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Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese

Truth under the rubble: media in the time of genocide

Summary

This report examines how the destruction of truth has become integral to the destruction of a people. It identifies three interconnected patterns: the elimination of Palestinian media workers – through killing, maiming, arbitrary detention, torture, intimidation and the systematic labelling of them as "terrorists" – to suppress the documentation of crimes; the construction of an information regime in Israel through media restrictions, censorship, propaganda, hate speech, genocidal incitement and denial; and the role of influential international media and digital platforms in marginalizing Palestinian voices and reproducing Israeli narratives, normalizing legal distortions, which ultimately legitimized atrocities. Together, these practices have not merely accompanied genocide but have facilitated its commission and obstructed accountability. Some aspects of this assault on truth might be described as "mediacide".

I. Introduction

1. Perpetrators and enablers of genocide often seek to shape how genocidal destruction is perceived and remembered. Eliminating those who bear witness, inciting violence through "sympathetic" media and deploying information systems to shield perpetrators are among the means by which this is achieved. In Palestine, these appear as interconnected features of a long colonial project, the current genocidal phase of which has intensified the war both on and through the media.

2. Unable to access the occupied Palestinian territory, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, relied in this report on primary and public sources, consultations with survivors and experts and 89 written submissions received following her call for input.[1] Of these, 62 examine recurrent patterns across media ecosystems in Europe, North America and Australia.[2] Rather than focusing on overtly partisan or propagandistic outlets, this report examines a selection of media organizations widely regarded as authoritative and influential in shaping public understanding and policymaking. These were the most frequently identified in submissions, and have faced criticism from audiences and journalists for their coverage of Palestine. Out of 12, only 3 responded to requests for comments.

3. The report examines three mutually reinforcing patterns:

(a) The systematic targeting of Palestinian media workers and media and telecommunications infrastructure,[3] in the deadliest conflict ever recorded for journalists.[4] Hundreds of journalists, photographers, videographers, editors and others have been killed, injured, arbitrarily detained, tortured, intimidated and smeared as terrorists while documenting the destruction of their own society. Their elimination has progressively deprived the world of its primary witnesses. In the words of an Israeli soldier: "Whoever writes an article or works on a laptop is like someone carrying a Kalashnikov and attacking us";[5]

(b) The broader Israeli architecture of information control, made of censorship, access restrictions, coordinated media and advertising campaigns, and the role of segments of the Israeli media in normalizing and promoting hatred, genocidal incitement and denial;

(c) The role of influential international media and digital platforms in reproducing Israeli narratives, marginalizing Palestinian voices, dehumanizing Palestinians, suppressing legitimate criticism of Israel and ignoring or recasting legal realities to obscure or legitimize conduct amounting to genocide.

4. Viewed together, these practices constitute an assault on truth that is intrinsic to the genocidal violence they are intended to conceal. The elimination of witnesses, the suppression of freedom of expression and the abandonment of fundamental

[1] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2026/call-input-role-media-context-israels-policies-and-practices-toward.

[2] The material covered media ecosystems in the European Union, Australia, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

[3] In this report, "journalists", "media workers" and "media personnel" are used interchangeably; under international humanitarian law, all are protected civilians.

[4] See https://costsofwar.watson.brown.edu/paper/news-graveyards-how-dangers-war-reporters-endanger-world.

[5] Submission by Addameer.

journalistic ethics may amount, in many ways, to "mediacide": the systematic destruction of the media's public function.

5. The Special Rapporteur notes that Palestinian journalists have endured the same bombardment, displacement, hunger and exhaustion as the population whose experience they record.[6] Many now report from tents;[7] some have collapsed live on air from starvation and stress.[8] Nevertheless, they continue to bear witness. As professional journalism has been progressively annihilated, ordinary Palestinians have assumed its burden, determined that neither they nor their people will disappear.[9] Every image, fragment of video and testimony that has left Gaza stands as an act of resistance against colonial erasure.

II. Legal framework

6. The Special Rapporteur relies on the framework set out in her previous reports – international humanitarian law, human rights law and international criminal law[10] – the rules of which largely reflect customary international law, which is binding on all States regardless of treaty ratification.[11] These rules must be read in light of the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which found the presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory to be unlawful; provisional measures in *South Africa v. Israel*; and pending International Criminal Court proceedings.[12]

7. Journalists in armed conflict are civilians, protected unless they directly participate in hostilities.[13] Under the principle of distinction, they cannot be targeted; in case of doubt, civilian status is presumed, and all feasible precautions taken to spare them.[14] Collective punishment and intimidation of media personnel and their families are prohibited.[15] Media facilities and telecommunications infrastructure are civilian objects, unless they make an effective – not presumed – contribution to military action offering a definite military advantage.[16] Disseminating information, including hostile propaganda, does not make journalists or media infrastructure

[6] See https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1657655.

[7] See https://ijnet.org/en/story/journalists-speak-challenges-covering-israel-hamas-war.

[8] See https://cpj.org/2025/07/cpj-israel-is-starving-gazan-journalists-into-silence/.

[9] See https://institute.aljazeera.net/en/ajr/article/2975; and https://progressive.org/latest/citizen-journalists-shine-a-light-on-gaza-hijazi-20260420/.

[10] Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Protocols Additional thereto; Hague Regulations; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. See A/HRC/55/73, paras. 15–20, and A/79/384. See also A/79/319.

[11] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, vol. I: rules (2005); *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136, para. 89.

[12] *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion*, paras. 261 and 285(3); *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), Provisional Measures, Order of 26 January 2024, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, p. 3; International Criminal Court, Pre-Trial Chamber I, *Situation in the State of Palestine*, arrest warrants of 21 November 2024.

[13] Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, art. 79; and ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rule 34.

[14] Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, arts. 50, 51 and 57; and ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rule 6.

[15] Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 33; and ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rule 103.

[16] Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, art. 52; and ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rule 10.

lawful military targets. Mischaracterizing journalists as “terrorists” or combatants cannot negate these protections.

8. Wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment and unlawful confinement of protected persons are grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions,[17] as is wilfully attacking civilians, causing death or serious injury.[18] These acts, together with intentionally attacking civilian objects, constitute war crimes.[19] When committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, murder, torture, imprisonment, enforced disappearance and persecution – including the targeting of journalists on discriminatory grounds or for imputed political opinions – constitute crimes against humanity.[20]

9. Systematically killing those who document atrocities – that is, witnesses belonging to the targeted group – may be probative of the intent to destroy that protected group, and removing witnesses and closing channels to the outside world may facilitate such destruction.[21] Genocide also engages the media as perpetrators: direct and public incitement to commit genocide, punishable under article III of the Genocide Convention, is an autonomous, inchoate crime, complete upon utterance or publication and applicable to officials, broadcasters and private media actors.[22] For a statement to amount to incitement to genocide, it must be a public call for genocide, direct in its cultural and linguistic context, and made with genocidal intent. Speech that does not cross that threshold may nevertheless be probative of intent.[23]

10. As the occupying Power exercising effective control, Israel is bound by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in the occupied Palestinian territory.[24] Article 19 protects the freedom to seek, receive and impart information through any media; network shutdowns and destruction of communications infrastructure engage the public’s right to receive information.[25] Restrictions must be prescribed by law, pursue a legitimate aim and be necessary; national security may not be invoked to muzzle the press or suppress information of public interest.[26] Censorship, bans on outlets, exclusion of the foreign press and the surveillance or prosecution of journalists must satisfy that standard.[27] Article 20 of the Covenant and article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination require States to prohibit war propaganda and advocacy of hatred

[17] Geneva Conventions, arts. 50, 51, 130 and 147.

[18] Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, art. 85 (3) (a).

[19] Rome Statute, arts. 8 (2) (a) and 8 (2) (b).

[20] Ibid., arts. 7 (1) (a), 7 (1) (e), 7 (1) (f), 7 (1) (h) and 7 (1) (i).

[21] *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia), Judgment of 3 February 2015, I.C.J. Reports 2015*, p. 3, para. 148; and *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro), Judgment of 26 February 2007, I.C.J. Reports 2007*, p. 43, para. 373.

[22] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, arts. II–IV; Rome Statute, art. 25 (3) (e); and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T, Judgment, 2 September 1998, paras. 556–562.

[23] International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, *Nahimana et al. v. Prosecutor*, Case No. ICTR-99-52-A, Judgment, 28 November 2007, paras. 315, 692, 700 and 701.

[24] *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion*, para. 111; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 31 (2004), para. 10.

[25] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 19; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011), paras. 11–13 and 43.

[26] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34, paras. 22 and 30.

[27] Ibid., paras. 39, 43 and 45.

inciting discrimination, hostility or violence at the threshold set by the Rabat Plan of Action.[28]

11. The conduct of a State's organs, including its armed forces, is attributable to that State, which must cease wrongful acts and guarantee non-repetition.[29] All States are obliged to cooperate to end serious breaches of peremptory norms and not to recognize as lawful the situations such breaches create.[30] Security Council resolution 2222 (2015) reaffirms the protection of journalists under international humanitarian and human rights law and recalls the duty to investigate and prosecute attacks against them.[31]

12. Under the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, media corporations, online platforms and advertisers bear responsibility to respect human rights: they must avoid causing or contributing to adverse impacts, prevent or mitigate those linked to their operations and exercise heightened due diligence in conflict.[32] An outlet adopting a belligerent's unverified claims as fact, a platform propagating prohibited advocacy or an enterprise disseminating such messaging for payment may thereby contribute to harm. Publicly constituted broadcasters may additionally engage the State's own obligations.

III. Silencing the witnesses

13. Throughout its decades-long occupation of Palestine, Israel has systematically sought to silence Palestinian journalism to obscure its oppression of the Palestinian people and avoid accountability. Through restrictions on freedom of movement,[33] limitations on access to technology and equipment,[34] and abuses including attacks and arbitrary arrests,[35] Israeli forces have long targeted media workers and infrastructure with impunity. Among the more than 20 Palestinian journalists killed before 2023,[36] the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces in May 2022 foreshadowed the patterns of violence and impunity that characterize the current assault on journalism.[37]

[28] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 20; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 4; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, general recommendation No. 35 (2013), paras. 13, 15 and 16; and A/HRC/22/17/Add.4.

