

Report shows journalist Samer Abudaqa was targeted and left to bleed to death

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Colleagues and family members pray over the body of Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abudaqa, December 16, 2023 [Mahmud Hams/AFP]

Gaza City, January 15 (RHC)-- Samer Abudaqa, Al Jazeera's cameraman who was killed on December 15 in an Israeli air strike in Gaza, died despite an extensive network of humanitarian organisations and fellow journalists applying pressure on Israel to help rescue him, The Intercept has reported.

Abudaqa was left to bleed to death at the Farhana school in Khan Younis, where the air strike hit, as emergency workers were blocked by the Israeli military from reaching the site despite multiple contacts writing to the military for approval, according to the report published on Friday.

"The Israeli military were well aware that an Al Jazeera journalist was lying helpless, The Intercept's reporting shows, yet it did not allow emergency teams to safely pass for nearly four hours and did not send a bulldozer for over an hour after that," the report said.

"Much of the evidence points toward a targeted Israeli strike on the Al Jazeera journalists," it also added.

Abudaqa had been filming at the school earlier with Al Jazeera Gaza bureau chief Wael Dahdouh, who was also injured in the air strike. "I tried to get up in any way because I was sure that another missile would target us – from our experience that's what usually happens," Dahdouh told The Intercept.

The veteran journalist told the outlet that once he realised his arm was bleeding profusely, he knew he needed medical attention, and stumbled to an ambulance hundreds of metres away. He was then taken to a nearby hospital.

Abudaqa, however, was injured in the lower half of his body and could not walk to the ambulance.

"I couldn't offer him anything," Dahdouh told The Intercept, recalling the incident, saying that once he reached the ambulance, he told emergency workers to go and rescue his cameraman. The crew said they would first take Dahdouh to the hospital and send another ambulance to Abudaqa.

Yet, for hours, emergency workers were unable to reach the bleeding cameraman without approval from the Israeli military, with Israeli forces even firing at them as the workers tried to get close.

Orly Halpern, a freelance reporter and producer based in Jerusalem, decided to share Abudaqa's ordeal on a WhatsApp group with more than 140 journalists from the Foreign Press Association, a Jerusalem-based non-profit representing reporters from more than 30 countries, The Intercept reported.

Members of the group shared contacts of the Israeli military among one another, as they attempted to let the military know that Abudaqa needed medical help. The journalists were trying to get a response from the army, just as various humanitarian organisations, from the Palestinian Red Crescent to the International Committee of the Red Cross, were doing the same.

"I thought that if many journalists contacted the army, along with the Foreign Press Association, then the army might be more pressed to act, particularly knowing that we were aware of the situation and that we would report on it," Halpern told The Intercept. "I believe there is power in numbers," she said.

By the evening, Halpern updated the group to share that the Israeli military had approved a Palestinian bulldozer to come through. But once the bulldozer cleared the path to reach Abudaqa, he was dead. About five hours had passed since he was injured in the strike.

Since Abudaqa's death, Al Jazeera has been preparing a legal file to the International Criminal Court (ICC) over what the network says was an "assassination" of its journalist. Dahdouh, meanwhile, continues to hold steadfast in his reporting despite losing his colleague as well as his wife, two sons, daughter and grandson in other Israeli air raids since October 7.

"The targeting and destruction of offices, like Al Jazeera's offices; the targeting of Palestinian families, such as is the case with my family; and the targeting of homes, like my home that was destroyed and

where there are no houses around it in the first place, so they know they are targeting the house of the head of Al Jazeera,” the bureau chief told The Intercept.

“It is clear that this is all happening in the context of pressure and punishment of Palestinian journalists by the Israeli military.”

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/344451-report-shows-journalist-samer-abudaqa-was-targeted-and-left-to-bleed-to-death>



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