

Advocacy dossier

Shireen Abu Akleh

شيرين أبو عاقلة

Killed **Palestine**

Shireen Abu Akleh was a Palestinian American journalist who reported for Al Jazeera from the occupied Palestinian territory for 25 years and was shot dead while covering an Israeli army raid in Jenin on 11 May 2022. More than four years later no one has been charged, the FBI inquiry has given no public update and the International Criminal Court has opened no investigation.

01
The case at a glance

Shireen Abu Akleh was a Palestinian American journalist who reported for Al Jazeera from the occupied Palestinian territory for 25 years and was shot dead while covering an Israeli army raid in Jenin on 11 May 2022. More than four years later no one has been charged, the FBI inquiry has given no public update and the International Criminal Court has opened no investigation.

Status **Killed**	Country **Palestine**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Order a full, independent, and impartial investigation into the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, with timely public reporting on findings.

02 Identify and prosecute those responsible, both the direct perpetrators and any state officials who ordered, enabled, or covered up the killing.

03 Provide effective reparation to the family of Shireen Abu Akleh.

04 Take immediate steps to protect other defenders working in the same field from similar attacks.

02

How the case unfolded

11 May 2022

Killing

Shot dead while covering an Israeli army raid in Jenin

At about 6.30 in the morning she was shot in the head near the entrance to Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank while covering an Israeli military raid. She wore a helmet and a flak jacket marked PRESS. Her Al Jazeera producer Ali al-Samoudi was shot in the shoulder in the same burst of fire.

13 May 2022

Physical assault

Police attack her funeral procession in East Jerusalem

Israeli police charged the funeral procession as her coffin left St Joseph Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem, nearly forcing the pallbearers to drop it. The Jerusalem Red Crescent said 33 people were injured and six taken to hospital; the Israeli authorities said six people were arrested.

24 June 2022

Other act

UN human rights office finds the shots came from Israeli forces

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said the shots that killed her and wounded Ali al-Samoudi came from Israeli security forces and not from indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians. It found that several single, apparently well-aimed bullets were fired at the journalists, that no warning was given and that there was no Palestinian armed activity nearby. High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet urged Israel to open a criminal investigation.

July 2022

Other act

United States describes the killing as the result of tragic circumstances

Two months after her death, the US State Department said in a statement that her killing resulted from tragic circumstances, without calling it intentional.

5 September 2022

Case closed or dropped

Israeli army says she was probably hit by its fire and opens no criminal case

The Israeli army published its findings, saying there was a high possibility that she was accidentally hit by Israeli army fire while it was not possible to determine the source of the gunfire unequivocally. The Military Advocate General decided not to open a Military Police criminal investigation. Her family and Al Jazeera rejected the findings and called for an independent international investigation.

20 September 2022

Complaint filed

Family files a complaint with the International Criminal Court

Her family submitted a complaint to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, supported by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and the International Federation of Journalists. Her brother Anton (Tony) Abu Akleh spoke for the family, which was represented by lawyers including Jennifer Robinson.

November 2022

Investigation opened

FBI opens an investigation into the killing

The US Department of Justice notified Israel that the FBI had opened an investigation into the killing of the US citizen. Israel said it would not cooperate with the inquiry.

6 December 2022

Complaint filed

Al Jazeera asks the International Criminal Court to prosecute

Al Jazeera Media Network, represented by Rodney Dixon KC, submitted a formal request in The Hague asking the International Criminal Court to investigate and prosecute those responsible. Its file included a six-month investigation, eyewitness accounts and video footage, and stated that there was no firing in her area other than Israeli fire directed at her.

May 2023

Other act

Israeli army spokesperson apologises for her death

Israeli army chief spokesperson Daniel Hagari apologised for her death in an interview with CNN. No criminal investigation followed.

May 2025

Other act

Documentary names the soldier it says fired the fatal shot

The documentary Who Killed Shireen?, produced by the US media company Zeteo, named Alon Scagio as the soldier who fired the fatal shot. The filmmakers said he was 20 at the time and was killed by an explosive device in Jenin in 2024. Her niece Lina Abu Akleh said the identification did not change the fact that Shireen had been deliberately targeted.

