Committee to Protect Journalists

Israel's targeted attack on journalists on October 13, 2023
Press conference fact sheet

What is the status of Israel's investigation into its targeted attack on seven journalists on October 13, 2023?

- In June 2025, the Israeli embassy shared with Senator Welch's office that its review of the October 13th attack had been completed. The embassy said that it had found that none of the soldiers who fired the shots acted outside of their instructions or the IDF's Rules of Engagement.
    - This revelation directly contradicts a statement made approximately seven weeks ago to AFP, the French media outlet where Collins and another survivor of the attack, Christina Assi, work, after it requested an update on the probe. The IDF's short reply was: "The incident is currently under review, and the findings regarding the event have not yet been concluded."
- Despite Israel first announcing it would review the incident in October 2023, Mr Collins has never been contacted by Israel to provide testimony. Nor has Israel contacted the offices of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reuters, AFP or Al Jazeera, despite some of these organizations obtaining key physical evidence, including munition fragments, helmets and flak jackets worn by the journalists and shrapnel. At least six cameras recorded the attack in real-time; these video files have never been requested for examination by Israel.
- The IDF continues to withhold any details about the unit responsible, who ordered the strike and on what basis, or the command oversight involved, despite repeated requests from Dylan Collins, CPJ and Senator Welch. Nor has it provided any information about how it is reviewing the incident (e.g. the agency leading it, the evidence it has collected or people spoken to) or whether/when a report will be published.
- From this, CPJ concludes that Israel is incapable of conducting a credible investigation into an apparent war crime, and that the international community needs to ensure an effective criminal investigation is conducted. Israel has taken over two years and its investigative approach does not meet international standards, such as those set forth in the Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary, and Summary Executions (the "Minnesota Protocol"). The protocol establishes that under international law, the duty to investigate a potentially unlawful death entails an obligation that the investigation be prompt; effective and thorough; independent and impartial; and transparent.

How many journalists has Israel killed since October 7, 2023, and what is the status of those investigations?

- CPJ has determined that Israel directly targeted and killed at least another 58 journalists and media workers after this attack in southern Lebanon; and in total has killed at least 246 journalists and media workers in Gaza and the region since October 7, 2023.
- The targeted killing of a journalist is a war crime. The IDF has not opened a single criminal investigation into any of the 59 cases of targeted killing that have been documented by CPJ since October 7, 2023.
- This is a longstanding pattern of impunity that pre-dates October 7, 2023. In May 2023 CPJ's report, "Deadly Pattern," found that over 22 years at least 20 journalists were

killed by members of the Israel military. No one has ever been charged or held responsible for these deaths.
    - This includes the killing of American-Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in May 2022. The FBI launched an investigation into her death, but has not given any updates on its progress since it was announced in November 2022.
- CPJ wrote to Israel's Military Advocate General (MAG) in April 2024, requesting it to open a criminal investigation into the October 13 attack and other targeted killings, following a public statement by the MAG acknowledging that there have been cases of "unacceptable conduct" by the IDF in Gaza, some of which were being probed to determine if a criminal investigation was warranted. The MAG never responded or acknowledged receipt of the submission.
- The International Criminal Court does not currently have authority to investigate the killing as neither Lebanon or Israel are members of the court, and nor has the U.N. Security Council referred the matter to the court to grant it jurisdiction.

What evidence exists about the October 13, 2023 attack in Southern Lebanon, and what were the conclusions of the five other investigations into the attack?
Five independent investigations all concluded that Israel conducted a deliberate attack on a group of clearly identifiable members of the media. It was the first instance where CPJ documented Israeli forces deliberately targeting journalists since October 7, 2023. Further details of the incident can be obtained here, however key information from the investigations includes:

- On October 13, at around 16:45, seven journalists from AFP, Al Jazeera, and Reuters congregated in a clearing on a hilltop to cover cross-border shelling approximately 1.3 miles away.
- At 18:02, they were hit by two strikes, 37 seconds apart. A Reuters investigation said it was "likely" that the double-tap strike was immediately followed by 1 minute and 45 seconds of heavy machine gun fire. Issam Abdallah was killed instantly in the first strike.
- The journalists took extensive security precautions. They all wore helmets and bulletproof jackets marked "Press." The Reuters journalists had consulted their security coordinator and shared their coordinates before arriving.
- The journalists were providing live feeds to three international news agencies at the time of the incident. This includes video footage by AFP's Dylan Collins, who began continuously recording at 5:05 p.m., nearly an hour before the first strike. Collins' camera continued filming after the first strike, until it was damaged 37 seconds later in the second strike. Multiple nearby journalists and first-responders who came to the scene obtained further video and photo documentation.
- The available physical evidence includes metal fragments and the remains of tank rounds, flak jackets and helmets worn, shrapnel recovered from the survivors bodies, as well as the cameras and live video transmitters.
- Audio analysis of footage from the attack by experts engaged by Human Rights Watch found that in the 25 minutes before the strike a drone circled the group 11 times. Amnesty International also identified an Israeli Apache helicopter flying overhead before the attack in the footage captured by Al Jazeera, as well as in footage that an Al-Araby crew obtained from another location. Both indicate that Israel had the surveillance capacities to see the journalists who were reporting from a hilltop in broad daylight.

