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Europe: Founder of Electronic Intifada expelled from Switzerland

Thursday 30 January 2025, by [ABUNIMAH Ali](#) (Date first published: 28 January 2025).

I'm free! I wrote this on the plane and I'm posting it just after landing at Istanbul.

On Monday evening I was brought to Zurich airport in handcuffs, in a small metal cage inside a windowless prison van and led all the way to the plane by police. This is after three days and two nights in a Swiss prison cut off from communication with the outside world, in a cell 24 hours a day with one cell mate, not even permitted to contact my family.

On Saturday in a police interview in the presence of my lawyer they accused me of "offending against Swiss law" without ever telling me what crime I had committed in Switzerland or listing any charges. As far as I know I have not been charged with any crime whatsoever and I was held in "administrative detention."

On Sunday morning, they took me from my cell for questioning by Swiss defense ministry intelligence agents without the presence of my lawyer, and they again refused to allow me to contact her or my family. I refused to talk to them without my lawyer and told them take me back to my cell. During my imprisonment I refused every meal and every cup of coffee or tea they offered me except the last meal, after I knew I would be going home. I accepted only water, which is the right of every human being. All of this was after I was abducted off the street around 1:30pm on Saturday while on my way to the Palestine teach-in by undercover agents, handcuffed, forced into an unmarked car and sped straight to the prison. My "crime"? Being a journalist who speaks up for Palestine and against Israel's genocide and settler-colonial savagery and those who aid and abet it.

I came to Switzerland at the invitation of Swiss citizens to talk about justice for Palestine, to talk about accountability for a genocide in which Switzerland too is complicit. But while I was hauled off to prison like a dangerous criminal before I even had a chance to say a word, the Israeli president Isaac Herzog, who declared at the start of the genocide that there are no civilians in Gaza, no innocents, received a red carpet welcome in Davos, a carpet soaked in the blood of the more than 47,000 known victims of the genocide and the thousands more still under the rubble, or who died of deliberately inflicted starvation and denial of medical care. And on this very day Netanyahu freely travels to Poland to make a mockery of the Auschwitz commemoration despite an outstanding ICC arrest warrant.

That is the perverse, unjust world we live in. This ordeal lasted three days but that taste of prison was more than enough to leave me in even greater awe of the Palestinian heroes who endure months and years in the prisons of the genocidal oppressor. More than ever I know that the debt we owe them is one we can never repay and all of them must be free and they must remain our focus.

The police gave me my phone back only at the gate of the plane so I'm only seeing now the extent of the overwhelming support and solidarity from all over the world. I'm deeply grateful to each and

every person who stood up for me. I'm especially grateful to my lawyer Dina Raewel and her team, to our friends in Zurich who I learned afterwards demonstrated outside the prison, to my family and my colleagues at EI and so many others. I honestly had no idea what was happening outside that concrete room! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I want to tell the whole story of what happened, perhaps in an [@intifada](#) livestream in the next day or two, because I think it's important for people to know the depths to which their Western so-called "democracies" have sunk in the abject service of genocidal Zionism. Right now I'm glad to be on my way home. I'm looking forward to hugging my mom and dad, taking a shower and sleeping in my own bed.

Journalism is not a crime! Speaking out for Palestine is not a crime! Standing against racist genocidal Zionism is not a crime!

Say it with me: From the River to the Sea Palestine Will Be Free!

Ali Abunimah

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