

URGENT ACTION

TERMINALLY ILL PALESTINIAN PRISONER DIES IN ISRAELI CUSTODY

On 7 April, Walid Daqqah, terminally ill Palestinian prisoner, died in an Israeli jail after having spent 38 years imprisoned. Walid Daqqah died as a result of systematic medical neglect, torture and other ill-treatment, including physical attacks while in prison. His body is still withheld by the Israeli authorities. On 16 April, Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, filed a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court on behalf of Walid Daqqah's family, demanding the immediate release of his body for burial. The case is still ongoing, awaiting a court decision.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

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Walid Daqqah is a 63-year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel. He was a writer and father to a four-year-old daughter. On 25 March 1986, Israeli forces arrested Walid Daqqah, then 24. In March 1987, an Israeli military court sentenced him to life imprisonment after convicting him of commanding the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)-affiliated group that had abducted and killed Israeli soldier Moshe Tamam in 1984. Walid Daqqah was not convicted of carrying out the murder himself, but of commanding the group, and his conviction was not based on Israeli criminal law but rather on British emergency regulations dating back to 1945, which require a much lower standard of proof for conviction. Israeli military courts have a well-documented history of failing to ensure the right to a fair trial. Additionally, Walid Daqqah was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while under interrogation.

In 2012, Walid Daqqah's life imprisonment sentence was capped at 37 years, after then-president Shimon Peres accepted his request to cap the sentence. However, in early 2018, five years before the end of his sentence, he was sentenced in a separate case to an additional two years in prison for attempting to get mobile phones into prison to help other prisoners get in touch with their families. On 22 November 2023, the Israeli Supreme Court turned down Walid Daqqah's leave to appeal the decision of the District Court to deny him parole, dashing Walid Daqqah's last remaining hope for an early release through judicial avenues.

Adding to the tragic news of his passing, the Israeli authorities are refusing to release Walid Daqqah's body for burial. On 16 April, Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, filed a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court on behalf of Walid Daqqah's family. The petition argues that the authorities are persisting in their abusive treatment of the family by unlawfully withholding the deceased's body in a cruel and inhumane manner and demands the immediate release of his body for burial. The case is still ongoing, awaiting a court decision. Amnesty international will continue following up on the family's petition and look for ways to support their right to bury Walid Daqqah in a dignified manner.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Walid Daqqah (he/him).

THIS IS THE THIRD AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 78/23.

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/7798/2024/en/>.

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