



Photojournalists in the service of Hamas in the Gaza Strip

December 26, 2023

Overview¹

- ▶ Hamas operates affiliated media outlets in the Gaza Strip, along with an array of **prominent correspondents whose professional activities are used to convey messages and reports to the residents and others in the Gaza Strip and abroad**. Some, such as Hassan Aslih, Ashraf Abu Amra, Anas al-Sharif work independently and others, such as Islam Badr and Hani al-Sha'er work for foreign media outlets as well as for Hamas.
- ▶ **This report analyzes a group of five of the most prominent journalists currently working in Gaza**. They enjoy extensive media exposure, are known in the streets of Gaza and are followed by many on their social media. **They also have personal relations with the Hamas leadership** and are invited to cover special events such as conferences, rallies, demonstrations and weapons displays. **They also enjoy benefits, apparently provided by the Hamas government, such as first-class flights to the hajj in Saudi Arabia and expensive medical treatment abroad**.



Hassan Aslih flies first class to Saudi Arabia and reports his safe arrival at Jeddah Airport (Hassan Aslih's Telegram channel, June 13, 2023)

- ▶ The correspondents also work for foreign media outlets such as CNN, AP, Reuters and al-Anadolu News, as well as for international channels such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabi TV from Qatar. **Some of them, such as Hassan Aslih and Hani al-Sha'er, reported on site during**

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, entering Israeli territory in civilian clothes and without the required PRESS vests.

►During the war in Gaza they benefit from exclusive coverage in combat zones, such as the northern Gaza Strip. For example, Anas al-Sharif and Islam Badr, who come from Jabaliya, are the only media personnel who report to the local and international media on events in the area. Thus they help Hamas by disseminating the information it wants to show the public in the Gaza Strip and beyond, including the image of governance, lively commercial activity and a large presence of residents remaining in the region after they had been asked to evacuate to the south of the Gaza Strip.

Further Information

Hassan Aslih

►**Hassan Abdel Fattah Aslih** is a freelance photojournalist from Khan Yunis, he is in his forties, married with children (aqrawataelam website, May 11, 2023). He began working in communications at the end of 2009 (Hassan Aslih's X account, October 12, 2020). He photographs for AP and CNN, and in recent months, he has been serving as the general manager of the news site Alam24, which began operating in the Gaza Strip in November 2022 (Alam24 website Telegram channel, July 10, 2023). Aslih's Facebook page has 102,000, his X account has 319,800 followers, his Telegram channel has 581,000 subscribers, one Instagram account has 450,000 followers and another has 178,000 followers, and a threads account with 42,700 followers.



Right: Hassan Aslih (Facebook page of Hassan Aslih, June 30, 2023). Left: Hassan Aslih wearing press gear (Hassan Aslih's X account, November 13, 2023)

►**Aslih is considered a prominent journalist in the Gaza Strip and has connections with senior Hamas terrorists, including Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, and there is a famous photo which shows al-Sinwar kissing him**

(January 2020). He regularly covers events in the Gaza Strip and as well as news from the Israeli media related to the Gaza Strip. He has covered of the launch of incendiary balloons from the Gaza Strip into Israel, activity at the border crossings and the funerals of senior Palestinian figures.



Hassan Aslih and Yahya al-Sinwar (Hassan Aslih's Telegram channel, January 9, 2020)

►On November 8, 2023, an NGO called HonestReporting² published the results of an investigation, according to which Aslih was present on the Israeli side of the border on October 7. **According to the report, Aslih documented a burned tank that was damaged by Hamas terrorist operatives near the border fence as well as the mob who entered Kibbutz Kfar Aza in the second wave while it was under attack by Hamas. He did not wear a PRESS vest**, and broadcast his presence live "in the Israeli settlements." According to the investigation, the early presence of Aslih and other independent photographers from Gaza in Israeli territory on the morning of the attack raises serious ethical questions, such as what were they doing there so early, on what was usually a quiet Saturday morning? Was their arrival coordinated with Hamas? Did the respectable media which publishes their photos, confirm their presence on Israeli territory along with the terrorists? (HonestReporting website, November 8, 2023). **Following the investigation, CNN and AP announced the termination of relations with Aslih.**

² HonestReporting is an NGO that critiques what it considers the anti-Israeli bias in the media. It was founded by students in Britain in 2000, and has branches in the United States, Canada, Britain and Israel. Its critics claim it serves as a mouthpiece for Israeli public discourse.



