

Brussels, May 15th, 2026

To the attention of:

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission,

Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EC
Vice-President,

Antonio Costa - President of the European Council,

Olof Skoog - Special Representative for Human Rights,

European Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

Re: Urgent appeal for the release of Doctor Abu Safiya

We are writing to you to draw your attention to a case which requires urgent intervention. Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, the former director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Northern Gaza, is facing death as a result of extremely brutal torture. He was unlawfully arrested by the Israeli army on 27 December 2024 when his hospital, then one of the last remaining hospitals in Gaza, was [ultimately destroyed](#) after a month-long siege. He has since then spent more than 500 days in an Israeli prison without charge or trial.

There are serious concerns about Dr. Abu Safiya's health after reports emerged that he has been subjected to severe torture. [UN experts had already demanded his immediate release](#) in March this year. Yet, he is still in prison, and his detention was recently [extended](#) despite the plea of the UN experts and various human rights organizations including [Amnesty International](#). The concerns about his condition have now reached an alarming level with a harrowing account by the Palestinian medical staff who were released on 9 May from the same prison. The former detainees gave testimonies of the unprecedented process of "slow killing" that Dr. Abu Safiya is subjected to. Dr. Abu Safiya, who was once called "the mountain of the North" for his charisma and unwavering determination to protect his patients during the genocide, is now in a state of "daze" with his body and mind consumed by prolonged brutal torture. Urgent action is needed to save him. His life now hangs by a thread.

His colleagues describe the "torture beyond imagination" designed to break the "resilience of the Gaza health care system" that he embodied. His charismatic identity as the healer who stood firm when the Kamal Adwan hospital was under siege is the exact reason for the extreme brutality. The heroic image of Dr. Abu

Safiya refusing to evacuate and negotiating with the Israeli army surrounding the hospital was broadcast throughout the world. The Israeli authorities intend to erase his identity as the hero and symbol of Palestinian resilience. The testimony of the former detainees reveals a pure sadistic tactic to humiliate and destroy the spirit of a noble, highly acclaimed and respected human being. They unleash attack dogs on his vulnerable body while continuing to beat him. One witness says "We could hear Dr. Abu Safiya's screams during his beatings without being able to intervene. The doctor who used to treat people has been turned into a man muttering prayers that are incomprehensible due to the intensity of the pain." These egregious acts inflicted on the doctor who has pursued his noble mission to save lives have to stop immediately.

Currently nearly 100 medical staff are still being held in Israeli prisons. [18 Medical doctors](#) were among more than [431 abducted health care workers](#) by the Israeli army. At least 309 staff have now been released, but five are still missing and five have died or been killed, at least three of whom are medical doctors. According to [the report](#) by an Israeli human rights organization B'tselem from January 2026, 84 Palestinians have died in custody since 7 October 2023. Medical staff have been relentlessly targeted with what appears to be [a clear intention to destroy the medical care system](#) in Gaza to accelerate genocide, as at least [1722 health care workers have been killed](#). Medical immunity under the Geneva convention has been repeatedly and rampantly violated by Israel. Despite the so-called "ceasefire", the killing never stopped and genocide continues. While the news from Gaza no longer makes the headlines, these detainees continue to suffer behind the impermeable prison walls in despicable conditions as Israel does not allow [any visits of the International Committee of Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#). While we call for the release of all detained medical staff and Palestinian prisoners, the case of Dr. Abu Safiya demands extremely urgent action.

Torture is forbidden by customary international law, and Israel is a signatory to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). Furthermore, these severe forms of torture clearly fall under the category of crimes against humanity in the context of the systematic persecution of the Palestinian people which Israel has been pursuing. As described in [the recent report](#) of UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, torture forms an integral part of the genocide in Gaza.

Dr. Abu Safiya should immediately be released and receive medical treatment. You have the power to force Israel to stop this inhumane practice and save his life before too late. His life depends on you. And we are counting on you to take action.

