

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant  
Israel Ministry of Defense  
**Sent by Email: [pniot@mod.gov.il](mailto:pniot@mod.gov.il)**

Ambassador Alon Bar  
Embassy of Israel in Italy  
**Sent by Email: [cao-assistant@roma.mfa.gov.il](mailto:cao-assistant@roma.mfa.gov.il)**

28 September 2023

Dear Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Ambassador Alon Bar,

We write on behalf of the Italian Society for Middle East Studies (SeSaMO), the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) and the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our concern for the Italian-Palestinian student Khaled El Qaisi.

SeSaMO is a leading Italian organisation devoted to the study of the Middle East and North Africa, while BRISMES was founded in 1973 to encourage and promote the study of the Middle East and is the leading European association in this field, with a global membership of academics and students and others who deal professionally with the Middle East. MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa, and has nearly 2,800 members worldwide. All three associations are committed to ensuring academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

As associations that are vested in Middle East scholarship and education, we are deeply concerned for the well-being of Khaled El Qaisi who was arrested on August 31, 2023, by the Israeli border police at the Allenby bridge while he, his wife and son were on their way from the West Bank to Amman to return to Italy. El Qaisi was handcuffed in front of his four-year-old child and he is currently detained in an Israeli prison without charge. El Qaisi studies Oriental Languages and Civilisations at La Sapienza University in Rome, is a professional translator, and is among the founders of the Palestinian Documentation Centre in Rome.

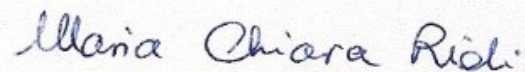
On 21 September, his detention was further extended for another 11 days without charges. From what we understand, El Qaisi is interrogated on a daily basis without a lawyer, while the allegations against him are not clear.

SeSaMO, BRISMES and MESA call upon you to ensure the immediate protection of Khaled El Qaisi's basic human rights, including the presumption of innocence and the right to due process, thus echoing the demands made by national and international associations, including the UN Special Rapporteur for the Palestinian Territories and Amnesty International Italy. Moreover, as Amnesty International Italy has noted, 'Khaled's case is unfortunately not an isolated case. Israel detains 5,000 Palestinians in flagrant violation of international law and due process, more than 1,200 without charge or trial'.

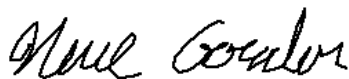
SeSaMO, BRISMES and MESA call on you to intervene to ensure the immediate release of Khaled El Qaisi.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Rosita Di Peri and Maria Chiara Rioli  
On behalf of the Board and the Committee on Academic Freedom of SeSaMO



Neve Gordon  
Professor of Human Rights Law  
On behalf of the BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom



Eve Troutt Powell  
Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania  
President of MESA