

Orthodox Jew: The Double Standard Against Israel and the Blatant Acceptance by the Media

News this week in Israel included the death of two Arab journalists, in different locations, under different circumstances and unrelated. But the circumstances, accusations and double standards are glaring and need to be discussed.

This week, months after Palestinian Arab-American Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu-Akleh was killed in Jenin, following a lengthy investigation, Israel has affirmed that she was likely killed by an Israeli bullet.

Other than her unfortunate death, the problem with this is that before the blood had dried, before she had been buried and before any facts other than her death were confirmed, the Palestinian Authority (PA), and much world media, immediately blamed Israel without any proof. That the PA rushed her burial and would not provide the bullet that killed her for forensics, underscored that they had something to hide, and that blaming Israel was just a convenient way to milk her death as a Palestinian Arab "martyr."

Israel did not deny it may have been an Israeli bullet that killed her, but did not acknowledge specific responsibility because facts were not known. After a lengthy and credible investigation, Israel has indicated she was likely shot by an Israeli soldier, inadvertently, in the heat of a battle with Palestinian Arab terrorists in which Abu-Akleh was in the middle.

It's never good to have to admit responsibility for such a

thing, but as a democracy where the rule of law is the rule, at least Israel maintains the integrity to do so. In its statement about Abu-Akleh's death, the IDF acknowledged, "There is a high possibility that Shireen was accidentally hit by IDF gunfire that was fired toward suspects identified as armed Palestinian gunmen, during an exchange of fire in which life-risking, widespread and indiscriminate shots were fired toward IDF soldiers."

Like many journalists trying to cover a story, or be in a place to get the best scoop, many put their lives at risk. In the case of Abu-Akleh, it seemed that not only did she only put herself in harm's way, but that she was there, camped out, waiting for violence to begin as if she had been tipped off to do so. Otherwise, how would she have been in the right place at the wrong time, and killed in the crossfire between Israeli troops and Palestinian Arab terrorists?

The other news item about the death of an Arab journalist in Israel this week is about Arab-Israeli journalist Nadal Ijbaria, who covered violent crime in Israel's Arab community which has become an epidemic. Ijbaria was shot in his car after leaving a mosque in his Galilee home town. Police are investigating. One hopes that they will find and arrest the perpetrators as one step to stem, and then eliminate, the Arab-on-Arab violence that's been increasing for years, plaguing Israel and its Arab community in specific: a threat to many more people than the circumstances surrounding Abu-Akleh's death.

With national elections coming up in November, again, one hopes that the Israeli Arab public will support those trying to make change and make the Israeli-Arab street safer. It's Israel's responsibility, but it requires a lawful public willing to participate in a solution, rather than just blaming Israel for their problems.

According to UNESCO, 55 journalists were killed

internationally in 2021, and more than 60 journalists have been killed already in 2022. Looking objectively at the frequency of death of, and relative danger for, journalists around the world, why is it that no one demands countries to investigate much less release the names of those involved in death of other journalists as in the case of Abu-Akleh? Why is the world, and its media, not up in arms (pun intended) about the death of these dozens of other journalists?

With some 120 journalists killed in these past two years alone, UNESCO lists a total of one in "Palestine" (Abu-Akleh), and now one in Israel, so recent it has not made their list. Leading the world in death of journalists are Mexico (28); Ukraine (10); Pakistan (9); Afghanistan (8); India (7); Brazil and the Philippines (5); Bangladesh, Colombia, DRC, Myanmar, and Yemen (4); and Haiti and Honduras (3). That's 99 dead journalists not reported about barely once, much less for months, on CNN, BBC News and certainly not on Al Jazeera.

Nor does this include where journalists are wantonly and widely harassed and arrested. Think about it. As tragic as her death was, Shireen Abu-Akleh was a Palestinian Arab reporting for Al-Jazeera, both with a long history of bias and dishonest reporting. Yet she had free unhindered access as a journalist throughout Israel, even representing a media outlet that's anti-Israel.

Israel's army and society have extensive checks and balances, operating according to international and domestic laws, never with the intent to harm civilians. That's not to say mistakes are not made. When the US did its own investigation of Abu-Akleh's death in July, it "found no reason to believe that this was intentional but rather the result of tragic circumstances during an IDF... operation Islamic Jihad which followed a series of terrorist attacks in Israel." Israel has affirmed that, not covered it up. Nor did it blame the terrorists hiding behind Abu-Akleh, drawing IDF fire.

Journalists are civilians and should never be harmed, and certainly not targeted. But there are risks in general, with an added element by operating and embedding themselves among terrorists who use and hide behind them as cover. Surely Israel did not target Abu-Aklah on purpose, or specifically because she was a journalist. Claims of this being a targeted assassination are absurd.

So why is it that the death of Al Jazeera's Abu-Aklah has been reported more than any other journalist in the world all year, still making news and the death of another Arab-Israeli reporter barely gone reported? The answer is simple: there's a double standard with Israel being blamed even before facts are known, and that's acceptable even in the media. While those reporting these allegations are not putting themselves in danger on the front line as Abu-Aklah did, they certainly do kill their own credibility in the unsubstantiated blaming of Israel for killing Arabs.

When it comes to killing of an Arab-Israeli reporter by other Arabs, that's not reported at all outside Israel, despite the fact that there is a plague of Arab-on-Arab deaths in Israel accounting for more than the total number of journalists killed this year internationally. It's a deep problem in Israeli society, and Israel needs to take charge and do much more to clean up the streets and illegal weapons in its Arab community.

But it's not reported widely because Arabs killing Arabs is not only not news, it's acceptable to the media. And it's not something that can be blamed on Jews. {eo}

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