

5 July 2026

Urgent Appeal to the Academic and Medical Community in Israel: Act Now to Save the Life of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya.

An appeal to the faculties of medicine and health professions, faculties of law, university administrations, the Israeli Medical Association, professional associations, faculty members, and physicians in Israel.

We, members of Academia for Equality, issue this urgent appeal to the academic, medical, and legal communities in Israel to act immediately to save the life of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, Director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, who has been held by Israel since 27 December 2024 without charge and without criminal proceedings against him.

According to extremely concerning information published by Physicians for Human Rights–Israel and by Dr. Abu Safiya's attorney, Adv. Nasser Odeh, following a prison visit on 2 July 2026, Dr. Abu Safiya is in immediate danger of death.

According to Adv. Odeh's sworn testimony, Dr. Abu Safiya was brought to the meeting shackled at both his hands and feet and escorted by masked prison guards. He bore severe and fresh injuries to his head, around his eyes, on his ears, and on his neck, to the extent that his attorney initially struggled to recognize him. During the visit, he had difficulty breathing and speaking, appeared extremely weak, and on several occasions seemed close to losing consciousness.

According to the account that Dr. Abu Safiya gave to his attorney, Dr. Abu Safiya has been subjected to severe and ongoing violence, has lost consciousness several times, and has not received adequate medical care. He stated that he fears for his life. Based on his direct observations, Adv. Odeh concluded that Dr. Abu Safiya is in immediate, life-threatening danger. In light of his condition, his attorney and Physicians for Human Rights–Israel have urgently appealed to the authorities, demanding his removal from the Rakefet detention facility, access to an independent medical examination, and immediate independent external oversight of his condition.

Faced with this information, silence is not a neutral position.

This is not an abstract political issue. It concerns the life of a physician and hospital director who is being held without charge, under Israel's complete control and, according to international law, in circumstances that raise serious legal concerns. The Israeli authorities bear full responsibility for his safety, health, and life, as well as the absolute obligation to prevent torture, abuse, violence, and medical neglect against anyone held in state custody.

We address this appeal in particular to the deans of Israel's medical faculties, schools of health professions, hospital administrations, ethics committees, faculty members, and especially those teaching medicine and medical ethics, and to physicians throughout Israel. Institutions responsible for educating the next generation of medical professionals cannot teach the sanctity of life, the duty of care, the universality of medical ethics, and the absolute prohibition on torture and abuse, while remaining silent when a physician and hospital director held under Israel's complete control is, according to his attorney's testimony, in immediate danger of death.

This silence is particularly grave in light of the continuing destruction of Gaza's healthcare system and the ongoing harm to physicians, healthcare workers, hospitals, and the ability to provide medical care to the civilian population. Precisely at this moment, Israel's medical faculties and medical community bear a particular professional and moral responsibility to uphold the universality of medical ethics. Medical principles do not stop at national borders, do not depend on the identity of the patient or physician, and do not cease to apply when the person in need of protection is a Palestinian from Gaza.

A Direct Appeal to the Israeli Medical Association

We address a special appeal to the Israeli Medical Association, as the principal professional body representing physicians in Israel, calling on it to raise a clear public voice and to act without delay.

We call upon the Israeli Medical Association to immediately approach the relevant authorities; to demand an urgent and independent medical examination of Dr. Hussam Abu

Safiya; to act to ensure his safety and access to appropriate medical care; to demand his immediate transfer from the Rakefet detention facility where he is imprisoned; and to activate its ethics institutions in response to the grave allegations of violence, abuse, and denial of medical treatment.

Silence by the principal professional organization representing physicians in Israel in the face of a credible threat to the life of a physician held by the state cannot be reconciled with the fundamental principles of medical ethics. The duty to protect human life and the safety of healthcare professionals does not depend on nationality, citizenship, or political identity.

We also appeal to Israel's law faculties, to scholars of constitutional, criminal, and international law, human rights, and legal ethics, and to members of the legal profession. It is impossible to teach the rule of law, the absolute prohibition of torture, the rights of detainees, and the state's obligations toward those in its custody, while remaining silent in the face of information indicating an immediate threat to life and serious allegations of violence and abuse.

We call for immediate action.

We call upon every faculty of medicine and law, every university administration, every medical and professional association, every ethics committee, and especially the Israeli Medical Association, to act within the next 24 hours to:

1. Publish a clear public statement demanding the immediate protection of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's life and safety.
2. Urgently contact the Attorney General, the Israel Prison Service, the Ministry of Health, and the relevant oversight authorities, demanding his immediate transfer from the Rakefet detention facility and the protection of his safety.
3. Demand an immediate, independent, and impartial medical examination by physicians who are not subordinate to the Israel Prison Service, and the provision of full medical treatment without delay.

4. Demand an immediate visit by an independent judicial or other official authority capable of directly assessing his condition and the conditions of his detention.
5. Demand an independent, effective, and transparent investigation into the allegations of violence, abuse, and torture, as well as into the concerns regarding the denial of adequate medical care.
6. Demand immediate protection for all Palestinian physicians and healthcare workers held by Israel, including access to independent medical examinations, legal representation, and effective external monitoring.
7. Demand the release of Dr. Abu Safiya and all healthcare personnel held without charge or trial, in accordance with the call of Physicians for Human Rights–Israel; or, at a minimum, demand urgent, independent, and effective judicial review of the legality and continued necessity of their detention and of the conditions under which they are held.

We also call upon every physician, every lecturer and researcher, every legal professional, and every member of the academic community: do not wait for your institutions to act on your behalf. Contact your university leadership, demand emergency discussions, write to your deans, to the Israeli Medical Association, and to the relevant authorities.

When a person is held in state custody, the state bears full responsibility for that person's life, health, and safety. When there is a credible and immediate threat to that person's life, institutions of medicine, law, and academia that profess a commitment to human life, ethics, fundamental rights, and the rule of law also bear a responsibility to act.

Every hour may be decisive.

Academia for Equality

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أكاديميون من أجل المساواة

Signed,

Academia for Equality

Academia for Equality is an organization of more than one thousand members working to advance equality, social justice, and Jewish–Arab partnership in academia and in public life. The organization works to strengthen the academic community, promote collaborative initiatives, and influence academic discourse and public policy.