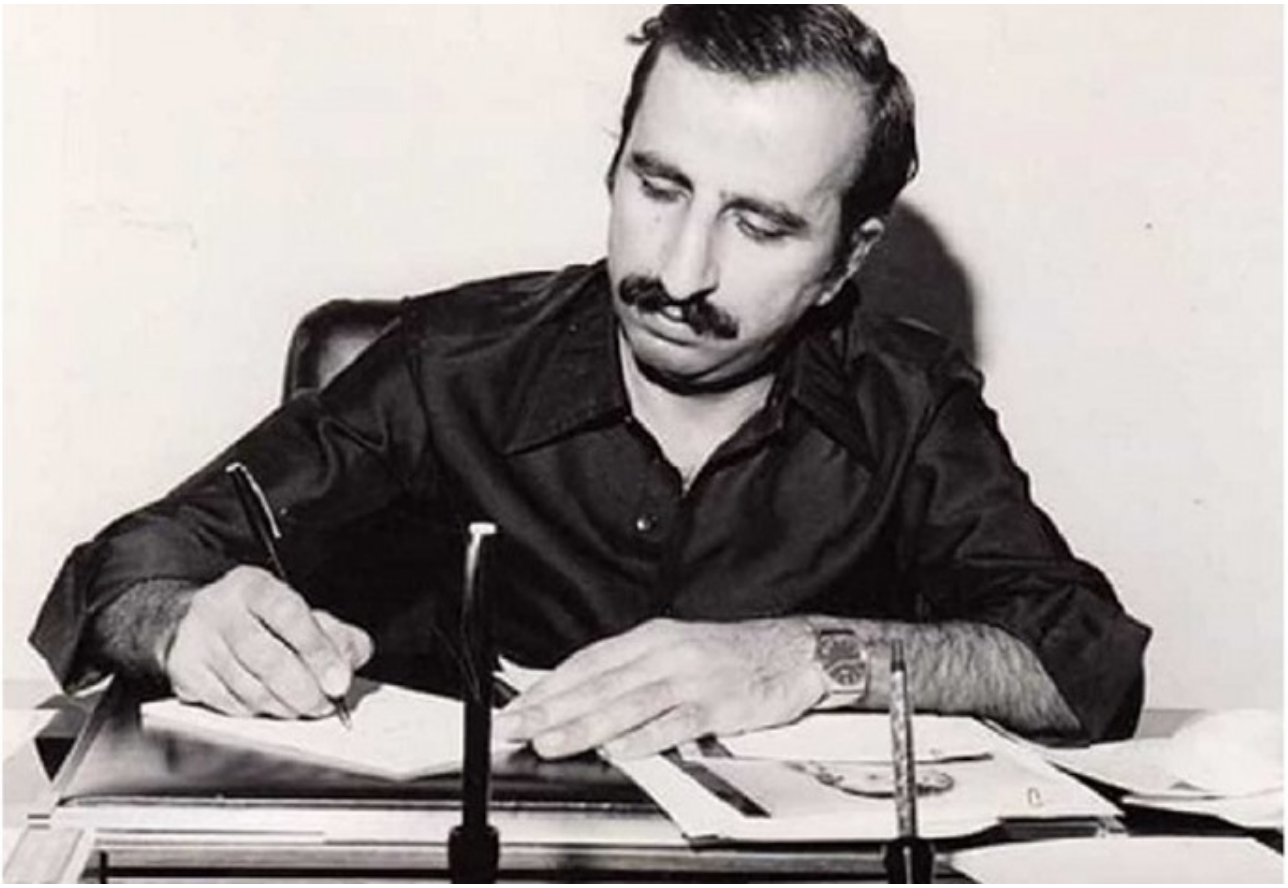
Hanna Muqbil: The Palestinian Journalist Killed in Nicosia, 1984



Hanna Muqbil, “Abu Thaer” (1939–1984), was a Palestinian journalist and writer from the village of Taybeh, a founder of the unified Palestinian media, editor-in-chief of Filastin al-Thawra after Kamal Nasser’s martyrdom, and Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists. On the morning of Thursday 3 May 1984 a gunman shot him with a silenced pistol as he went to work in Nicosia; the bullet pierced the press card in his shirt pocket and lodged in his heart. [1] [2]

This article is part of the series “Assassinated leaders of the Palestinian revolution,” alongside the articles on Ghassan Kanafani, Majed Abu Sharar and the Verdun operation.

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Who was Hanna Muqbil?

Hanna Eid Muqbil was a Palestinian journalist who combined the pen with commitment to the revolution, a pillar of Palestinian media from 1967 until his assassination [1] [3]. He managed Fatah’s newspaper, edited Filastin al-Thawra, founded two news agencies and was twice elected Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists [1] [2]. The General Union of Palestinian Writers calls him “a knight with two weapons and one loyalty to Palestine,” whose pen was “like a fierce cannon” [3] [1].

