

# Journalist casualties in war and armed conflict

## Executive summary

There is **no single, universally accepted, conflict-by-conflict global ledger** of journalists *killed and injured* “during all wars on the record”. What exists instead are **overlapping, partially compatible datasets** built for different purposes:

- Committee to Protect Journalists <sup>1</sup> (CPJ) maintains the most widely cited global, case-verified database of journalists (and, separately, “media workers”) **killed** in relation to their work since **1992**, and it also runs **conflict-specific rolling tallies** (notably for the Israel–Gaza war) that include **injuries, arrests and missing persons**. <sup>2</sup>
- UNESCO <sup>3</sup> maintains the Observatory of Killed Journalists since **1993** and tracks **judicial status** of cases (chiefly killings rather than injuries). <sup>4</sup>
- Reporters Without Borders <sup>5</sup> (RSF) produces **situation reports and a barometer**; in some conflicts it publishes **injury counts** and “abuse” tallies and uses them in filings (e.g., ICC complaints). <sup>6</sup>
- The International Committee of the Red Cross <sup>7</sup> (ICRC) and the UN provide authoritative **international humanitarian law** framing (journalists are civilians unless directly participating in hostilities), but they generally **do not publish conflict-wide casualty counts** for journalists. <sup>8</sup>

Because injury counts are rarely tracked systematically across all wars, the most defensible approach is:

- 1) Use CPJ/UNESCO/RSF as **core authoritative sources** for **killings**,
- 2) Provide **injury totals only where a named authoritative source publishes an explicit count**, and mark otherwise as “**unspecified**”, and
- 3) Be transparent about **definition differences** (“journalist” vs “media worker”; “killed while working” vs “killed by a specific belligerent”; confirmed vs suspected work-related).

Accordingly, this report provides a **conflict catalogue** covering wars where (a) conflict-specific journalist casualty counts exist in CPJ/RSF/UNESCO sources and (b) notable cases and accountability processes are traceable. It is **not a complete list of every war in human history**, and it cannot be, given the lack of universal injury reporting and the scale of conflicts worldwide. The final section explains how to extend this work using CPJ/UNESCO data tools. <sup>9</sup>

## Methodology and definitions

### What counts as a “journalist casualty”

This report uses the source organisations’ own definitions, and therefore presents counts as **snapshots with scope qualifiers**:

- CPJ states it investigates journalist deaths to determine whether they are work-related; cases can be “confirmed” or “suspected”. Its database distinguishes “journalists” from “media workers” and warns that searchable fields change depending on classification. <sup>10</sup>

- RSF includes only cases where it has established a link between the abuse (including death) and journalistic activity. <sup>11</sup>
- UNESCO’s Observatory tracks killings of journalists and follows up on judicial status. <sup>4</sup>

## War boundaries and grouping

“War” is not a single legal category consistently applied in datasets. Some sources group by **country**; others group by **conflict episode**. This report groups by widely recognised conflict episodes where the sources themselves publish conflict-page or conflict-report counts, e.g., “Israel-Gaza war” (CPJ conflict page) or “Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine” (RSF conflict analysis). <sup>12</sup>

## Legal baseline for “targeting”

Under IHL, journalists are civilians and must not be targeted unless they take a direct part in hostilities; attacks on journalists and civilian media equipment are unlawful absent loss of civilian protection. <sup>8</sup> The United Nations Security Council <sup>13</sup> has reinforced protection and anti-impunity obligations through resolutions such as 2222 (2015). <sup>14</sup>

## Conflict catalogue

### Cross-conflict summary of published counts

The table below summarises **published, conflict-specific counts** where an authoritative source provides them. “Injured” is often **unspecified** because systematic injury totals are not consistently available.

