

URGENT ACTION

FREE FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED PALESTINIAN SURGEON

On March 24, 2024, Palestinian Khaled Al Serr was detained by the Israeli military from Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. Since then, he has been held in conditions that amount to enforced disappearance. More than two months on, Israeli authorities continue to conceal his fate and whereabouts; the scraps of information that his family have been able to receive only came from his colleagues and from released detainees. Israeli authorities must immediately release Dr. Khaled Al Serr. They must immediately disclose the whereabouts and legal status of all Palestinian health workers from Gaza who have been forcibly disappeared and release them unless they are charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offense and prosecuted in proceedings that respect international fair trial standards. Pending Dr. Khaled Al Serr's release, authorities must disclose to Dr. Khaled Al Serr's family his fate and whereabouts and grounds of detention and ensure his access to a lawyer, medical care, and family members.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 53.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Brig. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi
Military Advocate General

Israel Defense Forces
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Ambassador Michael Herzog

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Dear Brig. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi / Your Excellency,

I urge you to order the immediate release of Palestinian surgeon, **Dr. Khaled Al Serr**, from the occupied Gaza Strip, who has been held by Israeli authorities in conditions that amount to enforced disappearance since March 24, 2024.

A released detainee, who was held along with Dr. Khaled Al Serr, reported to the media that he witnessed the torture of Dr. Khaled Al Serr, which included plucking his beard with pliers. Testimonies collected by Amnesty International and other independent human rights organizations from Palestinian health workers detained and recently released indicate that Israeli authorities are routinely subjecting detained health workers to torture and other ill-treatment.

A dedicated and talented young surgeon, Dr. Khaled Al Serr was one of the health workers who decided to remain at Nasser hospital to tend to the patients even while it was being encircled by the Israeli military.

I urge you to secure the release of Dr. Khaled Al Serr and to disclose the fate, whereabouts and legal status of all other Palestinian health workers who have been forcibly disappeared in Israeli custody.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On March 24, 2024, **Dr. Khaled Al Serr**, a 32-year-old Palestinian surgeon from the occupied Gaza Strip, was detained by the Israeli military from Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, along with other health workers. His family learned about his detention from his colleagues but since then, they have not received any information from Israeli authorities about his condition, whereabouts, or grounds for his arrest. They only received scraps of information from released detainees who were held along with Dr. Khaled Al Serr, including one detainee who reported that Dr. Khaled Al Serr was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

As reported by Israeli human rights organizations, since October 7, 2023, and particularly since the beginning of the ground operations in the occupied Gaza Strip at the end of October, Israeli authorities have resorted to the Unlawful Combatants Law and other unspecified provisions to detain thousands of Palestinians from the occupied Gaza strip without charges or trial, preventing them from having any contact with the outside world, and holding most of them, including Dr. Khaled Al Serr, outside the protection of the law, in conditions that amount to enforced disappearance. The use of the Unlawful Combatants Law and its amendments, the denial of access to lawyers, the refusal to disclose the fate and whereabouts of those detained, the denial of the right to a fair trial and the well-documented use of torture and other ill-treatment against detained Palestinians, particularly those from the occupied Gaza Strip, are all blatant violations of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. Torture and other ill-treatment and enforced disappearance are crimes under international law; and arbitrary detention during armed conflict and occupation is a war crime. Such acts may amount to crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack on the civilian population.

The detention while on duty and the enforced disappearance of health workers is part and parcels of the ongoing Israel's attacks on the healthcare system and infrastructure in Gaza. Healthcare workers continue to endure increasingly horrific and inhumane conditions whilst caring for their patients due to military operations and the blocking of adequate medical supplies and fuel. Over-stretched beyond imagination, they are working long shifts without access to food and clean water, and often with communications blackouts. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of June 5, of the 36 main hospitals that used to serve over 2 million Palestinians in Gaza, only 16 are partially functional, with severe limitations on the types of services they can deliver.

The enforced disappearance of Dr. Khaled Al Serr is part of the ongoing Israel's attacks against healthcare workers and the healthcare system in Gaza.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Hebrew, Arabic, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: August 2, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Khaled Al Serr (he/him).