



In spite of clearly identifying himself as a journalist, Yousef received bullet wounds to both legs during protests in Gaza. Surgeons operated successfully on Yousef's right leg at Shifa Hospital, but they were unable to save his left leg and on 9 April Yousef had an above-knee amputation. 26 April 2018 – After a first meeting on 11 April, WHO met again with Yousef after his referral out of Gaza to Istishari Arab Hospital in Ramallah in the West Bank. Yousef was transferred to Shifa Hospital in Gaza after he was shot during protests on 30 March. Yousef is studying Media Studies and Public Relations at Al Azhar University in Gaza and he attended the first demonstrations on 30 March east of Al Bureij refugee camp as a photojournalist. He was wearing a vest that clearly marked him as 'PRESS' when he was shot in both legs. Surgeons managed to save Yousef's right leg, but on 9 April he had an above knee amputation to his left leg.

“You know, when I first woke up I still had hope that both my legs would be saved and I would return to my normal life. I was absolutely devastated when they decided to amputate my leg.”

After WHO met Yousef in Gaza he was discharged from hospital on 12 April. On 16 April Yousef’s appeal through Al Mezan Center for Human Rights to the Supreme Court in Israel was upheld and he was granted a permit to travel to Istishari Arab Hospital in Ramallah. Yousef describes the process of having to apply for a permit to travel:

“Of course it was stressful. My father and uncles were going every day to follow up on the application with the Coordination and Liaison Office and human rights organizations, including Al Mezan Center for Human Rights. Finally I was given a permit to travel, but 12 of my relatives – my dad, my mum, my siblings and some uncles – were all refused permits to travel with me. In the end my grandfather of 85 years has come with me. Our family is paying for him to stay in an apartment near the hospital. My cousin is from Hebron and he comes to see me too.”

When WHO met Yousef in Gaza he was one of 6 patients who had applied to Israeli authorities for a permit to travel for health care. At that stage, all permit applications had so far been unsuccessful. Following the Supreme Court decision on 16 April, patient permit applications to exit Gaza were approved. As of 24 April, 9 out of 20 applications by patients injured in protests since 30 March in Gaza were approved and 11 denied.

Immediately after receiving his approval to travel, Yousef went by ambulance to Erez checkpoint, to exit the Gaza Strip to Israel and onto Istishari Arab Hospital in the West Bank. They were kept waiting at Erez for 2 and a half hours and Yousef was searched before being transferred to another ambulance on the Israeli side.

Yousef talks about his hopes for the future: “I still want to become a photojournalist and to finish my studies, but right now my main priority is to get an artificial limb so that I can walk again ... I’m realistic. When things are bad I recognize they’re bad. When things are getting better, they’re getting better. I’m used to being my own support.”

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