Conflict episode	Dates (approx.)	Killed (journalists / media workers)	Injured	Count source and “as of” date	Confidence in count
Israel-Gaza war and regional spillover (Gaza, Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Yemen)	Oct 2023–present	<b>≥ 259 journalists and media workers killed</b> (CPJ preliminary investigations), with detailed breakdown of those killed by Israel and by Hamas/others	<b>174 reported injured</b>	CPJ, as of <b>28 Mar 2026</b> (page updated 30 Mar 2026) <sup>15</sup>	High (live investigative tracker; CPJ also warns it is investigating additional cases) <sup>15</sup>

Conflict episode	Dates (approx.)	Killed (journalists / media workers)	Injured	Count source and "as of" date	Confidence in count
Russia–Ukraine war (full-scale invasion focus)	Feb 2022–present	<b>16 journalists killed</b> (RSF, by Russian forces) <b>and ≥21 journalists and media workers killed</b> (CPJ, while working)	<b>≥53 injured</b> (RSF)	RSF as of <b>10 Feb 2026</b> ; CPJ count is an on-page figure without an explicit update date <sup>16</sup>	Medium–High (credible but definitional differences yield divergent totals) <sup>16</sup>
Syrian civil war	2011–2024 (count window)	<b>141 journalists killed</b> (includes murders and custody deaths within that total)	Unspecified	CPJ, Dec 2024 statement of total for <b>2011–2024</b> <sup>17</sup>	Medium–High (strong CPJ methodology; documentation constraints acknowledged) <sup>17</sup>
War in Afghanistan (post-2001 conflict)	2001–present (count window)	<b>65 journalists and media workers died</b> (killings related to work, "since 2001")	Unspecified (but specific mass-injury incidents documented)	CPJ Afghanistan spotlight (page) <sup>18</sup>	Medium–High (work-related deaths tracked; injury totals not systematised) <sup>18</sup>
Iraq War (US-led invasion to declared end)	Mar 2003–Dec 2011	<b>≥150 journalists killed and 54 media support workers killed</b>	Unspecified	CPJ research summary, published Mar 2013 <sup>19</sup>	High (bounded war period; CPJ research synthesis) <sup>19</sup>
Yemen civil war (internal conflict window)	2015–2020 (count window)	<b>≥18 journalists killed</b> (2015–2020), plus later killings documented separately	Unspecified	CPJ statement (May 2025) for 2015–2020 + UNESCO condemnations for later incidents <sup>20</sup>	Medium (partial window; later escalation overlaps other conflicts) <sup>20</sup>
Sudan war (SAF vs RSF)	Apr 2023–present	<b>≥9 journalists killed</b> since war began (UNESCO); RSF reports <b>≥7 killed</b>	Unspecified	UNESCO "as of May 2025"; RSF April 2025 <sup>21</sup>	Medium (high undercount risk; access constraints) <sup>21</sup>

Conflict episode	Dates (approx.)	Killed (journalists / media workers)	Injured	Count source and "as of" date	Confidence in count
Wars in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia emphasis)	1992–1996 (count window)	≥45 <b>journalists killed</b> (1992–1996)	Unspecified ("many more injured")	Columbia Journalism School course material (secondary academic source) <sup>22</sup>	Low–Medium (credible academic compilation, but not a dedicated casualty database) <sup>22</sup>

## Israel–Gaza war and regional spillover

Geographic scope: Gaza Strip <sup>23</sup> and adjoining theatres including Israel <sup>24</sup>, Lebanon <sup>25</sup>, Iran <sup>26</sup>, and Yemen <sup>27</sup>, as CPJ groups it. <sup>15</sup>

Counts (CPJ): As of **28 Mar 2026**, CPJ's preliminary investigations show **≥259 journalists and media workers** among those killed across the war's theatres; CPJ lists **174 injured, 3 missing, and 106 arrested**, and provides an attribution breakdown including those killed by Israel and those killed by Hamas/other armed groups. <sup>15</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Targeting pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	Killed ≥259; injured 174; missing 3; arrested 106 (CPJ). <sup>15</sup>	Mixed; airstrikes, drones, detention, etc.	CPJ conflict casualties tracker. <sup>15</sup>
Hamza Al Dahdouh <sup>28</sup>	Killed 7 Jan 2024; described as Al Jazeera cameraman, killed in drone strike while reporting (southern Gaza). <sup>29</sup>	Drone strike / alleged targeting (contested)	CPJ profile; CPJ call for probe; RSF ICC complaint naming the case. <sup>30</sup>
Mustafa Thuraya <sup>31</sup>	Killed 7 Jan 2024 in same strike as above. <sup>32</sup>	Drone strike / alleged targeting (contested)	CPJ profile; RSF ICC complaint inclusion. <sup>33</sup>
Hussam al-Masri <sup>34</sup>	Reuters contractor killed Aug 2025 while operating a live feed at Nasser Hospital; Reuters later published a visual investigation challenging Israel's stated rationale and raising protocol and warning questions. <sup>35</sup>	Strike on/near medical site; contested "military objective" claims	Reuters obituary and Reuters investigation. <sup>35</sup>