[29] Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, arts. 4 and 30.

[30] Ibid., arts. 40 and 41.

[31] Security Council resolution 2222 (2015).

[32] A/HRC/17/31, annex, principles 11–13 and 17.

[33] See https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/cpj/1999/en/35817.

[34] See https://smex.org/how-the-israeli-occupation-restricts-the-development-of-internet-infrastructure-in-palestine/.

[35] See https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/freehou/2017/104420?prevDestination=search&prevPath=/search?order=desc&sm_country_name%5B%5D=State+of+Palestine+%28the%29&sm_keywords_name%5B%5D=Freedom+of+expression&sort=score&result=result-104420-en; and https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/article/palestine-icc-case-filed-over-systematic-targeting-of-palestinian-journalists.

[36] See https://cpj.org/data/killed/?status=Killed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&type%5B%5D=Media%20Worker&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&motiveUnconfirmed%5B%5D=Unconfirmed&cc_fips%5B%5D=IS&start_year=1992&end_year=2023&group_by=year.

[37] See https://cpj.org/2026/05/4-years-on-fbi-investigation-into-shireen-abu-aklehs-murder-stalled/; and https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CPJ-Special-Report-May-2023_Deadly-Pattern.pdf.

14. Since October 2023, Israeli forces have killed nearly 300 journalists[38] and wounded more than 400.[39] While some were killed in indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas, around 70 were killed as reprisal for their work.[40] Many were wearing press vests and helmets, carrying equipment or in marked vehicles and tents, which, instead of enabling the Israeli army to identify and protect media workers, facilitated their targeting.

15. Israel has justified targeting journalists by portraying them as combatants. Under international humanitarian law, journalists lose civilian protection only through direct participation in hostilities,[41] and the burden of proving this rests on the attacker; civilian status is presumed.[42] Affiliation, employment or the views expressed do not meet that threshold. Israel has inverted this standard, branding journalists as "terrorists" or "Hamas operatives" – often posthumously and on undisclosed or discredited evidence – to lend legitimacy to unlawful killings.

16. Palestinian journalists have also faced intimidation and repression at the hands of Palestinian political and armed groups. In Gaza, journalists have been assaulted by armed individuals,[43] while Hamas has threatened journalists covering protests against the organization.[44] In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority has similarly constrained press freedom, beyond individual arrests of journalists,[45] ordering the suspension of Al-Jazeera's operations from January to May 2025.[46]

A. Gaza

17. Only three months after 7 October 2023, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) observed that "Gaza has seemingly become the deadliest place for journalists – and their families – in the world".[47] On 27 October 2023, Israel told Reuters and Agence France Press that it could not guarantee their journalists' safety.[48] Since October 2023, 240 cases of Israel using live ammunition against media crews have been recorded.[49] Reuters stopped sharing journalists' locations with Israeli forces, fearing that such information could facilitate attacks.[50] Many Palestinian journalists have received threatening calls, including

[38] See https://www.un.org/unispal/document/high-commissioner-turk-the-absence-of-accountability-in-the-opt-is-nothing-short-of-shameful/.
[39] See https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Journalists-Report-EN.pdf, p. 4.
[40] See https://rsf.org/en/country/palestine; and https://cpj.org/2023/10/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-war/.
[41] Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, art. 79; and ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rule 34.
[42] Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, arts. 50(1), 51(3) and 79; ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rules 1 and 6; and ICRC, *Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities* (2009).
[43] See https://pjs.ps/ar/page-3250.html.
[44] See https://cpj.org/2025/05/gaza-journalists-speak-out-about-hamas-intimidation-threats-assaults/; and https://pjs.ps/ar/page-3308.html.
[45] See https://network.aljazeera.net/en/press-releases/al-jazeera-condemns-strongest-terms-arrest-mohamad-atrash-palestinian-authority-and.
[46] See https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158936.
[47] See https://www.un.org/unispal/document/killings-of-journalists-and-their-family-members-in-gaza-dec14-2023/.
[48] See https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-says-it-cant-guarantee-journalists-safety-gaza-2023-10-27/.
[49] See https://pjs.ps/en/page-3550.html.
[50] See https://www.reuters.com/investigations/visual-evidence-upends-israels-official-story-deadly-attack-gaza-hospital-2025-09-26/.

death threats, ordering them to stop reporting.[51] Journalists have limited their contact with their families following calls threatening to kill family members as punishment for their reporting.[52]

18. The destruction of more than 150 journalists' homes since October 2023 signals intent to persecute the media sector.[53] Journalists have struggled to rent homes or offices in Gaza due to landlords' fear that they would be targeted.[54] Palestinian photojournalist Fatma Hassouna was killed alongside five family members on 16 April 2025 when precision-guided munitions struck their apartment at night,[55] one day after her documentary on life during the genocide was selected for screening at the Cannes Film Festival.[56]

19. Particularly heinous warfare methods have been used to murder journalists, including "double-tap" strikes. In August 2025, Israeli forces struck a balcony at Nasser Hospital where journalists routinely used to work, killing 22 people. The first strike killed Hussam Al-Masri, a Reuters cameraman; the second killed four more journalists who had rushed to the scene, alongside health and rescue workers. Israeli forces stated that they had targeted a "Hamas camera", subsequently identified as Reuters'.[57]

20. Attacks continued beyond the October 2025 so-called ceasefire. On 21 January 2026, an Israeli air strike killed three Palestinian journalists driving to a displacement camp.[58] On 8 April 2026, in one of multiple drone attacks, the Israeli army killed Al-Jazeera journalist Mohammed Washah while he was driving his car.[59] Israel justified these killings by alleging Hamas affiliation.[60]

21. In Gaza, journalists know that their profession has become a target.[61] As reporter Youmna El-Sayed stated, "wearing our press vests seems like putting ourselves in danger".[62] These killings are unlawful: journalists' protected status is unforfeited.[63]

[51] See https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6371/Israel-escalates-attacks-against-Palestinian-journalists-in-Gaza; and https://cpj.org/data/people/anas-al-sharif/.

[52] See https://mezan.org/uploads/files/2025/9/1756720644Kill%20the%20Witness%20Hide%20the%20Crimes%20-%20Final.pdf, p. 6.

[53] See https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Journalists-Report-EN.pdf, p. 44; and https://pjs.ps/ar/page-3314.html.

[54] See https://www.afp.com/en/agency/inside-afp/inside-afp/death-exhaustion-and-suspicion-afp-journalists-horrors-gaza.

[55] See https://staging.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025.05.14-Kill-The-Press-1-Fatima-Hassouna.pdf, p. 13.

[56] See https://www.festival-cannes.com/en/press/press-releases/tribute-to-fatma-hassona/.

[57] See https://www.reuters.com/investigations/visual-evidence-upends-israels-official-story-deadly-attack-gaza-hospital-2025-09-26/.

[58] See https://cpj.org/2026/01/israeli-drone-strike-on-vehicle-kills-3-journalists-in-gaza/; https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1370254791806309&id=100064654032648; and https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/21/three-journalists-palestinians-killed-israeli-forces-gaza.

[59] See https://cpj.org/data/people/mohammed-washah/.

[60] See https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/2042135324776628405?s=20; and https://cpj.org/2026/01/israeli-drone-strike-on-vehicle-kills-3-journalists-in-gaza/.

[61] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3yDx_VWPd8.

[62] See https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/these-journalists-gaza-risk-their-lives-cover-israel-hamas-war-nothing-can-describe-what-you.

[63] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018), paras. 23 and 64.

B. West Bank

22. Over the past two years, journalists have also faced systematic attacks in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in the context of escalating settler terror and military operations,[64] with 139 documented settler attacks on the press.[65]

23. International visibility is far from a deterrent. For instance, in March 2025, weeks after winning an Oscar for the documentary *No Other Land*, journalist and co-director Hamdan Ballal was attacked in his home in Masafer Yatta by Israeli settlers, then detained overnight by the army.[66] Also in 2025, German Deutsche Welle crews were attacked in separate incidents with stones by settlers[67] and with tear gas by the Israeli army,[68] and Palestinian Reuters photographer Raneen Sawafta was attacked by settlers while covering the olive harvest, despite wearing press identifiers.[69]

C. Harming families

24. Israel has also threatened, intimidated and targeted journalists' families, killing around 710 relatives since October 2023,[70] 436 in the first four months alone.[71] While many deaths occurred amid indiscriminate Israeli attacks, evidence indicates that some families were deliberately targeted.

25. An emblematic case is that of Al-Jazeera Arabic's Gaza bureau chief, Wael Al-Dahdouh. On 25 October 2023, an Israeli air strike on Nuseirat camp killed his wife, his 15-year-old son, his 7-year-old daughter and his 1-year-old grandson.[72] Two months later, Mr. Al-Dahdouh and his colleague, Samer Abu Daqqa, were severely injured in an attack; after Israeli forces blocked the passage of ambulances, Mr. Daqqa bled to death.[73] On 7 January 2024, Mr. Al-Dahdouh's eldest son, Hamza, also an Al-Jazeera journalist, was killed along with a colleague in an air strike.[74] After being medically evacuated, Mr. Al-Dahdouh continued reporting, stating: "I was aware of being a target, but I would not think they would have targeted my family."[75]

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[64] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/03/state-backed-terror-squads-forefront-israels-ethnic-cleansing-and-annexation.

[65] See https://pjs.ps/en/page-3550.html.

[66] See https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/mar/24/oscar-winning-palestinian-director-attacked-by-israeli-settlers-and-arrested; and https://x.com/yuval_abraham/status/1904516176232759752.

[67] See https://corporate.dw.com/en/dw-staff-in-the-occupied-west-bank-come-under-a-hail-of-stones-from-radical-settlers-limbourg-israel-must-ensure-the-safety-of-journalists/a-73169386.

[68] See https://corporate.dw.com/en/israeli-military-targets-dw-team-in-west-bank-incident-captured-on-video/a-73809709.

[69] See https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-settlers-attack-palestinians-journalists-west-bank-olive-harvest-2025-11-08/.

