

Urteil ist rechtskräftig Auftritts-Verbot bei "Palästina-Kongress" in Berlin war rechtswidrig  
RBB, Do 06.11.2025, 17:38 Uhr

Das politische Betätigungsverbot für einen britisch-palästinensischen Arzt im Kontext des "[Palästina-Kongresses](#)" in Berlin im April 2024 war rechtswidrig. Ein entsprechendes [Urteil des Verwaltungsgerichts Berlin vom Juli](#) ist rechtskräftig, wie das Obergerverwaltungsgericht Berlin-Brandenburg (OVG) mitteilte.

Das Gericht hat nach eigenen Angaben einen Antrag des Landes Berlin abgewiesen, womit ein Urteil der ersten Instanz angegriffen und ein Berufungsverfahren erreicht werden sollte. Die vorgelegte Begründung erfülle jedoch nicht die gesetzlichen Vorgaben, die eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Urteil des Verwaltungsgerichts erfordern, wie es von einem OVG-Sprecher hieß. Deswegen musste sich das Gericht inhaltlich nicht mit der Entscheidung des Verwaltungsgerichts befassen.

[Verbot auch Samstag und Sonntag](#)

[Polizei beendet umstrittenen "Palästina-Kongress" in Berlin](#)

Laut Urteil hätte die Ausländerbehörde dem Chirurgen Ghassan Abu-Sittah die Teilnahme an dem Kongress und auch jegliche Veröffentlichungen und Interviews nicht verbieten dürfen. Als Grund hatte die Behörde damals die Gefahr angeführt, Abu-Sittah könnte auf dem Treffen die Terrorattacke der islamistischen Hamas am 7. Oktober 2023 in Israel glorifizieren und die Vernichtung Israels befürworten.

Das Verwaltungsgericht befand dagegen, dass nicht zu erwarten gewesen sei, dass Äußerungen Abu-Sittahs die freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung oder die öffentliche Sicherheit und Ordnung gefährdet hätten.



Archivbild: Wieland Hoban, Vorstand Jüdische Stimme, und Karin De Rigo, Spitzenkandidatin der Partei MERA25 in Deutschland für die Europawahl, sitzen bei einer Pressekonferenz zu dem Palästina-Kongress 2024 in Berlin. (Quelle: dpa/Gollnow)

**Ghassan Soleiman Abu-Sittah** ([Arabic](#): غسان أبو ستة; born 1969 in Kuwait) is a British-Palestinian [plastic](#) and reconstructive surgeon who specialises in [craniofacial surgery](#), aesthetic surgery, [cleft lip](#) and palate surgery, and trauma-related injuries.<sup>[12]</sup> Since April 2024 he has served as [Rector of the University of Glasgow](#).

He is known for providing medical assistance as a surgeon in twelve crisis and conflict areas, like in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, where he supported local clinics and doctors, particularly in the [Gaza Strip](#). He first visited the Gaza Strip as a medical student during the [First Intifada](#) in 1989, and was a member of [Medical Aid for Palestinians](#) during the [Second Intifada](#) starting 2000. He also travelled to the Gaza Strip during the [2008–2009 war](#), the [2012 operation](#), the [2014 war](#), and the [2018 Great March of Return](#).<sup>[13]</sup>

Abu-Sittah returned to the Gaza Strip after the start of the [Gaza war](#) in 2023, where he provided medical assistance with [Doctors Without Borders](#) out of the [Al-Shifa Hospital](#). He has spoken to news outlets and participated in press conferences discussing his experiences. In January 2024, he travelled to [The Hague](#) to meet with [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) investigators.

