

- **Eliminating Witnesses on Genocide**
- **and Ethnic Cleansing Crimes in the Gaza Strip**
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Report on the Targeting of Journalists and Media Institutions

in the Gaza Strip During the Genocide



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	(I)
Executive Summary	(II)
Recommendations	(V)
Introduction	(1)
Report Methodology	(3)
Part One: Violations by Occupation Forces Against Journalists and Media Outlets	(5)
1. Crimes Violating the Right to Life and Physical Safety	(5)
1.1. Deliberate Targeting of Journalists During Their Work	(6)
1.2. Journalists Killed or Injured While on Duty	(17)
1.3. Killing and Injuring Journalists During Continuous Bombardment across the Gaza Strip	(19)
2. Destruction of Media Offices and Institutions as a Form of Genocide	(20)
3. Arrest and Torture of Journalists	(26)
4. Missing Journalists	(31)
Part Two: Legal Protection Provided by International Humanitarian Law to Journalists and Media Institutions	(34)
1. Legal Protection for Journalists Under International Humanitarian Law	(34)
2. Protection for Media Institutions and Equipment Under International Humanitarian Law	(37)

Foreword

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Since the onset of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, it has been evident that the Israeli military has deliberately targeted journalists. From the beginning of the conflict, there was a clear and targeted assault on journalists, resulting in the deaths and injuries of several, with others still missing and their fate unknown. Additionally, the Israeli forces deliberately targeted various media offices and headquarters from the first week of the war, despite prominent markings and the known coordinates and locations of these offices.

Throughout the months of the Israeli war on Gaza, the Israeli military's actions against journalists have been overt and systematic. This includes direct attacks on journalists in the field, resulting in deaths, injuries, and arrests, as well as attempts to tarnish their reputations by linking them to militant activities or accusing them of participating in combat, which jeopardizes their safety and exposes them to potential killing, detention, or persecution. Moreover, journalists have faced a long list of obstructions and difficulties that hinder their coverage of the ongoing conflict, including penalties on social media platforms that are crucial for journalism and media outreach.

In its actions against journalism and journalists, the Israeli military has flagrantly violated international laws and norms that require all parties in conflict to respect journalists and freedom of expression. Despite adhering to all protective measures and clear indicators of their identities, journalists have been directly targeted, resulting in several deaths and injuries.

The targeting also extended to the homes of journalists and their places of refuge, leading to further casualties and ongoing pressure through threats and destruction of their properties to intimidate and deter their colleagues who continue to cover the current events.

Some specialized and international bodies have classified the Israeli actions against Palestinian journalists in the occupied territories, and during the war in Gaza, as war crimes. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and human rights organizations have condemned these actions as crimes aimed at obstructing journalism and stifling freedom of expression, in violation of all international conventions and laws that protect these rights, especially in conflict zones.

Executive Summary

- The targeting of journalists and media institutions in the Gaza Strip has surged to unprecedented levels, coinciding with the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces against civilians and their property in Gaza since October 7, 2023. It is now evident that journalists have become direct targets of the Israeli military fire, despite their status as protected civilians.
- The current aggression has, and continues to, result in the most horrifying, bloody, and violent incidents against journalists and media institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories since the Israeli occupation in 1967. During the assault, dozens of female and male journalists were killed, hundreds were injured, numerous media institutions were destroyed, and several journalists were detained and subjected to torture.

- During the ongoing genocide on Gaza, (170) journalists were killed, including 13 female journalists. Of these, 166, which is the majority, were killed by Israeli airstrikes bombardment, while 4 were shot by Israeli snipers. The largest portion of murderers were 72 journalists and their families killed in premeditated targeted attacks on their houses. Additionally, 52 journalists were killed during indiscriminate bombing throughout the aggression, 24 were killed in direct attacks, 22 were killed while on duty, and 185 were wounded.
- Israeli forces destroyed 86 media offices and institutions, including official, partisan, private, and Non-profit organizations. This destruction included television, satellite, and radio stations, broadcasting towers, media service offices, newspaper headquarters, and broadcast towers.
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- During the genocide, Israeli forces arrested 53 journalists, 16 of whom remain detained, with some subjected to severe torture.
- During the genocide, two journalists went missing and their fate until now remains unknown.
- These actions have created a hostile environment for journalism and media work in the Gaza Strip and led to the displacement of dozens of journalists and media professionals from the most important media outlets to southern Gaza, along hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were forcibly displaced by the Israeli strikes.

- **The continued killings and targeting have forced many journalists to flee abroad, fearing for their safety. One such case is journalist Wael Dahdouh, whose family was killed in an attack on a house they had sought refuge in at the Nuseirat refugee camp. Dahdouh himself was injured, and both his colleague and his son, who were also journalists, were killed while on duty.**

- **The report indicates that journalists are being targeted—despite their distinctive badges, the known coordinates of their locations, headquarters, institutions, and broadcast towers—unequivocally confirming a systematic policy of targeting the press. This aims to silence journalists and eliminate witnesses to what’s occurring on the ground of atrocities unprecedented in modern history.**

- **Three indicators confirm the systematic policy of Israeli practices against journalists and media institutions, reflecting a deliberate intent to inflict harm:**
 - (1) **The premeditated intent¹: These violations are an extension of decades of abuse against Palestinian journalists and their institutions.**

 - (2) **The unprecedented scale: The large number of killings, as well as the extent of casualties and destruction of institutions since the start of the international documentation of violations in 1992, is unmatched globally.**

 - (3) **The persistence of violations: These abuses continue despite more than nine months of ongoing aggression.**

¹ This is further reinforced by the threats faced by journalists Anas Al-Sharif and Hassan Aslih, who were threatened with being killed along with their families by the Israeli forces. It is worth noting that the occupying forces later bombed journalist Hassan Aslih’s home in Khan Yunis and killed journalist Anas Al-Sharif’s family in Jabalia.

- International humanitarian law emphasizes the protection of both female and male journalists as civilians, stating that their presence in conflict zones does not justify targeting them, provided they are not engaged in military activities, as confirmed by Article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which has attained customary international law status.
- Media institutions are considered civilian entities and, as such, should not be targeted by any party of the conflict. Media institutions remain civilian as long as they do not actively participate in combat.
- The longstanding impunity for Israelis' war criminals over decades, including the lack of accountability for the killing of dozens of journalists, even before 7 October, has led the Israeli occupation forces to continue committing more crimes, encouraged by the silence of the international community and its failure to take action to hold those responsible accountable.

Recommendations

In light of the above, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) presents the following recommendations to the international community, including the International Criminal Court:

- (1) PCHR calls on the international community to publicly condemn the targeting of journalists, pressuring the Israeli occupation to cease these attacks immediately, act without any further delay to provide international protection for civilians, including journalists in the Gaza Strip, and activate measures to pressure the occupation authorities to stop their crimes and comply with the international law and the protection of civilians.

- (2) PCHR urges the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to take serious measures to expedite the investigation into crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the targeting of journalists, who sacrifice their lives to reveal the truth. The Court should proceed with subsequent steps, as victims in Palestine have long awaited justice and accountability.**

- (3) PCHR requests the high contracting parties to the Geneva Conventions to compel Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of distinction and proportionality.**

- (4) Relevant international parties, especially the International Federation of Journalists and United Nations (UN) Human Rights Mechanisms, especially the Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression and Peaceful Assembly, should monitor violations and respond appropriately, especially concerning direct targeting of journalists.**

- (5) The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel should visit the occupied Palestinian territories and take a clear, firm, and public stance on the Israeli crimes against Palestinian civilians, including journalists, given their ongoing and repeated nature.**

- (6) The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression should strengthen and protect the right to freedom of expression and investigate Israeli's crimes against journalists and media institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories.**

Introduction

Since October 7, 2023, Israeli occupation forces have been waging a large-scale military assault against civilians and their property, aiming for a genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza. This includes committing acts of mass killing, total destruction of infrastructure, public facilities, and properties, forcing the population to be displaced from their homes, and imposing collective measures and sanctions such as denying water, food, medicine, electricity, and fuel supplies. The objective is to create an uninhabitable environment in the Gaza Strip, thereby displacing Palestinians and emptying the Strip of its inhabitants.

As the genocide continues and escalates in Gaza, journalists, media workers, and their institutions in the Gaza Strip are facing unparalleled conditions compared to any other region in the world, with serious challenges posing a real threat to their lives due to the continuous bombardment across the Strip.

During this period, dozens of journalists have been killed and many injured, either while carrying out their work or during the destructive bombings affecting every part of the Gaza Strip, including homes and shelters where they sought refuge. Media offices in residential buildings and towers have also been destroyed, exposing more civilians to death and injury. Additionally, dozens of journalists have been arrested, with some still in detention and others subjected to severe torture due to their journalistic work. These practices come in line with the occupation's long history of crimes against journalists and media outlets since its occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967. Their frequency has increased more during 2000, the year the Second Intifada began. Since then, the PCHR has documented, through specialized reports², numerous crimes committed by the occupation against journalists and journalism in the occupied territories. These include killings, injuries, arrests, beatings, prevention of photography,

² Check the Centre's series of reports on the targeting of journalists entitled "Silencing the Press on the Centre's website <https://pchrgaza.org/category/publications/thematic-reports/>

the closure of press institutions, and other systematic measures aimed at silencing the truth and obstructing journalists from reporting on violations and war crimes against civilians, their property, and their holy sites in the occupied territories. The targeting of journalists and their institutions in Gaza during the war represents a blatant violation of press freedom and the right to access information under international humanitarian law. Therefore, the international community must take action to protect journalists, prevent their targeting, and ensure they receive the full protection needed to continue their crucial work of reporting on the realities on the ground.