[70] See https://pjs.ps/en/page-3550.html; and https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/165699.

[71] See https://pjs.ps/ar/page-3314.html.

[72] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/25/family-of-al-jazeera-gaza-bureau-head-killed-in-israeli-air-raid.

[73] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/15/al-jazeera-condemns-israeli-forces-killing-of-cameraman-samer-abu-daqqa.

[74] See https://cpj.org/data/people/hamza-al-dahdouh/.

[75] See https://www.la7.it/piazzapulita/video/wael-al-dahdouh-al-jazeera-gaza-essere-giornalista-li-significa-essere-un-bersaglio-19-09-2025-611129.

D. Threatening, killing, smearing

26. Military attacks on journalists have systematically been accompanied by smear campaigns portraying them as legitimate military objectives. In October 2023, the Israeli military reportedly established a special unit, the "legitimization cell", which has systematically recast Gaza-based journalists as Hamas operatives.[76] These narratives intimidate journalists and establish a pretext before attacks, then retrospectively legitimize killings, ascribing responsibility to Palestinian armed groups by distorting international humanitarian law.[77] The systemic justification of these attacks evidences an intent to target protected media workers.

27. In October 2024, the Israeli army accused six journalists of being "operatives in Hamas' military wing".[78] Two of these journalists, Hossam Shabat[79] and Anas Al-Sharif, were later killed. In a statement published posthumously, Shabat wrote: "If you're reading this, it means I have been killed – most likely targeted – by the Israeli occupation forces."[80]

28. Anas Al-Sharif was one of the most prominent voices documenting the genocide, reaching millions online.[81] He received threatening calls ordering him to stop reporting and, in December 2023, an Israeli strike on his family home killed his father.[82] He rejected accusations of concealing "Hamas crimes"[83] after covering the Al-Tab'een school massacre[84] and of being part of Hamas,[85] saying, "they accuse me of being a terrorist because the occupation wants to assassinate me morally".[86] On 10 August 2025, he was killed along with five colleagues in a drone strike on a journalists' tent near Al-Shifa Hospital.[87] Israel claimed responsibility, repeating unsubstantiated allegations of Hamas affiliation.[88]

E. Unlawful detention and torture

29. Since October 2023, more than 100 Palestinian journalists and media workers have been detained, with around 30 still incarcerated.[89]

30. While numerous journalists have been arbitrarily detained following mass round-ups, several have been deliberately singled out. In April 2025, Israeli forces raided the home of journalist Ali al-Samoudi in Jenin. Al-Samoudi – who, in 2022, had been shot in the shoulder in the fatal attack on Shireen Abu Akleh – was detained

[76] See https://www.972mag.com/israel-gaza-journalists-hamas-hasbara/.
[77] See https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/attachments/books/Humanitarian%20Camouflage%20Israel%20Rewrites%20the%20Laws%20of%20War%20to%20Legitimize%20Genocide%20in%20Gaza.pdf.
[78] See https://x.com/IDF/status/1849088691450339461; https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/al-jazeera-hamas-connection/; and https://cpj.org/2024/08/cpj-denounces-israels-smearing-of-killed-palestinian-journalists-with-unsubstantiated-terrorist-labels/.
[79] See https://cpj.org/data/people/hossam-shabat/.
[80] See https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1904219854183313461.
[81] See https://www.instagram.com/anasjamal44/.
[82] See https://cpj.org/data/people/anas-al-sharif/.
[83] See https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1822253427126084040.
[84] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYZfEfOAGr8.
[85] See https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1948273569202364747.
[86] See https://cpj.org/2025/07/cpj-calls-for-anas-al-sharifs-protection-in-face-of-israeli-smears/.
[87] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/10/al-jazeera-journalist-anas-al-sharif-killed-in-israeli-attack-in-gaza-city.
[88] See https://x.com/IDF/status/1954652255199887516; and https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/gaza-un-experts-appalled-murder-al-jazeera-correspondents-israeli-strike.
[89] See https://cpj.org/2023/10/arrests-of-palestinian-journalists-since-start-of-israel-gaza-war/.

without trial for a year, in deplorable conditions resulting in a 60 kg loss in weight.[90] Two Palestinian journalists covering events on 7 October 2023 remain forcibly disappeared.[91]

31. Released journalists describe enduring physical assaults; sexual violence, including rape; forced stress positions; sensory deprivation; inadequate food; and medical neglect.[92] While Palestinian detainees are routinely subject to torture,[93] journalists endure unique forms of intimidating interrogation as they are presumed to be "Hamas agents".[94] An Israeli officer told one journalist: "I killed all the journalists, and those I couldn't kill, I brought them here."[95]

32. Detained journalists have been threatened with renewed targeting if they continue reporting after release. A detained journalist was told: "If you … write something, we will come back, arrest you again, give you another 15–20 years, or assassinate you, your wife, and your children in your bedroom."[96]

33. Following release, many journalists are unable to work, due to psychological and physical harm and fear of reprisals.[97]

F. Destroying infrastructure

34. The widespread targeting and destruction of key media and telecommunications infrastructure, at times plunging Gaza into a near-total information blackout, has severely obstructed the collection, verification and communication of information by journalists.

35. On the first day of the current assault, 7 October 2023, an Israeli air strike destroyed the Palestine Tower, which housed offices of seven media organizations.[98] In one week, around 50 media offices were damaged.[99] The Press House, a non-profit institution providing shelter, protective gear and Internet access to journalists, was completely destroyed in February 2024.[100] The early and intense targeting of media institutions likely indicates an explicit intention to suppress reporting from the

[90] See https://cpj.org/data/people/ali-al-samoudi/; and https://edition.cnn.com/2026/05/09/middleeast/palestinian-journalist-israeli-prison-latam-intl.
[91] See https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/7551/2023/en/; and https://rsf.org/en/what-happened-gaza-journalists-nidal-al-wahidi-and-haytham-abdel-wahed-missing-7-october-2023.
[92] See https://cpj.org/special-reports/we-returned-from-hell-palestinian-journalists-recount-torture-in-israeli-prisons/.
[93] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc6171-torture-and-genocide-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human.
[94] Submission by Addameer.
[95] See https://rsf.org/en/journalists-gaza-treated-inhumanely-israeli-army-and-shin-bet-israel-s-prisons.
[96] Submission by Addameer.
[97] See https://cpj.org/special-reports/we-returned-from-hell-palestinian-journalists-recount-torture-in-israeli-prisons/.
[98] See https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Journalists-Report-EN.pdf, p. 64.
[99] See https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/138333.
[100] See https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Journalists-Report-EN.pdf, p. 65; and https://forbiddenstories.org/the-destruction-of-press-infrastructure-in-gaza-a-strategy-to-blind-the-public/.

ground. By October 2025, 150 media offices and institutions had been destroyed,[101] including news agency headquarters, broadcast towers and radio stations.[102]

36. In Gaza, Israel has completely destroyed 81 per cent and partially damaged 12 per cent of information and communications infrastructure, such as mobile towers, fibre optic cables and data centres.[103] On 9 October 2023, Israeli forces targeted network installations, disabling two of Gaza's three primary mobile lines.[104] Within a month, 15 of 19 Internet providers in the occupied Palestinian territory experienced complete shutdowns,[105] an estimated 50 per cent of Gaza's telecom infrastructure had been destroyed, and only 30 per cent of mobile towers remained operational.[106] The restoration of connectivity has proved extremely difficult due to the scale of damage, blockade-driven equipment and fuel shortages,[107] and military obstruction of access.[108] In one incident, two Palestine Telecommunications Company technicians were killed by Israeli tank fire while repairing a switchboard in Khan Yunis, despite coordination with the army.[109]

37. Israel has repeatedly disrupted Internet access in Gaza through the destruction of telecommunications infrastructure and engineered electricity and fuel shortages.[110] Internet traffic dropped sharply from October 2023,[111] with the first 35-hour blackout occurring within the first month.[112] By November 2024, at least 16 blackouts had occurred, frequently coinciding with military escalations.[113]

38. In 2024, when the International Telecommunication Union called for the rebuilding of Palestine's telecommunications network,[114] Israel claimed that improved connectivity would enable Hamas attacks.[115] Indeed, Israel has long imposed a digital siege by controlling the occupied Palestinian territory's electromagnetic spectrum, restricting Gaza to outdated 2G network technology for

[101] See https://www.pjs.ps/ar/page-3425.html; and https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/article/palestine-media-sector-must-be-considered-a-priority-following-ceasefire.
[102] See https://mediacide.palestine-studies.org/index.php/en/node/6016; and https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/02/1166943.
[103] See https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e539cbf23b348c3d4fc69b8a7e9c9d7d-0280062026/original/Gaza-RDNA-2026-Final-April-19.pdf, p. 32.
[104] See https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-4.
[105] See https://www.accessnow.org/publication/palestine-unplugged/.
[106] See https://7amleh.org/storage/Advocacy%20Reports/Telecommunications%20Report.pdf; and https://mas.ps/cached_uploads/download/2025/03/26/destruction-gaza-telecommunications-2025-eng-1742996508.pdf.
[107] See https://mas.ps/cached_uploads/download/2025/03/26/destruction-gaza-telecommunications-2025-eng-1742996508.pdf.
[108] See https://7amleh.org/post/1647.
[109] See https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/2-staffers-from-palestinian-telecommunication-company-killed-by-israeli-attacks/310831; and https://www.972mag.com/paltel-workers-gaza-israeli-army/.
[110] See https://7amleh.org/storage/Advocacy%20Reports/Telecommunications%20Report.pdf.
[111] See https://pulse.internetsociety.org/en/shutdowns/internet-disconnected-in-gaza/.
[112] See https://x.com/CloudflareRadar/status/1718570617933349011.
[113] See https://mas.ps/cached_uploads/download/2025/03/26/destruction-gaza-telecommunications-2025-eng-1742996508.pdf; and https://www.accessnow.org/publication/internet-shutdowns-typology-of-harms/.
[114] See https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/conf/S-CONF-CL-2024-PDF-e.pdf.
[115] See https://theintercept.com/2024/06/21/israel-gaza-internet-rebuild/.