Hanna Muqbil at a glance

Item	Details
Full name	Hanna Eid Muqbil, “Abu Thaer” [2] [1]
Born	1939, the village of Taybeh [1] [2]
Profession	Journalist and writer [1] [3]

Item	Details
Roles	Managing editor of Fatah’s newspaper, editor-in-chief of Filastin al-Thawra, secretary of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists (1979 and 1983) [1] [2]
Founded	Quds Press agency in Beirut and Al-Sharq Press in Nicosia [1] [2]
Assassinated	Morning of Thursday 3 May 1984, Nicosia, with a silenced pistol [1] [2]

Timeline

Year	Event
1939	Born in Taybeh [1] [2]
1950s–1960s	University in Jerusalem; works at Falastin and al-Dustour [1] [2]
1967	Joins Fatah after the June defeat; helps found Fatah’s newspaper in Amman [1] [2]
1973	Editor-in-chief of Filastin al-Thawra after Kamal Nasser’s martyrdom [1] [2]
1978	Founds the Quds Press agency [1]
1979	Elected Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists [2]
1983	Re-elected Secretary-General of the Federation [2]
1984	Assassinated in Nicosia on 3 May [1] [2]

From Taybeh to the press of Jerusalem and Amman

Hanna Eid Muqbil was born in 1939 in the village of Taybeh, grew up there, then studied in Jerusalem, graduated from university and turned to journalism [1] [2]. He began at the Jerusalem newspaper Falastin, then moved to the Jordanian daily al-Dustour [1] [2].

The revolution’s journalist: from Fatah’s newspaper to Filastin al-Thawra

After the June 1967 defeat he joined Fatah, helped found Fatah’s daily newspaper in Amman and served as its managing editor [1] [2]. He was then among the founders of the “Unified Palestinian Media” and a member of its executive leadership at its creation [1] [2].

After poet Kamal Nasser, the first editor of Filastin al-Thawra, was killed in the Verdun operation in April 1973, Hanna Muqbil succeeded him as editor-in-chief in Beirut until November 1973 [1] [2]. He was a founding member of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists and secretary of its General Secretariat until 1980 [1] [2]. WAFA credits him with the union’s 1972 slogan, “With blood we write for Palestine” [1] [3].

Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists

In 1979 Hanna Muqbil was elected Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists, and re-elected in 1983 [2]. He sat on the International Committee for the Protection of Journalists of the International Organization of Journalists [1]. In 1978 he founded the Quds Press agency in Beirut, then Al-Sharq Press in Nicosia, and was working to launch the magazine Dafatir Arabiya [1] [2].

The assassination of Hanna Muqbil: Nicosia, 3 May 1984

On the morning of Thursday 3 May 1984, at about 8:30, Hanna Muqbil set off for work in Nicosia as usual, when a gunman shot him with a silenced pistol [1] [2]. The bullet pierced the press card in his shirt pocket before lodging in his heart, killing him [2]. Palestinian sources held the Israeli Mossad responsible [1] [3].

Three days later, on 6 May 1984, a memorial service was held for him in his hometown of Taybeh, under occupation [4].

A war on the Palestinian word

Hanna Muqbil was not the first Palestinian journalist the occupation killed. Before him came Ghassan Kanafani, editor of al-Hadaf, in 1972; Kamal Nasser, editor of Filastin al-Thawra, in 1973; Majed Abu Sharar, head of unified media, in 1981; and the intellectual PLO representatives in the Mossad assassinations in Europe. His killing came months after that of Mamoun Mreish in Athens, at a time when assassinations pursued the revolution's cadres in Cyprus and Greece after the departure from Beirut.

Legacy

On each anniversary the General Union of Palestinian Writers recalls his life, saying that "Hanna Muqbil's blood defeated the silencer," and describing him as a guardian of the word who shunned the temptations of official posts and stayed true to the principle that Palestine is the only homeland [1] [3].

Conclusion

From the press of Jerusalem to the head of the Federation of Arab Journalists, Hanna Muqbil carried the pen as his weapon, and the occupation killed him with a bullet that tore through his press card before reaching his heart. His killing stands as testimony to a long war on the Palestinian word.

Frequently asked questions about Hanna Muqbil

Who was Hanna Muqbil?

A Palestinian journalist and writer from Taybeh, editor-in-chief of Filastin al-Thawra and Secretary-General of the Federation of Arab Journalists.

When and where was Hanna Muqbil assassinated?

On the morning of Thursday 3 May 1984, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

How was Hanna Muqbil killed?

A gunman shot him with a silenced pistol on his way to work; the bullet pierced his press card and lodged in his heart.

Who killed Hanna Muqbil?

Palestinian sources held the Israeli Mossad responsible.

What was Hanna Muqbil’s link to Filastin al-Thawra?

He succeeded poet Kamal Nasser as its editor-in-chief after Nasser was killed in the 1973 Verdun operation.

Which news agencies did Hanna Muqbil found?

Quds Press in Beirut and Al-Sharq Press in Nicosia.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. “General Union of Writers: Hanna Muqbil’s Blood Defeated the Silencer,” WAFA, 3 May 2021.
2. “Lives of the Immortals: Leader and Fighter Hanna Eid Muqbil ‘Abu Thaer’,” Mokhayyam, after “Thakirat Watan”.
3. “General Union of Writers: Hanna Muqbil, a Knight with Two Weapons and One Loyalty to Palestine,” WAFA, 4 May 2022.
4. “Sunday, May 6, 1984,” Palestine Chronology, Institute for Palestine Studies.