Right: Hassan Aslih with a burning tank in the background, October 7, 2023 (Hassan Aslih's Facebook page, October 7, 2023). Left: Hassan Aslih reports on the kidnapping of IDF soldiers from a tank, on October 7, 2023, with the tank burning in the background (Shehab X account, October 7, 2023)

►Aslih issues regular reports on the progress of the fighting. He started covering the northern Gaza Strip and later moved on to cover events in locations such as Gaza City, Khan Yunis and Rafah.

Photographs published by Hassan Aslih



Ahfad al-Nasser terrorist operatives launch incendiary balloons at the Israeli towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip (Twitter account of Hassan Aslih, August 10, 2020)



The funeral of Taysir al-Jabari, a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Jerusalem Brigades' terrorist operative who was killed in a targeted attack during Operation Breaking Dawn (August 2022) (Twitter account of Hassan Aslih, August 5, 2022)



Gazans in Khan Yunis eat baklava to celebrate an attack carried out in Hawwara (south of Nablus) (Twitter account of Hassan Aslih, August 19, 2023)

Anas al-Sharif

► **Anas Jamal al-Sharif** is a photojournalist who is particularly active in the northern Gaza Strip; he comes from Jabalia. On an old Twitter (X) account he stated he was born on September 3, 1996, and studied at the Communications Media Faculty at al-Aqsa University in Gaza. He is married and has a daughter (Anas Jamal al-Sharif's X account). He began his work in the field of communications as a volunteer for the al-Shamal online website (al-Muntag, November 25, 2023). While working for the website, he operated Facebook pages and currently operates an X account with 48,600 followers, a Telegram channel with 31.3 thousand subscribers, and his Instagram account with 204 thousand followers. He also mentions his WhatsApp number, which is 00972597890044.



Anas al-Sharif (al-Jazeera website, November 22, 2023)



Anas al-Sharif at the beginning of his career as a journalist takes a selfie with senior terrorist Fathi Hammad, a member of the Hamas political bureau (Anas Jamal al-Sharif's X account, May 19, 2017)

- ▶ He has taken pictures of senior Hamas terrorists including Yahya al-Sinwar, Fathi Hammad and Abu Anas al-Ghandour, who was the commander of the Northern Gaza Brigade of Hamas' military-terrorist wing (eliminated by the IDF on November 14, 2023), who were participating in public events in the northern Gaza Strip. In addition, he documented a display of weapons held by Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the northern Gaza Strip (July 1, 2023) and covered the return marches at the border security fence in the northern Gaza Strip.
- ▶ During the Hamas-Israel war he has worked as a photojournalist for al-Jazeera TV in the northern Gaza Strip. On November 22, 2023, he claimed IDF officers had threatened him, told him to stop covering events and leave the northern Gaza Strip; he emphasized that he had no intention of doing so (al-Jazeera TV website, November 22, 2023).



Anas al-Sharif reports from Jabaliya (QudsN X account, December 21, 2023)



Right: A residential area in Jabaliya attacked by the Israeli Air Force at night (QudsN X account, December 14, 2023). Left: Evacuating casualties from Jabaliya (QudsN X account, December 14, 2023)

Photographs taken by Anas al-Sharif



Right: Yahya al-Sinwar and Abu Anas al-Ghandour commander of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' Northern Gaza Brigade (Anas al-Sharif's Facebook page, August 15, 2019). Left: Abu Anas al-Ghandour and next to him Suheil al-Hindi a member of the Hamas political bureau of Hamas, during a ceremony held for the leadership of Hamas by the Armilat tribe. Yahya al-Sinwar sits at the extreme left of the first row (Anas al-Sharif's Facebook page, August 15, 2019)



Yahya al-Sinwar visits the northern Gaza Strip (Anas al-Sharif's Facebook page , September 3, 2020)



Abu Anas al-Ghandour, commander of the Northern Gaza Brigade of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Suheil al-Hindi a member of the Hamas political bureau, and senior Hamas terrorist Musheir al-Masri open a display of Hamas military-terrorist wing in the northern Gaza Strip (Anas al-Sharif's Telegram channel, July 1, 2023)



One of Anas al-Sharif's photos of the protests in East Jabalia as part of the return marches (Anas al-Sharif's Facebook page, September 22, 2023)

