

*We have received the following petition from Valentina Pedone, who is a member of CERM as well as a member of the Scientific Board of the Series of Occasional Papers Quaderni del Cerm, which we are glad to subscribe and make more widely known.*

The Centre for Research on Minorities upholds and promotes the principles of freedom to teach and to carry out research, as well as the inviolability of teachers and researchers, as well as undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. students. We would like to express our condemnation of Khaled El Qaisi's precautionary detention without access to his own legal counsel. Our solidarity goes out to Khaled El Qaisi's family and friends, and we wish that the efforts made to ensure his release may rapidly succeed.

Daniele Brigadoi Cologna, Direttore del Cerm, *Department of Theoretical and Applied Sciences, University of Insubria (Varese-Como, Italy)*

Paola Bocale, Vice-Direttrice del Cerm, *Department of Theoretical and Applied Sciences, University of Insubria (Varese-Como, Italy)*

Dear Colleagues,

we hereby write you with a prayer to share and sustain.

On August 31<sup>th</sup>, Khaled El Qaisi, a student of Eastern Languages and Civilization at Sapienza Università di Roma and co-founder of the Centro Documentazione Palestinese in Rome, after having been searched by the Israeli army at Allenby check-point between the West Bank and Jordan, has been arrested and held in Ashkelon detention center, south of Tel Aviv, without the possibility to speak to his lawyer, waiting for an accusation unknown to this very day. The recounting of the arrest can be read in the heartfelt letter written by his wife Francesca Antinucci, with him and their four year-old son when forced to leave, and Lucia Marchetti, his mother, attached below. The student is a Palestinian-Italian citizen, on his way back home after a family vacation in Bethlehem, where he was born, in the occupied territories. On September 7<sup>th</sup>, after a week of detention, a first court hearing took place, about which Khaled's legal lawyer has been forbidden to reveal any detail, furthering the detention of another week. A second hearing has been scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup>, which might be followed by a longer period of detention, even without any accusation being formally issued. Meanwhile, his precautionary detention continues, without the possibility of being assisted by his lawyer during the daily interrogation in jail.

Before being a student and Italian citizen, we think of Khaled as a human being to whom the most basic rights and juridical guarantees of liberal democracies are forbidden. The academic community should protect its pupils by making its voice heard in such a daunting situation, with unspeakable causes and consequences. Sapienza University has already expressed its

support in a September 8<sup>th</sup> plea (<https://www.uniroma1.it/en/notizia/sapienza-calls-quick-solution-haled-el-qaisi-case>), and a number of national as well as international association (Amnesty International, ANPI, CGIL) made this cause theirs through petitions and official inquiries.

With this letter we call for a firm condemnation of the events and an expression of solidarity for his family and friends, who are currently following on a number of initiatives to free Khaled and bringing him back home to his loved ones and to his activities of translator and scholar of middle east culture. We would then be grateful to subscribe this plea and circulate it among your academic contacts. Endorsements can be communicated by replying to [sarin.marchetti@uniroma1.it](mailto:sarin.marchetti@uniroma1.it)

All best wishes,

Sarin Marchetti, Dipartimento di Filosofia, Sapienza Università di Roma  
Valentina Pedone, Dipartimento di Lingue, Intercultura, Letteratura e Psicologia, Università degli Studi di Firenze

Roma, 11 settembre 2023

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On 31 August Khaled El Qaisi, husband and son respectively of the writers, was detained by the Israeli authorities and is still imprisoned by virtue of a precautionary measure pending verification.

Last Thursday, Khaled, who has dual citizenship, Italian and Palestinian, was crossing the 'Allenby' border crossing with his wife and son after spending the holidays with his family in Bethlehem, Palestine.

At the luggage and document check, after a long wait, he was handcuffed under the incredulous gaze of his 4-year-old son, his wife, as well as all those who were waiting to resume their journey. The wife's requests for explanations were not answered, rather she was asked questions and then sent off with her son to Jordanian territory, without telephone, cash or contacts, in a foreign country. In the late afternoon, the wife and child were able to reach the Italian Embassy thanks to the human generosity of some Palestinian women.

Khaled, a translator and student of the department of Oriental Languages and Civilisations at the University of Rome, esteemed for his passionate commitment to the collection, dissemination and translation of Palestinian historical material, is one of the founders of the Palestinian Documentation Centre, an association that aims to promote Palestinian culture in Italy.

His family and friends, but also those who simply had the opportunity to meet him, are anxiously waiting for updates.

At the moment, he has not been able to meet his lawyer and there is still little news about his safety.

All we have heard from the consulate and his lawyer is that he will face a hearing on Thursday, 7 September.

In the meantime, we imagine Khaled in complete isolation, with no contact with the outside world, with no real perception of the passage of time, under the pressure of continuous interrogations, anguished about the fate of his own son and his wife left in the lurch with the only image in their eyes of his deportation in handcuffs.

The situation is therefore very serious.

We await with great anxiety the resolution of this unjust imprisonment. We call on whoever has the power to do so to ascertain Khaled's health condition and, above all, to exert all necessary pressure for his speedy release.

Francesca Antinucci, wife  
Lucia Marchetti, mother

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