

NYPD and ICE assault journalists in New York City

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In two separate incidents in New York City this week, the New York Police Department (NYPD) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) thugs attacked journalists reporting on actions against the Gaza genocide and the federal rampage against immigrants.

In the first case, on Monday, the NYPD raided the home of photojournalist Alexa B. Wilkinson. Police arrested and charged Wilkinson with aggravated harassment and hate crimes. The police also seized video equipment and phones.

The charges stemmed from a July 30 incident Wilkinson reported on, in which protesters covered the *New York Times* headquarters on 8th Avenue in Manhattan with graffiti. Protesters charged the newspaper with complicity in the Gaza genocide because of its pro-Zionist reporting and editorial policies.

The New York art journal *Hyperallergic* notes that Wilkinson is accused “of posting ‘a threatening social media message targeting the Jewish editor of the *New York Times*,’ as summarized in a court record. Wilkinson allegedly shared screenshots of an X post that read ‘They hanged newspaper editors at Nuremberg’ (a reference to the Nazi journalist Julius Streicher.) The complaint said Wilkinson captioned the screenshots with the phrase ‘Looking at you (Joseph Kahn),’ referring to the *Times*’s executive editor.”

Wilkinson has been one of the leading photojournalists who has covered the mass protests against the Gaza genocide in New York City since they began in the fall of 2023, often at personal hazard to themselves from Zionists and the NYPD. The *World Socialist Web Site* has published their work.

The case recalls the arrest by the NYPD of journalist Samuel Seligson in June because he video-recorded the painting of graffiti on the Brooklyn Museum and on the home of its president, Anne Pasternak, for her association with the repression of protests by anti-genocide

demonstrators. Seligson, who is Jewish, was also charged with felony antisemitic hate crimes.

In the second incident on Tuesday, journalist L. Vural Elibol of the state-run Turkish news agency *Anadolu* was shoved and thrown to the ground by ICE goons as he attempted to board an elevator outside an immigration court on the 12th floor in 26 Federal Plaza in Manhattan. The elevator was taking immigrants kidnapped by ICE to detention on the building’s 10th floor. Elibol struck his head on the ground and had to be taken to the hospital.

Two other journalists were also brutalized by ICE in the same incident, including Dean Moses, *amNewYork*’s police bureau chief and resident photographer, and freelancer Olga Fedorova, whose work is frequently published by the Associated Press.

These back-to-back attacks on journalists in the Democratic Party stronghold of New York City mark a bipartisan escalation of Trump’s efforts to establish a dictatorship in the United States and silence all opposition to—and even knowledge of—the domestic and foreign policy of the ruling elite. It is noteworthy that while a variety of Democratic politicians condemned the ICE assault, neither Governor Kathy Hochul nor Democratic Socialists of America mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani condemned the blatantly political arrest of Wilkinson by the NYPD.

The action by the NYPD, which had to be approved at the highest levels of the department and city government, is meant to send a message: the police, regardless of who is mayor, will continue to harass, arrest, and beat pro-Palestinian protesters while suppressing journalists who report on these attacks. This takes place under conditions in which the Trump administration has not only unleashed ICE against immigrant workers throughout the US, but has also laid the groundwork for police-military dictatorship by sending troops to Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Portland and Memphis.

In August, the police commissioner, Jessica Tisch, scion of the billionaire Tisch family, told Attorney General Pam Bondi in a private, face-to-face meeting that the Trump administration did not need to send troops to New York since the NYPD was fully capable of suppressing opposition. Tisch declared that the “city can police itself,” boasting that the country’s largest domestic police force had no need of the National Guard. According to a source, the two also discussed the use of drones.

At a rally on Wednesday in Manhattan’s Foley Square in defense of Wilkinson and the journalists assaulted by ICE, scores of journalists and supporters assembled to protest the blatant suppression of the First Amendment and the right to report objectively on the anti-genocide demonstrations and the right to report on the actions of state agencies.

One speaker told the rally: “We’re here for two different incidents that have motivated us to come out and flag you all and sound the alarm that journalism is under attack. The first being the arrest of a photojournalist for documenting a protest activity after it happened. Shame!

“Their home was raided in the middle of the morning, like an early morning pre-dawn raid. All of their equipment was taken so they cannot do their job ... They are being charged with a hate crime for protected political speech against the executive editor of the *New York Times*, which has a well-documented history of whitewashing genocide. Shame!

“Not only is our work as journalists being attacked, but speech itself is under attack, not just in New York City, but nationally. This is a five-alarm fire for the press.”

Wilkinson’s guest described to the rally the Tuesday raid at Wilkinson’s home: “there was a knock at the door, a gentle knock at the door. And I answered the door, not suspecting if it was going to be anything significant.

“And there standing right in front of me was a riot police officer holding a shield blocking the exit to the house and I was told to leave the property. He was backed up by several other police officers and I attempted to shut the door to give myself some time to think. He put his foot in the door, blocked it from closing. I took a step back ...

“I started reporting, which is all you can do in that situation ... we were asked to vacate the property as they executed a warrant upon exiting the building. My phone was slapped from my hand as I was recording. I was pushed up firmly against the wall. My head hit the wall and I was placed in handcuffs. I looked over to see Alexa suffering the same treatment. Her wife was also being

pushed and taken downstairs. They took Alexa from my view.”

A speaker from Writers against the War on Gaza, which has played a leading role in exposing the *New York Times*’ pro-Zionist bias, told the rally: “In Gaza, journalists are stalked and harassed with threatening IOF phone calls. Their homes are bombed. Their families are bombed. They get arrested, tortured, and starved. They distance themselves from loved ones amidst a genocide because they know, as journalists, they wear a target. There are no special protections, no press vests that can save them ...

“Here in the so-called land of the free press freedom, journalists who dare to fulfill their mandate to document reality and report the truth are facing escalating retaliation. They are surveilled, raided, harassed, assaulted and arrested for capturing the moments Empire would prefer to stay hidden.

“Just yesterday, journalists were brutalized by police at immigration court for simply recording the atrocities unfolding within the walls of 26 Federal Plaza. Across the country, those doing their duties as members of the press are being intimidated ...

“The repression we’re seeing here is not separate from what is happening in Gaza. It is interconnected. The same military-industrial complex that arms Israel also trains US police forces. The same surveillance tech used to track and kill Palestinian journalists is sold back to US agencies. The same logic that justifies bombing press offices in Gaza or Yemen or any of the countries we’ve seen bombed over the past two years is what allows police here to assault reporters on the job.”



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