



Palestinian Journalists Syndicate

**Freedom's
Report
2022**

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1. Opening

2022 is the year of the martyr Shireen Abu Aqleh, the icon of the martyrs of journalism in the world.



We close this year, which was full of historical events, the most important of which was the assassination of colleague Shireen Abu Aqleh, who became an icon of the martyrs of journalism in the world.

The year 2022 witnessed a quantitative and qualitative escalation, as field violations exceeded 900 violations and crimes by the occupation authorities, in addition to a clear participation by settlers in assaulting journalists, which raised the risk indication that journalists suffer from in Palestine. In cyberspace, while violations of Palestinian content exceeded a thousand Two hundred violations this year.

This serious escalation against journalists motivated the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate to further work and achievements to respond to these violations and crimes and to provide more protection for journalists through a set of measures at the local and international levels that varied among enhancing the journalists safety and communicating with the Palestinian security authorities to protect journalists from violations and finally referring to human rights organizations and the international judiciary and implement concrete steps to demand protection for journalists and hold perpetrators of crimes against them accountable.

The PJS partnership with local and international institutions, headed by the International Federation of Journalists, was the main supporter of all achievements, as all the partner institutions showed their belief in the work of the PJS and in the justice of the cause of Palestinian journalists. In addition, the case of colleague Shireen showed unparalleled global and Arab support and solidarity, as 229 Arab and international networks and human rights organizations demanded investigating the crime of executing of Abu Aqleh by the occupation.

Finally, the PJS renews its commitment to journalists to continue its support Palestinian journalists and provide them with protection in all possible ways, also it extends its thanks and gratitude to everyone who provided support and solidarity, which had a great impact on further achievement and influence.

Nasser Abu Baker
President of Palestinian Journalists Syndicate
Vice president of International Federation of Journalists

2. Summary of violations against journalists

902 crimes, violations and punishments by Israeli occupation



The year 2022 witnessed a series of events represented by crimes, violations and reprisals against the Palestinian journalism, practiced by the Israeli occupation regime represented by the occupation army and settlers, as well as the political and judicial level.

More than 900 crimes and violations committed by the occupation regime were monitored and caused severe damage, the most prominent of which was the assassination of fellow journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, Al-Jazeera correspondent, as well as the killing of colleague Ghufuran Al-Warasneh, a new graduate and a local radio staff member.

52 bullets hit the bodies of the journalists in the field by the occupation army members, who were deliberately targeting journalist through their guns that fired a variety of bullets, including live bullets, metal bullets, rubber bullets, and plastic bullets. However, 3 of our colleagues were injured by shrapnel of missiles in the Gaza Strip.

The most harmful form remained the detention of crews and preventing them from working, which amounted to 316 incidents. While the number of those affected by direct injuries from tear gas, stun grenades, and wastewater reached 95. Some of the injured journalists were treated in the field, while many of them needed hospital treatment, in addition to 68 cases of suffocation as a result of inhaling toxic tear gas.

117 male and female colleagues were subjected to physical assault by the occupation army, whether it was with sticks, shields, rifle butts, fists, or kicks.

This year witnessed a clear and dangerous rise by settlers in the West Bank; 99 crimes and violations against journalists were monitored, and most of those incidents took place under the protection and control of the occupation army.

40 incidents of arrest were recorded by the occupation forces, of whom about 17 male and female colleagues remained in the occupation prisons. In the same context, 58 journalists were brought before unfair military courts that imposed imprisonment on some of them as well as unjustly punitive financial fines.

The forms of crimes and violations also varied, including storming the homes of journalists, institutions and media centers, destroying and confiscating work equipment, banning travel and movement, summoning for investigation, as well as incitement by politicians, government departments and the Hebrew media.

The first half of the year 2022 witnessed a slightly higher rate than the second half, while the second quarter of the year was the most violent, the month of May witnessed the highest level of crimes, which reached 155 cases.

Dozens of male and female colleagues were directly injured by the occupation, some of them were treated in the field and through first aid, while 74 colleagues arrived in hospitals for treatment directly or to follow up on an injury that was in the field.

The highest geographical numbers were recorded this year, and for the second year in a row, in the city of Jerusalem, where the volume of targeting was very high, especially in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and in the Sheikh Jarrah area, then comes Nablus governorate, and then Ramallah.

For years, the scale of crimes and violations has reached a level that makes Jenin governorate a target.

Internal violations

This form of violation is still a wound in the Palestinian journalism because it has a very negative impact on the morale of everyone in the field of Palestinian media.

60 internal violations were documented, 32 of which occurred in the Gaza Strip and 28 in the West Bank. The most prominent forms violations were summons and prevention of coverage, in addition to arrest, threats, beatings, and prevention of movement and travel.