**Image link (primary-source hosted chart):** CPJ's embedded chart image showing comparative killings over 2020–2025 is accessible at the following URL (as embedded in CPJ's Israel–Gaza casualties page).

<sup>36</sup>

<https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/xtpSY/full.png>

## Russia-Ukraine war

Geographic scope: Ukraine <sup>37</sup> (and related detention/abuse in Russia <sup>38</sup> as documented by RSF). <sup>16</sup>

Counts: RSF reports that since 24 Feb 2022 it has documented **>175** journalist abuse cases, including **16 journalists killed** by Russian forces and **≥53 injured** (as of 10 Feb 2026). <sup>39</sup>

CPJ states **≥21 journalists and media workers killed while working in Ukraine**, and notes it is investigating whether two additional deaths were work-related (page does not display an explicit “as-of” date). <sup>40</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	RSF: 16 killed; ≥53 injured; >175 abuses (as of 10 Feb 2026). CPJ: ≥21 killed while working. <sup>16</sup>	Drones, artillery/missiles, detention, targeted fire	RSF Ukraine overview; RSF ICC complaint; CPJ war page. <sup>41</sup>
Brent Renaud <sup>42</sup>	Killed Mar 2022 while documenting events near Kyiv region; widely cited as first US journalist killed in the full-scale phase; attack details are described in major reporting. <sup>43</sup>	Crossfire / direct fire on assignment	Guardian film feature and contextual reporting. <sup>43</sup>
Victoria Roshchyna <sup>44</sup>	RSF reports she was killed after arbitrary detention in Russia; her death is included in RSF's killed/abuse accounting. <sup>39</sup>	Detention-related death	RSF Ukraine overview; RSF ICC filing summary. <sup>39</sup>

Accountability: RSF has filed multiple complaints to the ICC relating to alleged crimes against journalists in Ukraine, including a landmark complaint framed as crimes against humanity (persecution) and filed with the Ukrainian Prosecutor General. <sup>45</sup>

## Syrian civil war

Geographic scope: Syria <sup>46</sup> . <sup>47</sup>

Counts: CPJ reports **141 journalists killed between 2011 and 2024**, including **23 murders** and **at least six deaths in government custody** (included within the total). <sup>17</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	141 journalists killed (2011–2024). <sup>17</sup>	Mixed; crossfire, targeted killings, custody deaths	CPJ statement summarising count and custody deaths. <sup>17</sup>
Marie Colvin <sup>48</sup>	Killed 22 Feb 2012 in shelling of a makeshift press centre in Homs; UNESCO condemned attack and cited journalist civilian status; CPJ notes other reporters injured in same attack. <sup>49</sup>	Shelling of media centre; alleged targeting	UNESCO condemnation; CPJ profile. <sup>49</sup>
Rémi Ochlik <sup>50</sup>	Killed in the same Homs strike as Marie Colvin (UNESCO statement). <sup>51</sup>	Shelling / alleged targeting	UNESCO condemnation. <sup>51</sup>

Accountability: A US civil court (Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act context) entered a default judgment finding sufficient evidence that Colvin’s death resulted from an extrajudicial killing attributable to Syria and awarding damages; the publicly available judgment is a primary legal document. <sup>52</sup>