decades.[116] On 10 June 2025, Israel struck the last working cable serving central and southern Gaza.[117]

39. Telecommunications infrastructure is presumed to be civilian infrastructure under international humanitarian law,[118] and the generic claim by Israel that connectivity serves Hamas can neither rebut that presumption nor satisfy the requirements for attacking a civilian object.[119] These attacks on infrastructure and telecommunications workers therefore constitute unlawful attacks on civilians and civilian objects. By repeatedly engineering communication blackouts, Israel has foreseeably isolated the civilian population, obstructing access to life-saving information, attack warnings and emergency services[120] while violating the public's right to seek and receive information.[121]

40. Reporters have sought alternatives during blackouts, using foreign e-SIMs or Egyptian or Israeli networks,[122] which are accessible only in certain areas – mostly near borders – as well as being prohibitively expensive and easily congested; using them exposes journalists' locations, increasing the risk of attack.[123]

41. The killing of identified journalists, the strikes on their homes and families, and the destruction of media and telecommunications infrastructure that is presumptively civilian in character constitute the war crimes of wilful killing and intentional attacks against civilians and civilian objects.[124] The deliberate targeting of journalists' relatives to suppress reporting further constitutes prohibited collective punishment and intimidation of protected persons.[125] These acts form part of the widespread and systematic attack directed against the civilian population of Gaza.[126] In that context, the killing of journalists and their persecution for the political opinions ascribed to them constitute murder and persecution as crimes against humanity.[127] However, to analyse these acts only as war crimes and crimes against humanity would be incomplete. In the ongoing genocide, the systematic elimination of media witnesses and the destruction of the means of documentation are probative of genocidal intent. They reveal an effort not only to destroy a protected group, but also to destroy the conditions in which that destruction can be seen, documented, remembered and ultimately adjudicated. It also defies the binding order of the International Court of

[116] See https://www.accessnow.org/publication/palestine-unplugged/.
[117] See https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02jvuzcZVxyKjy3Ai33rY1AATTStepah5yARm4z3SzKeXEE2DSiUnKP4jJ4GHHkyEYl&id=61554847987085&rdid=75k4mgcCQoh6xbiQ#.
[118] Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Convention, art. 52(3).
[119] Ibid., art. 52 (2).
[120] See https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Annual-Report-2024-EN-Final.pdf; and https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf.
[121] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011), paras. 13 and 43.
[122] See https://mas.ps/cached_uploads/download/2025/03/26/destruction-gaza-telecommunications-2025-eng-1742996508.pdf; and https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2023/11/gl.2023.11.14.Response%20from%20Paltel%20to%20Human%20Rights%20Watch.pdf.
[123] See https://cpj.org/2026/04/how-middle-east-journalists-report-during-internet-blackouts/amp/; and submission by Al-Haq.
[124] Rome Statute, arts. 8 (2) (a) (i), 8 (2) (b) (i) and 8 (2) (b) (ii).
[125] Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 33; and ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, rule 103.
[126] See A/HRC/55/73 and A/79/384.
[127] Rome Statute, arts. 7 (1) (a) and 7 (1) (h).

Justice that Israel prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence of acts within the scope of articles II and III of the Genocide Convention.[128]

IV. The Israeli media landscape: censorship, manipulation, incitement

42. Throughout the genocide, Israel has waged what its Prime Minister has called the "battle for truth",[129] campaigning to shape the conditions under which reality is seen and understood and constraining domestic and foreign media while mobilizing media and digital platforms to spread hateful rhetoric, censorship, disinformation and denial, normalizing anti-Palestinian hatred and, at times, genocidal incitement.

A. Government's restriction and control of media

1. Domestic media

43. Since October 2023, Israeli censorship has intensified sharply. Military censorship requires approval for reporting on "security issues". Even before October 2023, the regime was averaging six interventions per day between 2011 and 2023.[130] It reached record levels in the 2024–2025 period, with 1,635 articles banned and 6,265 redacted in 2024 (21 interventions per day)[131] and 753 banned and 4,974 redacted in 2025 (15 per day).[132] A 2023 amendment to the Counter-Terrorism Law allows the arrest of journalists "for consumption" of content deemed supportive of "terrorism", engendering self-censorship and stultifying freedom of expression.[133]

44. This suppression has been reinforced by public and private media reforms. The Public Broadcasting Corporation has been brought under greater ministerial control,[134] and independent outlets have faced sanctions, including the 2024 ban on government-funded bodies engaging with the newspaper *Haaretz*, on the pretext that it delegitimizes Israel.[135] Simultaneously, pro-government media receive preferential treatment, including privileged access to government officials[136] and restricted locations, such as prisons.[137] The proposed "Karhi reforms" would further consolidate political control over media regulation,[138] ownership[139] and public funding.[140]

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[128] *South Africa v. Israel, Order of 26 January 2024*, para. 86(5), which was reaffirmed by *Order of 28 March 2024* and *Order of 24 May 2024*.
[129] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ov2Te_WH5Gk.
[130] See https://www.972mag.com/15-articles-israeli-army-media-interference/.
[131] See https://www.972mag.com/israeli-military-censor-media-2024/.
[132] See https://www.972mag.com/15-articles-israeli-army-media-interference/.
[133] See https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10951#:~:text=The%20amendment%20also%20grants%20the,bodies%20to%20halt%20its%20advancement.&text=Adalah%20commented:,Court%20to%20challenge%20this%20law.%E2%80%9D.
[134] See https://www.timesofisrael.com/unable-to-shut-down-kan-coalition-maneuvers-to-control-public-broadcasters-budget/.
[135] See www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-11-24/ty-article/.premium/israeli-govt-to-cut-ties-with-haaretz-over-publishers-remarks-on-freedom-fighters/00000193-5e5c-d68e-a1db-fe5c54cf0000.
[136] See https://niemanreports.org/netanyahu-vs-the-israeli-media.
[137] See https://www.facebook.com/reel/1894260134504194.
[138] See https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/2026-06-25/ty-article-opinion/ahead-of-a-fateful-election-netanyahu-wants-control-of-the-israeli-media/0000019e-fb3b-d0cc-af9e-fffba2c30000.
[139] See https://www.ft.com/content/55055c78-a50a-4b87-9667-8081c8944c15?syn-25a6b1a6=1.
[140] See https://www.the7eye.org.il/566367.

2. Foreign media

45. Since October 2023, Israel has effectively barred foreign journalists from Gaza,[141] apart from tightly controlled military embeds[142] and staged visits.[143] Some journalists have also been denied entry to the West Bank.[144] At times, journalists have experienced what has resembled blackmail. Sky News reported being told that Israel might cancel future humanitarian flights if it released footage filmed aboard a Jordanian aid flight.[145] Journalists have described a "Faustian bargain": report from afar or accept Israeli control.[146]

46. Some outlets have been banned completely. In 2024, the Knesset legislated to permit the closure of foreign broadcasters considered a threat to "State security",[147] leading to a ban on Al-Jazeera operating inside Israel,[148] while its West Bank bureau was raided and ordered to close by the Israeli military.[149] The Knesset later approved at first reading a bill seeking to make those powers permanent and removing judicial oversight, a move the International Federation of Journalists described as authoritarian control over critical media.[150] In February 2026, Israel banned five Palestinian outlets reporting from occupied East Jerusalem, on grounds of alleged "incitement".[151]

47. None of these measures meet the requirements for restricting freedom of expression under international law.[152] The Israeli military censorship regime, enforced thousands of times each year, fails the tests of legality and necessity, invoking security to suppress reporting of legitimate public interest.[153] The closure of media outlets as "security threats", or for "incitement" or "delegitimizing Israel", penalizes viewpoints rather than averting concrete harm.[154] The blanket, indefinite exclusion of foreign journalists from Gaza, including throughout the so-called "ceasefire", appears unjustified, unnecessary and disproportionate, serving only to prevent independent documentation.[155]

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[141] See www.washingtonpost.com/business/2026/04/30/gaza-israel-journalists-coverage-access-war-zone/05a0cdc2-4474-11f1-b19d-32431046b5b4_story.html.

[142] See https://www.cjr.org/feature/subversion-of-reality-embedding-israeli-military-idf-gaza-press-ban-access-hamas-jeremy-bowen-bbc-october.php.

[143] See https://cpj.org/2025/12/not-journalism-theater-inside-israels-press-tours-to-gaza/.

[144] See https://cpj.org/2026/06/these-6-foreign-journalists-have-been-denied-entry-by-israel/#:~:text=For%20Alessandro%20Stefanelli%2C%20an%20Italian,Immigration%20Authority%20(PIBA)%20stating%20that.

[145] See https://news.sky.com/story/mile-after-mile-of-grey-rubble-the-view-from-a-plane-dropping-aid-to-gaza-13403242?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter.

[146] See https://www.cjr.org/feature/subversion-of-reality-embedding-israeli-military-idf-gaza-press-ban-access-hamas-jeremy-bowen-bbc-october.php.

[147] See https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press1424t.aspx.

[148] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/5/netanyahu-government-votes-to-close-al-jazeera-channel-in-israel.

[149] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/7/israel-extends-closure-of-al-jazeera-office-in-occupied-west-bank.

[150] See https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/article/israel-government-seeks-to-ban-foreign-media-outlets-permanently-if-deemed-a-security-threat.

[151] See https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/israel-government-bans-five-palestinian-media-platforms-amid-crackdown.

[152] See para. 10 above; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011), para. 22.

[153] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011), paras. 25 and 30.

[154] Ibid., paras. 39 and 42.

[155] Ibid., paras. 34 and 45.

