

UK Urges Israel to Allow Media in Gaza

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The United Kingdom has joined 26 other countries in calling for Israel to lift restrictions preventing independent foreign journalists from entering Gaza. The joint statement, issued by the Media Freedom Coalition, urged that accredited reporters be granted immediate access and raised concerns over journalist safety during the ongoing conflict.

The coalition, which includes France, Germany, Australia, and Japan, stated that press access is vital for accurate and independent reporting. It noted that the current restrictions have limited international coverage of events inside Gaza.

Since the war began, Israel has prohibited foreign journalists from entering Gaza unless under military escort with the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), more than 190 reporters and media workers have been killed since the conflict started, the majority of them Palestinian journalists.

The statement highlighted recent incidents in which journalists were killed in strikes near Gaza City. Among those reported dead were Al Jazeera correspondent Anas al-Sharif, along with fellow reporter Mohammed Qreiqeh and cameramen Ibrahim Zaher and Mohammed Noufal. Freelance reporters Moamen Aliwa and Mohammed al-Khaldi were also killed.

The IDF later confirmed that Sharif had been deliberately targeted, alleging links to Hamas. CPJ said no evidence had been provided to support the claim, while Al Jazeera rejected the allegation.

With foreign press barred, local Palestinian journalists have continued to provide frontline coverage, often relying on digital platforms to share updates. International press groups, including the Foreign Press Association, have argued that restrictions make it difficult to ensure accurate and independent reporting from the territory.

Israel's High Court of Justice upheld the restrictions last year, citing security concerns. However, international media organisations have described the measures as "unprecedented."

The UK government's decision to back the Media Freedom Coalition statement marks the first coordinated demand of this scale for greater media access to Gaza. Officials supporting the call said enabling independent journalists to report on the conflict is important for transparency and accountability.