In this context, several UN special rapporteurs have confirmed the systematic targeting of journalists in Gaza to obscure the truth, as stated in a statement: "We have received alarming reports indicating that despite the clear identification of journalists wearing vests and helmets marked 'Press' or traveling in clearly marked press vehicles, they are being attacked. This appears to indicate that the killing, injury, and arrest are deliberate strategies by Israeli forces to disrupt the media and silence critical reporting."

Experts have also expressed: "grave concern over Israel's refusal to allow media from outside Gaza to enter and report unless accompanied by Israeli forces."

In this regard, PCHR hopes that this report will highlight the difficult and catastrophic situation faced by journalists and their media institutions in Gaza, and contribute to calling upon the international community and relevant parties to enhance the protection afforded to journalists and their institutions under international law, achieve justice for them and their families, including the prosecution of Israeli war criminals and ensuring that they do not go unpunished.

Report Methodology

For about 10 months, the occupying forces have been committing horrific atrocities against Palestinian civilians and their properties, resulting in a massive number of casualties and missing persons nearing 50,000 victims, including dozens of journalists, the destruction of hundreds of thousands of buildings and homes, and the displacement of 2 million Palestinians from their homes. Given the enormous scale of the violations, which exceeds the capacity of PCHR or the human rights organizations combined—who have consistently documented all crimes committed by the occupying forces in previous wars on Gaza—the centre decided to document these blatant violations as examples rather than exhaustively and precisely, and to build legal files on a large number of violations. This also applies to documenting violations against journalists, where documentation and investigation were limited to a small number of crimes.

The report relies on a descriptive-analytical methodology and is based on the centre's documentation of key cases, accessing victims, obtaining direct information from victims of killing, injury, and arrest, and taking legal testimonies from them, despite the difficult working conditions faced by the centre's staff, especially after the majority of its members were displaced from their homes, which were later destroyed by Israeli shelling, thus hindering their ability to work freely as before. These cases will be primarily highlighted in the report, which also bases its general statistics on information and data published by governmental and non-governmental entities, whether local or international institutions.

The report refers to official statistics issued by the Gaza Government Media Office concerning the number of journalists killed during the war, but also mentions other statistics published by international and local institutions, such as the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, which differ from the official figures due to differing criteria. Additionally, the report relies on the documentation of other institutions concerned with journalists regarding the number of media offices and institutions that were bombed

and destroyed by the occupying forces, such as the MADA Center for Media Freedom. It also depends on the Palestinian Authority's Commission of Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoners Club concerning detainees and their exposure to torture.

The report highlights five case studies of different incidents of killing and injury of journalists while they were on duty and wearing their press attire, which resulted in the killing of eight journalists and the injury of several others. The first incident involves the killing of three journalists in a direct bombing of a building they were sheltering in Gaza City; the second incident involves the killing of Al Jazeera photographer and the injury of a reporter in Khan Yunis; the third involves the killing of journalists while working in Rafah; the fourth involves an Al Jazeera correspondent and the channel's photographer who were killed inside their press vehicle in Gaza; and the fifth involves a journalist who lost his leg due to a direct injury while covering the events. The report presents these five cases as concrete evidence of the deliberate and intentional killing and wounding of journalists by the occupying forces, and particularly relies on detailed documentation by PCHR staff for four of these cases, based on victims' testimonies, eyewitness accounts, and field investigations.

The report is divided into two main sections. The first section addresses the violations by the Israeli occupation forces against journalists and media outlets in the Gaza Strip, including crimes against the right to life, and bodily integrity, destruction of media offices and institutions, arrest and torture of journalists, and missing journalists. The second section deals with the legal protection of journalists under international humanitarian law, including the protection provided for media institutions and equipment. The report concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at ending the violations against journalists and media outlets.

Violations by the Occupying Forces Against Journalists and Media

1. Crimes Against the Right to Life and Bodily Integrity

Journalists and media workers have sacrificed their lives to convey the reality of what's happening on the ground and report the truth, operating under extremely dangerous conditions and with minimal resources, which have been denied to them by the Israeli occupying authorities.

It has become increasingly evident that the Israeli occupying authorities are intolerant of anyone presenting a narrative that differs from the one they wish to project and promote to the world. From the outset of the genocide, journalists have been targeted to terrorize, intimidate, and displace them. When these threats failed to deter journalists, and they continued to suffer the consequences, the occupying authorities intensified their attacks to an even greater extent. This has resulted in an unprecedented number of journalists killed not seen in any other region of the world. The Israeli occupation forces have demonstrated a complete disregard for the special protections afforded to journalists under international law.

Throughout the genocide, Israeli occupation forces have killed dozens of journalists, some while they were actively on duty covering events in the field. Some journalists were directly and deliberately targeted, while others were killed in places thought to be safe, including their own homes, which were bombed, resulting in the deaths of both the journalists and their families

According to official government statistics, during the ongoing aggression against Gaza, 170 journalists have been killed and 32 others have been injured. The Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate has documented the killings of 161 journalists and injuries to 185 others. According to the PCHR's follow-up, among those killed and injured

some journalists were targeted directly and deliberately while covering the crimes of the occupation. Others were killed or injured while performing their journalistic duties in the field, despite wearing their official attire and taking security and safety precautions. Additionally, some journalists and their families were killed when their homes or the places they sought refuge in were targeted, mistakenly believing them to be safe. Others were killed due to the indiscriminate and heavy shelling of civilians in the area, where they happened to be.

Statistics from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in their report ³up to July 30, 2024, show that 108 journalists have been killed, including 13 female journalists, and 32 others have been injured. The committee is still investigating 350 other incidents, including cases of killing, injury, and arrest. The report notes that this period is the deadliest since the committee began tracking journalist fatalities worldwide in 1992. According to the committee's data analysis, the vast majority (89 journalists) were killed in airstrikes, including 56 who were killed while in their homes, 49 of whom were killed along with family members. And 16 journalists were killed while on duty⁴.

1.1. Deliberate Targeting of Journalists During Their Work

During the ongoing Israeli aggression, 24 journalists were killed and several were wounded during their coverage in the Gaza strip. They were targeted by the Israeli occupation forces during their work while wearing press vests and helmets that clearly identified them as journalists. It is apparent that these journalists had taken all necessary security precautions,

