

*Israeli authorities shut down live broadcast from Associated Press in Gaza, seize equipment*

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**In this image from video, Israeli officials seize AP video equipment from an apartment block in Sderot, Southern Israel (AP Photo)**

Gaza City, May 21 (RHC)-- The Associated Press has reported that Israeli authorities shut down their live camera feed displaying Gaza and confiscated their equipment, which they labeled as an "abusive application of the Israeli government's foreign broadcasters law."

"The Associated Press (AP) is strongly condemning the actions of the Israeli government," the news collective declared in a statement. "They demand that the Israeli authorities return their equipment and permit them to resume their live feed right away so they can carry on delivering important visual journalism to countless media organizations across the globe."

These areas surrounding Gaza are routinely classified by the Israeli military as 'closed military zones,' resulting in restricted access. The AP's live feed presented a perspective of the situation in Gaza, where no independent journalists are permitted due to Israeli and Egyptian restrictions on visiting the territory.

This incident happened several weeks after Israel shut down Al Jazeera's operations in the country. The Israelis raided the news network's offices and confiscated their communication equipment, prompting heavy criticism from the United Nations and human rights organizations regarding Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to curtail press freedoms.

Israeli Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi accused the Associated Press of violating the new law by providing a feed to its thousands of clients, including Al Jazeera. "The confiscated camera illegally broadcast live from the northern Gaza Strip on Al-Jazeera, showing the activities of the IDF soldiers and jeopardizing our troops," he said. "It's worth mentioning that a warning had been issued to the AP agency the previous week to stop the broadcasts to Al Jazeera per the law and government's decisions. However, they continued to air on the channel, thus causing real harm to national security."

The statement revealed that the seized items were a camera, tripod, two microphones, and transmission equipment.

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