The full response received by Khaled Hassan on November 15th, 2026 has been included below. The invitation for a response by Free Press Unlimited has been included under the response.

Please find my response below.

You contacted me on 10 November with accusations that I am a member of a bloodthirsty, quasi-official network of Jews and Zionists engaged in a potentially state-funded campaign to delegitimise and murder Palestinian journalists. On 10 November, as we marked 88 years since Kristallnacht, the state-sponsored, coordinated pogrom against Jewish people in Europe, you evidently found it fitting to write to me with a barrage of ludicrous accusations in an attempt to whitewash Palestinian terrorism and sympathetically portray terrorists as journalists who were victims of unlawful Israeli military action.

I am an Egyptian citizen, born and bred. Members of my family served in the Egyptian armed forces and took part in wars against the State of Israel. I grew up in an environment in which Jews were treated with suspicion and contempt and, most importantly, routinely denied the right to defend themselves. I am therefore all too familiar with the kind of antisemitism you have demonstrated. I recognise its language, its underlying prejudices and the hostility it seeks to legitimise.

Although I fundamentally believe that shameless organisations like yours legitimise and enable terrorism, I have nevertheless chosen to respond. I do so in the hope that my reply, which you promised to publish in full, will expose to the public exactly who you are.

Your attempt to legitimise terrorists masquerading as journalists is one of the most shameful acts of betrayal of the profession of journalism. You have accused me of the "delegitimisation of Palestinian journalists" Hossam Shabat and Anas al-Sharif.

You dismissed IDF and Israeli security intelligence identifying Shabat as a "sniper operative from the Beit Hanoun Battalion of Hamas who operated under civilian cover". You chose to dismiss this evidence despite Shabat's open and public support for the kidnapping, murder and torture of civilians.

As an estimated 6,000 terrorists invaded Israel, your "journalist" celebrated, declaring "today is our day" in a Facebook post. Later, in another Facebook post, he shared a video of himself, bearing his personal watermark, welcoming what he called "fighters from the battlefield" while screaming "Allahu Akbar".

In another video of himself, titled "Children in Beit Hanoun", he shouted, "We're receiving the heroes" [terrorists returning after their invasion of Israel], followed by further shouts of "Allahu Akbar", On October 7th.

In yet another video posted on his social media on October 7th, he mocked an Israeli child who was crying out for her mother as terrorists invaded her neighbourhood. Shabat responded by saying, "We're only just saying in the name of Allah", suggesting that this was merely the beginning of a campaign of genocidal, brutal terrorism.

In another social media post, Shabat declared, early on 7 October, that what was unfolding was "By order of the Chief of Staff, Abu Khalid" [a reference to Mohammed Deif, the Chief of Staff of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades].

Do you believe it is customary for “journalists” to scream “Allahu Akbar” as innocent civilians are murdered, kidnapped, and raped? It customary for “journalists” to mock children who call for their parents in fear as they watch terrorists invading homes? Is this your definition of “journalists”?

It is clear you have chosen to dismiss Shabat's public and proud support for terrorism, including his Jihadist screams of "Allahu Akbar" as civilians and babies were murdered and kidnapped, it is, therefore, hardly surprising that you would also reject Israeli intelligence identifying him as a Hamas sniper operating under civilian cover.

If you were unaware of Shabat's public support for and connection to terrorism prior to writing to me, then I expect an apology and your gratitude. If, however, you have chosen to dismiss the wealth of sources showing him openly supporting Jihad, then, like many across Europe, you are a despicable degenerate working for a despicable organisation that whitewashes terrorism as activism and journalism.

As for my role in exposing Shabat and others, I can tell you one thing: I slept like a baby the day I heard that the IDF had delivered justice to those who engaged in and supported the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.

In fact, your message reminded me of one of my proudest achievements: standing with my people, the Jewish people, and with humanity in our pursuit of justice against Palestinian Islamic terrorism.

I shall raise a glass and celebrate tonight as I reflect on how the IDF delivered, and continues to deliver, justice. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that, as the IDF proudly stated, Israel and its military and security forces "will continue operations against Hamas operatives", including those operating under civilian cover. Likewise, I will continue to support the IDF, Israel, and the world by playing my part in exposing terrorists and terrorism supporters, and there's absolutely nothing you and your ilk can do about it.

I would also like to inform you that I intend to make a generous donation to the IDF. Your email reminded me that their courage and sacrifice must never be taken for granted, particularly when Europe has organisations like yours who side with terrorists and grant them the legitimacy they are desperate for.

Thank you for writing to me. I wouldn't have donated to the IDF if it weren't for you.

The invitation for response as sent by Free Press Unlimited:

Dear Mr. Hassan,

I am reaching out on behalf of the international press freedom organization Free Press Unlimited. We would like to seek additional information and invite your response 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 **16**

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:

- In reference to your posts about Hossam Shabat on X, the report identifies you as one of the actors in 'a network of official and independent actors who were involved in constructing and amplifying delegitimization narratives' about Palestinian journalists and their work. The report notes that you were among the particularly active online actors who discredited Hossam Shabat, adding that others have referred to your posts as evidence of the allegations against Shabat. As is set out in further detail under 'summary of key findings' below, the report finds that credible evidence for these allegations is missing.
- The report refers to your post of 18 September 2024 (https://x.com/Khaledhzakariah/status/1836406970468737103), in which you claim that "Hossam was present in person, received and celebrated Hamas terrorists as they brought Israeli hostages into Gaza on October 7th" and imply he was involved in the attacks on October 7th. In the report, we conclude that the photos you added to this post do not substantiate the claim that Shabat was involved in the participation of these attacks or otherwise participated directly in hostilities. The report also notes that you erroneously attributed one of the photos to Shabat, which was posted and watermarked by the Al Qassem Brigades on Telegram twenty minutes earlier. The report concludes the photo does not provide evidence of your allegation that Shabat 'infiltrated Israel with Hamas terrorists on October 7th'.
- The report notes that, in addition to your meeting with then-IDF spokesperson Avichay Adraee (see below), you have various connections within the network of pro-Israel actors active in the online discourse on Palestinian journalists. The report refers in this regard to your co-authorship of the Asserson report, your participation in a podcast from the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs on 23 September 2025, two interviews with Visgerad24 and interviews with the Misgav Institute.

In relation to our findings, we also have two few specific questions:

- On 16 September 2024, you posted a photo on X of your meeting with the (now former) IDF Spokesperson Arabic Avichay Adraee in Israel. In November of the same year, you wrote about another meeting with the Spokesperson and added you also met with another 'very senior' member of the IDF and security establishment. You have since alluded to your influence over the IDF's decision to eliminate Hossam Shabat, writing among others: 'Hossam didn't listen and therefore, was eliminated in weeks, as I promised'

and ‘Do you know that I submitted a dossier of evidence of his [Anas Al-Sharif] and Hossam Shabat’s involvement to the IDF, and shortly afterward they were eliminated?’.
    - What documentation did you submit to the IDF regarding Hossam Shabat and Anas Al-Sharif?
    - What is the basis for your claim of a connection between your exchange of information on both journalists and their subsequent targeting by the IDF?
    -

Any response received before **November 16th** will be incorporated in the report. If you have any questions, please contact me at [email address]. We 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.