

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE DETAINEE AND THEIR FAMILY IN JENIN GOVERNORATE AS PERCEIVED BY THE FORMER DETAINEE AND THEIR FAMILY

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Abstract

This study examined the nature of administrative detention and its psychological effects on Palestinian detainees and their families in Jenin Governorate in 2023. The study population consisted of 33 detainees; the sample included 21 current detainees (represented through interviews with their families) and 8 released detainees. The interview method was employed due to the exploratory nature of the topic and the relatively homogeneous cultural and educational background of participants. Findings revealed that detainees experience severe psychological distress, including chronic anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and persistent fear, particularly regarding the indefinite renewal of detention orders without formal charges or trial. The detainees expressed deep concern for their children and families, compounded by isolation and the arbitrary denial of visitation rights. Many viewed their detention as a form of psychological punishment based on unverified or retaliatory intelligence.

Family members, particularly parents, reported continuous anxiety, fear, and emotional strain, especially during sentence renewals and during prison raids involving confiscation or destruction of detainees' belongings. The study recommends exposing the illegality of administrative detention practices internationally and locally, and calls for comprehensive psychological and material support for detainees and their families.

Keywords: Administrative Detention, Psychological Impact, Detainee Their Family Jenin Governorate

INTRODUCTION

Administrative detention in Israeli prisons constitutes one of the most pressing and controversial issues faced by the Palestinian people. Administrative detention refers to the imprisonment of an individual without any formal charge and without trial, for varying periods that may extend beyond five years. The detention is renewed every six months while the detainee remains imprisoned. During administrative detention, the detainee is not subjected to interrogation and is not even asked for his name. When the detainee's lawyer appears before Israeli courts, the prosecution does not disclose any specific charge, but merely asserts that the detainee "poses a threat to state security" and that there exists a "classified file" in 2022, Israeli occupation forces arrested nearly 8,000 Palestinians, including more than 1,300 minors and 184 women. That same year, 1,595 administrative detention orders were issued. The occupation authorities employ administrative detention arbitrarily, without formal charges or trials, based on secret files and undisclosed evidence inaccessible to the detainee or their legal counsel, according to their own claims. Under Israeli military orders, administrative detention can be renewed indefinitely, with each term lasting up to six months. Detention may thus continue for years. The form of administrative detention practiced by the Israeli authorities is prohibited under international law.

Despite this, Israeli forces continue to issue administrative detention orders against various sectors of Palestinian society in the West Bank, including human rights activists, laborers, university students, lawyers, mothers, and merchants (Addameer, 2020).

Administrative detention, as exercised by the occupation, amounts to psychological torture and may be classified as a crime against humanity and a war crime under the Rome Statute, which criminalizes the denial of a prisoner of war, or any protected person, the right to a fair and regular trial. Moreover, administrative detention hearings are held in closed sessions, depriving the detainee of the right to a public trial, in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees such rights. The most fundamental guarantee of a fair trial is that the accused

is informed, in a language they understand, of the nature of the charges against them. In contrast, the administrative detainee remains unaware of the reasons for their detention from the moment of arrest until release.

All they are told is that “secret material” exists indicating they pose a “security threat.” In the sham proceedings convened to “review” the detention, the detainee is left to await repeated renewals of their administrative detention, with no definite release date, until Israeli intelligence unilaterally decides to release them. The detainee is thus denied any opportunity to defend themselves or challenge the allegations, confirming that administrative detention is a form of arbitrary detention that warrants accountability and compensation in accordance with international law (Addameer, 2014). Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in 1967, Israeli forces have arrested more than 700,000 Palestinians, amounting to nearly 20% of the total population in the occupied territories. Given that most detainees are men, this suggests that approximately 40% of the male Palestinian population has experienced imprisonment. Administrative detention spikes during popular uprisings and mass mobilizations, as Israeli authorities use the policy to suppress and intimidate Palestinians. Since 1967, over 50,000 administrative detention orders have been issued, 24,000 of them between 2000 and 2014 alone.

During the First Intifada, in 1989, the number of administrative detainees exceeded 1,700. In 2003, during the Second Intifada, it reached 1,140. From the 2015 popular uprising until the end of 2018, 5,068 administrative detention orders were issued, including new orders and renewals. Palestinians wishing to visit relatives detained in Israeli prisons must apply for a permit from Israeli security agencies. In practice, this serves as a “permit to enter Israel ” since residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are prohibited from entering Israeli territory without special authorization due to the ongoing closure imposed on Palestinian areas. While the occupation authorities have not formally banned family visits, they have transferred all prisons and detainees inside the 1948 occupied territories and reserve for themselves the authority to decide who is granted entry.

As a result, thousands of Palestinian families have been denied contact with their imprisoned loved ones. Although Israeli law theoretically guarantees administrative detainees two family visits, many are denied visitation rights. Restrictions from 1996 remain in effect, allowing visits only from certain first-degree relatives: father, mother, spouse, and grandparents. Daughters, sisters, sons, and brothers may only visit if they are under 16 or over 46 years of age (Addameer, 2019).

Beyond arbitrarily detaining hundreds of civilians without charge or trial, the occupation authorities frequently renew administrative detention orders, often just days before or even on the date of the detainee’s expected release.

