

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/palestine-call-for-return-of-wattan-tv-02-12-2013,45530.html>

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Middle East/North Africa - Israel

Arbitrary seizure

## Call for return of Wattan TV equipment seized in February 2012

2 December 2013

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On 4 December, the Israeli High Court of Justice is to examine Palestinian broadcaster *Wattan TV*'s petition asking for the return of transmission equipment seized during an [Israeli military raid](#) on its headquarters in Ramallah (in West Bank territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority) on the night of 28 February 2012.

Reporters Without Borders urges the Israeli justice system to quash the decision under which the equipment was confiscated and to order its immediate and unconditional return. The current situation is totally arbitrary and unacceptable and must end without delay.

Contrary to the provisions of the Oslo Accords, the Israel Defence Forces did not at any time notify *Wattan TV* of any problem or irregularity or try to hear its arguments before carrying out the raid and seizing various kinds of equipment, including transmission equipment.

This was a flagrant and deliberate violation of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement, also known as Oslo II, which was signed in September 1995, two years after Oslo I.

The Israeli authorities have successively offered three different reasons for the military operation and seizure of the equipment. They initially said that *Wattan TV*'s broadcasting was "interfering with broadcasting media in Israel."

The petitioner, *Wattan TV*, refuted this claim, pointing out that, if this had been the case, the Israeli authorities should have referred the matter to the Joint Technical Committee set up under Oslo II.

The Israeli authorities then said that *Wattan TV*'s broadcast frequency was "disturbing various communication systems." The petitioner rejected this explanation as well, again pointing out that the matter should have been referred to the Joint Technical Committee.

The Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology of the Palestinian Authority and the Ramallah Governorate are also denying that any approach was made by Israel prior to the raid.

Part of the equipment was returned, damaged beyond any possibility of repair, in January 2013, but the IDF finally decided to confiscate the transmission equipment. It was only in August that *Wattan TV* received a formal notification of this confiscation, 18 months after it took place.

The latest reason for the confiscation, the one used since March, is "harm to security communication systems" and "defence activities." No explanation of this has been offered. The fact that security grounds have been used as a last resort, more than a year after the raid, underscores the arbitrary nature of this confiscation.

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You can download those documents on our website :

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