



Israel's Unprecedented Killing of Journalists in Gaza

Freedom of the press is a fundamental tenet that is protected and valued in the United States, leading one to question why U.S. officials have not done more to hold Israel accountable for its unparalleled killing of journalists in Gaza? Monday of this week marked a year of the genocide in Gaza, and further yet, the deadliest year on record of suppression and censorship by means of literally targeting and killing media workers. Given the fact that the United States is founded upon the principles of freedom of speech, press, and assembly, among others, this seems antithetical to what our country espouses and stands for. The targeting of journalists and other media workers – who are civilians – as Israeli forces have systematically done, is an egregious war crime and human rights violation under the accepted standards of international law.

The regrettably challenging task for journalists in Gaza is to focus on survival, as well as coverage and explanations of what is happening before their eyes, most importantly to Western audiences. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the ongoing Gaza War is the [deadliest conflict](#) in history for journalists and media workers. The overwhelming majority of journalists killed in Gaza have been Palestinian, and the year-long death toll is staggering and unlike any other conflict. The Israeli war crimes committed have only been able to be widely documented thanks to the work of these brave men and women, and the modern usage of social media as a tool for sharing and disseminating information.

Among those that have been killed during the course of the past year are Al Jazeera correspondents Samer Abu Daqqa, Ismail Al-Ghoul, Rami Al-Rifi, and Hamza Al-Dahdouh – the son of Al Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief Wael Al-Dahdouh. Numerous other members of Wael Al-Dahdouh's family have also been killed. In a recent [Al Jazeera investigative documentary](#) into the scope of Israeli war crimes committed in Gaza, a tribute was made to these and others that have been appallingly murdered at the hands of Israeli forces. Despite the unthinkable danger and risk that they constantly face, admirable work has been done by investigative journalists on the ground in Gaza like [Bisan Owda](#) – the brave young woman that has documented her life under siege in the Palestinian territory who has recently won both a Peabody and Emmy award for her journalism. Owda has nobly and courageously documented her first-hand experiences in Gaza in the name of drawing attention via social media, and in doing so, helped to broadcast Israel's war crimes and human rights abuses for all to see. Without this evidence and exposure, the struggle for accountability and justice would be an even more daunting task. Yet, the war crimes continue to take place while denial still festers as well.

The sheer volume of overwhelming and undeniable evidence of war crimes that we have borne witness to over the last year can be singularly credited to the bravery of the journalists in Gaza. This is not due to just the professional reporters and writers, but also civilians who have used their phones to record what has been taking place. Ironically, this is how we know that Israel has been targeting media workers, as well as humanitarian aid workers, medical workers, and the civilian population of non-combatants at-large. The documentation of the Israeli armed forces' actions highlights a clear and repeated pattern, and debunks any claims that these incidents are coincidental, accidental, and most importantly, isolated or rare. Furthermore, Israel is attempting to [control the narrative](#) by targeting media workers – even [outside](#) of Gaza – and closing news outlet offices, while also instilling fear in journalists that their homes, families, and livelihoods will be targeted for simply reporting the truth. The

intent is [plain to see](#), that this is censorship aimed at blatantly covering up what is transpiring, suppressing the documentation of war crimes, and hindering the distribution of this information to the outside world.

Reporters have been killed, displaced, arrested, tortured, and exiled for merely seeking to do their jobs. As Al Jazeera reporter Mohammed R. Mhawish put it: “When the press is silenced, it’s not just a building that closes or stories that disappear. It’s accountability itself that is lost. It cuts off a vital flow of information to the public...and the consequences ripple far beyond the journalists themselves. The world loses access to the ground truth – the kind of truth that challenges “official” government narratives, the kind that holds the powerful to account.” There has never been true accountability for Israel’s targeting and killing of journalists, something that unfortunately is not some new phenomenon, and [did not begin](#) this past year in Gaza. If this behavior continues to go unchecked, tragic killings like these will sadly persist.