In some cases, detainees have been re-arrested moments after their release, based on a new administrative detention order issued at the prison gate. Addameer’s legal monitoring has documented an increasing trend in which the occupation issues administrative detention orders against individuals who have already served a sentence based on an indictment, or conversely, issues an administrative detention order and then files formal charges after the detention expires. The legal basis for administrative detention originates from the British Mandate Emergency Regulations of 1945. Today, it falls under Israel’s Emergency Powers (Detentions) Law of 1979, which applies during states of emergency, an ongoing status since the state’s founding in 1948. In the occupied Palestinian territories, administrative detention is executed under Israeli Military Order No. 1651, particularly Article 273, which authorizes the regional military commander to detain individuals for up to six months, subject to indefinite renewal (Addameer, 2014).

Given the harsh conditions experienced by administrative detainees and their families as a result of arbitrary detention practices that lack any foundation in international law or established legal norms, and in light of the profound psychological suffering endured by both the detainees and their families, this study seeks to explore and understand the psychological impacts of administrative detention on Palestinian administrative detainees and their families.

The motivation for this research stems, in part, from the researcher’s personal experience as a former administrative detainee during the First Palestinian Intifada. Having lived through the experience and its psychological consequences, both personally and within his family, the researcher was compelled to investigate this issue further and to examine the psychological effects of administrative detention on released detainees and their families in the Jenin Governorate. Accordingly, the core problem addressed by this study is framed through the following primary research question: What are the psychological effects experienced by Palestinian administrative detainees and their families as a result of administrative detention imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities?

In order to ensure that participants had the freedom to respond openly and elaborate on their experiences as desired; while still remaining within the scope of the central research topic, the researcher deliberately selected the interview method as the primary data collection tool. In particular, an open-ended interview schedule was employed, as this approach allowed for in-depth and flexible responses that could capture the nuanced psychological impacts under investigation (Hamdeesha, 2012, p. 102).

The study was subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the study’s geographical reach covered freed administrative detainees and their families living in the Jenin Governorate. This limits how much we can apply the findings to other areas. Second, the research had a time constraint. It took place during the 2023/2024 school year, which might not show changes over time. The study faced a people-related

limit. The sample included a specific group made up of freed administrative detainees and their close family members. This might not show the larger group affected by administrative detention. This study matters for several linked reasons that highlight its worth in both academic and real-world settings. The main goal is to look at the legal rules and systems Israeli authorities use to carry out administrative detention. Also, it aims to check how much international legal standards are followed, or ignored when treating Palestinian administrative detainees held by Israel. What's more, the research tries to understand the stance of Israel's top legal authorities on administrative detention orders. This sheds light on the country's legal thinking and how it lines up, or doesn't, with international rules. Finally, and most critically, the study aims to identify and analyze the psychological impact of administrative detention on both the detainees themselves and their families, thus offering a comprehensive understanding of the human consequences of this practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Legal Status of Palestinian Prisoners: Administrative Detention: Administrative detention is a procedure under which an individual is held without being formally charged or brought to trial, based on administrative orders. In Israel and East Jerusalem, such orders are issued by the Israeli Minister of Defense, while in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (excluding East Jerusalem, which Israel unilaterally annexed), they are issued by military commanders. The period of detention is initially specified in the detention order. However, in February 1995, the maximum duration was extended from six months to one year, and orders are often renewed repeatedly, sometimes indefinitely. Although detainees are technically allowed to challenge their detention before so-called "Objection Committees," neither they nor their legal representatives are granted access to the evidence against them. The detainee's file is classified under the pretext of "security considerations," and defense attorneys are therefore prohibited from cross-examining witnesses, contesting the evidence, or even knowing whether witnesses exist. Military commanders rely on secret evidence in accordance with the Second Amendment to the Order on Administrative Detention (Temporary Order, Amendment No. 2), 1988 (Order No. 1254 in the West Bank and No. 966 in Gaza).

This secret material forms the basis of the allegations, and Israeli authorities claim that disclosing such information would endanger intelligence sources or reveal operational methods, the Israeli Supreme Court has upheld the legality of withholding such information and does not compel the authorities to uphold the suspect's right to a fair trial (Saleh, 2017).

Administrative detention practices in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories are primarily based on Article 111 of the British Mandate-era Emergency Defense Regulations imposed on Palestine in September 1945. Since then, the Israeli military has issued twelve military orders concerning administrative detention. The Minister of Defense issues orders within Israel and East Jerusalem, while military commanders issue them in the other territories occupied in 1967.

In 1970, Article 111 was integrated into Article 87 of Military Order No. 387 regarding public security regulations. In most cases, military commanders rely on secret evidence pursuant to Amendment No. 2 of Order No. 1254 (West Bank) and Order No. 966 (Gaza).

Notably, Order No. 1228, issued on March 17, 1988, authorized lower-ranking officers and even regular soldiers to issue administrative detention orders, leading to the opening of Ansar (Negev) Detention Camp in the Negev Desert to accommodate large numbers of detainees, particularly administrative detainees (Noufal, 2013). Israel has implemented administrative detention policies since the early years of the occupation. The current legal basis is Military Order No. 1229 of 1988, which grants military commanders the authority to detain Palestinians for six months if there exists suspicion or belief that the individual poses a threat to "regional security" or "public safety." The order also allows successive renewals, each lasting six months, without specifying a maximum duration. The definitions of "security of the area" and "public safety" are vague and left entirely to the discretion of the military commander.

Consequently, administrative detention orders are issued based on secret files prepared by the Israeli General Security Service (Shin Bet) or other intelligence agencies. These files are never disclosed to the detainee or their legal counsel, constituting a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly because they deprive detainees of the opportunity to contest the charges or defend themselves (Dawood, 2021). Previously, Israeli occupation forces relied on Military Order No. 1226, titled "Order Regarding Administrative Detention (Temporary Provisions) – Judea and Samaria, 1988," to issue administrative detention orders. This order specified the timeframes for the duration of detention, the deadline for bringing the detainee before a military judge, and the place of detention.

