

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, Zahir "Muhammad 'Ali" Yousef al-Sultan, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID number 803370816, born on 7 October 1991, a fisherman and a resident of the al-Salatin neighbourhood of Beit Lahya, North Gaza governorate, state the following:

On Friday 28 September 2012, at around 9:30 am, I was with 30 other fishermen fishing the mullet that gathers near the coast at this time of the year; they gather near the petrol of boats and ships. We were fishing with nets on the seashore northwest of Beit Lahya in the North Gaza governorate, 60 metres away from the Israeli water borderline. Of the fishermen, I knew my neighbour Fahmi Salih Abu Riyash, 23, who is a football player at the Beit Lahya club and a former member of the Palestinian team. He is married and has a child who is almost one year old. His brother Yousef Abu Riyash, 20, was also there. Suddenly, we heard gunshots fired from the border in our direction. I looked behind me and saw ten Israeli soldiers taking position above a sand dune about 15 metres away from the border and shooting at the fishermen. At that moment, I ran away along with most of the fishermen and took shelter from the gunfire behind the sand dunes on the seashore. Later on, I saw the Abu Riyash brothers; they were the closest ones to the border, about five metres away from the coast, in the sea and almost 20 metres from the border fence. They were trying to escape south but were visible to the soldiers above the hill. The soldiers were shouting at them. While they were escaping, the soldiers fired at them directly in sniper fashion. Fahmi was shot in the left foot and fell to the ground, and his brother Yousef was shot in the left hand while trying to help him. After that, I saw Fahmi trying to get up and continue running away from the area, but the soldiers fired at him, and he was shot again and fell to the ground. At that moment, I, along with other fishermen, started shouting at the soldiers to stop shooting so that we could help Fahmi. I stepped away from the sand dune with my hands up. Then I took off all of my clothes except for my underwear, so that the soldiers would not shoot me. The soldiers then signalled to me to get closer to the wounded Fahmi and Yousef. When I got closer to them, I saw that Fahmi was wounded in the left thigh and in the left groin. He was bleeding heavily from his wounds. I also saw that Yousef was slightly wounded in the left hand. With Yousef's help, I carried Fahmi, and withdrew 30 metres to the south. A number of fishermen then came and helped us carry Fahmi for about another 300 metres, where we put him in a civil defence ambulance that had arrived. We took him to the Kamal Odwan hospital in Beit Lahya. At around 3:00 pm, the doctor took Fahmi into surgery because of severe abdominal bleeding. That evening, at around 10:00 pm, the doctors pronounced him dead; he died of his wounds. The following afternoon, on Saturday, 29 September 2012, we received Fahmi's body and buried him in the Beit Lahya cemetery in the North Gaza governorate.

This is my declaration, which I hereby sign on 29 September 2012

Signature: Zahir "Muhammad 'Ali" Yousef al-Sultan

Name not withheld

This affidavit was taken in my presence

Field researcher: Muhammad Abu Rahmah