

October 21, 2024

**Re: Congressional letter to the White House and State Department calling for international media access to Gaza**

We, the undersigned, support Representative Jim McGovern and his colleagues in asking the Biden-Harris administration to urge Israel to allow independent access to Gaza for U.S. and international journalists, in the interest of transparency, accountability, and press freedom.

While more than [4,000 international journalists](#) have traveled to Israel to cover the ongoing war, Israel continues to deny them access to Gaza except for rare and tightly [controlled](#) military-led press tours to the war-torn territory. This effective ban on foreign reporting has placed an impossible and unreasonable burden on Palestinian reporters in Gaza to document an ongoing war through which they are living.

In response to this situation, more than 70 media and civil society organizations [called on Israel](#) in July to give journalists independent access to Gaza. The organizations – which include The Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, BBC, CNN, The Guardian, The New York Times, and The Washington Post – stressed that no independent media access to Gaza has been permitted since the start of the war in October 2023.

[More than 128 journalists have been killed](#) since the start of the war, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Those who remain in Gaza are working in conditions of extreme deprivation and face [intimidation](#), [violence](#), and [arrest](#) by Israeli authorities. Many have lost their limbs, homes, or families. They work in an eviscerated media landscape: amongst the [large-scale destruction](#) of media offices and equipment, persistent internet shutdowns, and [cyberattacks](#) on the media. The result is that information from Gaza [is becoming harder to obtain](#) and the reporting that does get through is subject to questions over its veracity. This creates a vacuum for propaganda and mis- and disinformation, and undermines the public's right to know about the devastating impact of the Israel-Gaza war.

A free and independent press is the cornerstone of democracy and freedom of expression. We, therefore, ask that the U.S. government urge Israel to uphold its commitments to press freedom by providing foreign media with immediate, independent access to Gaza and abide by its international obligations to protect journalists as civilians.

**Signatories**

Action Corps  
Amnesty International USA  
Association of Foreign Press Correspondents  
Coalition For Women In Journalism

Code Pink  
Committee to Protect Journalists  
Courage Foundation  
DAWN  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Essential Information  
Free Press  
Freedom of the Press Foundation  
Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University  
MPower Change Action Fund  
National Association of Science Writers  
PEN America  
Radio Television Digital News Association  
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)  
Society of Professional Journalists