Reports say Gaza Kamal Adwan Hospital chief Abu Safia held at Israeli army base

Hussam Abu Safia, who documented abuses at Kamal Adwan, thought to be at Sde Teiman base known for 'brutality, torture'.

Hussam Abu Safia, right, speaks with a UNICEF delegation at Kamal Adwan Hospital in the town

of Beit Lahiya, located in the northern Gaza Strip, in 2024 [File: Hassan Zaanin/Anadolu via Getty]

Gaza City, January 1 (RHC)-- The director of Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital, whose whereabouts have been unknown since he was detained by Israel after a raid on the facility last week, is allegedly being held at an army base doubling as a detention facility, says a CNN report.

Hussam Abu Safia, 51 years-old, is reportedly being held in the Sde Teiman base in Israel's Negev desert, according to former Palestinian prisoners cited by the network, who had been released over the weekend from the controversial facility known for its extreme abuse of detainees.

"Two Palestinian prisoners released this weekend from the facility said they saw Abu Safia at the prison, and another former detainee said he heard Abu Safia's name being read out," said the CNN report, published on Monday.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and authorities in Gaza said they lost contact with Abu Safia after the raid on Friday, which saw the Israeli military set fire to Kamal Adwan and forcefully expel dozens of medical staff and patients – shutting down the only partially functioning hospital in northern Gaza.

The Israeli army confirmed on Saturday that it arrested the director as he was "suspected of being a Hamas terrorist operative" and the hospital was used as a "command and control centre" without providing evidence for its claims. When asked if Abu Safia had been transferred to Israeli territory for further questioning, the military did not offer an immediate comment.

Earlier this week, Israeli media circulated a video of the moments before Abu Safia was detained by Israeli forces, the footage capturing his efforts to move hundreds of patients and medical staff to safety after the Israeli military issued a 15-minute warning to evacuate the hospital.

Israel's military said that its forces had killed approximately 20 Palestinians and apprehended "240 terrorists" in the raid, calling it one of its "largest operations" conducted in the territory. Abu Safia had refused multiple Israeli orders to leave Kamal Adwan after the Israeli military imposed a devastating blockade on the northern Gaza Strip on October 5.

The director general of the Health Ministry in Gaza said the medic, who had documented the cruel impact of Israel's offensive on his hospital, was severely beaten with batons and sticks by Israeli forces during the raid, forced to strip and put on clothes meant for prisoners.

Abu Safia's family told CNN: "Sde Teiman is known for brutality and torture, we can't imagine what our father is going through in that place and if he is well or not, warm or cold … hungry or in pain."

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of WHO, called for Abu Safia's release in a post on X on Monday, saying that hospitals in Gaza had become "battlegrounds" and that the health system was "under severe threat." Tedros said the patients in critical condition at Kamal Adwan had been moved to the Indonesian Hospital, "which is itself out of function".

"Amid ongoing chaos in northern Gaza, WHO and partners today delivered basic medical and hygiene supplies, food and water to Indonesian Hospital and transferred 10 critical patients to al-Shifa Hospital," he said. "We urge Israel to ensure their healthcare needs and rights are upheld." He said seven patients along with 15 caregivers and health workers remained at the "severely damaged" Indonesian Hospital.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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