



## The International Labour Day

### **MSD continues to offering its support and protection to Jerusalemite workers under the slogan "Workers Rights are Human Rights"**

Every year, on the first of May, people around the globe celebrate the International Labour Day, which sheds light on workers' suffering. Considering the fact that workers' sect is the largest in the Palestinian society, this day serves to enhance workers' welfare by guaranteeing their decent living conditions.

Internationally, this occasion symbolizes workers' ability to win the long struggle with employers, yet on the local level, Palestinians struggle the high rates of unemployment in the occupied territories, especially in Jerusalem.

Living under the Israeli Occupation, Palestinians experience an unbearable life as they have to face the Separation Wall, barriers, roadblocks, and closures on a daily basis. Moreover, Israel violates Palestinian workers' rights by rejecting to issue work permits, which is an issue of concern per se. More precisely, many workers commence their day in the midnight as they attempt to illegally pass checkpoints, with all the risks involved. Of course, if they could successfully pass, their suffering will soon start all over again. Furthermore, hundreds of workers are exposed to physical attacks, whether by Israeli authorities, employers, or settlers. Hundreds of incidents have been recorded while workers were beaten during work, or after leaving it. Occurring especially in Jerusalem, settlements, and other Israeli areas, some of these incidents result in to death, physical disability, and serious injury.

Israeli authorities and/or Israeli employers have intended breaching workers' rights on purpose. Particularly, types of discrimination can be revealed through employment opportunities, salaries, working time, contracts, compensations, health insurance, occupational safety, and freedom of movement, not to mention arbitrary dismissal, which deprives workers from their rights by denying their efforts during their working time.

Additionally, employees are denied work privileges, and fundamental rights stipulated in the local as well as international laws. As a result of high level of unemployment, and the difficulty in finding jobs and attaining work permits, many Palestinian workers are obliged to work under low-level conditions. Israel neglects its obligation to guarantee workers' rights.

For instance, in 2007, the Israeli government enforced a law requiring the implementation of Jordanian laws on Palestinian workers. Hence, hundreds of workers, especially with low wages, were deprived from privileges due to high taxes imposed. This law contradicts the decisions of the International Justice Court. By virtue of articles 6 and 7 of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Israel is obliged to secure the rights and dignity of all inhabitants, especially the workers. In accordance with the International Humanitarian Law, Israel should guarantee Palestinian safe working conditions, welfare, and rights.

In this context, Al-Maqdese calls on the international community and the ILO to improve workers' economic and social living conditions. Their role can be accomplished by putting pressure on Israel to apply international conventions on workers' rights, especially the International Labour Charter, and to pursue its obligation towards the workers' sect. Israel must also reduce the high rate of unemployment caused by closures and the denial of work permits.

On the first of May, Al-Maqdese praises the steadfastness of our valiant prisoners in Israeli jails, as well as honorable workers who are participating in the current hunger strike; the strike for "dignity". Additionally, Al-Maqdese supports prisoners in their fight against discrimination while also praises the Palestinian workers' achievements and resistance to live in dignity and resisting injustice with all efforts and means available.

Furthermore, Al-Maqdese reaffirms its commitment to the provision of legal services including: legal consultations and legal defense, publishing legal newsletters on international and national conventions, and awareness-raising brochures. It also conducts awareness sessions on workers' rights and methods of legally attaining those rights. All in all, Al-Maqdese delivers all types of legal and technical services, which support the living conditions of workers by economically empowering them, fulfilling their rights and getting financial compensations for them previously denied by Israeli employers.