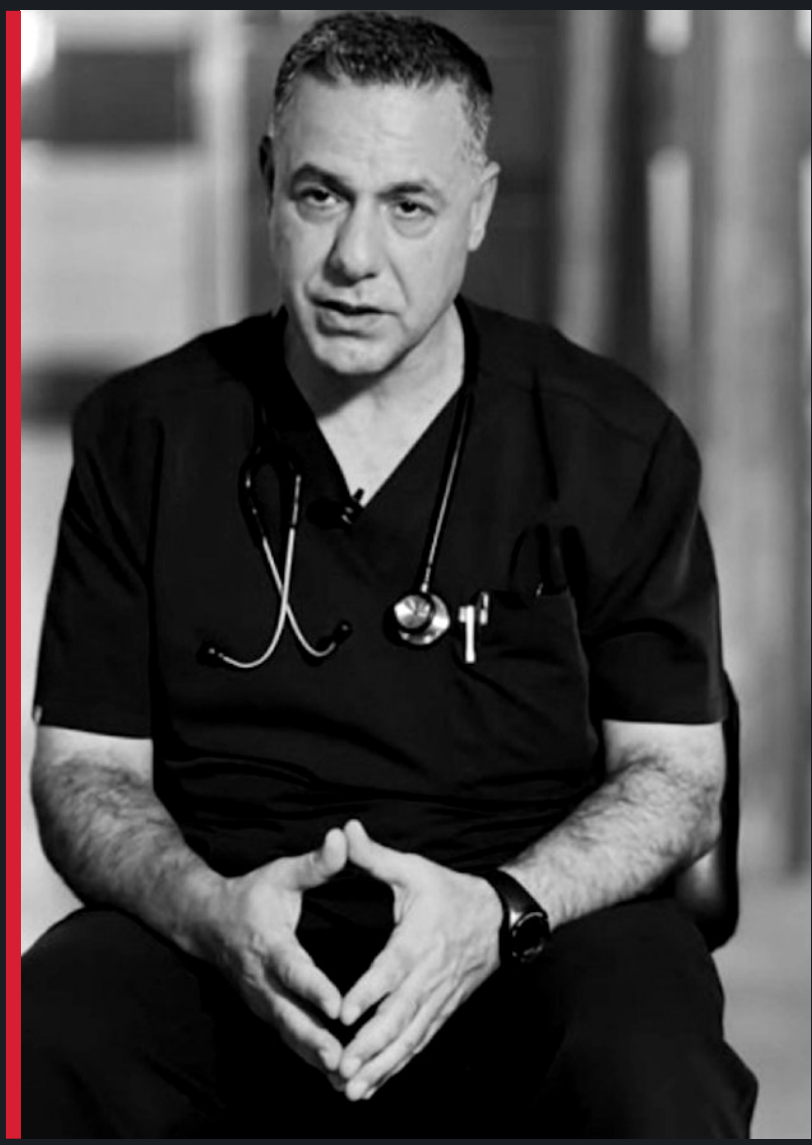

Advocacy dossier

Hussam Abu Safiya

حسام أبو صفية

Detained (pretrial) **Palestine**

Hussam Abu Safiya is a paediatrician and the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, detained by Israeli forces since 27 December 2024. He is held without charge or trial under the Unlawful Combatants Law, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found his detention arbitrary.

01

The case at a glance

Hussam Abu Safiya is a paediatrician and the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, detained by Israeli forces since 27 December 2024. He is held without charge or trial under the Unlawful Combatants Law, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found his detention arbitrary.

Status	Arrested	Country
Detained (pretrial)	**27 Dec 2024**	**Palestine**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Hussam Abu Safiya immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

02

How the case unfolded

27 December 2024

Arrest

Detained during military raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital

Israeli forces detained Hussam Abu Safiya while he was on duty at Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza during a military raid on the hospital.

