

Human rights group says Israel denying Gaza hospital director access to lawyer



Protesters in Brussels demand the immediate release of director of Gaza's Kamal Adwan

Hospital, January 6, 2025.

Gaza City, January 8 (RHC)-- Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHRI) says the Israeli regime forces refuse to allow the well-known director of Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital to meet with a lawyer to evaluate his detention conditions.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safia was abducted on December 27, 2024. The PHRI said it has received no updates on his safety since. "Despite our urgent requests to send an attorney, the military says he's barred from lawyer visits until 10 January," the PHRI said in a Tuesday post on social media.

It said the Israeli military also continues to withhold information about Abu Safia's detention location. The Israeli military, however, has retracted its earlier claim that he is being held outside the occupied territories.

The PHRI said medical professionals are protected by international humanitarian law – and for good reason.

"There's a reason for that and that is that if you attack health care professionals, you attack a whole society, you attack civilians who need medical attention, people with chronic illnesses and people with injuries."

Abu Safia was abducted by the Israeli army in the North Gaza Governorate a day after soldiers stormed Kamal Adwan Hospital, set it on fire, and put it out of service. Abu Safia was one of over 350 abductees. He was photographed in his medical gown being led by soldiers in handcuffs amidst the destruction.

The hospital director paid a heavy personal price when he lost his son Ibrahim in the Israeli storming of Kamal Adwan Hospital on October 26, 2024. On November 24, Abu Safia was injured in a bombing that targeted the hospital, but he refused to leave and continued to treat patients and the wounded.

The PHRI said its statistics show there are more than 20,000 people in Gaza waiting for urgent medical evacuations. "The reason is that there is no active healthcare system in Gaza and hundreds of medical professionals have lost their ability to care for their people."

Elsewhere in the post, the PHRI gave updated figures of medical professionals killed or being held by the regime. "More than 1,000 medical professionals have been killed; 230 have been arrested; 130 are still held in Israeli incarceration facilities... More than 70 people have already died in Israeli incarceration facilities."

"Just as a comparison, nine people died in Guantanamo in 22 years of operation. We have here more than 70 people in just a few months."

The demonstrators in Brussels condemned Israel's campaign of genocide in Gaza and attacks on health facilities and workers. The Israeli regime has slaughtered nearly 46,000 Palestinians in Gaza since October 7, 2023.

In November 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, his former war minister, for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its campaign of genocide.

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