

Rights groups back South Africa's urgent request to ICJ over media access to Gaza



New York, May 23 (RHC)-- The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has issued a statement in support of South Africa's urgent request to the International Court of Justice to order Israel to facilitate unimpeded media access to Gaza.

The CPJ is among nine human rights and press freedom groups saying Israel has failed to comply with the top UN court's January order.

In a joint statement released on Wednesday, the nine human rights and press freedom organizations said Israel has failed to "take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Genocide Convention."

Journalists, independent rights investigators, fact-finding missions and the International Criminal Court still do not have access to Gaza, the groups stated.

"Despite the valiant efforts of Palestinian journalists who continue reporting despite a daily struggle to survive, Israel's censorious actions make it nearly impossible to comprehensively, continuously and independently document what is happening on the ground in Gaza and risk significantly hampering future accountability efforts," the groups said.

"Israel's near-total ban of foreign journalists from Gaza and its increasing constraints on outlets like Al Jazeera and The Associated Press – combined with a struggling Palestinian press corps – means South Africa's ICJ request for unimpeded media access is urgent and vital," said Gypsy Guillen Kaiser, the CPJ's communications director.

Since the ICJ's January 26 order, the CPJ has documented Israel's killing of 19 Palestinian journalists and media workers in Gaza.

At least 105 journalists and media workers – 100 of them Palestinian – have been killed since Israel's barbarous campaign in Gaza began in October 2023.

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