3. Digital platforms

48. Israeli authorities have repeatedly emphasized the strategic importance of social media to their military campaign.[156] The Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has described it to United States-based influencers as the most important "weapon".[157]

49. Israel has pursued a multilayered online communication strategy, including large-scale takedown requests targeting content that challenges official narratives, placing it among the world's most prolific requesting States,[158] and invests heavily in promoting content aligned with its objectives. Such requests constitute conduct attributable to the State and must satisfy the requirements of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[159] One initiative was the Israeli-directed "Project Esther", a 2025 campaign targeting United States audiences to suppress pro-Palestine mobilization.[160]

50. The Government has also launched paid advertising campaigns on platforms including X and YouTube targeting Western audiences. Initially centred on the 7 October Hamas-led attacks and comparisons between Hamas and Da'esh, the advertisements generated millions of views before being removed following media scrutiny, although many remain available on the Israeli Foreign Ministry's YouTube channel.[161] In May 2025, despite the order of the International Court of Justice requiring Israel to permit unhindered provision of life-sustaining supplies, Israel renewed its aid blockade, contributing to worsening conditions and ultimately famine.[162] Rather than addressing the humanitarian catastrophe, Israel signed contracts worth roughly $50 million, including with Google and X,[163] to disseminate multilingual advertisements dismissing famine reports, including messages claiming, "There is food in Gaza. Any other claim is a lie."[164]

51. Senior State officials have also used social media directly. The hundreds of documented posts include[165] the Knesset Deputy Speaker, Nissim Vaturi, asserting on X the Israeli goal of "erasing the Gaza Strip from the face of the earth",[166] and the Prime Minister's Office's invoking of the biblical command to "remember what Amalek did to you",[167] referencing the injunction to annihilate enemies of Israel. South Africa relied on these statements before the International Court of Justice.[168] Referring to officials' dehumanizing rhetoric, the Court found that Palestinians are protected under the Genocide Convention, including from direct and public

[156] See https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/google-youtube-netanyahu-israel-propaganda-gaza-famine.

[157] See https://www.newarab.com/analysis/how-social-media-became-new-frontline-israels-digital-war#:~:text=Israel%20and%20artificial%20intelligence,exist%2C%E2%80%9D%20Abdel%20Razek%20says.

[158] See https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/leaked-data-israeli-censorship-meta.

[159] See paras. 10 and 11 above.

[160] See https://responsiblestatecraft.org/israel-influencers-netanyahu/.

[161] See https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-social-media-opinion-hamas-war/.

[162] See https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-134/en/.

[163] See https://mr.gov.il/ilgstorefront/en/p/4000604070.

[164] See https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/google-youtube-netanyahu-israel-propaganda-gaza-famine.

[165] See https://law4palestine.org/law-for-palestine-releases-database-with-500-instances-of-israeli-incitement-to-genocide-continuously-updated/.

[166] See https://x.com/nissimv/status/1710694866009596169.

[167] See https://x.com/IsraeliPM_heb/status/1720406463972004198.

[168] *South Africa v. Israel, Application Instituting Proceedings and Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures*, para. 101.

incitement.[169] Statements by senior officials,[170] such as advertising commissioned by the Foreign Ministry, constitute conduct attributable to the State under international law.[171]

B. Israeli media: hate speech and genocidal incitement

52. The Israeli Government's communication strategy has significantly manipulated media discourse, building on a long-standing pattern of dehumanization of Palestinians across Israeli media, which intensified after 7 October 2023.

53. Israeli media does not merely relay or amplify these narratives; in many instances, it explicitly incites to violence, including genocide, contributing to the normalization of mass atrocities.[172] Some media have promoted the mass killing and extermination of Gaza's civilian population,[173] at times extending such rhetoric to Palestinians more broadly.[174] Prominent media figures have disseminated these messages through social media, while televised panel discussions become echo chambers in which participants reinforce one another's racist and inciting rhetoric.[175] Meanwhile, Palestinian suffering has been pushed to the margins of public consciousness or rendered virtually invisible,[176] creating what researchers describe as "blindness",[177] whereby only military necessity, Israeli victimhood and official military narratives are foregrounded.

54. Palestinians have been described by mainstream and pro-government media as "Amalek",[178] "monsters",[179] "a cancerous growth"[180] and even "cannibals"[181] who "must be eradicated".[182] This rhetoric is accompanied by the denial of civilian status. Israeli media have asserted that "there are no innocents" in Gaza, that Palestinians are "not civilians"[183] and that Gaza is inhabited by "two and a half million terrorists".[184]

55. On Channel 14, presenter Shimon Riklin called for Gaza to be "wiped off the face of the earth".[185] The channel also broadcasted singer Eyal Golan's call to "erase

[169] *South Africa v. Israel, Order of 26 January 2024*, paras. 51–54.
[170] Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, art. 4; Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, art. IV; and Rome Statute, arts. 25 (3) (e) and 27.
[171] Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, art. 8.
[172] *South Africa v. Israel, Application Instituting Proceedings and Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures*, paras. 106 and 107.
[173] See https://x.com/C14_news/status/1718742747455053922.
[174] See https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/27/israel-gaza-propaganda.
[175] See https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/05/10/there-are-no-innocents-in-gaza-channel-14-the-israeli-television-channel-accused-of-genocidal-rhetoric_6753311_4.html.
[176] See https://cpj.org/2025/12/under-the-radar-israel-steps-up-censorship-and-suppression-of-independent-reporting/.
[177] See https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/10/israeli-media-gaza-channel-television-press-distorted-view/.
[178] Supreme Court of Israel, sitting as the High Court of Justice, *Zulat for Equality and Human Rights and others v. Israel*, Petition for Order Nisi, 8 May 2025 (Zulat petition). Available at https://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/71/cabinet_071_najafi_sina_prochnick_george_sfard_michael_001.pdf, para. 27 (14).
[179] See https://www.instagram.com/reels/DG5HVRqMUEF/.
[180] See https://www.c14.co.il/article/1301009; and https://www.youtube.com/shorts/vFZEjcOy_FY.
[181] See https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/05/10/there-are-no-innocents-in-gaza-channel-14-the-israeli-television-channel-accused-of-genocidal-rhetoric_6753311_4.html.
[182] Zulat petition, para. 27 (14).
[183] See https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/05/10/there-are-no-innocents-in-gaza-channel-14-the-israeli-television-channel-accused-of-genocidal-rhetoric_6753311_4.html.
[184] See https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/27/israel-gaza-propaganda.
[185] Zulat petition, para. 27 (2).

Gaza, don't leave a single person there".[186] Other statements aired on the channel called for a "Holocaust", including "gas chambers"[187] and to "destroy, kill, and obliterate".[188]

56. Rhetoric inciting violence also appeared in discussions concerning Palestinian detainees. During a Channel 12 broadcast, journalist Yehuda Schlesinger advocated for the institutionalization of sexual violence as a matter of State policy, stating that Palestinians "deserve it".[189] Subsequently, he was temporarily suspended by Channel 12, later joining Channel 14.[190]

1. Delegitimizing witnesses, humanitarian actors and accountability

57. Echoing rhetoric used by the Government and its "legitimization cell", outlets portray Palestinian journalists as members of armed groups. A Channel 12 article contained reference to "terrorists in disguise"[191] and another celebrated the killing of Anas Al-Sharif, describing him as a "terrorist operating under the guise of an Al-Jazeera journalist".[192] Israeli media also propagated allegations that Palestinian journalists had prior knowledge of the 7 October attacks, before admitting that they had no evidence.[193]

58. The few journalists who have challenged prevailing narratives have often faced repercussions. For example, Arad Nir was excluded from Channel 12's flagship show after he called for an end to the war.[194]

59. Independent Israeli outlets, particularly *+972 Magazine* and *Haaretz*, have played a crucial role in exposing facts that most Israeli media have failed to scrutinize, often proving more critical, and ethical, than elements of the international media.

60. Delegitimization is frequently accompanied by denial. Warnings of famine have routinely been dismissed, with outlets questioning the reliability of humanitarian assessments.[195] Humanitarian organizations are portrayed as biased, antisemitic or aligned with terrorist groups. For example, *The Jerusalem Post* has described the United Nations system as an apparatus of "global antisemitism", alleging an "alliance" between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Hamas, and has accused United Nations experts and accountability bodies of bias and support for terrorism.[196]

2. Legal assessment and genocidal incitement

61. Such reporting feeds narratives that justify measures depriving Palestinians of the conditions of life necessary for their survival. It also constitutes advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred amounting to incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, which Israel is bound to prohibit under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All

[186] See https://x.com/C14_news/status/1713531211300167928.
[187] See https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1918870523334799535.
[188] Zulat petition, para. 27 (4).
[189] See https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/israeli-journalist-calls-rape-against-palestinian-be-institutionalised.
[190] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yehuda_Schlesinger.
[191] See https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q1/Article-09a045bdb7bcd81026.htm.
[192] See https://x.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1954818682443440157?s=20.
[193] See https://www.mediasupport.org/blogpost/how-an-israeli-media-watchdogs-unsubstantiated-allegations-has-put-a-price-on-palestinian-journalists-heads/.
[194] See https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/10/israeli-media-gaza-channel-television-press-distorted-view/.
[195] See https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/aug/26/israel-gaza-tv-journalists-famine.
[196] See https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-874443.

Forms of Racial Discrimination[197] – obligations that it has not merely violated, but inverted, rewarding the outlets concerned with preferential treatment. A narrower category meets the higher threshold for direct and public incitement to genocide.[198] Broadcast on national television or posted to mass audiences and calling explicitly for the extermination of Gaza's population, statements inciting genocide are public and direct, requiring no contextual decoding. Genocidal intent is manifest in the very explicitness, which invokes the destruction of the group as such.[199]

62. That several such statements were made by presenters and regular commentators and were unchallenged and unrepudiated by the broadcaster engages the responsibility of those who control media entities themselves, as recognized in the *Nahimana et al.* case, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda's authoritative judgment on media incitement.[200] Although issued by private actors, this content engages the obligation of Israel to prohibit advocacy of hatred and prevent and punish direct and public incitement to genocide.[201] The order of the International Court of Justice of January 2024 directs Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent and punish direct and public genocidal incitement against Palestinians.[202] However, the Israeli competent authorities have failed to implement the order, and media outlets continue to broadcast incitement unchecked despite the hundreds of instances of incitement cited in a High Court petition filed against Channel 14 by three Israeli civil society organizations in May 2025.[203]

63. Incitement to genocide is punishable, whether committed by rulers, public officials or private individuals.[204] The sustained failure of Israel to prevent and punish such incitement engages its international responsibility as a distinct and continuing violation of the Genocide Convention and of article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in defiance of a binding order of the International Court of Justice.[205] Israeli tolerance of the underlying advocacy of hatred is likewise inconsistent with its duty of prohibition under article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[206]

V. Western media and digital platforms

64. The genocide has exposed long-standing ideological biases in media coverage of Palestine/Israel, including across Western traditional media and major digital platforms. It has exposed a system that determines whose voices are heard and whose

[197] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 20; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 4; see para. 10 above.

