

4 September 2025

Media and press freedom organisations in Finland issue joint appeal to the President: Finland must step up to protect journalists in Gaza

A wide array of Finnish media sector and press freedom organisations, including journalists, chief editors, publishers and the Council for Mass Media, as well as civil society groups that advocate for press freedom, have submitted a petition to President **Alexander Stubb** demanding that Finland leverage its international position to protect journalists in Gaza.

In August 2025, a large number of journalists were once more killed in Gaza by Israeli army strikes. Within just a few days, six journalists and media assistants were killed, among them employees of Reuters, the Associated Press and Al Jazeera. The international organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has documented over 200 journalists' deaths in nearly two years and submitted referrals to the International Criminal Court.

According to the petition, this is not about individual tragedies, but an attack on the fundamental principles of freedom of news reporting. In addition, foreign journalists' access to the area has been prevented. "The ongoing killing of journalists and the media blackout in Gaza are an unprecedented blow to free journalism. Silently allowing this to happen creates a dangerous precedent for future conflicts as well," says UJF President **Marjaana Varmavuori**.

UN Security Council Resolution 2222 obliges member states to protect journalists in armed conflicts and bring those responsible for violations to justice. The petition's signatories emphasise that flagrant violations of the resolution cannot go without consequences in the international community.

"The Finnish media sector is united when it comes to freedom of expression and ensuring news reporting. The Association of Editors (PTY) considers it essential that Finland exerts its authority to protect journalists in Gaza," stresses **Antti Kokkonen**, the association's Vice Chair.

The petition emphasises Finland's special responsibility in the matter. In RSF's 2025 press freedom index, Finland belongs to a group of only seven countries worldwide where press freedom can be defined as good.

"Only 0.8 per cent of the world's population lives in a country like Finland, where press freedom is well established. Therefore, defending free and fact-based news reporting unites all Finns. This gives Finland a special role and responsibility in this matter, both nationally and internationally," says **Kaius Niemi**, President of the Finnish branch of RSF.

“Given this special role, it is necessary to remind Finns from time to time that freedom of the press is not the editors’ prerogative, but the people’s right to receive information without obstruction,” says **Anne Leppäjärvi**, Chair of the International Press Institute Finland and Journalism Degree Director Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

When journalists' work is prevented, the picture conveyed of events in the region becomes thin and fragmented. Without journalistic fact-checking, there is a danger that all information gets labelled propaganda. This threatens both the public's right to know and the prerequisites for international decision-making.

“Without the work of journalists, we cannot get an independent and accurate picture of events in crisis areas. Defending the free flow of factual information is a prerequisite for open democracy and a functioning society everywhere in the world,” says **Jukka Holmberg**, CEO of the Finnish Media Federation.

The signatories call on President Stubb to:

1. Raise the issue of the media blackout in Gaza and compliance with Resolution 2222 in international forums, and demand action to end the killing of journalists and the associated impunity.
2. Demand unhindered access to Gaza for international journalists.
3. Consistently emphasise the need for the freedom of news reporting as a cornerstone of Finland's foreign policy values.

The petition is signed by Reporters Without Borders Finland, the International Press Institute Finland, the Council for Mass Media, the Finnish Media Federation, the Association of Editors (PTY), the Union of Journalists in Finland, and the Foundation for Media and Development (Vikes).

The full text of the petition can be found at the end of this press release.

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