

Canadian media published ‘journalists’ named in IDF investigation as terror operatives

An Israeli dossier names 170 alleged militants counted as journalists. Canadian coverage includes quotations and photographs from several listed men.

By Melanie Bennet | Juno News

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Source: Wikimedia Commons

Canadians trust that the news we read is balanced and truthful. But what happens when the journalists behind the media are members of a terrorist organization?

The Israel Defense Forces says 170 Gazans killed during the war and identified as journalists belonged to armed groups, including 118 affiliated with Hamas and 49 with Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

The IDF says its dossier draws on captured documents, interrogations and publicly available information. They say that 17 of those terrorists moonlighting as journalists participated in the October 7 attacks.

Juno News reviewed the Canadian coverage on the Israel-Gaza war and identified three names on the IDF list of terrorist journalists - Anas al-Sharif, Omar al-Derawi, and Hassan Eslaiah. These ‘journalists’ supplied quotes and images that Canadian legacy outlets happily published.

The Winnipeg Free Press quoted al-Sharif in a November 2023 Associated Press article about conditions in northern Gaza.

“We are living in constant terror,” he said, having been identified as a “freelance journalist” covering bombardments in Jabaliya.

Global News and CityNews also published quotes from al-Sharif through AP coverage following his death in August 2025, referring to him as a journalist.

TVA Nouvelles reproduced excerpts from his final message under the headline beginning "Israel succeeded in killing me," also referring to al-Sharif as a journalist.

Israel had already accused al-Sharif of leading a Hamas cell before killing him, but it appears that denials from al-Sharif and Al Jazeera were sufficient evidence for Canadian media.

Omar Al-Derawi appeared as a source in another AP article published by the Winnipeg Free Press in June 2024. Identified as a photographer working for Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, he described overcrowding after an Israeli strike.

"You can't walk in the hospital," he said.

Hassan Eslaiah's photos appeared with misleading captions like "AP Photo/Hassan Eslaiah."

His photographs continued circulating later. A January 2025 CityNews Halifax article about UNRWA fundraising also used an archived image of aid workers bearing his name.

Canadian news desks are not obliged to run wire service stories from Associated Press or Reuters. A wire subscription is a feed, not a contract to publish. Legitimizing these men as "journalists" was an editorial choice.

The revelations are especially poignant as prominent Gazan photojournalist Motaz Azaiza recently exposed "SMART," a Hamas-controlled group for journalists in Gaza used to control media narratives with an iron fist.



Video preview accompanying Bassem Eid's post about Motaz Azaiza's account of media coordination in Gaza. Source: X.

Its goal has been to shape positive coverage of its iron-fisted rule and to legitimize its narrative of "resistance" - that is, violence against Israel.

Azaiza revealed that journalists were told what to say and what to capture on camera and on film. In turn, the international press were kept in the dark about those constraints, and many ended up absorbing Hamas' narratives.

The dossier does beg the question of how thoroughly our media outlets vet their Gaza coverage. It's unclear whether the IDF's revelations will prompt an editorial review.

Readers deserve to know what evidence newsrooms had about the people supplying their reporting.

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