[198] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, art. III(c); and Rome Statute, art. 25 (3) (e); see para. 9 above.

[199] International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T, Judgment, 2 September 1998, paras. 557–560; and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, *Nahimana et al. v. Prosecutor*, Case No. ICTR-99-52-A, Judgment, paras. 692 and 698–703.

[200] International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, *Nahimana et al. v. Prosecutor*, Case No. ICTR-99-52-A, Judgment, 28 November 2007, paras. 758, 822, 834, 840 and 856.

[201] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 20; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 4; and Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, arts. I and III (c). See also paras. 9 and 10.

[202] *South Africa v. Israel, Order of 26 January 2024*, paras. 79 and 86 (3).

[203] See https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-05-08/ty-article/.premium/pro-netanyahu-channel-14-incites-gaza-genocide-israeli-groups-say-in-top-court-petition/00000196-b00b-df59-abde-f22bda510000; Zulat petition.

[204] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, arts. I, III(c) and IV.

[205] International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 4(a); and *South Africa v. Israel, Order of 26 January 2024*, para. 86(3).

[206] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 20 (2); see para. 10 above.

suffering is recognized. These attempts to influence opinions through content curation, amplification and other forms of distortion have serious consequences for the human rights of the Palestinian people and those who defend their rights.[207]

A. Traditional media

65. As noted in the introduction, the media outlets examined here were selected for their presumed authoritativeness and objectivity. They include:

(a) Public service broadcasters, established, funded and regulated by States, bearing positive obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to ensure that such institutions neither disseminate hatred nor suppress protected expression;[208]

(b) Privately owned outlets, bound by responsibilities under the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including heightened due diligence in armed conflict. States must prevent, investigate, punish and remedy human rights abuses by corporate entities within their jurisdiction.[209]

66. Access determines influence. Content analysis demonstrates that Western media rely heavily on Israeli sources,[210] with Israeli officials and pressure groups enjoying privileged access to media decision makers, including at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).[211] Internal editorial guidelines show how such influence translates into practice. The BBC style guide, for example, omits Gaza from the occupied territory and specifies the Israeli Government's "preferred" description of the West Bank and Gaza as "disputed'' territories, without indicating that this is contrary to international law.[212] BBC also makes the misleading statement that "outposts don't mean settlements" and that they are "very different" because outposts are not authorized by the Israeli Government and "defy it". Indeed, different Israeli Governments have protected and retroactively legalized illegal outposts, expanding illegal colonization.[213] Leaked *New York Times* guidance similarly advises caution regarding the use of terms such as "genocide", "ethnic cleansing" and "occupied territory", instructing journalists to use "Palestine" only "in very rare cases".[214]

67. Such editorial imperatives have marginalized historical context and legal frameworks that are essential to understanding the root causes of this renewed violence.[215] Media references to the Nakbah,[216] to decades of occupation and related

[207] See https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownLoadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28847, p. 6.

[208] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 2(1), 19(3) and 20; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, arts. 2(1)(a) and 4; Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34, paras. 7, 14 and 40; and Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, general recommendation No. 35, para. 39.

[209] United Nations, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, principles 1, 11–13, 17, 23 and 25; and A/75/212, paras. 41–49.

[210] See https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-sunday-talk-shows-on-gaza-a-study-in-media-bias/; and https://jacobin.com/2025/08/germany-media-bias-gaza-israel.

[211] See https://www.declassifieduk.org/strong-pro-israel-bias-among-bbc-bosses-new-data-indicates/.

[212] See https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsstyleguide/israel-and-the-palestinians/.

[213] See https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2026/06/israel-west-bank-ethnic-cleansing.

[214] See https://theintercept.com/2024/04/15/nyt-israel-gaza-genocide-palestine-coverage/.

[215] See https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CfMM-report-2023-24-ePDF-Edited.pdf; and https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias.

[216] See https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcaf032; and https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CfMM-report-2023-24-ePDF-Edited.pdf, p. 83.

brutalities,[217] to the illegality and continued settlement expansion and to the 19-year blockade of Gaza[218] are absent or minimized, with 7 October 2023 presented as the origin of hostilities. Cable News Network (CNN) has directed journalists to "remind our audiences" that Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians caused the conflict.[219] The resultant reporting obscures critical legal findings, presenting the military assault primarily as Israel exercising its "right to self-defence",[220] rarely acknowledging the significant limitations international law places on an occupying Power's reliance on such claims.[221]

68. Media outlets have also repeatedly amplified unverified or false Israeli claims. Concerns about this have been raised by journalists themselves, including those from BBC[222] and CNN, with the latter warning that such reporting amounted to "journalistic malpractice".[223] Some of the most damaging narratives of the conflict – including allegations that Hamas had beheaded babies on 7 October,[224] operated command centres beneath hospitals[225] and had systematically infiltrated UNRWA[226] and that Palestinian journalists killed by Israel were "terrorists"[227] – were widely reported without verification. In several cases, these allegations could not be independently substantiated,[228] and corrections received far less prominence. All this has tangible consequences. In the case of UNRWA, the amplification of unsubstantiated allegations contributed to donor Governments suspending funding, significantly weakening the provision of humanitarian assistance.[229]

69. Reporting by traditional media also shapes how international law is understood. Since October 2023, much of the media has reproduced what this Special Rapporteur has previously described as "humanitarian camouflage": using concepts of

[217] See https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CfMM-report-2023-24-ePDF-Edited.pdf, p. 11.
[218] See https://www.mediabiasmeter.com/framing-gaza-media-bias-report-2025.
[219] See https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias.
[220] See https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CfMM-Report-Final-MEDIA-BIAS-GAZA-2023-24-ePDF.pdf, p. 48.
[221] *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion*, para. 139; and A/HRC/55/73, paras. 15 and 74.
[222] See https://www.theguardian.com/media/2025/jul/02/more-than-400-media-figures-urge-bbc-board-to-remove-robbie-gibb-over-gaza.
[223] See https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias.
[224] See https://x.com/CNN/status/1712132220809298163; https://x.com/DanaBashCNN/status/1712197520393142506; https://x.com/CNN/status/1712427887851082198; and https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/12/middleeast/israel-hamas-beheading-claims-intl/index.html.
[225] See https://www.cbc.bb/news/international-news/hamas-has-command-node-under-hospital-says-us-official/; https://archive.org/details/CNNW_20231119_200000_CNN_Newsroom_With_Fredricka_Whitfield/start/240/end/300; https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CfMM-report-2023-24-ePDF-Edited.pdf, p. 112; https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-67436154; and https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67424064.
[226] See https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/at-least-12-u-n-agency-employees-involved-in-oct-7-attacks-intelligence-reports-say-a7de8f36; and http://archive.org/details/CNNW_20240130_220000_The_Lead_With_Jake_Tapper.
[227] See https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/11/world/middleeast/al-jazeera-israel-criticism-ban.html; https://www.tagesschau.de/newsticker/liveblog-nahoSt-freitag-164.html; and https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/israel-toetet-al-jazeera-reporter-anas-al-sharif-in-gaza-68991792204e050eae235be5.
[228] See https://www.972mag.com/israel-gaza-journalists-hamas-hasbara/; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/21/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-hamas-israel/; and https://www.unrwa.org/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-2025; https://www.lemonde.fr/en/les-decodeurs/article/2024/04/03/40-beheaded-babies-the-itinerary-of-a-rumor-at-the-heart-of-the-information-battle-between-israel-and-hamas_6667274_8.html.
[229] Submission by Aleta Moriarty.

international humanitarian law to legitimize genocide.[230] This framing presents mass atrocities as humanitarian protection. Israeli authorities portrayed the concentration of Palestinians into so-called "safe zones" and their mass displacement through "evacuation orders" as measures to protect civilians.[231] Western media has frequently reproduced this narrative without challenging it,[232] creating a veneer of humanitarian concern despite mounting evidence. *The New York Times* eventually reported[233] that Israel repeatedly used 2,000-pound bombs in designated "safe zones", killing thousands of Palestinians,[234] but only after initially lending legitimacy to the misleading use of the term.

70. Similar patterns emerge in outlets' attribution of civilian deaths to Hamas's tactics rather than to Israeli military actions. Editorial guidance of the German broadcaster ARD presents civilian casualties as being primarily a consequence of Hamas's alleged use of "human shields".[235] Between October 2023 and August 2025, *The New York Times* referred to "human shields" used by Hamas 176 times and BBC 81 times.[236] Systematic references to "Hamas-run hospitals" and "hospital shields"[237] and the unverified claims that Hamas operates from hospitals and other civilian sites have lent credibility to narratives that supposedly legitimize attacks on protected medical facilities. This framing is particularly significant because the allegation that Hamas systematically used civilians as human shields is one of the Israeli Government's principal legal justifications for its genocidal campaign in Gaza, including before the International Court of Justice.[238]

71. Meanwhile, findings by the United Nations,[239] including in the International Court of Justice proceedings, and by human rights organizations,[240] including on the question of genocide, have often been underreported or presented as disputed. In more than 100 documented instances, BBC presenters dismissed assertions that Israel was committing genocide, while Israeli leaders' genocidal statements went unmentioned.[241]

72. When some facts could no longer be denied or "camouflaged", reporting has frequently omitted or downplayed Israeli responsibility. Content analysis has found that BBC did so in 83 per cent of relevant headlines[242] and *The New York Times* in 65 per cent.[243] A striking example concerns the killing of Hind Rajab by Israeli forces, which BBC still presents with the headline, "Hind Rajab, 6, found dead in Gaza days after phone calls for help".[244]

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[230] See A/HRC/55/73.
[231] See https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf, pp. 2 and 3.
[232] See https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/23/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-rafah-evacuation-plans.html?searchResultPosition=20.
[233] See https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/21/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-bomb-investigation.html.
[234] A/HRC/55/73, paras. 76–86.
[235] See https://www.nachdenkseiten.de/upload/pdf/231027-Glossar_Berichterstattung-Nahostkonflikt.pdf, p. 4.
[236] See https://www.mediabiasmeter.com/framing-gaza-media-bias-report-2025.
[237] Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon, "Medical lawfare: the Nakba and Israel's attacks on Palestinian healthcare", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 53, No. 1 (2024).
[238] Neve Gordon and Nicola Perugini, *Human Shields: A History of People in the Line of Fire* (University of California Press, 2020), pp. 218–229.
[239] See https://jacobin.com/2025/08/germany-media-bias-gaza-israel.
[240] See https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/bbc-civil-war-gaza-israel-biased-coverage.
[241] See https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CfMM-report-2023-24-ePDF-Edited.pdf, p. 12.
[242] Submission by DeFrame.
[243] Ibid.
[244] See https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68261286.

