



Transform prison into a school for revolution

Joint Interview with Samidoun
(*Paris-Banlieue*) & International
Red Aid (*Toulouse*)

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Cover image: Freeing Palestine — Freeing Ourselves, a 2011
redesign of Freeing South Africa — Freeing Ourselves, Axie
Green, Leonra Davis, circa 1980
<https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/freing-south-africa-freing-ourselves>

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with whatever weapons at hand



Editor's Note: For this fourth issue of Material, dedicated to the question of (political) prisoners, we sought to pose a series of key questions to several organizations engaged in the struggle against imprisonment. We believe this exercise allows readers to compare the approach taken by each respondent as well as the broader political context in which they operate. For this first iteration of this interview process, we received responses from two organizations: Samidoun (Paris-Banlieue) and International Red Aid (Toulouse)

Material: Could you describe how, in your context, the state, through laws, policing, detention practices, or other mechanisms, produces political prisoners on a mass scale—and how this process fits into its broader strategy of containing, disorganizing, or destroying revolutionary movements in this time of history? How does imprisonment seek not only to punish individuals but also to break collective morale, instill fear, or isolate revolutionary forces from the masses? In this regard, we would like to hear how your organization/movement has analyzed and responded to this in the past and present.

Samidoun (Paris-Banlieue)¹: Regarding this question, we will discuss the specific context of Palestine, which lies at the heart of Samidoun's international struggle.

In Palestine, imprisonment is part of a wider context of settler colonialism, similar to what Algeria, Ireland, and other countries have experienced. As a result, in Palestine, prison is a tool of repression designed to subdue society as a whole. However, it targets those activists and fighters involved in national liberation movements with particular intensity, as they are the most advanced segment of the oppressed masses engaged in struggle. Dialectically, it is through the repression of these fighters that the Zionist state affects the people as a whole: workers, peasants, fishermen, students, and intellectuals. This reality is pervasive throughout Palestinian society: there are prisoners in every family and every generation.

cycle, as he utilized the “prison academy” (prison as a “school of the revolution”) to study the occupier's psychological apparatus, eventually transitioning from a captive to the architect of the October 7th offensive.

23. The “Filton 24” activists were arrested for the August 2024 disarmament of Elbit Systems's Bristol hub and subjected to 18 months of pretrial remand. Despite jury acquittals on major charges in early 2026, the case continues to be defined by the state's persistent use of retrials and “terrorist” labeling to prosecute direct action against the arms trade.

24. Humanitarian discourse often functions as a “sanitation” of politics, reclassifying the Palestinian struggle from a movement for national liberation into a passive crisis of “human suffering.” By focusing strictly on aid and victimhood, this rhetoric erases the political agency of the resistance.

25. The Red Brigades/Communist Combatant Party (BR-PCC) prisoners, notably Nadia Lioce, Roberto Morandi, and Marco Mezzasalma, remain symbols of the “long resistance” against the Italian state's 41-bis prison system. This draconian system, which imposes total sensory and social isolation, is a tool of political liquidation designed to break the ideological will of the last combatants of armed struggle from the 1990s–2000s.

26. Greek Anarchist militant Nikos Maziotis, a central figure of the group Revolutionary Struggle (“Epanastatikos Agonas”), has been imprisoned since 2014, following years of urban guerrilla activity against Greek and international capital. His struggle is defined by a rejection of the state's judicial legitimacy and a commitment to armed propaganda as a response to the devastating structural adjustment programs imposed on the Greek working-class.

19. The 2015 attacks were carried out by radicalized militants affiliated with Al-Qaeda (January) and ISIS (November), many of whom were French or Belgian citizens. The violence targeted sites of symbolic and social importance, including the Charlie Hebdo offices, a kosher supermarket, the Stade de France (football stadium), and various Parisian cafés as well as the Bataclan theater. These acts were driven by a Takfiri jihadist ideology that sought to punish the French state for its military interventions in the Middle East and to polarize European society by fueling domestic communal tensions. The government used the ensuing national trauma to implement a permanent “state of emergency,” expanding police powers and surveillance that have since been disproportionately used to suppress social movements and non-white neighborhoods.

20. The Affaire « du 8 décembre 2020 » (“December 8th Case”) refers to the arrest of seven left-wing activists, including a veteran of the YPG in Rojava, accused of the “crime of terrorist conspiracy.” Despite the absence of a specific plot or targets, the state secured convictions in 2023 by criminalizing everyday practices like encrypted messaging (Signal) and airsoft training.

21. In the First Intifada (1987–1993), Palestinians combatted Israeli civil control over Palestinian society through mass boycotts and autonomous “popular committees,” rendering the occupation functionally ungovernable. Israel responded with the “Iron Fist” policy of mass bone-breaking and administrative detention.

