

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, Qusay Muhammad al-'Abd al-Sultan, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 901475137, born on 3 September 1978, a fisherman and a resident of the Beit Lahiya town, Northern Gaza governorate, would like to declare the following:

My name is Qusay Muhammad al 'Abd al-Sultan. I am 30-years-old, married and the father of three children. I work as a fisherman and live in the area of al-Sifa, near the al-Tawhid Mosque, west of the town of Beit Lahiya in the Northern Gaza governorate.

At around 4:30 am on Tuesday, 21 July 2009, my cousin Ra'ed 'Awad al-Sultan, 24-years-old, and I went out fishing at sea, west of the al-Waha area in Beit Lahiya. We went on board a small boat (which we call Mijdaf or Hasaka). After sailing a distance of 300 metres west, I cast the fishing nets. At this time, I saw two small Israeli navy boats sailing towards us at a very high speed. I was afraid. Israeli navy boats usually open fire on our boats, arrest us, and confiscate our fishing boats. After the Israeli boats neared, five armed navy officers on each boat pointed their weapons at us. A navy officer then ordered me to sail westwards and follow the Israeli boat to the buoy (which we also call al-Rafsoda) – an object fixed at sea, located one kilometre (from shore) in the open sea, and used by the Israeli navy to confiscate fishing boats owned by Palestinian fishermen from the Gaza Strip. Upon our arrival there, the same officer ordered me to tie the boat to the buoy.

I then saw a cruiser approach us. It was a large Israeli battleship, which was always positioned at sea, a great distance off the beaches of the Gaza Strip. The cruiser stopped at a distance of 400 metres away from us. Navy officers onboard the cruiser ordered me and my cousin on the loudspeaker to strip, jump in the water, and swim towards the ship. When we arrived there, navy officers threw a small ladder down and told us to climb on board the cruiser. There, officers handcuffed and blindfolded me. They also did the same to my cousin Ra'ed. They then asked me for my name, the place of my residence, and what I was doing at sea. While we were handcuffed and blindfolded, officers severely beat me and Ra'ed with their fists and feet for about ten minutes. Later, the cruiser moved at a high speed. About 15 minutes later, the battleship stopped. I later discovered that we had moved northwards, towards Ashdod.

The officers took my cousin and I to a place where we sat for about half an hour while we remained handcuffed and blindfolded. Some soldiers then took me to a place where they ordered me to sit on a chair. When they removed my blindfolds and handcuffs, I saw that I was in a small room (office), where two persons wearing civil uniforms were sitting at a desk. One of the civilian officers said that they were Israeli Intelligence officers and that we were at the Ashdod Port.

The Intelligence officer requested that I put on green trousers and a shirt, which were placed on the desk before him, because I was naked. After putting on the clothes, he asked me for my name and personal information. He also showed me pictures of the area where I lived – al-Salatin neighbourhood in the town of Beit Lahiya – on a laptop. He inquired whether I knew anything about Hamas and the tunnels it uses in the Northern Gaza governorate for launching missiles towards southern Israel. The officer also showed me pictures of a number of persons whom I knew. Of these, I remember Khamis al-'Attar, Hashem al-'Attar, Sameh al-Sultan and Abu-Bashir al-Sultan. All were members of the al-Qassam Brigades in the area and were wanted by Israel. The Intelligence officer then requested information about these persons and about Hamas. He also requested that I work with the Israeli Intelligence in return for

releasing my cousin and I and returning my boat and nets, which the navy officers had seized from me. He also offered to give me a mobile telephone, a chip, and a large amount of money. I replied that I was a fisherman and made my living by fishing. I did not know anything about Hamas or the persons whose pictures I had seen. The officer reiterated that he would give a large sum of money each month in consideration for providing information he requested, but I refused.

After about two hours of interrogation, where I was pressured to work for the Intelligence, the officers left me in the room alone. Approximately 25 minutes after the soldiers had left, two beautiful girls, who looked to be in their early twenties, entered the room wearing their underwear. They proceeded to harass me and requested that I cooperate with the Intelligence by conveying information in return for a large amount of money, which I would receive each time I provided such information. One of the girls presented me with a large sum of American dollars and hundreds of shekels and offered it to me, but I refused. The girls continued to harass me and offer me money, but I refused to take it.

Later, a number of soldiers came in and blindfolded and handcuffed me. They took me to a place where I sat for several hours, along with my cousin Ra'ed, who told me that they had done the same with him. Soldiers then took Ra'ed and I to a car, where we were taken for an hour-long journey. When we stepped out of the vehicle, I found myself at the Erez Crossing Point. Israeli occupying soldiers told Ra'ed and I to walk towards the Gaza Strip and not to look back.

We left the crossing point and returned to our homes. It was then about 8:00 pm on the same day.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 23 July 2009.

Signature: Qusay al-Sultan

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Muhammad Abu-Rahma