

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, Rani Sami 'Umar Bakr, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 906702774, born on 21 May 1981, a fisherman, and a resident of al-Shate' refugee camp, Gaza governorate, would like to declare the following:

To make a living, I work as a fisherman on a fishing boat with a 25 horsepower engine. In addition to my brothers 'Umar (20 years old) and Rami (32 years old), our partner Muhammad Murad (35 years old) works with us on the fishing boat, which belongs to my father. From time to time, my cousin Muhammad Mansour 'Umar Bakr (20 years old) accompanies us on fishing trips.

At around 6:30 am on Friday 24 September 2010, my brothers 'Umar and Rami, and I, as well as our cousin, Muhammad Mansour Bakr, travelled to al-Sayyadin harbour west of Gaza city in order to set sail on a fishing trip. After we reached the harbour, we prepared the fishing boat and brought drinking water and food onboard. At the same time I had also met with many our relatives on the harbour. The majority of my family members work as fishermen.

My brother started the fishing boat engine and steered us out of the harbour. We headed west and sailed approximately 1,500 metres on waters, where fishing is permitted. In accordance with the agreements signed between the National Authority and the occupying government, fishermen are allowed to fish along a distance of three nautical miles. After my brother Rami switched off the fishing boat's engine, we prepared fishing hooks. We all fish with fishing hooks. However, fish are scarce in this area. After an hour, we had only caught about a kilogram of fish. I asked my brother Rami to sail north where fish might be more abundant. I noticed that the fishing boats of our relatives were visible north of the location we were fishing in. We sailed for about 15 minutes and reached the area where our relatives, who are also fishermen, were fishing. Our relatives were onboard nine fishing boats at sea off the *Khazendar* Gas Station near the former General Intelligence headquarters opposite al-Sudaniyya area, west of Beit Lahiya town, north of the Gaza Strip. When we reached them, we asked about the amount of fish in that vicinity. Some said there were not many and others said the numbers fluctuated. Then, we all decided to sail west on our fishing boats.

Suddenly, a cruiser (an Israeli military boat that is constantly present in these waters, patrolling the beaches of the Gaza Strip) approached us. The Israeli occupying soldiers who were onboard the cruiser opened intensive fire on us. When I saw bullets hit the water near my fishing boat, I felt afraid. Then, we all sailed east (towards the beach). Our relatives' fishing boats stopped at sea a distance of almost 1,500 metres from the beach. We stopped at sea at a distance of two kilometres from the shore and a fishing boat belonging to Munther al-'Abed 'Ali Bakr (45 years old) joined us. Bakr's sons, 'Abed, Yousef Khamis Bakr and Ra'ed 'Abd-al-Fattah Bakr, were onboard the fishing boat. After the cruiser had left the area and started to sail west, my brother Rami switched off the engine and we began to throw fishing hooks in order to catch fish. We were in a safe area, where fishing was permitted, so we continued to fish for about two hours.

At around 9:15 am on the same day, I saw an Israeli cruiser sailing at a great speed from the north towards us. The Israeli occupying soldiers onboard the cruiser opened intensive fire on us. I saw the bullets hit the water around us. We wrapped the fishing hooks and put them on the

fishing boat. In fear that we might get hurt, Rami switched on the boat's engine so that we could leave the area.

We fishermen are accustomed to attacks from Israeli boats. Often they open fire, arrest fishermen, and confiscate our fishing boats. While we were heading south in order to return to the harbour, the Israeli cruiser came close and intercepted our path. The cruiser, which had the registration number plate (884), was positioned about 100 metres west of us. Soldiers onboard the cruiser continued to fire at us. All the while, my brothers, my cousin Muhammad, and I were calling to the soldiers, requesting that they cease fire, but they did not take any notice. We waved to the soldiers with our clothes and lifted our arms so that they would cease fire, but in vain. As bullets hit the fishing boat, I heard someone scream beside me. I turned around to see my cousin Muhammad placing his hand on the right side of his waist underneath his chest. I lifted Muhammad's hand to examine him and saw a hole in his waist, from which blood was pouring out. I put my hand on his wound in order to stop the bleeding. Rami also put his hand on the bullet wound. Then, Muhammad stopped talking and the soldiers ceased fire. 'Umar and I stood up and started to shout at the soldiers and waved with our hands, which were dripping with blood. We requested that they offer first aid to Muhammad, but they did not respond to our calls.

Afterwards, we moved Muhammad to Munther's fishing boat, which had approached us. Rami went with him. They sailed east towards the shore in order to take Muhammad to hospital.

Meanwhile, 'Umar and I remained aboard our boat. I sailed west and approached the Israeli cruiser. I saw six soldiers in army uniforms, onboard the cruiser. Among them, I noticed a black soldier sitting behind the cruiser's steering wheel. I also spotted two soldiers holding machineguns which were fastened to the cruiser. I shouted at them, requesting that they catch up with Munther's boat and offer first aid to Muhammad. I knew that Israeli cruisers are supplied with first aid tools. However, they did not respond, or even acknowledge me. Later, the cruiser moved at a great speed and sailed west.

After sailing to al-Sayyadin harbour in Gaza city, I travelled to al-Shifa' Hospital in Gaza, but I did not find Muhammad. I returned to my house in order to report to my father about what had happened. He told me that Rami had called him from Kamal 'Udwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya to say that Muhammad had reached the hospital. He also told him that by the time Muhammad reached the hospital he was already dead and his body was directly taken to the mortuary room at the hospital.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 30 September 2010

Signature: Rani Bakr

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Muhammad Abu-Rahma