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Palestinian journalists stop reporting "to a world that doesn't know the word humanity"

While the typical phrase "killing a journalist is killing the truth" continues to circulate on social media, the truth is that, as of mid-January, Israel had killed at least 118 journalists in Gaza, and that number is increasing every day.



Palestinian journalists have been subjected to all forms of State violence that Israel has launched against them to prevent the dissemination of information. Whether through means of intimidation, such as phone calls from anonymous numbers, kidnappings and illegal detentions in Israeli jails, or through more violent and calculated efforts, such as airstrikes targeting journalists or their entire families, Israel has made it clear that

Palestinian journalists – who pride themselves on sharing the truth with the rest of the world – pose as much of a threat to Israel as Hamas.

All journalists working in Palestine are therefore faced with a difficult choice. As each new day of Israel's latest conquest of Palestinian land bleeds into the next, journalists must decide whether to try to save themselves or continue to share the truth with a world that doesn't seem to listen to them.

But what does security really mean in the midst of genocide, where every individual is at risk of dying?

"Killed Twice"

Palestinian journalists have been left to fend for themselves in the eyes of the world. As Al Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief, Wael al-Dahdouh, stated in a recent interview with MSNBC, "We feel like we're being killed twice: once because of the bombs and once because of this silence, this evasion of expressing support."

Despite the failure of the global response to the humanitarian crisis in occupied Palestine, as well as diplomatic efforts aimed at establishing a permanent ceasefire, some journalists like Dahdouh have chosen to continue reporting on Israel's cyclical phases of brutality. For many others, however, the decision has not been so easy, and the psychological, spiritual, and physical toll of the atrocities has been too much to bear.

The repercussions are obvious, because for many journalists in Gaza, the costs of sharing the truth with the rest of the world have begun to outweigh the benefits, and they have increasingly opted to end their reporting.

On 7 January, Palestinian journalist Anas El-Najar announced the end of his reporting in a strong statement condemning the three months of global silence and inaction in response to the genocide.

On the social network X, he said that "it is a thousand times preferable to seek my safety and that of my family than to look for news to communicate to a world that does not know empathy and humanity"

Journalist Anas El-Najar announces the end of his journalistic coverage. He says that seeking safety with his family is a thousand times better than looking for news to convey to a world that knows neither empathy nor humanity.

Najar's difficult message was followed by a groundswell of public support and understanding on social media. Three days later, on January 10, another Palestinian journalist, Ismail Jood, also announced the end of his journalistic work:

"Dear friends, I announce the end of my coverage of this ongoing aggression. We have more than enough documented the crimes, massacres, and genocide we have endured over the past 96 days. Unfortunately, there has been no reaction to put an end to this aggression that is devouring citizens, journalists, health workers, activists, and even stones and trees. We have been sentenced to death and we are all waiting for our turn. 96 days of loss and grief over the loss of our friends, our homes, our loved ones, and our wealth. The Israeli occupation has taken everything away from us, we have only a few clothes left that are not enough to keep us warm, living in tents that are inadequate even for animals.

And for the people who didn't know who Ismail was and came to know me through this genocide, I want you to know that I am the father of two beautiful children. I am the eldest son of my parents, who waited 25 years to have me because of childbearing difficulties. I have a sister and brother who have been counting on me since my father grew old and sick.

I've survived death several times and put myself in harm's way to show you the situation on the ground, and I think that's enough for now. As one of my colleagues said, "Seeking safety within the family is a better option than seeking news to convey to a world that does not know the meaning of humanity and compassion."

Those heart-wrenching words proved their certainty when, on the same day, Hamza al-Dahdouh, Wael al-Dahdouh's eldest son, was killed by Israel in a targeted airstrike on the vehicle in which he was travelling with his colleague and journalist Mustafa Thuraya.

This reality has pushed Palestinian journalists to stop wearing their security vests, which clearly and conspicuously identify them as members of the press.

Given that the Israeli military openly admitted on January 10 to deliberately killing both Dahdouh and Thuraya because of their alleged and baseless association with Palestinian Islamic Jihad, it is no wonder that many of their comrades and friends have begun to lose sight of the purpose for which they were filming Israel's atrocities.



Wael al-Dahdouh, Al-Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief, at the funeral of his son, also a journalist for the same TV station, who was killed in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip on 7 January. Wael al-Dahdouh, who was wounded in the arm, lost his wife and two other children in an Israeli bombardment in the first weeks of the war (Photo: Bashar Taleb/APA Images)

Despite these announcements, most Palestinian journalists who have decided to stop reporting have so far not left the Gaza Strip. Like the rest of the residents, they continue to live and survive in unimaginable conditions under the constant threat of bombing and are not necessarily safer than when they practiced their profession. Yet, as El-Najar clearly stated, they consider it preferable to die with their loved ones than to die documenting Israel's crimes for a world that doesn't care about them.

Some journalists, such as Wael al-Dahdouh and Noor Harazeen, recently left Gaza when they realized they had no alternative. Dahdouh traveled to Qatar on Jan. 16 to perform the surgery needed on his hand, which had been injured since December; Harazeen evacuated his family on Jan. 18. A week later, Palestinian journalist Motaz Agaiuja, whose Instagram account went viral during the war for documenting unedited footage of the carnage caused by Israel, announced that he had evacuated Gaza and was boarding a plane from Egypt to Qatar.

Both Dahdouh and Harazeen have publicly expressed their intention to return to Gaza to continue their coverage. Harazeen made good on that promise by getting his family

evacuated, returning to Gaza almost immediately after. Dahdouh is still recovering after the success of his operation in Qatar, but he is also expected to return at some point.

"Murdering the Truth"

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UMRWA) recently claimed that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is "tainting our shared humanity" on a global scale.

The two professions most affected by the genocide in Gaza are journalists and health workers. The vast majority have insisted on remaining in their beleaguered homeland, knowing that the probability of death for people exercising their profession is greater than that of survival.

While the typical phrase "killing a journalist is killing the truth" continues to circulate on social media, the truth is that, as of mid-January, Israel had killed at least 118 journalists in Gaza, and that number is increasing every day.

Nor can it be ignored that, since 7 October, the Palestinian press has begun to successfully break through the camera obscura that the Israeli regime has managed to maintain for so long.

The obstruction of Palestinian journalism remains entrenched in the Zionist political agenda for this very reason.

Hanna M. Warsame

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