9 January 2025

Pretrial detention renewed

Ashkelon court extends detention without charge

The Ashkelon Magistrates' Court extended his detention without charge until 13 February 2025. He was then transferred to Ofer Prison, where Front Line Defenders reported he was held in solitary confinement for 25 days. A ban on lawyer access had been imposed until 22 January 2025.

11 February 2025

Access to counsel denied

First lawyer visit after 45 days held incommunicado

MENA Rights Group reported that he was held incommunicado for 45 days after his arrest. A lawyer from Al Mezan Center for Human Rights visited him for the first time at Ofer Prison on 11 February 2025, and he described beatings, prolonged interrogation, electric shocks and a weight loss of 12 kilogrammes.

12 February 2025

Pretrial detention ordered

Detention order issued under the Unlawful Combatants Law

The commander of the Israeli military's Southern Command issued an order to detain him under the Unlawful Combatants Law, which allows renewable detention without charge on the basis of classified evidence.

25 March 2025

Hearing

Court upholds six-month detention order on secret evidence

The Be'er Sheva District Court upheld the detention order for six months. The prosecution submitted a secret file, and the court upheld the refusal to give his lawyers access to the classified material.

16 October 2025

Pretrial detention renewed

Detention extended by six months

The Be'er Sheva District Court extended his detention by six months. He attended the hearing by video link from Ofer Prison.

2026

Medical care denied

Court refuses independent medical examination

Physicians for Human Rights Israel reported on 11 November 2026 that the Lod District Court had refused his request for an independent medical examination and a second medical opinion, and that the Supreme Court had refused to release 14 detained Gaza doctors. A review of his prison medical file by the internist Amit Tirosh found significant weight loss, falling haemoglobin, uninvestigated chest pain, delayed diagnosis of scabies and bruising around the left eye. As of 11 November 2026 he had been held for almost 23 months without charge or trial, in solitary confinement since June 2026.

28 April 2026

Pretrial detention renewed

Detention extended again

The Beersheba District Court extended his detention under the Unlawful Combatants Law for an unspecified period. He remained held without charge.

3 June 2026

Solitary confinement imposed

Placed in solitary confinement

Amnesty International reported that he had been held in solitary confinement since 3 June 2026 and continued to be denied adequate healthcare.

16 June 2026

Appeal outcome

Supreme Court rejects appeal for release

Israel's Supreme Court, after a hearing on 10 June 2026 that he attended by video link, rejected his appeal for release and upheld the latest detention order, which keeps him detained until at least October 2026.

2 July 2026

Torture

Lawyer reports fresh marks of torture

A lawyer from Physicians for Human Rights Israel who visited him reported fresh bruises and marks of torture, and said he had been beaten daily and threatened since his transfer to the Rakevet detention facility.

6 July 2026

Other act

UN Working Group finds his detention arbitrary

MENA Rights Group announced that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in Opinion No. 14/2026, found his detention arbitrary on three grounds and called for his immediate release and an enforceable right to compensation.

7 July 2026

Other act

UN Special Rapporteurs call for his immediate release

Five UN Special Rapporteurs, including Francesca Albanese and Andrea Bolaños Vargas, called on Israel to release him and all detained health workers immediately, citing reports of continued severe torture and warning that his injuries could lead to imminent death.

10 August 2026

Transfer between places of detention

Transferred to the prison medical centre in Ramla

He was transferred from the Rakevet facility to the Israel Prison Service medical centre at Ramla prison. Physicians for Human Rights Israel said the move indicated serious medical needs. After a lawyer's visit at the end of August, the group reported that guards continued to beat him.

03

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Hussam Abu Safiya has been held by Israel without charge or trial since 27 December 2024 under the Unlawful Combatants Law. On 11 November 2026 Physicians for Human Rights Israel reported that the Lod District Court had refused him an independent medical examination and that the Supreme Court had declined to release 14 detained Gaza doctors.