Over the years, the provisions concerning time limits were amended. Prior to the Israeli military incursion into Palestinian areas, detainees were required to be brought before a military judge within eight (8) days from the issuance of the administrative detention order. This was stipulated under Article 78(a), (d) of the Order Regarding Security Provisions (Judea and Samaria) No. 378 of 1970.

The order also determined the location and duration of the detention. On April 1, 2002, the Israeli military commander in the occupied territories issued Military Order No. 1499, titled "Order Regarding Administrative Detention (Temporary Provisions) – Amendment No. 19," which amended Article 4(a) of the aforementioned Order No. 1226. Under this amendment, the time limit of eight (8) days in the original order was replaced with a new limit of eighteen (18) days. The amendment further specified that detainees arrested prior to the effective date of the amendment would remain subject to Article 4(a) of the original order. The validity of this amendment was set for a period of two months. In April 2002, hundreds of Palestinians were arrested based on Military Order No. 1500, titled "Order Regarding Detention in Time of War (Temporary Provisions)." This order established an initial detention period of eighteen (18) days before the detainee was required to appear before a military judge. During this period, detainees were denied access to legal counsel, and in practice, most detainees were neither informed of the legal proceedings nor permitted to meet with their attorneys. Initially, Israeli authorities also refused to disclose the legal grounds for the detentions. This was followed by Military Order No. 1501, titled "Order Regarding Administrative Detention (Temporary Provisions – Amendment No. 20)," issued on April 10, which stipulated that any person issued an administrative detention order, after first being detained under Order 1500, must appear before a military judge within ninety-six (96) hours for review of the administrative detention. The order was issued for a period of two months. However, the absence of a clearly defined period between the two types of detention orders resulted in unlawful detention practices.

Many individuals detained under Order 1500 were issued administrative detention orders (based on Order 1499) upon the expiry of the initial 18 days, without being brought before a military judge within the required 96-hour period as stipulated in Order 1501. Subsequently, Military Order No. 1504 extended the validity of Orders 1499 and 1501 until June 15, 2002. Later, Military Order No. 1506, titled "Order Regarding Administrative Detention (Temporary Provisions – Amendment No. 23)," modified the timeframe within which detainees must be brought before a military judge, setting it at ten (10) days from the date of issuance of the administrative detention order. Moreover, this amendment abolished the provision of a second legal review, previously required by Article 5 of the original Order No. 1226, which mandated a second judicial review within three months following the initial confirmation of a six-month administrative detention. As a result, detainees subjected to six-month administrative detention orders were deprived of a second judicial appearance, significantly diminishing legal oversight over prolonged detention (Noufal, Imad, 2013).

Conditions, Justifications, and Safeguards of Administrative Detention under International Law: Administrative detention is defined as the deprivation of liberty by executive order without formally charging the individual with a criminal offense or bringing them to trial. The researcher notes that this type of detention is considered an exceptional measure employed for state security and public order. Although international humanitarian law permits the use of administrative detention, such permission is not absolute. Rather, it is subject to strict legal conditions and safeguards, due to the harm it may inflict upon the detainee and the potential for violations of international legal standards. As addressed in the earlier chapter, this section identifies the conditions and justifications for administrative detention and begins with the legal safeguards provided by international treaties, most notably the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Convention recognizes detention and forced residency as exceptionally severe measures that may be used by the occupying power against protected persons only when absolutely necessary for state security. In this context, the legitimacy of administrative detention is contingent upon a clear and explicit condition: that it be the only available means to preserve state security.

Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates that: "Decisions regarding internment or assigned residence shall be made according to a regular procedure prescribed by the occupying power in accordance with the provisions of this Convention. Such decisions shall afford the persons concerned the right to appeal, and the appeal shall be decided with the least possible delay. If the decisions are upheld, they shall be subject to periodic review, if possible, every six months, by a competent body designated by the occupying power" (Sharif Abdel Wahid, 2002).

The same article further clarifies that administrative detention may be imposed on protected persons for an indefinite period, as long as the Convention remains in force in the occupied territory. However, it establishes strict conditions and limitations: There must exist imperative reasons of security, detention or assigned residence must follow legal procedures defined by the occupying power in accordance with the Convention, the detainee must be granted the right to appeal, and if the decision is upheld, a periodic judicial review must be conducted. Based on the above, the researcher concludes that the most critical restriction on the occupying power's use of administrative detention is the requirement of "imperative" security reasons. Article 78 does not allow for mere general or routine security concerns; rather, it refers to exceptional and pressing threats that affect national or regional stability. While the Convention does not define "imperative security reasons," the wording clearly implies either a widespread crisis or a localized but highly disruptive threat to the occupied territory. As for the justifications for administrative detention, Article 41 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (on the protection of civilians in times of war) states: "If the Power in whose hands protected persons may be finds that the control measures provided for in the present Convention are inadequate, the

most severe measure it may take is internment or assigned residence, as stipulated in Articles 42 and 43”(Fourth Geneva Convention, 2020).

This is echoed in Article 78, referenced earlier, which provides: “If the Occupying Power considers it necessary, for imperative reasons of security, to take safety measures concerning protected persons, it may, at the most, subject them to assigned residence or internment.” Thus, administrative detention may only be applied when no other means exist to avert a danger, and may never be used as a form of punishment, retaliation, or coercion. In both Articles 42 and 78, the Geneva Convention emphasizes that such exceptional measures may only be applied in cases where the security of the state is at risk in the most absolute sense, and that detention without charge is permitted only if the individual poses a present or foreseeable threat to the security of the occupying power.