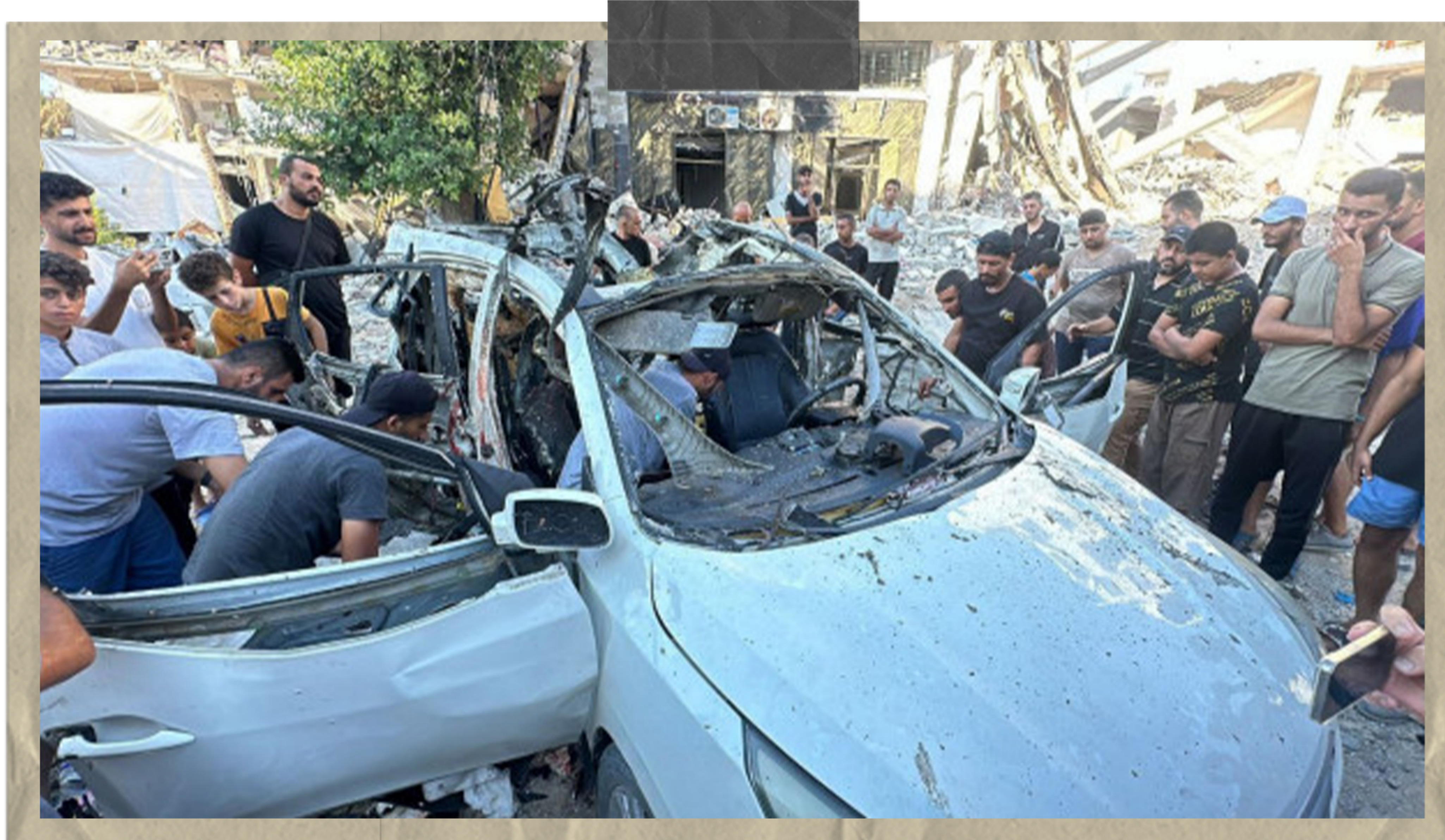
³ <https://cpj.org/?p=321571>

⁴ Part of an investigation titled "The Gaza Project: What does a helmet and shield do in the face of rockets", by journalistic institutions, published on 25 June 2024. <https://daraj.media/?p=134495/>.

including reporting their locations during armed clashes between Palestinian resistance and the Israeli occupation forces or when heading to specific areas in the Strip to document the atrocities committed against Palestinian civilians and broadcast them.

Among the journalists who were killed by deliberately targeting them while on duty, PCHR was able to obtain eyewitness testimonies of four crimes against journalists, which represent case studies to prove the intent and deliberate targeting of those who convey the truth to the world in an effort to obscure the war crimes and genocide committed by these forces for over ten months, which continue to this day.

Case One: The Killing of Three Journalists in the Bombing of a Residential Building in Gaza City

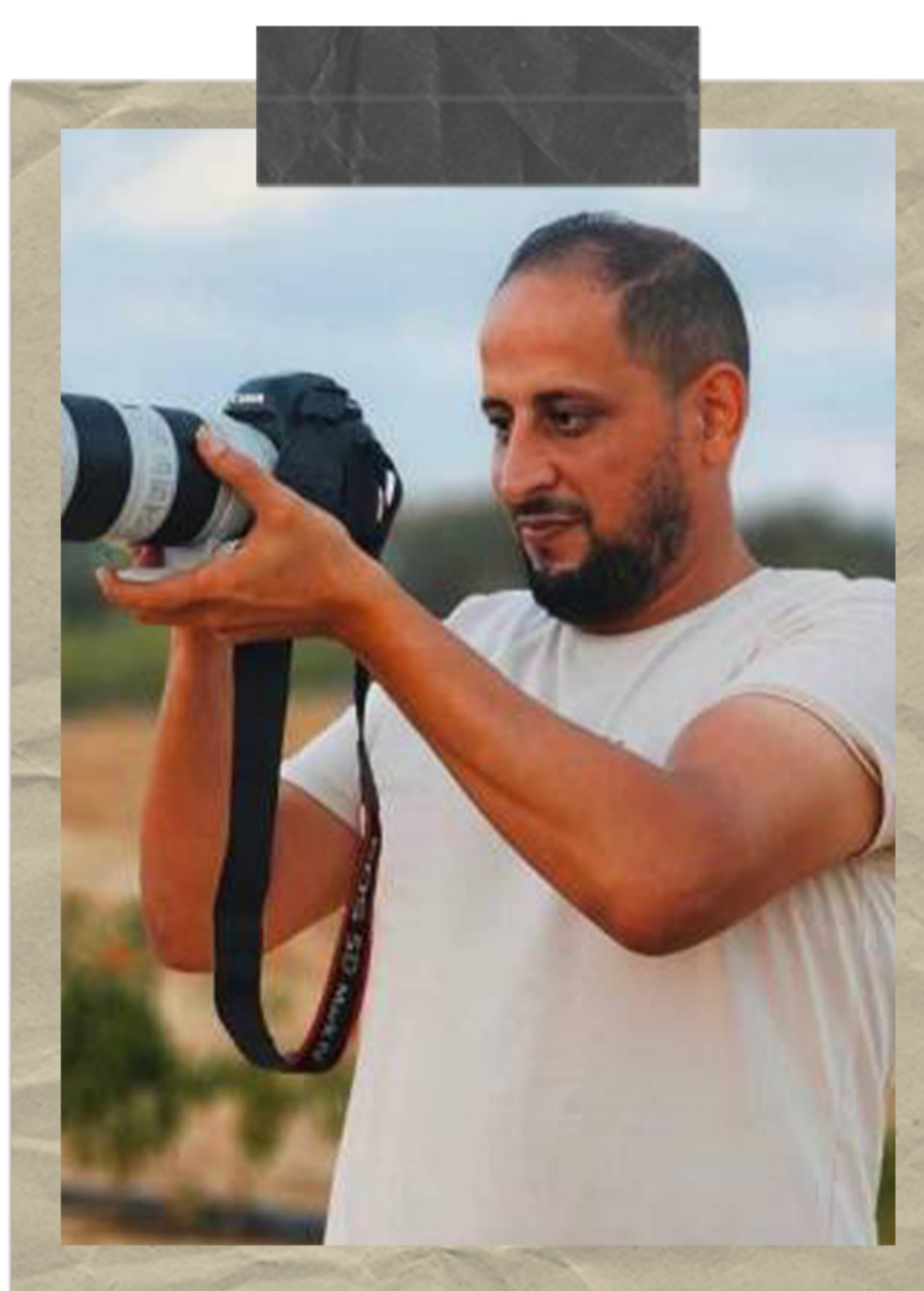


On the evening of October 10, 2023, journalists Said Al-Tawil, director of Al Khamsa Agency; Mohammad Subh Abu Rizq, a photographer with Khabar Agency; and Hisham Al-Nawajha, a journalist with Khabar Agency, were killed when the Israeli occupation forces bombed the Babel Tower in western Gaza City.

They were taking shelter there with other journalists due to a warning from the occupation forces about the nearby Haji Tower, which houses media offices and media institutions. Despite the presence of numerous journalists from various news agencies and dozens of local residents waiting for the occupation forces to carry out their threats to bomb the tower (Haji), the tower where the journalists and citizens were sheltering was bombed, resulting in the deaths of the three journalists and several other civilians. Journalists Abu Rizq and Al-Tawil were killed immediately due to their injuries, while Al-Nawajha died the following morning from his injuries.



Hisham Al-Nawajha



Mohammad Subh Abu Rizq



Said Al-Tawil

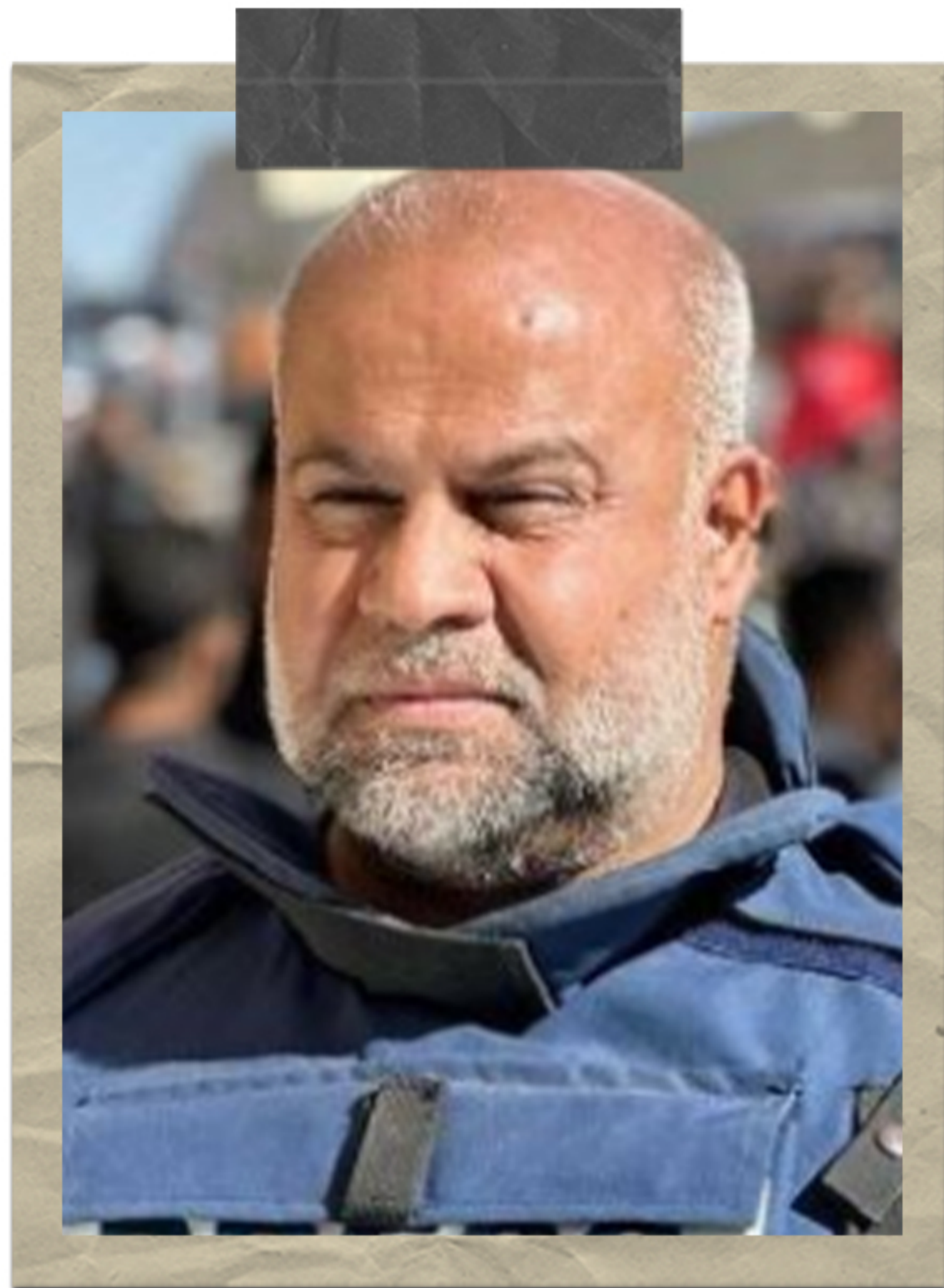
Regarding the circumstances of the crime, journalist Mustafa Jarrou, 35, a reporter and photographer for Al-Yawm Al-Ikhbari, stated that on the evening of October 10, 2023, he went to cover the warning of the Israeli occupation forces about the bombing of Haji Tower, west of Gaza City. Journalists gathered near Al-Ghifari Tower, which borders the targeted tower from the south. He added:

