HuMENA: Israel's Targeting of Journalists in Gaza Is a War Crime and a Crime Against Humanity in the Context of Systematic Genocide and Starvation

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HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement strongly condemns the Israeli airstrike on 10 August 2025 that targeted a media tent near Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, killing journalists **Anas Al-Sharif, Mohammed Quraiqa, Ibrahim Zaher, Moamen Alouwa, and Mohammed Noufal**, along with a relative, while they were documenting violations and reporting from the field.

The victims were wearing press vests and carrying professional equipment, making the attack a direct violation of Article 79 of Additional Protocol I to the 1977 Geneva Conventions and the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. It constitutes a war crime under Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and, given its repeated and systematic nature, also falls under the definition of crimes against humanity as per Article 7 of the same Statute.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 192 journalists have been killed in Gaza since October 2023, the highest death toll for journalists ever recorded in a single armed conflict since monitoring began in the early 1990s, exceeding the combined total of journalists killed in all other armed conflicts over the past five years. This pattern reflects a deliberate Israeli policy to silence independent journalism, obstruct on-the-ground documentation of violations, and deny the global public access to the truth.

The targeting of journalists takes place within the broader widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population of Gaza, including an entrenched policy of starvation. UN data indicates that 122 people, including 83 children, have died from hunger since the start of the blockade, with over 28,000 cases of malnutrition recorded, amid the destruction of 86% of agricultural land and the prevention of adequate supplies of food, water, and medicine from entering the Strip. UN experts have classified these practices as genocide through starvation, in direct violation of Article 54 of Additional Protocol I, which prohibits starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

Journalists in Gaza are not only defenders of press freedom, they are human rights defenders documenting crimes, safeguarding the right to truth, and enabling accountability. Targeting them is a direct assault on the global accountability framework, an attempt to erase evidence, and a means of silencing victims.

HuMENA affirms that Israel, as the occupying power and the party directly responsible for these violations, bears full international legal responsibility for all crimes committed, including the

targeting of journalists and the policy of starvation. States providing military, political, or diplomatic support to Israel, with knowledge of these grave violations, also bear legal responsibility as aiding or assisting states under customary international law and the Rome Statute.

HuMENA calls for:

- **Expanding the scope of ongoing ICC investigations** into the situation in Palestine to ensure the inclusion of the crime of targeting journalists and all related violations, with the identification of individual and institutional responsibilities.
- **Immediate activation of international protection mechanisms for journalists**, including guaranteed access to conflict zones, the establishment of safe corridors, and the provision of protective equipment.
- **An immediate end to the comprehensive blockade on Gaza**, ensuring the urgent, sufficient, and unconditional entry of food, water, and medical supplies.
- **The imposition of binding financial obligations on Israel** and on any state or entity proven to have aided or participated in the violations, enforced through an independent international mechanism, funded by freezing and confiscating assets belonging to responsible parties, to guarantee full compensation to victims and their families.
- **The establishment of an international compensation fund for Palestinian victims, under UN supervision**, with journalists included as a specific category, ensuring that compensation reaches eligible recipients directly.

The killing of journalists in Gaza, in the context of a systematic policy of genocide and starvation, is not only a crime against individuals, it is a crime against truth itself. The continuation of international silence, combined with ongoing material and political support to Israel, undermines international law and entrenches impunity as the rule rather than the exception. Accountability must be swift and uncompromising.

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