“The exceptional nature of administrative detention lies in the fact that it permits authorities to deprive individuals of their liberty without criminal prosecution, solely based on a determination that they constitute a current or future threat to national security.”

(Yelena Bjejets, Principles and Procedural Safeguards Concerning Internment and Administrative Detention in Armed Conflicts and Other Situations of Violence (Sharif Abdel Wahid, 2002). Referring to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 42 explicitly states: “The internment or placing in assigned residence of protected persons may be ordered only if the security of the Detaining Power makes it absolutely necessary.”(Sharif Abdel Wahid, 2002). This provision establishes that the legitimacy of administrative detention is strictly conditional upon the fulfillment of a clear and explicit requirement, namely, that such detention be absolutely necessary for state security, and that no alternative measure is sufficient to ensure that security. The second condition mandated by this article is that any such measures must conform to the provisions of the Convention itself. Thus, while administrative detention and appeal procedures are permitted, they must not contravene the Convention’s broader legal framework.

For example, Part IV of the Convention outlines minimum standards for the treatment of internees, including: The right to free medical care, access to adequate nutrition and shelter and the right of family members, especially parents and children, to be detained together, even for orphaned or unaccompanied minors. It also prescribes the conditions of places of detention, requiring appropriate climate and location, among other humane standards.

Additionally, Article 84 of the Convention requires that administrative detainees be separated from prisoners of war and other categories of detainees, including those awaiting trial or serving criminal sentences. Accordingly, administrative detainees must not be held in the same facilities as convicted prisoners or pre-trial detainees. However, in practice, Israel often holds administrative detainees alongside criminal convicts and pre-trial detainees, in clear violation of this provision.

Furthermore, Article 132 obligates the detaining power to release any detainee immediately upon the cessation of the reasons that justified the detention. This implies that so-called “imperative security reasons” cannot be extended indefinitely. The indefinite renewal of administrative detention for years, often without any new justifications, is incompatible with this provision. Nevertheless, Israel has repeatedly extended the administrative detention of numerous Palestinian detainees for prolonged periods, varying over time. The researcher will present a detailed graphical analysis of these detention patterns, categorized by time intervals, in the upcoming chapters of this study.

The third and final condition is that detainees must have the right to periodic judicial review of the legality of their continued detention. Such periodic review, whether following confirmation of the initial detention order (Article 43) or upon appeal (Article 78), is considered a fundamental procedural safeguard under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Article 43 specifies that such reviews must occur at least twice a year. Furthermore, Article 87 affirms that the review process must conform to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights treaties ratified by member states.

International Conventions Related to Administrative Detention: Treaties represent the primary and most authoritative source of international legal rules. In cases of conflict between domestic law and international treaties, international treaties hold supremacy of application, as they may override or amend other sources of international law, such as customary law or general legal principles, provided they do not conflict with a peremptory norm (*jus cogens*) of international law. Custom remains the second main source of international law, alongside general principles of law recognized by the United Nations, decisions of international courts, and scholarly jurisprudence, as outlined in Article 38(1) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice.

International legal norms possess binding authority, as affirmed by the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, specifically in Article 53, which states: “A treaty is void if, at the time of its conclusion, it conflicts with a peremptory norm of general international law. For the purposes of the present Convention, a peremptory norm is a norm accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted and which can only be modified by a subsequent norm of general international law having the same character.” (Vienna Convention, 1996).

International instruments also require States to respect the right of peoples to self-determination, and to support the United Nations in fulfilling its charter-based responsibilities. States are thus obligated to enable the populations under

their control to exercise their right to self-determination, and, more critically, to refrain from any measure that would deny such peoples their right to independence or sovereignty. These obligations are endorsed across all major international charters and treaties (Abdel-Mo'ti, 2006).

Psychological and social stress are pervasive phenomena in daily life, spanning nearly all domains of human experience. If sustained over extended periods, such stress may lead to behavioral dysfunction, psychological maladjustment, and impaired social adaptation. As individuals live in constant interaction with external and internal stimuli, many of which are pressure-inducing, these conditions may give rise to various psychological and social problems. Consequently, the individual must strive to manage and adapt to these pressures in order to maintain healthy psychosocial functioning (Ghattas, 2012, p. 14).

While psychological and social stress are considered normal and expected occurrences in human life, often triggered by short-term disruptions that typically resolve on their own, they may also escalate into chronic psychological distress if prolonged (El-Sayed Obaid, 2008).

Stressful experiences are usually tied to daily life events, stemming from diverse sources, and may overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope, often leading to crises. Social pressures, in particular, can intensify when an individual's aspirations exceed their ability to fulfill them, resulting in frustration and psychological strain (Kayyali, 2005, p. 4).

The phenomenon of psychological and social stress is not new, it has existed since the dawn of human consciousness. Prominent Muslim scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina addressed stress-related mental disorders, recognizing their link to environmental pressures (Al-Meshaan, 2004, p. 19). Due to its broad application across diverse fields, such as art, physics, psychology, and mental health, the concept of stress has been interpreted in various ways. There is no single universally agreed-upon definition, largely due to differing theoretical lenses through which individuals interpret and experience stress. The term derives from the Old French word "distress", connoting suffocation, pressure, or injustice. It evolved in English into the modern term "stress", referring to unpleasant, unwanted, and oppressive conditions, typically associated with psychological suffering triggered by external or internal variables (Abdel-Mo'ti, 2006, p. 20).

