



August 15, 2024

**Dear Secretary Blinken,**

Since October 7, 2023, Israel has killed more than 160 Palestinian journalists. This is the largest recorded number of journalists killed in any war. While Israel's indiscriminate bombing of the densely populated Gaza means no civilians are safe, Israel has also been repeatedly documented deliberately targeting journalists.

Israel's military actions are not possible without U.S. weapons, U.S. military aid, and U.S. diplomatic support. By providing the weapons being used to deliberately kill journalists, you are complicit in one of the gravest affronts to press freedom today.

On World Press Freedom Day this year, you called on "every nation to do more to protect journalists," and reiterated your "unwavering support for free and independent media around the world."

As journalists, publications and press freedom groups in solidarity with the courageous Palestinian journalists of Gaza, we call on you to do more to protect journalists and show unwavering support for free and independent media by supporting an arms embargo against Israel.

Israel has gone to great lengths to suppress media coverage of its war in Gaza, imposing military censorship on both its own journalists and international reporters operating in the country; and, with Egypt's help, blocking all foreign journalists from Gaza. Israel shut down Al Jazeera, raided its office, seized its equipment, and blocked its broadcasts and website within Israel. The world relies only on the Palestinian journalists in Gaza to report the truth about the war and Israel's widespread violations of international law.<sup>1</sup>

Israel's deliberate targeting of these journalists seems intended to impose a near blackout on coverage of its assault on Gaza. Investigations by United Nations bodies, NGOs, and media organizations, have all found instances of deliberate targeting of journalists.<sup>2</sup>

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1 "Israel bans Al Jazeera: What does it mean and what happens next?" Al Jazeera (May 6, 2024). Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/6/israel-bans-al-jazeera-what-does-it-mean-and-what-happens-next>

2 E.g. "Gaza: UN experts condemn killing and silencing of journalists," United Nations (February 2, 2024). Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/gaza-un-experts-condemn-killing-and-silencing-journalists> "Israel: Strikes on Journalists in Lebanon Apparently Deliberate," Human Rights Watch, (December 7, 2023). Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/07/israel-strikes-journalists-lebanon-apparently-deliberate>

"Journalist casualties in the Israel-Gaza war," Committee to Project Journalists. Available at <https://cpj.org/2024/07/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>. "Israeli tank fire killed Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah in Lebanon," Reuters (December 7, 2023). Available at <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-LEBANON/JOURNALIST/akveabxrzvr/index.html>

In a joint statement, five UN special rapporteurs declared:

"We have received disturbing reports that, despite being clearly identifiable in jackets and helmets marked "press" or traveling in well-marked press vehicles, journalists have come under attack, which would seem to indicate that the killings, injury, and detention are a deliberate strategy by Israeli forces to obstruct the media and silence critical reporting."<sup>3</sup>

Israel has also killed journalists during the war outside of Gaza, such as on October 13, 2023 when an Israeli tank fired across the Lebanese border at clearly identified press, killing a Reuters reporter and injuring six other journalists.<sup>4</sup>

Under international law, the intentional targeting of journalists is a war crime.<sup>5</sup> While all governments are bound by international law protecting reporters, U.S. domestic law also prohibits the State Department from providing assistance to units of foreign security forces credibly accused of gross violations of human rights.<sup>6</sup> Israel's well-documented pattern of extrajudicial executions of journalists is a gross violation of human rights.

Additionally, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the American people's right to receive information and ideas.<sup>7</sup> Israel's deliberate targeting of journalists follows a longstanding pattern by the Israeli government to suppress truthful reporting on its treatment of Palestinians and its war in Gaza. By providing Israel with the weapons used to kill journalists, the State Department is abetting Israel's violent suppression of journalism.

The US is providing the weapons Israel continually uses to target Palestinian journalists in Gaza. This is a violation of International law and U.S. domestic law. We urge you to immediately cease the transfer of all weapons to Israel.

**Signed,**

113 journalists

20 news outlets

7 press freedom organizations

*(Signatures below)*

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3 "Gaza: UN experts condemn killing and silencing of journalists," United Nations (February 2, 2024). Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/gaza-un-experts-condemn-killing-and-silencing-journalists>

4 "Israeli strike killed 'clearly identifiable' reporter in Lebanon: UN probe," Al Jazeera (March 14, 2024). Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/14/israeli-strike-killed-clearly-identifiable-reporter-in-lebanon-un-probe>

5 Article 79 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions states "Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians"

