



## **Injustice can never be a foundation for a secure peace for Israel and Palestine**

**June 2022**

### **Killing of Shireen Abu Aklen**

On 11 May 2022, Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aklen, aged 51, was shot dead while covering a raid by Israeli soldiers in the Jenin refugee camp. Another Palestinian journalist working for Al Jazeera, Ali al-Samoudi, was wounded in the shooting and is in a stable condition.

Footage of her body after the shooting shows Shireen wearing a blue flak jacket marked with the word "PRESS".

Several witnesses stated that Israeli forces shot Shireen and Ali. Journalists who were with Shireen when she was shot, including Ali al-Samoudi, said that the Israeli troops fired upon them despite that they were clearly identifiable as reporters. Al Jazeera accused the Israeli military of murdering Shireen.

On 14 May, Israeli riot police attacked and beat the pallbearers carrying Shireen's body to the funeral service at a Catholic church, causing them to drop her coffin briefly. They also attacked other Palestinian mourners in front of the St Joseph Hospital. Police also stormed inside the hospital. Israeli police stated they attacked the mourners because they were singing "nationalist songs" and were engaged in "nationalist incitement". The police said that the mourners refused to stop their singing and incitement.

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, said, "Israel's police invasion and disproportionate use of force, attacking mourners, striking them with batons, using smoke grenades, shooting rubber bullets, frightening the hospital's patients, is a severe violation of international norms and regulations."

Shireen was a Christian whose family came from Bethlehem. She was also a US citizen.

### **World Council of Churches reaction**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has expressed concern that injustice can never be the foundation for a secure peace. They have called for an independent international investigation of Shireen Abu Aklen's killing. The WCC also called for those responsible for her death be held accountable to the full extent of the law.

The WCC raised concern that 86 Palestinian journalists have been killed since 1967, the year in which Israeli forces occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Fifty of the journalists have been killed since 2000. No Israeli soldier has been held to account for killing a journalist.

The WCC further expressed its shock at Israeli police attacking mourners at the funeral for Shireen Abu Aklen.

The European Union has urged an "independent" investigation of Shireen's killing. The United States demanded the shooting be "transparently investigated". The UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine, Francesca Albanese, described the killing as a possible war crime.

### **Israeli security forces human rights abuses of other journalists**

In early April 2022, before Shireen's death, the International Federation of Journalists, the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate and the International Centre for Justice for Palestinians had filed a submission to the International Criminal Court alleging that Israeli security forces were systematically targeting journalists working in Palestine. The submission contained the cases of Ahmed Abu Hussein, Yaser Murtaja, Muath Amarneh and Nedal Eshtayeh. All of them were shot by Israeli soldiers while reporting on demonstrations in Gaza. All were wearing clearly marked "PRESS" vests when shot.



Palestinian journalists also face discrimination, restrictions on their freedom of movement and restrictions on their press accreditation at the hands of Israeli authorities.

In May 2021, Israeli forces bombed media outlets in Gaza, killing two journalists and wounding approximately 100.

### Israeli killings of Palestinian children and youths

There has been a recent escalation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians since 22 March 2022. Dozens of Palestinians, including eight children, and 18 Israelis have been killed in the violence.

Included in the recent murders by Israeli forces was Nader Rayan. On 15 March 2022, at around 5:30 am, Israeli soldiers and Border Police officers entered the Balata Refugee Camp, which lies near the city of Nablus. They arrested a camp resident and left the area at around 6:15 am. Nader Rayan, aged 16, and a 16-year-old friend followed them on a scooter. As they followed the Border Police, their scooter stopped. The two boys failed to restart it. Instead, they fled away from the Border Police jeeps on foot. A Border Police officer fired three shots from the vehicle he was in, hitting Nader in the back. Nader fell face down and called out for help.

Footage from nearby security cameras showed five officers, including the shooter, getting out of their jeeps about 30 seconds after the first shots were fired. The officer who fired the first shots then shot Nader again, killing him. A medical examination of the body found the boy had been shot eight times from the front, including in the head, chest and limbs. He had also been shot three times from behind.

The Border Police initially claimed that Nader had fired a pistol at them. They subsequently changed the story to say that Nader had "endangered their lives, after bursting into their car and aiming a revolver at them." However, the officers failed to produce the revolver they claimed Nader had threatened them with.

On 1 March 2022, around 4 pm, 18-year-old 'Ammar Abu' Afifah and a 17-year-old friend from the al-'Arrub Refugee Camp, south of Bethlehem, went for a walk outside of the camp. They reached a hill about 1 km north of the camp, which they had visited the previous day. An Israeli soldier arrived and called on the two Palestinians to halt. The Palestinian youths panicked and started to run. More Israeli soldiers arrived. 'Ammar Abu' Afifah tripped and fell while he was running. When he got up, Israeli soldiers shot him dead. The autopsy showed he had been shot through the head and in the shin.

### What You Can Do

Write a polite and respectful letter to:

His Excellency Mr **Amir MAIMON**  
Ambassador of Israel  
Embassy of Israel  
6 Turrana Street  
Yarralumla, ACT, 2600

Email: [info@canberra.mfa.gov.il](mailto:info@canberra.mfa.gov.il)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Points to make in your letter:

- Express deep concern at the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Aklen and the wounding of Ali al-Samoudi on 11 May in Jenin.
- Ask that the Israeli Government allow for a completely independent international investigation into the shooting.
- Also, ask for a thorough investigation into the shooting death of 16-year-old Nader Rayan on 15 March 2022 by a Border Police officer. The killing occurred at the Balata Refugee Camp. Ask what progress has been made in investigating the shooting.
- Further, ask what progress has been made in the shooting death by Israeli soldiers of 18-year-old 'Ammar Abu' Afifah near the al-'Arrub Refugee Camp on 1 March.