Among the most prominent researchers associated with the study of stress is Seley (often rendered as Selye in Western literature), who initially focused her work on identifying the physiological terms related to the body's responses to stress. She defined stress as a set of symptoms that arise when an individual is exposed to a stress-inducing situation. It represents the body's non-specific response to environmental demands such as changes within the family, job loss, or relocation, situations that place the individual under psychological pressure. This definition emphasizes environmental circumstances as the root causes of psychological stress. She described stress as an adaptive response shaped by individual differences, influenced by psychological processes, and triggered by any external event or situation requiring additional mental, physical, or physiological effort (El-Sayed Obaid, 2008, p. 20).

Farhat (2006) defined stress as a psychological construct denoting internal pressure that creates a state of psychological and physical imbalance. It originates from environmental factors such as anxiety, weakness, and depression, whether arising from family, social context, or negative cognitive patterns that emerge in response to stress stimuli. It is also shaped by the individual's physiological and behavioral responses to these stimuli.

Despite the widely acknowledged negative effects of stress, which dominate much of the literature, these stressors can significantly affect an individual's life, whether in predictable or sudden ways. Adverse impacts include reduced morale, emotional confusion, increased anxiety, feelings of work overload, and the accumulation of unexpressed negative emotions. This often results in pessimism about the future and difficulty returning to emotional baseline following distressing experiences. However, beyond these negative outcomes, stress may also have positive effects, though not in all circumstances. At times, stress can serve as a motivating force, spurring the individual toward action and productivity. It may facilitate thinking, support the expression of emotions, and foster feelings of achievement, strength, confidence, and optimism (Al-Meshaan, 2004). Exposure to varying types of psychological and social stress may lead individuals in divergent directions, either toward resentment and rejection of lived reality, or toward resilience, optimism, and the ability to create psychological harmony with the demands of their environment.

A substantial body of Arabic scholarship has covered the extensive and multi-dimensional consequences of Israeli detention practices on Palestinians, their families, and communities. Using various methods, some of these studies showcased the devastating ramifications of long-term jail time and administrative detention upon an individual in the psychological, social, legal, and economic realms. Bilal Ahmad Dawood (2021) conducted a detailed legal study of Israel's administrative detention practices, considering them from the perspectives of international humanitarian and human rights law. The study concluded with Israel's arbitrary detention through secret evidence and lack of fair trial, in violation of articles under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Dawood stressed the need for more news coverage and international accountability since this practice has been implemented against thousands of Palestinians for decades, including woman and children. Complementing these legal studies, Qaddan (2002) undertook an analysis of the social, economic, and psychological strain on the families of detainees, tracing how Israeli detention policies underwent transformation from 1948 to 1994. His combination of

approaches showed that the families received all vital moral and financial support from the Palestinian social and political groups. Firms spouses and children would handle the mental trauma, other social problems and money problems relating to legal fees or prison visit expenses. The study highlighted the ups and downs that the children underwent and the social isolation encountered by the wives in traditional society. Lafi (2005) went on to establish an in-depth study into the psychological stress among the prisoners' wives. The study showed that stress levels were considerably linked with socio-economic status and education, while age or religious beliefs did not make much of a difference in this regard. These findings pointed towards the intricate interplay between structural disadvantages and mental toughness, hence calling for a comprehensive psychosocial intervention for these women. Subsequently, Wadi (2005) looked at the children, particularly how the children of the freed prisoners adjusted. The study found that children under five at the time of their father's imprisonment had the hardest time. However, strong support from the extended family and refugee status seemed to help children adjust better, implying that societal solidarity in a community acts as a buffer for post-prison trauma in children.

Zaout et al. (2010) and Abu Deqqa & Zaout (2012) explored how torture and imprisonment have long-term effects on women. Their research found that former female prisoners often suffer from PTSD physical health issues, and problems in social and psychological areas. The studies drew clear links between how severe the torture was and the lasting mental harm it caused. They also pointed out how challenging it is for these women to adjust back into society. Even years after being released, trauma continued to harm how they interacted with family and society. Sahwil et al. (2011) took a broader view focusing on 358 families of detained married people. They found frequent social withdrawal in women and noted that social standing often dropped because communities offered little support. The trauma hit starting with nighttime arrests, and led to long-term troubles like emotional struggles and money problems. Abu Deqqa and Najm (2011) shared stories from 53 released women to give a clearer picture of how societal norms and stigma push these women to the margins. Patriarchal systems often leave them with little financial stability. The women in this undaunted testimonial declared an indispensable urge to receive national acknowledgement and acceptance within the communities. The study suggested that these personal stories be presented during civic education. A longer-term view was given by Shanā'ah (2012) through reports, testimonies, and legal documents relating to the female and child detainees from 1967 through 2012. It further provided the evidence and established a permanent pattern of physical abuse, thus resulting in unlawful IL trauma and further mental suffering on these sections of the population under Israeli detention policies. The adjustment to normal life entailed many social and emotional challenges. Hassan Ali (2012) considered the effects of arrest on Palestinian families since 1948. He found that families in Gaza were going through the turmoil of emotional distress and financial insecurity while in their strength and support for one another.

Hameed and Diab (2013) examined the link between loneliness and social support among 179 women prisoners freed in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange. Social support was higher with less loneliness, highlighting how important community reintegration programs are for assisting with recovery post-detention.

