
Director-General condemns murder of two Palestinian media workers in Gaza City
The Director-General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura, today condemned the murder of Suleiman Abdul-Rahim al-Ashi, and Mohammad Matar Abdo, of the *Palestine newspaper* in Gaza City on 13 May and called for an investigation into the crime.

"I condemn the murder of Suleiman Abdul-Rahim al-Ashi and Mohammad Matar Abdo," the Director-General said. "Killing journalists and media workers is not just a crime against individual people but an attack on society's right to be informed – it is also an attack against the basic human right of freedom of expression. These rights are not a luxury to be enjoyed by rich countries alone, but a vital necessity for all, especially those experiencing conflict and hardship. I trust the Palestinian authorities will investigate these crimes and bring their perpetrators to justice. I also urge the Palestinian presidency and government to do their utmost to ensure respect for freedom of the press, an indispensable condition for the development of a democratic Palestinian society and for the improvement of the living conditions of the Palestinian people," Mr Matsuura concluded.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, gunmen wearing presidential guard uniforms shot Abdul-Rahim al-Ashi, and Mohammad Matar Abdo who were in a taxi in a high security area southwest of Gaza City. Abdul-Rahim al-Ashi, was an economics editor for the Hamas-affiliated daily *Palestine*, and Mohammad Matar Abdo was responsible for the newly-created paper's distribution.

UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom. Article 1 of its Constitution requires the Organization to "further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations." To realize this purpose the Organization is required to "collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image..."