

UK service honors slain reporter Shireen Abu Akleh

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London, June 29 (RHC)-- Dozens of people in the UK's capital attended a memorial service for Shireen Abu Akleh, the veteran Al Jazeera journalist who was shot dead by Israeli forces last month while on a reporting assignment in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin. The service on Tuesday took place at St Bride's Church in central London.

Reporting from the scene, Al Jazeera's Nadim Baba said the memorial was a chance for participants to honor Abu Akleh and remember her life and work. It hosted via video link Abu Akleh's colleague, Ali al-Samoudi, who was shot and injured during the same incident, in addition to Palestinian artist Reem Kilani and Lina Abu Akleh, the slain journalist's niece. "Shireen's niece has been vocal in pushing for an independent investigation," Baba said.

Last week, 24 United States senators called on President Joe Biden to ensure direct involvement from Washington in the investigation of the killing of Abu Akleh, who held U.S. citizenship.

It came a day before the United Nations said on Friday that information it had gathered showed that the bullets that killed Abu Akleh on May 11 were fired by Israeli forces.

Multiple witnesses said that Israeli forces killed the Jerusalem-born Abu Akleh. Investigations conducted by several media organisations have also come to the same conclusion.

Israeli officials initially tried to argue that Palestinian gunmen could have killed Abu Akleh. However, Israel later backtracked and said it could not rule out the possibility that an Israeli soldier had fired the shot.

Al Jazeera Media Network announced on May 26 that it had assigned a legal team to refer the killing to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. The case was recently handed over to the ICC prosecutor. However, the current status of the investigation remains unclear.

The Palestinian Authority has called on Israel to hand over the gun that fired the shot that killed Abu Akleh. Israel has asked the Palestinian Authority to provide the bullet extracted from her body so Israel could conduct its own ballistic investigation.

"We have refused to hand over the bullet to them, and we even demand that they hand over the weapon that murdered Shireen Abu Akleh," Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh said at the ceremony.

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