

Committee to Protect Journalists says Israel's war on Gaza deadliest in modern history for journalists



Mourners at the funeral for Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abudaqa in Gaza's southern city of

Geneva, December 22 (RHC)-- As Israeli forces pound the Gaza Strip, journalists are being killed at a rate with no parallel in modern history, a press freedom watchdog says. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said on Thursday that 68 media workers have been killed in the 10 weeks of fighting – 61 of them Palestinian, four Israeli and three Lebanese.

Among them is Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abudaqa, who was killed in an Israeli drone strike last week while reporting from a school in Khan Younis. “More journalists have been killed in the first 10 weeks of the Israel-Gaza war than have ever been killed in a single country over an entire year,” the CPJ said in a statement.

The Committee to Protect Journalists says concentration of reporters killed in Gaza ‘unparalleled’ in the group’s history. “More than half the deaths – 37 – occurred during the first month of the war, making it the deadliest single month ever documented by CPJ since it began recording journalist fatalities in 1992,” it added.

The statement came as Palestinian reporters in Gaza continue to work under brutal conditions, facing constant bombardment, displacement and possible targeting by Israeli forces.

The report drew attention to what CPJ called “an apparent pattern of targeting of journalists and their families by the Israeli military”, noting that it had recorded at least one instance in which a journalist was killed while wearing clearly marked press insignia with no fighting in the surrounding area.

“The concentration of journalists killed in the Israel-Gaza war is unparalleled in CPJ’s history and underscores how grave the situation is for press on the ground,” CPJ President Jodie Ginsberg said. “Local Palestinian journalists continue to report from Gaza while living in fear for their lives.”

The concentration of journalists killed in Gaza outpaces that of other conflict zones, such as Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, it said. The CPJ said Iraq was the only country to approach the current death toll in Gaza when in 2006, 56 journalists were killed in the wake of the United States invasion of the Gulf country three years earlier.

Another Al Jazeera journalist, Wael Dahdouh, lost his wife, son, daughter and grandson in an Israeli bombing last month and was wounded in the attack that killed Abudaqa. Al Jazeera has said it will refer Abudaqa’s killing to the International Criminal Court (ICC), stating that the strike took place within a context of “recurrent attacks on the Network’s crews working and operating in the occupied Palestinian territories and instances of incitement against them”.

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