

I was beaten savagely without knowing the reason

**Bidya man recounts nightmarish
experience in PA custody.**

By Khalid Amayreh in the West Bank



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Beaten:

Kanaan Mustafa Said Shatat

Despite repeated assurances from the Palestinian Authority (PA) that torture has been outlawed in PA interrogation and incarceration facilities, stories of physical and psychological abuse continue to surface in the West Bank. This raises serious questions about the credibility of undertakings made by the PA to local and international human rights organisations operating in the occupied territories.

The following is an accurate translation of a written testimony by Kanaan Mustafa Said Shatat from the village of Bidya in the Salfit District.

Shatat spoke personally to this writer on Tuesday 8 December, recounting the horrible ill-treatment he had been meted out by members of the Palestinian General Intelligence or Mukhabarat last month.

His graphic account underscores the rampant lawlessness still permeating through the PA security apparatus. It also shows that the PA government is quite slack in enforcing its own laws on the various security agencies operating under the PA rubric in the West Bank.

"My name is Kanaan Mustafa Said Shatat from the village of Bidya in the Salfit District. On Monday, 9 November, while I was inside the al-Noor pharmacy at around 7:30 pm, to buy medicine, two officers from the General Intelligence in the Salfit Governorate stormed the pharmacy.

The two officers are Mahmoud Mustafa Mahmoud Kanaan from Bidya, who is forty years of age and married; and Sofyan Abdul Rahman Kamel al Dalew, also from Bidya, and is 30 years' old and single.

As the two stormed the drug store, they attacked me savagely, beating me with their fists all over my body before they dragged me outside in a violent and savage manner. Then the two resumed beating me in the face and head.. Outside the drug store, there was a police patrol whose members helped the two officers force me into a blue vehicle belonging to the Mukhabarat. The pair took me to the police station at Bidya.

There, the police frisked me, took my Identity card and placed me in one room alone. At that time I heard my father's voice, enquiring about me. The police chief told my father that I was not there, which forced me to scream at my dad to tell him that they were lying to him. Then, the police opened the door, with one officer telling me not to speak a word, and that I was a trouble-maker. I told him I was

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not a trouble maker and that I really didn't know why I was being detained, especially since no arrest warrant had been issued against me.

“As many as ten intelligence officers stormed the small chamber, ganged up on me and started beating me ferociously. The assault lasted for ten minutes and caused deep cuts in my skull”

The police chief told me that a Mukhabarat car would come to pick me up soon and that the Police were going to hand me over to the Mukhabarat based on their request. I asked him why they were going to hand me over to the Mukhabarat. He said because the Mukhabarat wanted to question me on certain charges.

About half an hour later, I was taken by a group of Mukhabarat officers to their local center where I was ordered into a small room on the entrance to the building.

Soon afterward, as many as ten intelligence officers stormed the small chamber, ganged up on me and started beating me ferociously. The assault lasted for ten minutes and caused deep cuts in my skull, another one behind my right ear as well as bleeding from my head, lips and teeth. The beating was so harsh that I barely could stand on my feet. Then I was taken to the interrogation office while I was still bleeding. They started questioning me on charges alleging that I had threatened two intelligence officers (Mahmoud Mustafa Kanaan and Hasan al Akraa). When I denied the charges they asked me to wash the blood away.

They actually led me to the washbasin as I was too frail to walk on my feet on my own. Then they took me to another interrogation room. However, as they failed to prove the charges against me, the Mukhabarat's local chief, Muhammed Abdul Hamid, Abu al Abed, entered the room, accompanied by several officers. He asked me about the charges and I answered that I was innocent. Then the chief himself started beating me as I was bleeding and had nothing with which to stop the blood except a small pillow which was soaked in blood.

An hour later, they took me to the local clinic in Bidya where my cuts were stitched up. Taking me back to the Mukhabarat center, the chief told me that I would stay in their custody indefinitely. On the sixth day of my incarceration, (November 15, 2009), they asked me to fill in a form stating my name, whether I was married or single, my political affiliation and which political party I voted for in the past elections. They also asked me why the Israelis arrested me in 2005. I signed the affidavit, which also included my denial of the charges.

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Then I was taken to the office of the military prosecutor in Salfit, Yafi Marayta. There I was asked to state my name, political affiliation, and the charges levelled against me. Marayta warned me that if he found out that the charges were genuine, he would show me what he would do to me!

Then he extended my detention for 15 more days. As I was being led to the military prosecutor's office, I heard an intelligence officer, named Zayd, tell the military prosecutor the following: "I've brought you a Hamas detainee in our custody. He is stubborn, teach him good manners!! Then Marayta said "don't worry."

Afterwards, I was taken to the Salfit police center where I remained incarcerated for 11 more days until I was released on bail on 26 November.

I am civilian citizen and totally innocent of the charges levelled against me. In fact, the Mukhabarat apparatus didn't content itself with beating, humiliating and torturing me, but also contacted my employer, the Palestinian Telecommunication Company, demanding that they fire me from my job, apparently in order to impoverish me and my family. Fortunately, the company didn't succumb to their blackmailing tactic. I really don't know what will happen to me next with regard to the charges against me and also with regard to my job.

Signature: Kanaan Shatat,

Final note: "From the first moment of my abduction from the Noor pharmacy on 9 November, 2009, until I was transferred to the police headquarters in Salfit, the Mukhabarat officers accompanying me never stopped abusing and cursing me every day and every time. It seemed that for those people, bad-mouthing, cursing God and religion and indulging in all sorts of blasphemes were like breathing oxygen."

