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## **Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli court upholds the detention order of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya and extends it for 6 months**

On 25 March 2025, the Israeli Be'er Sheva District Court upheld the order from the Commander of the Southern Command of the Israeli army to detain **Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya** under the Unlawful Combatants Law. The court has ordered that the human rights defender be detained for 6 months under the Law.

[Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya](#) is a Palestinian doctor and human rights defender who lives in northern Gaza, Palestine. He is a paediatrician and the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital which by November 2024, was one of the last barely functioning hospitals in northern Gaza with only two remaining doctors. Since the start of Israel's genocide in Gaza, the human rights defender has refused to evacuate the hospital as ordered by the Israeli military forces, for fear of abandoning his patients. On 25 October 2024, the Israeli military brutally stormed the hospital, bombed its buildings, detained many patients and all hospital staff, and killed Hussam Abu Safiya's son as a consequence of the father's refusal to leave the hospital. Hussam Abu Safiya's son was targeted by a drone while he was sheltering at the hospital with his family.

On 25 March 2025, [during the hearing](#), the Southern District Prosecutor submitted a secret file to the court, alleging that the human rights defender poses a threat to the security of the state of Israel. In response, Al Mezan's legal team, who represent Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, asserted his innocence and emphasised that he was solely performing medical and administrative duties at Kamal Adwan Hospital. [Al Mezan's](#) legal team also requested access to the classified investigation materials, however the prosecution declined their request, with the court upholding the refusal.

The Unlawful Combatants Law enables prolonged detention without charges, stripping detainees of any meaningful judicial review or due process rights, and has been extensively used by the Israeli authorities since October 2023 to arbitrarily detain Palestinian residents of Gaza.

On 23 March 2025, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's lawyer, Gheed Kassem, reported to Al-Jarraq News that on 19 March she managed to visit him in Ofer Prison, his place of detention. She was only granted 17 minutes with him, but reported that he has suffered a severe eye injury as a result of being beaten, and shared that he had been tortured and subjected to prolonged interrogation, the longest of which lasted 13 consecutive days. As a result of torture, the human rights defender has sustained four broken ribs and an irregular heartbeat. Additionally, he has been denied glasses for his poor eyesight. Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya has yet to be charged since his abduction on 27 December 2024.

On 27 December 2024, the Israeli forces invaded Kamal Adwan Hospital before setting it on fire, which rendered it completely out of service. They then detained more than 350 people who were at the hospital, including Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, 180 of his medical staff as well as 75 patients and their family members. The [Israeli military's systematic attacks on medical facilities and personnel in Gaza constitute war crimes](#) and grave violations of its duties as an occupying power as stated in international humanitarian law, namely the fourth Geneva Convention 1949, which grants specific protection to civilian hospitals and medical personnel.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned for the safety and well-being of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya and continues to condemn his arbitrary detention and call for his immediate release.

## **Front Line Defenders urges the Israeli authorities to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya along with other detained Palestinian health workers and human rights defenders;
2. Conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the sustained injuries and torture which Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya has been subjected to whilst in detention, and hold accountable those responsible for these violence actions against him, with the aim of publishing the findings and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Ensure that Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's physical and psychological integrity are protected and guaranteed while in prison in accordance with its obligations as an occupying power under international standards, mainly international humanitarian law;
4. Ensure that Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya has access to his family and lawyers;
5. Cease targeting all doctors and human rights defenders in Gaza and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate and peaceful human rights work without fear of reprisals.

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