## War in Afghanistan

Geographic scope: Afghanistan <sup>53</sup> . <sup>18</sup>

Counts: CPJ states that **since 2001, 65 journalists and media workers have died** in Afghanistan in killings related to their work (as presented on CPJ’s Afghanistan coverage spotlight). <sup>18</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	65 journalists and media workers “since 2001” (CPJ). <sup>18</sup>	IEDs/bombings, crossfire, targeted killings	CPJ Afghanistan spotlight. <sup>18</sup>
Danish Siddiqui <sup>54</sup>	Killed 16 Jul 2021 near Spin Boldak while covering fighting; UNESCO DG condemnation and CPJ reporting document date and context. <sup>55</sup>	Crossfire / combat zone death	UNESCO condemnation; CPJ report and CPJ profile. <sup>55</sup>
David Gilkey <sup>56</sup>	Killed 5 Jun 2016 with Afghan colleague while embedded with Afghan forces; CPJ profile provides circumstances. <sup>57</sup>	Attack on convoy / combat zone	CPJ profile; CPJ alert. <sup>57</sup>

Injury counts: CPJ documents specific incidents with quantified injuries (e.g., a 2023 bomb attack in Mazar-e-Sharif injuring at least 16), but a conflict-wide cumulative injury count is **unspecified** in CPJ’s Afghanistan spotlight. <sup>18</sup>

## Iraq War

Geographic scope: Iraq <sup>58</sup>, especially Baghdad <sup>59</sup> during the 2003 invasion and subsequent conflict phases. <sup>60</sup>

Counts: CPJ research states that **at least 150 journalists and 54 media support workers were killed** from the US-led invasion (March 2003) to the declared end of the war (December 2011). <sup>19</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	150 journalists + 54 media support workers killed (Mar 2003–Dec 2011). <sup>19</sup>	Crossfire, targeted fire, kidnappings, dangerous assignment deaths	CPJ death toll synthesis. <sup>19</sup>
Taras Protsyuk <sup>61</sup>	Killed 8 Apr 2003 when a US tank fired on the Palestine Hotel; CPJ profile and CPJ investigative report detail circumstances. <sup>62</sup>	Direct fire on press location	CPJ profile; CPJ “Permission to Fire?” report. <sup>62</sup>
José Couso <sup>63</sup>	Killed 8 Apr 2003 in same Palestine Hotel shelling; CPJ profile summarises. <sup>64</sup>	Direct fire on press location	CPJ profile; CPJ report. <sup>64</sup>
Mazen Dana <sup>65</sup>	Killed 17 Aug 2003 near Abu Ghraib Prison by US tank fire; CPJ profile and CPJ call for investigation document context. <sup>66</sup>	Mistaken identity / engagement rules dispute	CPJ profile; CPJ statement demanding public investigation. <sup>66</sup>

Accountability: CPJ conducted investigative reporting on the Palestine Hotel shelling; RSF and others criticised the US military inquiry that cleared soldiers and argued the incident was avoidable and rooted in failures of command communication. <sup>67</sup>

## اليمن civil war and war-related escalation

Geographic scope: Yemen nationwide, with multiple armed actors; recent escalation has also involved external strikes. <sup>20</sup>

Counts: CPJ stated that **between 2015 and 2020, at least 18 journalists were killed in Yemen**, and it documents subsequent war-linked killings including a 2024 execution by AQAP and a 2025 killing in a Houthi drone strike. <sup>68</sup>

UNESCO confirmed that in a 10 Sep 2025 strike on a building housing newspaper headquarters, **at least 9 journalists** were confirmed among “over thirty” killed in the same attack, with verification ongoing. <sup>69</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	≥18 journalists killed (2015–2020 window; CPJ). Injury count: unspecified. <sup>68</sup>	Airstrikes, abductions, executions, drone strikes	CPJ Yemen statement. <sup>68</sup>
Mohamed Al-Maqri <sup>70</sup>	CPJ reports he was executed Dec 2024 after abduction in 2015 (AQAP). <sup>71</sup>	Abduction leading to death	CPJ statement; UNESCO condemnation of his killing. <sup>71</sup>
Musab Al-Hattami <sup>72</sup>	CPJ reports he was killed in April 2025 in a Houthi drone strike. <sup>68</sup>	Drone strike	CPJ statement. <sup>68</sup>

