

RSF initial report: *Reuters* journalist was killed in strike

Reuters visuals journalist Issam Abdallah was killed on 13 October in southern Lebanon by a "targeted" strike from the direction of the Israeli border, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Sunday, based on preliminary findings of its investigation.



Source: © Safety of Journalists Platform [Safety of Journalists Platform](#) Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Sunday, based on preliminary findings of its investigation that *Reuters* visuals journalist Issam Abdallah was killed in southern Lebanon by a "targeted" strike from the direction of the Israeli border

"According to the ballistic analysis carried out by RSF, the shots came from the east of where the journalists were standing; from the direction of the Israeli border," RSF said.

"Two strikes in the same place in such a short space of time (just over 30 seconds), from the same direction, clearly indicate precise targeting."

The RSF report did not conclude who had launched the strike against the journalists or provide its underlying analysis.

The Israel Defense Forces did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the RSF's findings. It has said it does not deliberately target journalists and that it is investigating the 13 October incident.

In a statement, *Reuters* said: "We are reviewing the preliminary conclusion reached by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which found that Issam Abdallah and other journalists in Alma el-Chaab appear to have been deliberately fired upon from

the direction of Israel on 13 October.

“We reiterate our call to the Israeli authorities to conduct a swift, thorough and transparent probe into what happened. And we call upon all other authorities with information about the incident to provide it. We will continue to fight for the rights of all journalists to report the news in the public interest free of harassment or harm, wherever they are.”



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Karabo Ledwaba 16 Oct 2023



Abdallah was killed on 13 October while working with six other journalists near the village of Alma al-Shaab, close to the Israeli border, where the Israeli military and Lebanese militia Hezbollah have been trading fire.

RSF said its preliminary findings were based on what it described as a “thorough analysis of eyewitness accounts, video footage and ballistics expertise”. Its investigation continues, the report added.

“It is unlikely that the journalists were mistaken for combatants, especially as they were not hiding: in order to have a clear field of vision, they had been in the open for more than an hour, on the top of a hill,” the report said. “They were wearing helmets and bullet-proof waistcoats marked ‘press’.”

“*RSF releases the findings of its investigation into the death of [@Reuters](#) reporter Issam Abdallah in Lebanon, on the border with Israel: even though Abdallah and his colleagues were clearly identifiable as journalists, their vehicle was deliberately targeted. [pic.twitter.com/Y8KeAqk8bg](#)— RSF (@RSF_inter) [October 29, 2023](#)*”

Asked why it published preliminary findings and an accompanying six-minute video rather than wait until its investigation had concluded, the head of its Middle East desk, Jonathan Dagher, said: “We are certain of our findings at this stage and wanted the public to know about them.

“There are other elements which we have not yet been able to confirm.” He did not elaborate further.



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30 Oct 2023



Lebanon’s army and government have blamed Israel for Abdallah’s death. A Lebanese military source told *Reuters* that the claim is supported by a technical on-the-ground assessment carried out after the attack.

Abdallah was with two other *Reuters* journalists, Maher Nazeh and Thaer Al-Sudani, as well as journalists from media groups *Al Jazeera* and *Agence France-Presse* when he was killed.

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