

**International Lawyers and Legal Organizations Call for Immediate Action to
Free Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya and End the Genocidal Assault on Gaza's
Healthcare System**

16.01.2025

We, the undersigned Legal Organisations and lawyers, join [Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor](#) in an urgent and unequivocal call for international intervention to secure the release and safety of *Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya*, Director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza. His detention represents not only a gross violation of his individual rights but also a deliberate and systematic assault on Gaza's healthcare sector, highlighting Israel's genocidal intent against the Palestinian people.

Dr. Hussam has been a pillar of Gaza's humanitarian response. Despite the unimaginable personal loss, including the death of his son in an Israeli airstrike and injuries sustained during an attack on his hospital, he has remained steadfast in serving his community. His arrest on December 27, 2024, during a military raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital, marked another alarming incident in Israel's systematic targeting of healthcare professionals and facilities. Video evidence shows Dr. Hussam being led to an Israeli military vehicle; yet, days later, Israeli authorities denied any record of his detention, placing him at imminent risk of torture and enforced disappearance.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's valiant stand by his patients and his unrelenting commitment to healing in the face of destruction have made him another symbol of Palestinian resistance. His detention now unfolds in the context of an ongoing genocide, where his healing capacities are perceived as a direct threat to the project of annihilation. His forced disappearance and torture reflect Israel's deliberate targeting of any form of Palestinian claim to life. The assault on healthcare personnel like Dr. Hussam is not only a strategy to dismantle Gaza's health infrastructure but also a direct attack on the resilience and survival of the Palestinian people.

The deliberate targeting of healthcare facilities and personnel constitutes not only a grave violation of international humanitarian law but also a form of *ethnic cleansing* and *collective punishment*. This strategy is designed to destroy the physical and psychological resilience of Gaza's population. Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's detention exemplifies the broader assault on Gaza's healthcare system, which is essential for survival under the conditions of an ongoing genocide. His courage and unwavering commitment to his patients demand our immediate collective action.

Since October 2023, Israel has arbitrarily detained hundreds of Palestinian healthcare workers from Gaza without charge or trial. Many have been subjected to inhumane torture, held incommunicado, and forced to endure degrading conditions. Reports from released detainees confirm that many were not charged, underscoring the arbitrary and punitive nature of these detentions. In Dr. Hussam's case,

eyewitness accounts and reports reveal that he was subjected to severe torture, including being stripped of his clothing, whipped with thick electrical wires, and beaten to the point of collapse. He is being held at *Sde Teiman detention centre* under inhumane conditions, with no access to legal representation or contact with his family. On the morning of January 13, 2025, Dr. Hussam was transferred from Sde Teiman detention center to Ofer prison, where concerns for his safety and health remain acute.

Adding to the gravity of this case, Dr. Hussam's family has stated that he holds Kazakh citizenship. Reflecting their concern, a group of Turkish activists peacefully protested in front of the Kazakh Consulate in Istanbul on December 30, 2024, amplifying the family's call to Kazakh authorities. During the protest, consular officials reached out to the protesters, requested information about the case, and confirmed that the family's appeal had been noted. However, on January 3, 2025, Kazakh authorities issued a contradictory response, denying Dr. Hussam's citizenship while simultaneously stating that they had notified the Kazakh mission in Tel Aviv to intervene diplomatically. This response highlights Kazakhstan's failure to meet its obligations under international law and risks signalling tacit endorsement of Israel's genocidal actions. We call on Kazakhstan to fulfil its diplomatic obligations, ensure Dr. Hussam's immediate release, and provide the protection he is entitled to as a Kazakh citizen. Failing to do so would send a dangerous message that even its own citizens are expendable in the face of these atrocities.