73. The unequal attribution of responsibility is matched by an unequal distribution of empathy. Studies demonstrate that Israeli suffering is narrated in detail and endowed with emotional and moral significance; Palestinian suffering is rendered partial, abstract or incidental.[245] Thus, although Palestinian children accounted for approximately 99.7 per cent of child fatalities,[246] they appeared in just over half of the personalized CNN reports on child victims.[247] Across two sampling periods, *The New York Times* mentioned sexual violence against Israelis 76 times, but only four times in relation to Palestinians,[248] despite substantial evidence of its widespread use against them.[249] Even the moral vocabulary is unevenly allocated. Terms such as "barbaric" are overwhelmingly reserved for violence against Israelis; at the German broadcaster ZDF, 90.7 per cent of uses have referred to Israeli victims, while the term has never been applied to attacks on Palestinians.[250]

74. The same editorial logic extends to the treatment of evidence itself. Human rights documentation, Palestinian perspectives and even expressions of solidarity have been marginalized, while journalists departing from the dominant narrative have faced pressure, disciplinary measures, reassignment or dismissal.[251] Antoinette Lattouf was unlawfully dismissed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation after reposting a Human Rights Watch report on starvation in Gaza. The publicly funded broadcaster spent more than $1.7 million of taxpayers' money[252] defending the dismissal, before the Federal Court of Australia found it unlawful and noted that senior management had acted to "appease the pro-Israel lobbyists".[253] At BBC Arabic, journalists have been disciplined without any demonstration that editorial policies had been breached, which has even reportedly prompted the resignation of a senior journalist.[254] Public events have been altered and documentaries withdrawn,[255] including the BBC film on Gaza health workers[256] and the broadcast of *Wajib* by ARD.[257] Increasingly, reliance on human rights findings, criticism of Israeli State

[245] See https://github.com/hollyjackson/casualty_mentions_nyt; https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CfMM-report-2023-24-ePDF-Edited.pdf, p. 9; and https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/israel-palestine-bbc-news-coverage-bias-gaza-war/.

[246] See https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-25-september-2024.

[247] See https://arxiv.org/html/2510.06453v2.

[248] Adam H. Johnson, *How to Sell a Genocide: The Media's Complicity in the Destruction of Gaza* (Pluto Press, 2026), p. 21.

[249] See https://www.phr.org.il/en/sexual-gender-based-violence-2024/?pr=18397; https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20240731-Thematic-report-Detention-context-Gaza-hostilities.pdf; https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/israel-must-end-mass-incommunicado-detention-and-torture-of-palestinians-from-gaza/; and https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/26/israel-palestinian-healthcare-workers-tortured.

[250] See https://itidal.de/israel-und-gaza-wann-nutzt-das-zdf-die-markierung-barbarisch/.

[251] See A/79/319, paras. 29 and 30.

[252] See https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-08/abc-senate-estimates-hears-cost-of-antoinette-lattouf-case/105868832.

[253] Federal Court of Australia, *Lattouf v. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (No 2)* [2025] FCA 669, Judgment, 25 June 2025, para. 603.

[254] See A/79/319, para. 30.

[255] See https://www.instagram.com/reel/DV_AZXbjTA4/; and https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/23/bbc-accused-of-censoring-acts-of-gaza-solidarity-in-bafta-awards-c.

[256] See https://observer.co.uk/news/national/article/bbc-bosses-pulled-our-film-on-israel-attacking-gazas-medics-heres-why.

[257] See https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/ard-setzt-palaestinensichen-film-wajib-ab-a-f1557c0c-8880-4015-99a8-618ae5c7d482.

policies or solidarity with Palestinians have themselves been treated as suspect, collapsed into allegations of antisemitism.[258]

75. Such practices engage human rights obligations. For public service broadcasters, disciplining journalists in absence of professional misconduct, withdrawing commissioned works or suppressing lawful expressions must satisfy the strict requirements of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[259] In the sole instance judicially examined, the Lattouf dismissal was held as unlawful and attributable to external pressure.[260]

76. Editorial restrictions on the use of legally relevant terminology raise concerns about whether media reporting adequately reflects the legal characterizations, accountability frameworks and rights claims recognized in international law. Broadcasting dehumanizing content without correction engages the duty to prohibit advocacy of hatred under article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. For private media, presenting unverified belligerent claims as fact, reproducing one party's legal characterizations without acknowledging contrary arguments and according corrections less prominence than the original misstatements falls short of the heightened due diligence required by the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.[261] Where such conduct causes identifiable harm – as in the suspension of UNRWA funding – a responsibility to mitigate impact and remediate arises.[262]

77. These obligations acquire particular urgency where there is a serious risk of genocide – arising, as a due diligence obligation, upon knowledge of serious risk thereof[263] – which requires States, at a minimum, not to permit their own institutions to obscure that risk. The patterns documented here persisted despite repeated warnings from journalists, courts and United Nations bodies, raising serious questions as to compliance with those obligations.

B. Digital platforms

78. As Israel has systematically eliminated Palestinian journalists and excluded foreign media, social media has become indispensable for documenting events. Journalists, human rights defenders, civil society organizations and United Nations experts have increasingly relied on a handful of private platforms as primary channels of information.

79. In doing so, companies such as Meta, X and Alphabet Inc. (Google) have become the principal gatekeepers of information on Palestine. Through content moderation, recommendation systems, advertising and monetization policies, they have determined which narratives are amplified and which disappeared; the evidence reviewed below indicates recurring patterns of discriminatory moderation, censorship and amplification of Israeli Government narratives.

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[258] See https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17506352251392722#con; and https://www.wsj.com/opinion/harvard-is-an-islamist-outpost-fringe-leftist-views-eventually-united-by-antisemitism-42759e15; https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CfMM-Report-Final-MEDIA-BIAS-GAZA-2023-24-ePDF.pdf; and submission by Aleta Moriarty.

[259] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 19(3); see para. 10 above.

[260] Federal Court of Australia, *Lattouf v. Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, paras. 8 and 603.

[261] United Nations, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, principles 17 and 23.

[262] Ibid., principles 19 and 22.

[263] *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro), Judgment of 26 February 2007, I.C.J. Reports 2007*, p. 43, paras. 431 and 432.

80. Close relationships between platform executives and Israeli officials have reinforced these concerns. Following meetings with the President and the Prime Minister of Israel in November 2023,[264] Elon Musk characterized expressions such as "from the river to the sea" and "decolonization" as "necessarily imply[ing] genocide",[265] disingenuously conflating advocacy for Palestinian rights with support for violence. Meanwhile, Alphabet has continued providing Israel with Project Nimbus, supporting surveillance and artificial intelligence capabilities that are used in ways that harm Palestinians.[266]

1. Engineering the narrative

81. These institutional relationships are reflected in platform operations, which have systematically censored content documenting human rights abuses in Palestine, historical and political content and criticism of Israeli actions through removal of posts and comments, account suspension, engagement restrictions and "shadow banning",[267] often without notice or effective appeal.[268] X has suspended hundreds of accounts of activists, journalists and Palestinians documenting the genocide, with no explanation,[269] and leaked Meta data indicates that approximately 38.8 million posts across Facebook and Instagram have been removed, banned or suppressed since late 2023,[270] while engagement with prominent Palestinian news organizations has fallen by 77 percent.[271] Platforms have also demonstrated near-total compliance with the large number of Israeli takedown requests. TikTok and Meta reported compliance rates of 99.2[272] and 94 per cent, respectively.[273] Although formally voluntary, such requests are State conduct aimed at suppressing expression and, given near-total compliance, operate as de facto removal orders. Precisely because they bypass any legal process, they cannot satisfy the requirements of legality, legitimate aim and necessity set out in paragraph 10 above.[274]

2. A permissive architecture for hate

82. The same platforms that have suppressed Palestinian voices have failed to apply their own content policies to hate speech, dehumanizing rhetoric, incitement to violence against Palestinians and falsehood campaigns by senior Israeli officials and media figures, including the statements examined in section IV above and those cited before the International Court of Justice as evidence of genocidal intent.[275] Channel

[264] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/27/elon-musk-arrives-in-israel-flight-tracker.
[265] See https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1725645884409401435?lang=en.
[266] See A/HRC/59/23, paras. 40 and 41.
[267] See https://7amleh.org/post/erased-and-suppressed-palestinian-testimonies-of-meta-s-censorship-en.
[268] See A/79/319, para. 52.
[269] See https://www.vice.com/en/article/x-purges-prominent-journalists-leftists-with-no-explanation/.
[270] See https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/leaked-data-israeli-censorship-meta.
[271] See https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c786wlxz4jgo.
[272] See https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/transparency/government-removals-report.
[273] See https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2024/07/digital-apartheid-gaza-unjust-content-moderation-request-israels-cyber-unit.
[274] Human Rights Committee general comment No. 34 (2011), paras. 7 and 22.
[275] *South Africa v. Israel, Application Instituting Proceedings and Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures*, para. 101.