Israeli Occupation violations 2022	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	Total
Injuries by gas or tear bombs	28	17	9	22	76
Arrests	7	11	17	7	42
Detention and prevention of coverage	78	97	77	68	320
Gas inhalation	0	22	33	13	68
Presenting to courts	5	6	17	8	36
Summoning for investigation	0	0	0	4	4
Physical assault	30	50	14	23	117
Targeting journalists' offices and houses	1		21	6	28
Equipment's confiscation and damaging	4	20	18	9	51
Injuries by bullets	18	17	8	8	51
Travel banning	0	0	5	0	5
Settlers assault	19	45	14	1	79
financial fines	2	0	2	16	20
Injuries by missiles shrapnel			2	0	2
Martyrs		2			2
Threatening and incitement				1	1
Total	192	287	237	186	902

The conspiracy of social media platforms with the Israeli occupation regime against Palestinian content



Social media platforms continued to target Palestinian content in general, and media content in particular, by permanently closing websites, pages, and accounts of media organizations or media professionals, and some partially for a period of time, and blocking publications and film materials.

At the forefront of those platforms that practiced these violations was the "Facebook" website owned by the "Meta" company, which had the lion's share of those repressive practices in clear complicity with the occupation regime through agreements concluded with government occupation agencies.

In the investigation conducted by the independent consulting company, Business for Social Responsibility, commissioned by "META", it was found that the procedures of "META" had a significant negative impact on the rights of Palestinians to express freely, as well as their rights to assembly, political participation and non-discrimination, and thus on their right to share information and ideas about their lived experiences. However, the recommendations of the report were not binding on the company.

Likewise, other platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Tik Tok and Zoom continued to target Palestinian content, as the number exceeded 1,200 violations that were monitored in the context of targeting Palestinian content.

The most prominent indications of collusion aimed at obliterating the Palestinian narrative in favor of the lies and falsification of the occupation system:

In 2017, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a pro-Israel lobby group with a history of working to smear Palestinian organizations, established a "command center" within Silicon Valley to monitor what it said was "online hate speech." That same year, YouTube designated it a "trusted reporting organization," meaning its requests to remove content are given priority over others.

In 2017, an application called ACT.IL was launched to mobilize pro-Israel supporters to invade sites critical of Israel or that support the Palestinians. This initiative, which was supported by the Ministry of Strategic Affairs in Israel, was based on former Israeli intelligence officers.

According to The Forward, a weekly Jewish magazine published in the United States, the Israeli intelligence services are coordinating closely with ACT.IL and requesting assistance in obtaining content including videos that are banned by social media platforms. The Forward noted shortly after the app's launch: "Through his work, he provides a startling glimpse into how online discussions about Israel can be shaped without seeming to have a hand in it."

Sima Vaknin Gil, a former censor in Israel who was later appointed to work in Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs, says the goal was to "create a community of warriors" whose mission is to "flood the Internet" with propaganda for Israel.

Since 2008, it has emerged that a pro-Israel media lobby group called "Camera" has been coordinating covert efforts by pro-Israel supporters to hack into the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia with the aim of editing and rewriting history in ways that serve Israel's interest. Shortly thereafter, politician Naftali Bennett helped organize courses teaching "Zionist editing" of Wikipedia.

Facebook's behavior in closing Palestinian accounts was not surprising, as it opened its first headquarters in the occupied territories since 2012, when it bought the Israeli company "Onavo" specialized in information technology and communication sciences, and made it its headquarters. It also acquired several "Israeli" startups, including "Snap Two" and "Facecom", with a value ranging between \$120-130 million. Specialists pointed out that there is a profitable reason why the site adopts Israeli stories, as Facebook gets \$300 million from Israeli ads, according to the last count, while it gets much less than this amount from the Palestinian market.

And the "Israeli" Jerusalem Post reported: Mark Zuckerberg - the president and founder of Facebook, joined in November 2018 an Israeli group called "Secret Tel Aviv", which has 220,000 members.

She explained: "Zuckerberg" expressed his happiness to be in the group in order to get closer to Tel Aviv, saying: "It has been a long time since my last visit to this city, thank you for creating this forum."

3. Legal Accountability and impunity combating

The PJS was not satisfied with documenting and monitoring the violations against journalists in Palestine, but rather continued its efforts to demand accountability and combat impunity for perpetrators of crimes against journalists through a series of measures that can be summarized as follows:

- A case was filed by the International Federation of Journalists and the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate at the International Criminal Court (ICC) accusing Israel of committing war crimes for targeting Palestinian journalists, which included 4 serious cases of targeting, including the martyrs Ahmed Abu Hussein and Yasser Murtaja.
- Referring the case of the assassination of Martyr Abu Aqleh to the International Criminal Court, which included the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, the International Federation of Journalists, the International Center for Justice for Palestinians (ICJP), and Al Jazeera Media Network, in cooperation with prominent human rights lawyers from the "Bindmans LLP" law firm, and "Daughty Street Chambers".
- Handing over, the file of the case of systematic targeting of Palestinian journalists, including the assassination of journalists Ahmed Abu Hussein, Yasser Murtaja and Shireen Abu Aqleh at the headquarters of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.



