

# Palestinian contortionist seeks to flip record books

Yousef Al-Bahtini, a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy invited to attempt the record attempt for "fastest time to travel 20 metres in a contortion roll" by Guinness World Records, shows off his acrobatic skills

## Gaza City

As 12-year-old Palestinian Yousef al-Bahtini distorts his body into almost impossible shapes, he dreams of entering the Guinness World Records.

That dream could come true in the coming weeks, provided Jordan and Israel grant him permits to travel for a time trial.

Bahtini lives in Gaza, the Palestinian enclave of two million people sealed off by Israel and Egypt.

But using YouTube videos and with his family's help, he has taught himself to bend in seemingly impossible ways.

And now his family believe

Guinness should recognise him.

"This talent was discovered by my brother and I've improved it. I will participate in the Guinness Book of Records with a forward movement of 20 metres in 14 seconds, and it's name is 'The Roll,'" said Bahtini.

The move involves rolling forward onto your stomach before flicking your bent legs up behind you into a crab position, then rolling back through and dropping onto your chest again.

The current record, set in 2013 by Britain's Leilani Franco, is 20 metres (45 feet) in 17 seconds.

Bahtini's family say he has done it in 14, and sent the evidence to Guinness to prove it.

The company wrote to the family in July to say he had been accepted for a time trial.

They don't, however, have an office in Gaza so Bahtini must travel to Jordan for an official test.

The family are waiting for a Jordanian permit, after which they will apply for permission to transit through Israel.

"Guinness are understanding

of the circumstances in the Gaza Strip and therefore have not specified a particular date for our participation," Yousef's brother Mohammed, who is also his trainer, said.

He added they wanted to get his name into the Guinness World Records to "raise the name of Palestine high".

If successful, Bahtini would be the second Gazan contortionist to enter the Guinness records book in a year.

In February, 13-year-old Mohammad al-Sheikh broke the record for the most full body revolutions maintaining a chest stand in one minute.

The move involves lying on the chest, bending the back to put the feet in front of the head then rotating the hips to run the feet in laps around the body.

Israel, which has fought three wars with Palestinian militants in Gaza since 2008, has maintained a crippling blockade on the territory for more than a decade, and its residents receive only a few hours of electricity a day. (AFP)

