

BBC accused of not disclosing that killed Palestinian journalists were Hamas supporters

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7–9 minutes

Pro-Israeli body says corporation's Arabic arm failed to point out that 55 dead media workers had advocated killing of its countrymen

The BBC has been accused of failing to tell viewers that some Palestinians it had described as “journalists” killed by Israel were Hamas supporters.

Media campaigners have pointed out that some of those highlighted by the corporation as having been killed since Israel launched its response to the [Oct 7 attacks](#) appeared to be militants who had praised and even worked for [the terror group](#).

They said the BBC was too quick to describe Palestinian militants and activists killed in [the conflict](#) as journalists.

The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (Camera) – which lobbies for a fair representation of Israel – claimed that 55 out of 69 Gazans and Lebanese described as journalists in a BBC Arabic article about media workers killed

since Oct 7 had either voiced support for the killing of Israelis or had worked for outlets which did.

Two of these – Mohammad Jarghoun and Assaad Shamlakh – were mourned by friends on social media as members of the “resistance” and “jihad fighters”, while a third, Mustafa el-Sawaf, had been a member of Hamas’s political leadership for nearly two decades.

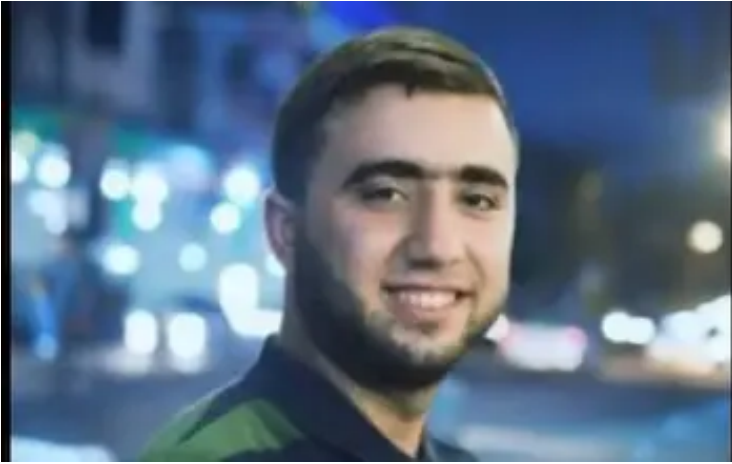


Mohammad Jarghoun was mourned by friends on social media as a supporter of Hamas

Additionally, Israel’s Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre has claimed that more than half the journalists that the Hamas media office says were killed in the Gaza Strip between Oct 7 2023 and Feb 18 2024 were affiliated with terrorist organisations, including 44 from Hamas and 19 from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

The claims came as it transpired last week that three Israeli

hostages were being held captive in the home of a Palestinian journalist and his father, a doctor, before they were rescued by Israeli troops.



Assaad Shamlakh was painted as a jihad fighter by his friends after his death

The [Israel Defence Forces](#) (IDF) accused Abdallah al-Jamal, the journalist, of being a “ Hamas terrorist” who had detained Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov and Shlomi Ziv in his family home.

Jamal, who wrote for The Palestine Chronicle, a news website based in Washington, was killed along with his father, Ahmed, and his wife, Fatima, in the raid that freed the hostages last Saturday. The IDF said Jamal had also been a contributor to Al Jazeera.

The claims raise questions about the extent to which some Palestinian journalists can be regarded as independent and objective reporters working for recognised media organisations.

A spokesman for Camera Arabic said: “The 55 Gazans and Lebanese in question were not listed by BBC reporter Layla Bashar al-Kloub simply because they were civilians in conflict whose deaths ‘are to be regretted’. Rather, it is due to their supposed ‘journalistic work’ that the BBC elevated them apart from other civilians in the first place.

‘Political affiliations’

“Alas, Arabic editors and the ECU [the BBC’s executive complaints unit] alike kept insisting that the way these individuals and their workplaces celebrated killings of Jewish civilians and served as propaganda arms for Hamas, PIJ and Hezbollah was simply a matter of ‘political affiliations’. By refusing to amend the list, they also indicated Arabic-speaking audiences are better off not knowing anything about this.”

Camera Arabic added: “Evidently, BBC staff members are still under the impression that they share the same profession with people who spent their careers disgracing it for the sake of murderous ideologies – a fact which suggests that their own journalism is compromised. This should be cause for concern to both fellow journalists and the corporation’s funding public.”

BBC Arabic has faced repeated criticism since Oct 7 for its coverage of the conflict and what some have claimed is the biased attitude of some of its broadcasters towards Israel.

The Telegraph disclosed last month that the corporation’s head office had been [forced to correct BBC Arabic’s coverage of the Gaza](#) conflict every other day on average during the first five months of the war.





BBC Arabic corrected its coverage of the Gaza conflict every other day on average during the first five months of the war Credit: Carl Court/Getty Images Europe

BBC Arabic, whose output Tim Davie, the corporation's director-general, has described as "something we should be very proud of", made 80 corrections in the five months after the Oct 7 Hamas attacks on Israel.

In response to Camera's complaint, Richard Hutt, the complaints director of the BBC's executive complaints unit, said: "BBC Arabic have said that the article was a list of journalists and media workers killed in the conflict (on both sides) regardless of their political affiliations.

"Beyond this, they make the point that such reporting is legitimate notwithstanding any such affiliations or connections between their employers and proscribed groups, given that journalists are nonetheless civilians in a category of worker which is particularly vulnerable in a war.

'Purpose is to record the loss'

"Moreover, they make the point that reporting the deaths of journalists is not to put them in a positive light or to comment on the quality of their work."

He added: "In general I would expect BBC Arabic online audiences

to understand that those working in the media in Gaza may have their own views, and may work for outlets with particular positions or political affiliations.

“The purpose of the piece is not to pass judgment, but to record the loss.”

A BBC spokesman said: “Our report covers the deaths of journalists over the course of the conflict, in Gaza, Lebanon and Israel, regardless of their media outlets’ political affiliations, and takes no account of their views or assessments of their journalism. We reported on journalists who have died who were not BBC staff and therefore not subject to our impartiality guidelines.”

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