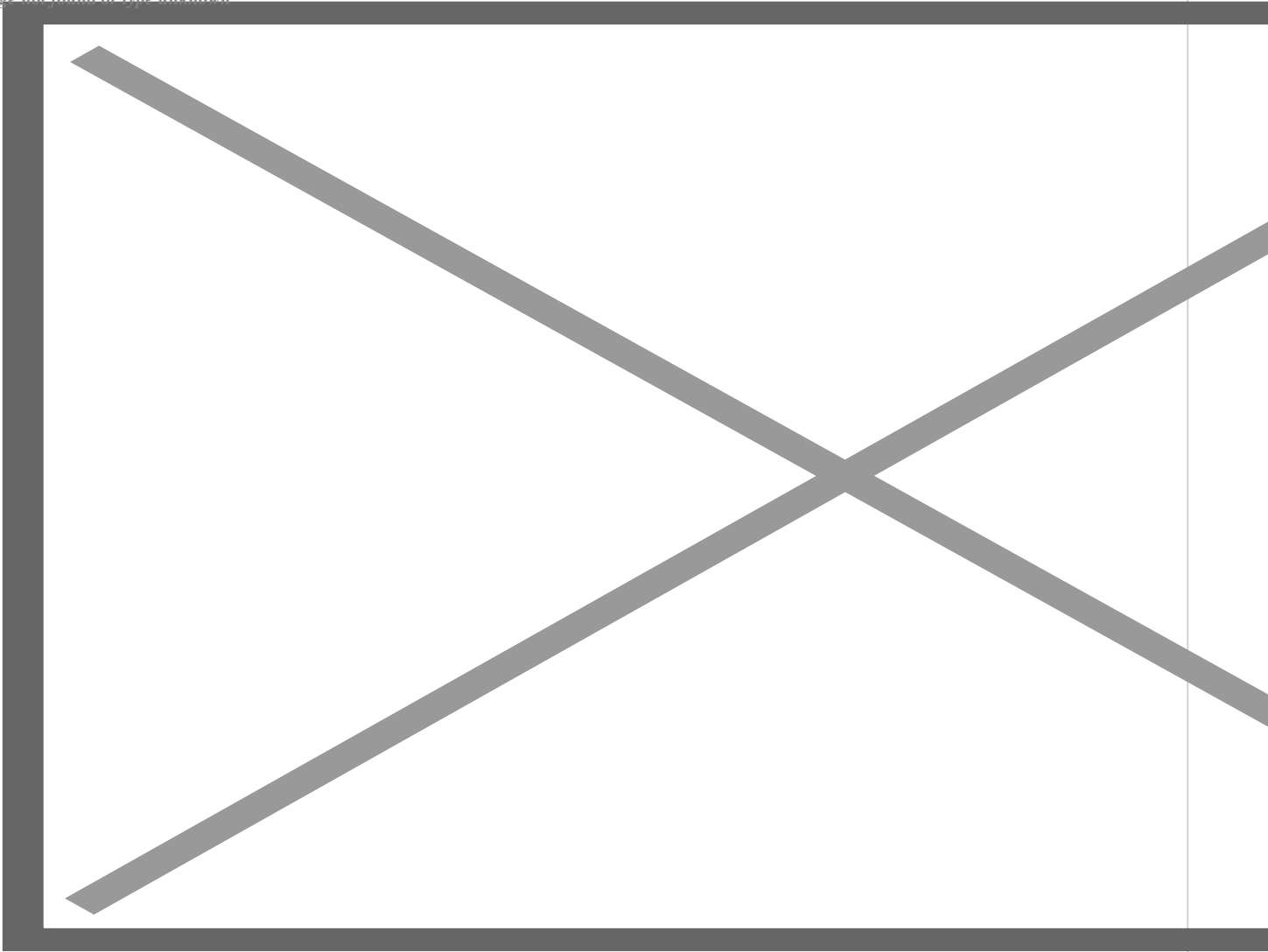


Media organizations press Israel for unhindered access to Gaza

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File photo of Israeli forces in the war-hit Gaza Strip

New York, July 12 (RHC)-- As many as 70 international media and civil society organizations have pressed the Israeli regime for unhindered access to the Gaza Strip, which has been subjected to a near-total media blackout amid Tel Aviv's ongoing genocidal war against the coastal sliver.

The organizations, which include the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, BBC, CNN, The Guardian, The New York Times, and The Washington Post, made the plea in an open letter addressed to the regime on Thursday.

The bodies that hail from more than 26 countries pointed out that no independent media access to Gaza had been permitted since the start of the war in October last year. The brutal military onslaught has so far claimed the lives of nearly 38,350 Palestinians, mostly women and children, besides turning almost the entirety of Palestinian territory into a scene of utter destruction.

“Nine months into the war, international reporters are still being denied access to Gaza except for rare and escorted trips arranged by the Israeli military,” the letter read. “This effective ban on foreign reporting has placed an impossible and unreasonable burden on local reporters to document a war through which they are living,” it added.

The undersigned said that more than 100 journalists had been killed since the start of the war and those who remained were working in conditions of extreme deprivation.

“The result is that information from Gaza is becoming harder and harder to obtain and that the reporting which does get through is subject to repeated questions over its veracity,” they said.

Commenting on the letter, whose release was organized by the non-governmental Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ CEO Jodie Ginsberg said, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “describes Israel as a democracy. His actions with regard to the media tell a different story.”

International journalists, she added, “should be given independent access to Gaza so they can judge for themselves what is happening in this war—rather than being spoon-fed with a handful of organized tours by the Israeli military.”

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