

Ramadan: Fasting for Palestinian Justice and Dignity

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Today is the first day of Ramadan. Muslims in many parts of the world begin their month-long fast today. Most of them are not aware that 1500 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails are on a hunger strike that began almost six weeks ago.

These prisoners have undertaken a hunger strike to protest the denial of their basic human rights in prison. When they began their strike, they were only drinking salt water to survive. It is reported that many have stopped drinking water altogether. Their health is deteriorating rapidly. They are in dire straits.

Their hunger strike is not just about prison conditions. In a larger sense it is against the occupation of Palestine and the oppression and injustice that have occurred through the decades. It is a strike for liberation from Israeli domination. It is a strike for human dignity. This is why the strike has been described as the Dignity Strike.

The world has to all intents and purposes ignored this mass strike partly because the media both mainstream and alternative have given so little coverage to it. It is a reflection of Zionist power over the global media.

Faced with this situation, civil society groups with a conscience should speak up. They should use the channels available to them to express their support for the Dignity Strike. As more and more groups and individuals take a stand, the Israeli authorities will be forced to respond.

By giving support to the Strike those of us who are fasting will be enhancing the meaning of our own fast. For our fast is also about dignity and justice. It is not just Ramadan that carries this meaning. In the Jewish tradition itself exemplified by the teachings of the Prophet Isaiah fasting is also about justice.

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