

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/israel-journalist-could-face-seven-year-30-05-2012,42702.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Israel

Ominous indictment

Journalist could face seven-year sentence for having secret documents

30 May 2012

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Reporters Without Borders is highly disturbed by the Israeli attorney general's announcement that the Haaretz journalist **Uri Blau** will be indicted for "holding classified information without authorisation and without intention to harm the security of the state". He could face up to seven years' imprisonment under article 113-c of the criminal code.

"These proceedings, like the conviction of Anat Kam in October 2011, are a clear warning to all journalists who use confidential documents as the basis for their reporting," the press freedom organization said.

"It is a worrying sign for freedom of the press in Israel. We repeat our request for the charges against Uri Blau to be dropped.

The attorney general, Yehuda Weinstein, said in a statement: "Blau held, knowingly and without supervision, hundreds and thousands of documents classified as 'secret' and 'top secret,' which were stolen from the Central Command by the soldier Anat Kam, and he violated his obligation – and later his obligation before the state authorities – to stop holding them..."

In [a letter to the attorney general](#) on 3 November last year, Reporters Without Borders wrote: "Investigative journalists are the cornerstone of transparency, which is essential if a society is to function in a democratic manner. They provide a vital service. Convicting him would do grave harm to the free flow of news and information."

It also said: "In this case, the documents involved shed a vital light on the way the IDF was operating ... This is not about endangering the country's security. It is just a question of exercising one's right to information about a state entity."

During her military service between 2005 and 2007, Kam, an online journalist, photocopied classified military documents about abuses by Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied territories and passed them on to Blau.

Beginning in late 2008, Blau used these documents as the basis for several articles for his newspaper Haaretz, all of which were approved by the military censors, as required by Israeli law. One of the articles, published in November 2008, said the IDF had violated a Supreme Court decision by carrying out targeted killings of Palestinian militants who could have been arrested.

Kam was [sentenced to four-and-a-half-years' imprisonment](#) on 30 October last year. She is currently in jail.

Photo: Tal Cohen
