

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/three-journalists-killed-in-21-11-2012,43704.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Palestinian terr.

Media targeted

## Three journalists killed in deliberate attacks by Israeli planes

21 November 2012

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

Three journalists were killed yesterday, the seventh day of Israel's Operation Pillar of Defence in the Gaza Strip. A tower block containing the offices of the French news agency *Agence France-Presse* in the Rimal district was also hit by an Israeli air strike.

Two Palestinian cameramen from the TV station *Al-Aqsa*, **Mohamed al-Kaoumi** and **Hossam Salameh**, were killed when their vehicle was hit by a missile fired from Israeli aircraft just after 6 p.m.

The two men were in Nasser Street in Gaza City on their way to the northern part of the city to film Palestinian victims of Israeli air strikes. An Israeli warplane aimed a missile directly at the *Al-Aqsa* crew's vehicle, which was clearly marked with the word "media" in Arabic.

The executive director of *Al-Quds* educational radio, **Mohammed Moussa Abu Eisah**, [was killed](#) when his car was hit by an Israeli missile in the Gaza City district of Deir Al-Balah about 8 p.m.

An Israeli military spokeswoman, Avital Leibovich, said later that preliminary results of an investigation indicated that the three journalists were Hamas operatives.

Later in the evening, the block housing the offices of *AFP* was hit by three Israeli strikes. None of the agency's [journalists](#) were hurt.

The Israeli military confirmed the eight-storey building's seventh floor, which it said was believed to house a Hamas military operations room, was "surgically" targeted.

About 11 p.m., Israeli forces issued a statement on Twitter aimed at journalists in the area.



IDF @IDFSpokesperson

12 h

Warning to reporters in Gaza: Stay away from Hamas operatives & facilities. Hamas, a terrorist group, will use you as human shields.

Ouvrir

In an [interview](#) with *Al-Jazeera* three days

ago, the Israeli government spokesman, Mark Regev, said *Al-Aqsa* journalists were not legitimate journalists in the same way as those from the *BBC* or *Al-Jazeera*.

Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns these deliberate attacks on those working for media organizations affiliated to, or with links to, Hamas, and also the statement by the Israeli government spokesman. The press freedom organization points out that, under humanitarian law, journalists are entitled to the same protection as civilians and should not be regarded as military targets.

The fact that they are considered to be propaganda outlets is not sufficient reason to treat them as military targets. Indeed, the commission of experts appointed by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to examine the NATO bombing campaign in 1999 ruled that journalists and media organizations were not legitimate targets for "merely disseminating propaganda".

“Attacks on civilian targets are war crimes and serious violations of the Geneva Conventions. Those responsible must be identified,” **Christophe Deloire**, Reporters Without Borders secretary general, [said last weekend](#).

Since the start of Operation Pillar of Defence against the Gaza Strip, 11 journalists have been wounded:

- Six were hurt when Israeli planes fired missiles at the Al-Shawa Wa Hassri Tower in Gaza City at 2 a.m. on 18 November.
- Five hours later three Al-Aqsa TV employees were wounded when two missiles hit the Al-Shourouk building, located in the Rimal district in the western part of the city and known as the “journalists’ building”.
- Two more were hit in another Israeli salvo against the Al-Shourouk building. They were identified as **Ahmed Al-Ridi**, a cameraman for *Al-Arabiya*, and **Ahmed Al-Achkar**, a cameraman for the local station *Houna Al-Qods TV*. According to medical staff at the Al-Shifa hospital, they were only slightly hurt and were discharged two hours later, after treatment. An Israeli military spokesman said the planes’ target was Ramez Harb, a senior communications official in the Al Quds Brigades, the military wing of Islamic Jihad.

A dozen media organization offices were hit on 18 and 20 November.

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