

Leaked documents show Israeli military bans reporting on eight subjects amid war on Gaza



The Israeli occupation forces are seen in an undisclosed location in the besieged Gaza Strip (Photo by Reuters)

Tel Aviv, December 25 (RHC)-- Leaked documents revealed that the Israeli military has officially banned media from reporting on eight subjects in Israel, including captives held in Gaza, amid the war on the besieged territory. According to a report, the document, titled "Operation 'Swords of Iron' Israeli Chief Censor Directive to the Media," was provided by an unnamed source to The Intercept.

The order is not dated, the report said, but its reference to Operation Swords of Iron — the name of Israel's current military offensive in Gaza — makes clear that it was issued sometime after Hamas's October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Storm carried out into the occupied territories.

The order is signed by the chief censor of the Israel military, Brig. Gen. Kobi Mandelblit, it added. The document lists eight topics the media are forbidden from reporting on without prior approval from the Israeli Military Censor, it said.

"In light of the current security situation and the intensive media coverage, we wish to encourage you to submit to the Censorship all materials dealing with the activities of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Israeli security forces prior to their broadcast," the report said citing the document.

"Please update your staff on the content of this letter, with an emphasis on the news desk and field reporters."

The potentially embarrassing revelations about weapons used by Israel or captured by Hamas, discussions of security cabinet meetings, and the Israeli hostages in Gaza — an issue that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been widely criticized for mishandling, are among the topics banned in the order, according to the report.

The bans also included reporting on details of military operations, Israeli intelligence, rocket attacks that hit sensitive locations in Israel, cyber-attacks, and visits by senior military officials to the battlefield, it said.

"I haven't ever seen instructions like this sent from the censor aside from general notices broadly telling outlets to comply, and even then it was only sent to certain people," said Michael Omer-Man, a former editor-in-chief of the Israel's +972 Magazine.

According to The Intercept, more than 6,500 news items and stories have either been completely censored or partially censored by the Israeli regime since the launch of its genocidal war on Gaza.

However, the report said, the actual number of new stories affected by the censor can never be quantified. Because of a system of close relationships and a feeling of what to expect, Israeli journalists can censor themselves.

"People self-censor, people do not even try to report the stories they know won't get through," Omer-Man said. "And that is really showing right now in how little regular Israelis are seeing in the press about what is happening in Gaza to Palestinians."

The Israeli aggression in Gaza has so far killed more than 20,300 people, mostly women and children, and injured over 56,000 others, with thousands more believed lost and buried under rubble. The regime has also cut off most water, food, and power supplies in Gaza.

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