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VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS NEWS

RSF secures inclusion of crimes against journalists in ICC investigation into Palestine



ORGANISATION: RSF_en

Following the two last complaints filed by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) with the International Criminal Court (ICC), the office of prosecutor Karim Khan has assured the organisation that crimes against journalists are included in its investigation into Palestine. Back in 2018, RSF played a decisive role in getting the ICC to investigate crimes against journalists.

Following the killing of independent videographer journalist working for Agence *France Presse* (*AFP*) Moustafa Thuraya and *Al Jazeera* journalist Hamza Waël Dahdouh, which brings the total number of journalists killed in three months to at least 79, RSF is able to reveal that crimes against journalists are indeed the subject of particular attention in the International Criminal Court's investigation into the situation in Palestine.

Since 7 October, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan had never spoken publicly about the fate of journalists. In a message sent to RSF on 5 January 2024, his office stated for the first time that crimes against journalists were included in its investigation. This is of course crucial information in a terrible context for journalists in Gaza.

In its statement, the ICC prosecutor's office assures that *"crimes against journalists are being examined by the prosecutor's office, among other potential crimes, as part of the ongoing investigation into the situation in Palestine, and RSF's objectives and actions must be supported and are of crucial importance in Gaza and elsewhere. Journalists are protected by international humanitarian law and the Rome Statute and must not under any circumstances be targeted in the exercise of their important mission."*

Back in 2018, RSF filed an initial complaint about Israeli sniper fire on Palestinian journalists during the "Great March of Return March" in Gaza. RSF argued that two journalists killed and 18 wounded had been deliberately targeted and that these acts qualified as war crimes. In December 2019, then ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda's annual progress report on the preliminary investigation into Palestine mentioned journalists for the first time as included in this investigation.

In a message sent to RSF on 21 December 2023, Fatou Bensouda stated that the inclusion of crimes against journalists in her preliminary investigation "r*esulted from RSF's communication of May 2018*" to the ICC. On 3 March 2021, the prosecutor announced the opening of a formal investigation into the situation in Palestine.

ICC prosecutor Karim Khan and his predecessor Fatou Bensouda were contacted in December by RSF, which sought to ensure their understanding of the scale and

seriousness of the crimes against Palestinian journalists.

"The massacre of journalists in Gaza, at least 79 of whom have been killed since 7 October, demands a determined response from the ICC. We have found to date that at least 18 of them were killed in the course of, or because of, their duties as journalists, but only a thorough investigation will establish the immense extent of the war crimes against media professionals. The announcement by the ICC prosecutor's office to RSF is good news, which we welcome. We hope that its investigation moves forward quickly and leads to concrete action: it is necessary and long overdue.

Christophe Deloire
Secretary General of RSF

RSF has constantly documented the crimes committed against journalists in Palestine. In May 2021, following the bombing of some twenty media outlets in the Gaza Strip by Israeli forces, the organisation filed a second complaint for war crimes. In December 2022, RSF supported the complaint filed by *Al Jazeera* concerning the murder of Palestinian journalist Shirin Abu Akleh in the West Bank. Since 7 October 2023, RSF has filed two complaints with the ICC – the first on 31 October and the second on 22 December – calling on the prosecutor to investigate all Palestinian journalists killed by the Israeli army.

MIDDLE EAST - NORTH AFRICA

Palestine

156 / 180
Score : 37.86

Découvrir le pays

MIDDLE EAST - NORTH AFRICA

Israel

97 / 180
Score : 57.57

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Middle East - North Africa Palestine Israel Violence against journalists

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