- Joining the American Writers Union joins the criminal case about Israel committing "war crimes" against journalists, as officials, branch heads and representatives of the American Writers Union voted unanimously to join the case filed by the International Federation of Journalists and the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate at the International Criminal Court (ICC) accusing Israel committed war crimes for targeting journalists.
- The participation of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate in special sessions of the investigation conducted by the Human Rights Council at the United Nations in Geneva, into the occupation's crimes against Palestinian journalists, including the assassination of journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh.



4. Enhancing journalists' safety:

Believing in the importance of building the capacities of journalists to protect themselves while carrying out their work, the Syndicate has made the following achievements in the last two years:

1. Training 80 male and female journalists, including students and graduates from media colleges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in cooperation and support from the UNESCO Organization for Science and Culture. The program was devoted to training professional safety officers in media institutions.
2. A training course in Hebron, with the participation of 20 male and female journalists.
3. The graduation ceremony for occupational safety students in the city of Ramallah, with the participation of representatives of UNESCO and the Syndicate
4. Qualifying three new male and female trainers in the field of safety for journalists (2 West Bank + 1 Gaza) through their participation in an intensive course via Zoom technology.
5. The participation of the three trainers in a regional training course in Jordan within the framework of qualifying the new trainers
6. Issuing 3 informative pamphlets to deal with the dangers of the Corona virus and others to deal with the dangers of field media coverage in the West Bank and Gaza
7. Organizing a training course for media and journalism students at Palestine Ahliya University, with the participation of 25 male and female students.
8. The participation of a staff of occupational safety trainers (6) trainers (4 West Bank and 2 Gaza) in a refresher course for occupational safety trainers in the Tunisian capital for 3 days
9. Developing a training program in the field of psychological safety for journalists and having it approved by the International Federation of Journalists and including it within the occupational safety program
10. Organizing an electronic seminar via Zoom technology, in cooperation with Al-Quds Open University, on the psychological safety of journalists, with the participation of 45 journalists and academics.
11. Participation in an electronic training course in Iraqi Kurdistan to talk about occupational health and safety, based on the training program developed by the coordinator of the occupational safety program at the Journalists Syndicate
12. Organizing two training courses in the West Bank and Gaza on professional safety for investigative journalists, with the participation of 35 male and female journalists.
13. Organizing two lectures at Hebron and An-Najah Universities on occupational safety.
14. Contribute and participate with UNESCO in implementing specialized training courses for occupational safety in the Gaza Strip and contribute to training and qualifying occupational safety officers Participation in preparing an evaluation study on the safety of Palestinian journalists for the benefit of UNESCO.
15. Participating in a specialized meeting with foreign journalists about the reality of professional safety for journalists at the Syndicate's headquarters in Ramallah.

16. Supporting two media students at Palestine Technical University Khadoury to implement an initiative and a media campaign on the safety of journalists by providing them with support materials and television photography, as the initiative won the ARIJ award in its last conference.
17. Organizing a specialized academic meeting for the deans of media faculties, in the official presence of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Higher Education, the Syndicate, UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists, in the efforts of the Syndicate to develop a course and a course on the safety of journalists in preparation for accreditation for teaching in Palestinian universities and media colleges.
18. Organizing a training course on occupational safety in Jenin, in cooperation with the One Evra Foundation, with the participation of (20) male and female journalists.
19. Participation in a specialized conference organized by UNESCO in Tunisia on the safety of journalists and resistance to impunity.
20. Participation in a symposium organized by UNESCO via Zoom technology on the reality of safety in the Arab region
21. Participation in giving lectures to Palestinian security officers within a joint program between the Ministry of Interior, the Syndicate and the Hurriyat Center.
22. Participation in a regional symposium via Zoom technology organized by the International Federation of Journalists on occupational safety from a gender perspective.
23. Participation in several seminars organized by the Media Development Center at Birzeit University.
24. Organizing a course on the journalists safety at the Palestinian Radio and Television Authority, with the participation of 18 male and female journalists, as part of a special program for training journalists working in official media institutions to enhance the professional safety of Palestinian journalists.

5. Steps forward:

As part of the PJS mission to support and preserve press freedoms, it will continue its efforts during the year 2023 through:

1. Follow up on cases filed at the International Criminal Court
2. Continue to participate in the sessions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva
3. Continuing to document and monitor violations against journalists and to develop and build the capacities of the Syndicate's documentation team
4. Launching the Safety Officers Network and increasing the number of certified trainers
5. Continue to work at the international level to demand protection for journalists
6. Continue the effort of demanding the Cabinet to approve the risk premium for journalists