What has Israel said about the attack?

- The IDF acknowledge it was responsible for the attack. However, since the IDF announced it had first opened a probe in October 2023, it has not released any detailed

public updates about its progress or findings or proactively engaged any of the impacted media outlets.

- In June 2025, the Israeli embassy shared with Senator Welch's office that its investigation into the October 13th attack had concluded and that none of the soldiers involved acted outside the IDF's rules of engagement.
    - However, in subsequent correspondence to AFP, the Israeli army stated that the "incident is currently under review, and the findings have not yet been concluded." In an email to CPJ on December 9, the IDF said the "event is still being examined."
- In July 2025, the Israeli government conveyed the following points in a letter to Senator Peter Welch:
    - Israel did not receive information "regarding injuries" to Dylan Collins in the incident, while it received information about the killing of Issam Abdallah.
    - *"This tragic event took place in a highly complex operational context. The operational context was defensive action under intense pressure, the fog of war, and a real threat to human life."*

What has been the US response to-date, including the information revealed by Sen. Welch's office on December 11, 2025?

- Dylan reported the incident, requesting an investigation, to the FBI and DHS in May, 2024. To the best of our knowledge, an investigation has not been opened.
- As far as we know, no U.S. official has sought to interview the Israeli shooter(s), other survivors, or anyone else with firsthand knowledge, or obtain any of the extensive evidence detailed above.
- In a **letter from November 21, 2025**, the Trump Administration's State Department told Senator Peter Welch the following key points:
    - *"The Department became aware of the injuries to Mr. Collins on October 13, 2023, and the U.S. Embassy in Beirut immediately reached out to him to offer assistance, which Mr. Collins declined. [**Note**: Dylan Collins denies the government's assertion that he declined offer of assistance.] The Department immediately worked to gather additional information on reports of the incident, and our spokesperson noted on the day the strike occurred that "every day, we stand with journalists around the world who do critical work that we all rely on every single day, sometimes in dangerous conditions.""*
    - *"The Department asked the Israeli government to conduct a swift, thorough, and transparent investigation in both of these cases. The Department refers you to the Department of Justice regarding any requests to open an independent investigation into either of these two incidents. We refer you to the Government of Israel on requests related to the outcomes of any investigations conducted by Israeli law enforcement or by the Israeli Defense Forces into either of these two incidents."*
- In a June 27, 2024, letter, the Biden Administration's State Department shared the following points with Senator Bernie Sanders:
    - *"The Department became aware of the October 13 strike on that same day, and the American Citizen Services section at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut immediately reached out to Mr. Collins to offer assistance. We then worked immediately to gather additional information on reports of the incident, and our spokesperson noted on the day it occurred that "every day, we stand with journalists around the world who do critical work that we all rely on every single day, sometimes in dangerous conditions." Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Israel to fully and thoroughly investigate the incident, and as he noted on December 7, "it will*

be important to see that investigation come to a conclusion, and to see the results of the investigation."

- *"We understand the incident remains under investigation in Israel. To date, the Department of State has not received any additional information from the Government of Israel regarding this investigation, but we intend to engage with Israeli officials until we get answers and see appropriate accountability for this incident."*
- *"The Department is working collaboratively with our embassies, our consulates, civil society, and media organizations to continue ongoing assessments of this and other incidents as part of various internal processes, which may include but are not limited to the Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance (CHIRG). As noted in the May 10 National Security Memorandum-20 report, our assessments remain ongoing."*
- *"The Department began reviewing this incident in December 2023 and conducted assessments on civilian harm and whether U.S.-origin defense materiel was used. Based on all available information, the civilian harm caused by this incident did not involve U.S.-origin weapons, and instead was likely caused by Israeli-made M339 or M329 tank rounds fired by an Israeli made Merkava tank, according to an independent investigation by Reuters and TNO."*

For more information about any of these details, please contact mena@cpj.org or press@cpj.org.