"I went down the lift with my colleagues Hisham Al-Nawajha, Mohammad Subh, and Samer Al-Za'aneen. We reached the tower's entrance and walked towards Haji Tower. Said Al-Tawil was standing at Babel Tower, about 100 meters from Haji Tower, trying to find a somewhat protective spot and evacuate civilians. He was accompanied by colleague Tamer Lubbad.

My colleague Samer Al-Za'aneen stopped me and asked where I was going. I said I was heading towards the colleagues. He asked me to tie the helmet on his head. While I was fastening it, I heard three strong explosions, and dust spread everywhere. A journalist from Media 24 screamed at us, saying: 'The young man who was with you' (referring to Said). I shouted back: 'Who? Who?' Then, he fell on the stairs of Al-Ghifari Tower and lost consciousness. One of the journalists

checked his fallen camera and found a picture of Said Al-Tawil lying on the ground. We realized he was the one referred to. Colleagues came from the targeted area, shouting: 'Said! Said!' We then headed by car to Shifa Hospital. I went to the reception and searched for Said. Colleague Ahmad Hijazi, a freelance journalist, tried to calm me down. At that moment, I tried to leave the reception area, and I saw colleague Mohammad Subh lying on a bed, already lifeless, being taken from reception and emergency to the morgue. I went into a hysterical state, pushing the bed to the morgue. After placing him in the fridge, I remembered Said and looked for him. They told us there was another journalist in the fridge. Colleagues went in and found Said's body. That was a huge shock, especially since they were also my friends and like brothers to me. Hisham Al-Nawajha was in intensive care. Around 3:00 AM, we returned to the office and searched for Said's belongings, which we found. At around 6:00 AM, we went to the street to search for the journalistic belongings of our martyred colleagues and were surprised to find that the target was Babel Tower, not Haji Tower, which was the building where the colleagues were sheltering. We found the cameras and discovered that there were also martyrs from the Hassouna and Haboush families in the same bombing."

Case Two: The Killing of Al Jazeera Cameraman Samer Abu Daqa and Injury of the Al Jazeera Correspondent Wael Al-Dahdouh



Wael Al-Dahdouh



Samer Abu Daqa

At around 2:27 PM on Friday, December 15, 2023, an Israeli drone launched a missile at Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqa and the correspondent Wael Al-Dahdouh while they were with a civil defense team evacuating a trapped family from a targeted home near Farhana School in central Khan Younis. This resulted in injuries to journalists Abu Daqa and Al-Dahdouh, who were wearing helmets and distinctive press attire, as well as to members of the civil defense team. Reporter Al-Dahdouh managed to walk away from the area despite being injured by shrapnel in his arm and abdomen, while his colleague Abu Daqa and the civil defense workers remained at the site, bleeding. Later, the occupation forces' aircraft and artillery targeted the same area with several shells. After about five hours, during which emergency teams could not reach the site due to repeated bombardments and delays by the occupation forces in coordinating access, the teams arrived after obtaining special coordination through the Red Cross. It was found that journalist Samer Abu Daqa and three civil defense workers—Hossni Khalil Nabhan, Nour Al-Din Mohamed Saqer, and Rami Hisham Bdeir, a photojournalist with the civil defense team—had been martyred. Injured Journalist Wael Al-Dahdouh provided the following testimony to PCHR:



"I, along with my colleague the photographer Samer Abu Daqa, accompanied the civil defense after they received coordination to reach a trapped family in their home near Farhana School in Khan Younis after an Israeli attack. We photographed the areas and documented the extensive destruction, reaching a point where no camera had yet reached. We tried to convey these scenes to the world through coordination and finished filming. While we were returning from the mission and walking several meters, something suddenly happened. I felt something significant had happened, and I fell on the ground with my helmet and microphone falling off. I tried to gather my strength and barely managed to stand, feeling dizzy and unsteady. I expected a second strike and estimated that staying in the area would prevent anyone from reaching me. So, despite my unsteady state and severe bleeding from my arm, I decided to leave the area. I pressed my hand against one of the wounds and began walking until I reached the end of the street where a first aid team treated me on-site. I informed them that we needed to return to our colleague Samer Abu Daqa, whom I heard screaming and clearly injured. I estimated that his injury was in the lower part of his body. The field crews stopped the bleeding and told me to leave now and that another crew would come back to get Samer and the others out."

Case Three: The Killing of Hamza Wael Al-Dahdoh and Mustafa Thuraya in Rafah



Mustafa Thuraya



Hamza Wael Al-Dahdoh

On January 7, 2024, Hamza Wael Al-Dahdoh, who works as a journalist for Al Jazeera, and Mustafa Thuraya, who works as a photojournalist for Agence France-Presse (AFP), were killed by an Israeli drone strike while they were working in the Muraj area of Rafah, southern Gaza. The journalists were wearing their press vests and helmets at the time of the attack, which also resulted in the deaths of other civilians.

Amer Abu Amro, 40, a photographer for Al Jazeera Mubasher and Palestine Today TV, provided details of the crime to PCHR. He was with his colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh, Al Jazeera's Mubasher correspondent, at a chalet owned by the Abu Al-Naja family in the Al-Nasser area, north of Rafah, to cover an Israeli airstrike on the chalet, which resulted in casualties and missing persons under the rubble. Abu Amro said:



"I saw several journalists at the chalet, including Hamza Wael Al-Dahdoh and Mustafa Thuraya, and I spoke with Mustafa Thuraya for a few minutes to coordinate a joint effort and benefit from his expertise in photography. After our conversation, as I was heading towards my colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh to finalize our report, I heard an explosion nearby, which I estimated to be caused by an Israeli drone strike. This resulted in injuries to me and my colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh from shrapnel. Despite my injury, I continued filming as if I did not feel it at the time, while Ahmed was in considerable pain. I then boarded an ambulance from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which was parked at the chalet with at least one martyr's body recovered from the destroyed chalet. The ambulance took us south via a street connecting Rafah and Khan Yunis towards Al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah.

At around 11:15 AM, I heard an explosion near Al-Yasmeen Mall and saw a civilian vehicle behind us that appeared to have been hit by at least one missile. The ambulance stopped, and I ran towards the vehicle, filming as I went. It turned out to be a Skoda, which had stopped due to the attack and contained five injured civilians. I was not sure if Hamza Al-Dahdoh and Mustafa Thuraya were inside. I returned to the ambulance, and we continued to the hospital. Shortly after, other ambulances arrived with casualties from the vehicle hit behind us, including the martyrs Hamza Wael Al-Dahdoh, Mustafa Thuraya, and a third martyr named Qusai Salem, whose profession I do not know, along with two other injured individuals. After that, doctors examined me, found my injuries to be minor, and then I went to check on my colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh, who had shrapnel in his abdomen and was described as being in moderate condition."

Case Four: The Killing of Ismail Al-Ghoul and Rami Al-Rifi



Rami Al-Rifi



Ismail Al-Ghoul

Journalists Ismail Al-Ghoul, 27, a correspondent for Al Jazeera in Gaza city, and Rami Al-Rifi, 27, a photographer for the same channel, were killed when Israeli forces targeted their vehicle in Gaza City. According to reports, an Israeli drone struck the Al Jazeera vehicle at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, July 31, 2024, while it was traveling on Al-Aidiya Street, west of Gaza City. This resulted in the deaths of Al-Ghoul and Al-Rifi. Al Jazeera correspondent in northern Gaza Anas Al-Sharif stated that his colleagues were killed in a "direct hit" while in their well-known Al Jazeera vehicle marked with "TV" and while wearing press vests.

