

2002

On January 3, Palestinian security authorities in the West Bank city of Hebron descended on the offices of the weekly newspaper, *Hebron Times*, and ordered its immediate closure, according to CPJ. No official reason was given, but staff from the newspaper alleged that the PNA was responding to US "pressure" to close the paper, which has frequently criticised Israel and the United States' Middle East policies.

According to information obtained by RSF, since the beginning of 2002, with some exceptions, the GPO has not renewed press cards for Palestinians working for international media organisations. This decision, which affects journalists living in the Occupied Territories who work in Jerusalem as well as those who both live and work in the Occupied Territories, is said to be for "security reasons". Without press cards, Palestinian journalists are at the mercy of the Israeli security forces, who have the authority to refuse them access. For example, **Awad Awad**, a Palestinian photographer for *Agence France-Presse (AFP)* in Ramallah, was unable to enter Jerusalem on January 14. He was stopped at a checkpoint because he did not have an Israeli press card.

On January 15, 29 media organisations in Israeli and Palestinian Authority territories, including *Reuters* and RSF, issued a joint statement expressing concern and urging the government of Israel to renew accreditation of Palestinian journalists. The new regulation, which went into force on January 1, appears to be designed to prevent fair and balanced coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, coming on the back of a year in which Palestinian journalists had largely been prevented from entering Israel due to the "security situation". Daniel Seaman, head of the Israeli Government Press Office (GPO), said that Israel was not paying attention to the aforementioned statements, particularly those made by the RSF, as the group has included Shaul Mofaz, Chief of Staff of the Israeli army, on a list of world figures it calls "predators" on media freedoms. In July, RSF added the Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, to the list.

IPI issued a protest on January 21 to the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon saying: "The Israeli Government Press Office's refusal to issue new press cards, which expired on December 31, prevent an estimated 450 Palestinians, many of whom work for foreign media organisations, from covering news in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Under the new restriction, they are no longer allowed to move freely from one city to another, or to enter Israel or East Jerusalem. In addition, the GPO has allegedly prepared what it calls a "Black List" of Palestinian media workers . . . These latest violations of press freedom appear to be part of a concerted strategy by the Israeli army to control reports on the surge in armed hostilities throughout the region."

On January 17, *Agence France Presse* reported that the Israeli revocation of Palestinian journalists' accreditation had affected a Palestinian photographer employed by *AFP*. The reason given was "security purposes". Without such accreditation, it is practically impossible for Palestinian and other media to cross areas and towns in the West Bank that are subject to a blockade by Israeli military forces. The measure has met with outrage from press associations around the world because the measure implies that Israel will only allow one-sided (i.e. biased, pro-Israeli) reporting on the conflict.

On January 19, Israeli troops blew up the *Voice of Palestine* Radio and Television station offices and studios in Ramallah. Arriving with tanks and bulldozers, the soldiers evacuated all employees and proceeded to place explosive charges on the upper floors of the building. The charges were detonated and half of the five-storey complex was reportedly destroyed. Crippled by previous IDF attacks, the station had been operating on regional frequencies since December 2001. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Israel's attack on the *Voice of Palestine* building was "extremely dangerous...They have crossed all red lines". The army said in a statement it had carried out the operation in retaliation for the "murderous attack" on a Jewish party in the northern Israeli city of Hadera two days earlier. Israel has accused the *Voice of Palestine*, which broadcasts the official positions of the Palestinian Authority, of

transmitting provocative material during the Palestinian uprising. Palestinians deny the charge and say Israel is trying to silence its media. The following day, *Voice of Palestine* director Bassem Abusumaya said the station had resumed broadcasting news, songs and talk shows on FM frequencies used by private radio stations. Palestinian television continued broadcasting out of Gaza. The Palestinian leadership denounced the Israeli strike as a "cheap crime" intended "to silence the Palestinian voice so the world won't know about the brutal crime the Israeli occupation has carried out against our people". It called on the United Nations and human rights groups in a statement to condemn Israel's action. Israeli government spokesman Arie Mekel said the *Voice of Palestine* had "long been a centre of incitement against Israel", which would "continue to do whatever necessary" to protect its citizens to avoid a repetition of the Hadera attack. International media watchdogs condemned the step as "totally unacceptable" and "reprehensible". On January 21, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan condemned Israel for the act, saying violence would not resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

On January 20, a cameraman for *Abu Dhabi TV*, **Haitham Omari**, who was covering a gun battle between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers in Ramallah, was hit by a bullet that penetrated his camera, causing injuries to his neck and knee. Omari was taken to hospital immediately and was still recovering from his injuries in February. Due to the precision with which Omari was hit, it may be inferred that he was targeted in his capacity as a reporter.

On January 22, after its occupation of three Palestinian towns, Dir el Balah, Beit Hanun and Beit Lahya, the Israeli army prohibited international journalists and diplomats entry into the Gaza strip. Correspondents who wanted to report on events there were turned away at the border. Only following protests from international media outlets were a handful of correspondents allowed entry.

On January 24, *Reuters* reported a statement on behalf of *The Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation* that it planned to demand at least \$10 million in compensation from Israel for the destruction of the *PBC*'s headquarters. The attack effectively failed to force *Voice of Palestine* radio off the air because it switched to other frequencies. "We are considering the issue of compensation with legal organisations," *PBC* head Radwan Abu Ayyash told a news conference in Ramallah. "We will sue the Israeli government," he said, adding that the *PBC* planned to pursue the matter through unspecified international channels. Abu Ayyash said the *PBC* estimated the cost of destroyed transmission equipment at between \$10 and \$15 million. He said no estimate had been reached on the cost of the *PBC* building, which had been leased. He also said the transmission equipment had been donated by European countries and the United States after the establishment of the *PBC* in 1994, a year after signing the breakthrough Oslo peace accords. Israel had no immediate comment on the demand for compensation.

On February 2, Palestinian police harassed and confiscated the tapes of camera crews who were filming rioting outside a courtroom in the West Bank city of Jenin. A Palestinian mob had earlier stormed the courtroom and killed three defendants accused in a murder case.

Two journalists, **Nabil Abu Dayyeh**, a cameraman for the *PBC*, and **Samer Abu Daqqa**, a soundman for *Al-Jazeera*, were among the 37 victims of an Israeli air strike on a security compound in Gaza on February 11. Four of the victims were wounded critically. It remains unclear if there were any journalists among the latter group.

According to RSF, on February 13, Israeli security forces prevented journalists from travelling to the Gaza Strip, as numerous television crews were blocked at the Eretz border checkpoint. Israeli tanks and bulldozers had previously entered the towns of Beit Lahya, Beit Hannun and Deir al-Balah. Only a pool of print media journalists were allowed to enter the zone. The Foreign Press Association in Israel protested against the curbing of journalistic rights.

On February 14, **Sagui Bashan**, a TV journalist for Israel's *Channel Two*, was fired upon in his car by Israeli soldiers as he was leaving the Gaza Strip. He had been covering the Israeli army incursion into the area. He was stopped at a military barricade close to Netzarim. After

showing his press card to the soldiers, he asked to see the order from a superior officer stating that the Karni crossing was a "closed military territory". When the soldiers told him they did not have such a document, he told the soldiers that he intended to approach the Karni crossing and drove off. After he had driven a few metres, the soldiers opened fire on his car, which carried clear "Press" markings. Bashan was wounded in the shoulder and leg by ricochets from live ammunition rounds, and was later admitted to Soroka Hospital, in the town of Beersheva.