Islam Badr

► Islam Badr is a correspondent from Jabalia, 35 years old, who has been working at Hamas' al-Aqsa channel since 2007 as an announcer, program presenter and field reporter. From 2007, he was responsible for the news, and since May 2022, has been director of the channel's news department. He holds an MA in journalism and media communications (Islam Badr's LinkedIn account). He was previously involved in using al-Aqsa TV to convey messages from Hamas terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip to terrorist operatives in Judea and Samaria. The operatives detained by the Israeli Security Agency at the beginning of 2019 had been instructed by their handlers in the Gaza Strip to carry out terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Israel.³ **In addition to al-Aqsa TV, during the war he has been acting as a correspondent for the Qatari al-Arabi TV channel.** He also regularly updates his X

³ For further information, see the February 2019 ITIC report, "[Terrorism and the Media: Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip who also worked as media personnel were involved in recruiting a terrorist network exposed in Judea and Samaria.](#)"

account with developments, daily life and the fighting in the northern Gaza Strip, with an emphasis on the Jabalia area.

►Badr has a very active X account, with 66,700 followers. He also operates an Instagram account with 30,500 followers, and a Facebook page, not particularly active, with 20,000 followers. He also has a presence on TikTok and on Threads, with a relatively small number of followers, 9,433 and 2,129, respectively.

►Recently he posted information about his daily routine during the war. He and his colleagues begin working at seven in the morning. They go to the center of the Jabalia refugee camp to monitor the movement of people and ask eyewitnesses where IDF forces are, to be able to avoid danger. He prepares an agenda but usually does not follow it because IDF activity dictates the course of his work. Before nightfall, he and his fellow correspondents look for a place to spend the night, which can be a shelter in a school, another correspondent's house or a friend's house. Like other correspondents, he came under attack. He reported that working conditions were very difficult and correspondents were exposed to danger like the displaced persons and residents. His right hand was slightly injured in an Israeli attack on the Block 2 area of the Jabaliya refugee camp (Anas al-Sharif's X account, December 19, 2023)

►Badr said the lack of cell phones on the market was a problem which threatened journalistic work. He claimed that if a journalist loses his mobile phone, he will inevitably stop working, as there are no phones for sale (Aljazeera.net, December 17, 2023).

Photographs of Islam Badr



Islam Badr reports from Jabalia. Right: For al-Aqsa TV (Islam Badr's X account, November 29, 2023). Left: For al-Arabi TV (al-Arabi TV X account, December 16, 2023)



Residents at the market in the center of the Jabalia refugee camp
(QudsN X account, December 15, 2023)



Islam Badr reports from Jabalia (al-Arabi's YouTube channel, December 13, 2023)



Right: Islam Badr (on the right) after being slightly injured in an Israeli attack on the Block 2 area of the Jabaliya refugee camp (Anas al-Sharif's X account, December 19, 2023) Left: Aslam Badar with his colleague Anas al-Sharif in Jabaliya (Anas al-Sharif X account, December 9, 2023)

Ashraf Abu Amra

► **Ashraf Muhammad Nasser Abu Amra** is a freelance photojournalist from Deir al-Balah. He has at least twenty years of experience in the media. According to his X account, he has been working for al-Anadolu News since 2013, Reuters, Agence France-Presse, The New York Times and other news outlets. On his Facebook page he represents himself as a photographer for the APA Images Agency. In recent months he has been the deputy general

manager of the Alam24 news website, working under Hassan Aslih (Alam24 website Telegram channel, July 10, 2023). His photographs have won awards. For example, in 2014, he won the award for the best press photo of 2014 from the Palestinian Press House⁴ in Gaza (al-Riyadiya Online website, May 28, 2015). In 2016, he won second place in the news photography category of Andrei Stenin International Russian Photojournalism Competition for photojournalists aged 18 to 33 (Filastin al-Yawm TV website, August 6, 2016). In 2022, he won first place in the Shireen Abu Akleh competition held by Hamas media information office in the Gaza Strip (Abu Amra's Facebook page, December 29, 2022).



Ashraf Abu Amra on a pilgrimage to Mecca (Ashraf Abu Amra's Facebook page, June 12, 2023)

► Abu Amra's X account his Facebook page have relatively small numbers of followers 2,439 and 5,803 respectively. He also has an Instagram account with 159,000 followers, a Threads account with 13,500 followers, and a TikTok account with 283,200 followers. Most of the media channels and correspondents in Gaza use the photos he takes.

