

公益社団法人 日本外国特派員協会

## The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

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### FCCJ Freedom of the Press Committee Statement on the Closure of the office of Al Jazeera in Jerusalem May 6, 2024

The FCCJ joins the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and other international media and human rights' watchdogs in condemning Israel's decision to close the Israeli offices of broadcaster Al Jazeera.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68961753>

Multiple news reports say that Israeli police raided the Jerusalem office of the Qatar-based state-funded broadcaster at the weekend, confiscating laptops and broadcasting equipment. BBC reporters visiting the scene were reportedly stopped from filming.

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The ban follows the passing of a law on April 1 that permits the shutdown of foreign broadcasts that "harm in a real way" Israel's security. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Al Jazeera of disseminating "anti-Israeli propaganda" and said: "It's time to remove the Hamas mouthpiece from our country."

In a statement, Al Jazeera said: "Israel's ongoing suppression of the free press, seen as an effort to conceal its actions in the Gaza Strip, stands in contravention of international and humanitarian law. Israel's direct targeting and killing of journalists, arrests, intimidation and threats will not deter Al Jazeera from its commitment to cover, whilst more than 140 Palestinian journalists have been killed since the beginning of the war on Gaza.

Al-Jazeera is one of the last international media outlets still reporting from Gaza. Journalists for the network have faced "multiple threats" during Israel's ongoing war with Hamas, according to the CPJ, citing arrests, injuries and killings.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-794800>

The Foreign Press Association, an NGO that represents foreign media in the region, said that the ban should be a “cause for concern for all supporters of a free press,” calling it a “dark day” for the free media. The CPJ’s program director, Carlos Martinez, also said the ban sets “an extremely alarming precedent for restricting international media outlets working in Israel.” <https://cpj.org/2024/05/cpj-condemns-israeli-vote-to-shut-down-al-jazeera-warns-of-alarming-precedent/>

Since the war in Gaza began on October 7<sup>th</sup>, at least 97 journalists and media workers have been killed while doing their jobs by May 3<sup>rd</sup>, World Press Freedom Day, according to CPJ figures.  
<https://cpj.org>

The ban on Al Jazeera will do nothing to protect Israelis but will reinforce suspicions that the Israeli government is trying to hide its actions in Gaza. We strongly urge the government of Prime Minister Netanyahu to reverse the ban and do more to protect journalists and the work of the free media.