On February 21, Israeli soldiers raided the offices and studios of the Palestinian National Authority, in the Gaza Strip. They confiscated equipment and later blew up the *Voice of Palestine* headquarters building, setting it on fire and causing it to collapse, again taking radio and television transmissions off the air. In a protest, CPJ said that they had analysed *Voice of Palestine* broadcasts and found them non-military in purpose, thus challenging the Israeli attempt to justify the repeated attacks against the *Voice of Palestine*.

According to CPJ in March, Palestinian information minister Yasser Abed Rabbo urged *Al-Jazeera* not to air a live interview with Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon because of his aggressive attitude toward Palestinians. The interview was eventually cancelled because, according to *Al-Jazeera*, Sharon failed to cooperate with the station's terms, which required a Doha-based interviewer rather than an Israeli-based one.

RSF reported that **Benny Lis**, a reporter for Israeli TV station *Channel One*, was slightly wounded in his left hand by Palestinian sniper-fire in Bethlehem on March 5 while he was with Israeli soldiers. He was not wearing a bulletproof jacket.

On March 12-13 the IDF stormed Ramallah and other towns and areas under Palestinian Authority rule in its largest military offensive against Palestinians in 35 years. Supported by at least 150 tanks, bulldozers, artillery and the air force, the IDF laid siege in what it said was a punitive action against Palestinians following an escalation in violence between the two sides.

According to eyewitness accounts, on 12 March Israeli troops in Ramallah confiscated a vehicle belonging to a media organization – an initial report said it belonged to *Abu Dhabi Television* – in an apparent attempt to disguise themselves and carry out military operations against Palestinians. The vehicle carried the word "TV" in large, clear markings.

On March 12, heavy Israeli machinegun fire shattered the windows of a *Link Productions* office at the City Inn Hotel in Ramallah, narrowly missing **Franz Normann**, a correspondent for the Austrian public broadcaster, *ORF*, and around 30 other journalists working for various other organisations, who were in the building at the time. Fortunately, there were no injuries, but gunfire destroyed an *ABC* camera after the fleeing crew left it on its tripod. Reports from the journalists present indicated that there were no ongoing hostilities in the area at the time and that the IDF was aware that journalists occupied the building. Israeli forces gave no prior warning of the attack, which lasted for about 15 minutes.

Raffaele Ciriello, an Italian free-lance photographer who was on assignment for the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, was killed by Israeli gunfire on March 13, during the re-occupation of Ramallah. **Amedeo Ricucci** of the Italian television station *Rai Uno* told CPJ that he and his cameraman were accompanying Ciriello at the time of the incident. They were trailing a group of Palestinian gunmen who were some 200 yards in front of the journalists. Ricucci said the area was quiet and was located roughly 500 yards from a nearby refugee camp where fighting between Israelis and Palestinians was taking place. The three journalists were standing inside a building off an alleyway. Shortly afterward, a tank emerged at one end of the street some 150 yards away, he said. Ciriello left the building and pointed his camera at the tank. He then came under fire without warning. Ciriello was shot in the stomach six times and died of his wounds soon afterwards. The IDF said the area had been closed to journalists and that journalists who entered the area were "endangering" themselves and claimed that it was not clear whether Ciriello's death was caused by Israeli or Palestinian gunfire. After diplomatic pressure from Italy, the IDF started an investigation into Ciriello's death. It is unclear whether any journalists in Ramallah, the largest city on the West Bank aside from Jerusalem and

home to many media outlets and offices, were warned in any way by the IDF that the area was closed. On August 23, the Israeli army said its investigation found "no evidence and no knowledge of an (army) force that fired in the direction of the photographer." In a response, IFJ said the army report was a whitewash and "lacking all balance and credibility". It called for an independent inquiry into the shooting, a move supported by Ciriello's own union, the Italian Association of Journalists. In June, a monument for Ciriello, which had been erected by local journalists on the spot where he died, was destroyed. Palestinians say Israeli troops destroyed it, but the Israelis deny they were responsible.

Also on March 13, according to several press reports, a French photographer, who did not want to be named, was wounded in the leg during the fighting in Ramallah. He said he did not know whether shrapnel or a bullet had hit him.

On the same day, **Tareq Abdel Jaber**, a reporter for *Egyptian TV*, told CPJ that he and his cameraman were driving on a main street in Ramallah when their car, which was clearly identified as a press vehicle, came under fire. There was no fighting taking place in the area at the time, Abdel Jaber said. Bullets penetrated the car and struck his flak jacket, but he was not seriously hurt. Although Abdel Jaber did not visually identify the shooter, he said that Israeli tanks and military personnel surrounded the entire area.

The Ramallah offices of *Al-Jazeera* came under Israeli fire on March 13, according to CPJ. The office was hit by Israeli machine gun fire shortly after *Al-Jazeera* correspondents finished an interview with Palestinian information minister Yasser Abed Rabbo. The gunfire came from a tank stationed about 100 meters beyond the office and struck a window from which a second staff cameraman was filming Israeli-Palestinian clashes some 300 meters away. One round narrowly missed the cameraman's head. Others in the office, including Minister Abed Rabbo, ducked for cover, *Al-Jazeera* sources said.

The *Associated Press (AP)* reported that some 20 Israeli soldiers searched the building housing the *AP's* Ramallah office on 13 March. The soldiers searched the office and then took positions on a higher floor, where they attracted Palestinian fire.

In a letter of protest concerning the events that took place on the March 12 and 13, IPI said, "At least two of these press freedom violations appear to be part of a concerted strategy by the Israeli army to control reports on the recent surge in armed hostilities in the region. In addition, IPI believes they have been undertaken with a criminal disregard for civilian lives. Moreover, the apparent decision by the IDF to disguise some of its forces places journalists at risk. In the opinion of IPI the decision represents an intentional blurring of the line between combatants and non-combatants. For this reason, it is inexcusable." Furthermore, IPI said it regards "these crude attacks on journalists and media outlets and the abuse of media infrastructure as gross violations of everyone's right to 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers' as guaranteed by Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Amjad al-Alami, a 22-year-old cameraman from a local Palestinian television station was killed by Israeli gunfire in Hebron on March 18, according to *Reuters*. Other sources said he was wearing a bullet-proof flak jacket clearly marked with the letters "TV", taking pictures near his studio in a refugee camp, when he was killed by a single shot to the head by an Israeli sniper.

On the same day, Israeli defence minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer told the Knesset Defence Committee that journalists would not be allowed to accompany Israeli troops while they operate in the occupied West Bank or Gaza. This came after Israeli troops had been criticised by governments and organisations around the world for their use of excessive force in Palestinian cities and villages.

On March 29, **Carlos Handal**, a cameraman for the Egyptian television station *Nile TV*, was seriously wounded by gunfire while driving in Ramallah with a colleague. Handal was filming

from the window of a mini-van clearly marked "TV", driven by his colleague **Raed el-Helu**, when he was hit in the throat by a bullet that came through the windshield. Other bullets also hit the vehicle. Handal was taken to a private hospital, the Arab Medical Centre, and placed in intensive care. El-Helu said the shots came from an Israeli sniper.

A crew from the French TV station *France 2* were fired at by Israeli troops when they attempted to pass a roadblock between East Jerusalem and Ramallah on the following day.