Abu-Rahma and Al-Talla (2014) explored how self-concept impacts political participation among freed women prisoners. Their results suggested that women who did not earn income exhibited a higher level of political participation, thereby unveiling the complex interrelation of identity, empowerment, and socio-political marginalization in post-incarceration trajectories. By and large, these studies in Arabic throw light on the encompassing and deep-seated effects of Israeli detention policies on Palestinian society. They stress the need for creating support mechanisms encompassing legal, mental health, financial, and educational needs, all of which should be customized to address the particular concerns faced by detainees and their families. The study also urges the global community to examine legal issues, set up ways to help individuals rejoin society, and use gender-aware approaches to handle the long-term family and social effects caused by extended political imprisonment.

A growing body of international research has shown how much parents going to prison can change families hurt kids' growth, and mess with mental health. Edith in 2004 looked at refugee families in Denmark and explained how a parent's time in jail breaks the family apart and causes emotional struggles. The study showed kids felt like their families were falling apart and dealt with bigger fears and deep uncertainty. Their situation got even harder because they had already gone through terrible things like violence and torture. Refugee families with parents in jail faced serious layered challenges. Poehlmann in 2005 added similar findings in the U.S. and showed how moms going to prison affects kids' mental and emotional growth in life. In a study of 60 young children aged 2 to 7, the research pointed out big risks to kids' development when they lose their mom's day-to-day care. Even though some kids were cared for by grandparents, the care didn't always help their learning and emotions grow if the care ended up being with institutions over a long time.

Building on these concerns, Poehlmann (2005) provided empirical evidence from the United States indicating that maternal incarceration has deleterious effects on early childhood cognitive and emotional development. In a study of 60 children aged 2–7 years, the findings underscored significant developmental risks associated with the loss of continuous maternal care. Although many children were placed under the guardianship of grandparents, the quality of

intellectual and emotional stimulation was often inadequate, especially in prolonged cases where care arrangements shifted to institutional settings. Poehlmann further pointed to cumulative demographic risks, suggesting that incarceration does not occur in isolation but often intersects with broader socio-economic vulnerabilities.

In a related vein, Liddell (1998), as cited in Shahwan (2007), investigated the psychosocial effects of incarceration on the spouses of imprisoned individuals. Using a sample of 108 wives in the United States, the study demonstrated that spousal incarceration precipitates considerable emotional and physical distress, manifesting in symptoms of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and social isolation. These findings mirror the disruptions observed by Edith (2004) and Poehlmann (2005), but with an emphasis on the adult partner's psychological burden. Further extending the discussion, Hairston (2001), as cited in Qaddan (2013), focused on the familial consequences of paternal incarceration, particularly the adaptive responses of wives and children. Based on data from 102 children and 70 wives, Hairston's study illuminated the extensive restructuring of family roles necessitated by the father's absence. Mothers were often forced into dual parental roles, bearing both emotional and economic responsibilities. The resultant strain was felt in terms of psychological distress among mothers, disrupted spousal relationships, and adverse emotional effects on children, such as feelings of abandonment and social withdrawal. Collectively, the studies highlight this central theme: incarceration changes family structure and functioning and provides great psychological, developmental, and economic stressors on both partners and children.

While the situational details vary from refugee families in Denmark to American families confronting maternal or paternal incarceration, all four studies stress the urgency of addressing the collateral consequences of incarceration through joint systems of support that address trauma, familial preservation, and child development.

Among international studies, the work of Zina T. and Bertha Davis (2014)-The Behavioral Link Between Children's Outcomes and Life Events of Incarcerated Mothers-stands out for considering aspects of maternal incarceration and child well-being. Conducted in the United States, the study sought to examine the relationship between economic stability, living arrangements, and behavioral outcomes in children whose mothers were imprisoned. Through interviews and questionnaires administered to a sample of 200 incarcerated women, the research investigated the impact of incarceration-related stressors both before and after the mother's imprisonment.

The findings revealed that many children often dealt with post-traumatic stress signs like guilt, anger, and depression. Many also struggled with various emotional and behavior-related problems aggressive behavior, because of being separated when their mothers were sent to prison. The research highlighted how mothers faced severe financial problems after being released. It pointed out that kids' behavior issues tied back to being cut off, deprived, and pushed to the margins during the time of their mother's imprisonment. It also recorded how kids affected by this went through both health and learning difficulties.

In evaluating the body of existing literature, both Arabic and international, it is evident that previous studies demonstrated a high degree of methodological rigor and flexibility, addressing their respective research problems with notable thoroughness and dedication to detail. These studies were consistent in their effort to ensure comprehensive data collection and succeeded in covering essential dimensions of their chosen topics. The relevance and utility of these earlier works to the current study manifest across several critical areas, namely in the theoretical framing of the subject, the articulation of the research problem and its objectives, the conceptual definitions provided, and the formulation of research questions.

Moreover, the present study draws on insights from prior literature in selecting the interview method as the most appropriate data collection tool. These earlier works also played a foundational role in shaping the educational literature and theoretical framework adopted in the current research. Despite their contributions, a critical synthesis of both Arabic and international sources confirms that no previous study has specifically and comprehensively addressed the psychological, social, and economic dimensions affecting the families of released Palestinian female prisoners. While some studies have touched on relevant themes, including Qaddan (2002), Wadi (2005), Sahweel et al. (2011), Hassan Ali (2012), Edith (2004), and Harirston (2001), they remain limited in scope and do not offer a targeted exploration of the multilayered impacts in question. This gap in the literature thus underscores both the novelty and scholarly necessity of the present research.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This study employed a qualitative methodological framework to explore the psychological effects of administrative detention on detainees and their families within the Jenin Governorate. The study population consisted of all administrative detainees and their families residing in the governorate during the year 2023, totaling thirty-three (33) individuals. From this population, the study sample was composed of twenty-nine (29) participants: twenty-one (21) administrative detainees who were still incarcerated at the time of data collection, whose families were interviewed on their behalf, and eight (8) former detainees who had already been released.