Following the attack, the occupation forces claimed that Al-Ghoul was part of the "elite forces" of Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades involved in the October 7 attack, suggesting that his killing was due to this association rather than his role as a journalist. They added that the killing was "carried out by an airstrike from the air force" and a "joint operation between the General Security Service and the army.

" Al Jazeera denied these allegations, stating ⁵ that Al-Ghoul was indeed a journalist and committed to pursuing all legal avenues to seek justice for him and over 160 journalists killed in Gaza since the outbreak of the war. The evidence contradicts the claims against Al-Ghoul, who had been covering events since October 7 as a journalist and was a witness to significant crimes and atrocities committed by the occupation forces in Gaza, including an assault on Al-Shifa Hospital. Al-Ghoul was detained for several hours, interrogated, and later released, disproving the accusations against him.

Case Five: Injury of Ismail Abu Omar



Ismail Abu Omar

On February 13, 2024, an Israeli drone fired at least one missile at journalists Ismail Abu Omar, a correspondent for Al Jazeera, and his colleague photographer Ahmed Matar while they were covering events in the Al-Nasser area, north of Rafah. The attack resulted in serious injuries to both journalists, with Abu Omar's right leg being amputated. A video showed the injured journalists wearing press vests marked with "Press" in English.

According to Ismail Abu Omar, he and his colleague Ahmed Matar were covering incidents in Qizan Al-Najjar, south of Khan Yunis, where there was a spot with internet reception to broadcast their messages to the world. Abu Omar said:

⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/u633aewz>

"There has been heavy drone activity since we arrived, and we sensed a potential bombing. An airstrike occurred targeting a group of youths about 10 meters away, resulting in one martyr and two others injured, which we documented. We decided to leave the area, and as soon as we moved 500 meters, we were targeted by a missile from the Israeli occupation forces. After that, I am not sure what happened. I learned that I was aided and underwent several surgeries to stop the bleeding from the explosion, which resulted in the amputation of my right leg. My colleague Ahmed was taken to the hospital and placed in intensive care with shrapnel in his head and arm, and he remains in a coma."



Bilal Jadallah

The Killing of Bilal Jadallah, Director of the Press House-Palestine in Gaza

On November 19, 2023, Bilal Jadallah, the Director of the Press House-Palestine, was killed when his car was targeted while he was driving on Salah al-Din Road, east of the Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City. The Press House is a leading institution in Gaza, an independent, non-profit Palestinian media organization founded in 2013 by a group of independent journalists. It aims to promote freedom of opinion and expression, support independent media, and provide legal protection for journalists in Palestine.



The Killing of Ibrahim Mohareb During an Attack on Journalists

Ibrahim mohareb

On August 18, 2024, Israeli forces deliberately fired at several journalists who were wearing blue vests marked "Press" while covering the advance of Israeli vehicles and tanks around the city of Hamad, northwest of Khan Yunis. This attack resulted in the injury of journalist Salma Qaddumi from Agence France-Presse, who was struck by a bullet that entered her back and exited through her chest. She, along with three colleagues, managed to leave the area under fire. However, the journalist Ibrahim Marwan Salem Mohareb, 26, a freelance photographer, was unable to escape due to the intense gunfire and remained at the scene. On the morning of August 19, 2024, Mohareb was found to have been killed by gunshot wounds to his lower back and thigh, having bled to death. This video captured by the Israeli forces showed them intensifying their fire on the journalists.

1.2. Journalists Killed or Injured While on Duty

PCHR has documented the killing and injury of many journalists both females and males while they were performing their official duties, wearing their press attire and helmets, and carrying their equipment during the coverage or shortly after. Among the victims are freelance journalists and those working for local and international news agencies. Several journalists were killed on the first day of the war on Gaza while covering clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli occupation forces along the border strip east of the Gaza Strip, where they were shot among hundreds of civilians who were killed indiscriminately. Others were killed during the ongoing aggression due to continuous shelling of civilian homes and properties, where thousands of civilians, including journalists, were killed while fulfilling their duties during the bombardments.

In many incidents, the occupation forces ignored the presence of journalists in targeted areas, causing severe harm despite their knowledge of their presence, their press attire, and their equipment. Many videos have documented journalists being injured live on air while they were broadcasting from areas under attack or doing live reports for local and international television channels.

There is no accurate statistic on the number of journalists killed or injured by the Israeli occupation forces while on duty due to the high number of casualties during the genocide. However, some local and international organizations that focus on journalists' issues have published statistics on these victims. According to a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists⁶ 16 journalists were among those killed while on duty, and investigations are still ongoing on the deaths of many other journalists. Based on the PCHR's follow-up and data analysis, the number of journalists killed on duty is estimated at 22.



Muhammad Jargon

Three journalists were killed on the first day of the war on Gaza while covering ongoing incidents between Palestinians and the Israeli occupation forces on the eastern and northern borders of the Gaza Strip. The three journalists were shot by Israeli snipers during indiscriminate fire towards Palestinian civilians at the border. Their press badges and equipment did not protect them from the harm despite the international legal protection they should

The journalists are: Muhammad Al-Salhi from Al-Nuseirat camp, a photographer for Al-Sulta Al-Rabi'a Agency, killed by Israeli snipers while covering events on the border east of Al-Bureij camp on October 7, 2023; Muhammad Jargon from Rafah, working for Smart Media Agency, killed by Israeli snipers while covering events on the border east of Rafah on October 7, 2023; and Ibrahim Lafi from Gaza City, working for Ain Media Agency, killed by Israeli snipers while covering events at the Beit Hanoun crossing north of Gaza on October 7, 2023.

⁶ Ibid

1.3. Killing and Injury of Journalists During Continuous Bombardments Across the Gaza Strip

The vast majority of journalists killed during the current aggression have lost their lives due to airstrikes targeting civilian homes, facilities, and infrastructure. Journalists are at significant risk due to their profession, which necessitates getting close to conflict zones to document events with sound and imagery. Consequently, they are always in danger.

- According to the Committee to Protect Journalists' documentation, among the killed were 89 journalists due to continuous bombardment. They were in those places by chance, thinking they had sought refuge in safe civilian areas, or were on the street when the devastating bombardment occurred. Meanwhile, 56 journalists were killed inside their homes or the homes of relatives where they had sought refuge, 49 of whom were killed along with

Among those killed in this context:

- On March 31, 2024, eight journalists were injured when Israeli forces targeted the displaced tents inside Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah. The bombardment hit the tents, resulting in the deaths of four civilians and injuries to 17 others, including eight journalists who were in their tents adjacent to the displaced persons' tents within the hospital.

The injured journalists were:

- independent photographer Ali Hamad, who sustained shrapnel injuries to his back; the independent photographer Said Jares, who was hit by shrapnel in his knee; independent photographer Na'aman Shitewi, who suffered minor facial injuries; Zain Media photographer Mohamed Abu Dahrouj, who sustained serious leg injuries; independent photographer Nawaf Abu Ladda, who was injured in his leg; Al-Aqsa TV photographer Ibrahim Labed, who was wounded in his leg; Al-Jazeera photographer Hazem Mezid, who also sustained leg injuries; and independent photographer Majdi Qaraqe.



Mohamed Yaghi

- On February 22, 2024, the freelance photographer Mohamed Yaghi, 30, along with his wife, their child, and 30 relatives, were killed when Israeli warplanes bombed their relatives' home, where they had taken refuge from northern Gaza, in the Al-Zawaiyda area in central Gaza. Investigations revealed that the bombing occurred shortly after Mohamed had returned from work⁷.



Amjad jahjouh

- On July 6, 2024, Amjad Jahjouh, his wife, also a journalist, Wafaa Abu Da'baan, and the journalist Rizek Abu Shikyan were killed when Israeli forces shelled their home in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the early morning. On the same evening, Israeli forces bombed a house belonging to the Medoukh family in Gaza City, resulting in the deaths of journalists Saadi Medoukh and Ahmed Soker. This followed the previous day's killing of journalist Mohamed Sakani in the bombing of his home in the Al-Daraj neighborhood, east of Gaza City.

2. Destruction of Media Offices and Institutions as a Form of Genocide

Since the start of the military assault on Gaza, the systematic destruction of the Palestinian media sector and its core functions has been evident, including the killing and targeting of journalists, the destruction of their institutions, their equipment, and broadcast towers, aiming to obliterate the truth that exposes the aggression and war crimes, and reveals the false claims made by the Israeli occupation forces to the world.

⁷Our colleague Dana Yaghi, a lawyer at Women's Unit, a member of the family who was displaced from northern Gaza to the town of Zawaida, was also killed in this incident.

Throughout the months of the aggression on Gaza, local and international media organizations documented the systematic destruction of all working media entities in Gaza. No institution remains intact, whether radio and TV stations, media offices, or governmental and non-governmental institutions. Journalists and reporters lost all means to convey the ongoing genocidal crimes against civilians in Gaza after their institutions and media transport and broadcasting facilities were destroyed, particularly in the early days of the aggression. These crimes, in addition to the killings of dozens of journalists due to continuous bombardments of civilians, led most journalists to flee from northern Gaza to southern Gaza, the central region, Khan Younis, and Rafah, following intensified battles in Gaza City and the north, especially after the ground invasion of those areas. Only a few journalists remain, struggling to convey the crimes using basic means, in addition to the targeting of infrastructure like electricity, communication networks, and internet services, which are essential for journalistic work and its transmission to the outside world.