Also on March 30, Israeli soldiers again broke into the headquarters of *The Voice of Palestine*, forcing it to go off the air. The troops ordered four journalists to leave their offices. The Ministry of Culture building that housed a local radio and TV station was also occupied.

On the same day, Israeli soldiers entered a building that houses offices of several Palestinian and foreign media, including the British news agency *Reuters*, and forced the journalists to leave. Four Turkish journalists, Talip Alpdogan, Burak Ersemiz, Mete Cubukcu, and Mustafa Sap, were detained at the Ramallah press centre for several hours by Israeli soldiers who searched them, confiscated their passports and prevented them from leaving the building.

The vehicle of Swedish journalists **Bengt Norborg** and **Rickard Collsjö**, special correspondents for the Swedish public TV station *SVT*, was the target of warning shots fired by Israeli troops at a roadblock on the outskirts of Ramallah on the following day.

An American journalist, **Anthony Shahid** of the *Boston Globe*, was hit in the shoulder by a bullet although he was wearing a bulletproof vest with "Press" written on it. Shahid said he did not see who fired at him but said Israeli tanks and soldiers surrounded the area at the time.

RSF reported that **Maher Hussein Romaneh**, a presenter on *The Voice of Palestine* radio, was arrested in Ramallah on March 30 and taken to the Ofer detention centre. He reportedly had two broken ribs but the army refused to allow him to be taken to hospital or permit his family to visit him. He was freed on April 26.

Mahmud Fatafta, of the daily paper *Al-Quds*, was briefly arrested in Ramallah on 31 March by Israeli soldiers as he was watching an army raid on a building.

The Israeli government told media organisations on March 31 that it would be strictly applying rules under which journalists must submit reports about defence matters to a military censor.

Palestinian gunmen who shot dead a man suspected of collaborating with Israel on April 1 confiscated *Reuters* television footage and photographs of the incident in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. At least three masked gunmen dragged the man through the streets in the early hours of the morning and shot him dead in a car park off Manger Square, site of the church built on the spot where Christians believe Jesus was born. A *Reuters* cameraman and a *Reuters* photographer who were on the scene shortly afterwards filmed the dead man, who was blindfolded and had his hands tied, as well as his killers. The gunmen initially allowed *Reuters* and several other media organisations to continue filming but later ordered them to hand over the footage and photographs, saying: "We will hold you personally responsible if these pictures appear." The videocassette was destroyed on the spot and the film was wiped clean. *Reuters* protested the incident to the Palestinian Authority.

Six foreign civilian volunteers protesting the Israeli invasion were injured when they marched up to tanks in Beit Jala on April 1, according to *AP*. One woman was hit in the stomach by a bullet, and witnesses said the others were struck by shrapnel after an Israeli soldier fired into the ground. An *Associated Press Television News* cameraman, **Iyad Hamad**, was also lightly injured by the shrapnel.

In another incident an Israeli soldier kicked and pushed a *Reuters* cameraman and fired one shot over his head while he was covering the demonstration. *Reuters* lodged a complaint with

the army over this incident.

On April 1, Israeli soldiers expelled an American *CBS News* television team from Ramallah. At the same time, a vehicle containing six Western reporters and photographers was fired at by Israeli troops near the city centre, according to RSF. "I think the soldiers got worked up and fired a hail of bullets in our direction," said one of the journalists, who refused to be named.

On the same day, *BBC* reporter **Orla Guerin** and her television crew came under Israeli machine-gun fire while covering peaceful protesters walking through the streets of Bethlehem, according to CPJ. The crew took cover behind a car that was clearly marked "Press". No one was injured in the attack.

On April 1, CPJ reported that *NBC* correspondent **Dana Lewis** and his two-person camera crew came under IDF fire in Ramallah at dusk while driving in an armoured car that was clearly identified as a press vehicle. After an initial burst of gunfire hit the car, a lone IDF soldier opened fire with a second burst from a range of about 50 to 100 feet (15 to 30 meters). The journalists then stopped the car, turned on an interior light to make themselves visible, and placed their hands on the windshield. After 15 to 20 seconds, the soldier fired a third burst, hitting the windshield. The *NBC* crew escaped by driving away in reverse.

On the same day **Majdi Banura**, a cameraman with the Qatar-based satellite channel *Al-Jazeera*, was injured when Israeli troops fired live rounds at the Star Hotel in Bethlehem, where most journalists covering the Israel army's incursion into the West Bank were staying. Two of Banura's colleagues told CPJ that he and several journalists were standing in fifth floor of the hotel when Israeli troops began firing into the hotel. Both journalists said that there was heavy Israeli-Palestinian cross fire outside at the time. As bullets punctured the window, Banura was struck in the head by broken glass but was not seriously injured.

Ismail Khader, a cameraman for *Reuters*, and **Mark Mina**, a cameraman for the *Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC)*, were forced to strip down to their underwear by Israeli troops on the fourth day of the Israeli army's incursion into Ramallah, which began on March 29. Khader and Mina told CPJ that they were in an armoured car owned by *Reuters*, which was clearly identified as a press vehicle. Israeli troops signalled the journalists to stop as they neared Al Manara Square, which had been secured by Israeli forces at the time. Both men said that there was no exchange of fire in the area that morning. The soldiers ordered the men out of the car and motioned for Khader to approach. When he was about 20 meters away, the soldiers ordered both men to place their cameras and cell phones on the ground and to remove their flak jackets, shirts, and pants. When he refused to remove his pants, Khader said a soldier threatened to shoot him. The journalists were forced to kneel in their underwear for about 25 minutes before being allowed to leave.

On the following day, Israel threatened the US television stations *CNN* and *NBC* with legal action, since they had continued to report from Ramallah. The city of 210,000 inhabitants had been declared closed to journalists by Israel on March 29. Initially, however, the Israeli army had only sporadically enforced its closure. Bethlehem was declared closed to journalists by Israel on April 2. The Foreign Press Association in Israel protested both closures.

On the same day, **Atta Oweisat**, a photographer working for the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot* and the *Gamma* news agency, was arrested by Israeli soldiers in Beitunia in the West Bank when they discovered he was not properly accredited. He was held for six hours during which he was handcuffed and blindfolded. **André Durand**, a journalist who works for *Agence France Presse*, was held together with Oweisat and released after two hours.

Abbas al-Moumani, a photojournalist who also works for *Agence France Presse*, was driving his car, which was clearly marked with "TV", on Manari, the main square in the centre of Ramallah, on the same day, when Israeli soldiers opened fire at his car and a live bullet hit the rear view mirror inside the car. The driver was not hurt. The car was stopped and Israeli

soldiers confiscated Moumani's camera. They forced him to put his hands behind his head and left him standing for three hours, after which they returned his camera and ordered him to leave the area, LAW reported.

In a letter of protest CPJ reported that, on the same day, Israeli authorities revoked the press credentials of two *Abu Dhabi TV* reporters, locally based correspondent **Leilah Odeh** and visiting correspondent **Jassem Azawi**.

In Bethlehem on April 2, according to CPJ, an Israeli soldier fired one round toward the car of *Reuters* photographer **Magnus Johansson**, which was clearly identified as a press vehicle. Johansson heard soldiers shouting at him. When he got out of the car, he was ordered back in. The shot was fired as he attempted to drive away.

Ahmed Assi, a cameraman with the *Arab News Network (ANN)*, was arrested by Israeli soldiers in Ramallah on the same day and imprisoned in Ashkelon.