Background and Work

Hussam Abu Safiya is a Palestinian paediatrician. According to Al Jazeera, he was born on 21 November 1973 in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, to a family displaced in 1948 from Hamama in the Ashkelon district. He holds a master's degree and Palestinian board certification in paediatrics and neonatology. He headed the paediatric department of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia and later became the hospital's director. MENA Rights Group also describes him as lead physician for the medical charity MedGlobal.

After the Israeli military imposed a siege on northern Gaza in October 2024, he refused repeated orders to evacuate Kamal Adwan Hospital, which UN experts later described as the last functioning hospital in North Gaza. In late October 2024 his son Ibrahim was killed by an Israeli drone strike at the hospital gate, and he was briefly detained during a raid on the hospital before being released. On 23 November 2024 he was wounded by drone shrapnel inside the hospital, according to Al Jazeera.

The Arrest

On 27 December 2024 Israeli forces raided Kamal Adwan Hospital and detained him while he was on duty. MENA Rights Group places the arrest in the early hours of 28 December. Front Line Defenders reported that more than 350 people were detained during the raid and taken to an unknown location. On 2 January 2025 the Israeli authorities told Physicians for Human Rights Israel that they had no record of his detention, and on 5 January they confirmed that he was in custody without disclosing where. Detainees released from the Sde Teiman military camp said they had seen him there.

Detention Conditions and Health

Front Line Defenders reported that after his transfer to Ofer Prison on 9 January 2025 he was held in solitary confinement for 25 days. His first lawyer visit, by a lawyer of Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, took place on 11 February 2025, after about 45 days without access. MENA Rights Group recorded his accounts of beatings, prolonged interrogation, electric shocks and a weight loss of 12 kilogrammes, and, after a visit on 20 March 2025, of broken ribs and eye injuries. In January 2026 he was moved to Nafha Prison.

Amnesty International reported that he has been held in solitary confinement since 3 June 2026 and that he was later moved to Rakevet, an underground section of the Ayalon prison complex. On 2 July 2026 Nasser Odeh, a lawyer with Physicians for Human Rights Israel, found fresh bruises on his head and body and reported daily beatings and threats. On 10 August 2026 he was transferred to the Israel Prison Service medical centre at Ramla prison. Physicians for Human Rights Israel said the move indicated serious medical needs and reported

in September that guards continued to beat him and deprive him of sleep. A review of his prison file by the internist Amit Tirosh found significant weight loss, falling haemoglobin, uninvestigated chest pain, delayed diagnosis of scabies and bruising around the left eye. His son Elias speaks for the family.

Legal Proceedings

On 9 January 2025 the Ashkelon Magistrates' Court extended his detention until 13 February 2025 on suspicion of offences under the Penal Code. On 12 February 2025 the commander of the Southern Command ordered his detention as an "unlawful combatant", a status that allows renewable detention without charge on the basis of classified evidence. The Be'er Sheva District Court upheld the order for six months on 25 March 2025, refusing his lawyers access to the secret file. It extended his detention for a further six months on 16 October 2025 and again, for an unspecified period, on 28 April 2026. On 16 June 2026, after a hearing on 10 June that he attended by video link, the Supreme Court rejected his appeal and upheld his detention until at least October 2026. No charge has been filed. In 2026 the Lod District Court refused his request for an independent medical examination and a second medical opinion. According to Physicians for Human Rights Israel, the authorities cited his international contacts and the campaign for his release, partly in closed session. The evidence on which he is held has not been made public.

International Response

UN special procedures wrote to Israel about his case on 22 January and 26 February 2025. On 6 July 2026 MENA Rights Group announced that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in Opinion No. 14/2026, had found his detention arbitrary and called for his immediate release and compensation. On 7 July 2026 five UN Special Rapporteurs, including Francesca Albanese and Andrea Bolaños Vargas, said his injuries could lead to imminent death and called for the release of all detained health workers. The UN Commission of Inquiry, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Front Line Defenders have also called for his release. On 10 November 2026, according to Arab media reports, the Council of Arab Health Ministers meeting in Cairo gave him a newly created award, received on his behalf by the Palestinian health minister.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/hussam-abu-safiya/

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