

Prisoners Dilemma? Prison-Based Resistance and the Diffusion of Activism in Palestine

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The question of how Palestinians should engage with the Israeli legal system is complicated for prisoners and detainees, whose current and future situations, both individual and collective, are inherently intertwined with that system. From the early days of the occupation, in addition to pursuing traditional justice mechanisms, prisoners have engaged in acts of extra-legal resistance, aimed at making the prison system itself unworkable. Actions have included the development of alternative institutions (such as political, financial, and educational systems within the prisons), noncooperation (such as refusing to comply with prison protocols), and prolonged hunger strikes.

Such acts of resistance have had a reverberating effect, diffusing beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the physical prison institutions to influence policy and inspire local, national, and international activism. In this presentation, Dr. Julie Norman discusses the short and long term impacts of prison-based resistance among activist networks, examining how hunger strikes in particular resonate in unique ways from other forms of activism. Her findings are based primarily on personal interviews with former political prisoners and current activists in the West Bank.

**Presented by the Department of Geography, Planning, and Environment
Concordia University**