On April 2, CPJ reported that Israeli troops in the West Bank town of Bethlehem opened fire on a car carrying journalists **Marc Innaro**, **Mauro Mauritz**, and **Fernando Pellegrini**, of Italy's television and radio station *RAI*; **Toni Capuozzo** and **Garu Nalbandian**, of the Italian television station *TG5*; and **Luciano Gulli**, of the Italian daily *Il Giornale*. The journalists had gone to Bethlehem to cover the Israeli army's military offensive in the West Bank and were travelling in a white armoured car marked "TV".

On April 3, **Ashraf Farraj** and **Jalal Ehmadi** of the Bethlehem TV station *Al-Rouah* were arrested by Israeli soldiers at the Bethlehem press centre and deported to the Beitunia detention centre near Ramallah. **Maher Hussein Romanneh**, a presenter on *Palestinian Radio*, was arrested in Ramallah on the same day and taken to the Ofer detention centre.

CPJ reported that on April 3, Israeli troops entered the Bakri building in Ramallah, which houses three private Palestinian Radio Stations and one TV station. **Faed Said Akro** and another worker were on the sixth floor, when soldiers ordered both men to strip to their underwear, checked them for explosives, and slapped handcuffs and blindfolds on them. The soldiers then forced Arko to lead them to *Nasr TV* and *Menara Radio*, which broadcast from the same studio. They ordered Arko to enter the room first to make sure there were no explosives or Palestinian snipers. Then the soldiers entered the studio. Using sledgehammers, they smashed television screens in the front office and then entered the broadcasting room, where they removed hard drives from computers and destroyed all the other equipment.

IFJ reported that on April 4, 16 Palestinian journalists were arrested in the press centre in Bethlehem Municipality by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and were transported to the military Headquarters at Kefar Etzion near Bethlehem. IFJ reported that three journalists were released from Israeli detention on the same day and three more were let go the same evening. Ten remained in detention. The six journalists freed were **Said Ayyid** (journalist, *Voice of Palestine*), **Walid Abu Alia** (photographer, *Al-rouah TV*), **Ahmad Mezher** (photographer, *Al-Mahed TV*), **Mustafa Salah** (editor, *Al-rouah TV*), **Ala Daoud** (technical operator, *Al-rouah TV*), and **Ala al-Abed** (*Palestine Broadcasting Corporation*).

AP Photo/Peter Dejong



Journalists run for cover as they are chased by Israeli soldiers in the streets of the West Bank town of Bethlehem on April 4.

On April 4, LAW reported that Israeli forces fired a pepper gas canister at a group of about 30 journalists attempting to cover a standoff between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians at the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. *Reuters* reporter, **Christine Hauser**, was cited by LAW as saying that an Israeli soldier had then told the journalists to back off "or we will use everything we have against you".

According to *Reuters*, Israeli troops threw stun grenades to turn back foreign journalists on their way to cover US envoy Anthony Zinni's meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the West Bank on April 5. A *Reuters* correspondent among the 25 foreign journalists in six armoured cars saw two Israeli jeeps and an unmarked vehicle blocking the access road to Arafat's compound in Ramallah. The troops inside then threw stun grenades, which are used to disorient and frighten their targets by creating a loud noise and a bright flash. One grenade exploded under *CNN* reporter **Michael Holmes'** foot. As the convoy turned back, some of the channel Al-Jazeera, was injured when Israeli troops fired live rounds at the Star Hotel in Bethlehem, where most journalists covering the Israel army's incursion into the West Bank were stsed by the *CNN* crew.

On the same day, the German news agency, *DPA*, reported that two German journalists travelling with a German medical relief team were harassed and shot at by Israeli soldiers. *DPA* did not mention names of the journalists nor their affiliations. This shows that an increasing number of journalists who become victims of Israeli army harassment or violence prefer to remain anonymous. This could be interpreted as a disturbing sign. Reporting violence against journalists can lead to repercussions from the Israeli army or even the GPO, and some press freedom violations may thus remain unreported.

AP Photo/Nasser Nasser

Similarly, on April 5, reporters for the press freedom organisation *Reporters sans Frontières* were refused accreditation and access to the occupied Palestinian territories by the Israeli



A television cameraman jumps from the explosion of a stun grenade, thrown by an Israeli soldier, in front of Yasser Arafat's compound in Ramallah on April 5. Journalists attempting to cover the scheduled Ramallah, which began on March 29. Khader and Mina told CPJ that they were in an armoured car owned by Reuters, which was clearly identified as a press vehicle.

On April 8, IFJ reported that Israeli troops in the West Bank arrested a reporter and destroyed the independent broadcasting station at Al-Quds University. Eyewitnesses reported that Israeli forces raided and ransacked the offices of several news organizations in Ramallah, using gunfire and explosives to enter the buildings. Equipment was destroyed and journalists in the building were harassed and intimidated. No one was injured, and Israeli military officials claimed the searches were part of their broader effort to find terrorists. Media affected by the raid were *CNN*, *Abu Dhabi TV*, *Nile TV*, *Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC)*, and the *Arab News Network (ANN)*.

On the same day, **Raed al-Helw**, a cameraman for *Nile TV*, was attacked in Ramallah by Israeli forces.

The following day in Nablus, **Gilles Jaquier**, a cameraman for *France 2* was shot above his flak jacket somewhere between his neck and chest. The perpetrator(s) remain unidentified. On the same day, **Yuzuru Saito**, a reporter for *Tokyo TV* in Bethlehem, was threatened

government due to their "political" reporting.

According to RSF **J rome Marcantetti**, a cameraman for the French TV station *LCI*, was shot in the thigh and seriously wounded by an Israeli soldier in the centre of Bethlehem on April 5 when he was turning back as he had been ordered to. He was with another of the station's cameramen, **Olivier Ravello**.

LAW reported on April 6 that a *Reuters* team was being detained and held by Israeli soldiers in a commercial building in downtown Nablus. Similarly, **Jassem al-Azzawi**, a correspondent for *Abu Dhabi Television* with US citizenship, was detained and deported by the Israeli government on the same day without being allowed to contact the US consulate.

On the same day, **Husam Abu Allan**, a photographer for *Agence France Presse*, and four other journalists from a Spanish television station were shot at in Yatta by the Israeli army although they wore clearly marked press jackets and waved a white cloth.

AP Photo/Nasser Nasser



A stun grenade thrown by an Israeli soldier explodes in the middle of a group of journalists, in front of Yasser Arafat's compound in the besieged West Bank city of Ramallah on April 5.

and had his video tapes with recordings confiscated by the Israeli army. **Vincent Benhamou**, a cameraman, also had his videotapes confiscated by the Israeli army, and shots were fired around him in order to intimidate him and chase him out of the area.

RSF reported that *Reuters* photographer **Laszlo Balogh** said he came under automatic fire from an Israeli armoured car in Bethlehem on April 9 as he got out of his easily identifiable armoured press vehicle.

