

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/palestinian-territories-hamas-restricts-foreign-05-10-2011,41116.html>

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Middle East & North Africa - Palestinian territories

Security concerns?

## Hamas makes it harder for foreign journalists to visit Gaza Strip

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Reporters Without Borders is worried by the Hamas interior ministry's adoption of new rules that will make it harder for foreign journalists to visit the Gaza Strip.

Under the new rules, adopted on 25 September, every foreigner wanting to enter the Gaza Strip via the Rafah and Erez crossings will have to apply in advance to the interior ministry in Gaza. Processing the application could take several days.

The government says the new measures are needed for security and control purposes. Italian activist Vittorio Arrigoni's murder by an armed group on 15 April has heightened concern about the safety of foreigners in the Gaza Strip.

Journalists submitting applications will have to include ID photos and a photocopy of their passport, and will have to name a "guarantor" in the Gaza Strip.

Members of the Foreign Press Association nonetheless voiced a degree of optimism after a meeting yesterday with the head of Hamas media relations, Hassan Abu Hashish. Some thought the need for initial authorization and the waiting period could mean that journalists would be able to get accreditation valid for a year.

Reporters Without Borders believes the new rules will hamper journalists' freedom of movement and complicate covering the Gaza Strip even more. It therefore urges the authorities to rescind the decision and facilitate the international media's access to the Gaza Strip.

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