

Because it does not want witnesses to its crimes, Israel methodically kills journalists it cannot silence!

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No criminal wants witnesses to his crimes. And neither does Israel, of course. That's why it does everything it can to be able to commit its crimes in Gaza - and in the Occupied Territories - far from the spotlight. And it does so in several ways at once:

- By banning foreign journalists from entering the Gaza Strip, where it controls all the entrances.
- By threatening those who remain in Gaza to leave immediately if they don't want to die.
- By methodically, systematically and as a matter of priority murdering those who persist in doing their job as journalists.
- By pressurising and threatening to brand as "anti-Semitic" journalists of integrity throughout the world so that they use as their sole sources of information about what is happening in the Middle East only those of the Israeli army and the Israeli government.
- By forcing, with the active cooperation of state authorities and other supporters around the world, the media in other countries to use certain terminology that prohibits words and expressions such as ... "escalation of the war" or even "stop the war"!



But there is also a sequel, because for some weeks now we have been witnessing - at world level - the application of a new form of manipulation of information by Israel and its international accomplices: the **blackout**, the total journalistic silence on the "actions" of the Israeli army against the Palestinian population. The reason is obvious: such is the scale of its crimes, such is the shock and repulsion they provoke almost everywhere, such is the ineffectiveness of its "arguments" and propaganda, that Israel and its supporters throughout the world apparently think it best to "forget" their war and not talk about it any more on a daily basis! This is how we see, for example, media which, for two months, devoted their front pages to the bloodbath in Gaza, suddenly and... as if by magic - saying not a word or covering the issue succinctly and on their very back pages... systematically replacing the rivers of blood in Gaza with reports on villainous crimes and other news items of rather mediocre interest.

The effect of this information blackout is already being felt: the war and, with it, the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Israel are now part of the daily routine or are tending to be forgotten. This is undoubtedly the greatest, most dangerous and most nightmarish "achievement" of Netanyahu and his executioners, because it accustoms us *"to a world that increasingly resembles a jungle, where only the law of the strongest reigns, and where the worst atrocities against the weakest are "permitted!"* (1)

And all this is happening in the midst of general indifference, and without the slightest reaction from the journalists' unions in our countries. Unions that do not seem particularly moved by the fact that not one or two, but... **110 fellow journalists have been killed, or rather murdered, mainly in Gaza and the Occupied Territories, by the Israeli army and Israeli settlers, in just three months, in what is by far the biggest massacre of journalists in the history of humanity!** Really, what are they waiting for to take to the streets and go on an urgent solidarity strike in support of their Palestinian colleagues, who are living and dying in the hell of Gaza, and who are desperately asking for this support and solidarity?

However, **Tim Dawson**, Deputy General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), said three weeks ago, *"I don't think we have seen a death toll of journalists to this concentration in any conflict that I can think of. There were about 1,000 journalists in Gaza at the beginning of this conflict. And while there are slightly different counts of precisely how many have died, if between seven-and-a-half and 10 percent have died, that is an extraordinarily high number"*. And the President of the International Federation of Journalists (600,000 members worldwide), **Dominique Pradalié**, added: *"In war zones, abuses can be committed against journalists on an ad hoc basis. In Gaza, they are systematic...I've been defending journalists' rights for over fifty years. I have never seen a state kill so many reporters in such a short space of time"*. As for the Vice-President of the same International Federation of Journalists, the Palestinian **Nasser Abou Bakr**, after denouncing that journalists working in Gaza and the Occupied Territories are *"regularly threatened with death and receive anonymous calls and messages from soldiers on WhatsApp"*, he concluded as follows: *"Every day, I contact my colleagues who are still on site and ask them how they are. They tell me one thing: we're still alive. They are waiting to die and wondering who will be next. But they insist on continuing their work. If they stop, who will report and document the mass crimes and ethnic cleansing that our people are suffering? Israel wants to kill journalists, who are witnesses to its crimes »*.

Of course, it is no coincidence that most of the journalists threatened, injured or killed work for **Al Jazeera**, because it is precisely this international television channel that is constantly in the sights of Israel, which is trying at all costs to silence it. Why is this? Because Al Jazeera is the only channel that does its job properly: it reports directly and generally 'live', covering all developments and events in the Middle East - and not just the Middle East - and giving a voice to all sides, even the most odious. Having followed Al Jazeera's English-language channel non-stop for the past three months, we can confirm that we have seen Hamas representatives as well as Israeli ministers and generals, Americans and other supporters of Mr Netanyahu as well as those who support the Palestinians. In other words, we have seen that Al Jazeera does exactly what the vast majority of media outlets, including of course those in our 'liberal' countries, refuse to do. As for the slanders that are traditionally hurled at it, even by many 'progressives', namely that Al Jazeera is the mouthpiece of the 'Muslim Brotherhood' or... Hamas, these are lies as crude as those claiming that Israel indiscriminately bombs and kills not Palestinian civilians but 'Hamas terrorists'. After all, it would be paradoxical, to say the least, for Al Jazeera to be... Islamist, obscurantist and reactionary when it harshly criticises every manifestation of anti-Semitism and unreservedly supports and promotes progressive and anti-racist movements around the world, including those of Jews in the United States and elsewhere who demonstrate daily calling for an immediate ceasefire...

So it is because it is its journalists who make Al Jazeera so unique and precious in these barbaric times, when objective information is becoming an increasingly difficult commodity to find, that their incredible suffering moves and upsets us even more. It is not just that 110 journalists have already been killed by the Israeli army. It is also that members of their families, from their grandparents to their grandchildren and their babies, are also being killed with them, as a matter of priority! This is what happened, among many others, in the personal tragedy of Al Jazeera's chief reporter in Gaza, **Wael Al-Dahdouh**, who lost his wife, daughter, youngest son and grandchild, as well as eight other members of his family, in three successive Israeli bombardments. Then there was his cameraman, who died bleeding to death after the Israeli soldiers did not allow the ambulance to reach him - even though he was himself injured - and finally his eldest son, who was also a journalist! Needless to say, there are no words to describe how viewers feel when they see someone - and this has happened on several occasions - interrupting an Al Jazeera journalist as he is speaking live from the rubble of countless Israeli bombings, to whisper in his ear that members of his family have just been killed. And to see this journalist petrify, turn pale and have tears in his eyes... while continuing to report, talking about the death of others!

It is therefore to these journalists, who are saving the honour of world journalism, that the journalists' unions in our countries must urgently show their solidarity in deeds, not only because they owe them a debt of gratitude, but also because the salvation and even the lives of these heroic journalists depend on our support. However, it is not just our journalists' unions but the entire progressive opposition and the left that must justify their *raison d'être* by supporting the martyred Palestinian people not with words but with deeds. For example, by actively supporting the South African genocide complaint against Israel, which has begun to be heard at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. In what way? By mobilising in the streets and putting pressure on their governments in parliament to join or at least support South Africa's case before the International Court of Justice. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta...*

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Note

1. See our text

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2023/11/22/when-netanyahu-accustoms-us-to-an-inhuman-world-without-rights-or-rules-the-law-of-the-jungle-reigns/>