► Ashraf Abu Amra's right hand was slightly injured by a smoke grenade on September 15, 2023, while he and Hassan Aslih were covering a demonstration near the border fence in eastern Khan Yunis. On September 18, 2023, Abu Amra was admitted to the Başakşehir Cam and Sakura Medical Center in Istanbul, after leaving the Gaza Strip, where his arm was operated on. **On September 22, senior terrorist Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas'**

⁴ An NGO established in Gaza in January 2013. It is funded by the Palestinian Ministry of Communications, international foundations and Western countries. Its office is located on Shahada Street in the Rimal neighborhood. The independent Sawa news agency operates out of the office. The NGO conducts courses, practical training, seminars and lectures for journalists, hosts diplomatic and Western delegations. It also holds workshops for a variety of political bodies in Gaza, distributes equipment to correspondents and opens shelters for correspondents in times of war.

political bureau, visited him in his hospital room (al-Anadolu News, September 22, 2023). At the beginning of October 2023, with the end of the medical treatment and his recovery, he returned to the Strip.

Photographs taken by Ashraf Abu Amra



Right: Haniya kisses Ashraf Abu Amra's injured hand while visiting him in the hospital in Istanbul (Safa, September 23, 2023). Left: Ashraf Abu Amra is welcomed by his friend Hassan Aslih upon his return from Turkey (Hassan Aslih's Facebook page, October 4, 2023)



Ashraf Abu Amra (left) with Hassan Aslih and Ali Jadallah (al-Anadolu News photographer in Gaza) who won the second and third places in the competition held by the Hamas government information bureau in Gaza (Abu Amra's Facebook page, December 29, 2022)

► Abu Amra has photographed Hamas rallies with senior Hamas terrorists in attendance including Yahya al-Sinwar, senior PIJ military-terrorist wing terrorists and IDF attacks throughout the Gaza Strip.



Right: Al-Sinwar holds a child at a Hamas rally in Gaza on May 24, 2021 (Ashraf Abu Amra's Twitter account, May 24, 2021). Left: Khaled Mansour (right) and Taysir al-Jabari, PIJ military-terrorist wing commanders who were eliminated in Operation Breaking Dawn "Dawn" operation (August 2022) (Ashraf Abu Amra's Twitter account, August 7, 2022)



Yahya al-Sinwar with a gun taken from an IDF military patrol operation on November 11, 2018, which was revealed by Hamas. The photograph appears on website without copyright (since it was taken from Hamas' combat information, which appears in the lower right corner of the picture) compared to other websites where "Ashraf Abu Amra for APA" appears (Sama News website, November 11, 2018)



IDF attacks in the Gaza Strip. Right: attack on the house of the Khalifa family in west Gaza City during Operation Breaking Dawn (Ashraf Abu Amra's Twitter account, August 6, 2022). Left: Damage to a soccer field in the al-Maghazi refugee camp (Ashraf Abu Amra's Twitter account, November 5, 2022)

Hani al-Shaer

►Hani Hamad Marzouq al-Shaer is a freelance correspondent and photojournalist from Khan Yunis (Hani al-Shaer 's Facebook page), who works for various local and international media outlets (Reporters Without Borders YouTube channel, November 14, 2023), such as the Hamas-affiliated Safa website (Safa, December 26, 2021; skeyes website, the Samir Kassir Center for the Protection of Freedom of Communication and Culture, February 25, 2023), and the Turkish al-Anadolu News agency (al-Akhrar Movement website, April 22, 2013; Khan Yunis municipality website, May 31, 2022).

►As a photojournalist he records daily life and events on the ground, especially during times of war, and has won many awards. He had an X account that was active until the beginning of 2023, with few followers, and has a Facebook page with 50,500 followers, a Telegram channel with 61,600 subscribers, an Instagram account with 85,500 followers, and a TikTok account with 46,500 followers.

Photographs taken by Hani al-Shaer



Hani al-Shaer (Hani al-Shaer's Facebook page , November 24, 2023)

►On October 7, 2023, Hani al-Shaer participated in documenting the Hamas attack and massacre in the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip and took photos for the Turkish al-Anadolu News agency.



Photographs by Hani al-Shaer of the Hamas October 7 attack and massacre for al-Anadolu News (Middle East Monitor, October 10 and 12, 2023)



Results of the attack on the positions of Hamas' restraint force in eastern Abasan al-Jadeeda (Hani al-Shaer 's Facebook page, January 13, 2021)



Photo by Hani al-Shaer of an explosion following an attack in Rafah for Safa (Safa Twitter account, August 3, 2020)



**Covering a “march of return” in eastern Khan Yunis
(Hani al-Shaer's Facebook page, December 6, 2019)**