The detention of Dr. Hussam and the broader assault on Gaza's healthcare system demand immediate action. These actions must be understood as part of a coordinated and systemic campaign to dismantle Gaza's health infrastructure and eliminate vital personnel, actions that align with internationally recognized definitions of genocide. We express deep regret and strong condemnation of the continued inaction of Ms. Alice Jill Edwards, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, who has failed to address these atrocities. Her bias and deliberate negligence in fulfilling her mandate are unacceptable and further perpetuate impunity. On 28 August 2024, an [official letter](#) was submitted to the President of the UN Human Rights Council, H.E. Amb. Omar Zniber, by international legal organizations, civil society groups, and lawyers, requesting her dismissal. We reiterate our call for her immediate removal and the appointment of a new Special Rapporteur who is neutral, impartial, and committed to justice.

Mechanisms such as the *UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions* and the *Working Groups on Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances* must prioritize Dr Hussam's case and the broader context of crimes against Gaza's population. They must conduct thorough investigations into Israeli military crimes in Gaza, engage directly with victims and

their families, and submit comprehensive reports to facilitate the international prosecution of Israeli crimes.

We further call on all states and international entities to fulfil their legal obligations under international law to halt the genocide in Gaza. This includes the imposition of a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, ensuring accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and protecting Palestinian civilians.

Our Call to Action

- Demand Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's immediate and unconditional release, ensuring his safety and fundamental rights.
- Provide full access for international and local human rights organizations to monitor his health, facilitate medical treatment, and ensure legal representation.
- Call on Kazakhstan to fulfill its diplomatic obligations and protect Dr. Hussam as its citizen.
- Urge international mechanisms, including the UN, to investigate and prosecute crimes against Palestinian detainees, including torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention.
- Halt the genocide in Gaza by imposing comprehensive international arms embargoes on Israel, protecting civilians, and safeguarding Gaza's health sector.

The global community must recognize that Dr Hussam's case is not isolated but reflects a larger systemic oppression and annihilation strategy. We demand immediate and united global action to uphold justice and hold Israel accountable for its crimes.

Initiating Legal Organizations:

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, International.

The PAL Law Commission on War Crimes, Justice, Reparations, and Return, International.

Worldwide Lawyers Association (WOLAS), Turkiye.

Centro Di Ricerca Ed Elaborazione Per La Democrazia (CRED), Italy.

Global Legal Alliance for Palestine, International.

Avocats pour la Justice au Proche-Orient, France.

The International Commission to Support Palestinian Rights (ICSPR), Palestine.

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Advocate Nasir Qadri, Founder and Executive Director of Legal Forum for Kashmir (LFK).

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Dr Ayşe Didem Sezgin, Bogazici University Faculty of Law.

Shabnam Ebrahim Mayet, Advocate, Johannesburg Society of Advocates, South Africa.

Euro-Med's Call: Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's Life in Danger Due to Torture – Immediate International Intervention Needed

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Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor has received information that Dr. Abu Safiya's health has deteriorated due to the torture he endured during his detention, particularly while being held at the Sde Teyman military base in southern Israel. Euro-Med Monitor warns of the grave risk to his life, following patterns of deliberate killings and deaths under torture previously suffered by other doctors and medical staff arrested from Gaza since October 2023.

Euro-Med Monitor has documented testimonies confirming that Israeli soldiers physically assaulted Dr. Abu Safiya immediately after he left the hospital on Friday, 27 December 2024. He was then directly targeted with sound bombs while attempting to evacuate the hospital in compliance with orders from the Israeli army.

According to testimonies gathered by Euro-Med Monitor, the Israeli army subsequently transferred Dr. Abu Safiya to a field interrogation site in the Al-Fakhura area of Jabalia Refugee Camp. There, he was forced to strip off his clothes and was subjected to severe beatings, including being whipped with a thick wire commonly used for street electrical wiring. Soldiers deliberately humiliated him in front of other detainees, including fellow medical staff. He was later taken to an undisclosed location before being transferred to the Sde Teyman military camp under Israeli army control.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor has also received information from recently released detainees at the Sde Teyman military camp, confirming that Dr. Abu Safiya was subjected to severe torture, leading to a significant deterioration in his health. This occurred despite him already being injured by Israeli air strikes on the hospital, where he worked tirelessly until the facility was stormed and set ablaze by Israeli forces.