According to local media documentation, the Israeli occupation forces destroyed dozens of media institutions operating in Gaza, especially in the first three months of the aggression. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate has documented the destruction of a total of 86 media institutions, including 15 news agency headquarters, 21 radio stations, 15 satellite channels, 3 broadcast towers, 6 newspapers, and 13 institutions providing media and journalistic services. Among them, 41 institutions were completely destroyed, and 32 suffered partial destruction, including damaged equipment. Throughout the aggression, the forces continued to target media offices and institutions, though the frequency decreased due to the destruction of the vast majority, especially in Gaza City and northern Gaza.

The Israeli occupation forces deliberately bombed residential towers containing media offices and radio stations in Gaza City to destroy them. Among the prominent towers with numerous known media offices was the Palestinian Tower in the city center.

On the first day of the aggression, the Israeli occupation forces targeted the Palestine Tower in Gaza City and completely destroyed it. The 14-story building housed residential apartments and 7 known media institutions: Shihab News Agency, Al-Ayyam newspaper office, Infinite Media Services, Fadl Shana'na Media Foundation, Gaza FM radio, Quran Radio, and Al-Quds newspaper office.

On the same day, the Israeli occupation forces also bombed the Watan Tower in Gaza City, which included media institutions, radio stations, and broadcast towers for international channels. The targeted institutions included: a broadcast tower for Voice of Palestine, a broadcast tower for CNN, Sawt Al Watan Radio, Sawt Al-Buraq Radio, Radio Baladna, Shams News Agency, Sawa News Agency, Khabar News Agency, Roya Channel, Media Town News Agency, and Muthaq Network for Media and Journalistic Services.

On November 2, 2023, Israeli forces bombed the Agence France-Presse (AFP) office in Gaza City. The missiles targeted the agency's office on the 11th floor of the building, which is located near the port area west of Gaza City, resulting in the destruction of the office's walls and doors.

On November 2, 2023, the Israeli occupation forces targeted the 16th floor of the Al-Ghifari Tower, west of Gaza City. The tower has 19 floors, some of which house media offices. The targeted floor was destroyed, and media institutions were affected, some completely destroyed, such as the Monte Carlo Radio broadcast tower, and others partially destroyed, including Zain Media Production, Anki Media Production, Screen Media Production, and MEDIA 24 News Agency.

On November 12, 2023, the Israeli occupation forces completely destroyed the Al-Aqsa Satellite Channel and Al-Aqsa Radio building, located in central Gaza City near Sheikh Radwan Cemetery, after bombing it with aircraft missiles. This was not the first time the channel had been destroyed; it had been bombed multiple times during each Israeli escalation on Gaza.

On December 19, 2023, the Israeli occupation forces destroyed the Al-Shawa and Al-Hosari Tower, a 15-story building in Gaza City. The tower housed media and journalistic institutions, including: Al-Quds Today Satellite Channel, APA News Agency, Ma'an News Agency, Safa News Agency, Al-Rai Radio, and Al-Quds Radio, all of which were completely destroyed. Additionally, Voice of the People Radio, located in the neighboring Al-Wahda Tower, was partially destroyed, with its equipment damaged.

On December 24, 2023, the Israeli occupation forces heavily bombed residential buildings and towers near the Al-Tabbah Tower, close to the Saraya Junction in Gaza City, causing significant damage to the tower and affecting media institutions within it, including: Al-Ghad Al-Arabi Channel and Al-Jazeera Mubasher, both of which were completely destroyed, as well as Al-Hurra, Al-Arabi, Al-Jazeera, and Al-Mayadeen Media Group, which suffered partial damage and destruction of their journalistic equipment.

In the first week of February 2024, the Israeli occupation forces bombed and completely destroyed the Press House Palestine Foundation office in western Gaza City. The extent of the destruction was revealed after the Israeli forces withdrew from the western Gaza areas. The Press House Palestine Foundation is a non-profit organization supported by the governments of Norway and Switzerland and operates independently. Earlier, on January 30, 2024, the foundation had been hit by Israeli tank shells while one of its founders was inside, using the office as a shelter after his home in Gaza City was destroyed. Journalist Mohamed Salem

reported to PCHR that a tank fired a shell at the office while he was inside. Additionally, the foundation's director, Bilal Jadallah, as noted earlier in the report, had been killed earlier by an Israeli shell while driving on Salah al-Din Street.⁸

Many other media and journalistic institutions were also destroyed as a result of targeting buildings and residential towers nearby. These institutions suffered partial damage, including the destruction of walls, doors, and journalistic equipment.

These attacks perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces were not coincidental or spontaneous; rather, they are part of a long-standing, systematic policy. The bombing and destruction of journalistic institutions have escalated with each aggression waged by the Israeli occupation forces on Gaza.

In the 2008-2009 aggression, PCHR documented the destruction of journalistic institutions by the Israeli occupation forces, including the destruction of the Al-Aqsa TV headquarters belonging to Hamas on December 28, 2008. The warplanes bombed the building located in the Al-Nasr neighborhood, north of Gaza City, completely destroying it, including a storage area containing a broadcast vehicle, broadcasting equipment, and computers. The office of Al-Risalah newspaper in the Al-Nasr neighborhood was also destroyed. The roof of the Al-Jawhara building on Al-Jalaa Street, in central Gaza City, was bombed, resulting in the destruction of journalistic equipment belonging to Media Group and injuries to one journalist. In another incident, the Israeli occupation forces bombed the Gaza Media Center located on the 14th floor of Al-Shorouk Tower, in the Al-Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City, which also housed Abu Dhabi TV. The bombing injured two journalists and destroyed the company's equipment. The warplanes also targeted the headquarters of Radio Quran, affiliated with the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, located on the 10th floor of Palestine Tower in the Al-Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City, damaging the radio's equipment.

⁸ Regarding the incident, see p. (16) Item on the killing of journalists as a result of the ongoing shelling on the Gaza Strip

During the 2012 aggression, several journalistic and media institutions were destroyed, both completely and partially, including the headquarters of Al-Quds TV on the 11th floor of Al-Shawa and Hassry Tower in central Gaza City on November 18, 2012. The Israeli forces also bombed the office of Al-Aqsa TV on the 15th floor of Al-Shorouk Tower in the Al-Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City, causing significant damage to the equipment. The tower also housed other media offices, including Palestine Media Production; Al-Mayadeen TV office; Abu Dhabi TV office; Sky News; and Dubai TV, all of which sustained damage. On November 20, 2012, the forces bombed the office of journalist Ghazi Al-Surani, located in Al-Ni'mah Tower in the Al-Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City, causing partial destruction.

During the 2014 aggression, the Israeli forces targeted several important media offices in Gaza City, destroying some and causing partial damage to others. Three headquarters for Al-Aqsa TV were bombed, two in the Al-Nasr neighborhood and one in Al-Shorouk Tower in the Al-Rimal neighborhood. Radio Al-Aqsa and a journalism and media training center owned by Naeem Al-Nuwati in Al-Basha Tower in the city center, as well as Radio Sawt Al-Shaab, were also targeted. Other media offices sustained damage, including Radio Watan on the 4th floor of Dawood Tower in the Al-Rimal neighborhood; journalist Saud Abu Ramadan's office in Al-Basha Tower; and Starcom Advertising Agency in Al-Basha Tower.

During the 2021 aggression, the frequency of attacks on journalistic headquarters in Gaza City increased significantly. Twenty-three media and journalistic headquarters were directly destroyed, including four media companies. The Israeli forces bombed four towers containing dozens of media offices, including Al-Jalaa Tower, which was completely destroyed, thereby destroying the offices of AP and Al-Jazeera TV. In the nearby Al-Jawhara Tower, 16 local and international institutions were destroyed, including the National Media Agency; Palestine Newspaper; Al-Araby Al-Jadeed newspaper ;Al-Arabi Channel; Al-Ittijah Iraqi TV; Al-Nujabaa Iraqi TV; Syrian TV; Al-Kufiya Channel; Al-Mamlaka Channel; Sabq 24; Media Forum; 24 Gate; and APA Agency. In Al-Waleed Tower, 17 apartments were destroyed, some of which contained media offices, including a media production company. In Al-Shorouk Tower

the headquarters of Al-Hayat Al-Jadida Newspaper; Al-Aqsa Network (TV, satellite, radio); Taif Media; and PMP, which provides media services to channels like RT and Dubai TV, were all destroyed. Al Jawhara Tower was completely destroyed, as was Al Shorouk Tower

3. Detention and Torture of Journalists

PCHR has documented the arrest of several Palestinian journalists by Israeli forces during the aggression on Gaza. According to records from the Gaza Government Media Office, Israeli forces have arrested 36 journalists since the beginning of the aggression. The Committee to Protect Journalists has documented the arrest of 52 journalists, while the Journalists Syndicate report indicates that 53 journalists have been arrested. Some of these arrests occurred on the first day of the aggression, while others were detained during the ground invasion of the Gaza Strip in various areas, including northern Gaza, Gaza City, and specifically at al-Shifa Hospital. Most of these journalists were arrested due to their journalistic work while reporting in the field, with some being detained in their homes despite identifying themselves as journalists.