22. Nael Barghouti’s 2014 re-arrest proved that “secret evidence” can override any release deal; Ahmed Saadat’s and Marwan Barghouti’s trials served to criminalize popular uprising and Marxist resistance: the prison functions as a site of attempted political decapitation. Yahya Sinwar’s 23-year detention further illustrates this

Israel attempts to fragment the realities of the different areas of Palestinian territory in order to divide its population: there are around a hundred arrests per day in the West Bank; prior to October 7, Gaza was under blockade; Palestinian refugees face specific forms of discrimination in Jordan and Lebanon; and so on.

Repression through imprisonment is a pervasive phenomenon in the Palestinian context. A quarter of Palestinian men have been incarcerated since 1967, and since 1948, there have been over a million prisoners. In occupied Palestine, those arrested are tried by military courts and subjected to daily raids carried out by the Zionist army. Those imprisoned civilians are then sent to interrogation and investigation centers and subsequently brought before military courts where the conviction rate is around 99%.

This type of administrative detention is a tool of repression that allows Zionist authorities to imprison Palestinians based on “secret” records and files to which neither the defense nor the prisoner has access. Without a trial or judgment, provisional sentences of several months are often extended, and it is common for prisoners to remain under this “administrative detention” regime for years. Currently, as of March 2026, there are nearly 3,500 detainees held under this system, not counting those in Gaza.

The repressive prison and legal system we have just described dates back to Mandatory Palestine.² Its tools were

originally developed by the British colonial administration even before the establishment of the Zionist entity in Palestine, clearly illustrating the colonial continuum that exists between British imperialism and the Zionist entity. Prisons are, in fact, often located on the sites or foundations of detention facilities from the British Mandate era, as is the case with the Damon Women's Prison.³ This legacy is also reflected in the legislative framework, as seen in the law on "illegal combatants," modeled after similar legislation in the United States.⁴

The history of mass incarceration in Palestine dates back to the 1930s, during the time of the first anti-colonial strikes and actions, which in turn triggered the earliest forms of state repression against this emerging resistance.

In the 1960s, with the advent of political parties such as Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP, the prison population increasingly consisted of activists engaged in political-military actions, numbering several thousand inmates at the movement's peak. In this context, the enemy's objective was—and still is—to weaken the resistance by cutting off its fighters from the popular base on which the guerrillas draw their strength. It is vitally important for the occupying power to silence the most determined resistance fighters, to cut them off from their communities, and to make them disappear. The prison experience thus aims to deter any return to the struggle by former prisoners, scarred by multiple traumas and the weight of reprisals threatening their families, rendering it increasingly

15. The Maja T. case (or "Budapest affair") represents the practical application of the EU's "transnational repression" model, where the collaboration between German and Hungarian security apparatuses bypassed a high-court injunction to "blitz-extradite" an anti-fascist in June 2024. Maja's subsequent 40-day hunger strike in 2025 against solitary confinement and "shackled" show-trial conditions created wide-spread outrage among anti-fascist, left-leaning, and more generally democratic circles.

16. The 2024–2026 "New Pact on Migration" and Frontex (the EU's border control agency) expansion have transformed the EU border into a militarized "black hole" where the right to asylum is in the process of being liquidated.

17. In the broader context of the repression of Anti-Zionism in France, the Loi Yadan (scheduled for final parliamentary debate in April 2026) serves as the legislative anchor for a systematic criminalization of Palestinian solidarity by officially making "calls for the destruction of a state [of Israel]" a form of "apology for terrorism." It functions alongside the Separatism Law and the administrative dissolution of groups like Urgence Palestine and the Union juive Française pour la Paix (UJFP, "French Jewish Union for Peace") to create a seamless repressive net.

18. Palestine Action has moved beyond symbolic protest to the physical dissolution of genocide supply chains, forcing the permanent closure of Elbit Systems sites in Oldham (2022) and Bristol (2025). In July 2025, the British state responded by proscribing the group as a terrorist organization, a move ruled "unlawful" by the High Court in February 2026 for being a disproportionate interference with the right to protest.

regard. As for the feminist movement at the heart of that day's demonstration, a significant part of it called for opposition not only to identitarian groups like Nemesis, but also to more "liberal" organizations like Nous vivrons, which hold explicitly Zionist positions.

13. The attacks against Mohammed Khatib are part of a relentless crackdown carried out by various states over the past several years, as evidenced by his arrest and detention for several days in Crete, followed by his deportation from Greece to Belgium. Despite the support of 70 organizations that signed an appeal launched by Samidoun Paris Banlieue to secure his release, his conditions of detention were harsh, causing him, among other things, a skin condition. Now barred from entering Switzerland for ten years, banned from the Netherlands, and recently from Greece as well, he lives in exile in Belgium under constant pressure.