6 22 U.S. Code § 2378d

7 Stanley v. Georgia, 394 U.S. 557 (1969)

## Journalists

Abby Martin, *The Empire Files*  
Adam H. Johnson  
Aida Chávez  
Akayla Galloway, *The Social Justice Center*  
Alex Han, *In These Times*  
Alex Press, *Jacobin*  
Ameen Izzadeen, *The Sunday Times, Colombo*  
Amy K. Sater  
Andy Lee Roth  
April Alonso, *Cicero Independiente*  
Arun Gupta  
Azad Essa, *Middle East Eye*  
Ben Burgis, *Jacobin*  
Branko Marcetic, *Jacobin*  
Britney Schultz, *Truthout*  
Brittany M. Brown  
Cathy Vogan, *Consortium News*  
Charles Glass, *Former ABC News Chief Mideast Correspondent*  
Chip Gibbons, *Defending Rights & Dissent*  
Chris Hedges  
Cody Bloomfield  
Dahr Jamail, *Independent Journalist*  
Dan Sheehan  
Daniel Denvir, *Host of The Dig podcast*  
Daniel Larison  
Dave DeCamp, *Antiwar.com*  
Dave Reed, *Mondoweiss*  
David Lindorff, *Independent journalist, 54 years in the profession*  
David Pierce Griscom, *Left Reckoning*  
David Swanson, *World BEYOND War*  
David Zirin, *The Nation Magazine*  
Dennis J. Bernstein, *KPFA/PACIFICA RADIO/FLASHPOINTS*  
Doug Henwood, *KPFA radio*  
Dr. Maha Hilal, *Muslim Counterpublics Lab*  
Eleanor Goldfield  
Eli Clifton  
Erik Baker, *Associate editor, The Drift*  
Frances Madson, *Member of National Writers Union*  
Gareth Porter, *Independent Journalist*  
Gunnar Olsen  
Irene Romulo  
Jack McGrath, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*  
Jack Mirkinson  
Jake Romm, *Protean Magazine*  
James Bamford, *Author and Contributing Writer at The Nation*  
James Fox, *Airmail News*  
Jeff Cohen, *Founding Director of Park Center for Independent Media at Ithaca College*  
Jeffrey St. Clair, *CounterPunch*

Jen Deerinwater, *Crushing Colonialism*  
Jim Lafferty, *Host, Public affairs show Law and Disorder*  
Joe Lauria, *Consortium News*  
Joel Whitney  
John Hanrahan  
Jonathan Cook  
Joshua Frank, *CounterPunch*  
Ju-Hyun Park, *The Real News*  
Kai Bird  
Kelley B. Vlahos, *Responsible Statecraft*  
Kevin Gosztola  
Kristinn Hrafnsson, *WikiLeaks*  
Lara Witt  
Laura Poitras  
Lena  
Lidia Alvarez  
Liza Featherstone  
Loretta Graceffo, *Truthout*  
Luke O'Neil, *Welcome to Hell World*  
Luke Savage, *Columnist, Jacobin*  
Malcolm Harris  
Marjorie Cohn, *Truthout*  
Matt Kennard, *Declassified UK*  
Maureen Clare Murphy, *The Electronic Intifada*  
Maximillian Alvarez, *The Real News Network*  
Maya Schenwar, *Truthout*  
Meagan Day, *Jacobin*  
Micah Uetracht  
Michael Arria, *Mondoweiss*  
Mickey Huff, *Director, Project Censored*  
Natasha Lennard  
Nathan Fuller, *Courage Foundation*  
Nathan J. Robinson, *Current Affairs*  
Nathan Tankus  
Nausicaa Renner, *Drop Site News*  
Negin Owliaei, *Truthout*  
Nick French, *Jacobin*  
Nima Shirazi, *Citations Needed*  
Noah Kulwin  
Norman Solomon  
Philip Weiss, *Mondoweiss*  
Richard Silverstein, *Tikun Olam*  
Robert Scheer, *University of Southern California*  
Roberto Savio, *Othernews*  
Rosette Sewali  
Rune Ottosen, *PEN Norway*  
Ryan Grim, *Drop Site News*  
Sam Carliner  
Sam Sacks, *Means TV - MMN*  
Samantha Borek, *Truthout*

Sarah Lazare  
Séamus Malekafzali, *Freelance*  
Seraj Assi, *Jacobin*  
Seth Ackerman, *Editor at Large, Jacobin*  
Shaheryra Mirza, *Middle East Eye*  
Sharon Zhang, *Truthout*  
Skip Kaltenheuser, *Have Pen Will Travel, freelance based in DC*  
Spencer J. Ackerman  
Stefania Maurizi, *Investigative Journalist, Il Fatto Quotidiano*  
Tareq S Hajjaj, *Mondoweiss*  
Tim Shorrock, *Independent writer*  
Tony Sutton, *ColdType*  
Umar Farooq  
Y. L. al-Sheikh

### **Press Freedom Organizations**

Courage Foundation  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting)  
Freedom of the Press Foundation  
Project Censored  
RootsAction  
Whistleblower & Source Protection Program (WHISPeR) at ExposeFacts

### **News Outlets**

Antiwar.com  
Cicero Independiente  
Citations Needed  
ColdType  
Consortium News  
CounterPunch  
Crushing Colonialism  
Current Affairs  
Drop Site News  
Law and Disorder  
In These Times  
Middle East Eye  
Mondoweiss  
Othernews  
Progressive Hub  
The Real News Network  
Tikun Olam  
Truthout  
Washington Report on Middle East Affairs  
Welcome to Hell World