

Subject: Deaths of journalists during the war in Gaza

Honourable High Representative Mr Borrel,

Honourable President of the European Commission, Mrs von der Leyen,

Honourable President of the European Parliament, Mrs. Metsola,

The continuing escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip has, as you know, caused the deaths of tens of thousands, including civilians, and the displacement of almost 2 million of the Palestinian population¹.

Among the numerous victims of this terrible war, we must also count the lives of the journalists and media workers who have been lost. This number currently stands at 95,² while many more have been arrested, injured, or are missing³, at a time when there are allegations of targeting of journalists and their families⁴.

Additionally, the increased number of journalists killed in the Gaza Strip is said to reflect a wider global trend, as according to a statement issued by UNESCO at the end of December, the number of journalists who died in conflict zones worldwide in 2023 has almost doubled compared to the last three years⁵.

These figures are supported by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and its member, PJS, the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate.

The signatories of this letter, motivated by the human tragedy that unfolds daily and us through the exceedingly dangerous work of media workers, express our deepest concern about the danger to life under which journalists and other media workers are forced to work.

In a conflict zone, the journalist is, of course, considered a civilian, but he is more than that: he is the voice that will make public the horrors of a war which shows no signs of halting its escalation.

The EU has shown that it cares about press freedom, even if it has not managed to get to grips with all its problems. It must also extend the same humanitarian and democratic vigilance to the major issues in its wider neighbourhood.

Dear High Representative, President of the EC, President of the EP, we call on you to take a clear stance on this issue immediately. We call on you to condemn, loudly and unequivocally, the deaths of journalists in the Gaza Strip. On the road to a ceasefire and the subsequent start of talks for the eventual resolution of the Palestinian issue, as defined over time in UN resolutions, Europe must send a strong message to those who, for their own reasons, have not hesitated to violate its founding values.

Yours sincerely,

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/situation-occupied-palestinian-territory-and-israel/media-and-resources>

² <https://www.ifj.org/war-in-gaza>

³ <https://cpj.org/2023/12/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>

⁴ <https://cpj.org/2023/12/attacks-arrests-threats-censorship-the-high-risks-of-reporting-the-israel-hamas-war/>

⁵ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/2023-alarming-increase-journalists-killed-conflict-zones>

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