

Fact sheet

Journalists under fire by Israeli Occupation Forces

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PRESS



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

The ongoing violent conflict in the Gaza Strip has had a severe impact on the rights of journalists and media workers. Numerous journalists have been killed or injured in direct and indiscriminate military attacks carried out by Israeli occupation forces since the events of October 7th. These attacks not only involve killings but also include threats, physical attacks, detention, confiscation of equipment, denial of access to coverage areas, and arbitrary arrests. Journalists' families have been killed and homes have also been targeted for destruction. The violations have extended to targeting civilian media outlets, resulting in widespread demolition and damage.



Funeral of a journalist killed while covering events in Gaza Strip

These documented violations blatantly disregard the principles of international humanitarian law and indicate a deliberate targeting of journalists and media workers by the occupying forces. The aim is to silence and intimidate them, preventing them from documenting the war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces in Gaza. These violations have created a climate of self-censorship among journalists, driven by fear for their safety as well as the safety of their families. International community failure to hold perpetrators accountable for these serious crimes provides a green light for the continuation of these practices, depriving the victims families of justice and encouraging further violations in an environment of near-

complete impunity. This situation may deter other journalists from covering violations and revealing the truth.



Israeli occupation targeting a number of journalists in Tal Al-Zaatar area, in Jabalia refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip

Overview of Conditions of Journalists and Media Workers in Gaza

The conditions faced by journalists and media workers in Gaza are dire. Since October 7, 2023, Israeli occupation forces have carried out indiscriminate and disproportionate military attacks on the Gaza Strip, targeting not only civilians and civilian infrastructure but also journalists themselves.

Being a female Palestinian journalist means facing a constant risk of becoming a martyr, wounded, displaced, losing homes, or being a mother desperately seeking safety for toy children but unable to find it.

Part of a testimony by a Palestinian journalist

During its war on Gaza, Israeli occupation forces committed a total of **547 violations** against journalists. These violations were distributed as follows: 187 in October, 104 in November, 104 in December 2023, 80 in January 2024, 47 in February, and 25 in the first half of March.

Month	No of Violations
October 2023	187
November 2023	104
December 2023	104
January 2024	80
February 2024	47
First half of March 2024	25

Table of violations committed by Israeli occupation forces against journalists during its war in Gaza



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”The most common human rights violations suffered by journalists during armed conflict are detention and prevention from covering and photographing events, followed by killings, targeting of journalists lives, and storming and raiding of their homes.”

From the start of the conflict until March 15, 2024, approximately **133 journalists** and media workers, including **16 women**, were killed by the Israeli occupation forces. The number of wounded journalists reached **170**, with **70 inside** the Gaza Strip and **100** in the West Bank. Additionally, **75** press and media institutions were destroyed in the Strip and nearly **65 journalists** were arrested, and while some of them were released due to international pressure, Israel still holds **36 journalists** in detention.



Killing

Women



16

Including

133



Injuries

Gaza Strip

70

Including

170

Western Bank

100



Destruction

Media Institutions

75



Arrest

36

Remain

journalist

65

in detention



Israeli Occupation Forces Consistently Demonstrate Disregard for Journalists Lives

Gaza has become one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists, as many have paid with their lives for their courage in exposing war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli occupation forces. The conflict in Gaza has been described as one of the bloodiest and cruelest in recent times. Throughout the war, the occupation forces employed various methods to conceal their killings of civilians, committing severe violations of international humanitarian law. Palestinian journalists and media workers, in particular, have been among the majority of those killed while reporting on the events.

During the war on Gaza until mid-March 2023, the occupation forces killed **133 journalists and media workers**, including **16 women**, and injured 170 others. Some of these injuries resulted in the amputation of body parts. The use of drones and explosive devices targeting journalists in the field with the intent of assassination and to prevent the truth from being revealed was intensified by the Israeli occupation forces.

