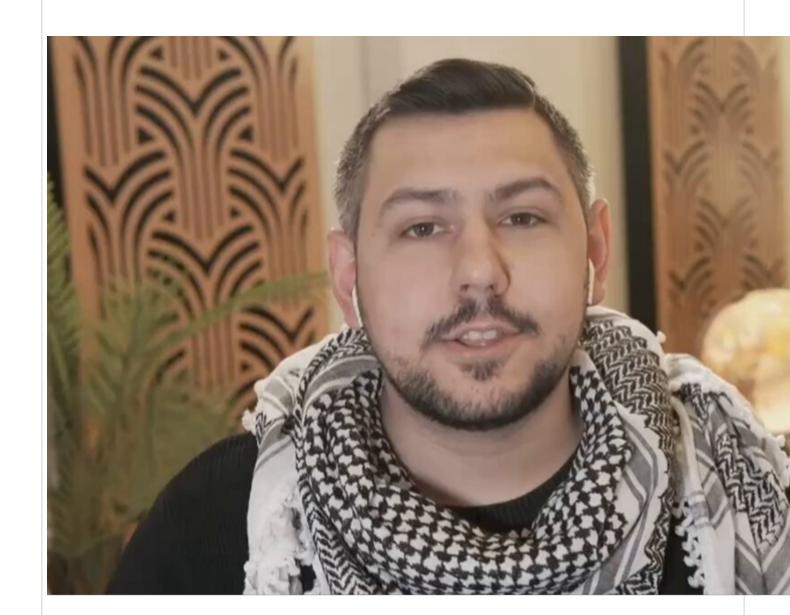# Pro-Palestine British journalist detained in Austria

Richard Medhurst, a British-Syrian journalist and political commentator currently based in Vienna, Austria.

Vienna, February 8 (RHC)-- Austrian police have detained Richard Medhurst, an internationally recognized pro-Palestinian journalist amid the Western countries' push to silence the pro-Palestinian

voices.

Earlier this week, agents from the Austrian police and intelligence services raided his home and detained the 33-year-old independent journalist, political commentator, and news analyst from the UK.

The agents reportedly alleged that Medhurst, who has a British father and Syrian mother, is a member of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement fighting in the Gaza Strip against the occupying Israeli regime forces, the journalist said in a video posted on his YouTube channel on Thursday.

The Austrian-based Medhurst, who strongly denies the allegations, has said he was briefly arrested by the security agents. Similarly, the UK police had arrested him in August.

Medhurst explained that he had been "lured into a trap" when the local authorities in Vienna summoned him for an interview last week. On arrival, officials informed him that they were considering revoking his residency because of his reporting on Gaza and Lebanon.

The UK national went on to say that he was literally "ambushed by a group of plainclothes agents," who said "they were the Austrian equivalent of MI5 or the FBI." Medhurst was subsequently served an arrest warrant and a search warrant by police, with officials saying he was suspected of being a member of Hamas, as well as "disseminating propaganda [and] encouraging terrorism," according to the video.

The law enforcement agents searched his home and confiscated all his electronic devices. "They're my journalistic tools. I have been left with literally nothing," Medhurst pleaded.

Medhurst was eventually released after being finger-printed and photographed, and had a sample of his DNA collected. "I was released after six-seven hours," the reporter recalled in his video.

According to Medhurst his run-in with Austrian agents was not a coincidence and could be linked to his detention at London's Heathrow Airport on August 15.

On that occasion, he had been incarcerated for over 24 hours at a British police station on charges of "expressing an opinion or a belief that is supportive of a proscribed organization" under Section 12 of the UK's Terrorism Act 2000.

"Strangely enough, last week, the police in England again extended this investigation and then suddenly this happens in Vienna. I don't think that is mere coincidence," Medhurst noted.

In the video, Medhurst categorically denies "all of these accusations by the British and Austrian governments," insisting: "I'm not a terrorist, I'm a journalist and they bloody well know it."

Medhurst condemned the procedures being taken by both the British and Austrian police authorities as "disproportionate state violence."

In his video, Medhurst said he had been targeted by the Western security forces, describing the arrest and seizing of his equipment as a direct attack on free speech and crackdown on press freedom. "I could face up to 14 years in prison in the UK, plus another two to five years if I don't give them the passwords to my phones, and maybe another ten years in prison in Austria," he said.

Radio Habana Cuba