Sincerely,

Organizations:

1. European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP),
2. NWRG (New Weapons Research Group) , Italy
3. Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P), Belgium
4. Ekō, Global organisation
5. Assopacepalestina, Italy
6. Association France-Palestine Solidarite (AFPS), France
7. ICAHD UK,
8. Gibanje za pravice Palestincev, Slovenia
9. Gruppo Ibriq per la cultura e la causa Palestinese, Italy
10. BDS Berlin, Germany
11. BDS Ponente Ligure, Italy
12. Rompiamo il Silenzio Anagni per la Palestina, Italy
13. docP - BDS Nederland, The Netherlands
14. Humanitas - Centre for Global Learning and Cooperation, Slovenia
15. Casa dei Circoli, Culture e Popoli - Ceriale (SV), Italy
16. Stichting Groningen-Jabalya, Netherlands,
17. Kairos Germany,
18. Women in Black (Vienna), Austria
19. Palestina Solidariteit vzw, Belgium,
20. The Palestine Solidarity Association in Sweden (PGS), Sweden
21. KoPI, Germany,
22. Health workers for Gaza, Italy,
23. MPPM - Movimento pelos Direitos do Povo Palestino e pela Paz no Médio Oriente,
Portugal,
24. Cultura è libertà una campagna per la palestina, Italy,
25. Humanitas - Center for Global Learning and Cooperation, Slovenia,
26. Viva Salud, Belgium,
27. Gibanje za pravice Palestincev, Slovenia,
28. Sumud - the Finnish Palestine Network, Finland,
29. UJFP (Union Juive Française pour la Paix), France,

30. Gaza Group GCDG, Belgium,
31. Association Belgo-Palestinienne (ABP), Belgium,
32. Deutsch-Palästinensische Gesellschaft, Germany,
33. Salaam Ragazzi dell'Olivo-Milano-ETS, Italy,
34. Finnish-Arab Friendship Society, Finland,
35. FRPMHN (Réseau Francophone Santé Mentale et Solidarité avec la Palestine),
Belgium,
36. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Ireland,
37. Irish Psychologists for Palestine, Ireland,
38. Nederlands Palestina Komitee, Netherlands,
39. Associazione Culturale Liguria Palestina, Italy,
40. Swiss Healthcare Workers Against Genocide (SHWAG), Switzerland,
41. Sanitari per Gaza-Verona, Italy,
42. Dutch Scholars for Palestine, Netherlands,
43. Gerechtigkeit und Frieden in Palästina, Switzerland,
44. Irish Healthcare Workers for Palestine, Ireland,

Individuals (health care/human rights professional, academics etc.):

1. Dr Roberta Baldi Epidemiologist, Department of Public Health, Local Health Authority La Spezia, Italy
2. Dr. Francesca Battistella, psichiatra, La Spezia, Italy
3. Dr. Nozomi Takahashi, Ghent University, Belgium
4. Dr Franco Camandona gynecologist, Italy
5. Dr Andrea Balduzzi, Genoa University (retired), Italy
6. Lucia Bertamino, paediatric nurse, Genoa, Italy
7. Dr. Guido Vanham, Prof. Em Immunovirology Global Health Institute University of Antwerp, Belgium
8. Jan Engelen, prof. em. Kath. Univ. Leuven, Belgium
9. Dr. Gert Van Hecken, University of Antwerp, Belgium
10. Dr. Wim Nerinckx, Flemish Institute for Biotechnology, Ghent, Belgium
11. Jos Dumortir, prof em. KU Leuven, Belgium
12. Prof. Dr. em. Ides Nicaise, KU Leuven, Belgium
13. Dr. Giulia Piccinini Psychiatrist, ATS Genoa, Italy
14. Michel Gevers, Emeritus Professor, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium
15. Perrine Humblet, prof. Hon. Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