14. The question arises as to whether there is a "before" and "after" Meloni in Italy: experience shows that repression has ebbed and flowed since she came to power in 2022. The events surrounding the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza marked a period of intense struggle in the country, but today they are triggering a backlash from an alarmed government, resulting in the arrest of activists, particularly targeting the Association of Palestinians in Italy. This architecture of repression, built on systematic surveillance over several years, is now taking the form of arrests and fines, which our Italian comrades interpret as a significant strengthening of the overall repressive apparatus. However, it is important to provide some nuance, as this phenomenon transcends partisan divides: in Canada, it was the "progressive" Trudeau who banned Samidoun, while in the United States, this measure was taken under the Biden administration.

costly for them to continue participating in the struggle for liberation.

From this situation grew the need for an organization of political prisoners inside the penal institutions themselves. It was necessary to create the material conditions to transform the destructive prison environment into a place of confrontation with the enemy and a school of revolution. This is how the reality of prisons has evolved throughout history, in step with the ebb and flow of prisoner exchange agreements or periods of rapid increase in the number of prisoners, forcing the movement to continually adapt.

What is important to emphasize—if not to reiterate—is that the enemy's desire to break the morale of the resistance fighters has, on the contrary, given rise to a movement that turns prison into a school of the Palestinian revolution. Prisoners are the vanguard of the liberation struggle. When referring to them, terms like "Palestinian hostages" tend to be overly humanitarian or even moralistic: the men and women in question are, above all, individuals who have been repressed by a colonial entity, with previous generations having fought to ensure the political dimension of their incarceration is recognized. (Similarly, there were no Zionist "hostages," only prisoners of war.) Whatever the reason for which a Palestinian is imprisoned, all the decisions made by the colonized are linked to the overall fate of their people.

International Red Aid (Toulouse): As part of their strategy of preemptive counterrevolution, imperialist states have developed a vast legislative arsenal. In this context, and in the face of the structural crisis it is currently undergoing, French imperialism has, in recent years, introduced a growing number of new measures aimed at strengthening its instruments of coercion. These measures do not target only revolutionary movements—which do not currently exist on a mass scale—but seek above all to contain any inclination emanating from various sectors of the proletariat, particularly non-white segments of the population, toward challenging the established order.

Under these conditions, it cannot be said that the French state produces political prisoners “on a large scale.” (However, it is noteworthy that France held one of Europe’s longest-serving political prisoners, Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, for over forty years.) This statement nevertheless warrants some nuance. During every phase of heightened antagonism with the state, many people are imprisoned, as was the case during the Yellow Vest movement in 2018⁵ or the riots following the police killing of Nahel Merzouk in 2023.⁶ Furthermore, several anti-fascists have been repressed and incarcerated following clashes with neo-Nazi groups. The most emblematic case remains the pretrial detention of nine antifascists in the case linked to the death of the neo-Nazi Quentin Deranque in Lyon.⁷

The fact remains: In all these situations, the issue of incarceration—and even more so the struggle against it—is

power in early 2025—represents an important shift toward a “security-state” model designed for implementing a violent anti-social economic program, and repressing any resistance from within the working-class. This intensification of repression, mirrored in the violent police response to the massive 150,000-strong anti-Arizona protests in October 2025 and March 2026, marks a significant weakening of the right to protest in the country.

11. The EU’s new “hybrid threat” and “foreign interference” designations—codified in the 2024–2026 “Democracy Shield”—allow the state to freeze assets and raid groups like Samidoun by administrative decree rather than criminal trial. Simultaneously, the “ProtectEU” agenda reclassifies climate protests and blockades as “attacks on critical infrastructure,” effectively treating civil disobedience as a form of “violent extremism” to justify preemptive surveillance and mass detention.

12. In this brutal smear campaign, several French ministers issued explicit threats to dissolve Samidoun. While 24-hour news channels (CNews, BFMTV, etc.) covered various events and actions organized by Samidoun, the pressure intensified to the point of Samidoun being mentioned during political discourses held in important institutions, notably at a session of a parliamentary inquiry commission in France and during debates in the European Parliament. Laurent Nuñez—former Paris police chief who became Minister of the Interior—went so far as to ban the March 7 demonstration, justifying his decision in a letter to the French Associated Press (AFP) on March 5, 2025, citing the call to demonstrate by Samidoun and Urgence Palestine and the presence of the slogan “From the River to the Sea.” In the end, the ban was lifted on March 7 (the day of the protest), but it set a precedent in this

far-right violence. Rooted in Italian Operaismo (Workerism) of the 1960s, what came to be called “Autonomism” shifted focus from party-style organizing to the self-activity of workers, eventually expanding into the German Autonome scene of the 1980s. This milieu birthed the Black Bloc—a tactical formation of masked, uniform dress designed to neutralize police surveillance and defend squatted social centers.