Accountability: UNESCO condemnation statements generally call for protection and accountability but do not in themselves constitute completed prosecutions; no comprehensive judicial outcomes were located in the sources reviewed here for these Yemen cases (mark: unspecified). <sup>73</sup>

## Sudan war

Geographic scope: Sudan <sup>74</sup> (SAF vs paramilitary RSF conflict). <sup>21</sup>

Counts: UNESCO states that **as of May 2025, at least nine journalists have been killed** since the war began. <sup>75</sup>

RSF states that at least seven journalists were killed over the first two years of war (as of April 2025). <sup>76</sup>

Notable documented cases and accountability signals (selected):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	UNESCO: ≥9 killed since war began (as of May 2025). RSF: ≥7 killed (as of Apr 2025). Injury totals: unspecified. <sup>21</sup>	Armed raids, drone strikes, displacement-linked risk	UNESCO Sudan reporting; RSF Sudan report. <sup>21</sup>
Hanan Adam <sup>77</sup>	CPJ reports she was killed by RSF soldiers at her home in al-Gezira state (Dec 2024). <sup>78</sup>	Armed raid / home attack	CPJ alert. <sup>78</sup>
Muawiya Abdel Razek <sup>79</sup>	CPJ urged investigation into his killing and family deaths after an RSF raid (June 2024). <sup>80</sup>	Armed raid / targeted killing	CPJ call for investigation. <sup>80</sup>

Accountability: CPJ and RSF repeatedly call for investigations; the UNESCO narrative emphasises infrastructure destruction and displacement. Publicly documented prosecutions for journalist killings in Sudan were not identified in the sources reviewed here (mark: unspecified). <sup>21</sup>

## Wars in the former Yugoslavia

Geographic scope: the former Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia. <sup>81</sup>

Counts: A Columbia University journalism resource states that from **1992 to 1996**, at least **45 journalists were killed** and “many more were injured”, and it notes evidence of point-blank targeting in addition to crossfire/landmine deaths. <sup>22</sup>

Notable documented cases (selected, CPJ record):

Item	Details	Pattern category	Source links
<b>Counts snapshot</b>	≥45 killed (1992–1996). Injured: unspecified total. <sup>22</sup>	Snipers/artillery/crossfire; some targeted killings	Columbia compilation (secondary academic). <sup>22</sup>
Ivo Standeker <sup>82</sup>	Injured by tanks/mortar shells in Sarajevo and died the same day (Jun 1992). <sup>83</sup>	Artillery/crossfire	CPJ annual report entry via Refworld. <sup>83</sup>
Jana Schneider <sup>84</sup>	Injured in same Sarajevo incident; shrapnel wounds; evacuated to Belgrade. <sup>83</sup>	Artillery/crossfire (injury case)	CPJ annual report entry via Refworld. <sup>83</sup>
Kjasif Smajlovic <sup>85</sup>	CPJ states he was murdered Apr 1992 in Zvornik after seizure of the town; case unsolved as of Oct 2024. <sup>86</sup>	Murder during takeover / impunity	CPJ person profile. <sup>86</sup>

## Patterns of harm and accountability across conflicts

Across conflicts with adequate documentation, several patterns recur:

- **Airstrikes, artillery and drones** dominate modern conflict casualty patterns; CPJ’s Israel–Gaza tracker explicitly records very high killed and injured totals, and RSF’s Ukraine reporting highlights FPV drones as a major recent threat and quantifies injuries. <sup>12</sup>
- **Detention-related deaths and disappearances** appear as a distinct pathway, with RSF’s Ukraine reporting explicitly including at least one death in detention. <sup>39</sup>
- **Press locations becoming “battlefield-adjacent targets”** recur in conflicts such as Iraq (Palestine Hotel shelling) and Gaza (journalists killed at/near medical or civilian infrastructure sites, contested by belligerents). <sup>87</sup>
- **Accountability mechanisms are often non-criminal**: civil judgments (e.g., the US default judgment in the Colvin case), international advocacy complaints (RSF ICC complaints), and official condemnation and follow-up processes (UNESCO Observatory judicial-status tracking). <sup>88</sup>

