

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, Darwish Yousef Abdul Majeed Khader, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 963032651, born on 30 January 1967, owner of a Kindergarten, and a resident of Al Far'a Refugee Camp, Toubas governorate, would like to declare the following:

I am a resident of Al-Far'a refugee camp located to the south of Toubas city, and the owner of Friends kindergarten located in the centre of Al-Far'a refugee camp as part of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq mosque. The Kindergarten has been operating since 1996 and has about 55 boys and girls registered as students from the camp. Since the date of establishing and operating the kindergarten, I had applied for a licence on a yearly basis, and I never faced any significant problems in obtaining it, as I fulfilled all the necessary requirements, including the safety requirements. However, when I needed to renew the license at the beginning of the scholastic year of 2007-2008, I was surprised at being unable to renew the license, since the issue was stopped by the Palestinian security services, in particular the Preventive Security, whose licensing procedures require the obtaining of a certificate of good conduct for the owner of the kindergarten. This certification of good conduct was rejected by the security services (Intelligence Services and Preventive Security). This rejection was based on political considerations as I was accused by them of being affiliated to Hamas.

I have tried since that year until this day to get a certificate of good conduct several times, but all my attempts have failed. Every time I used to visit the Preventive Security offices in Toubas city, they used to detain me in prison and deal with me as if I were guilty. At one time, Preventive Security agents directed by a man named Mursi Abu Hawilah, known as "Abu Al Abed," suggested that I relinquish the kindergarten and presented me the names of two people that I could to give up the kindergarten for and in return, I would get the certificate of good conduct. The two names are well known to me and they are: Yasser Abu Kishk and Ahmad Jabri, both known of being affiliated to the Fatah movement in Al-Far'a refugee camp. I fully refused to relinquish the ownership of the kindergarten to the two mentioned names, and I suggested that I could instead relinquish the kindergarten to one of my brothers or sisters; he completely rejected the idea.

Despite all these obstacles, I continued to work in the kindergarten, until 20 November 2011, when three Palestinian Police cars reached Al-Far'a refugee camp, and handed me a final order issued by the Office of the Governor of Toubas Mr. Marwan Toubasi stating that I was required to close the kindergarten immediately until I obtain the necessary license from the competent authorities as stated in the order dated 17 November 2011. On 17 November 2011 and before receiving the closing order, I went to the governorate premises where I presented my problem and not for the first time. I spoke to the Legal Counsel named Mahmoud Al-Mallah who failed to help me, on the contrary, he evaded me. Every time I attempted to obtain the license, I used to meet all the required procedures, such as obtaining a license from the civil defence, providing proof of eligibility and safety of the license and its attachments. The process failed to progress due to the refusal of the Preventive Security Services to grant me the certificate of good conduct so I could move on to the Ministry of Education to obtain the necessary licenses. Currently, and since the date of receiving the above mentioned order to close

the kindergarten, which I abided by, I lost my living source, and as you can see now, I am jobless with no source of income to support myself and my family.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that the closure of the kindergarten took place due to my political background, without any legal justifications that give the right of any security services or the governor of Toubas to close the Kindergarten and deprive me and my family of our livelihood.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign,

Signature: Darwish Yousef Abdul Majeed Khader

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Tariq Al Haj