9. The close connection between the Collectif Palestine Vaincra (CPV) and Samidoun (Paris-Banlieue) stems from a longstanding organic relationship forged by a common political heritage and a shared membership within the Samidoun network over many years. CPV’s political contributions in France, both in terms of organizational methods and theoretical reflection, has consisted of introducing within the heart of the social movement: (1) a clear political line in favor of a free Palestine spanning from the river to the sea; (2) a staunch support for the Resistance and its prisoners; (3) reclaiming the historic theories of the resistance movement from the 1960s and 1970s. Their work is also rooted in the history of the struggle for the liberation of Georges Ibrahim Abdallah. The above-mentioned process reached a major milestone with the founding of Urgence Palestine in October 2023, centered on the struggle against genocide, support for total liberation, and, more generally, the Resistance. Now, three years later, Urgence Palestine has established its presence on a national scale, and is gaining influence in different local scenes as well, enabling it to advance within the larger social movement political demands of an increasingly higher level.

10. The Arizona coalition (named after the colors of the US state, Arizona’s flag)—the right-wing government led by Flemish nationalist Bart De Wever (New Flemish Alliance; N-VA) that took

largely ignored by broad segments of the revolutionary movement, and even more so by progressive circles. This can be explained in particular by years of pacifism and by the dominance of social democracy in various spaces of struggle, which have largely contributed to depoliticizing the issue of repression, even though it is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle. This observation must, however, be updated: we are seeing the development of self-defense frameworks, particularly in Autonomist circles,⁸ which have been hit hard in recent times.

Material: How has “lawfare”—the strategic use of the legal system as an instrument of repression—been deployed in your context recently and how has it evolved? Have there been recent national or international judicial frameworks (such as anti-terrorism legislation, deportation regimes, or administrative measures) that have targeted militants and organizations? Is the balance shifting, in terms of states investing more into lawfare compared to “regular military” anti-insurgency tactics, or vice versa? How does lawfare-based repression function to demoralize, isolate, or contain the revolutionary movement in your experience? Has your movement been able to effectively resist or undermine this use of lawfare?

Samidoun (Paris-Banlieue): In our context, as an international solidarity network in support of Palestinian prisoners operating

in many different countries, we have faced numerous manifestations of “lawfare” waged against us by imperialist states. While these repressive offensives did not begin after October 7, 2023, they intensified during the imperialist-Zionist genocidal onslaught. Founded in support of hunger strikes led by Palestinian, Arab, and internationalist detainees in colonial prisons since 2011, our network confronts lawfare in a variety of ways.

In November 2023, the German government banned our organization within its borders. We had a very active chapter there, made up of several refugee comrades, most of whom came from camps in Palestine or elsewhere in the region. This broad crackdown was accompanied by attacks on activists and their families, including attempts to strip them of their refugee status, bans on demonstrations, and regular arrests. Germany is home to the largest Palestinian population in Europe and occupies a dominant position within the European imperialist order. The fact that the assault on our organization was launched after October 7, 2023 follows a clear political logic. These two factors (Germany’s position within European imperialism and the fact it hosts the continent’s most important Palestinian diasporic population) make it a central strategic battleground.

One of the major offensives against Samidoun in the current period took place in North America with Samidoun’s designation as a “terrorist organization” in Canada in 2024 and

detention without trial and the suspension of Geneva Convention protections.

5. The Yellow Vests (“Gilets Jaunes”) emerged in October 2018 as a spontaneous uprising of mostly rural working-class elements and professionals against a newly introduced “carbon-tax,” embodying the more general neoliberal austerity measures implemented in France over the last several decades. Bypassing traditional trade union mediation, the movement became more ideologically left-wing and radical in its methods before it was met by a high level of state repression.

6. The police execution of 16 year old Nahel Merzouk sparked riots all over the French banlieues (ghettoized working-class suburbs) against the structural racism of the French repressive apparatus.

7. In February 2026, neo-Nazi Quentin Deranque died of injuries suffered during a brawl with anti-fascists in Lyon. The clash was provoked by a neo-Nazi mob (of which Deranque was part), accompanying the far-right identitarian “feminist” collective Nemesis, at a protest against MEP (Member of the European Parliament) Rima Hassan’s (a prominent Palestinian activist) talk held at Lyon’s Institute for Political Sciences. What followed was a media smear campaign of unprecedented scale, leading to Deranque being honored with a minute of silence in the National Assembly, as well as threats of all kinds directed at La France Insoumise (to which Hassan belongs), a self-proclaimed “radical-reformist” party vilified by the right and the center for its pro-Palestinian and (moderate) anti-fascist positions.

