

UN renews call for international probe into killing of Shireen Abu Akleh

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Palestinians hold pictures of veteran reporter Shireen Abu Akleh, who was killed by Israeli army gunfire during an Israeli raid on the Jenin refugee camp, in Nablus in the Israeli-occupied West Bank (Photo by Reuters)

United Nations, August 22 (RHC)-- The United Nations has renewed its call for an international investigation into the assassination of veteran Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was killed by Israeli forces while on assignment in the occupied northern West Bank city of Jenin.

“Our position on the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh is unchanged,” Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, told a press conference in New York when asked about the UN chief’s stance on an international probe into the circumstances surrounding the killing of the 51-year-old Palestinian TV correspondent for Qatar-based al-Jazeera Arabic television news network on May 11th. And he added: “We still want this matter to be thoroughly investigated and for those responsible for the killing to be held accountable.”

On whether Guterres supports the International Criminal Court’s probe into the journalist’s murder in the occupied West Bank, Haq said: “We have been clear that we support the investigations that have been underway, and we want to make sure that they come to a result that is acceptable to all [concerned] parties.”

Palestine is an Islamic issue, because the political, as Imam Khomeini demonstrated, can be expressed in a non-secular, non-Western grammar, and resistance against the Zionist regime could be articulated in the language of Islam.

Abu Akleh was wearing a protective vest marked with “PRESS” and standing with other journalists when she was shot dead by an Israeli sniper.

Ali Samoudi, a Palestinian journalist who was accompanying her, was hospitalized in stable condition after being shot in the back. Samoudi told the Associated Press that they were among a group of seven reporters who went to cover the Israeli army raid on the Jenin refugee camp. He said they were all wearing protective gear that marked them as reporters, and they passed by Israeli troops so the soldiers would see them.

The journalist said the first shot missed them, then a second struck him, and a third killed Abu Akleh, adding that there were no combatants or other civilians in the area — only the reporters and Israeli army troops.

Shaza Hanaysheh, a reporter with a Palestinian news website, who was also among the reporters, gave a similar account, stressing there were no clashes or shooting in the immediate area.

Al-Jazeera has described Abu Akleh’s death as a “blatant murder” that violates “international laws and norms” and said that she was “assassinated in cold blood”. The network has assigned a legal team to refer her killing to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague.

The Palestinian Ministry of Information condemned what it said was a “shocking crime” committed by Israeli forces. “The Israeli occupation has repeatedly targeted, injured, and assaulted Palestinian journalists. Shireen joins other journalists that Israel killed as they worked on revealing the crimes of the Israeli occupation.

“The killing can never deter our people from continuing the struggle for freedom, will only shorten the life of the occupying regime, and will bring us closer to freedom and an end to Israeli impunity,” it said in a statement.

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