## Early life and education

Abu-Sittah was born in 1969 in [Kuwait](#) to a [Palestinian](#) father and a [Lebanese](#) mother. He is the nephew of [Salman Abu Sitta](#).<sup>[14]</sup> Abu-Sittah's father's family originated in Ma'in Abu Sitta, south east of Gaza, where they had their house and Abu-Sittah's grandfather had built a school. During the [Nakba](#), Zionist armed forces [Haganah](#) attacked the village, destroying indiscriminately and shooting anyone who got in their way.<sup>[15]</sup> His father's family [were expelled](#) from their land and became refugees in the [Gaza Strip](#). They later moved to Kuwait and, in the 1980s, to the [United Kingdom](#).<sup>[16]</sup>  
<sup>[17]</sup>

In 1988, Abu-Sittah followed in his father's footsteps and studied medicine at Glasgow University.<sup>[17]</sup>  
<sup>[18]</sup>

## Career

After receiving his medical education at the [University of Glasgow](#) and completing his residency training in London, Abu-Sittah began working for the [National Health Service](#) (NHS).<sup>[19]</sup> He pursued three specialised fellowships: Pediatric Craniofacial Surgery and Cleft Surgery at [Great Ormond Street Hospital](#), as well as Trauma Reconstruction at the [Royal London Hospital](#).<sup>[16]</sup>

In January 2011, Abu-Sittah joined the faculty of the [American University of Beirut Hospital](#) and moved to [Beirut](#).<sup>[19]</sup> He also provided remote assistance for surgeons working in the Gaza Strip.<sup>[10]</sup> While in Lebanon, Abu Sittah's demonstrated his interest in Palestinian politics by writing Opinions for local papers.<sup>[11]</sup>

He worked as the director of AUB's Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department from 2012 until September 2020.<sup>[8][12][13]</sup> In 2015, he also co-founded and co-directed the Conflict Medicine Program at the AUB's Global Health Institute.<sup>[12][9]</sup>

Abu-Sittah returned to live in London with his wife and three sons, providing reconstructive and aesthetic consultations at his [clinic](#) in 2020. Since 2021, he was a lecturer at the Centre for Blast Injury Studies at [Imperial College London](#) and at the Conflict and Health Research Group of [King's College London](#).<sup>[6][12]</sup>

Abu-Sittah first visited the [Gaza Strip](#) as a medical student during the [First Intifada](#) in 1989.<sup>[8][12]</sup> He was inspired to focus on [conflict medicine](#) by [Ang Swee Chai](#).<sup>[12]</sup> Abu-Sittah travelled to Gaza as a member of [Medical Aid for Palestinians](#) to provide medical assistance during the [Second Intifada](#), the [2008–2009 Gaza War](#), the [2012 Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip](#), the [2014 Gaza War](#), and the [2018–2019 Gaza border protests](#).<sup>[13][14]</sup> He worked on voluntary missions in twelve crisis and conflict areas in the [West Asia](#), like in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, where he supported local clinics and doctors.<sup>[8][9][15]</sup>

Abu-Sittah was an editor and co-author of the book *Reconstructing the War Injured Patient* (2017) and *The War Injured Child: From Point of Injury Treatment Through Management and Continuum of Care* (2023).<sup>[12]</sup> He is a trustee of the [Institute for Palestine Studies](#).<sup>[16]</sup> In April 2024, he was elected the [Rector of the University of Glasgow](#).<sup>[17]</sup>

## Gaza war

Abu-Sittah returned to Gaza on 9 October 2023 at the onset of the [Gaza war](#). He told Vogue Arabia that he provided medical assistance with [Doctors Without Borders](#) at [Al-Shifa Hospital](#) and [Al-Ahli Arab Hospital](#), operating on victims of the conflict.<sup>[18][8][19][20]</sup> Abu-Sittah was at [Al-Ahli Arab Hospital during the night of the attack](#) and wrote: "This incident served as a litmus test for what was to come: Israel's full war on Gaza's healthcare infrastructure. After Al-Ahli was hit, and no one was held to account, the domino pieces began to fall rapidly. Hospitals were targeted one after the other. It became obvious that the attacks were systemic."<sup>[21]</sup>

He witnessed the war and spoke to news outlets and posted updates on [Twitter](#) about the hospital and some of the patients during the [Al-Shifa Hospital siege](#).<sup>[20][22][23]</sup>

On 16 October 2023, Abu-Sittah's family in London was questioned by the [Metropolitan Police](#) about his work in Gaza.<sup>[8][24][7]</sup>

