

# URGENT ACTION

## PALESTINIAN JOURNALISTS FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

Nidal al-Waheidi and Haitham Abdelwahed are journalists from the occupied Gaza Strip. Both were detained by Israeli forces on October 7 while they were reporting the Hamas-led attack and are held in conditions constituting enforced disappearance. Since then, Israeli authorities have refused to disclose their whereabouts or the legal grounds and reasons for their arrest. Two and a half months since their disappearance, and no information has been shared about their fate or whereabouts. Israeli authorities must immediately disclose their whereabouts and the legal grounds for their arrest, grant them access to legal representation and ensure their humane treatment. Unless charged with an internationally recognized criminal offence, they must be immediately released.

### 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 119.23**. 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.

**Military Advocate General**  
**Brig. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi**  
Email: [Pazar@idf.il](mailto:Pazar@idf.il)

**Embassy of Israel in the United States**  
**Ambassador Michael Herzog**  
3514 International Drive, NW, Washington DC 20008  
Email: [info@washington.mfa.gov.il](mailto:info@washington.mfa.gov.il)  
Twitter: [@IsraelinUSA](https://twitter.com/IsraelinUSA)

Dear Brig. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi,

I am deeply concern over the enforced disappearance of **Haitham Abdelwahed**, (25) and **Nidal al-Waheidi** (31), two journalists from the occupied Gaza Strip whose whereabouts have remained unknown since October 7, 2023. The detention of the two journalists was widely documented as they were reporting from Beit Hanoun/Erez crossing. Two-and-a-half months since the two went missing while on duty, their families, colleagues, and friends have received no information about them.

As recently as December 18, the Israeli army told Israeli daily, Haaretz that a “number of” detainees from the Gaza Strip died in custody at the military detention facilities in the Beersheba Airfield, also known as Sdeh Teyman, where hundreds of Palestinians from Gaza are held in conditions that violate the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment.

We urge you to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Nidal al-Waheidi and Haitham Abdelwahed, detail the legal grounds for their detention, ensure their humane treatment, including access to medical services and protection from torture and other ill-treatment, and grant them access to the lawyers appointed by their families. Unless they are charged promptly with a criminal offence and granted a fair trial in accordance with international standards, they must be immediately released.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Haitham Abdelwahed** (25) and **Nidal al-Waheidi** (31) are two journalists from the occupied Gaza Strip who work for the independent outlets Ein Media and an-Najah channel respectively. They were detained by Israeli forces on October 7 while they were reporting on the Hamas-led attack near/at the Beit Hanoun/Erez checkpoint. Two other journalists from Ain Media have been killed in Israeli attacks since October 7: Ibrahim Lafi and [Roshdi Sarraj](#).

Israeli human rights organization, HaMoked, has filed several requests to Israeli authorities and two petitions to the Israeli Supreme Court to demand information on the whereabouts of Nidal and Haitham and on the legal grounds for their detention. The Supreme court's response to one of these petitions was that "Israel held no obligation towards residents of the Gaza Strip, given that it was a territory controlled by a terrorist organization and did not establish what were the legal framework and duties incumbent on Israel in holding Gazans." From October 7 to December 11, HaMoked alone received 816 inquiries on missing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. The actual number of those missing is expected to be much higher, with many families unable to report on their missing loved ones due to communication blackouts and concerns over negative implications of publicity.

[Horrible accounts and cases](#) of torture and degrading treatment of Palestinian detainees and prisoners have been shared by released prisoners and detainees as well as lawyers who visit them. Since October 7, Israeli authorities have confirmed that six Palestinian detainees have died in Israeli custody, the autopsy of at least one of them showed clear signs of beatings and torture. Two of these detainees are from the occupied Gaza Strip, and their families were only able to learn about their deaths from other detainees from Gaza who were released. The bodies of all six detainees who died in Israeli custody since October 7 are still withheld by the Israeli authorities. The cases of torture, humiliation, and degrading treatment were shared widely online in the forms of gruesome scenes in images and videos. A number of those detained were identified as journalists, school headmasters, and shop owners. They were detained in Gaza then taken to a military detention center outside of Gaza where some were subjected to further torture and other ill-treatment.

The legal basis for the ongoing detention of Nidal and Haitham, and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Palestinians from Gaza remains vague, but since October 7, Israeli authorities have also resumed the implementation of the "Unlawful Combatants" Law, a category which is not recognized by international law, to indefinitely hold without charge or trial at least 260 Palestinians from the occupied Gaza Strip, as of December 1, 2023. According to this law, and the emergency regulations attached to it, a detainee may meet a lawyer within 28 days of their detention, but a court may deny the right to counsel for up to 80 days. The court may approve the detention without a defense lawyer present.

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

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** February 14, 2024

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Haitham Abdelwahed, Nidal al-Waheidi (Both he/his)