

Minister of Justice
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Dear Minister Levin,

I am writing to you about Mohammed al-Halabi, a civil engineer and a humanitarian worker from Gaza City, who is currently serving a 12-year sentence in Ramon Prison, southern Israel, after a flawed process on charges of financing "terrorism" that remain unsubstantiated and appear to be an attempt to delegitimise and intimidate the humanitarian sector and its workers. He filed an appeal against his conviction before the Israeli High Court. The first hearing is scheduled for 17 May.

Mohammed al-Halabi was arrested on 15 June 2016 and convicted on 15 June 2022, after a deeply flawed trial, of diverting millions of dollars to the Hamas administration, which Israel considers a terrorist organisation. His lawyer had not been granted access to his defence statements or a copy of the appeal he filed. Mohammed al-Halabi, who was formerly the head of the Gaza office of the US-based charity World Vision, spent six years in detention pending trial. He was interrogated without legal representation, tried in secret hearings with multiple postponements and over 170 sessions, and convicted on secret evidence. He also said that he was tortured during the interrogations.

The Israeli authorities have not presented any evidence that he diverted any funds. Similarly, the outcome of the audit conducted by his employer and a state donor agency and other abundant evidence, including emails, witness testimonies, expert opinions and budget documents that clear Mohammed al-Halabi of any wrongdoings were submitted by his legal representative but were completely disregarded by the court. His trial and subsequent wrongful conviction represent a glaring example of the violations of the right to a fair trial and due process.

Ahead of his appeal hearing on 17 May, I call on you to quash the wrongful conviction of Mohammed al-Halabi, drop the fabricated charges against him, discount all statements obtained under torture, and ensure his prompt release unless he is given a re-trial in proceedings that meet international standards for fair trials. I also call on you to ensure that Mohammed al-Halabi's complaint of torture and other ill-treatment, filed to the Ministry of Justice in January 2018, be urgently investigated and those found responsible brought to justice in fair trials. Finally, his defence must be granted with unhindered access to all hearing protocols, defence statements, casefiles and so-called "secret" evidence.

Yours sincerely,