16. Frank Roels, emeritus professor, MD, Ghent University, Belgium
17. Prof. Claude Libert, UGent, Belgium
18. Špela Lemež, PhD student, KU Leuven, Belgium
19. Leon Verbruggen, prof em, MD, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
20. Drl Egbert Harmsen, board member BDS Netherlands
21. Claude Cuvelier, em. Professor, MD. Ghent University, Belgium
22. Dr. Karel Arnaut, professor Social & Cultural Anthropology, KU Leuven, Belgium
23. Elena Aoun, Professor of International relations, UCLouvain, Belgium
24. Serge Deruette, Professor, University of Mons
25. Alessandra Bo MD San Martino Hospital Genoa, Italy
26. prof.dr. Marco Blanker, general practitioner, University Medical Center Groningen, The Netherlands
27. Prof. Dr. Petra De Sutter, rector Ghent University, Belgium
28. Em. prof. Dr Jean Paul Van Bendegem, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
29. Dr Emanuela Morelli, Hematologist, INT Napoli,
30. Dr Marc Cosyns, GP, Belgium,
31. Dr. Loes van Schie, scientist Ghent University, Belgium,
32. Prof. Em. Frans Daems, Prof. Em. University of Antwerp, Belgium,
33. Valentina Ritondale, infermiera, Italy,
34. Dr Rami Haidar, medico, Italy,
35. Wim Nerinckx, PhD, Flemish Institute of Biotechnology; Ghent, Belgium
36. Paola De Vitis, medical doctor, Italy,
37. Sonia Biggi, nurse, Italy,
38. Valentina Capetta, Infermiere, Italy,
39. Francesca Battistella, medical doctor, Italy,
40. Roberta Baldi, epidemiologist, Italy,
41. Salvatori Federica, laboratory technician, Italy,
42. Giulia Rossi, therapist, Italy,
43. Chiara Grulls, medical doctor, Italy,
44. Walter Foulon, Prof.em. MD VUB, Belgium,
45. Paola Ghetti, medico, Italy,
46. Prof. Dr. Patrick Deboosere, Prof em, Belgium,
47. Dr. Jean-Jacques Amy, Prof. Em. VUB, Faculty of Medicine, Belgium,
48. Patrick Van der Stuyft, em. prof. dr., Ghent University, Belgium,
49. Dr. Jean-Marie Frère, Emeritus Professor University of Liège, Belgium,
50. Prof. Dr. Wendelien Vantieghem, professor diversity & learning at Ghent University, Belgium,
51. Stef Craps, Professor of English Literature, Ghent University, Belgium,
52. Marco Capelli, Psychologist, Italy,

53. Prof Ana Lourdes de Heriz, Università di Genova, Professor, Italy,
54. Laura Mezzani, Psychologist, Italy,
55. Michela Negro, nurse, Italy,
56. Mariagiulia Agnoletto, Psychiatrist, Italy,
57. Andrea Ventrella, nurse, Italy,
58. Cozzani Roberta, social worker in public health service, Italy,
59. Laura Bertolino, neurological physiotherapist, Italy,
60. Sonia Angarano, atelerista/Ceramista. Italy,
61. Cristina Abba, veterinary, Italy,
62. Maria Elena Indelicato, researcher, Portugal,
63. Nelly Bocchi, pharmacist, Italy,
64. Linda Monaco, educator, Italy,
65. Maria Grazia Daniele, Pensionata ex senatrice PD, Italy,
66. Giuseppe Coscione, Prof em, Italy,
67. Maria Rosaria Masullo, retired senior researcher, Italy,
68. Teuvo Mikkonen, staff nurse, Finland,
69. Marina Rui, University lecturer, Italy,
70. Dr Elif Durmuş, Postdoc researcher, Belgium,
71. Brooke Maddux, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, France,
72. Frachon Irene, medical doctor, France,
73. Teresa Bailey, child psychotherapist, UK,
74. Silvana Agatone, medical doctor, Italy,
75. Martin Kemp, psychoanalytic, psychotherapist, UK
76. Grazia Lomonte, Clinical Psychologist, Belgium,
77. Dr Rebecca Heslin, Psychologist, Ireland,
78. Dr. Karen Dias, Clinical Psychologist, USA,
79. Lahssaini Fouad, Psychologist, Belgium,
80. Jonathan House MD, Psychiatrist, USA,
81. Francis Martens, Psychologist, Belgium,
82. Sissy Lykou, psychotherapist and academic, Ireland,
83. Brid Keenan, Psychotherapist and teacher, UK,
84. Dr Catherine Luxereau, psychiatrist, Belgium,
85. Louise McDonnell, Counsellor & psychotherapist/SEP, Northern Ireland,
86. Tanguy de Foy, Psychologist, Belgium,
87. Joelle Gartner, Psychotherapist and trainer, Ireland
88. Bríd Keenan, Psychotherapist and trainer, Ireland,
89. Cheryl Qamar, Social workers, USA,
90. Professeur émérite Xavier RENDERS, UCLouvain, Belgium,
91. Dr Ruth Stanley, Academic & psychotherapist, Ireland,
92. Elizabeth Berger MD, child psychiatrist, USA,
93. Gráinne Nic An Mháistir, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
94. prof. em. Lieven De Cauter, philosopher, KU Leuven, Belgium,

