

# CNN news team assaulted and detained by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank

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On Friday, a group of three Israeli soldiers assaulted and detained a CNN news team who were in the northern West Bank village of Tayasir to report on the aftermath of a settler attack and the establishment of a new illegal Zionist settler outpost.

The crew—reporter Jeremy Diamond, producer Abeer Salman, and photojournalist Cyril Theophilos—was set upon by armed soldiers who pointed rifles at them, ordered them to sit down, placed Theophilos in a chokehold, damaged camera equipment and detained the team for roughly two hours.

CNN reported that the journalists were speaking with Palestinian residents in Tayasir after settlers had attacked people in the village and erected an unauthorized outpost in the area, when Israeli soldiers intervened to stop the journalists from filming.

The CNN crew was covering a settler assault on Palestinian residents in Tayasir, after settlers had entered the village overnight, fired weapons into the air, attacked several Palestinians, and injured at least four people, including a 75-year-old man, Abdullah Daraghmeh, who was beaten in his home and later filmed in hospital with a swollen face and a bandage across it.

During the assault, a recording made by the team captured a soldier shouting, “Stop! Sit down! Sit down!” before another soldier approached Theophilos from behind, seized him in a chokehold and forced him to the ground. The video also recorded the soldiers discussing “revenge,” and making clear that they viewed the West Bank as belonging to Jews.

At least one soldier has been identified in reporting by the *Times of Israel* as “Meir,” a masked IDF soldier who spoke on camera with CNN’s Jeremy Diamond and said the outpost was “illegal under Israeli law” but would become a “legal settlement.” The other soldier

who physically assaulted photojournalist Cyril Theophilos has so far not been publicly named.

The *Times of Israel* report says, “Meir and another soldier could also be heard telling Diamond in the report, when asked if they think the West Bank belonged to them: ‘We’re here because it’s our land ... the Jews.’ ”

In its initial official response to the attack on press rights, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the soldiers’ conduct was “incompatible with what is expected of IDF soldiers operating in the Judea and Samaria area,” and promised a review. A subsequent response went further, with IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, calling the matter a “grave ethical incident,” suspending the battalion involved, withdrawing it from the West Bank and ordering additional training.

The IDF also reported that one soldier was dismissed from military service. This response was framed as an internal disciplinary matter without acknowledging that the soldiers were acting as enforcers of the Zionist regime whose day-to-day operations are focused on the dispossession and terrorization of Palestinians.

The attack in Tayasir is part of the escalation that began with the Gaza genocide and has spread across the region. In the West Bank, the killing of Palestinians by Israeli forces and settlers has intensified dramatically throughout the assault on Gaza, with UN and rights groups documenting a rising death toll and repeated attacks by settlers acting under IDF protection. As of March 2026, reports cited by humanitarian and rights organizations placed the number of Palestinians killed in the occupied West Bank at 1,071 since October 7, 2023.

The Gaza genocide was also extended into Lebanon, where Israel has carried out repeated strikes that have

killed civilians, journalists and other noncombatants, while occupying southern areas under the pretext of security and “buffer zones.” Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported at least 3,445 conflict-related deaths in Lebanon from October 7, 2023 to mid-November 2024.

The attack on the CNN team is part of Israel’s deadly war on journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has reported that Israel was responsible for the most journalist deaths in 2025 and that it has killed more journalists than any government on record.

In Lebanon, Israeli strikes have repeatedly killed media workers, including the March 2026 attack that killed Ali Shoaib, Fatima Ftouni and Mohamad Ftouni. In Gaza, where foreign journalists are barred and Palestinian reporters have assumed the burden of bearing witness under bombardment, the toll has been catastrophic.

Meanwhile, according to a United Nations/OHCHR report cited in August 2025, at least 247 Palestinian journalists have been killed in Gaza since October 7, 2023. CPJ has reported that by late March 2026 the total number of press members killed in Lebanon since the war began had reached 11.

The West Bank has long been treated by the Israeli state as a laboratory for legalized criminality. Since 1967, the occupation has evolved into a system in which land seizure, settlement expansion and armed settler violence are shielded by the army and normalized by the state apparatus. Settlers routinely attack Palestinian villages, burn property, assault residents and seize land through new outposts, while the IDF intervenes not to stop the aggression but to manage it in a way that secures the colonization project.

For decades, Palestinians have been killed, beaten and displaced while Israeli authorities shield perpetrators and convert “security” into a cover for ethnic expansion. The ongoing campaign in the West Bank is not separate from Gaza; it is the same program of dispossession adapted to different terrain.

All these crimes have accelerated under the cover of the US-Israeli war with Iran which began on February 28.

CNN said the assault on its crew was an “unprovoked” attack and demanded “an explanation and accountability for this unprovoked assault.” The network also said that its journalists were clearly

identifiable as press, that the crew was covering rising settler violence in the area, and that the attack occurred despite the team following wartime regulations.

A statement by the Foreign Press Association on Saturday said, “The use of force was excessive and dangerous. Pointing rifles at journalists and civilians, physically assaulting a cameraman and detaining a crew are actions that cross every line. Such behavior reflects a deeply alarming pattern of hostility toward the media and cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.”

The US government has not responded to the attack and this silence is sending a clear political message. Washington is the chief sponsor, financier and diplomatic protector of the Israeli state’s operations in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. The lack of even a token defense of press rights by the Trump administration once again demonstrates that the US ruling class is dispensing with democratic rights in pursuit of global hegemony, and views Israel’s war crimes as a critical element of its strategic regional goals.



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