In a joint statement made by the International Press Institute, International Federation of Journalists, Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Sans Frontieres, Foreign Press Association and World Association of Newspapers dated April 9 the press freedom groups wrote:

The undersigned organizations call on the government of Israel to allow the foreign media access to the cities of the West Bank. The prolonged attempt to seal off entire cities, where hundreds of thousands of people live, has been excessive, unjustifiable and utterly counterproductive. We furthermore call on Israeli officials to desist from public attacks on the foreign press in which irresponsible generalisations have been employed to criticize the way we conduct our business. They only undermine the freedom of the press and endanger journalists. We also repeat our fervent call on Israel to accredit Palestinian journalists working for the foreign press out of the Palestinian territories. The current operation in Areas A only shows, yet again, why these professionals need, for their safety, to be able to identify themselves to Israeli soldiers as journalists. The government promised to issue "territories-only" accreditations two months ago, and the promise has not been implemented. We call on the government to make good on this pledge without any further delay. At the same time we call on all the Palestinian factions to cease efforts to confiscate materials or intimidate journalists. Attempts to suppress unflattering visuals are utterly unacceptable. We call on the Palestinian authorities to reject such tactics unequivocally. The foreign press here has a proud and long tradition of excellent and unbiased journalism. Its job is to report this complicated and delicate story -- a story that generates tremendous interest abroad. It is important that it be allowed to carry out this mission.

Nasser Ishtayeh, a photographer for *AP*, and **Jafer Ishtayeh** from *AFP* were held by Israeli soldiers for one and a half hours close to the village of Salem on April 10. They were forced to strip at gunpoint, but refused to hand over their bulletproof vests and films. They were barred access to Nablus and forced to return to where they came from.

On April 11, Israeli soldiers assaulted a group of local and foreign journalists around the Jenin refugee camp. **Atta Awisat** from *Gamma*, **Rowhi al-Rasem** from *APTM*, **Amar Awad** from *Reuters* and **Jerome Delay** from *AP* were forced to take their clothes off. Their press cards and film were confiscated, their entry into Jenin refused.

On the same day, **Carlos Yousef Handal**, a cameraman for *Nile TV*, was refused passage and denied an access permit to an East Jerusalem hospital from Ramallah for an operation on a gunshot wound perpetrated by Israeli troops two weeks prior to this date. Handal was shot in the neck and jaw while driving in Ramallah on March 29.

The Israeli army detained and harassed a group of journalists, including **Walid el-Omari**,

correspondent for *Al-Jazeera*, and a Spanish TV crew, for several hours on April 13 at a roadblock at Jalameh, near Jenin, confiscating equipment and four videotapes.

Eight journalists, including *APTN* cameraman **Rawhi el-Rasem**, were stopped by Israeli soldiers at the entrance to Ramallah, Jenin and other cities on April 14 and had their film equipment seized.

Reporters from the Israeli daily *Yediot Adhronot*, the *Reuters* news agency, and two reporters from *AFP* were barred from entering Jenin on April 15.

RSF reported that **Khalid el-Zwawi**, a correspondent of the daily *Istiqlal* in Nablus, was arrested at his home on April 15 in the middle of the night by a group of Israeli soldiers using a Palestinian civilian as a human shield. They seized computer equipment and books; Zwawi was taken to the district coordination office and then to prison in the southern city of Ashkelon. The Israeli prime minister's office said in a letter on November 17 that he was an active member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist group.

On April 16, *AP* reporter **Mohamed Daraghmeh**, who also writes for the Palestinian daily *Al-Ayam*, was detained by Israeli forces in Nablus. He and thirty other Palestinian men were apprehended from the building in which they resided during an army sweep of the neighbourhood. He was released the same night but did not arrive home until the following day due to the curfew in Nablus. He was repeatedly harassed by Israeli soldiers as he made his way back home.

AP Photo/Str



A Swedish TV crew were fired at in their vehicle in Ramallah on the same day. **Peder Carlqvist**, a member of the crew, said that the shots were fired in response to orders from Israeli soldiers.

Two Palestinian journalists, **Maher Shalabi** and **Majid Sawalha** of the Morocco state TV station were arrested by Israeli soldiers in the centre of Ramallah on April 16. They were blindfolded, handcuffed and were beaten before being released.

On April 18, according to CPJ, Israeli forces arrested **Maher al-Dessouki**, the host of a talk show on the Ramallah-based *Al-Quds Educational TV*. Al-Dessouki was taken from his brother-in-law's home along with another journalist, **Kamel Jbeil**. Both were held at the Ofer detention facility under "administrative detention". Dessouki hosts the popular weekly talk show "Space for Opinion." Maher al-Dessouki, was released on June 27. No charges were made against Al-Dessouki. Jbeil remained in detention with two other journalists. Jbeil, a journalist with the

Associated Press reporter Mohammed Daraghmeh shows a white flag given to him by Israeli soldiers, and his ID card, near Nablus on April 17, following his release from an Israeli detention center.

Daraghmeh, who reports on events in the West Bank for AP, was released after being detained by Israeli troops in the morning of the previous day during an arrest sweep of his neighborhood.

Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds*, was finally released on September 15.

On April 20, **Mahfouz Abu Turk**, 52, a veteran Palestinian news photographer with *Reuters*, was detained at an Israeli army checkpoint near Jenin. An army spokesman said that Abu Turk's identity card number appeared on a list of people Israel wanted to detain for questioning, though he did not say why. However, following his release Abu Turk said: "I was not asked a single question during my confinement. I was arrested without cause." He had been with a *Reuters* news crew returning from a tour of Jenin's devastated refugee camp when troops detained him. Abu Turk said he was kept blindfolded with his hands tied for 20 hours at a military encampment in northern Israel before troops dropped him back in the West Bank, one kilometre from the dividing line with the Jewish state. When his blindfold slipped at one point, Abu Turk saw he was confined to the back half of a military bus separated by razor wire from the front of the vehicle occupied by soldiers. He was held with five other blindfolded Palestinian detainees. When one prisoner asked for a cigarette and another complained of stomach cramps, guards shouted them down, he said. Tired, thirsty and hungry, Abu Turk walked back into Israel after his release, passing an army checkpoint without difficulty for a taxi ride back to the *Reuters* bureau in Jerusalem.

On April 22, Israeli soldiers confiscated the press cards of 17 foreign and Palestinian journalists who had attempted to approach Bethlehem's Church of Nativity, the site of an ongoing standoff between the Israeli army and Palestinians holed up inside. According to CPJ, troops stopped them when the journalists, from news organisations including *Reuters*, *AP*, *Al-Jazeera*, *the BBC*, and *AFP*, tried to approach the church. An officer told the group that it was a closed military area and ordered the journalists' press cards confiscated. Most of the cards were returned later that day following protests from news organisations.

According to RSF *AFP* photographer **Hussam Abu Alan**, was arrested on April 24 at the Beit Anun roadblock near Hebron. Abu Alan was detained while attempting to reach a nearby village to cover the funeral of Palestinian militants killed by Israeli forces. An army spokesman said he had been detained because he was in the Israel-controlled Zone C and did not have a press card on him. The Foreign Press Association expressed its great concern on May 1 about the arrests of Palestinian journalists and said the argument about lack of press cards was absurd because the government press office had refused accreditation to virtually all Palestinian journalists since January. According to CPJ, on October 22, Abu Alan, who had been held by Israeli authorities without charge for nearly six months, was finally released. "We are glad that our colleague Abu Alan has been freed," said CPJ executive director Ann Cooper. "But his release today only confirms our belief that the Israeli government deprived him of his liberty for six months without justification."

On April 26, Palestinian security authorities in Hebron ordered the Hebron-based *Amal TV* to suspend broadcasting for allegedly jamming the frequency of *Palestine TV*, although officials at *Palestine TV* were apparently unaware of any jamming. CPJ said, "Staff at *Amal TV* suspect the closure was in reprisal for the broadcast of a program about the topic of corruption in Islam or a story about a Palestinian man who had held his son captive for several years in a cave in Hebron." The station resumed broadcasting in mid-May.

