The full response received by OSINT613 on November 16th, 2026 has been included below. The invitation for a response by Free Press Unlimited has been included under the response.

We acknowledge receipt of your inquiry and strongly reject the characterization of our reporting as an attempt to discredit journalists.

Our reporting on Anas al-Sharif and Hossam Shabat relied on publicly available evidence, including IDF statements, captured Hamas documents, military records, photographs, videos and their own social media activity.

According to IDF documents, al-Sharif joined Hamas's military wing in 2013, commanded a rocket launcher squad, held military ID 305342 and appeared in Hamas employment records. A separate 2023 battalion roster published by the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center lists the same military ID and identifies him as a media officer. Both the BBC and CNN reported that he previously worked for a Hamas media team.

IDF documents similarly identified Shabat as a sniper in Hamas's Beit Hanoun Battalion, military ID 713064, and listed him among recruits in a 2019 Qassam Brigades course. The New York Times reported in October 2024 that he had published posts praising Hamas and photographs wearing the scarf of its student movement.

Please take a look at their own statements, they definitely warrant scrutiny.

On October 7, 2023, al-Sharif posted, "It is jihad, jihad: victory and martyrdom." Nine hours into the massacre, he wrote that "the heroes are still roaming the land, killing and capturing." These subsequently deleted posts remain publicly archived. He also photographed Hamas rallies and posted selfies with Yahya Sinwar.

When Hamas displayed the coffins of the Bibas children, Shabat described them as "prisoners" and praised the gunmen as "the men of Izz al-Din."

Archived posts:

https://web.archive.org/web/20231103184241/https://t.me/s/anas1020304050/22032

https://web.archive.org/web/20231127011930/https://t.me/s/anas1020304050/22098

We can provide additional source links upon request.

These are specific, documented allegations that deserve examination, not dismissal as an effort to discredit journalists.

We are particularly concerned by the apparent disparity in your treatment of evidence. Israeli documents face intense skepticism, while denials from Al Jazeera and the individuals involved appear to receive greater weight. Your organization described the allegations against al-Sharif as "unfounded" in August 2025, before this investigation. That raises legitimate questions about your methodology and impartiality.

We also categorically reject any suggestion of coordination with Israeli organizations. OSINT613 operates independently and has **NEVER received payment from the Israeli government, the IDF or any affiliated organizations.** Our reporting required no coordination. The evidence is publicly accessible. Any allegation of paid or coordinated activity must be supported by evidence.

There is a fundamental distinction between investigating military affiliations and determining whether someone was lawfully targeted. Our role is to examine and report publicly available evidence, not determine the legality of military operations.

Your legal analysis must also distinguish between civilian journalists and individuals who may belong to an organized armed group. The legal implications depend on the facts, including the nature of any military role. Simply disregarding evidence of such affiliations does not resolve that question.

Press freedom is essential, but journalism does not place an individual's affiliations or possible military involvement beyond scrutiny. The Committee to Protect Journalists has itself removed 27 individuals from its list of journalists killed during this war because of evidence of combat participation or armed group membership.

An organization committed to press freedom should defend the right to investigate credible allegations, not portray the investigation itself as misconduct.

We expect your report to accurately represent our findings, engage with the evidence and refrain from unsupported allegations concerning our independence.

The invitation for response as sent by Free Press Unlimited:

To whomever it may concern,

I am reaching out on behalf of the international press freedom organization Free Press Unlimited. We would like to 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 **18 November 2026**. Please find a summary of the key findings of the report at the bottom of this email.

- The report identifies you as part of 'a network of official and independent actors who were involved in constructing and amplifying delegitimization narratives' about Palestinian journalists Anas al-Sharif and Hossam Shabat. It refers to your posts:
    - https://x.com/Osint613/status/1954869419932262713
    - https://x.com/Osint613/status/1904203828976636254
    - https://x.com/Osint613/status/1904170710961951007
    - https://x.com/Osint613/status/1904191525988258174 (as well as your other posts about Shabat that day)
- In a short profile of the account OSINT613, the report notes that it has been active in discrediting Palestinian journalists Anas Al-Sharif and Hossam Shabat. Based on the information on your website, it notes that Open Source

> Intel is run by a man identified as Jay and by Simcha Brodsky, both based in Israel. The profile notes OSINT613 used to sell 'Gaza's most wanted'-cards, and currently runs a website where 'live intelligence' is shared. It notes that, according to your website, other actors in the network described in the report, have been among the contributors to OSINT613 analysis.

Any response received before **November 18th** 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.