



Media & Press | International | Working Conditions

Local journalists and fixers are dying at unprecedented rates in Gaza. Can anyone protect them?

In Gaza's ongoing conflict, local journalists face unprecedented risks, with 220 Palestinian media workers killed. Despite international law's protections, these brave reporters remain vulnerable, struggling to document the war's brutal reality while fighting for survival.

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Journalist Mariam Dagga was just 33 when she was [brutally killed](#) by an Israeli airstrike in Gaza on August 25.

As a freelance photographer and videographer, she had captured the suffering in Gaza through indelible images of malnourished children and grief-stricken families. In her [will](#), she told her colleagues not to cry and her 13-year-old son to make her proud.

Dagga was killed alongside four other journalists – and 16 others – in an attack on a hospital that has drawn widespread condemnation and outrage.

This attack followed the killings of six Al Jazeera journalists by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in a tent housing journalists in Gaza City earlier in August. The dead included Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist [Anas al-Sharif](#).

Israel's nearly two-year war in Gaza is among the deadliest in modern times. The Committee to Protect Journalists, which has tracked journalist deaths globally since 1992, has counted a staggering [189 Palestinian journalists](#) killed in Gaza since the war began. Many worked as freelancers for major news organisations since Israel has banned foreign correspondents

from entering Gaza.

In addition, the organisation has confirmed the killings of two Israeli journalists, along with six journalists killed in Israel's strikes on Lebanon.

## Countries with the most journalists killed since 1992

Click to change timeframe: **Since 1992** Past 5 years

	Country	Murdered	Killed
1	Iraq	114	107
2	Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory	25	177
3	Mexico	63	99
4	Philippines	94	66
5	Pakistan	41	61
6	Colombia	48	47
7	India	44	49
8	Afghanistan	30	49
9	Russia	40	32
10	Somalia	48	24
11	Algeria	58	2
12	Brazil	42	18
13	Syria	24	34
14	Honduras	10	30
15	Bangladesh	21	17
16	Turkey	23	8
17	Tajikistan	14	15
18	Guatemala	4	24
19	Ukraine	8	17
20	Nigeria	8	16

There are no rules, there's no safety. Sometimes, when settlers attack a village, for example, we go to cover, but Israeli soldiers don't respect you, they don't respect anything called Palestinian [...] even if you are a journalist.

## 'It was very traumatising for me'

I went to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Israel and Ramallah in the West Bank in 2019 to conduct part of my [PhD research](#) on the available protections for journalists in conflict zones.

During that time, I interviewed journalists from major international outlets such as The New York Times, The Guardian, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, CNN, BBC

and others, in addition to local Palestinian freelance journalists and fixers. I also interviewed a Palestinian journalist working for Al Jazeera (English), with whom I remained in contact until recently.

I did not visit Gaza due to safety concerns. However, many of the journalists had reported from there and were familiar with the conditions, which were dangerous even before the war.

Osama Hassan, a local journalist, told me about working in the West Bank:

Nuha Musleh, a fixer in Jerusalem, described an incident that occurred after a stone was thrown towards IDF soldiers:

### **Journalists killed in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel**

Cumulative deaths since 2000, includes both journalists and media workers

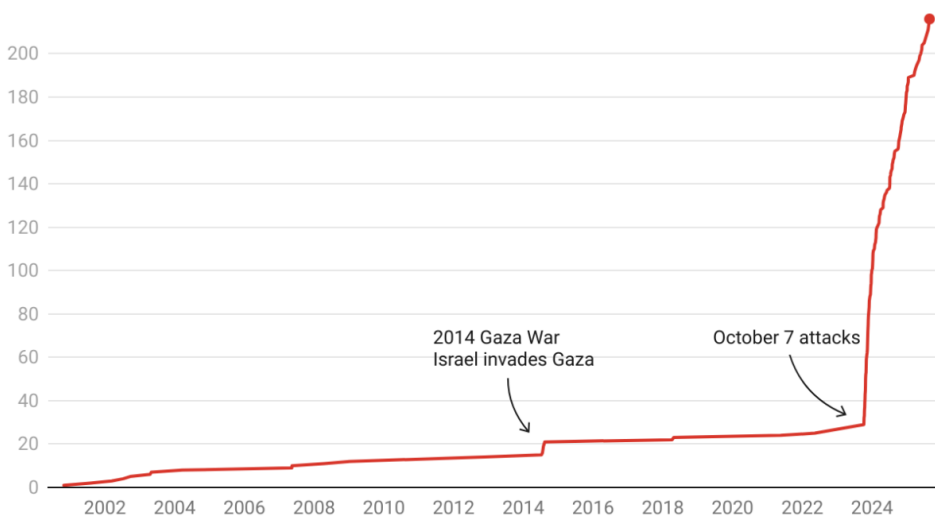


Chart: The Conversation - Source: Committee to Protect Journalists - Created with Datawrapper.

International correspondents typically have training on reporting from war zones, in addition to safety equipment, insurance, and risk assessment procedures. However, local journalists and fixers in Gaza do not generally have access to the same protections, despite bearing the brunt of the effects of war, which includes [mass starvation](#).

Despite the enormous difficulties, I believe media organisations must strive to meet their employment law obligations, to the best of their ability, when it comes to local journalists and fixers. This is part of their duty of care.

For example, [research shows](#) fixers have long been the “most exploited and persecuted people” contributing to the production of international news. They are often thrust into precarious situations without hazardous environment training or medical insurance. And many times, they are paid very little for their work.

Local journalists and fixers in Gaza must be paid properly by the media organisations hiring them. This should take into consideration not just the woeful conditions they are forced to work and live in, but the immense impact of their jobs on their mental health.

As the global news director for Agence France-Presse [said recently](#), paying local contributors is very difficult – they often bear huge transaction costs to access their money. “We try to compensate by paying more to cover that,” he said.

But he did not address whether the agency would change its security protocols and training for conflict zones, given journalists themselves are being targeted in Gaza in their work.

These local journalists are literally putting their lives on the line to show the world what’s happening in Gaza. They need greater protections.

As Ammar Awad, a local photographer in the West Bank, told me:

The photographer does not care about himself. He cares about the pictures, how he can shoot good pictures, to film something good. But he needs to be in a good place that is safe for him.

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