

Al Jazeera to Send Shireen Abu Akleh Killing Case to ICC

Media network vows to bring Abu Akleh's killers to justice through all international legal platforms

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*The Al Jazeera Media Network announced on Thursday that it would refer the killing of its veteran journalist **Shireen Abu Akleh** to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.*

The [Qatar](#)-based media network said it had formed an international coalition consisting of its legal team and international experts, and was preparing a dossier on Abu Akleh’s killing for submission to the ICC prosecutor.

“Al Jazeera Media Network condemns the killing of our colleague Shireen Abu Akleh, who worked with the Network for 25 years as a professional journalist covering the ongoing conflict in the occupied Palestinian territories,” the network said in a [statement](#).

“The Network vows to follow every path to achieve justice for Shireen, and ensure those responsible for her killing are brought to justice and held accountable in all international justice and legal platforms and courts.”

Al Jazeera said it would also include in its submission the Israeli bombing of the network’s office in Gaza during Israel’s assault on the besieged strip in May 2021.

Abu Akleh, 51, was shot dead by Israeli forces on 11 May near the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank while covering an Israeli raid on the camp. Israel has denied targeting her and said it remained unclear who killed the journalist.

Eyewitnesses and colleagues who were present at the scene, including Middle East Eye [correspondent Shatha Hanaysha](#), said Abu Akleh was targeted by an Israeli sniper. Al Jazeera said Abu Akleh was “assassinated in cold blood”.

Calls have grown both in the US and internationally for an independent investigation into the killing of the Al Jazeera journalist. Earlier this month, more than 50 US lawmakers [signed](#) a letter calling for the FBI and State Department to intervene and lead a probe.

A coalition of more than 30 press freedom and human rights groups also published a [statement](#) on Thursday, calling for an immediate and independent investigation into the killing.

They called for “an international task force to investigate this attack and to ensure credibility and impartiality of procedures and outcomes”.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Mustafa Barghouti also [announced](#) the ICC had been formally asked to investigate Abu Akleh’s killing. Barghouti, general secretary of the Palestinian National Initiative, said there was a need for strong international pressure on the ICC to investigate crimes including the killing of Abu Akleh.

On Monday, a CNN investigation [found](#) Abu Akleh was likely killed by Israeli forces in a targeted attack.

The Palestinian Authority has so far refused to hand over the bullet to Israel, saying Israel could not be trusted to investigate the conduct of its military. Rights groups have also said this, saying Israel had a poor record of investigating the conduct of its forces in relation to Palestinian deaths.

The ICC opens investigations in places where domestic authorities are unable or unwilling to look into allegations of abuse.

Israel, however, maintains that it is not subject to the court’s mandate because it is not a signatory to the Rome Statute that established the tribunal, and that the ICC cannot investigate abuses in the Palestinian territories because Palestine is not a state.

‘Aim to kill’

The Palestinian Authority announced earlier on Thursday that the results of its investigation into the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh showed [Israeli](#) forces deliberately shot and killed the veteran reporter.

[Palestinian Attorney-General Akram al-Khatib](#) told reporters:

“It was clear that one of the [Israeli] occupation forces... had fired a bullet that hit journalist Shireen Abu Akleh directly in her head” while she was trying to escape.

Abu Akleh was hit with an armour-piercing bullet, Khatib said, while she was wearing a

helmet and a vest that was clearly marked with the word "PRESS".

"The only source of firing was by the occupation forces with the aim to kill," he said in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah.

Khatib said the PA investigation was based on interviews with witnesses, an inspection of the scene and a forensic medical report.

The Palestinian attorney-general also said the probe found there were no Palestinian fighters near the scene of the shooting, contradicting claims made by Israeli officials that she could have been killed by Palestinian gunmen.

He said that the Israeli forces were able to see Abu Akleh and other journalists, who were all clearly marked as members of the press.

Khatib noted that an autopsy and forensic examination conducted in Nablus after Abu Akleh's death showed she was shot from behind, an indication that she was attempting to flee as Israeli forces continued to shoot towards her and other journalists.

Israel's military prosecutor has called on the army to conduct an in-depth investigation. However, Israeli media reported last week that the military had no plans to launch a criminal investigation.

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