



4 June 2021

Mr. Eirik Hoff Lysholm

Norsk Redaktørforening / Norwegian Editors' Association

Re: Your correspondence of 18 May, 2021

Dear Eirik Hoff Lysholm,

I adhere to the importance of maintaining a free and independent press and maintaining freedom of opinion, as Israel does, and always has done.

The Al-Ja'a building housed Hamas' military installations, as well as offices used by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization. The building housed the research and development unit of the military intelligence of the terrorist organization Hamas, which is responsible, among other things, for a number of terrorist acts carried out against the State of Israel. The unit consisted of centers of knowledge that were a unique asset to the terrorist organization, and important technological equipment. Hamas used these capabilities against Israel in a number of incidents.

As you noted yourself, a notification for evacuation had been given to the building's personnel, as the IDF does whenever possible, in order to prevent innocent people from being harmed, a measure that is hardly taken by other armies, if at all.

Israel is taking all necessary precautions to avoid civilian casualties. The blame for these casualties should be put on Hamas' side for cynically using civilian infrastructure for its operations and rocket launching sites, while deliberately targeting Israeli civilians in cities and villages, hence Hamas' double war crime.

I am surprised that there is no reference in your letter to the fact that there is no free press and reporting in the Gaza Strip. Hamas, which is internationally recognized as a terror organization, does not allow journalists in its territory to report in a completely free way, unlike the situation in Israel. I strongly believe that there is room to express dissatisfaction with this fact, before filing a complaint towards a democratic state that preserves freedom of expression and allows for diverse and critical discussions to take place even while defending itself from very difficult security threats like 4,000 rockets.

**EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
OSLO**



**שגרירות ישראל
אוסלו**

The Embassy is working tirelessly to assist and provide the answers to those in the Norwegian press and media, who are seeking an accurate account of the events, by providing direct sources and through invitation to extraordinary press conferences from Israel, in order to avoid the FAKE NEWS pithole of our times.

As journalists who are supposed to serve as watchdogs for keeping the freedom of press and exposing injustices, it is worth investing efforts in exposing Hamas' methods of repression that do not allow the free press to operate in its territory, and its use of the Gaza population as human shields.

Sincerely,

Alon Roth

Ambassador of Israel to Norway