

**Sworn Statement**

After having been warned to tell the truth and nothing but the truth or else I shall be subjected to penal action, I, the undersigned, Yousef 'Ali Kamel Fayyad, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 931717392, born on 24 August 1981, a correspondent at the Palestine Press website and a resident of al-Bahar Street, Deir al-Balah City, Central Gaza Governorate, would like to declare the following:

At about 1:10 am on Sunday, 12 October 2008, I was asleep at my house, located along al-Bahar Street, west of Deir al-Balah City in the governorate of Central Gaza. I awoke to strong knocks at my house door. My brother Ashraf told me that Internal Security officers wanted to talk to me at the door of my house. When I exited the house, I saw four black Land Rover vehicles parked at the door of my house as well as 15 armed individuals who were in black uniforms surrounding my house. One of them asked me if I was a correspondent for the Palestine Press website in the Gaza Strip. I answered yes.

Then, the officer ordered the forces to search my house. They came out after about five minutes of searching, having confiscated two computers, one belonging to me and the other to my brother Ashraf, as well as some papers, press materials, and CDs related to my work. They then led me to one of the cars. The car drove me to the Internal Security headquarters in the centre of Deir al-Balah City. There I was blindfolded and interrogated about my work as a correspondent at the Palestine Press website. Then I was detained in a room along with my colleagues from work, including Muhammad Shein, Akram al-Loh, and Hani Isma'il. They told me that they had been arrested in the same manner and subjected to the same interrogation.

At about 10:00 am, they transported me and my colleagues, blindfolded, onboard a police car to the Internal Security headquarters in al-Saraya Prison in the centre of Gaza City. They subjected me to interrogation about my work as a journalist for long hours while blindfolded. I was interrogated for ten consecutive days. After each interrogation session, they sent me out, blindfolded, for "shabeh" [a torture technique which forces one to remain in uncomfortable positions, with hands and/or feet typically shackled to a specific object, for prolonged periods of time] in a place known by the name "The Bus," which is a narrow place used by the Internal Security to torture detainees. There they would order me to stand on my feet, with my arms raised high, for very long hours during a single day. During this time, I was subjected to beating by fists whenever I tried to sit down due to fatigue caused by standing on my feet for such long hours. They did the same to my three colleagues. I stood on my feet like that for 14 consecutive hours a day and underwent interrogation about the same subject, my work as a correspondent for the Palestine Press, for one hour everyday. In the short period of time in which they used to allow me and my colleagues to sit and rest, I would sleep due to the severity of my exhaustion and fatigue.

I should note that they did not remove my blindfold for ten consecutive days. Following ten days of "shabeh" for prolonged hours, they moved me to a small cell, in which I was held in solitary confinement for 12 consecutive days. During this time I only left the cell on two occasions for interrogation about the same subject. Being detained for many days in a solitary cell, my psychological condition greatly deteriorated. In the morning on the thirteenth day of my detention in the solitary cell, a delegation visited me, which included officials from the Oversight Committee at the Palestinian Legislative Council, Representative Yihya Mousa, Chairman of the Oversight Committee, and Representative Huda Na'im. It also included several

individuals from human rights organisations and centres, of whom I remember Salah 'Abd-al-'Ati and Mustafa Ibrahim from the Independent Commission for Human Rights, a person from the al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights whose name I do not remember, as well as others from al-Dameer and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. I spoke with them and begged them to pressure the officials at al-Saraya Prison to move me from solitary confinement due to my degenerating psychological condition.

Hours after the visit, they moved me to a room in which seven detainees were being held. Of these, I was acquainted with my colleague Hani Isma'il, who also worked at the Palestine Press website. I was held in that room with my fellow detainees from 2 November 2008 until 3 December 2008. However, detention conditions improved over this period. My family was allowed to visit me on five occasions. They also allowed me to bring in some food and clothes. Moreover, they allowed me and my colleagues to go out for a period of half an hour everyday in the sun and air.

At about 4:00 pm on Wednesday, 3 December 2008, an interrogator demanded that I sign a pledge stating that I would not take part in any media, political or security activity against the government in Gaza. Then, he demanded that my colleagues and I not go back to work at the Palestine Press website and demanded that we not talk to the media about what happened to us during our detention period. He threatened to bring us back to prison if we failed to follow his orders. He then served me and my colleagues a summons to report to al-Mashtal Prison of the Internal Security in western Gaza on 19 December 2008. We then left the prison.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 6 December 2008.

Signature: Yousef Fayyad

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Muhammad Abu-Rahma