

**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, Hisham 'Abd-al-Hafith Hashem Sharabati, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 975432832, born on 27 July 1967, a field researcher at al-Haq, and a resident of al-Haouz neighbourhood, Hebron city, Hebron Governorate, would like to declare the following:

At around 3:00 pm on Wednesday, 29 April 2009, my colleague Mousa Abu-Hashhash and I arrived at the village of Wadi al-Shajina, approximately five kilometres south of the town of Doura. Mousa is a fellow field researcher at B'TSELEM, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. We were assigned to document random arrests of a number of young citizens in the village on Sunday, 26 April 2009. While we were on a house balcony taking an affidavit of an affected citizen, I saw a number of Israeli military vehicles arrive and patrol the village at around 3:30 pm. Accompanied by a military jeep, a group of four Israeli soldiers came to the house, in which we were present.

The soldiers demanded that two or three children, who were in front of the house, accompany them. Adult family members refused to obey this order. A short while after the soldiers arrived, I started to film the incident using the camera which Al-Haq has equipped me with. My colleague Abu-Hashhash took photographs using his digital camera.

At first, the soldiers opposed our documenting the incident. "If you are acting in accordance with the law, why are you afraid of photos?" we exclaimed. So they let us continue. As the soldiers insisted on taking the children with them, adults accompanied the children and the Israeli soldiers. My colleague Abu-Hashhash and I went along with the children and their family members. The soldiers took the children to an area near a school belonging to the UNRWA, the United Nations Works and Relief Agency, and which was at a distance of approximately 500 metres away from the family's house.

Other units of the army were present near the school. They detained other children and adolescents and forced them to sit on the ground opposite the school's wall. Amongst them was a child who was about 15 years of age. He was blindfolded and handcuffed. Immediately after we arrived, a soldier removed the child's blindfold and handcuffs. I think the soldiers did not want us to take pictures of the child in that condition.

While I was near the school, I saw soldiers bring in children and adolescents between 15 and 18 years of age from various areas. I realised that dozens of soldiers were dispatched in all areas of the village. Five minutes later, an officers' jeep with a registration plate No. 655537 arrived and an officer stepped down. He was tall, of strong build, of brown complexion, and had a vine leaf shaped insignia on his shoulders. Meanwhile, my colleague Abu-Hashhash and I took photographs from a distance of about 15 metres away from the area where the children were being detained.

The said officer approached my colleague and I, demanding that we identify ourselves, which we did. The officer demanded that we film from a farther location, claiming that we were impeding the soldiers' operation. However, the location, which the officer indicated did not overlook the area where children were detained. Consequently, my colleague and I moved 10 metres to a more suitable position and continued to take pictures for another two minutes.

At around 3:45 pm, the same officer came and alleged that we disturbed him and obstructed the performance of his duties. He also asked for our ID cards, which we handed to him. We also presented our work IDs, revealing our respective workplaces. The officer then demanded our cameras and mobiles, stating that he would carry out a security examination. In addition, he demanded that we wait at a distance of ten metres from the detained children. The officer gave our possessions to a soldier. We saw soldiers watch the recorded material on our cameras. The officer left without returning our belongings. We realised that he wanted to detain us and confiscate our cameras until the army would have completed its activity in the village.

As a result, the officer who had taken our possessions prevented us from further documenting the incident including the detention of the children. He was touring around the village. From time to time, he would come back to the location where the children were detained. After the officer left, my colleague Abu-Hashhash used his second cellular telephone, which he still had on him, to call his colleagues at B'Tselem. The person on the phone asked Abu-Hashhash to pass the mobile telephone to the officer so that he could talk to him. When Abu-Hashhash gave the telephone to the officer, the latter disconnected the conversation and kept the phone.

While we were detained, my colleague Abu-Hashhash noted the registration numbers of military jeeps. When soldiers saw that, they threatened him. A soldier also took the paper, on which Abu-Hashhash had written down the numbers, and claimed that taking numbers of military vehicles was prohibited. Later, the officer, who had taken our belongings, returned the paper to Abu-Hashhash.

At about 5:15 pm, most military vehicles left and the detainees were released. Only a boy of about 14 years of age was still detained in the same area by an Israeli Police jeep, which had arrived earlier. Before he left, the said officer also returned our possessions. We realised that the soldiers had deleted all materials recorded on our cameras.

Later, we went back to the house, where we had been earlier that day, and took an affidavit from a person who was arrested during the random detention campaign reported on Sunday, 26 April 2009. Later, my colleague Abu-Hashhash and I returned to our respective homes.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 4 May 2009

Signature: Hisham Sharabati

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Hisham Sharabati