**AP slammed for firing cameraman at behest of Palestinian police**

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Palestinian social media exploded in anger Thursday after the Associated Press news agency fired a Palestinian cameraman, apparently at the request of Palestinian police who objected to his support for a fellow journalist the Palestinians had jailed.

Veteran Palestinian cameraman Eyad Hamad, 63, was fired by AP under mysterious circumstances, with Palestinians claiming that the agency had capitulated to demands from the Palestinian Authority (PA) apparently connected to Hamad’s support for Anas Hawwari.

Palestinians say Hawwari was arrested by the PA security forces after criticizing the PA, which is headed by Mahmoud Abbas.

The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) said AP fired Hamad “based on a complaint by the Palestinian police against him.”

MADA denounced the firing and said it “calls the agency to reverse its decision, which violates his right to express his opinion, his right as a journalist and a citizen to protest and express solidarity with a colleague who was arrested, and calls on the AP to disclose the complaint message it received from the police.”

AP’s Jerusalem Bureau Chief refused to comment about Hamad, who has worked for the AP for the past 20 years, only telling The Jerusalem Post “we don’t comment on personal matters.”

According to MADA, Hamad and a group of journalists staged a sit-in on Tuesday outside the PA office in Bethlehem to protest the arrest and beating of Hawwari by Palestinian police.

The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate slammed the AP decision and called for Hamad to be reinstated.

“The Palestinian Journalists’ Union denounces the decision of the Associated Press agency to arbitrary [sic] dismiss fellow journalist Eyad Hamad from his work,” saying they stood by their fellow journalist “especially because he is known for his profession and dedication to his work and has been injured, broken, beaten and arrested for his activity and work at the agency.”

According to social media posts, Hamad’s leg was broken in 2019 during an altercation with Israeli security forces.

Fellow journalists joined in the condemnation of the AP.

“The table must be turned over the heads of the unjust decision-makers who fired colleague Hamad. The photojournalist Eyad is a human being, and he conveyed his message with respect and politeness, and it is a shame that was dealt with in this way,” tweeted Palestinian journalist Ismail Al Thawabta.

Journalist Mohsen Alafranji said the “arbitrarily unfair dismissal is a crime that calls for a unified and resolute stance by all journalists, and from professional syndicates against this assault on a journalist who has spent his life serving his cause, his people, and his homeland.”

Despite its own record of arrest and abuse of journalists in Gaza, the Hamas terror group jumped on the bandwagon.

“We condemn the Associated Press’s dismissal of photojournalist Eyad Hamad in this heinous manner, which does not indicate the slightest commitment to professional ethics,” said Salama Maarouf, who heads the Hamas government media office in Gaza.

Another Palestinian noted that both Fatah and Hamas have a record of harassing journalists.

“In the West Bank, Iyad Hamad, a journalist, is fired from his work in the American AP after a complaint from the Palestinian police,” tweeted Meqdad Jameel, who said a Gaza journalist named Yusef Hassan is being held by Hamas for doing investigative reporting. “Violations of freedom of the press is official and deeply rooted.”