

Your Excellency
Israel's Ambassador,
Avi Nir-Feldklein

Parkveien 35
PB 4046 AMB
0244 Oslo
Norway

Oslo, 15. March 2024

A letter of severe concern for press freedom in Gaza

Let us start by regretting the brutal attack on Israeli citizens on October 7th last year. We condemn the killings and support the right to bring the responsible individuals to court.

PEN Norway is very concerned about attacks on journalists, press freedom and democracy following the terror on October 7th and the war in Gaza.

Based on reports from the UN, International Federation of Journalists, and Reporters Without Borders, a high number of journalists are killed, injured, or attacked:

- Over 122 journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza since October 7th. About 75% of all journalists killed in 2023 were killed in Gaza. Many media outlets are destroyed.
- In Lebanon, three journalists were killed by Israel.
- Four Israeli journalists was killed by Hamas on October 7th.
- Many Palestinian journalists have been arrested by Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank. There are numerous reports that threats and attacks on journalists have increased lately, and that the attacks on journalists are deliberate.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is horrific. More than 30.000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel in the past five months, and many more are injured and displaced. There is a severe food and water insecurity, and the UN reports of an imminent famine. It is extremely important that journalists are able to document and report on the current situation in Gaza.

PEN Norway condemns Israel's killing and attacks on journalists and other civilians. People all over the world demand and have the right to receive independent reports of the situation

in Gaza. The journalists doing the job on ground must be able to work in safety. An attack on journalists is an attack on the truth.

We demand that Israel's government respect the fundamental right of press freedom and take immediate measures to uphold the principle. According to the Geneva Convention journalists covering war and conflict shall be protected as civilians.

Your Excellency, we urge You to bring our concerns to the Israeli government and look forward to Your answer.

Your Excellency, we also hereby extend an invitation to You to meet and discuss our above-mentioned concerns on **9 April 2024, 15:00 CET**. Please let us know if that time and date no not work for you, so that we could find another time for our meeting.

Best Regards

Ann-Magrit Austenå, Chair, PEN Norway

Thomas Spence, Chair, PEN Norway's Press Freedom Committee