8. The shift toward the organization of self-defense mechanisms and tactics reflects a strategic break from state-mediated security in favor of horizontal, communal protection against resurgent

Notes:

1. In English: “Samidoun (Paris-Suburbs).” Unlike the North American context, in many European countries—and in France in particular—the rapid and planned urbanization of the outskirts of large and medium-sized cities in the 1960s and 1970s led to a concentration of the working class in these “villes nouvelles” (“new towns”). By the 1980s and 1990s, as white workers gained opportunities to become homeowners themselves in even more distant suburbs (made accessible by the construction of highways across the country), the “villes nouvelles” became areas where the most precarious members of the largely non-white working class were concentrated.

2. Mandatory Palestine was a British colonial entity established post-WWI (after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, which had governed the region for 400 years by that point) to economically exploit the territory and facilitate the Zionist project through the violent suppression of indigenous Arab national liberation movements.

3. Damon Prison is a high-security facility located in the Haifa district, originally built as a tobacco warehouse during the British Mandate and repurposed as a colonial site of confinement. It was infamously used by the British to incarcerate Arab nationalists after the suppression of the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt.

4. The Israeli “Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law” (2002) is a direct structural mirror of the US “Unlawful Enemy Combatant” designation created by the Bush administration following 9/11. By inventing a category that is neither “civilian” nor “prisoner of war,” both states carved out a legal gray zone to justify indefinite

sanctions against the network by the US Treasury at the same time. In 2024, the French government dissolved the Collectif Palestine Vaincra (“Palestine Will Prevail Collective”).⁹ In the Netherlands, a dissolution order was also issued against our chapter there, though it was not enforced. To wage this legal war effectively, states are adapting and drawing inspiration from one another. In Belgium, this is reflected in particular by the so-called “Arizona” reactionary government’s¹⁰ determination to implement procedures aimed at dissolving organizations, explicitly targeting Samidoun and other components of the social movement. This offensive is part of a broader logic of repressive cooperation among imperialist states. The criminalization of Samidoun thus prolongs the process that began in 2021, when the Zionist regime classified Samidoun and five other organizations as “terrorist,” paving the way for their international ostracism.

These sanctions are never isolated. Whenever a state succeeds in banning or criminalizing a section of our network, Zionist groups in other countries rely on these designations to legitimize new offensives against Samidoun or its affiliated organizations. The mechanisms vary depending on each state’s specific legal arsenal—whether or not an organization can be dissolved, the use of administrative procedures, “designations” made at the national or European level,¹¹ etc.—but the logic remains the same. In most cases, a convergence of actors from political and media circles works to create a climate conducive

to these attacks, laying the groundwork for repression. In France, moments of high social tension, such as the feminist demonstrations on March 7 and 8, 2025, gave rise to a sustained series of media attacks. These intensified when activists from Urgence Palestine and Samidoun organized to prevent the presence of fascist and Zionist groups (like the femi-nationalist, Nemesis collective) at the demonstrations themselves, or when the March 7 protest focused on the release of political prisoners, with slogans calling for the start of a new intifada. This political and media campaign has even led to explicit threats of dissolution made by ministers against the two organizations.¹²

Furthermore, it is important to clarify that this is not an attack on Samidoun as an organization, but rather an attack on the political work centered on prisoners and martyrs, in support of the Palestinian Resistance, and against the active role our governments play in the colonization of Palestine. The imperialist states fear the formation of a broad and strong movement against imperialism, capable of standing alongside the resistance forces in and around Palestine, to confront our own rulers. The issue of prisoners and the honoring of martyrs are therefore primary targets of Zionist repression. A recent illustration of this is the “Palestinian Authority’s” submission to Zionist and imperialist demands—notably those of the European Union and the United States. For example, on February 10, 2025, Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree ending the

International Red Aid (Toulouse): Our organization played a significant role in the campaign in Europe to support Georges Abdallah for over twenty years. We organized direct and concrete support in France—including monthly prison visits and regular exchange of letters—and built mobilization campaigns centered on defending the prisoner’s revolutionary identity.

It is this mobilization—based on the coordination of resistance both inside and outside prisons, and driven by the determination of the imprisoned revolutionary protagonist, Georges Abdallah—that made it possible to secure his release. This approach also guides the development of other campaigns, notably in support of the Red Brigades/Communist Combatant Party prisoners²⁵ in Italy, Nikos Maziotis²⁶ in Greece, and many others.

times harsher than those faced by the first generation of prisoners: hard-won rights have been swept away by the Zionist authorities; the possibility of collective and political organization has vanished; and old forms of torture are reappearing, creating unprecedented difficulties. Therefore, it can be said that genocide is also taking place inside prisons, and the primary challenge for the prisoners' movement is to survive this unprecedented offensive.

