

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, Mu'tasem Mahmoud 'Awad 'Odeh, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 911625788, born on 17 December 1979, a worker, and a resident of the Qusra village, Nablus governorate, would like to declare the following:

At around 8:15 am on 23 December 2009, I was in a taxi on my way to the city of Nablus for business. When I reached the neighbouring village of Talfit, I received a call on my cellular telephone from my brother Murad, about 36 years old. He told me that from his house, which is adjacent to mine, he saw several Israeli patrols and a bulldozer arrive to a building, which belonged to me and was located near my house, east of the main street of the village. My brother added that the bulldozer, which was yellow, started to demolish the building with the contents still inside. He also said that when he and several family members and residents of the neighbourhood tried to reach the building, a soldier imposed curfew on the neighbourhood using a megaphone and prevented anyone from coming close to the area.

The area of the aforementioned building, which I had constructed in 2005, was approximately 180 square metres. It consisted of brick walls and zinc-plated ceilings. Inside the building, I had a small grocery of about 15 square metres. It contained cans of sardines, meat and beans; potato chips; biscuits; detergents; and sacks of rice, flour, salt and sugar. In another part of the remaining area of the building I had a metal caravan, which measured about 30 square metres. The other parts of the building were above my modest petrol station, which I had constructed more than ten years ago to sell fuel. The station comprised of three metal tanks, with a capacity of 40,000 litres of benzene and diesel. Based upon a request from the Palestinian Authority, however, I had stopped selling fuel until I could obtain the relevant licence. Therefore, the fuel tanks were empty.

After I received the telephone call from my brother, I returned, in the same taxi, from the village of Talfit to my village in order to find out what was going on. When I reached the northern entrance to the village, I saw an Israeli army patrol and a number of soldiers, known as the Druze, standing beside it. I moved closer to them and told them in Arabic that the building that was being demolished belonged to me and that I wanted to go there. A soldier said that no one was allowed to access the village. Hence, I waited until I would be allowed to enter the village. After I waited for about one hour, I was allowed to pass. In about five minutes, I reached the place that used to be my building by taxi. I found it reduced to the ground on top of all of the contents of the grocery. The aforementioned tanks were destroyed, the land levelled, and the metal caravan was destroyed. Soldiers and the bulldozer had withdrawn from the area.

Because the Israeli occupying authorities demolished my building, my loss was estimated at approximately NIS 150,000 I should note that in 2008 officers from the Israeli Building and Licensing Authority came to my building and served me a summons, stating that I should cease construction of the building and report to the Israeli authorities in Beit Eil. The interview was scheduled to take place almost two months after I had received the summons. On the set date, I went to Beit Eil and had a short interview, which lasted for several minutes, with a number of officers. They requested a

construction licence, but I said I did not have it. Therefore, they told me to apply for a licence because the area, where my building was located, was classified as Area C according to the Oslo Agreements.

When I returned to my village, I started the procedures of applying for a licence and retained an Israeli female lawyer called Bati. However, the lawyer did not report to me. I called her after my building had been demolished. She said that she had received a demolition decision from the Israeli authorities, but she had forgotten to tell me.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 25 December 2009

Signature: Mu'tasem 'Odeh

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Yousef Qawariq