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<http://www.rsf.org/palestine-palestinian-journalists-under-fire-29-07-2014,46716.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Palestine

Crosshairs

Palestinian journalists under fire

29 July 2014

Covering the military conflict and its ripple effects in Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinian media, including Hamas broadcast stations, find themselves in the IDF crosshairs

Following 22 days of a conflict in which 1,100 Palestinians as well as 47 Israeli soldiers and three civilians have been killed, the Israeli Defence Forces at dawn on [29 July](#), bombed the headquarters of *Al-Aqsa TV*, the Hamas channel, located in the Nasser neighbourhood, northeast of Gaza City. Despite the destruction of some equipment and material, the station continued broadcasting via clandestine studios.

Forty-five minutes later, the Hamas radio station, *Al-Aqsa*, came under fire. Located in the Al-Shourouq building, in the Rimal neighbourhood of downtown Gaza City, the station went off the air after the attack. No employees were wounded.

The building houses a number of media bureaus, many of them damaged. The offices of *Al-Aqsa TV* in Burj Al-Shourouq had been hit by Israeli rocket fire two days earlier, on [27 July](#).

As the IDF Operation "Protective Edge" proceeds, a rocket hit the 15th floor of the building in Burj Al-Shurouq, in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City, that houses the station, according to Sa'ad Radwan, the station's director general. The attack caused considerable physical damage including the destruction of some station equipment.

Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns direct fire on the Hamas broadcast stations. The fact that media serve as propaganda organs does not justify making them a military target, RWB said.

An expert committee formed by the International Criminal Court's prosecutor for the former Yugoslavia, to assess the NATO bombing campaign of 1999, specified that a journalist or media organization is not a legitimate target merely because it broadcasts or disseminates propaganda.

"Attacks against civilian targets constitute war crimes and serious violations of the Geneva Conventions," Christophe Deloire, the secretary-general of the press freedom organization said during "Pillar of Defence," the 2012 IDF operation in Gaza. "Those responsible must be identified."

On 24 July, [Abdurrahman Abu Hina](#), a programming staffer at *Al-Kitab TV*, was killed during Israeli bombing on the Al-Shuja'iya neighbourhood of east Gaza, where he was visiting family. [The attack](#) killed 60 people in all, including the journalist's brother and grandfather, who had been in the family home.

On 23 July, **Saber Ibrahim Nour Eddine**, a photographer for *Deutsche Press-Agentur*, a German press agency, was wounded by shrapnel from a mortar fired by the IDF while covering, alongside colleagues, the removal of bodies from Al-Shuja'iya. He was taken to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City where he received emergency treatment. The day before, **Sakher Madhat Abou Al-Aoun**, a journalist for *AFP*, a French news agency, was wounded in the face from Israeli missile fire, near Al-Shifa Hospital.

Violence in Israel and the West Bank

While the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip is the major focus of events, the people of many West Bank cities are infuriated by toll inflicted by "Protective Edge." Nine Palestinians in all have been killed in the West Bank, six of them on 25 July alone, which had been dubbed a "Day of Rage." Many others were wounded.

Palestinian journalists were among the injured. On 26 July, journalist **Rami Al-Khatib**, as well as **Moaz Mish'al**, a photographer for *Agence Anatolia*, a Turkish press agency, were wounded by rubber bullets while covering confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli troops in Beit El, north of Jerusalem. The day before, journalist **Thaer Abu Baker** was wounded by Israeli

gunfire in Jenin, in the northern West Bank.

Nader Beibars, producer of the daily "Good Morning Jerusalem" program on *Palestine TV*, was hit by a rubber bullet in the Wadi Al-Joz neighbourhood of Jerusalem on 24 July. The same day, other news professionals were also wounded. Among them were **Zakkariyya Al-Salhi**, editor at *Ramsat Co.*, and **Shadi Hatem**, a photographer for *Raya FM*, who were hit by Israeli fire as troops were trying to break up a Palestinian demonstration at the [Qalandia border checkpoint](#) in north Jerusalem.

On 23 July, Israeli security forces arrested *Raya TV* correspondent **Mahmoud Abu Khdeir**, at his home in the Shuafat neighborhood in East Jerusalem. According to [MADA](#), the Palestinian Centre for Media and Development, the journalist was scheduled to appear in an Israeli court on 28 July. On 21 July, freelance photographer **Amjad Arafa** was [wounded](#) in the shoulder near Al-Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem, and received emergency treatment.

A *BBC Arabic* correspondent was [attacked](#) the same day by an Israeli private citizen. **Firas Al-Khatib**, was in the midst of a live broadcast from the Gaza border when the Israeli physically and verbally attacked him in full view of the camera. A member of the TV crew intervened to protect the journalist.

Meanwhile, Israel is going beyond its military censorship procedures to exert control over program content. The Israeli Broadcasting Authority prohibited on 24 July the broadcast of a spot produced by [B'Tselem](#), an Israeli NGO, which listed the names of 150 children killed in Gaza.

B'Tselem had been trying to prompt a debate in Israeli society over attacks on civilians, especially children. The IBA decision to prohibit broadcast of the spot in Israeli was based on the content, which was deemed "[politically controversial](#)." B'Tselem announced that it would appeal to the Supreme Court of Israel to overturn the broadcast ban.

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