

A case of arbitrary detention:

I was provoked while watching the uprooting of the olive trees which were loaded with fruit. The owners were watching through their windows after the curfew was imposed. I was so deeply moved that I found myself standing in front of one of the bulldozers. The driver stopped just before hitting me. The authorities and border police all gathered around me while I was shouting, "Why are you doing this? This is a terrible and unimaginable crime! This is illegal madness!" Moments later, a border policeman approached me and pushed me out of the way of the bulldozer. He demanded my Identity Card and informed me that I was under arrest. He then ordered me into his jeep in which he was roving the area. He then spoke to an army officer and handed me over to him. The officer was lame and wore a knitted red skull cap of the Jewish religious people on his head. He was full of hatred. He pushed me violently into the military vehicle and started to drive from one place to another. Some time later I was ordered to get out of his car and to get into another border police car. Moving me from the army vehicle to the border police car was repeated several times. At last they decided that the army would take care of my detention. So the soldiers moved me to an area of the woods to the west of the village. There the civil police who were present in large numbers detained me.

There I found also detained two youths from the village as well as the daughter of the village Mukhtar. The two youths had their hands tied with a plastic rope. The policemen, however, did not find anything to tie my hands with.

The time was approaching 1:00 pm. The policemen whispered to each other, then decided to put us in a cell-car. It was terribly hot, and the car was standing under the sun. Inside the car, we were nearly suffocating. We asked them to let us out but to no avail. Then we asked them to move us under the trees but again to no avail. We then knew that the policemen were ignoring us in order to have their lunch. After they had finished, they offered us some lunch but we refused it. The girl, who remained outside the cell-car, also refused the offer of lunch.

The time was now nearly 4:00 pm when a high-ranking civil police officer arrived. He asked the policeman in charge about us, and the policeman said, "These are two detainees from the village of Al-Midya, but the third," pointing at me, "is an inciter." I was taken out of the car after the two other youths and had my hands cuffed with shackles. Then I was transferred to the Ramallah police station. There I was informed that the charge against me was trespassing on a military area under curfew and inciting the villagers to resist the security men.

After I gave my testimony, in which I described how I stood in the way of the bulldozer which was uprooting the olive trees and what happened after that, I was transferred to the Russian Compound police headquarters in Jerusalem. There I was put in the section of political prisoners. I remained there for 96 hours without interrogation.

I was then released and the policeman wanted me to sign some papers. I told him I had not committed any crime, I had just stood in the way of a bulldozer which was uprooting olive trees. He answered me that I was lucky for if he had been there, he would have shot me.

That was not the first attack to have taken place. Several other attempts had been made before to seize the village lands. The Israeli authorities led an attack in the winter of 1982