According to RSF Israeli soldiers arrested **Iyyad el-Juneidi**, head of the Hebron TV station *Al Mostaqbal*, at his office on April 29 and destroyed some of the station's equipment. El-Juneidi was held at the Ofer detention centre until May 14.

On April 30, Israeli troops in Hebron detained **Youssri al-Jamal**, a soundman for the *Reuters* news agency. According to CPJ Al-Jamal and *Reuters* cameraman **Mazen Da'ana** were filming near the Al-Ahli Hospital when soldiers demanded to see their identification cards and then informed them that they were under arrest. RSF later reported that as they were being taken away, a soldier pointed a gun at their heads and asked them how they preferred to die. They were interrogated on the next day and Da'ana was freed with apologies. Jamal was kept in administrative detention for over five months, until October 9, without charge.

Ayman el-Kawasmi, head of a local radio station, *El Horiya*, was arrested in his home on

April 30 and sent to the Ofer detention centre the next day. Soldiers destroyed all the equipment at the radio station. He was freed on July 15.

RSF reported that **Ammar Awad**, a cameraman working for *Reuters*, was wounded while filming at the Qalandia roadblock, between Ramallah and Jerusalem, on May 7, when a soldier fired at the ground and fragments hit Awad.

Palestinian police banned **Musa el-Shaer**, an *Agence France-Presse (AFP)* photographer, from going into the Omar mosque in Bethlehem on May 13 while other journalists were allowed in. He was forcibly taken to a police station before being freed with apologies.

CPJ reported censorship of the private broadcast media in the West Bank. On May 17, Palestinian security authorities shut down the Bethlehem-based *Al-Roa' TV* after a play was broadcast on 13 May that authorities claimed incited "prejudice" between Christians and Muslims. CPJ said: "For more than a year, *Al-Roa' TV* has been the target of repeated official harassment for its independent news coverage and programming."

On May 22, Israeli troops detained *Reuters* photographer **Suhaib Jadallah Salem** at the Abu Holi checkpoint in the Gaza Strip. Salem was arrested while attempting to enter the town of Rafah. According to *Reuters*, Salem was travelling to Egypt, where he was supposed to catch a flight to Japan to cover the World Cup soccer tournament. He was travelling in a *Reuters* armoured car, clearly identified as a press vehicle, with a driver and two other passengers. On May 27, he was released by Israeli authorities after being detained for five days. According to *Reuters* news reports, no charges were filed.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) censored the print and broadcast media in the West Bank and Gaza in late May, according to CPJ and RSF. On May 22 and May 23, Palestinian security authorities arrested three journalists working for the Islamist weekly *Al-Risala* in Gaza after they published an article on May 20 alleging the Palestinian police had tortured Ayman Amassi in detention. Editor **Wisam Afeefa**, editor-in-chief **Saleh Bardaweel**, and managing editor **Ghazi Hamad** were interrogated at the Criminal Investigation Department in Gaza.

Mashhur Abu Eid, a correspondent for the official Jordanian news agency, *Petra*, was arrested by Israeli soldiers on May 31. Four days later, according to RSF, the journalist was driven to the Jordanian border in a prisoner bus with his legs tied and then expelled. Eid was arrested along with seven Western peace activists in the Balata Palestinian refugee camp, near Nablus. The city was declared a closed military zone at the time of the Israeli incursion. Eid arrived in Israel on May 27 with the necessary press accreditation. He first went to Nablus and then to Jenin on May 30 before going to the Balata camp. He wanted to film a gathering of Western peace activists who had come to inquire into the human rights situation inside Palestinian refugee camps. Eid was accused of failing to respect a closed military area and resisting arrest. On June 2, the journalist refused to sign his deportation order and, along with the seven peace activists, asked to be allowed to appeal to the Supreme Court, to seek the annulment of his deportation order. The Jordanian foreign minister and *Petra* then negotiated with the Israeli authorities to secure his release.

According to RSF **Ala Badarneh**, of the privately-owned radio station *Tareek el Mahabeh* and the newspaper *Al Quds el Arabi*, and **Hassan Titi**, a *Reuters* cameraman, came under Israeli gunfire while driving through Governor's Square in Nablus on June 4. Titi was driving a yellow Land Rover with British plates and with banners marked "press." No fighting was going on at the time. A first shot smashed a rear-view mirror and a second punctured a tyre. "We had passed through the square several times that morning and anyway the soldiers knew who we were from previous days," said Badarneh.

RSF reported that **Kahlil Abu Hamra**, an *Associated Press* photographer in the Gaza Strip, was arrested on June 7 while taking pictures of an Israeli army roadblock. He was released from Ashkelon prison on July 17. His digital camera was returned to him but without the

photos he had taken and about which he had been questioned.

An Israeli soldier hit *Reuters* photographer **Nasser Shiyoukhi** with a rifle-butt while he was taking pictures of the army arresting Palestinians in Hebron on June 10. Some of his equipment was confiscated.

The Israeli army continued to restrict the movement of journalists in the West Bank and intensified it with the launch of its "Operation Determined Path" on June 21. The towns of Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, and Bethlehem were declared "closed military areas" and, therefore, off-limits to the press. Some journalists said that they were turned back by soldiers while attempting to enter these cities, and those within the cities have said that they have experienced difficulties in moving around.

On June 22, Palestinian security forces broke into the office of Palestinian journalist, **Zakaria Al-Talmees**, a correspondent for the German public television station, *ARD*. They roughed up office personnel, held them at gunpoint and confiscated videotapes with footage from a festival organised by the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement.

On June 24, the armoured car of *Reuters* cameraman **Hamouda Hassan** and soundman **Abdel Karim Khadr** came under IDF gunfire at the entrance to the al-Amari refugee camp in Ramallah. Israeli soldiers then ordered the two journalists out of the car at gunpoint and detained them for about an hour-and-a-half, said Hassan, who pointed out that his car was clearly marked as a press vehicle.

On June 26, a single bullet pierced the side of the video recorder of veteran cameraman **Mazen Da'ana** as he was filming from a window on the top floor of a three-story apartment building in Hebron. The journalist was filming the Israeli army's destruction of a Palestinian Authority security forces building about 300 meters (330 yards) away. Several Israeli soldiers were stationed about 150 meters (165 yards) from his location. Da'ana did not see who fired the shot, but said that there was no exchange of gunfire in the vicinity of the building at the time of the shooting and added that he had been filming from the same window for about 40 minutes without incident. Other Palestinian residents had been viewing the demolition from a window one floor below where Da'ana was stationed, also without incident.

RSF reported that **Nizar Ramadan**, of the Qatar paper *As-Sharq* and the Internet website *Islam Today*, was arrested in Hebron on June 27. Soldiers searched his office and seized two computers, a fax and a printer. He was first taken to the Ofer detention camp. His detention was extended for 18 days on July 6. A lawyer was not allowed to visit him. The prime minister's office said in a letter on November 17 that he had been charged by a military court with "belonging to an illegal organisation (Hamas), attending secret meetings and helping an illegal organisation." He was sentenced on December 31 to 16 months in prison, with 10 further months suspended.

The army detained **Hassan Titi** (journalist) and **Abed Omar Qusini** (photographer) of *Reuters* for nine hours on June 30 in Nablus for filming in a "closed military zone." Titi said they had been arrested because they were filming a demonstration by foreign pacifists.