The Israeli army has attempted to mislead the public regarding Dr. Abu Safiya's detention and torture. Pro-Israeli media outlets circulated a misleading promotional video portraying his treatment as humane, even though he was tortured and humiliated immediately after filming.

Euro-Med Monitor warns of the severe implications of Israel's denial of Dr. Abu Safiya's detention, describing this as a deeply troubling indicator of his fate and detention conditions. This denial also reflects a blatant disregard for binding legal standards.

Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHRI) submitted a request on behalf of Dr. Abu Safiya's family to obtain information and facilitate a lawyer's visit on 2 January 2024. However, the Israeli authorities claimed to have no record of his detention, stating they had no indication of his arrest.

Euro-Med Monitor expresses deep concern that Dr. Abu Safiya may face execution during his detention, similar to the fate of Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh, head of the orthopaedics department at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, who was killed under torture at Ofer Detention Centre on 19 April 2024. Dr. Al-Bursh had been detained along with colleagues from Al-Awda Hospital in December 2023.

Likewise, Dr. Iyad Al-Rantisi, head of the obstetrics department at Kamal Adwan Hospital, was killed due to torture at an Israeli Shin Bet interrogation centre in Ashkelon, one week after his detention in November 2023. Israeli authorities concealed his death for more than seven months.

Dozens of doctors and medical staff remain subjected to arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in Israeli prisons and detention centres, where they face severe torture and solitary confinement, according to testimonies from former detainees.

The detention of Dr. Abu Safiya must be understood within the context of Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza, which has persisted for nearly 15 months. His arrest, torture, and potential execution form part of a broader strategy aimed at destroying the Palestinian people in Gaza—both physically and psychologically—and breaking their will.

This strategy includes not only the deliberate destruction of the health sector and the disruption of medical staff operations, particularly in northern Gaza, but also an attack on the symbolic and humanitarian role represented by Dr. Abu Safiya. Despite the grave crimes committed against Kamal Adwan Hospital, its staff, and patients, especially in the past two months, Dr. Abu Safiya remained unwavering in his dedication to providing essential medical care and fulfilling his medical duties.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor calls on all concerned states, international entities, and UN bodies to take immediate and effective measures to secure the unconditional release of Dr. Abu

Safiya. His fundamental rights to life, physical safety, and dignity must be protected, shielding him from torture or any cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Euro-Med Monitor also urges international and local human rights organisations to be granted full access to visit Dr. Abu Safiya, monitor his health condition, provide necessary medical treatment, and ensure he is free from human rights violations until his release.

Furthermore, Euro-Med Monitor reiterates its call for the United Nations to deploy an international investigative mission to examine the grave crimes and violations faced by Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. It calls for the immediate release of those detained arbitrarily, for international and local organisations to be granted visitation rights, and for detainees to have access to legal representation.

Euro-Med Monitor expresses regret over the continued inaction of Ms. Alice Jill Edwards, the Special Rapporteur on Torture, who has failed to address these atrocities. It condemns her bias and deliberate negligence in fulfilling her mandate and calls for her dismissal. A new Special Rapporteur who is neutral and committed to universal human rights principles must be appointed.

Additionally, Euro-Med Monitor urges the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to conduct immediate and thorough investigations into crimes committed by the Israeli military in Gaza. It calls for direct engagement with victims and families, as well as for reports to be submitted to pave the way for investigative committees, fact-finding missions, and international courts to prosecute Israeli crimes, hold perpetrators accountable, and compensate victims in line with international law.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor renews its call for relevant states and entities to fulfil their legal obligations to halt the genocide in Gaza. This includes imposing a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, holding it accountable for its crimes, and taking effective measures to protect Palestinian civilians. Immediate steps must also be taken to prevent forced displacement, ensure the return of residents, release arbitrarily detained Palestinians, and facilitate the urgent entry of life-saving humanitarian aid into Gaza without obstacles. Finally, Euro-Med Monitor demands the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the entire Gaza Strip.