The study found twenty-nine participants sufficient for the sample size. The small total population and exploratory focus of the research supported this number. Four detainees could not be included because the researcher was unable to contact them. To gather information, the researcher chose interviews as the main tool. This choice aligned with the goals of exploring new ideas and matched the shared cultural context of the participants Palestinian administrative detainees and their close family members. Using interviews aimed to generate fresh hypotheses, pinpoint relevant factors, and reveal hidden issues related to the topic (Al-Assaf 2003 p. 394). A structured format with open-ended questions helped participants share their thoughts and emotions while ensuring the discussion stayed on track. This design supported detailed and adaptable answers without losing focus on the subject (Hamdeesha 2012 p. 102). For reliability and accuracy, faculty at Al-Quds Open University reviewed the interview questions. The researcher reviewed their suggestions and included them in the final version. In its final form, the interview guide featured one core question designed to suit both participant groups directly. For the released detainees, the core question was: "What is the psychological impact of your administrative detention?"

Meanwhile, for the families of detainees currently under administrative detention, the corresponding question was phrased as: "What psychological impact have you experienced as a result of your son's administrative detention?", through these carefully formulated questions, the study aimed to elicit rich, subjective accounts that would shed light on the emotional and psychological toll exerted by the administrative detention system on Palestinian individuals and their families.

RESULTS

The practice of arresting Palestinians under administrative detention severely affects their mental balance and profoundly impacts the psychological well-being of their families in the Jenin Governorate. Several people who had been formerly detained and the families of those still imprisoned testified about the hurtful and complicated nature of the experience. Their testimony showed a broadly similar pattern of emotional distress comprising fear, depression, persistent worry, and exhaustion. Time and time again, detainees would say that this form of incarceration seemed more like a tossing of mental anguish than a legal procedure. One former prisoner stated: "It is a prison for the mind, not just the body," emphasizing that the whole experience was hair-raising due to the absence of formal charges or any trial.

The process of the six-month renewal of detention thrust detainees in limbo. They could never make any plans for moving forward, nor could they prepare for release or ever have closure. Most suggested that the worst moments they endured never occurred at the moment of arrest but rather when the ending days of their sentence were creeping in, just to be abruptly extended with no explanation. This miserable weight was borne by the families parents, who often expressed feelings of utter helplessness and deep fear about what might happen next. Several were mournful testimonies of how hard it was to plan visits from the authorities canceling them without giving any reason, and in some cases, families went on for months without even the chance to see or hug their loved ones. Another concerned mother confided that she had heard through other detainees' families about the worsening condition of her son's health. She described her life as one "constant swing between hope and fear," uncertain if the nightmare would ever end.

The distress worsened with violent incidents inside the prisons, such as sudden raids. The detainees' belongings were taken or destroyed without notice, and the acts only added chaos, seeming to be intended only to increase emotional suffering. The parents would worry for their sons' mental and physical well-being whenever the raids coincided with the extension of their detention periods. Families would describe the anxiety that accompanied such incidents, with the intrusions leaving scars that ran deeper than the moments they intruded. Great personal milestones just made the pain worse. Births, deaths in the family, serious illnesses, and so many things passed without the detainees being there. Missing these monumental life events made them feel even more isolated and powerless. One detainee related how the hardest blow was not the incarceration itself but missing his daughter's first words. Detainees faced physical consequences besides mental torture. A lot of them mentioned constant headaches, difficulty sleeping, and stomach trouble due to all the stress. The detainees' relatives spoke of prolonged emotional fatigue, which continued even after their wards were released.

Even post-release, the detainees bore emotional scarifications. Most of them had difficulty joining back into their own communities, most times being stigmatized because of their imprisonment. They all said the emotional wounds were still fresh, unhealed. The families were hurried right into this recurrent cycle of agony and stress as well. This study proves administrative detention to be more than just a legal process; it is a personal ordeal. It really disrupts emotional ties between detainees and their families and perpetuates sickness within their communities. Experiences shared as part of this research suggest such harm is not accidental but an inherent part of what detainees are made to endure.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights how administrative detention affects the mental and emotional well-being of Palestinian detainees and their families in the Jenin Governorate. The findings align with what rights organizations and lawyers have reported for years but offer a rare direct view of the trauma these individuals face. The study explores the emotional and legal challenges they endure and compares these experiences with broader Arabic and international research. Rather than repeating earlier conclusions, these stories expand on them showing how Israel's approach to administrative detention creates unique and unsettling consequences.

The detainee's mental state is at the core of this research. The endless uncertainty being stuck between arrest and freedom, between laws and exceptions, between hope and despair weighs on them. This constant instability and lack of legal clarity bring ongoing psychological hardship. It confirms what many have observed: this system causes a profound emotional strain. Dawood's (2021) legal critique of Israel's reliance on secret evidence and indefinite detention ties into these findings. While Dawood focused on legal flaws, this study reveals how such ambiguities lead to psychological suffering leaving detainees trapped in fear and unable to move forward.

