How Palestinian Prisoners Spend Ramadan in Occupation Jails | Iftar, Worship and Harassment



Despite the pain the prisoners live through, from cramped space and the cruelty of the jailer, and the harsh grief that the prisoner and his family alike feel in the month of Ramadan, they try to ease their suffering by creating an atmosphere like the one they knew outside.

The blessed month of Ramadan arrives for the prisoners every year to reopen their wounds and leave a mark of pain in every corner, as the tables of suhoor and iftar, the family gatherings and the visiting of relatives in the holy month miss their smiles and their presence.

Contents

1. Suhoor and iftar
2. Sweets
3. Worship
4. The occupation’s harassment

Suhoor and iftar

The prisoners begin by listing the food and supplies they need, to submit to the prison administration and demand that it provide them. The administration usually stalls in providing these needs and does not honour the quantities the prisoners require.



Cooking runs from the afternoon until sunset on a small electric hotplate, after the prisoners in each cell are split into groups: one team for cooking, a second to set the table, a third for cleaning and a fourth for washing up.

In the holy month the prisoners make a point of breaking the fast together so that everyone gathers around one table, “for there is blessing in the group,” and the same applies to suhoor, which is usually a light meal.

Sweets



The prisoners try to prepare some kinds of sweets, whose main ingredient is leftover bread instead of flour or semolina. One prisoner says: “We crumble it and add some water or milk until it reaches the consistency we need.”

Worship



The prisoners try to change the routine in force in the prison throughout the year and to reduce the searches and the inspection of walls and floors. They seek to cut these raids during the blessed month and call on the prison administration to respect its sanctity. As usual, the occupation honours no agreements.

The Prisoners’ Media Office highlighted the prisoners’ life in Ramadan, describing the prisons as “a beehive”: for the prisoners Ramadan is not a month of idleness or

sleep but of work and worship, and they use every minute of it to read the Quran, pray at night and call on God in supplication to relieve their distress.



When the heat grows intense after the noon prayer, quiet falls over the place so that their bodies can get some rest; some sleep until the afternoon, some watch television, some read, and each prisoner or group has its own routine.

As the time of the tarawih prayer approaches, the prisoners prepare lessons and sermons, as well as purposeful religious competitions, and after the prayer each is free according to his ability to pray at night or read the Quran and beneficial books.

The prisoners compete in drawing near to God through acts of obedience: one completes the Quran four times and another ten, one prays a quarter of the night, another half and a third all of it, hoping for reward.

The occupation’s harassment



The prison administration deliberately carries out daily and surprise searches, breaks up prisoners during a given activity, and removes many food items from the

prison canteen. In interrogation and detention centres such as Etzion and Huwara, among others, it serves detainees food of poor quantity and quality, and often deliberately delays the iftar meal for detainees in these centres until midnight.

May every year find our prisoners closer to freedom, and may God bring it back to us with our country freed from the filth of the occupiers.

Sources and references

1. Prisoners’ Media Office.
2. The “Prisoner Is Not a Number” page on Twitter.