14, for example, maintains active Facebook and Instagram pages containing the same type of content.[276]

83. These platforms have also enabled degrading content by Israeli soldiers, including footage of civilian destruction, looting and detainee humiliation.[277] A "Hamas hunting club" Instagram page has featured images of blindfolded and bound prisoners,[278] while YouTube has permitted a song describing Palestinians as rodents with lyrics including "One, Two, Shoot!"[279] These examples demonstrate a failure to enforce platforms' own policies, contrasting sharply with the draconian enforcement applied to Palestinian expression. By contrast, videos documenting the conduct of Israeli soldiers have in some instances been removed by the Israeli military itself,[280] which in 2025 restricted soldiers' public exposure amid concerns that such posts could be used in war crimes proceedings abroad.[281]

84. Platforms have also failed to remove campaigns delegitimizing Palestinian journalists before their killing. Organizations such as Honest Reporting spread unsubstantiated allegations,[282] for instance, that Palestinian journalists working for Reuters and Associated Press had advance knowledge of the 7 October attacks[283] – claims amplified by Israeli officials[284] but refuted by both agencies.[285]

85. As described in paragraph 50, platforms have also profited from roughly $50 million in Israeli advertising contracts, turning their advertising infrastructure into an instrument of genocide denial. Despite user complaints, Google has reportedly concluded that advertisements denying famine did not violate its policies.[286] It has also carried paid advertisements portraying the International Court of Justice genocide case as a "blood libel" and discouraging donations to UNRWA.[287]

86. Commercial complicity has extended to the suppression of accountability itself. Following the publication of this Special Rapporteur's report, "From economy of occupation to economy of genocide" (A/HRC/59/23), Google carried Israeli-

[276] See https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/05/10/there-are-no-innocents-in-gaza-channel-14-the-israeli-television-channel-accused-of-genocidal-rhetoric_6753311_4.html; https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/27/israel-gaza-propaganda; and https://internationallaw.blog/2025/09/08/not-all-who-incite-will-be-charged-an-assessment-of-holding-israels-channel-14-media-officials-accountable-for-direct-and-public-incitement-to-genocide/.

[277] See https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/02/28/israeli-soldiers-deployed-in-gaza-post-their-abuses-on-social-media_6568987_4.html.

[278] See https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2024/03/05/social-media-posts-show-off-blindfolded-and-bound-palestinian-detainees/.

[279] See A/79/319, para. 57.

[280] See https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68249962.

[281] See https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-tightens-media-rules-over-war-crimes-prosecution-concern-2025-01-08/.

[282] See https://x.com/HonestReporting/status/1968584616706535655.

[283] See https://x.com/HonestReporting/status/1722309273940611406.

[284] See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/23/al-jazeera-decries-unfounded-israeli-claims-about-its-gaza-journalists; and https://x.com/gantzbe/status/1722535046400061853?s=46&t=9dWa0HpIDFVxB1s0g6EsfA.

[285] See https://www.reuters.com/media-center/statement-from-reuters-regarding-accusations-made-by-honestreporting/; and https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-772702.

[286] See https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/10/15/israel-ads-youtube-famine-gaza/.

[287] See https://govextra.gov.il/unrwa/unrwa/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23796210161&gbraid=0AAAABCej1Y68jxUAqQBHvasJZDPJQ0rZT&gclid=CjwKCAjw0o3SBhBVEiwAh28-jdA2o0dI_xr-U8fM38R8yJMgevGzrONKMTHctb4FDCDQE2yOb0_0LRoCFr0QAvD_BwE; and https://www.unrwa.org/topics/spread-misinformation-disinformation-continues-be-used-weapon-war-gaza?.

sponsored content containing false and misleading information designed to discredit its findings and smear the mandate holder.[288]

87. Social media companies should be assessed against the principles of corporate responsibility to respect human rights set out in paragraph 12 above. For those that mediate global access to information about an unfolding genocide, that responsibility demands heightened due diligence.[289] The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are engaged in three distinct ways.[290] Where platforms actively suppress protected expression, they directly cause adverse impacts. Compliance with government takedown demands does not discharge that responsibility, which exists independently of domestic law, State pressure and the absence of either notice or remedy for affected users.[291] Where their recommendation systems host and amplify advocacy of hatred by third parties, they are at minimum directly linked to the resulting harm. By monetizing such content, including by accepting payment to disseminate State propaganda denying atrocities, platforms contribute directly to the resulting harm.

88. Following the provisional measures order of the International Court of Justice of January 2024, at the latest, no platform could claim ignorance of the risk and urgency of the context in Gaza.[292] Meta, in particular, had been on notice since 2018, when the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar found that its platform had been "a useful instrument for those seeking to spread hate" – a conclusion the company's own commissioned assessment accepted.[293] Even after the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification had confirmed famine and the International Court of Justice had ordered the unhindered provision of humanitarian aid,[294] platforms accepted payment to disseminate messaging that denied the famine, thereby contributing to the resulting harm within the meaning of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. That contribution to harm is aggravated by the fact that the platforms accepted payment for disseminating the content.[295] Where a company knowingly provides practical assistance that has a substantial effect on the commission of international crimes, questions of complicity arise beyond the Guiding Principles.[296] At a minimum, this report establishes inadequate due diligence, selective enforcement and the denial of remedy.

VI. Conclusion

89. **Since October 2023, Israel has deployed every means at its disposal to silence Palestinian journalism, creating conditions in which independent reporting has become nearly impossible. Read in the context of the broader campaign against the Palestinian people, the scale and intensity of this assault reveal a deliberate effort not only to conceal mass atrocities, but also to erode the very possibility of documenting them.**

[288] See https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Gm4wrZm8LAM.
[289] Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, principles 17, 19 and 23.
[290] Ibid., principles 13, 17–19 and 23.
[291] Ibid., principle 11 and commentary.
[292] *South Africa v. Israel, Order of 26 January 2024*, paras. 54 and 74.
[293] A/HRC/39/64, para. 74; and https://about.fb.com/news/2018/11/myanmar-hria/.
[294] *South Africa v. Israel, Order of 28 March 2024*, para. 51 (2) (a).
[295] Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, principle 13.
[296] Ibid., principle 17 and commentary (complicity); and International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, *Prosecutor v. Anto Furundžija*, Case No. IT-95-17/1-T, Judgement, 10 December 1998, para. 235.

90. **The evidence examined in this report describes a single, integrated phenomenon that, in many respects, constitutes mediacide: the destruction of the media's essential function in the information environment surrounding the occupied Palestinian territory. It operates through three mutually reinforcing processes: (a) the systematic elimination of Palestinian journalists and their means of documentation; (b) the dissemination and normalization of genocidal incitement and denial by Israeli authorities and segments of the Israeli media; and (c) the reproduction by influential Western media and digital platforms of narratives that obscure, justify or legitimize atrocity crimes while marginalizing Palestinian voices, evidence and international law.**

91. **Together, these phenomena are intrinsic to the ongoing genocide. Genocide depends not only on the destruction of human beings, but also on the destruction of the political, moral and evidentiary conditions that make that destruction visible, intelligible and contestable. When witnesses are silenced, when dehumanizing language becomes ordinary and when independent verification is displaced by the claims of the perpetrator, violence acquires the appearance of legitimacy and impunity becomes easier to sustain.**

92. **This makes the preservation of the record a legal imperative. At a time when proceedings before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice seek to establish responsibility for the gravest international crimes, the protections owed to journalists, the prohibition of incitement to genocide and hatred and the obligations of States and corporate actors under international humanitarian law, human rights law and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights remain fully in force. Systematic disregard for them is itself relevant to the assessment of intent, knowledge and complicity.**

93. **The Special Rapporteur therefore urges States, the General Assembly, judicial mechanisms, media organizations and technology companies to do their utmost to protect those who report, bear witness, preserve documentation and resist narratives that erase or legitimize crimes. The capacity to establish the truth of what has occurred, and to act upon it, is integral to the protection of the people this mandate exists to serve. Accountability depends on the survival of the record. Without it, neither justice nor the prevention of future atrocities remains possible.**

VII. Recommendations

94. **Recalling the 67 recommendations found in all her previous reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur further makes the recommendations below.**

95. **To the General Assembly:**

(a) **Establish an independent mechanism to consolidate and preserve evidence of crimes against journalists and the information environment in the occupied Palestinian territory;**

(b) **Take all measures within its powers to ensure compliance with the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice and so that Israel:**

(i) **Ceases all attacks against the information environment, releases arbitrarily detained journalists, discloses the fate and whereabouts of the forcibly disappeared, and grants both the International Committee of the Red Cross access to detainees and international media and human rights monitors access to Gaza;**

(ii) **Complies with the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice, including by preserving evidence, including journalists' documentation;**

(iii) **rescinds censorship measures, outlet bans and media-restrictive legislation.**

96. **States should:**

(a) **Investigate and prosecute attacks against Palestinian journalists, in line with Security Council resolution 2222 (2015) – especially attacks carried out by citizens of their own countries who hold Israeli citizenship – and cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court;**

(b) **Review public funding and institutional partnerships with media organizations and digital platforms that systematically disseminate hatred or incitement to discrimination, hostility, violence or genocide, or that materially contribute to the concealment of atrocity crimes, for example through suppressing protected expression;**

(c) **Treat journalists' reporting, audiovisual material and archives as evidence requiring preservation for future judicial proceedings and discharge their duty to prevent genocide, including by protecting documentation thereof.**

97. **Media organizations and online platforms must stop laundering propaganda through the journalistic form. To that end, they must:**

(a) **Verify belligerent parties' claims before publication and issue corrections of equal prominence;**

(b) **Cease retaliation against journalists for expression concerning Palestine, and remediate harm;**

(c) **Cease arbitrary removal of reporting on potential international crimes and provide transparent explanations and appeals;**

(d) **Conduct heightened human rights and international law due diligence especially in situations presenting a serious risk of atrocity crimes, including genocide;**

(e) **Preserve content documenting potential international crimes and make it available, subject to appropriate safeguards, to accountability mechanisms.**

98. **The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court should investigate direct and public incitement to commit genocide by government officials and media figures as part of the ongoing Palestine investigation.**

99. **Journalists' organizations, civil society and the public should defend those documenting atrocities, demand accountability and sustain attention to detained and disappeared journalists; and they should never forget that journalism ceases to perform its public function when it reproduces the claims of power instead of scrutinizing them.**