

Report says Gaza doctor tortured to death during Israeli interrogation



Israeli forces transfer abducted Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip. (File by AFP)

Gaza City, June 20 (RHC)-- A prominent physician from Gaza was killed in November while under interrogation by Israel's internal spy agency Shin Bet.

Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on Tuesday that Iyad Rantisi, 53, was abducted on November 11 at an Israeli checkpoint while seeking to flee south from Israeli bombing in northern Gaza.

Dr. Rantisi was declared dead six days later at Shikma Prison, which is home to a Shin Bet interrogation facility. Rantisi directed a women's hospital that is part of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia.

Rantisi's family and hospital colleagues heard nothing more about him, leading them to worry he was killed in Israeli custody. The Israeli daily said after Rantisi was killed, the Ashkelon Magistrate's Court issued a six-month gag order prohibiting the publication of all details of the case, including the existence of the gag order.

Haaretz is now able to report on the case because the court order expired in May. It is unclear how Rantisi died, but Israel has a long history of torturing Palestinians.

Another Palestinian physician from Gaza, Adnan al-Bursh, 53, was also killed while in Israeli custody. Bursh led the orthopedic surgery department at Gaza City's Shifa Hospital and was abducted in Khan Yunis in December. The father of six died four months later, on April 19, at Ofer Prison in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli authorities have not explained the circumstances of Bursh's death.

More than three dozen Palestinians from Gaza held at Israel's Sde Teiman detention facility have also died, presumably under torture.

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