

UN rights chief urges Israel to open criminal investigation into Palestinian journalist's death

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UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet has called for accountability and an end to the Tel Aviv regime's impunity as Israeli troops press ahead with their acts of aggression against Palestinians across the occupied lands.

Geneva, June 15 (RHC)-- The United Nations human rights chief has called on Israeli authorities to open a criminal investigation into circumstances surrounding the the killing of veteran Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot dead last month while covering an Israeli army raid in the occupied West Bank, and to hold perpetrators to account.

“Under international human rights law, Israel should investigate and ensure appropriate accountability for every case of death and serious injury inflicted by Israeli forces. The prevailing climate of impunity is fueling further violence and violations,” Michelle Bachelet said during her opening address to the Geneva-based body’s summer session.

“The now chronically high levels of killings and injuries of Palestinians, including children by Israeli forces in the occupied Palestinian territory, have continued in the first six months of 2022,” the former president of Chile noted.

On Sunday, the American daily newspaper Washington Post published an investigative article on the killing of Abu Akleh – a renowned reporter of the Qatar-based and Arabic-language Al Jazeera television news network, stating that an Israeli soldier killed her on May 11 in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

It cited multiple interviews with eyewitnesses and examined a number of videos, including live videos streamed at the moment of the shooting, as well as audio analyses. “The Washington Post examined more than five dozen videos, social media posts and photos of the event, conducted two physical inspections of the area and commissioned two independent acoustic analyses of the gunshots,” The Post said.

“That review suggests an Israeli soldier in the convoy likely shot and killed Abu Akleh,” Sarah Cahlan, Meg Kelly and Steve Hendrix, who conducted and wrote the investigation, revealed.

The Washington Post went on to refute Israeli claims that there was an exchange of gunfire between Israeli forces and Palestinian gunmen at the time Abu Akleh was killed, or that a gunman was among the journalists when a soldier opened fire in his direction.

“We were very sure there were no armed Palestinians, and no exchange of fire or clashes with the Israelis,” the newspaper quoted Ali Samoudi, a Palestinian journalist who was accompanying Abu Akleh, as saying. “It was totally calm, there was no gunfire at all,” Samoudi stressed.

A newly-released video shows relative calm and quiet in the area where Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed by Israeli forces, contradicting the regime.

The Associated Press has also carried out a reconstruction of Abu Akleh's killing, and reported that their findings lend “support to assertions from both Palestinian authorities and Abu Akleh's colleagues that the bullet that cut her down came from an Israeli gun.”

Calls have grown around the world and in the United States for an independent investigation into Abu Akleh's killing. More than 50 US lawmakers signed a letter last month, calling on the FBI and State Department to intervene and lead a probe.

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