

Resolution 2657 (2026)¹

Journalism in the context of the Israel–Gaza conflict

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly strongly condemns the deliberate targeting and killing of local journalists in Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Israel's prohibition on international journalists and media outlets accessing the Gaza Strip.
2. The Assembly's condemnation also extends to the flagrant violations of press freedom and the harassment of journalists by Hamas, as well as the absence in Gaza of a legal and practical framework guaranteeing freedom of expression and information in accordance with international law.
3. Attacks against journalists, restrictions on media access and the spread of disinformation in the context of the conflict in Gaza reflect a broader and deeply worrying deterioration of conditions for freedom of expression and press freedom in situations of conflict. Impunity for violations committed against journalists risks normalising attacks on independent media, undermining access to reliable information and weakening democratic safeguards far beyond the region. In the case of Gaza and the broader region, attacks on the free press cannot be separated from human rights violations and war crimes that are committed against both Palestinian and Israeli civilians.
4. Since the launch of Israel's military campaign in response to the appalling terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas and other militias on 7 October 2023, more than 220 journalists have been killed by the IDF in Gaza. At least 68 of these journalists were apparently targeted or killed in the course of carrying out their work. This includes at least three journalists killed in January 2026, after the October 2025 ceasefire.
5. Moreover, the Assembly expresses its grave concern that since 7 October 2023 Israeli airstrikes have destroyed most telecommunications and media infrastructure in Gaza, and that the humanitarian and economic situation has greatly deteriorated, which directly affects the work of local journalists.
6. The Assembly is disturbed by the IDF's denial of allegations that they deliberately target and kill journalists, and by their claim that they direct their strikes only towards military targets and military operatives, and avoid targeting civilian objects and civilians, including media organisations and journalists as such.
7. In that regard, the Israeli forces have released documents that purport to reveal the involvement of al-Jazeera journalists as terrorist operatives and that indicate close co-operation between Hamas and the media network. Al-Jazeera refutes these claims and international press associations do not consider them to be substantiated.
8. The Assembly also emphasises that violations of press freedom by Hamas have also been widespread and under-reported, primarily due to the fear of reprisals, given that Hamas is known for violently targeting, persecuting and killing its critics.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 22 May 2026 (see [Doc. 16401](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Constantinos Efstathiou; and [Doc. 16408](#), opinion of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Ms Lise Selnes).



9. The Assembly deeply deplores and condemns Israel's policy and practice of refusing international journalists access to Gaza for reporting purposes. This prohibition has not changed even after a ceasefire was agreed between Israel and Hamas as part of Donald Trump's peace plan. The Israeli Supreme Court of Justice has postponed on several occasions its ruling on a petition filed by the Foreign Press Association calling for free, independent press access to Gaza.
10. The Assembly adds its voice once more to all those calling for the full respect by Israel for its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.
11. The Assembly firmly reiterates that freedom of information is linked to the safety and protection of journalists, and stresses that journalists are society's eyes and ears, bearing witness to the situation on the ground during political and military operations, most importantly in the face of humanitarian catastrophes and crises.
12. The Assembly reaffirms its long-standing commitment to the protection and safety of journalists, including through its initiatives aimed at promoting media freedom and combating impunity for crimes committed against journalists in conflict situations. In this respect, it recalls the Assembly's commemoration "Victory for Viktoria", which honours journalists who have been killed or have disappeared during conflicts and reaffirms the essential role of independent journalism in democratic societies.
13. The Assembly underlines that journalists working in areas of armed conflict are civilians and are protected as such under international humanitarian law, provided that they do nothing to adversely affect their legal status as civilians. Targeting and killing journalists and their families are war crimes, which cannot be committed with impunity.
14. The deliberate exposure of local journalists to life-threatening circumstances, or even death, and the lack of access for international journalists to the Gaza Strip have allowed for the perpetration of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by Israel, without accountability.
15. As regards the IDF's claims about the alleged close co-operation between the deceased journalists and Hamas, as well as other terrorist organisations, the Assembly points out that they cannot be verified by independent journalists without unrestricted access to the Gaza Strip.
16. The Assembly recalls its [Resolution 2623 \(2025\)](#), in which it urgently called for the protection of journalists working in Gaza, deploring "the exceptionally high number of journalists killed or injured in Gaza" and called on all parties "to ensure their protection and the safe, unhindered access of all journalists to conflict areas".
17. For all these reasons, the Assembly urges Israel to halt the targeting of journalists and to fully adhere to all its relevant international human rights and humanitarian obligations in this respect.
18. The Assembly urges Israel to immediately:
 - 18.1. refrain from targeting journalists and their families, as well as any other civilians;
 - 18.2. carry out full and independent investigations into all killings of journalists in Gaza, make public the conclusions and take any steps necessary to punish those responsible and provide redress;
 - 18.3. allow access to the Gaza Strip to local and foreign journalists, as well as international organisations responsible for providing information or carrying out investigations, and facilitate their work in safe conditions.
19. The Assembly calls on the International Criminal Court to investigate the alleged war crimes committed by the Israeli army against journalists in Gaza and the crimes committed by Hamas against Israeli journalists during the attacks of 7 October 2023.
20. The Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:
 - 20.1. support the request by international press associations for the immediate granting of free and safe access of international media outlets to Gaza so that the situation on the ground can be observed and reported by them;
 - 20.2. maintain pressure on Israel to ensure a thorough and impartial investigation into all violations against journalists during the Israel–Gaza conflict;
 - 20.3. plead for and facilitate the evacuation of Palestinian journalists and their families from Gaza where it is needed for their immediate protection and provide them with psychological and material support.

21. With regard to the conditions for sustainable peace, the Assembly:
 - 21.1. stresses that independent journalism and unhindered access to reliable information are essential safeguards against disinformation, radicalisation and impunity;
 - 21.2. emphasises that transparency and accountability are indispensable for rebuilding trust between communities and creating the conditions for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East;
 - 21.3. reiterates its commitment to a peaceful, just and sustainable future for Israelis and Palestinians based on the two-State solution and in full respect for international law.