# American reporter Jeremy Loffredo detained for 4 days by Israeli military

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Jeremy Loffredo, a US citizen and journalist for the independent news website the Grayzone, was illegally arrested and detained for four days by the Israeli military and then released on Friday morning by court order.

An Israeli judge ordered Loffredo's release, although he also ordered the journalist to remain in the country until October 20. The Israeli police detained Loffredo, who is Jewish, on suspicion of "aiding the enemy during wartime" and "providing information to the enemy," charges that carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment or death.

According to a report in the *Intercept*, Israeli civil rights lawyer Lea Tsemel, who represents Loffredo, said the purpose of forcing him to remain in Israel is to allow military and police investigators time to bring additional allegations and further interrogate him. They have seized his smartphone and have been able to search through the data on the device.

The *Intercept* reported: "The allegations stem from his reporting for American media outlet The Grayzone, which showed the locations of several Iranian missiles launched at military targets inside Israel earlier this month, including footage near Nevatim, an Israeli air base, and the Mossad headquarters in Tel Aviv, Tsemel said. Though the same targets were featured in broadcasts by other media outlets, Israeli authorities tried to argue that Loffredo's reporting allowed Iran to study future targets."

Responding to the allegations, Tsemel told the *Intercept*, "He didn't do anything original—he took it from different sources that were published already, all over, by Israeli and foreign journalists." Tsemel said the Israeli government's attempts to charge Loffredo is "nonsense."

The material that Loffredo used for his report on the aftermath of the Iranian attacks on military and intelligence targets inside Israel were the exact same locations featured in televised reports on ABC News and PBS, neither of which have faced any charges.

In ordering the Grayzone journalist's release, the judge said that since the military censors agreed to allow Israeli media to publish both news of Loffredo's arrest and the publications that led to his detainment, Israel could no longer justify his detention.

At the time of the arrest, the Grayzone issued a statement on Twitter/X that described the circumstances leading to Loffredo's detention:

> The Grayzone unequivocally rejects these outrageous accusations from Israeli police. We stand by Jeremy's legitimate reporting. The claim that Loffredo and The Grayzone represent Israel's enemy in wartime merely suggests that the Israeli government views the American people and free press as a legitimate target. We represent no one else. We will fight these charges and ask that you contact the State Department and urge them to act in defense of their citizen detained in Israel. The US has an obligation to defend its journalists who are merely adhering to their ethical obligation to inform the public of pertinent facts.

Loffredo and three other journalists were arrested on October 8 by Israeli soldiers at a West Bank checkpoint. Guns were pointed at them, they were blindfolded, roughed up and then hauled away to a detention facility in Jerusalem.

Audrey X, an independent journalist in Palestine and cofounder of Kompass Media, was one of the others arrested by the Israeli army along with Loffredo. In a Twitter/X post, Audrey described the incident in detail.

She said there were five journalists—"an American journalist, a Palestinian journalist, a Russian-Israeli journalist, a Canadian-Israeli videographer, and an Israeli photographer"—traveling by car when it was stopped at a checkpoint in the northern West Bank.

The checkpoint separates Areas C and B, and "all the journalists are allowed to be on both sides by Israeli occupation law," she wrote. Audrey X's report continued,

They were held for an hour and a half in their car, while the IOF [Israeli Occupying Forces] collected their documents. The IOF searched the car, going through personal items. The photographer later discovered that her underwear was removed from her bag, placed on top of their belongings.

The soldiers then illegally requested that the journalists hand in their phones, and when they refused, the soldiers pointed a gun at one of the journalists, hit him with their hands and the barrel of a gun, then dragged him out of the car and slammed him onto the concrete. When lying on the ground, they pointed 2 guns at his head. The rest of the journalists exited the car and the military raided it, confiscating phones, cameras, and personal items.

She added that the journalists were forced to sit in the sun on the side of the road for two hours while they shouted insults and Israeli nationalist slogans at them. After two more hours in the sun, the Palestinian journalist was released. The other four journalists were "stacked on top of each other into a military jeep, and taken to a military base." Audrey X continued,

There they were held blindfolded and handcuffed on the floor for two hours, while being insulted and interrogated by the soldiers. The soldiers told the female Israeli photographer that she should have been raped by Hamas.

At approximately 04.00 PM the [IDF] passed the illegally detained journalists to the police, who took them to the police station. The two male journalists remained blindfolded until arriving at the Maale Adumim Shai Police Station in an illegal Israeli settlement 1 hour later. At the station, the journalists were forced to be photographed in front of an Israeli flag with a nationalist slogan on it, while the officers were insulting them. A journalist was threatened with physical violence for smiling.

The journalists were interrogated in regards to their political affiliation and work, refused the right to see a lawyer, denied food and water until many repeated requests (the two male journalists were denied food completely). The two female journalists were released without charges at 11:00 PM. The Russian-Israeli journalist was released at midnight. The American journalist was held for three days and was released Friday, October 11th. The army confiscated two phones and one camera that they have yet to return.

The arrest of journalists and the four-day detainment of Loffredo is part of the intensification of the US-backed Israeli assault on Gaza and the West Bank and the preparations for a wider war in the Middle East against Lebanon and Iran.

It is significant that none of the major TV news networks or news publishers in the US—including CNN, MSNBC, ABC and CBS and the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*—have published a single word about the attack on independent journalists in the West Bank by Israel.

Since the start of the genocide in Gaza last October, at least 126 journalists have been killed by Israeli forces, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The CPJ also reported that five of those journalists were specifically targeted by Israel for their work, and there are investigations into the killing of 10 others.

In the West Bank, the CPJ reports 69 journalist arrests during the war, with 43 remaining in Israeli custody. The assault on freedom of the press by Israel is a necessity for a regime that is engaged in a war of extermination against the Palestinian people.

Within Israel, a lawmaker demanded that Israeli police charge the head of human rights group B'Tselem, Yuli Novak, with the same charge brought against Loffredo, after Novak provided an expert review before the United Nations Security Council that condemned the Israeli government for "waging war on the entire Palestinian people, including committing war crimes almost daily."

Following Loffredo's release, CPJ Program Director Carlos Martinez de la Serna issued a statement that said, "We are deeply concerned by the arrest of journalist Jeremy Loffredo in Israel, which highlights the high level of censorship in the country since the war started, and the ban on him leaving the country. All journalists should be allowed to do their jobs freely and unconditionally to provide the public with important information on an escalating war."

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