“Rarely have journalists paid such a heavy price for just doing their job as those in Gaza now”

United Nations Special Rapporteurs, in their condemnation of violations against journalists in Gaza

Despite journalists and media workers clearly identifying themselves through press-branded jackets, helmets, and marked press cars, they are directly targeted by Israeli occupation forces in an effort to silence their voices. This alarming message has been consistently sent by Israeli occupation forces since the beginning of war on Gaza, targeting anyone who reveals the truth from within the Gaza Strip.

preventing future violations. On the other hand, some journalists are faced with baseless charges, particularly the charge of incitement, which often carries a prison sentence ranging from six months to two years.



A photo showing solidarity of one of the unions within International Federation of Journalists with journalists in Palestine on the occasion of International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian Journalists (February 26, 2024).

Targeting and Threatening Journalists in the Gaza Strip to Obscure Truth

Journalists in the Gaza Strip are constantly targeted and threatened by Israeli occupation forces in an attempt to humiliate and intimidate them, obscuring the truth. The occupation forces frequently assault and beat journalists to intimidate them into self-censorship, preventing them from reporting on human rights violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces. In some cases, settlers are allowed to attack and beat journalists, with the intention of forcing them to stop their news coverage. These attacks by settlers are often carried out under the protection of the Israeli police. The occupation forces not only resort to threats but also go as far as killing journalists and their families, following through on their threats.

Human rights estimates indicate that targeting of journalist Wael Al-Dahdouh's family in their home in Nuseirat camp, central Gaza Strip, came after threats from the occupation forces. These threats were aimed at stopping him from carrying out his journalistic duties and documenting human rights violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces. This signifies that Al-Dahdouh paid a heavy price for his dedication to documenting the truth.



Bombing Media Buildings Constitutes War Crimes

The intentional targeting and destruction of media outlets by Israeli occupation forces not only causes significant material damage to the buildings of media institutions but also obstructs the coverage of a conflict that directly affects civilians. The Israeli army claims that all the media buildings it targeted and razed to the ground were military targets. However, investigations conducted by Maat found no evidence to support this claim. The occupation forces targeted and destroyed 75 media organizations.



Recommendations: Necessary Measures Should Be Taken To Implement UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity

Despite numerous human rights violations, including potential war crimes, attributed to the leaders of Israeli occupation forces in Gaza, they rarely face any accountability. Previous investigations into their crimes were marked by media and official blackouts, and even the announced investigations lacked independence and neutrality. To ensure the implementation of United Nations plan on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity in Gaza, Maat calls for the following measures:

First: International Bodies and International Community Shall Take the Following Actions :

Initiate an independent international investigation into the crimes committed by Israeli occupation forces against journalists and put an end to the culture of impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators.

Pressure Israeli occupation forces to allow the entry of all international media personnel to cover the situation in Gaza and document violations

Provide support to media institutions that were damaged by the occupation forces' violations, including reconstruction efforts and compensation for lost media equipment during the war.

Support relevant authorities in Gaza that seek to take stronger legal measures to ensure the safety of journalists.

Sustain international pressure on Israeli occupation forces to secure the release of detained journalists.

Encourage International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court to give special attention to the conditions faced by journalists in Gaza.

Second: Civil Society Organizations Should Take the Following Actions:

Promote information sharing on improving media work to effectively address the risks faced by journalists. This includes providing training to journalists on how to cover armed conflict situations without exposing themselves to serious danger.

Organize campaigns to exert pressure on countries supporting Israeli occupation forces, urging them to cease their support as it contributes to the killing of journalists and suppression of truth, particularly countries providing military assistance to occupation forces.

Seek legal recourse through international and national courts, utilizing mechanisms such as the principle of universal jurisdiction, to file cases against the leaders of the Israeli occupation forces and prevent their impunity.

Raise awareness among global populations about gravity of violations endured by journalists and media professionals, so that individuals take action and exert pressure on their governments to address dire situation faced by press in Gaza.

Recognize importance of addressing underlying causes of violence against journalists in Palestine, including issue of impunity for unlawful attacks by Israeli occupation forces.

Third: Media Institutions Should Implement the Following Measures:

- Operate with minimal number of personnel during critical times to minimize losses among journalists, while utilizing technology to transmit events.
- Strengthen cooperation and coordinate efforts among media organizations to ensure safety of journalists covering war events.