

**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, Tharifa Rashid 'Abd-al-Fattah al-Katnani, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 933730459, born on 30 September 1957, a housewife, and a resident of the al-Rimal neighbourhood, Gaza city, Gaza Governorate, would like to declare the following:

My name is Tharifa Rashid 'Abd-al-Fattah al-Katnani. I am 52 years old, married and mother of six children, including four sons and two daughters. I live in a rented flat in the al-Rimal neighbourhood near the Complex of Security Agencies (al-Saraya) in the centre of Gaza city.

Several years ago, I started to suffer from pain in my neck and back. Having reported to physicians at the Al-Shifa' Hospital in Gaza, I found out that I suffered from a cartilage disorder in the neck and back. I received medical treatment and took tranquilisers for a long period of time. However, the pain intensified and my health condition deteriorated. After I was diagnosed by several well-known specialist doctors in Gaza at the al-Shifa' Hospital, they decided to transfer me for medical treatment abroad. On 15 September 2009, I received a medical transfer report for treatment at the al-Maqased Neurology Charitable Hospital in the city of Jerusalem. Accordingly, I would have to have a magnetic resonance image of my neck and back before I underwent a surgical operation for the cartilage disorder. That was because the only magnetic resonance imaging device in the Gaza Strip, which is available at the al-Shifa' Hospital, was out of order. I had an appointment at the al-Maqased Charitable Hospital on 5 October 2009 and I was required to be present at the hospital before that date. I submitted an application to obtain a permit to enter Israel through the Coordination Office at the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs in Gaza. On the evening of Sunday, 4 October 2009, I received a telephone call from an employee at the Coordination Office of the Ministry of Civil Affairs in Gaza, requesting that I travel to the Erez Crossing Point in Northern Gaza the next morning in order to receive my access permit from the Israeli Intelligence agency at the Crossing. Thereby, I could enter Israel and be present at the al-Maqased Charitable Hospital on the allotted date. At around 7:00 am the next day, I carried my bag and travelled to the Erez Crossing. When I arrived at the Coordination Office of the Ministry of Civil Affairs on the Palestinian side of the Crossing, an employee at the Office called the Israeli side and reported that I had arrived. Then, the employee requested that I go to the Israeli side of the Crossing in order to receive the access permit from the Israeli Intelligence. I went to the Israeli side of the Crossing on foot. I walked for a distance of about two kilometres until I reached the gate of the Israeli checkpoint. Then, I entered a small room, where a large, glass electronic device was installed inside. Through a loudspeaker, a person ordered me to enter into the device, which I did and was subjected to search as the device spun around my body several times. Later, I reached a waiting hall and waited a little while. Then, a person wearing the civil uniform – an Israeli Intelligence officer – came, requested my ID card and told me to wait in my place.

"You have a permit to enter Israel, but why are you going to hospital alone without an attendant?" The same person asked me after he came back about 15 minutes later.

I replied that none of my children would be valid to accompany me.

"My eldest son is 32 years old, but you require that a patient's attendant will be at least 40 years of age. Furthermore, I do not have any brothers or sisters or first degree

relatives to accompany me according to the conditions you impose on us, the sick.” I added.

Then, he inquired about my husband. I said my husband suffered from a heart disorder. For a long time, he had been under medical treatment at the Nablus Specialised Hospital in the West Bank. He could not leave the hospital because of his deteriorating health condition. Later, the Israeli Intelligence officer demanded that I wait in my place. I waited from 8:30 am until 2:00 pm on the same day. Then, the same person came back along with two other Intelligence officers, including a female officer. They led me to a place, where I went down a staircase underground, and then walked through narrow passageways and corridors and entered a small room. The female officer searched my body with her hands and with a small electronic device, which she moved over my body several times. Then, she thoroughly searched my bag, including my personal belongings. Thereafter, the officers took me with them to a small room, where a television screen and a DVD machine were inside. After they closed the door from the outside, they demanded that I sit down. I sat down in front of the television screen, which showed pictures and shots of members of the Hamas Movement, as well as security officers of the Gaza government, while they were assaulting wedding parties in areas north of the Gaza Strip and beating children and civilians in the Gaza Strip following the military takeover. The television screen also showed pictures of Shalit, the abducted soldier. I remained in that position for about two hours, after which the same Intelligence officers came back and led me to a room, where a person wearing the civil uniform sat at a desk with a laptop on. This person requested that I sit down and said that he was an Israeli Intelligence officer and his name was Moti.

“We know everything about you. I will ask you. If you do not speak the truth, I will arrest you.” He went on.

Having inquired why I would leave the Gaza Strip to Israel, I said I was sick and wanted to leave for Jerusalem, not for Israel, in order to receive medical treatment. I presented my medical papers and patient transfer report. However, the officer accused me of paying a bribe to obtain the patient transfer report in order to enter Israel. He then asked me about the doctors who supervised my health condition and showed me pictures of famous doctors in Gaza on the computer, which was in front of him. He demanded that I point to the physician who followed up on my condition. He was Dr. Khamis al-Sheikh Deeb, a neurologist, and I recognised him in a picture. Later, the officer inquired as to why my husband was present in the West Bank. I said he suffered from a heart attack and that he has been subject to ongoing treatment for some time at the Nablus Specialist Hospital.

“Everything you have said is a lie. You will not obtain the permit and I will return you to Gaza. When your husband comes back to Gaza, you can enter Israel and receive medical treatment. Now, get out of this place.” The officer said.

Having instructed them, Intelligence officers led me to the waiting hall, where I sat down for about one hour. Then, an Intelligence officer came, gave me my ID card and medical file, and ordered me to leave the area and go to my house in the same way I had reached it.

Over time, my appointment at the hospital lapsed and the duration of the patient transfer report expired. On 4 November 2009, I obtained a new patient transfer report in order to have a cartilage surgery in my back and neck at the al-Maqased Neurology Charitable Hospital in Jerusalem. After the device had been fixed, I had a magnetic resonance image at the al-Shifa' Hospital in Gaza. Then, I got a new appointment on 18 November

2009 to report to the al-Maqased Hospital in Jerusalem in order to have the surgical operation. I submitted a new application to obtain an access permit so that I could have the operation, but I am still waiting to receive the permit to enter Israeli and continue my treatment. Without the permit, I will not be able to have the surgical operation and I will continue to suffer from severe pain in the nervous system.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 16 November 2009

Signature: Tharifa al-Katnani

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Muhammad Abu-Rahma