

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/israel-palestinian-journalists-under-fire-23-08-2011,40828.html>

Middle East & North Africa - Israel

Arbitrary arrests

Palestinian journalists under fire again from Israeli troops

23 August 2011

Reporters Without Borders condemns the complete failure to punish abusive treatment of Palestinian journalists by the Israel Defence Forces in the West Bank. Many arbitrary arrests have been reported in the past two months and five journalists are currently held. Cases of Israeli soldiers deliberately firing on media personnel have also been reported. We urge the Israeli authorities to investigate these serious violations of physical integrity and to free all the detained journalists.

The latest victims of arbitrary arrest were **Usaid Abd Al Majid Amarana** of *Al-Aqsa TV*, and **Amar Abu Urfa**, a reporter for the *Shahab* news agency, who were arrested in their homes on 21 August. After storming into Amarana's home in the Dahishe Camp in Bethlehem, soldiers opened fire, wounding his cousin. They then searched the building before taking Amarana away. This is not the first time he has been detained. The IDF used similar methods when arresting Urfa in Hebron.

Samir Allawi, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin who heads the *Al-Jazeera* bureaux in Afghanistan, was arrested at the Al-Karama checkpoint as he was leaving Jericho on 9 August to return to Kabul via Jordan. He was taken to the Jalameh interrogation centre in Kishon (north of Tel Aviv) and, on 16 August, he was brought before a military court which ordered him held for another eight days. A further 15-day extension of his detention was ordered yesterday.

Allawi's lawyer, Selim Ouakim, told Reporters Without Borders that the charges against him have evolved over the days. He was initially accused of "relations with terrorist movements" (namely Hamas) but now he is accused of activities that could endanger regional security and, by extension, Israel's security.

Mohamed Beshara, a 25-year-old journalist, was arrested by the IDF at his home in Tamoun, a village to the southeast of Tubas, in the northern West Bank, on 10 July. No reason was given for his arrest and he continues to be detained.

Al-Quds TV presenter **Nawab Al-Amer** was arrested at his home in Nablus on 28 June without any reason being given and was placed in administrative detention for a five-month period that is renewable. After initially being held at a provisional detention centre in Howareh, he was transferred to Mejiddo prison, which is a few kilometres outside Jenin but within Israeli territory.

Reporters Without Borders was shocked to learn that IDF reservists deliberately fired on a group of journalists who went to cover the weekly demonstration in Nabi Saleh (a few kilometres outside Ramallah) on 29 July, and calls on the Israeli authorities to investigate this case. Many journalists were attacked in the course of July.

Nabi Saleh has for weeks been the site of regular protests against the Israeli occupation and the Separation Wall. The Israeli authorities declared the village and surrounding area to be a "closed military zone" because of the "risk of public order disturbances," allowing them to tighten control over access to the village and contain the protests and coverage of them by the media.

Dozens of Israeli soldiers isolated the village before the start of the demonstration on 29 July, using force to push the protesters back and using force against a group of 10 journalists, although they were clearly identified because they were wearing blue vests with the worlds

“Press” or “TV.”

One of the journalists, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* photographer **Mahib Al-Barghouthi**, sustained bruises and cuts to the face when he was thrown to the ground by an Israeli soldier, while other soldiers damaged his video camera and erased its hard disk. He was then taken away in a military vehicle and released a few hours later on the road between Saleh and the nearby village of Kafr A'yn. The *Ma'an* news agency said his camera was later returned to him without its hard disk.

Hazem Bader, a photographer working for the *Associated Press*, sustained injuries to the feet from a stun grenade fired by an Israeli soldier while covering a demonstration in support of residents of Al-Tawani, a village south of Hebron, on 9 July. He is still suffering from multiple burns.

The journalist **Mustapha Sabri** was forbidden to pass the Al-Karama checkpoint when he tried to travel to Jordan on 8 July.