On 18 November, after 43 days voluntary work during the war, Abu-Sittah returned to England, as he became "redundant" because he could no longer perform surgeries due to a lack of medical supplies.<sup>[25]</sup> In London he gave a press conference discussing his experiences,<sup>[18][26]</sup> and gave testimony that he treated patients suffering from [white phosphorus](#) burns, which the Israeli army denied using.<sup>[26]</sup> [Scotland Yard's](#) War Crimes Unit contacted Abu-Sittah for witness testimony as it is obliged to gather evidence for the [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) probe into alleged [war crimes](#) committed in Gaza.<sup>[27][28]</sup>

In January 2024, he travelled to the [Netherlands](#) to meet with [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) investigators in [The Hague](#).<sup>[29][18][24][7]</sup> And he gave evidence to the [International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) for [South Africa's genocide case against Israel](#). The ICJ also heard [Nicaragua's lawsuit against Germany](#) for facilitating genocide against Palestine by supplying weapons under the [Genocide Convention](#).<sup>[15]</sup>

Abu-Sittah was elected [Rector](#) of his [alma mater](#), the University of Glasgow, on 26 March 2024, winning 80% of the vote.<sup>[30][17]</sup>

[The Times](#) reported that Abu-Sittah had compared Israeli leadership to "the psychosis of the Germans in the 30s and the 40s.", further characterising the supporting western powers, including the US, UK, Germany, France, Australia and Canada, as being "the axis of genocide".<sup>[31]</sup>

In April 2024, German authorities denied his entry to Germany while he was en route to speak at the Palestine Congress conference in Berlin where he would present evidence on the war in Gaza and his witness statement as a doctor working in two hospitals. Berlin also denied entry to Germany

to other guests, including former Greek Finance Minister [Yanis Varoufakis](#) ([DIEM25](#)), who was also due to speak at the Palestine Congress conference. Shortly thereafter, the event was shut down by the police who said they cancelled it because [Salman Abu Sitta](#), Ghassan Abu Sittah's uncle and one of the event speakers, was "forbidden from being politically active in Germany". Organisers of the event had, according to their statements after the cancellation, not been informed of this ban.<sup>[32]</sup>

He was scheduled to speak to the [Senate in France](#) about the medical crisis in Gaza at the invitation of a Green Senator but was denied entry to France, on 4 May 2024, based on a [Schengen-Area-wide](#) entry ban for one year against him put in place by German authorities.<sup>[33][34]</sup> Lawyers were able to provide the Greens with a link that allowed Abu-Sittah to join the symposium via video.<sup>[15]</sup> Abu-Sittah was scheduled to speak to authorities in the ICC, which was exploring issuing arrest warrants for Israeli war criminals, including [Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu](#).

Lawyers of the [International Centre of Justice for Palestinians](#) (ICJP) challenged the ban with the help of German lawyers.<sup>[34]</sup> Subsequently the ICJP announced the travel restriction was overturned.<sup>[35]</sup> And the [Potsdam Administrative Court](#) ruled on 14 May 2024 that the measures taken against Abu-Sittah were unlawful.<sup>[36]</sup>

After thousands of people suffered "almost identical injuries" when with [PETN](#)<sup>[37]</sup> [booby-trapped pagers](#) were detonated in the [coordinated Israeli attack](#) in [Lebanon](#) and [Syria](#) on 17 September 2024, Abu-Sittah volunteered at the [American University of Beirut Medical Center](#), providing medical assistance.<sup>[38][39]</sup>

## Personal life

As of 2023, he lives in London with his wife and three sons.<sup>[40]</sup>

## Awards

Ghassan Abu Sitta is recipient of several recognitions including the [Royal College of Surgeons fellowship](#) in 2010 and the [American University of Beirut Humanism and Professionalism award](#) in 2015. He was granted the [TRT World Citizen of the Year award](#) and the [TAKREEM Lifetime Achievement award](#) 2023.<sup>[41]</sup> In 2018, American University of Beirut's Bioethics and Professionalism program inaugurated *The Ghassan Abu-Sittah Library* in his honour.<sup>[6]</sup>