The full response received by CAMERA on November 16th, 2026 has been included below. The invitation for a response by Free Press Unlimited has been included under the response.

CAMERA is an independent nonprofit watchdog whose media work is devoted to one essential principle: the public deserves accurate and complete reporting, as promised in journalistic codes of ethics. We hold news organizations accountable when they fall short of that responsibility, including by omitting information material to understanding the events they cover. This is a fundamental function of a free press.

The central premise of your inquiry — that CAMERA's media analysis constitutes membership in a purported "network" aimed at "delegitimisation" — misunderstands or misrepresents this reality, and paints legitimate media scrutiny as a nefarious scheme.

News organizations have a responsibility to provide audiences with relevant context. This includes sharing, with appropriate attribution, information about news subjects conveyed by official sources. To call attention to the omission of such context is basic media accountability.

CAMERA's oversight is all the more essential because major news organizations have repeatedly presented individuals with documented combat roles in Hamas as "journalists" — extending even to hostage-holder Abdallah Aljamal, who was killed during a hostage rescue but whom The Guardian featured in a montage of slain journalists without disclosing his role.

Indeed, the extent of this verification problem is underscored by Free Press Unlimited's own reliance on its self-described "partner" the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, whose tallies of slain "journalists" were repeated by FPU but include casualties identified by Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad as their own combatants (see, e.g., Ahmad al-Helou and Hassan Abu Warda) and others who even the Committee to Protect Journalists eventually acknowledged had "engaged in combat" (see, e.g., Ahmad Abu Eisha).

Rigorous scrutiny of who is presented to the public as an unaligned journalist is a journalistic necessity, not a smear, and anyone concerned with the safety of journalists should likewise condemn the widespread misuse of the "journalist" title.

CAMERA's references to Hussam Shabat and Anas al-Sharif reflect precisely that mission. When Israel shared captured documents affiliating the two with Hamas's Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, that disclosure was newsworthy — whether or not an advocacy organization feels the documents were sufficiently authenticated.

FPU's characterization of CAMERA as part of a coordinated "network of official and independent actors" might also be called a delegitimisation narrative. CAMERA is entirely independent, without government direction or funding. As journalists know, reporters and researchers routinely link to, quote, and embed publicly available material without forming an operational "network" with those they cite. This is all the more true with incidental references, such as the example you share of CAMERA embedding an X post by an individual researcher in order to embed the video he shared. Of course, having a researcher's commentary published in a Jewish newspaper like The Algemeiner is also straightforward journalism, not evidence of a secretive, bad-faith "network." Indeed, press-freedom advocacy organizations should be careful not to treat routine citations of Jewish commentators or publication in a Jewish newspaper as evidence of a coordinated network, which risks echoing longstanding antisemitic tropes about Jews operating through shadowy, interconnected cabals.

The invitation for response as sent by Free Press Unlimited:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am reaching out on behalf of the international press freedom organization Free Press Unlimited. We would like to invite a response from the Foundation to findings we will publish in a forthcoming report about the delegitimisation of Palestinian journalists before and after they were killed, in particular the cases of Anas Al-Sharif and Hossam Shabat.

To ensure that we accurately reflect any views or actions taken by you in relation to the matters included in the report, we respectfully request your response by **17 November 2026**. Please find a summary of the key findings of the report at the bottom of this email.

In the publication, we make the following statements, for which we would like to invite your response:

- The report identifies CAMERA as one of the online actors in 'a network of official and independent actors who were involved in constructing and amplifying delegitimization narratives' about Palestinian journalists and their work, including Anas al-Sharif and Hossam Shabat. The report refers to the following posts and publications:

https://x.com/CAMERA4Truth/status/1908129324076503272
https://x.com/CAMERA4Truth/status/1957543544068919509

https://x.com/CAMERA4Truth/status/1961395490760650904
https://www.camera.org/journalist/al-sharif-anas/

And notes that CAMERA references other actors from this network in some of these publications, including Honest Reporting, Eitan Fischberger and the Algemeiner. Any response received before **November 17th** will be incorporated in the report. If you have any questions, please contact me at [email address]. Thank you in advance for confirming receipt of this email.

On behalf of the Investigations unit at Free Press Unlimited,

Summary of key findings

The report analyzes public and online statements in which official and independent actors have referred to the two Palestinian journalists as terrorists, propaganda operatives, or participants in hostilities without providing credible evidence of these allegations. In the report, we refer to these allegations as 'delegitimisation narratives': efforts beyond legitimate media criticism, in which journalists are portrayed in a way that discredits their status as a journalist or their journalistic credibility, without providing credible evidence of such allegations. FPU conducted digital and open source research to answer the research questions: 'How have delegitimisation narratives around killed Gazan journalists been constructed?' and 'How did these narratives reach legacy media – and thereby large audiences?'.

With regard to the allegations issued against Anas al Sharif and Hossam Shabat, the report outlines the applicable legal framework under international humanitarian law, which prescribes that journalists can only be legitimate targets during armed conflict if and for so long as they participate directly in hostilities. The report finds that the IDF provided no credible evidence that meets this threshold, nor that supports the allegations made in these two cases. The report notes, among others, that the screenshots the IDF distributed to substantiate its allegations were unverifiable due to Israel's refusal to release the original documents, remain uncorroborated, and do not contain evidence relevant to the applicable legal threshold (both in time and

scope). With regard to materials shared by other actors, including photos of the journalists with leaders of a terrorist organisation or posts from their social media accounts, the report notes in reference to the applicable legal framework (including the interpretation by the Israeli authorities) that the mere expression of political thoughts or (alleged) sympathies with a party to the conflict are not sufficient to demonstrate that a journalist has 'participated directly in hostilities', and thereby do not justify any attacks against them.

To research the aforementioned questions, the report relies on two methods: a chronological reconstruction of the delegitimisation campaigns that targeted Anas Al-Sharif and Hossam Shabat, analysing social media activity, official statements, thinktank publications and other publicly available material. Second, an examination of 98 publications from 14 major legacy media outlets across seven Western countries to assess how allegations against the two journalists were reported.

The first key finding is that delegitimisation narratives about Al-Sharif and Shabat were constructed and amplified through a specific network of both official actors, meaning (individuals employed by) the IDF and other Israeli government bodies, and independent actors. Our findings show that actors in- and outside the Israeli government and IDF reinforced each other's messaging about the journalists by reposting and adding to the same narratives, exchanging information about the journalists (e.g. OSINT-researchers handing over 'evidence' to the IDF and meeting with IDF officials), attending meetings organized by government bodies in which messaging was coordinated, and in some cases, even engaged in paid collaborations with Israeli ministries. In both cases, our analysis demonstrates that delegitimisation followed a recognisable pattern, moving from allegations of propaganda to allegations of terrorism.

During periods of heightened international criticism of Israeli military operations, delegitimisation activity intensified considerably. Second, our analysis of legacy

media demonstrates that these narratives were frequently reproduced by international legacy media in ways inconsistent with fundamental journalistic safeguards. Despite the severe nature of the allegations, for example, more than 72% of the publications about Al-Sharif and Shabat did not demonstrate any attempts to independently verify allegations of terrorism made against the journalists.

While the severity of these shortcomings varied, together they contributed to the wider dissemination and normalisation of these unsupported and severe allegations. The report argues that insight into delegitimisation is relevant because the protection of journalists in armed conflict is contingent on their status as civilians. Accusations of participation in combat or terrorism can influence how the legitimacy of attacks on journalists is assessed and can thus impact accountability for violations of international humanitarian law.