95. Marie-France Dispaux, Psychologue -psychanalyste, France,
96. Ulrike Bechler, Intensive care nurse, Switzerland,
97. Dr A Bryssinck, Psychiatrist, Belgium,
98. Catherine Coirault, Research Director, France,
99. Journet François, Psychiatrist, France,
100. Cat Mayer, Professor, Belgium,
101. Philippe Cattiez, Psychiatrist, Belgium,
102. Paul Hogan, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
103. Dr Claire Mestre, Psychiatre et anthropologue, Université de Bordeaux, France,
104. Jaak Le Roy, Psychiatrist, Psychoanalist, Belgium
105. Valerie Ballarotti, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
106. Elizabeth Scott, Social Worker, USA,
107. Stephen Cooke, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
108. Neveux Olivier, Researcher, France,
109. Carmel O'Hara, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
110. Clare Hodgins, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
111. Raphaëlle DOYON, Assistant Professor, France,
112. Dr Alan Kessedjian, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, UK,
113. Anna Paré-Anastasiadou, Psychiatrist, France,
114. Dr. Irene Bertolotti, GP, Italy,
115. Nica Massagrande, Anesthesiologist, Italy,
116. Trabucchi Valentina, Osteopathy, Italy,
117. Ingrid Henz, GP, Belgium,
118. Marco Nalbone, Medical doctor, Italy,
119. Dr Bakioui Hafida, Medical doctor, Belgium,
120. Laboureur Françoise, GP, Belgium,
121. Enrico Boano, Nurse, Italy,
122. Nicolas Tebib, GP, Switzerland,
123. Dominique Jadot, Psychologist, Belgium,
124. Roxane Dury, Psychiatric nurse, Belgium,
125. Ibrahim Khayar, Psychiatrist, Belgium,
126. Alessandra Allodi, Medical doctor, Italy,
127. Monette Eiliazadeh, Nurse, UK,
128. Ahmed Chouk, Physical Therapist, UK,
129. Cristina Bet, Fisioterapista, Italy,

130. Boutaher Elias, Family doctor, Belgium,
131. Caoimhe McDermott, Pharmacist, Ireland,
132. Kawtar Hib, Psychologist, Belgium,
133. Hanne Bosselaers, GP, Belgium,
134. Djebara Sarah, Medical doctor, Belgium,
135. Laurent Lob, Physician, Switzerland,
136. Pirjo Pekkola, Nurse, Finland,
137. Maria Ernestina Colardo, retired doctor, Italy,
138. Goossens Philippe, Médecin psychiatre, Belgium,
139. Aoife Twohig, Child Psychiatrist, Ireland,
140. Angela Paganelli, retired doctor, Italy,
141. Dr Siobhan Graham, medical doctor, Ireland,
142. Deirdre Dowdall, GP, Ireland,
143. Dr Victoria Holt, Doctor (GP), UK,
144. Carroll O'Dolan, Medical doctor, Ireland,
145. Vanden Broucke Ria, Psychologist, Belgium,
146. Nathalie Tebib, Medical doctor, Switzerland,
147. Dr James Smith, Emergency medicine, UK,
148. Ian O'Dwyer, Psychotherapist, Ireland,
149. Giuseppe Lo Piccolo, Psychotherapist, Italy,