Legally, the baseline is clear: journalists are civilians under IHL (absent direct participation in hostilities), and attacks on them are unlawful when they retain civilian protection. <sup>8</sup>

Operationally, the record shows that **investigations and prosecutions are inconsistent**, which reinforces UNESCO’s repeated emphasis on impunity and judicial follow-up. <sup>89</sup>

## Mermaid timeline of major conflict journalist casualties

timeline

title Major conflict episodes with published journalist casualty counts

(selected; snapshots)

1992 : Former Yugoslavia wars – at least 45 journalists killed (1992–1996 window; secondary academic compilation)

2003 : Iraq War begins – CPJ later summarises at least 150 journalists killed (2003–2011)

2001 : Afghanistan post-2001 war – CPJ later notes 65 journalists/media workers killed since 2001 (snapshot)

2011 : Syria civil war – CPJ later reports 141 journalists killed (2011–2024)

2022 : Russia full-scale invasion of Ukraine – RSF: 16 killed and 53 injured (as of 10 Feb 2026); CPJ: at least 21 killed while working

2023 : Israel-Gaza war begins – CPJ: at least 259 journalists/media workers killed; 174 injured (as of 28 Mar 2026)

2023 : Sudan war begins – UNESCO: at least 9 journalists killed since war began (as of May 2025)

## Source catalogue by conflict

This catalogue lists the **primary/authoritative sources** actually relied upon above (not an exhaustive bibliography).

### Cross-cutting legal and definitional sources

- ICRC explainer on journalists as civilians under IHL. <sup>90</sup>
- ICRC journal article on protection of journalists in conflict zones (includes Iraq context). <sup>91</sup>
- UN Security Council Resolution 2222 (2015). <sup>14</sup>
- CPJ data methodology language embedded in CPJ database interface. <sup>10</sup>
- UNESCO Observatory/Datahub pages (killed journalists; judicial status concept). <sup>4</sup>
- RSF barometer definition notes. <sup>11</sup>

### Israel–Gaza war and regional spillover

- CPJ rolling casualty tracker (killed/injured/missing/arrested with update date). <sup>15</sup>
- RSF ICC complaint naming specific cases (Dahdouh/Thuraya) and injury case inclusion. <sup>92</sup>
- Reuters obituary and Reuters visual investigation relating to the Nasser Hospital strike. <sup>35</sup>
- CPJ person entries for notable cases. <sup>93</sup>

### Russia–Ukraine war

- RSF Ukraine “175 journalists victims of abuse” (overview with killed and injured totals). <sup>94</sup>
- RSF ICC complaint summary with killed, injured, attempted homicides, detention stats (as-of date). <sup>45</sup>
- CPJ Russia–Ukraine war page (killed while working). <sup>40</sup>

### Syria civil war

- CPJ Syria count summary (2011–2024). <sup>17</sup>
- UNESCO condemnation of Homs media centre attack (Colvin/Ochlik). <sup>51</sup>
- CPJ profile for Colvin. <sup>95</sup>
- US court judgment (Colvin v Syria) PDF. <sup>52</sup>

## Afghanistan war (post-2001)

- CPJ Afghanistan spotlight count. <sup>18</sup>
- UNESCO condemnation entry for Siddiqui. <sup>96</sup>
- CPJ profiles/alerts for Siddiqui and Gilkey. <sup>97</sup>

## Iraq War (2003–2011)

- CPJ Iraq war death toll synthesis (150 journalists + 54 media support workers). <sup>19</sup>
- CPJ investigative report on Palestine Hotel (“Permission to Fire?”). <sup>98</sup>
- CPJ profiles for Protsyuk, Couso, Dana; CPJ call for investigation. <sup>99</sup>
- RSF critique of the US inquiry into the Palestine Hotel attack. <sup>100</sup>

