

# Israeli Journalist Held Under Secret House Arrest

By [Global Research](#)

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New York – Ma'an – An Israeli journalist has been held secretly under house arrest for months, sources confirmed this week, amid allegations she obtained and leaked classified military information to an Israeli newspaper.

Israel's Shin Bet intelligence service has banned news media from mentioning the case or identifying the reporter, Anat Kam, 23, who former colleagues say worked for the Israeli news site Walla! until her arrest last December.

A group of Israeli journalists will challenge the ban in court on 12 April, 48 hours before Kam goes on trial for espionage and treason. Prosecutors will claim she copied at least two classified military documents during her mandatory army service years earlier. These two documents are believed to have inspired a 2008 investigation by Haaretz reporter Uri Blau detailing Israeli army assassination procedures.

Most of the Israeli journalists who contacted Ma'an said they believed Israel's intelligence community wanted to make an example of Kam in an effort to dissuade others from exposing secret documents in the future. But knowledgeable Israeli sources have also said Blau could be the real target. "This is bigger than you think," said one source who remains in contact with the Haaretz reporter. "They're really after him."

Blau's report alleged that the Israeli military has repeatedly violated a 2006 ruling by the High Court of Justice against certain types of "targeted assassinations," predominantly those in which a non-combatant was killed. Some killings were planned more than a month in advance and were later excused as arrest raids gone wrong, according to the story in Haaretz Magazine that republished sensitive documents.

A year after the story's publication, Israeli authorities seized Blau's computer, Ma'an has learned. Blau, who happened to be in China at the time, remains abroad. Colleagues say he fears arrest if he returns to the country. Blau did not respond to inquiries about his present location, although his colleagues say he is somewhere in the United Kingdom. His latest story's dateline is London.

'Hundreds of documents'

How Blau convinced Israel's military censor to approve the story is a matter of debate in journalistic circles. Colleagues believe his report was longer than the one Haaretz ultimately published in November 2008, and that its approval came after Blau agreed to remove certain allegations.

Some say it was approved only when the censor became aware of hundreds of other highly

classified documents — allegedly provided by Kam — proving the assassinations story was just the tip of the iceberg. Giving the okay to one part of the story, these sources claim, put the damper on more damaging elements.

While Kam's ongoing detention is well-known to local and foreign journalists based in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, no Mideast-based news organization has independently reported on the issue until now. Despite criticism that the newspaper has remained notably silent, Haaretz has fought the order in court. It also submitted reports on the Kam case to the censor's office, which rejected them outright.

Another Israeli newspaper, Ma'ariv, has published ambiguous references to the case. One came in a January op-ed about a non-existent country that secretly jails journalists, asking its confused subscribers whether that country should still be considered a democracy. Another reference appeared as a satirical correction. "Due to a gag order, we can't tell you what we know. Due to laziness, indifference, and misplaced trust in the defense establishment, we don't know anything," the Hebrew-language daily explained Friday.

No side in the case has officially confirmed involvement, a point of concern noted by press freedom groups. Israel's military did not return calls seeking comment, nor did a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose office approved the publication ban.

Haaretz has not confirmed that Kam was Blau's source. Speaking with Ron Kampeas of the Jewish Telegraph Agency, Haaretz editor-in-chief Dov Alfon called allegations the two journalists collaborated on the assassinations story "absurd." "More than a year passed between the publication and her arrest, a year in which Uri Blau published several other front-page articles criticizing the army's conduct," he said.

Kam has also denied involvement. Her lawyers did not return calls seeking comment, but one of them, Eitan Lehman, told Donald Macintyre of the London-based newspaper The Independent that his client was doing her utmost to abide by the terms of the publication ban. Lehman said the leaks were coming from "the other side and not from us," and has stated that the defense did not seek the gag order.

Cracks in the publication ban's effectiveness began to appear this spring, when Israeli journalists leaked the news to bloggers. Richard Silverstein's Tikun Olam blog in the US brought the story to light in English, while the JTA filed its report from Washington, DC on Sunday. Israel's own state broadcaster, IBA, let the story slip through in Arabic, although it was quoting JTA as a foreign source.

Macintyre became the first foreign correspondent to report the story from Jerusalem late Tuesday. The move was significant because most international reporters, including those with foreign agencies and newspapers, also sign an agreement with the censor before they are granted Israeli press credentials. Based in the Palestinian territories, Ma'an is neither a party to this agreement nor bound by the gag order.

*Jared Malsin and Mya Guarnieri contributed to this report.*

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