RSF reported that **Anas Bensalah** (journalist) and **Hassan Bouchenni** (cameraman), of the Moroccan state TV station *2M*, were arrested by Israeli soldiers on July 4 as they left Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah, where they had interviewed him. The Moroccan Press Union condemned their arrest as "repressive behaviour." They were freed five hours later without explanation. Soldiers had asked them about the situation inside the headquarters, about Arafat's physical and mental health and about their interview.

The headquarter of the Jordanian broadcasting company *JTV* in Ramallah was occupied by the Israeli army on July 8. *JTV* correspondent **Abdallah al-Hoot** said troops barged into the offices, threatened the staff with their guns and searched the premises. They took film, passports and press cards from Al-Hoot and another journalist, **Akil al-Amr**. Their documents

were returned a few hours later, after the intervention of the Jordanian representative in Gaza, Jomaa al-Abadi.

On July 12 **Imad Abu Zahra**, 35, a freelance reporter on mission for the Palestinian news agency *Wafa*, died of his wounds one day after he was shot by Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Jenin. He was wounded in the thigh, lost a lot of blood and slipped into a coma before being brought to the hospital, hospital officials said. **Said Dahla**, a photographer working for the Palestinian news agency *Wafa*, was also wounded in the incident, but survived. An Israeli army spokesman said the shooting began after a group of Palestinian children approached a military vehicle and threw stones and firebombs. The soldiers were then allegedly shot at and returned fire. Palestinian witnesses, however, denied there had been any exchange of fire or any firebombs. The killing was still being investigated by the chief military prosecutor's office at the end of the year.

On July 17, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that Israeli forces at Qalandya military checkpoint between Ramallah and Jerusalem prevented Palestinian journalists from entering Ramallah, claiming that they did not have the necessary permits. According to **Mahmoud Khalouf**, a reporter for the *Palestinian News Agency (Wafa)*, Israeli forces prevented all Palestinian journalists from entering Ramallah, and instead ordered them to contact the "Civil Administration" to obtain the necessary permits.

Gideon Levy, a well-known columnist for the Israeli newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, came under fire from Israeli troops in Tulkarm on August 11 after receiving army authorisation for his visit to the West Bank city. *Ha'aretz* photographer **Miki Kratzman** and a human rights worker were in a taxi with Levy when an Israeli officer directed them towards a military office. 100 metres from the office, the journalists were greeted by a burst of bullets, "three of which hit the windscreen and were thus clearly intended to kill," said Levy, a former aide to former prime minister Shimon Peres, who now writes a weekly column on Palestinian suffering. No one was hurt. The army later said the Israeli officer responsible had been unaware of the authorisation. It gave the platoon commander a suspended 21 days jail sentence, and the operations sergeant who failed to report the entry of the vehicle into the zone was sentenced to 35 days confinement to base. RSF reported that Levy said: "what happened is what happens every day in the Occupied Territories, except that this time it happened to an Israeli Jew and journalist. They weren't just warning shots, they were trying to kill us."

RSF reported that on August 14, **Thierry Oberle**, of the French daily newspaper, *Le Figaro*, had his laptop confiscated at Ben Gurion airport during a pre-flight search and questioning. The computer, which belongs to the newspaper, contained data about work done during his stay in the occupied territories, had still not been returned to him in September.

On August 15, **Ahmed Bahaddou**, a cameraman with *Reuters*, was expelled to Jordan after having been refused entry to Israel and detained overnight at Tel Aviv's Airport. Daniel Seaman, head of the GPO, had, according to RSF, previously promised *Reuters* that Bahaddou would be authorised to return to work in Israel on condition that he only cover the Gaza Strip and West Bank. A Belgian national, Bahaddou was held for 20 hours in a cell at Ben-Gurion Airport after being refused entry on August 14. Seaman said the Interior Ministry had denied Bahaddou entry under pressure from trade unions that object to foreign cameramen working in Israel. Bahaddou has often covered the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since November 2001, without any difficulty until now. Like most foreign journalists, he would enter Israel on a three-month tourist visa and would subsequently obtain the accreditation authorising him to work. In early July, however, the Israeli authorities asked him to obtain a work permit. The Israeli cameramen's union had protested to the Interior Ministry about the large number of foreign cameramen employed by international news media in Israel, to the detriment of Israeli cameramen. However, RSF notes that international news agencies are usually forced to use foreign cameramen to cover the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In part this is because Israeli journalists cannot enter these areas for security reasons. It is also because many Palestinian journalists, lacking press cards, cannot move freely between the different territories. The London *Guardian* later quoted an anonymous source suggesting that the insistence on use of Israeli cameramen may be a ploy to increase the amount of TV footage

broadcast from Israel, as opposed to that from the Occupied Territories. Since the start of 2002, the GPO has refused to renew the accreditation of many Palestinian journalists. Some now only have an accreditation valid for a few months, as opposed to the two-year accreditation that used to be issued. Others only have a new document describing them as "media assistants".

On August 18, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that Israeli forces beat **Nayef D'iab 'Abdul Hafizh al-Hashlamouni**, a reporter working for the *Reuters* press agency from Hebron, while he was filming Israeli troop movements against Palestinian civilians and their property in the West Bank town.

AFP photographer **Said Shawki Dahla**, accused the Israeli army on of stealing US \$2,000 worth of jewellery and three mobile phones when they searched his home in Jenin on August 23. He said an officer threatened him and advised him to "change his job" if he did not want to meet the same fate as a colleague, **Imad Abu Zahra**, who was killed in Jenin in July. An army spokesman said the accusations would be carefully looked into.

Ammar Awad, a *Reuters* photographer, was shot in the shoulder on August 26 by Israeli soldiers firing rubber bullets at stone-throwing youths in the centre of Ramallah.

On August 27, CPJ reported that the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, a professional press association based in the Gaza Strip, attempted to prevent Palestinian and foreign journalists from photographing images of Palestinian children wearing military uniforms or carrying weapons by "banning" such images. However, the group has no legal power over the media and did not say what the consequences would be for those who violate the ban. The syndicate's statement said that such footage serves "the interests of Israel and its propaganda against the Palestinian people," *Associated Press* reported (*AP*). *AP* also quoted syndicate deputy chairman **Tawfik Abu Khosa** as saying that photographs of children in these situations violate children's rights and has "negative effects" on Palestinians. The ban was reversed a few days later after local and international protests.

On August 28, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that **David Silver**, a Swedish journalist, was reporting on the Israeli entry into Jenin. Upon entry into the central square, Israel forces opened fire in his direction, wounding Silver with a live bullet to the right arm, while he was reporting on the events.

Bassam Masaoud, a *Reuters* cameraman, said Israeli troops shot at him, hitting and shattering his camera, while he was filming clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians on August 29 in the Gaza Strip. Masaoud said he had taken precautions not to get caught in crossfire, but had been targeted anyway.

On September 22, **Issam Hamza Al Tilawi**, 30, a Palestinian journalist for *Voice of Palestine*, was shot and killed by an Israeli army sniper while covering a demonstration in the centre of Ramallah. Israeli military sources say troops were returning fire from armed protesters. Witnesses claimed the journalist was clearly wearing a vest marked "press". The killing was reportedly being investigated by the chief military prosecutor's office at the end of the year.