## Sudan war

- UNESCO Sudan article stating killed-since-war-began count (as-of May 2025). <sup>75</sup>
- RSF Sudan two-year summary. <sup>76</sup>
- CPJ alerts for named killings. <sup>101</sup>

## Former Yugoslavia wars

- Columbia University journalism resource summarising killed count and qualitative patterns (1992–1996). <sup>22</sup>
- CPJ record entries for specific killed/injured cases (Refworld mirror) and CPJ profile. <sup>102</sup>

# Limitations, contested cases, and how to extend to more wars

## Key limitations

- **No universal injury ledger:** Most global databases emphasise **killings**, not injuries. Where injuries are counted (e.g., CPJ for Israel–Gaza; RSF for Ukraine), totals are still subject to verification constraints and access limitations. <sup>12</sup>
- **Counting differences:** CPJ’s “killed while working” vs RSF’s “killed by Russian forces” in Ukraine illustrates how two authoritative sources can yield **different but simultaneously valid** counts due to different inclusion rules and attribution frames. <sup>103</sup>
- **Under-reporting and access:** Wars with restricted access and heavy disinformation are likely undercounted, and CPJ explicitly states it is investigating additional cases in Israel–Gaza. <sup>15</sup>
- **What is a “war”:** Dataset groupings rarely align with a definitive war list.

## Contested or ambiguous cases

- In several conflicts, whether a journalist was **deliberately targeted** or killed in **crossfire** is disputed. For instance, Iraq’s Palestine Hotel shelling and Gaza hospital strikes are extensively disputed, with NGOs and media investigations challenging official explanations while militaries often claim self-defence or military objectives. <sup>104</sup>

## How to extend toward “all wars on the record”

To approach comprehensive coverage, a feasible method is:

- 1) Use CPJ’s killed database to extract country/year cases and then map them to conflict episodes (CPJ provides the definitional and methodological base for work-related death classification). <sup>10</sup>

2) Use UNESCO's Observatory/Datahub to cross-check killings and judicial-status follow-up for the same countries/periods, noting definitional differences. <sup>105</sup>

3) For injury counts, prioritise **conflict-specific trackers** (like CPJ's Israel-Gaza page) and RSF conflict "numbers" reports where they publish explicit injury totals. <sup>106</sup>

For many wars, the honest and methodologically correct outcome will remain: **"injured: unspecified"** unless a reputable body publishes a count.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>22</sup> <sup>46</sup> <sup>81</sup> [https://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/nelson/rohde/graves\\_safety.html](https://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/nelson/rohde/graves_safety.html)

[https://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/nelson/rohde/graves\\_safety.html](https://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/nelson/rohde/graves_safety.html)

<sup>2</sup> <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> <https://cpj.org/data/killed/country/>

<https://cpj.org/data/killed/country/>

<sup>3</sup> <sup>55</sup> <sup>96</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/director-general-urges-better-protection-journalists-following-killing-award-winning-journalist>

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/director-general-urges-better-protection-journalists-following-killing-award-winning-journalist>

<sup>4</sup> <sup>42</sup> [Observatory of Killed Journalists](https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

[https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>5</sup> <sup>19</sup> <sup>44</sup> <sup>60</sup> [Iraq war and news media: A look inside the death toll](https://cpj.org/2013/03/iraq-war-and-news-media-a-look-inside-the-death-to/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

[https://cpj.org/2013/03/iraq-war-and-news-media-a-look-inside-the-death-to/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://cpj.org/2013/03/iraq-war-and-news-media-a-look-inside-the-death-to/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>6</sup> <sup>11</sup> <sup>84</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/barometer>

<https://rsf.org/en/barometer>

<sup>7</sup> <sup>43</sup> ['Brent's end was poetic': the life and death of first US journalist killed in Russia-Ukraine war](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/aug/29/brent-renaud-armed-only-camera-documentary?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

[https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/aug/29/brent-renaud-armed-only-camera-documentary?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/aug/29/brent-renaud-armed-only-camera-documentary?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>8</sup> <sup>63</sup> <sup>90</sup> <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/international-humanitarian-law-protect-journalists-armed-conflict>

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