According to a statistic released by the Palestinian Prisoners Club⁹, 16 journalists from Gaza remain in detention. While some detainees have been released after being subjected to interrogation and torture, other journalists are still detained with uncertain legal status and living conditions in prisons, and have not been brought to trial. Additionally, the fate of two journalists who went missing at the Erez crossing on the first day of the aggression while covering the events there remains unknown. Despite nearly 10 months having passed since their disappearance, the Israeli authorities have not provided any information about their whereabouts, and they are considered missing since that date.

⁹ Palestinian Prisoners Club Facebook Page on 25 July 2024

¹⁰ Over the past months, PCHR has received dozens of testimonies from ex-detainees, including journalists, who were released from Israeli detentions. They confirmed that they were subjected to unprecedentedly brutal interrogation and torture, and endured dehumanizing conditions. These included deprivation of sleep, food, visits, and medical care, which resulted in the deaths of several detainees and caused psychological and physical disabilities for many others.

Significant Cases of Detention:



Diaan Al-kahlout

1. Detention and Torture of Diaa Al-Kahlout, a Correspondent for Al-Araby TV

On December 7, 2023, the occupying army detained Diaa Al-Kahlout, a correspondent for Al-Araby Al-Jadeed Channel in Gaza, 42 years old, from Souq Street in Beit Lahiya, along with a group of his brothers and relatives. Journalist Al-Kahlout and dozens of civilians were forcibly removed from their clothes,

searched, and taken to an unknown location. Photos and videos spread of dozens of Palestinian civilians being taken inside large transport vehicles in a humiliating and inhumane manner, including journalist Al-Kahlout.

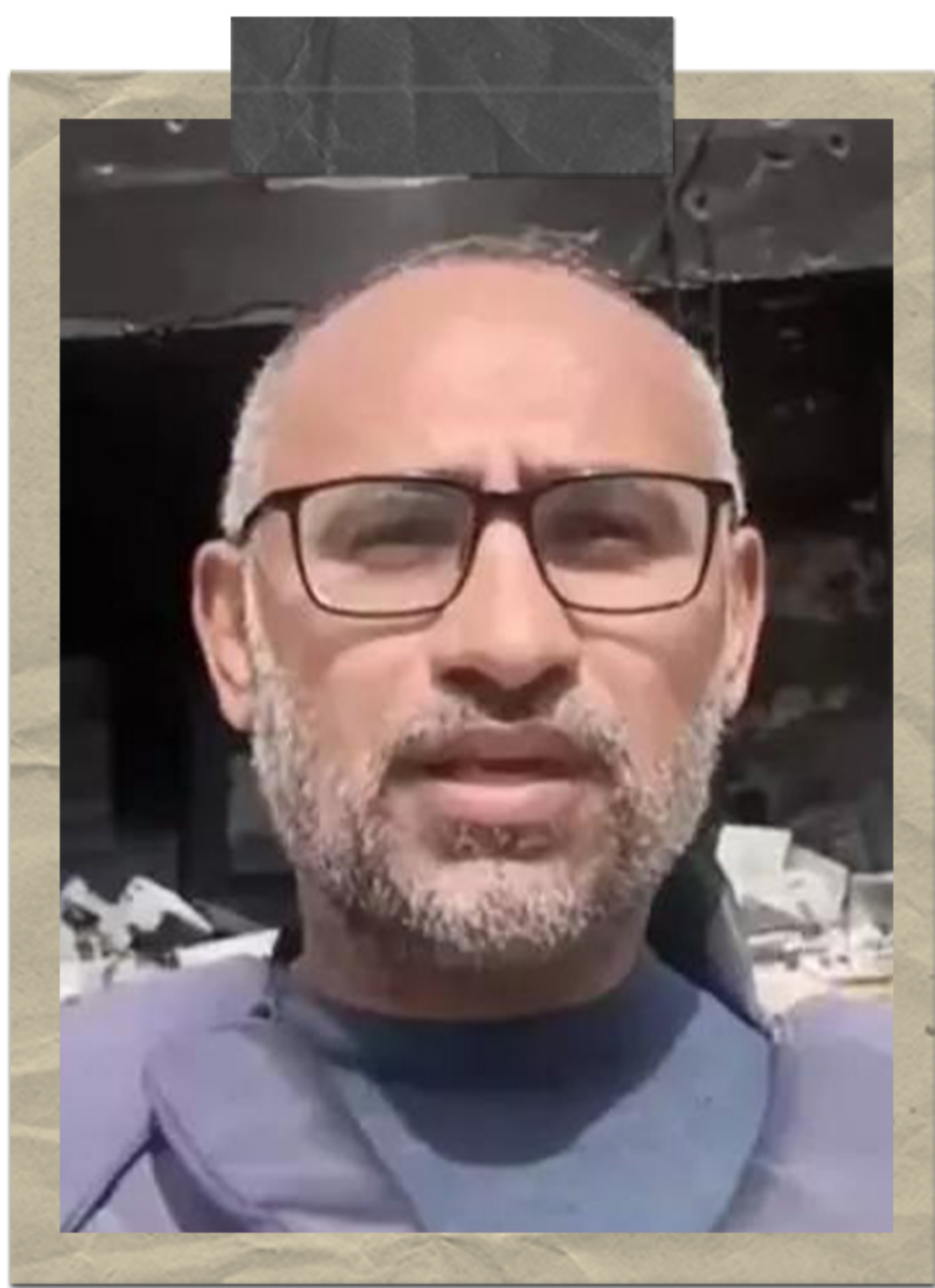
Al-Kahlout described to PCHR, after his release from the occupying forces' prisons following 33 days of detention, the degrading and inhumane conditions of his detention, including torture. His testimony states: "The occupying soldiers ordered us to remove our clothes except for our underwear, stormed the house, and burned it completely. Then they took us to Souq Street, made us sit on the ground in very cold weather while hurling insults, and pointed their guns at our heads."

Al-Kahlout confirmed he was transferred to a detention center inside Israel, which he could not identify precisely, where he endured continuous beatings and torture throughout the detention period, including being blindfolded and handcuffed behind his back while naked. Inside the detention center, he and his fellow detainees faced inhumane conditions. He added: "For 25 consecutive days, we had to kneel on the ground (asphalt) from 4:00 AM to approximately 11:00 PM and were counted several times. The food was very minimal, consisting of bread, jam, liquid cheese, and tuna, and water was also scarce. We went to the bathroom only once a day. The prolonged kneeling on the ground caused me skin infections and abscesses on my thighs, and I was not provided treatment when I requested it from the soldiers."

He was subjected to torture and beatings during interrogations related to his journalistic work. He recounted: "On the 25th day of my detention, I was transferred in a military vehicle that drove for about 15 minutes before stopping. I was taken out of the vehicle, and the soldiers, with my hands bound and eyes blindfolded, led me to a place I did not recognize and threw me on the ground. I sat on my knees on gravel for about 10 minutes. Then the soldiers took me into a room, ordered me to remove all my clothes, and gave me a diaper. After putting it on, I dressed again and thought that I was being prepared for an interrogation session with a Shin Bet investigator. The soldiers then placed me in the corner of a corridor, with my hands bound behind my back with metal cuffs and shackles on my feet. They subjected me to "shabah" (a form of painful stress position) in the corridor with the sun overhead, and there were other detainees being subjected to the same treatment nearby. I recognized one of them as my relative (Mohsen al-Kahlout). I was subjected to "shabah" for about 6 continuous hours, which intensified my pain, particularly in my shoulders and the disc issues I suffer from. One of the detainees being subjected to "shabah" fell to the ground, and the soldiers removed his restraints and gave him water. After my "shabah" and that of another detainee, whom I learned was Dr. Ahmad Mahna, Director of Al-Awda Hospital in Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, we were transferred to a new cell. Contrary to what I had expected, I was not interrogated by the Shin Bet after the 6 hours of "shabah."

2. Detention and Torture of Journalists During the Siege of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza

During the siege of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City in March 2024, the occupying forces detained several journalists, including Mahmoud Aliwa, Imad Al-franji, 55, director of Watan News Office in Gaza, Ismail Al-Ghoul, Al-Jazeera correspondent, and Mohammed Abu Arab. The forces released Al-Ghoul after 12 hours of detention and physical assault, while others, including Aliwa and Al-franji, remained in detention.



Mohammed Abu Arab



Mahmoud Aliwa



Imad Al-franji

Al-Ghoul reported to the media upon his release that he and his fellow journalists were forced to surrender to the occupying forces, who made them strip completely after demolishing the journalists' tent and destroying their vehicles during the raid on the Al-Shifa complex. He added that the forces handcuffed and blindfolded them, interrogated them all, and confiscated their phones, computers, and photography equipment.

