



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, October 26, 2023

The role of journalists must be safeguarded in Gaza conflict

The union for Australian journalists condemns the rising death toll of media workers in Gaza and calls on Israel and Hamas to respect the role that journalists play as non-combatant witnesses in times of war.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance supports calls by the International Federation of Journalists and Palestinian Journalists Syndicate for full and transparent investigation of any and all attacks on journalists.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 24 media workers have been killed since the hostilities began following an attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7.

They are made up of 20 Palestinians, three Israelis and one Lebanese journalist, according to the CPJ.

A number of media workers have also been reported missing and unaccounted for.

MEAA is also deeply concerned at reports that Israel is threatening to close Al Jazeera's Jerusalem bureau and to censor media coverage of the conflict in Gaza.

The media must be allowed to report freely on news events in Israel and Gaza during the current conflict without censorship by the Israeli government.

"Media workers are not combatants in this or any conflict," said MEAA Media Federal President Karen Percy.

"They play a crucial role as the eyes and ears of the world in reporting and explaining what is happening on the war front, including exposing war crimes.

"MEAA joins the IFJ in calling on all combatants in this conflict to do their utmost to safeguard journalists and media professionals and condemns the targeting or deliberate murder of journalists."

MEAA also urges Australian audiences to respect the traumatic and dangerous job of journalists working for Australian media outlets who are taking great risks to bring us news from Gaza.

"We demand all Australian media outlets not place their staff in danger and to provide them with professional safety equipment and support. No story is worth the life of a journalist."

MEAA supports the stand of the ACTU and other organisations in showing solidarity with all Palestinian and Israeli victims of violence and in calling for a ceasefire in Gaza amid unequivocal evidence of a massive humanitarian catastrophe and the danger of further escalation of the conflict.

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