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Armed journalists, dismembered journalists

Many in Washington, if only they could, would have done the same – what bin Salman did to Khashoggi – to Julian Assange for leaking his war crimes. Instead of this – of dismembering it – for years they have applied lingchi: death by a thousand cuts.



1. When after the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American journalist for Al Jazeera shot by an [Israeli sniper](#), the army spokesman (IDF) came out to say – even before the whole festival of denials, lies and fake news reproduced by the international media began – that the IDF considers Palestinian journalists "legitimate targets" (sic) since "in the occupied territories they are armed with cameras" (sic), it seemed that the reality of Israel's [brutal occupation of Palestine](#) would never surpass any fiction.



Shireen Abu Akleh was covering Israeli incursions into Jenin in the occupied West Bank
[Al Jazeera].

And when last Tuesday an Israeli journalist, a photographer for Yedioth Ahronoth, one of Israel's leading newspapers, pulled out a real weapon – not his camera – and shot in an illegal Israeli settlement a Palestinian attacker who came "armed" with a disarmer, wounding him, things became even rarer (or more "normal", within what is the occupation).

In fact, it was the second time this communicator had done the same thing: six years ago he similarly "neutralized" another Palestinian attacker. Apparently, some journalists are armed there, but they are not stigmatized or criminalized – through accusations of carrying imaginary weapons – in order to dehumanize them and justify their deaths. In the end, they carry real weapons and they decide whether to inflict death.

In fact, soon, after Abu Akleh's assassination, the Israeli – and international – press, reproducing again the "talking points" and Israeli propaganda (hasbara) – tried to justify, ahem!, "contextualize", her death on the grounds that [it was from Jenin, where she was covering an "anti-terrorist raid"](#), from which several of the Palestinian attackers came in the latest wave of knife attacks in Israel. That is, "something was happening there", that's why she "died". Well, of course something was happening: since the beginning of the year, Israeli forces have murdered 25 other Palestinians in Jenin, all of them, of course, "armed terrorists" (some, apparently, even from cameras).

[It takes no imagination](#) to think about the difference in what the reaction would have been like if in the occupied territories, in Israel itself or in some illegal settlement, an Israeli journalist had been shot (or, on the other hand, if a Palestinian communicator would carry and/or use a weapon, even in self-defense).

Now it is also not necessary to imagine what the treatment of a (Israeli) journalist who carries a real weapon and uses it in the street against a terrorist "armed" by a disarmer (sic) would be: [congratulations and appointment with the prime minister](#).

2. I agree that "cut him some slack" (cut him some slack). But not because "[presidents have to deal with tyrants](#)," but because – given their latest blunders that are often relegated by their collaborators to "gajes of their age" (sic) – their memory may already be failing him.



President Biden is on his way to board a plane after an Arab summit in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, on July 16. (Evelyn Hockstein/Reuters)

Perhaps he no longer remembers that during the campaign, with his mouth full of tales about "freedom of speech" and "defense of journalism and journalists in the world" he promised to make Saudi Arabia, after the "[Khashoggi affair](#)", a columnist for the *Washington Post* – and permanent resident of the United States – murdered on the orders of Prince bin Salman, "[a pariah-state](#)".

The same bin Salman – "Mr. Bone Saw" – with whom Biden, during his recent visit to this country, has just bumped his fists: bump! (how cool!).

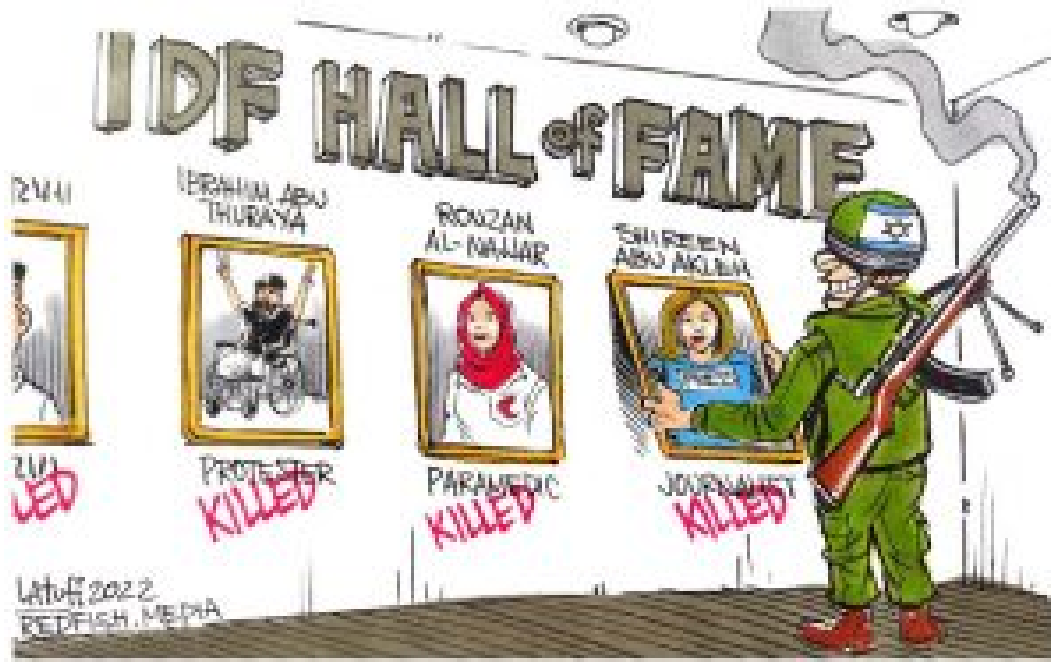


[The controversial photograph that defines Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia.](#) *Photo Reuters.*

Jamal Khashoggi, the critic of the royal household, was kidnapped in 2018 by the crown prince's agents, parts of a death squad specialized in "neutralizing" opponents (Tiger Squad), tortured, dismembered and dissolved in acid in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

For there also went the ideals of "freedom of the press" trumpeted from Washington: through the sewer, along with the remains of Khashoggi.

The Saudis, in fact – lying just like the Israelis in Abu Akleh's case – at first tried to blame the victim for his own death, claiming that the journalist came armed with fists (sic) and "died in a fight that he himself started with security agents" (sic).



Israeli Army Hall of Fame, by Carlos Latuff

It is not that one is surprised that the criticisms of trampling on freedom of speech always apply to enemy countries (China, Russia et al.), but not to journalist-killing regimes – whether with bullets or bone saws – that are part of the US imperial agenda. [The Saudis and the Israelis](#), whose rapprochement Washington has been working on for years ([Abraham Accords](#)) – by the way, the "normalization" between Tel Aviv and Riyadh leaves the Palestinians abandoned, perpetuating the Israeli occupation – are a perfect example.



Meeting of diplomats of the signatory countries of the Abraham Accords in Bahrain

Of course, [realpolitik](#): the war in Ukraine, oil prices, inflation, arms sales, the "Iranian threat". Biden, in Saudi Arabia, did not even mention Khashoggi's name (curiously the week before he spoke of [Abu Akleh](#), but being in Palestinian territories, not when he was in Israel).

Anyway, let's not forget envy. Many in Washington, if only they could, would have done the same – what bin Salman did to Khashoggi – to Julian Assange for leaking his war crimes. Instead of this – of dismembering it – for years they have applied lingchi: death by a thousand cuts.

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Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)

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