

Orly Noy, *Local Call*, “Covering Genocide”, 12/8/2025

Introduction

Hello everyone. Welcome to *Eyes on Gaza*, our daily gathering that combines protest and learning. Yesterday, during the meeting, Member of Knesset Aida Touma-Suleiman referred to the killing of Anas al-Sharif and four Al Jazeera staff members in the Israeli bombing of the channel’s tent. That death resonated for her, and for many others, with the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh by IDF snipers in May 2022. Between these two cases, during the Gaza war, 237 journalists were killed. I found this figure, not by chance, on the website *Local Call*, whose editor, Orly Noy, is our guest here today. Orly, a woman of many roles, serves as chair of B’Tselem’s executive board. She is a political activist, a Mizrahi feminist, and—as a scholar of literature—I must emphasize in particular that she is a gifted translator of Persian literature. I would have wished for Persian translations to be the subject of our conversation today. But instead, Orly will address the unbearable yet necessary work of covering genocide. She will speak for eight minutes, after which we will leave time for a short discussion. I remind you that you are welcome to write your questions in the chat, and I will read them to Orly after the lecture. Orly, thank you very much for joining us today.

Talk

Thank you very much, Ayelet. Thank you for the invitation, and thank you truly for this remarkable initiative you have launched—I hold it in great appreciation. I will just note that I am one of three editors at *Local Call*. We do not have an editor-in-chief; I am one among three. And I am also grateful that you began, rightly, with the murder of Anas al-Sharif together with four Al Jazeera staff members. And rightly, you also mentioned Shireen Abu Akleh. In that same context, since we are speaking of Al Jazeera, those who follow this important channel will recall the heartbreaking images of Wael al-Dahdouh [Wael Hamdan Ibrahim Al-Dahdouh], head of Al Jazeera’s Gaza bureau, whose entire family was wiped out in one attack—and then, in a second attack, his son was also killed. The images of this devoted journalist collapsing over his son’s body are seared into memory.

These past two years have been years in which we are constantly handed new reasons to sink into profound shame. Today, I must say, I feel ashamed also as an Israeli journalist, because there is something particularly horrifying in how the Israeli media has covered this war of extermination in Gaza since its beginning. But the deepest shame, perhaps, lies in the coverage of the deliberate killing of journalists—as colleagues, as partners in the profession. I am not even speaking of Amit Segal, who openly celebrated it. But when someone like Daphna Liel frames it as good news, then truly—woe to us.

To understand the work of *Local Call*, it is necessary to recall when, under what circumstances, and why the site was founded. We came into being in April 2014, and I had the privilege of being part of the founding group. From the moment of our birth, we were born into a reality of destruction in Gaza. Those were literally our very first days: I remember sitting around the clock, translating the names of the dead in Gaza. Back then, it was still possible to contain it. From the outset, *Local Call* was created to address what was missing, the deep deficiencies and ills of Israeli media. The idea was that we were first and foremost activists—active in various arenas of protest and resistance—and writing from this stand point about realities that received no media coverage. Over the years, of course, we became more professionalized. We are no longer defined by that same on-the-ground activism of our writers as before, but still, our central mission remains: to provide a platform for what has no other platform. And after this introduction, I will explain how that has played out in the past two years.

We quickly realized there are three central areas gravely lacking, and crucial to bring into public awareness. The first is reliable information from inside Gaza. Israel effectively barred journalists

from entering during most of the war. Those who did enter in the early months did so riding on the tanks of the very army carrying out the destruction. Of course, we would never have considered such reporting, nor would we rely on information supplied by the army, which positioned itself as the sole source of information about Gaza. Even before the war, we had contacts with journalists inside Gaza. But many managed to flee in the first months, some with our help—simply to save their lives. In those early months, our work was reduced to calling our contacts in Gaza each morning just to make sure they were still alive. Then, Ghousoon Bisharat, the gifted editor of our sister site *972 Magazine*, identified and trained four exceptional journalists: Mahmoud Mushtaha, Mohammed Mhawish, Ibtisam Mahdi, and Ruwaida Amer. Mahmoud and Mohammed have since left Gaza. But we still have sources on the ground, and they are our voice. These are the voices we bring, even though at times these journalists themselves become the story—the subject of their own reporting. It is utterly heartbreaking to read their accounts of their own families, their own lives. I am rushing through this to keep within time.

The second field is investigations. It was clear to us that the mechanisms enabling this mass destruction had to be exposed. This has been done through a brilliant series of investigations by Yuval Abraham, some in partnership with *The Guardian*. The latest, published just last week, revealed Microsoft's cooperation with [IDF intelligence Corps] Unit 8200 in storing data that supports the destruction in Gaza. I strongly recommend reading all of them. Yuval Abraham's investigation into "Lavender" exposed the deliberate killing of medical teams [<https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>]. His reporting showed how Israel deliberately targets the second wave of rescuers who arrive after an initial strike—targeting them specifically. He uncovered Israel's operational decision to strike Hamas operatives when they are at home. This is crucial: Israel constantly justifies itself by claiming they hide behind civilians. But Yuval Abraham's investigation showed how Israel waits for them to be at home, among their families. The monstrous software that carries out this process is even called "Wayn ba'ba" ("Where is Dad" in Arabic)—locating the father at home with his children, and then bombing.

The third field is context and analysis. These are no less important than exposing the raw facts. Israel invests immense energy and resources into shaping a manipulative narrative around this war of extermination. Already on October 7, the very first thing we published was an article by Haggai Matar, the CEO of 972, warning—with all the red flags—against revenge being turned into an end in itself. We work to bring, of course, Palestinian voices from inside the 1948 borders as well. And I will end with one sentence: part of providing context is viewing the whole space as one continuum, and keeping constant attention also on what is happening in the West Bank and inside the 1948 borders. I believe this is essential. It is impossible even to understand what is happening in Gaza without this broader perspective.