

Affidavit No. 4921/2009

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, Ayman 'Izat Muhammad Awlad Muhammad, of Palestinian nationality, holder of ID No. 900718883, born on 1 April 1976, a laboratory technician, and a resident of Khirbet Salama, Doura town, Hebron Governorate, would like to declare the following:

I am a resident of Khirbet Salama, a town southwest of Doura. I am married and the father of three daughters, the eldest of whom is six years old. I work as a laboratory technician at al-Maqased Hospital in Jerusalem. To access my workplace, I require a permit from the Israeli occupying authorities, which allows me to enter the city of Jerusalem. Usually, the occupying authorities grant me such a permit. Currently, I can enter Jerusalem any time during the day or at night through Gilo/Bethlehem checkpoint, which the Israelis refer to as the 300 Checkpoint.

At around 7:15 pm on Wednesday, 3 June 2009, I was driving a rented Volkswagen Golf in the village of al-Tabaqa west of Doura. All of a sudden, I had an accident. The car turned over and I sustained an injury to my left eyebrow. The skin under and around my left eyebrow was ripped off of my face. I did not fall unconscious. I called my brother Muhammad, who is about 29 years old. He came and took me to al-Ahli Hospital in the city of Hebron. At the hospital, doctors told me that I needed plastic surgery and advised me to seek treatment at al-Maqased Hospital, where I work.

On my way to Jerusalem, namely as I was approaching the settlement of Kfar 'Etzion, an employee from the insurance company called and told me that they had located the missing part of my eyebrow. I asked him to keep my eyebrow, put it on ice and send it to me. At around 9:00 pm, my brother Yousef arrived in his car. He had brought me the container with my eyebrow and gave it to me at the Tunnel Checkpoint south of the city of Jerusalem. I had arrived at the checkpoint 15 minutes earlier. On my way to the checkpoint, I called al-Maqased Hospital. Doctors had sent an ambulance to the said checkpoint in order to pick me up.

At the Tunnel Checkpoint, however, Israeli Border Guard officers refused to allow me to cross to the ambulance. They only allowed me to get a special salty liquid in which to store the ripped piece of flesh. One of the Border Guard officers had a name written in Hebrew on his shoulder. It read Feisal Qablan, as far as I remember. When I addressed him with that name, he claimed that the name inscribed on his shoulder was not his real name. He showed me his ID card, which stated that his name was Tamer Shahin.

Although I presented my permit allowing me access to the city of Jerusalem, the Border Guard officer said that my permit entitled me to access Jerusalem only through the 300 Checkpoint. To get into Jerusalem through the Tunnel Checkpoint would require coordination with the Israeli Civil Administration. Using my mobile telephone, I called Dalia Bassa, the Israeli Liaison Officer for Health Issues at the Israeli Civil Administration. She said she would follow up on the issue. While waiting, I was very anxious. Time was crucial in order to replant the part of my eyebrow that had been ripped off. All my efforts to convince the Border Guard officer at the checkpoint to let me pass were in vain and so was my conversation with Officer Bassa.

About one hour later, another Border Guard officer told me that they had still not received any feedback. Then, I decided to go to the 300 Checkpoint and access the city of Jerusalem from there. As I had to walk through a long lane to reach the checkpoint, I feared I would fall unconscious. I drove to the 300 checkpoint with my brother Yousef, in his personal car. At around 10:15 pm, we arrived at the checkpoint. There were no fellow citizens there. I walked for a distance of about 150 metres before I reached the metal detector.

For about five minutes, a soldier who was in charge of searching people passing through the checkpoint sat in an adjacent room. First he ignored me and then he started to laugh. I asked him in Hebrew why he was laughing and explained my situation to him. However, he continued to laugh. Then, an employee from the private company administrating the checkpoint arrived. I heard him tell others to close all doors at the checkpoint. Before the employee had arrived, a Palestinian lady arrived. I requested that the soldier allow me to give her the salty liquid, in which the part of my eyebrow was kept, until I pass the metal detector and until my belongings were examined, but he rejected. Then, I started to talk loudly to the soldier and demanded that he allow me to pass.

An officer at the checkpoint heard me and asked through a loudspeaker whether I was injured. "Yes." I answered. He requested that I look at a camera installed at the checkpoint so that he could verify my injury, and I did. Then, he ordered the door to be opened. An employee from the private security company accompanied me as I crossed the metal detector. Meanwhile, a Border Guard officer arrived and talked to me in Arabic. Recognising his voice, I realised that he was the person who talked to me through the loudspeaker. "What is this disdain for? Why have you impeded my access knowing that I am wounded?" I asked the Border Guard officer. "Usually, it takes me much less time to cross the checkpoint to my workplace." I continued.

"You say that you don't have time and yet you're quarrelling with me! Why don't you complete the procedures and leave?" The officer replied. After I was delayed for another fifteen minutes, my permit was examined and I finally crossed the checkpoint. Under normal circumstances, it takes me an average of three minutes to cross the checkpoint.

At around 10:40 pm, I arrived at al-Maqased Hospital where I was immediately admitted to the operations room. I was taken to the hospital by an ambulance, which picked me up at the 300 checkpoint. I received medical care for two days at the hospital. During my surgery, doctors fixed the part of my eyebrow that had been ripped off. However, they fear that the surgery may not be a success because it was conducted late since I was obstructed at the Israeli checkpoints.

An examination of the operation's result is planned for 15 June 2009. There was not any justification to delay me at any of the two checkpoints. If the surgery does not lead to the desired results, it will all be because of the checkpoints. In that case, I would need to undergo plastic surgeries and skin planting on a regular basis.

This is my declaration and hereby I sign, 9 June 2009

Signature: Ayman Awlad Muhammad

Name not withheld

Field researcher: Hisham Sharabati