Furthermore, Samidoun also addresses the issue of pro-Palestinian prisoners in imperialist detention centers, such as the case of the Palestine Action and "Filton 24" activists,²³ imprisoned in the United Kingdom. In their regard, our work is carried out in the same way as for prisoners in Palestine: spreading prisoners' writings, providing translations, and distributing propaganda—all without resorting to humanitarianism.²⁴ This sometimes involves letter-writing workshops, which create an emotional and human connection with the prisoners, often making the authors of these letters more committed and engaged in their support for the Resistance.

It is important to note that in 2026, Samidoun is an organization that can no longer operate on social media due to Meta's censorship. Despite efforts to ban us, our work continues, and we persist in giving voice to the Resistance and carrying out political work to honor the prisoners, the martyrs, and the Palestinian Resistance in general—even in places where Samidoun has been banned.

payment of financial allowances to the families of Palestinian prisoners and martyrs.

The legal tools deployed against Samidoun, particularly in Canada, are part of the anti-terrorist arsenal that has been used for decades against Palestinian organizations, which are placed on "lists of terrorist organizations." These lists also include numerous anti-imperialist and revolutionary movements around the world. Such dynamics are therefore not new and are part of the security-driven, Islamophobic, and imperialist paradigm that solidified after 2001, particularly in the United States. The case of the Holy Land Five is emblematic in this regard. On November 24, 2008, five Palestinian community activists who were members of the Holy Land Foundation—one of the leading Muslim charitable organizations in the United States—were sentenced to lengthy prison terms by the US courts for supporting humanitarian aid efforts to Gaza. Even today, two of them, Shukri Abu Baker and Ghassan Elashi, remain incarcerated, serving sentences of up to 65 years in prison.

The example of the Holy Land Five shows that, in the imperialist centers, Palestinians in exile face particularly intense repression, and increasingly so since October 7, 2023. The ban on Samidoun in Germany and the attacks against Mohammed Khatib, the network's European coordinator and a native of the Ain al-Hilweh camp in Lebanon,¹³ are part of this assault. Repression is intensifying and relies on the racist and

imperialist legal systems of Western capitalist states. From border controls to anti-terrorism laws and the repression of social movements, these states have a full arsenal at their disposal to strike ever harder against Palestinians.

At this time (March 2026), several Palestinian refugees are incarcerated in European prisons. In France, Ali, a Palestinian refugee from the Balata camp, has been in pretrial detention since May 2024 on charges forwarded by the Zionist authorities.

In Italy, Ahmad Salem, a 24-year-old Palestinian, has been imprisoned for over six months awaiting trial. Anan Yaeesh, an activist from Tulkarem, has been imprisoned for two years and was sentenced to five and a half years in prison on January 16, 2026, accused of “association with terrorism” based on intelligence provided by the Zionist authorities to the Italian government.

Also in Italy, on December 27, 2025, during a series of coordinated raids, Mohammed Hannoun, president of the Associazione dei Palestinesi in Italia (API), along with Ra’ed Dawoud, Yasser Elasal, Khalil Abu Deiah, Adel Abu Rawwa, Raed Al-Salahat, and Reyad Albustanji were arrested by Italian police. These arrests were based on Zionist accusations regarding the collection of millions of euros in donations for Palestinian institutions, but the state primarily targets the institutions’ support for the families of martyrs and prisoners. On January 19, Adel Ibrahim Salameh Abu Rawwa, Raed Al

agreements. The hunger strike is one form of this refusal, though it is the most costly. It is not the only one: there is also the exfiltration of documents and the tactic of “cell blockades.” One famous case comes to mind from 1993, at the time of the Oslo Accords: while the prisoners in a women’s unit were scheduled for release, three of them remained locked up. This led to a cell blockade lasting several months by the detainees so that all could be released together. In doing so, they rejected the arguments of certain members within the movement who sought to sweep the matter under the rug or pressure them into accepting a deal with the prison authorities.