Mohammed Abu Arab, 42, a correspondent for Al-Arabi TV, remains detained at the "Sde Teiman" camp in the Negev Desert. He was visited by Khaled Muhajna, a lawyer from the Commission of Detainees Affairs on June 19, 2024, about 100 days after his detention. According to a statement issued by the Commission

Abu Arab reported that several detainees in the camp had died due to torture, maltreatment, and humiliation, including rape. Abu Arab described the conditions as inhumane, as detainees are kept shackled 24 hours a day, blindfolded, and not allowed to change clothes for over fifty days. They are subjected to continuous torture and denied communication with each other, surrounded by police dogs, sleeping on the floor, and using their shoes as pillows.

3. Detention of Journalist Amjad Arafat from His Aunt's House



Amjad Arafat

On January 12, 2024, the Israeli occupation forces detained Amjad Arafat, a correspondent for "Al-Ain" News Agency, from his aunt's house in the Al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza. Arafat had sought refuge there with his family from Gaza City. The forces raided the house, arrested Arafat and two family members, and took them to an unknown location. His fate remains unknown, with the International Committee of the Red Cross, human rights organizations, and lawyers still being prevented from accessing detention centers.

4. Detention and Torture of Journalist Mohammed Emad Obeid, 20 years old



Mohammed Emad Obied

On January 15, 2024, Israeli occupation forces arrested journalist Mohammed Emad Obeid from Aaidia Street in Gaza City. He was transferred to a detention center within the occupying state, where he was interrogated under torture before being released after 40 days. Obeid provided a recorded testimony to Al-Jazeera¹⁰ about his detention conditions, confirming he was tortured, including beatings and shabeh.

He stated that upon arrest, he was stripped, handcuffed, shackled, blindfolded, and thrown on gravel for three hours before being taken to a detention facility in Beerli. Despite being known as a journalist, he was threatened and beaten to force a confession of involvement in the October 7. He was also moved to a military site where he and other detainees were severely beaten and left in heavy rain and cold. Obeid described later stages of interrogation where Israeli police officers tortured him for four days, with daily two-hour interrogations followed by 6-7 hours of shabeh. He was released after 40 days and dropped at the Kerem Shalom crossing, south of the Gaza Strip.

4. Missing Journalists

Since the start of the war on Gaza, the occupying forces have enforced a policy of enforced disappearance for dozens of citizens detained from inside Gaza or workers who had work permits inside Israel, refusing to disclose their fate, numbers, or detention locations despite international appeals. After some time and under international pressure

the authorities released information about some detainees, revealing inhumane conditions in newly established secret detention facilities lacking basic human rights standards.

International organizations have confirmed that Israeli occupation forces have used enforced disappearance against Palestinians following October 7, 2023. In this regard, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Office announced on December 16, 2023, that it had received numerous alarming reports from northern Gaza about mass detentions, mistreatment, and enforced disappearances.¹¹

Following international pressure, Israeli authorities released some information about the fate of hundreds of detainees, most of whom are held in detention camps in the Negev Desert, particularly the "Sde Teiman" camp, where they face inhumane and degrading conditions, leading to the deaths of some detainees. Subsequently, Israeli forces released dozens of detainees in phases, who were in deplorable condition due to torture and mistreatment, showing signs of exhaustion and illness.

Many detainees are still missing, including two journalists whose fate remains unknown. They disappeared at the Beit Hanoun crossing on the first day of the aggression. Local media reports have conflicted on whether the journalists were killed or arrested by Israeli forces. Their fate remains unconfirmed, and Israeli authorities have not announced whether they are in detention or not. Despite 10 months having passed since their disappearance, the fate of the two journalists remains unknown.

¹¹<https://youtu.be/ZX5UnPi-XLI?si=3gdbqbnuri0s0XTl>

PCHR has sent several communications to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance regarding dozens of Palestinians who have disappeared after being taken by the Israeli occupation forces from different parts of the Gaza Strip, in an effort to know their fate and whereabouts.



Nidal Al-Wiheidi



Haitham Abdul Wahed

Among the cases that PCHR is following is the case of Nidal Al-Wiheidi, a Palestinian photographer working at NBC al-Najah, whose headquarters is in Nablus. He has disappeared since 7 October while he was covering events at Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing, north of the Gaza Strip.

Additionally, Haitham Abdul Wahed, who is photographer and video editor at “Ain Media”, a production company in Gaza, went missing while he was also covering events near Beit Hanoun “Erez” crossing on 7 October 2023.

Part Two: The Legal Protection Provided by International Humanitarian Law for Journalists and Media Institutions

1. Legal Protection for Journalists under International Humanitarian Law

Journalists are afforded protection under international humanitarian law, just like civilians. International law considers that their presence in dangerous conflict zones should not be used as an excuse or justification for targeting them. According to Article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which has attained customary international law status:

Conventions, which has attained customary international law status:

1. Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in armed conflict zones are considered civilians under the provisions of Article (2-50), which states: "They must be protected as such under the Conventions and this Protocol, provided that they do not engage in any act that is likely to adversely affect their status as civilians, without prejudice to the rights of accredited war correspondents with the armed forces to benefit from the status provided for in Article 4 (4-A) of the Third Convention."

2. They may also obtain an identification card according to the model in Appendix 2 of this Protocol. This card is issued by the government of the state of which the journalist is a national, or where they reside, or where the news agency they work for is based, and it certifies their status as a journalist."

Article 50 of this Protocol defines a civilian as "any person who does not belong to any of the categories of persons classified as combatants under Article 43 of this Protocol." It states that if there is doubt as to whether a person is a civilian or not, that person should be considered a civilian, and civilians cannot be stripped of their civilian status because there are individuals among them who do not fall under the definition of civilians. Therefore, the mere presence of journalists accompanying the armed forces of any party does not justify targeting them by the opposing party. In all cases, the principle of proportionality must be observed when attacking a military objective that includes journalists, meaning that the anticipated military distinction must be sufficient to justify the attack in the presence of journalists; otherwise, such targeting could be considered a war crime if it results in civilian casualties without a significant military distinction corresponding to the civilian loss.

From the description above, it is clear that journalists do not have special protection but are guaranteed civilian status under the Geneva Conventions. With the increasing number of journalist casualties, the United Nations, through the Security Council, has reaffirmed the civilian status of journalists and their protection from being targeted. Security Council Resolution 2222, issued in May 2015, states:

"It's a necessity to consider journalists, media staff, and individuals associated with the media, who carry out tasks under their profession and are at risk in armed conflict areas, as civilians who must be respected and protected as such, provided they do not engage in any act detrimental to their status as civilians. This is without prejudice to the rights of war correspondents accredited with the armed forces to be treated as prisoners of war as provided in Article (4-A-4) of the Third Geneva Convention."

The resolution also condemns impunity for targeting journalists in armed conflicts, stating: "It strongly condemns the widespread impunity for violations and abuses committed against journalists, media workers, and individuals associated with the media in armed conflict situations, which may contribute to the recurrence of such acts."

Under international humanitarian law, civilians must enjoy various rights, the most important being that they should not be targeted as long as they are in their civilian status. Article 51 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions states:

"The civilian population and civilians shall enjoy general protection against the dangers arising from military operations and, to ensure the effectiveness of this protection, the following rules must be observed in addition to other applicable international rules. 2. The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence aimed at civilian populations are prohibited. 3. Civilians shall be protected by this section as long as they do not take a direct part in hostilities and for as long as they do so."

International humanitarian law classifies war correspondents as individuals who "accompany the armed forces without being part of them. This category, if captured by the enemy, is treated as prisoners of war." This protection is less than that afforded to their civilian journalist counterparts, who should never be treated as prisoners of war under any circumstances when leaving conflict zones. Thus, civilian journalists have better protection than military correspondents and should not be targeted in any case.

2. Protection for Media Institutions and Equipment under International Humanitarian Law

Media institutions are considered civilian objects and, as such, should not be targeted by any party to the conflict. They remain civilian objects as long as they do not actively participate in combat activities. Therefore, parties to a conflict must distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. Article 48 of Additional Protocol I states:

"Parties to the conflict shall distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives, and accordingly direct their operations only against military objectives, in order to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects."

Article 52 emphasizes that civilian objects must not be the object of attack: "Civilian objects shall not be the object of attack or of reprisals. Civilian objects are all objects which are not military objectives as defined in paragraph 2." According to this definition, media institutions are civilian objects even if they broadcast news or statements hostile to one of the parties to the conflict. The Protocol also confirms that any object whose nature is doubtful should not be targeted, considering it civilian until proven otherwise. Paragraph 3 of the same article states: " In case of doubt as to whether an object normally dedicated to civilian purposes such as a place of worship, a house, or any other residence, or a school, is being used to make an effective contribution to military action, it shall be presumed not to be so."

A media institution may lose its protection under international humanitarian law if it is used for combat operations and makes a significant contribution to the fighting, and its destruction or capture provides a definite military advantage. Thus, merely broadcasting statements or inciting violence or even spreading rumors does not provide sufficient justification for targeting a media institution, and it retains its civilian status.

Paragraph 2 of Article 52 of Additional Protocol I states: "Attacks shall be limited strictly to military objectives. Military objectives are those objects which by their nature, location, purpose, or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture, or neutralization offers a definite military advantage."

Media equipment, such as live broadcast vehicles, broadcast towers, cameras, and other equipment, are considered civilian objects and should not be targeted unless they are used effectively in combat and attacking them provides a definite military advantage. Therefore, targeting media equipment or broadcast towers would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, potentially amounting to a war crime.