

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, 'Isa Isma'il Hasan 'Amr, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 905708327, born on 13 April 1980, employee at B'Tselem, and a resident of Hebron, Hebron Governorate, would like to declare the following:

I am an employee of B'Tselem, which is an Israeli human rights organisation. Around 11 months ago, I started my work as a field researcher in Hebron city. I work in the part of the city that is named H2 and according to the Protocol on Hebron signed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority remains under the authority of the Israeli occupying forces. H2 is where all the settlements of Hebron city are located, including the settlements of Kiryat Arba' and Giv'at Kharsina.

During my work in Hebron city I was attacked by the settlers several times. I was also attacked by soldiers twice. These attacks were relatively limited and did not result in any arrests. On the evening of Saturday 19 January 2008, I was 100 metres away from a house seized by soldiers in al-Ras area, which is near the settlement of Kiryat Arba'. I saw a group of settlers, up to 25 individuals, aged between fifteen and twenty years. They were attacking Arab houses. They were throwing stones on them and tried to break into one of the inhabited houses. I was doing my regular work, which is to observe those settlers in order to take affidavits later and I was also taking photos during the attack.

At this time, I saw a total of ten Israeli soldiers, among them an officer, who I knew was the commander of the army unit in Hebron. I identified his rank from the two stars on his shoulder and also because I had heard the soldiers themselves talk about him several times. I was taking pictures while standing on the steps of one of the houses. I could be seen by both the soldiers and the settlers.

The mentioned officer approached me and told me in Hebrew, which I was able to understand since my knowledge of Hebrew is average, "Do not take pictures!" I told him that I am allowed by Israeli law to take pictures while doing my job. I continued taking pictures and after around two minutes the officer came back. He hit the camera, slapped me with his hand on my face and left. I readjusted the camera and continued taking pictures. I thought that I should call the police office, and indeed I called the Israeli police and told them about the settlers' attack and the officer who had hit me. Then I went back to take pictures.

The settlers were continuing their assaults and I heard children screaming, particularly from the house of the al-Ja'bari family, which the settlers were trying to break into. The officer who attacked me went to where the soldiers were standing, at around five metres away from me. I was with a colleague of mine, 'Assaf, a co-worker and an Israeli citizen. I asked him not to go far away from me and to continue working. Two female settlers approached me, followed by a whole group of female settlers. The two girls tried to take the camera away from me, but I refused to give it up, holding it very well. But one of them held the camera strongly and again tried to pull it away from me. I pulled the camera and stepped back. At this very moment, around five soldiers ran towards me and

started beating me without any warning. At five metres from us, the officer was watching the attack.

I fell to the ground and the soldiers continued to beat me. I was hit by a gun which made me dizzy. The beating continued and I did not know where my camera was. I was constantly kicked by the soldiers until I was not able to stand.

The soldiers dragged me on the floor until they reached the military car. There, they cuffed my hands behind my back with plastic handcuffs, blindfolded me and made me sit on the floor. The soldiers started beating me all over my body, while I was screaming in severe pain. I heard the voice of Itan Flashman, a settler I knew because I had often seen him around and because he had already attacked me twice before. He said, "How are you 'Isa? How are you Flashman?"

I could not tell who from the soldiers and the settlers were attacking me. I was on the floor near the military jeep. They carried me from my hands and legs into the jeep. Then they dropped me from the jeep, uncovered my eyes and took off my handcuffs. I was at the Israeli police office in Kiryat Arba'. I waited in the investigation room, or in front of it or in the corridor, and a nurse checked me.

After an hour or two I was taken to a doctor who told me that I did not have any broken bones. I felt a severe pain in my head and the rest of my body due to the beatings I had been subjected to. I was taken to the investigation office by an Israeli investigator from the police at around 9:30 pm, where I was surprised to hear what I had been charged with. I was accused of dragging an Israeli soldier by his shoulder and of disturbing his work. There was no mention of the settlers. I told the investigator what had happened exactly and that I had not touched him at all. I asked them to look at the pictures in my camera, showing the attack of the settlers and soldiers.

I stayed at the police office until I was transferred to 'Atsyon and eventually returned to the Hebron police station at night. At the end I was detained at the Hebron police station until 5:00 am on Monday 21 January 2008. I was released on a bail of one thousand and five hundred Israeli shekels, and on the condition that I do not return to the settlers' road in the surroundings of the settlement of Kiryat Arba' for 15 days.

I went back home. There will be a hearing on 9 April 2008. I had filed a complaint against the soldiers when I was at the investigation office at the police station. As I remember the sequence of events, I realise that the military officer had provoked the soldiers to beat me after he himself had beaten me because I had continued to take pictures. I had mentioned this to the police investigator but he did not care much. After I returned home the camera was returned to me by a female citizen who resides in the area and told me, "I abducted it from your side when the soldiers were beating you." The film that I had used to take the pictures was still in the camera.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 23 January 2008

Signature: 'Isa 'Amr

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Zahi Jaradat