

**"Truth in Ruins, Journalism under Siege in Gaza"**  
**(on the occasion of the Side Event: Safe and free journalism in the  
Middle East: reports from the Gaza conflict)**

**26 June 2025, Strasbourg (France),**

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos  
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

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Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I speak today not just as a political figure, but as a journalist—someone who, following the War in the Gulf and mostly during the 1990s, covered the war in former Yugoslavia, and understood that reporting is not just a profession. It is a form of courage.

What we are witnessing in Gaza is not just a humanitarian catastrophe. It is a war on truth. Over 100 journalists have lost their lives since the beginning of this conflict. Some were targeted. Others died trying to tell the world what was happening, their cameras and pens silenced by bombs.

History reminds us that this is not new. Callisthenes, the historian who accompanied Alexander the Great, was executed for daring to question the divine status of his subject. Power always fears the one who writes.

In the age of algorithms, the battlefield has expanded. Journalists today face not only bullets but bots, misinformation, surveillance, and character assassination. The war against truth is digital and deadly.

But why is this important for us, here, in this Assembly?

Because the Council of Europe was built on the ashes of war—with the belief that democracy cannot breathe without a free press. Without journalists,

there is no accountability. Without truth, there is no justice. Without stories, the victims vanish twice.

Gaza is a graveyard for both people and facts. In moments of destruction, journalism becomes an act of resistance. And those who try to silence it—through intimidation, murder, or disinformation—are not just enemies of the press. They are enemies of democracy.

Let us therefore raise our voices for those who have lost theirs. Let us protect those who report from the frontlines of fire and fear. And let us remind the world that in defending journalists, we defend the right of every citizen to know, to question, and to speak.

Thank you.