On September 28, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that Israeli forces detained **Nabil Abu Dayeh**, a cameraman for *Palestine Television*, from Gaza, while he was filming a peaceful march that was organised on the second anniversary of al-Aqsa Intifada in the northern Gaza Strip.

On September 30, Israeli soldiers confiscated video footage of clashes between troops and stone-throwing Palestinians taken by **Hassan Titi**, a *Reuters* cameraman, in Nablus. A 10-year-old boy had been killed and more than 20 other youths had been wounded in the clashes.

In the Israeli-occupied city of Jenin, on October 7, **Samir Abu Al-Rob**, a cameraman working

for AP, suffered lacerations to his right leg, shoulders and back when Israeli tanks fired down a street where journalists had gathered, dislodging masonry that fell on him.

Mourners at the Bethlehem funeral of a Palestinian militant on October 14 attacked one of his critics and then set upon foreign journalists. About one hundred mourners chased the man, the head of a local human rights group, until he took refuge in a house, and then attacked journalists who had followed them. *Reuters* photographer **Mahfouz Abu Turk** was treated for back and head injuries. Another photographer had his camera smashed.

Israel's cable television systems and Turner Broadcasting System came to an agreement on October 23 that will keep *Cable News Network (CNN)* on Israeli TV. Israeli government officials had accused *CNN* of perpetrating anti-Israeli bias. The channel was then suspended during trading negotiations between the two partners.

A statement purporting to be from the Palestinian Journalist Syndicate (PJS) on October 28 warned Palestinian members that anyone filming Palestinian children with weapons or masked men at rallies would face union sanctions for violating the rights of children and denigrating the Palestinian cause in the world media. On the same day, the PJS condemned the statement and denied that it had had anything to do with the statement, which had come from a member acting alone.

On October 31, Hamas activists assaulted news cameramen filming in a densely populated neighbourhood in Gaza City where three Palestinians were killed in a series of explosions while making bombs for use against Israeli forces. **Nagib Guban**, an AP cameraman, **Adel Hana**, an AP photographer and **Shams Odeh** of *Reuters* were among those beaten and had their equipment seized or broken. The journalists were treated in hospital for their injuries and released. In response, the PJS announced it would boycott all Hamas-related activities and events. A senior Hamas leader later apologised for the incident to *Reuters*.

According to CPJ, in October settlers punched and assaulted reporters with stones while they covered the dismantling of the Jewish West Bank settlement, Havat Gilad.

On November 19, three Israel border police officers ambushed and beat up *Reuters* cameraman **Mamoun Wazwaz**. There were several witnesses to the incident – including other journalists from *Reuters*, as well as from *ABC* and *Al-Jazeera* – who then brought Wazwaz to hospital. The policemen also roughed up the witnesses.

In November, **Walid Batrawi** a freelance journalist affiliated with IPI said that Palestinian journalists were assaulted as they attempted to report on an explosion that took the lives of three suspected members of Hamas in Gaza City. According to the Palestinian Committee for Human Rights, when reporters arrived at the scene of the explosion, unknown assailants beat them and damaged their cameras.

Kawther Salam, a well-known Palestinian journalist from Hebron, working with *Al-Ittihad*, an Israeli Arab newspaper in Haifa, was granted political asylum in Vienna, Austria on December 5, partly due to interventions by IPI and IFJ. She had received several death threats from both Israeli soldiers and extreme Muslim fundamentalists. Israeli soldiers had also attacked her on several occasions. She said one soldier had broken her arm, whereupon Salam had filed a lawsuit. The Israeli judge, however, deemed the soldier's act to be a "sign of affection". In 2000, her hard-hitting reports on corruption in the Israeli army had led to internal army investigations against two officers. The head of the GPO, Daniel Seaman, had recently let her know that he was not going to let her work in Israel any more, for no other apparent reason than the facts that she is a Palestinian critical reporter and that the army and the Israeli settlers do not "recognise" her work. According to Salam, Seaman threatened to have her arrested if she ever came to his office for a renewal of her press card again.

According to RSF five Palestinian journalists working for the international news agencies *AFP*, *AP* and *Reuters* were held for five hours on December 5 by Israeli army soldiers, who

accused them of disobeying the curfew in Nablus, which was a "closed military zone."

Israel's Film Ratings Board drew an outcry against censorship on December 11 after it banned a documentary on an Israeli offensive in Jenin, which took place earlier in the year. The board said it decided to ban "Jenin, Jenin", by Israeli Arab actor and director **Mohammed Bakri**, for a "distorted presentation of events in the guise of democratic truth which could mislead the public".

Israeli soldiers detained a group of Palestinian cameramen and photographers, on assignment for *Reuters*, *AP* and *AFP*, for five hours on December 15 for breaking a curfew in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Both CPJ and RSF reported that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) closed six private television and radio stations in the West Bank on December 18. Palestinian police ordered the stations in Ramallah and Bethlehem to suspend broadcasting until further notice in a move CPJ says "has been widely interpreted as an attempt by authorities to silence news coverage pertaining to the current US military attack on Iraq, then in its third day." *Al-Roa' TV*, *Al-Mahid TV*, and *Bethlehem TV* were shut down in Bethlehem and *Al-Watan TV*, *Nasr TV*, and the radio station *Voice of Love and Peace* were taken off the air in Ramallah. Broadcasters believe that the closures have come in direct response to their coverage of topics such as "anti-US sentiment and expressions of sympathy with Iraq from Palestinians." According to *AP*, "*Al-Watan TV* had broadcast pro-Iraqi interviews; *Al-Nasr TV* had broadcast nationalist music; and the *Voice of Love and Peace* had devoted its broadcasts on December 12 to a popular nationalist Iraqi singer."

In another incident on December 18, CPJ reported that authorities from the PNA's Anti-Crime Unit ordered the closure of *AP*'s Gaza bureau after informing local staffers of the decision. According to *AP*, no explanation was provided for the closure.

RSF reported that **two Israeli frontier guards at a roadblock near Nablus punched Jaafar Ishtayeh, a Palestinian photographer working for AFP**, on December 19 after they had clearly acknowledged that he was a journalist. They threatened to seize his camera and then dropped the idea when they saw no pictures had been taken. Before letting him go, they threatened to kill him if he came back.

On December 22 the Israeli interior ministry decided to close the radical Islamic weekly *Sawt al-Haq wa Al-Hurriya* (Voice of Truth and Freedom) for two years, on grounds that it threatens national security. The order came at the request of the Shin Beth security service, which stated that the paper is a mouthpiece for the Palestinian militant group Hamas. *Sawt al-Haq wa Al-Hurriya* is published by the radical wing of the Islamic Movement in Israel, a party that has two seats in the Israeli parliament and controls five Arab towns in Israel. The newspaper was given 15 days to appeal the order. The closure order was based on Article 19 (2a) of the 1933 Press Ordinance dating from the period of the British Mandate in Palestine, before the founding of Israel. It was last used in 1953, unsuccessfully. The majority of Israeli newspapers that have been banned are those serving the country's 20 per cent minority of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, but this has been done using laws other than the 1933 measure. At least six Arab papers were shut down in the 1980s and 1990s for having alleged links with a "terrorist organisation" without any direct relation to the newspaper's content.

RSF reported that **Tamer Ziara**, an *Associated Press* cameraman, received head wounds from a ricocheting Israeli bullet while filming a group of foreign pacifists distributing food on December 29 to Palestinians living in an enclave in the middle of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. He was not seriously hurt.