

Affidavit No. 7207/2012

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, Sababah Ma'zouz Hussein Masalhah, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 944058098, born on 13 August 1979, a grocer, and a resident of the Hajja village, Qalqiliya governorate, would like to declare the following:

I am a resident of the Hajja village, at a distance of about 17 kilometres east of the city of Qalqiliya. My brothers and I live on a three-storey building. My wife, three children and I live on the third floor. My brother Usama Ma'zouz Hussein Masalhah (39 years) lives on the second floor. He is married and has three sons and two daughters. My brothers Muhammad (27 years) and Khader (22 years) live with my mother on the first floor.

At around 1:00 am on 13 March 2012, I was at my home on the third floor. I heard strange sounds around the house, so I went to the northern window which overlooked the main street in front of the house. I saw about ten large Israeli military patrols, called "carriers", which were parked on the street. Israeli soldiers went out of the military patrols, dispersed and surrounded the house. The soldiers saw me, uttered obscene expressions to me, and pointed their weapons at me while I was at the window.

"Come down." A soldier told me in Hebrew.

He meant that I should go down and open the main gate. I immediately got out of my home and went down the stairs. When I reached the main gate of the building, I saw that my mother had already opened the gate. Some Israeli soldiers had black masks over their faces. They also had two dogs. I talked to an Israeli officer, called Shukri, as he introduced himself to me.

"What do you want?" I asked him in Hebrew, which I speak fluently.

"We want Usama." Officer Shukri replied.

I called my brother Usama, who had been awake. When he reached the gate, the Israeli soldiers immediately tied his hands behind his back with plastic handcuffs, blindfolded him, and took him out. Then, the Israeli officer demanded that soldiers search the house. I said he could do so, but without the dogs. However, he insisted that the dogs would go in before the soldiers to search the house.

"Our homes are full of children, including my brothers' children and mine." I explained to the officer.

A dog attacked my brother Muhammad, who pushed it back with his foot. The Israeli soldiers beat my brother with their rifles on various parts of his body. I saw a soldier hitting my brother on his head and blood gushing out of his head. Almost 20 soldiers beat my brother, dropped him to the ground, and handcuffed and blindfolded him. I shouted at the soldiers in an attempt to prevent them from beating my brother because his forehead was bleeding, but they also attacked me. Meantime, the soldiers fired sound and tear gas canisters inside the house. A soldier also fired about seven gunshots in the air in order to prevent us from assisting our brother, who lay on the ground. Later, the Israeli soldiers arrested my brother Rasem (37 years, married and has three sons and two daughters) as well as my brother Sa'ed (30 years, married and has a little girl). Having taken them outside, the soldiers handcuffed and blindfolded my brothers. With his mobile telephone, my brother Khader (22 years) took footage of the Israeli soldiers who attacked the house and my brothers. The soldiers demanded that they take the telephone, so I gave it to them. Later, my brother Khader was arrested and taken out of the house.

Together with the two dogs, almost 50 soldiers got in the house and searched the ground floor. They thoroughly searched pieces of furniture. About 20 minutes later, the soldiers went up to my brother Usama's flat, searched it, and damaged pieces of furniture in a savage manner. I was present with the soldiers in the same flat. In about half an hour, they scattered clothes and damaged my brother's bedroom and kitchen. While the Israeli occupying soldiers raided the house, the children and women were kept in a 4x4 metre room on the second floor. There were 27 persons in the room, including five women, my mother, and 21 children. The Israeli soldiers raided and searched the house for almost three hours. Ultimately, they detained my five brothers.

I would like to note that when my brother Muhammad had been assaulted, I asked the Israeli officer to bandage his wound and offer him first aid. However, the officer said that this was his punishment because he had attacked the dog.

"Thank you for what have done!" I replied sarcastically.

"You should thank me because I have not killed your brother." The officer said to me.

The Israeli soldiers got on the military patrols, which left at around 3:40 am.

This is my declaration, which I hereby sign, 13 March 2012

Signature: Sababah Masalhah

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Mohammed Ra'i