So why is the prisoners’ struggle so important to Samidoun? The answer is quite simple: If prisoners are a priority for the Palestinian resistance in general, they must also be a priority for those who support the revolution. Let us not forget that the Al-Aqsa Flood of October 7 also aimed to break the Zionist prisons; in fact, today we see that many prisoners initially sentenced to life imprisonment—sometimes for terms of several hundred years—are now being released and are joining the resistance as free men. Despite this, the Zionists’ savagery has since focused its efforts on prisons themselves, extending the genocide behind bars. This is because the Palestinians’ struggle within colonial prisons poses a constant challenge to the occupier and the balance of power depends on the strength of the movement, both inside and outside. Since October 7, we have witnessed a return to conditions that are at

Intifada, the number of prisoners rose from several thousand in the 1960s and 1970s to over 10,000—many of them very young, including numerous women—who had not received much political or theoretical training. For the most part, they had joined the struggle at a very early age to take part in the ongoing uprising. They were therefore trained in prison, and it was from among their ranks that leaders such as Yahya Sinwar, Nael Barghouti, Ahmed Saadat, Marwan Barghouti, and others emerged.²²

A well-known example of a prisoner's trajectory is that of Walid Daqqah. He was imprisoned in 1986 after being accused of participating in a military operation. Initially sentenced to life in prison, he was ultimately given a 37-year term. Daqqah was a simple gas station attendant who, due to his conviction and his involvement in the armed struggle, came into contact with the leadership of the resistance and, through hard work, became one of the greatest theoreticians of the resistance, as well as a playwright and poet whose reputation became widely known. He fell as a martyr on April 7, 2024, a victim of medical negligence that lets sick prisoners die or fails to treat illnesses contracted in their cells.

There have always been theoretical work or other writings coming out of prison. Samidoun strives to make this prisoner literature available, especially since, as mentioned, they represent the most advanced segment of the revolution, always ready for confrontation and unwilling to accept liquidationist

Salahat, and Khalil Abu Deiah were released, while the other four remain behind bars and face prosecution.¹⁴

Mustafa Ayyash, a Palestinian journalist from Gaza, has been imprisoned in Austria since November 17, 2025. On September 19, he was arrested by the Dutch police and subsequently placed in detention. At the time, he was in the Netherlands to file a lawsuit against the Austrian government following a raid on his home. After two months in custody, he was extradited to Austria, where he remains incarcerated. In Belgium, several Palestinians from Gaza—Mahmoud Abu Hadayed, Anas Seyam, and Hamouda Albayyouk—were deported to Greece. On October 7, 2025, Mahmoud Farajallah took his own life in a correctional facility while being held in administrative detention. Another young man from Gaza, Ali Abu Taha, remains incarcerated.

This brief overview of a few different cases of repression highlights the inter-imperialist coordination in terms of legal warfare and in repression. The current phase of intensified repression relies heavily on proceedings initiated by the Zionist authorities against Palestinian refugees. It also extends to increased surveillance of money transfers and forms of community aid, which are criminalized under the guise of fighting terrorism. It should also be noted that the “Europeanization” of repression is intensifying in many areas: strengthened police cooperation, cross-border prosecutions—as evidenced by the arrest warrants issued by Hungary in the

context of the “Maja T” or “Budapest affair,”¹⁵ targeting anti-fascists—but also the tightening of conditions imposed on those in exile and the ongoing militarization of borders.¹⁶

Furthermore, the issue of blocking and criminalizing financial and material aid to Palestinian institutions will become a major challenge for solidarity with Palestine. Repressive measures often begin with individual or collective designations issued by the US Treasury, as was the case with Mohammed Hannoun in Italy a few weeks before his arrest. These mechanisms are still largely invisible but are set to become tools for repressing community self-organization and support from working-class immigrant and Muslim communities for Palestine. The community association Humani’Terre in France, which is under investigation for financing “terrorism,” is a telling example. In France, this logic also manifests through the use of administrative measures—and thus, by nature, extrajudicial ones—such as the freezing of assets. Several activists have been affected, including Omar Alsoumi, one of the founders of Urgence Palestine, as well as various associations and collectives.¹⁷

Finally, there is a fundamental difference between the level of repression targeting the solidarity movement here and that targeting Palestinian resistance forces on the ground. The legal war waged by the imperialist West sheds light on our own position and that of the states in which we live. The fact that similar tools are used both against us and against political and

daughters—are allowed to visit the prisoner, thereby excluding any adolescent or adult male family members.

As we mentioned earlier, prisoners initially had no rights: no books, no pencils, no paper, no kitchen, and no library.

Scattered across numerous prisons and very few in number per detention center, the incarcerated resistance fighters also had to cope with meals that were practically inedible. At that time, prison life was truly inhumane; extremely destructive for those held there.

