

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, Tahani Farouq Khalil al-Sarkaji, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 901896951, born on 21 February 1978, a housewife, and a resident of the Bab al-Saha neighbourhood, al-Nasr Street, the old city of Nablus city, Nablus governorate, would like to declare the following:

On 26 December 2009, my family members and I were present in our old one-storey house, which is made of 5 rooms and located in the neighbourhood of Bab al-Saha along the al-Nasr Street in the city of Nablus. My family consists of my husband Raed 'Abd-al-Jabbar Muhammad al-Sarkaji (about 42 years of age) and my children Walid (12 years old) and Zeina (8 years old). My mother-in-law Nathmiyya (about 77 years old) and sister-in-law Rabiha (about 55 years old) also live with us in the house. While my husband and I were asleep in our bedroom, we were awakened at the sound of strong explosions. As they were severe, it appeared that the explosions took place inside the house, but I did not know their exact location. We also heard the sound of another explosion, which occurred in a garden east of our house. Meanwhile, we heard the sound of footsteps on the southern part of the house roof, which is made of zinc plates and overlooks our bedroom. Several seconds later, we were surprised when strong spotlights were directed towards our bedroom. We were shocked and wondered what was going on. I looked at my watch, which showed it was 3:00 am. Quickly, we put on additional clothes. We realised that Israeli occupying troops were carrying out the aforementioned activities, although we did not know the reason for it. Two or more minutes later, the troops suddenly opened fire on our bedroom without prior warning. At this time, my husband stepped forward to open the door of the bedroom, which led outside. I was behind my husband, and we shouted in Arabic, asking why they had opened fire and letting them know that we were getting out of the room to open the door. The soldiers did not reply to us and continued to fire. Under the spotlights, my husband and I went out of the bedroom after he had opened the southern door of the room. I walked behind my husband and we reached the small yard, which only measures two square meters, south of the house door. Due to the lights, we were exposed and directly seen by the soldiers. During this time, a soldier who was positioned on the roof at a distance of approximately six or seven metres south of our location opened fire and hit my husband in the forehead. As soon as he sustained the bullet wound, blood spurted heavily from his head. Parts of his brain scattered on my body. He fell backward in my lap without saying a word. I also felt a bullet or more hit my right leg and we both fell on our backs on the ground. While soldiers continued to open fire, I shouted for an ambulance.

"You killed him! You killed him!" I yelled.

I asked my sister-in-law to help me. I also requested that my husband utter the *Shahaadatayn* (i.e. to say that there is not god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

Several seconds after we had fallen on the ground, the firing ceased. I then saw around four or five Israeli soldiers wearing the standard military uniform, carrying long weapons and wearing helmet-mounted flashlights, approach us. Their faces were uncovered. Of these, a soldier held a dog with an iron chain. They came down from the roof using the external staircase, which led them to our location. When they reached us, I was sitting

on the right side of my husband, calling for an ambulance. Without any prior warning, a soldier whom I estimated to be in his thirties fired four or five bullets into the body of my husband, ranging from his chest towards his legs, from a distance of one metre or less. My husband's body only shook. It was an assassination carried out without any justification. I shouted and was shocked about what had happened.

Another soldier, whom I also estimated to be in his thirties, asked me in Arabic for my husband's name. I said his name was Nader. My husband was commonly known as Nader, not Ra'ed as was stated in his ID card. Then, the soldier demanded his ID card, which I brought. I did not believe what was going on. It seemed as I was living in a dream. Later, the same soldier said that there was a weapon belonging to my husband. It was an M16 rifle.

"Like this." The soldier said and indicated to his weapon.

I answered that we did not have anything.

"You killed him!" I shouted. "He was released from prison only a year ago and he is not wanted." I went on.

Despite the fact that I did not see any insignia that distinguished him from others, I believed that the abovementioned soldier was an officer because he talked to me.

"We are sorry!" he replied clumsily.

Shocked as I was, I continued to shout for an ambulance in the hope to save my husband's life although I was sure he was martyred. I was looking for a glimpse of hope. Yet, not a soldier responded. The same soldier then ordered me to go to another room, where my mother-in-law, sister-in-law and children were gathered, and the soldiers followed behind me. When I reached the room, I saw the place where the explosion, which I had heard earlier, took place. The wooden doors of two rooms in the southern part of the house were destroyed. I also realized why my sister-in-law did not get out when I called her. I saw a number of soldiers standing inside and in front of the room. When I entered the room, my children, mother-in-law and sister-in-law were shocked, horrified and shouting. As I mentioned, a number of soldiers were dispersed; some were positioned in front of the room and others inside it. As soon as he saw my children, the aforementioned soldier asked them about the alleged weapon.

"Don't you see the situation of the children?" I shouted at him and he stopped.

Then, he ordered us to stay inside the room and a number of soldiers remained positioned in front of it. With other troops, the aforementioned soldier left the room. Meanwhile, my mother-in-law, my children, and I continued to shout and attempted to get out of the room and reach my husband. However, the soldiers positioned in front of the room prevented us. As we did not have a choice, we stayed inside the room and continued to shout. During that time, my leg was bleeding and I did not receive any medical aid. The soldiers were dispersed in the other rooms for about an hour, after which I saw them withdraw without informing us. We then got out of the room.

As soon as we were out, a number of young men from the Palestine Red Crescent Society reached us. Some of them carried my husband, who was a dead corpse, to an ambulance parked in front of the house. Then, I was carried and put onboard another ambulance, which drove to the Rafidia Governmental Hospital in the city of Nablus. There, doctors examined my husband and confirmed that he had been martyred. When they diagnosed me, doctors found out that I had sustained bullet shrapnel in my right leg and offered me immediate medical aid. An hour later, I left the hospital and returned to

my house, which I found to be partially destroyed. In particular, all of the furniture inside the children's room were damaged and thrown on the ground. Also, four doors, three wooden doors and three aluminium and glass windows were destroyed. In addition, the wall of one room, which was built of bricks, was demolished.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 29 December 2009

Signature: Tahani al-Sarkaji

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Yousef Qawariq