The anguish goes beyond just the detainees. Their families suffer too. Parents, in particular, struggle in a cycle of waiting and helplessness often becoming isolated. Many relatives described the emotional toll using the phrase "imprisoned." This idea aligns with Qaddan's (2002) earlier research, which noted the heavy emotional and financial weight families bear when a loved one is detained. This shared suffering connects detainees with their families, as both endure the far-reaching effects of the detention system. Lafi (2005) also supports these findings by demonstrating increased stress levels among wives of detainees, particularly when compounded by low socioeconomic status or a lack of educational means. Similarly, Suhweil et al. (2011) underlined the long-term emotional ramifications on detainee families, calling them "secondary victims of detention," a concept supported by some of the narratives gathered in this study.

Further in international literature, the transgenerational impact of incarceration is also attested. Research by Poehlmann (2005) in the U.S. revealed that the absence of a mother due to imprisonment combines in voltage disruptions to children's emotional development along with intellectual outcomes, effects echoed by Wadi (2005) when he also found that the children of Palestinian detainees suffered impaired psychosocial adjustments, particularly when absent fathers were detained during the children's formative years. The study by Montgomery (2004) on refugee families places the icing on the cake by showing that imprisonment deepens pre-existing traumas and intergenerational emotional instability. The present study thus confirms and supplements these observations by asserting that the Israeli policy of administrative detention is not only punishing the detainee but in a way tearing apart the emotional fabric binding a family together.

Furthermore, while some international studies highlight community resilience as a protective factor, an overwhelming lack of such support appeared to be experienced by participants in this study. This stands in contrast to Hameed's (2013) study, which found that higher levels of perceived social support decreased loneliness among those released from detention. Narratives from Jenin showed that the ongoing occupation, surveillance, and restricted movement serve to lessen opportunities for healing away from a social or community environment. Instead of serving as buffers, community expectations and political pressures augment the emotional weight they carry. One striking theme that cuts through all narratives is the idea of ambiguous loss, where a person experiences the grief of losing someone who is physically present but psychologically and emotionally absent. This was sharply illustrated by the testimony of parents whose sons were held for years without charge or trial. While rarely applied to political detention situations, this theory rings true with the emotional fragmentation expressed in this study. Abdel-Moati (2006) in his conceptualizing of stress and coping in Arab settings provides added insight into the processes through which prolonged pressure and uncertainty generate maladaptive responses of emotional withdrawal, insomnia, or depression, symptoms the participants have been repeatedly reporting.

The research also finds resonance in the study of Zaqout and Abu Deqqa (2012), who described the psychosocial consequences of detention among Palestinian women, identifying long-term problems such as PTSD, emotional instability, and reintegration difficulties. Saleh (2017) also described how administrative detention heightened the legal precarity but also aggravated mental vulnerability within the family setup for the families of freed female detainees. This study takes the weight of the above approach forward by extending the focus to male detainees and their families, very much emphasizing the dual functioning of administrative detention as a legal instrument and as a systemic agent of psychological destabilization.

In general, the findings show that administrative detention becomes a method of psychological violence that impacts the mental health of the detainees and the cohesiveness of their particular communities. Whereas criminal detention is one that should follow an established legal avenue, administrative detention remains a process shrouded in secrecy, lacking any semblance of reason, with ambiguous terms for renewal, and each of these aspects makes complete

psychological recovery near impossible. One can therefore infer that the trauma is not incidental, but rather structural, which also makes it somewhat strategic.

In sum, the study contributes to the existing literature in terms of offering a more human-focused narrative of administrative detention that combines legal critique with psychosocial analysis. This study validates previous literature while imparting novel qualitative evidence in support of the administrative detention being a form of punishment administered multilaterally—that is, on the body, on the mind, on the family, and on the collective—which calls for international legal accountability but also for immediate psychosocial intervention with support from the affected individuals and communities. Within the broader comparative frame, the Palestinian experience with administrative detention must be recognized not only as a legal anomaly but as a psychological crisis demanding urgent redress.

CONCLUSION

This study critically examined the psychological impact of administrative detention on Palestinian detainees and their families in the Jenin Governorate during 2023. By drawing on qualitative accounts from released detainees and the families of currently incarcerated individuals, the research sought to illuminate how indefinite detention under opaque legal mechanisms produces lasting psychological and emotional harm. The research shows that people suffer serious mental harm such as long-term anxiety deep sadness emotional burnout, and constant fear. These problems grow worse because of repeated detention extensions secret intelligence files, and random bans on visits. Former detainees described administrative detention as more of a mental punishment than a fair legal measure. Their accounts backed by what families shared, reveal how lasting doubt and forced separation harm both the mind and family bonds, spreading trauma beyond the prison environment. From a legal angle, the study supports claims that Israel's use of administrative detention goes against key international humanitarian and human rights laws parts of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This convention allows detention in rare and specific situations, but the findings point to its frequent use for political control, not real security concerns. Even though the study gives valuable details, it only looks at certain areas and uses qualitative data, which might miss how others in Palestinian regions are impacted. Still, the participants' detailed and aligned testimonies highlight a broad issue that needs global attention. Future studies should include other regions affected, track long-term mental health effects, and consider how international legal processes could help stop these actions. Comparing this with similar situations in other areas facing long detentions without trial could further explain the global scope. The study makes it clear that administrative detention in Palestine is both a legal problem and a constant cause of mental suffering. Tackling this issue will need legal consequences along with creating systems to prevent more harm to detainees and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study offers a set of recommendations that focus primarily on exposing the illegitimacy of administrative detention practices by Israeli authorities at both national and international levels. These include denouncing the unlawful procedures carried out against various segments of the Palestinian population, whether with or without formal charges. The study further calls for sustained psychological and material support for administrative detainees and their families.

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