Thus, the first generation began demanding the right to receive books, to gather among Palestinian prisoners, to have their own food, as well as pens and paper for writing. Their tools of struggle included hunger strikes, sometimes organized on a massive scale, at the cost of several martyrs. It was not uncommon for the Zionists to use force-feeding—a form of torture that often led to death—when the prisoners went on strike. Subsequently, conditions improved, hard-won through struggle. But it was only after the first Intifada—the “Intifada of the Stones”²¹ that took place from 1987 to 1993—when tens of thousands of young Palestinians were locked up in colonial prisons, that they transformed the prison into a true school of the revolution, making sure that incarceration would not be a break from the Palestinian revolution as a whole.

To build this school of the revolution, the necessary material conditions had to be put in place. During the first

weakness and disorganization. Those shortcomings are due to the prevalence of reformism in France—including within the radical left—which represents the decisive factor in this regard. In France, International Red Aid remains a modest organization, present only in Toulouse. Faced with this reality, we seek to re-politicize the issue of the struggle against repression by linking it to a revolutionary perspective.

Material: When faced with the imprisonment of activists and/or guerrillas, how has your movement responded? Have you been successful in organizing solidarity with prisoners and their families beyond humanitarian support? How have you managed the continuity of political work and organization despite the capture of key comrades—and potentially entire politico-military fronts? In what ways has repression forced you to innovate organizationally or strategically? At what point does repression force the acceptance of strategic retreat?

Samidoun (Paris-Banlieue): Let's return here to the Palestinian context itself.

It is extremely difficult for families to visit prisoners because the detention centers are located within the 1948 borders, forcing many Palestinians to pass through numerous checkpoints and thus endure humiliation at the hands of the Zionist army. Furthermore, only the children and female members of the immediate family—mothers, sisters, or

military organizations rooted in the masses—capable of inflicting tangible losses on the enemy—must not lead us to overestimate ourselves. On the contrary, it must allow us to highlight the coherence of the repressive apparatus and the political role assigned to us within this framework. First, the Zionist entity is the organic extension of Western imperialism in the Middle East: the colonization of Palestine thus serves to defend the strategic interests of this imperialism. In this context, as Georges Abdallah emphasized in an interview with Masar Badil in January 2026:

The Palestinian keffiyeh and flag have become much more than mere national symbols; they are universal symbols of the struggle against Israeli fascism, on the one hand, and of resistance to the rise of fascism in Europe and around the world.

Consequently, the imperialist West upholds these interests by suppressing the solidarity movement with Palestine and the Palestinian diaspora.

On an international scale, our role, from the very heart of the imperialist centers, is to organize collectively against repression and for liberation. We must not let our enemies fragment us through their labels, their repressive mechanisms, and their propaganda, which seek to isolate the struggles from one another. Our strength lies in our unity. It is up to us to

intensify our efforts to build an international grassroots foundation for resistance, capable of standing up to the ongoing legal and political offensive. If the legal war is intensifying, it is also because imperialism fears this prospect of unity and grassroots grounding.

The banning and imprisonment of Palestine Action activists must therefore be seen in relation to the effectiveness of their direct actions against the current war machine—actions that have contributed to the closure of arms factories and offices linked to the arms trade involved in genocide.¹⁸

International Red Aid (Toulouse): In France, various legal, police, and judicial measures exist to crack down on revolutionary and progressive activists. Since the 1980s, and even more so after the 2015 attacks,¹⁹ the anti-terrorism arsenal has been significantly strengthened. In particular, it has expanded to include certain criminal charges, such as “criminal conspiracy in connection with a terrorist enterprise,” which allows for preemptive police interventions before any act is even committed.

At the same time, several other provisions introduced under the state of emergency (see footnote 5) have been incorporated into common law, facilitating administrative searches, house arrests, and the extension of surveillance measures, including in activist contexts. Added to this are other legal tools, such as the creation of the offense of “unlawful

assembly, participation in criminal conspiracy with the intent of committing violence, or public insult.”

These legal mechanisms, which are obviously not limited to combat “Islamic terrorism” alone, are part of a broader strategy to manage challenges to the established order. Several trials of the revolutionary left have been carried out using these measures, such as the so-called *Affaire « du 8 décembre 2020 »* (“December 8th Case”).²⁰ In particular, they allow for the use of preventive arrests, widespread and exceptionally long police custody periods, restrictive judicial controls (bans on demonstrating, reporting requirements), as well as prison sentences. At the same time, we are witnessing a militarization of law enforcement and the development of new technological tools, ranging from the use of artificial intelligence in video surveillance systems, to the deployment of drones in the management of protests and working-class neighborhoods.

Beyond their individual effects, these measures also have a collective impact, helping to deter participation in political organization and mobilizations. The use of pretrial detention, immediate court appearances, or certain detention conditions—such as solitary confinement or geographical isolation—thus constitute a set of repressive measures with both individual and collective implications.

It is clear that these measures affect the revolutionary movement. However, they are not the primary cause of its