



مركز الميزان لحقوق الإنسان
AL MEZAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Update on Dr. Abu Safiya's Arbitrary Detention and Denial of Access to Legal Counsel, Referred to UN Special Procedures

24 January 2025



Gaza, 24 January 2025 – Al Mezan unequivocally condemns the ongoing arbitrary detention of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya by Israeli authorities as an egregious violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. Earlier this week, Israeli authorities once again extended the ban prohibiting Dr. Abu Safiya from meeting with his legal representative, now in place until 6 February 2025.

Al Mezan renews its calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Abu Safiya. At a bare minimum, we urgently demand immediate access for our lawyer, appointed by the family of Dr. Abu Safiya

as his legal representative, to independently assess his conditions.

Timeline of Events Around the Unlawful Arrest and Arbitrary Detention of Dr. Abu Safiya

Israeli forces abducted Dr. Abu Safiya on 27 December 2024 as they invaded, stormed, and raided Kamal Adwan Hospital, which had been under military siege since early October 2024. In the initial days of his arbitrary detention, [Israeli authorities denied holding Dr. Abu Safiya in their custody](#), despite numerous eyewitnesses reporting that he was captured by Israeli forces along with medical personnel, patients, and other civilians present at Kamal Adwan Hospital.

It was not until 5 January 2025 that Israeli authorities officially notified Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHRI) that Dr. Abu Safiya was in their custody; however, they refused to disclose his whereabouts. This means that Dr. Abu Safiya was effectively subjected to enforced disappearance for several days during the early stages of his detention.

According to the testimonies of released prisoners, in the early days of his arbitrary detention, Dr. Abu Safiya was held in the Sde Teiman military camp. According to information available to Al Mezan, between 8 and 9 January 2025, Dr. Abu Safiya was transferred to Shikma Prison ahead of a hearing set for 9 January.

On 8 January 2025, Israeli authorities extended the ban on Dr. Abu Safiya's access to legal counsel until 22 January 2025, marking the second such extension since his unlawful arrest. On 9 January 2025, the Magistrates' Court of Ashkelon extended his detention without charges until 13 February 2025. He was denied access to his legal counsel and participated in the hearing via video call. After the

hearing, he was transferred to Ofer Prison, in the occupied West Bank, where he is currently being held. On 22 January 2025, the ban on his access to legal counsel was further extended until 6 February 2025.

Dr. Abu Safiya is being held without charges. Initially detained under the [Unlawful Combatants Law](#), the latest extension of his detention was sanctioned through the [Criminal Procedure Law](#), which is designed to extend the validity of harsh, special detention procedures for suspects of security offenses. These laws have been systematically applied to detain Palestinian residents of Gaza, denying them basic human rights and legal safeguards.

Urgent Call for Access to Legal Counsel

Israeli authorities have denied Dr. Abu Safiya access to legal counsel since his capture, in blatant violation of his fundamental rights under international law. Ensuring that he meets with his lawyer is essential not only for safeguarding his legal rights but also for conducting an independent assessment of his current physical and psychological condition following inhumane arrest and detention practices, including initial enforced disappearance.

Al Mezan expresses profound alarm for Dr. Abu Safiya's safety and well-being, fearing that he may be subjected to severe torture, retaliation, or other forms of coercion, particularly given the ongoing and deliberate denial of access to a lawyer. In response to these egregious violations of international law, Al Mezan has raised Dr. Abu Safiya's case with relevant United Nations (UN) Special Procedures, including the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

We urge the international community—particularly Israel’s enabling allies—to take immediate action to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Abu Safiya, as well as of all Palestinians who have been unlawfully arrested and arbitrarily detained by Israeli authorities, including hundreds of healthcare workers.

At a minimum, the international community must demand that Israeli authorities provide Dr. Abu Safiya with immediate and unrestricted access to his legal counsel to independently evaluate his conditions, protect his legal rights, and ensure urgent oversight of his treatment while in custody.