

Was Palestinian artist-photojournalist Fatima Hassouna targeted for death by the Israeli military?

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Fatima Hassouna, a 25-year-old Palestinian artist and photojournalist, was killed in an Israeli air raid in northern Gaza on Wednesday. Hassouna died, along with 10 members of her family, including her pregnant sister, in what media reports describe as “a direct [missile] strike on their home.”

The bombing occurred, as the *Guardian* reported, only 24 hours after

it was announced that a documentary focusing on Hassouna’s life in Gaza since the Israeli offensive began would be debuted at a French independent film festival that runs parallel to Cannes.

This raises an obvious question: Was Hassouna specifically targeted for death by the fascistic Israeli regime and military?

To answer that, the first thing one needs to do is dismiss with contempt the claims of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) officials, who lie as often as they draw breath. *The Times of Israel*, one of the chief cheerleaders of the genocide, reports

The IDF says the strike targeted a Hamas operative involved in attacks on soldiers and civilians. “Prior to the strike, measures were taken to minimize the risk to civilians, including the use of precision munitions, aerial surveillance, and additional intelligence,” it says.

The only thing certain about this brazen, cynical statement, which the IDF doesn’t expect anyone to believe or care whether they do, is that it’s false from beginning to end.

French-Iranian director Sepideh Farsi, in whose

documentary film, *Put Your Soul On Your Hand And Walk*, Hassouna appears, commented that the young Palestinian was considering attending the festival in Cannes, which runs parallel to the official gathering.

According to *Deadline*,

“She said, ‘I’ll come, but I have to go back to Gaza. I don’t want to leave Gaza,’ said Farsi. “I was already in touch with the French Embassy. We’d just started the process. I was worried about how to get her out and back in safely. I didn’t want to have the responsibility of separating her from her family.”

“Now the whole family is dead. I’m trying to find out if her parents are dead but for sure Fatima and her sisters and brothers are dead. One of the sisters was pregnant. On a video call two days ago, she showed me her belly. It’s so horrible and devastating. Fatima herself had gotten engaged a few months ago.”

Farsi now fears that Hassouna may have been murdered because of her photojournalism work. She told *Deadline*:

“I was trying to be a voice and accentuate her and now I don’t know. I even feel guilty... maybe they targeted her because the film was announced. I don’t know. We’ll never know.” she said. “The Israeli army said it bombed the house because there was a Hamas officer in there, which is totally false. I know the whole family. It’s nonsense. It’s just so devastating.”

All the circumstantial evidence certainly points toward the

Netanyahu regime and the IDF having deliberately targeted Hassouna.

First of all, there is the damning fact that—as the International Federation of Journalists reported in February—at least 157 journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza, and many more injured, since the beginning of the Israeli onslaught in October 2023. In addition, innumerable Palestinian intellectual or artistic figures—poets, painters, scholars—have come under lethal fire from the Israelis, anyone in fact who might be able to articulate the hellish conditions and communicate them to a wide audience.

Moreover, quite concretely, the Zionist government had the unpleasant experience six weeks ago of seeing the four co-directors of *No Other Land*, which chronicles the savagery of Israeli “ethnic cleansing” in the occupied West Bank, receive a prize for Best Documentary Feature at the Academy Awards ceremony.

In retaliation for that, on March 24, settler thugs and Israeli soldiers set upon and beat Hamdan Ballal, one of *No Other Land*’s directors, at his home in the West Bank. There no doubt have been discussions among top Israeli officials about seeing to it that no such international embarrassments like the Academy Award success recur in the future. A “pre-emptive” air strike on any potential award recipient or guest at a foreign film festival is entirely in keeping with the Nazi-like outlook of the Zionist ruling elite.

(*No Other Land*, incidentally, is now available for viewing in North America for the next three weeks, as part of an effort to raise money for “the communities of Masafer Yatta that are being forcibly displaced by the Israeli army and settlers,” as the film documents.)

There is always the possibility that Hassouna was “merely” another victim of the indiscriminate, criminal Israeli terror, missile strikes, artillery and tank fire and other attacks directed at civilians and intended to drive the Palestinian population out of Gaza, as part of the Netanyahu-Trump plan. Tens of thousands of Gazans have been killed in such brutal circumstances.

France’s Association for the Distribution of Independent Cinema (ACID), which runs the parallel festival at Cannes, issued a statement expressing “horror” at the news of Hassouna’s killing. According to *Screen Daily*, the statement read in part:

We met Fatima Hassouna when we discovered Sepideh Farsi’s film *Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk*. Her smile was as magical as her tenacity: bearing witness, photographing Gaza, distributing food despite bombs, grief, and hunger. Her story

reached us, and we rejoiced at each of her appearances to know she was alive; we feared for her. Yesterday, we learned with horror that an Israeli missile targeted her building, killing Fatima and her family.

We had watched and programmed a film in which this young woman’s life force was nothing short of miraculous. This is a different film than the one we will carry, support, and present in every theater, starting with Cannes.

The *Guardian* reported the comments of fellow journalists in Gaza, who

reacted with grief and anger at the news that an Israeli airstrike had taken Hassouna from them, just as she had feared it would. “She documented massacres through her lens, amid bombardment and gunfire, capturing the people’s pain and screams in her photographs,” said Anas al-Shareef, an *Al Jazeera* reporter based in Gaza.

Miqdad Jameel, another Gaza-based journalist, called on people to “see her photos, read her words—witness Gaza’s life, the struggle of its children in war, through her images and her lens.”

On social media, Hassouna had written

If I die, I want a loud death. I don’t want to be just breaking news, or a number in a group, I want a death that the world will hear, an impact that will remain through time, and a timeless image that cannot be buried by time or place.

Now she is dead.



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