October 2025

Other act

US colonel says Washington diluted its assessment of the killing

Colonel Steve Gabavics, who worked at the Office of the US Security Coordinator in Jerusalem in 2022, told The New York Times that the evidence he reviewed pointed to a deliberate shooting and that he and colleagues were taken aback when the government declined to call it intentional. CPJ called for an independent and transparent US investigation.

7 May 2026

Other act

Four years on, no one charged and the FBI inquiry stalled

On the fourth anniversary of the killing, CPJ wrote to the US Department of Justice and FBI Director Kash Patel asking for a public status update and a timeline, noting that the FBI had given no public update since opening its inquiry. The International Criminal Court has opened no investigation despite the complaints from her family and Al Jazeera, and no one has been charged. Her family said it would not stop pursuing justice.

03
The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: more than four years after Shireen Abu Akleh was shot dead in Jenin, no one has been charged. The FBI investigation opened in November 2022 has given no public update, and the International Criminal Court has not opened an investigation into her killing.

Background and Work

Shireen Abu Akleh was a Palestinian American journalist born in Jerusalem in 1971. She studied at the Rosary Sisters School in Beit Hanina, began studying architecture and then took a degree in journalism at Yarmouk University in Jordan. Before joining Al Jazeera she worked for UNRWA, Voice of Palestine radio, Oman television, Radio Monte Carlo and the Miftah organisation.

She joined Al Jazeera in 1997 and was one of the channel's first correspondents in the occupied Palestinian territory. Over 25 years she reported on the second intifada, Israeli military incursions and daily life under occupation, and became one of the best known television reporters in the Arab world.

The Killing

On the morning of 11 May 2022 she was covering an Israeli military raid on Jenin refugee camp in the northern occupied West Bank. At about 6.30 she was walking with three other journalists towards the camp; all wore helmets and flak jackets marked PRESS. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, several single, apparently well-aimed bullets were fired at the group. One hit her producer Ali al-Samoudi in the shoulder. Another hit her in the head and killed her instantly. Further shots were fired as an unarmed man tried to reach her body and as another journalist sheltered behind a tree. The UN office found that no warning was given and that there was no armed Palestinian activity in the immediate area.

On 13 May 2022 Israeli police charged her funeral procession as the coffin left St Joseph Hospital in East Jerusalem, almost causing the pallbearers to drop it. The Jerusalem Red Crescent reported 33 people injured.

Investigations and Legal Proceedings

The Israeli army first said it could not determine the source of the fire. On 24 June 2022 the UN human rights office concluded that the shots came from Israeli security forces. Investigations by The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, B'Tselem and Bellingcat reached similar conclusions, and some of these analyses found evidence that she had been deliberately targeted. In July 2022 the US State Department described her death as the result of tragic circumstances.

On 5 September 2022 the Israeli army published findings saying there was a high possibility that she had been accidentally hit by Israeli army fire. The Military Advocate General decided not to open a criminal investigation. Her family and Al Jazeera rejected the findings.

On 20 September 2022 her family, represented by her brother Anton Abu Akleh, filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court, supported by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and the International Federation of Journalists. On 6 December 2022 Al Jazeera, represented by Rodney

Dixon KC, asked the Court to investigate and prosecute those responsible. In November 2022 the US Department of Justice told Israel that the FBI had opened an investigation; Israel said it would not cooperate. In May 2023 the Israeli army's chief spokesperson, Daniel Hagari, apologised for her death on CNN.

In May 2025 the documentary Who Killed Shireen?, produced by Zeteo, named Alon Scagio as the soldier it said fired the fatal shot; the filmmakers reported that he was killed in Jenin in 2024. In October 2025 Colonel Steve Gabavics, who served at the Office of the US Security Coordinator in Jerusalem at the time, told The New York Times that the evidence pointed to a deliberate attack and that the official US assessment had been softened. In April 2025 Israeli forces raided the home of Ali al-Samoudi, who was wounded beside her, and placed him in administrative detention without charge.

International Response

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, called on Israel to open a criminal investigation. Reporters Without Borders called for an independent international investigation, and the Committee to Protect Journalists has repeatedly asked the United States to complete and publish its inquiry. A 2023 CPJ report found that no one had been charged over the 20 journalists killed by Israeli military fire in the preceding 22 years. On the fourth anniversary of her death, in May 2026, CPJ wrote to the Department of Justice and the FBI asking for a timeline, and her family, including her niece Lina Abu Akleh, said they would continue to pursue justice through all available avenues.

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