

Affidavit No. 5446/2010

### **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, Ibrahim Kamel 'Atiyya 'Uleiwa, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 900262940, born on 16 March 1974, a worker at a contracting works company (night guard), and a resident of the al-Shaghaf neighbourhood, Gaza city, would like to declare the following:

I work as a night guard at the Tabariya Contracting Works Company, which belongs to Hatem al-Kurdi. I guard summer camps of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). For almost a month, the Tabaryia Contracting Works Company has been implementing a project to construct nine summer camps on the beach in the al-Sheikh 'Ijlin area west of Gaza city. I earn a monthly salary of NIS 800 for my work with the Contracting Works Company. There were nine sites being constructed on a piece of land measuring approximately 18 *dunums*, which UNRWA rented from the Gaza Municipality to install summer camps for children in Gaza city. Summer camp sites at the time contained a large number of plastic tents, leather-made arbours, potable water tanks, umbrellas, and construction equipment, including pipes, wood, etc. The construction sites also included about 25 empty water tanks and nine others filled with water. These materials were to be used for the construction of the said children's summer camps.

At around 2:30 am on Sunday, 23 May 2010, I was on duty guarding the UNRWA summer camps on the beach. I was ambushed by about 30 masked persons who raided the construction sites surrounding and pointed their weapons at me. They were all in black uniforms and carried Kalashnikov rifles and pistols.

"Is there anybody else with you guarding the sites, or are you alone?" a person questioned me.

I said I guarded the construction sites alone and that there was no one else with me. The masked person hit me with the butt of his weapon on the lower part of my right knee. I fell to the ground and was immediately in severe pain. A masked person then tied my feet with a rope whilst another tied my hands behind my back with a plastic ribbon. Another person punched me on the head.

I saw the masked people spreading themselves around the construction site and saw they were carrying knives. Meanwhile, I remained lying on the ground, guarded by two masked individuals. I saw the remaining members of the masked group tear apart the leather-made tents with the knives, damaging both empty and full water tanks. I saw two masked people carrying canisters, splashing all of the site, equipment and barrels with benzene and incendiary materials and then set all sites ablaze. Later, the masked individuals came and confiscated my mobile, ID card, wallet and sunglasses. They also beat me with rifle butts on my back and right shoulder, set fire to my bed, placed my jacket on my head, and threw me out of the site near the Coastal Road away from the fire after putting a letter and bullets in my pocket.

One of the masked individuals told me to "Deliver this letter to John Ging and his corrupt assistants", at which point they gave back my ID card and wallet and withdrew.

I saw them withdraw from the area towards the Coastal Road and climb into a white minibus. It was one of the minibuses which George Galloway (member of the British Parliament) had brought on his last visit to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing

onboard ships dispatched in order to break the siege on Gaza. I know these minibuses well because I had seen them on the said ships.

After the masked individuals had left, I crawled towards the Coastal Road and cut the rope off my feet on the edge of the road. Whilst walking on the beach, I saw a cafeteria, north of the sites I had been guarding, whose owner I did not know. I knocked on the door and a man in his thirties came out. I asked him to cut the rope off my hands and he did so with a knife. Then, I hurried off to put out the fire in the summer camp. Alone, I managed to extinguish the fire using sand, managing to save some equipment.

Later, I walked towards the Coastal Road and saw two young people. I asked them to give me a mobile telephone so that I could call my brother Muhammad, who also worked on a project implemented by the Tabariya Contracting Works Company; I called my wife and asked her to telephone my brother Muhammad. I returned to the site and waited until around 5:00 am at which time my brother Muhammad, Hatem al-Kurdi, Manager of the Tabariya Company, and the engineer in charge from UNRWA arrived. I reported what had happened and handed over the letter, which the masked individuals had put in my pocket. In the letter was a threat addressed to Mr. John Ging, Director of UNRWA Operations, as well as to the Education Director and his assistant in the Gaza Strip. Three bullets were also enclosed with the letter.

Muhammad, Hatem al-Kurdi and the UNRWA engineer went to the al-'Abbas Police station west of Gaza city to report the incident. Around 20 minutes later, they came back with only one Police officer. I asked my brother Muhammad why they did not send a Police force to which he replied that a Police officer had told him that the police cars had no fuel. The officer dispatched one Policeman to interrogate me and inspect the area. Then, we all travelled to the al-'Abbas Police station, where Police officers took my statement.

I then went to the al-Shifa' Hospital to receive medical treatment for the contusions on my back and feet, which I sustained as a result of being beaten and shackled. After I received treatment, I returned to the site where UNRWA staff, including Mr. John Ging, had arrived. I reported to them what had happened and handed over the letter to them.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 25 May 2010

Signature: Ibrahim 'Uleiwa

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Muhammad Abu-Rahma