

Yarno Ritzen

Investigative Journalist · OSINT & Visual Investigations

info@yarnoritzen.com · yarnoritzen.com · +974 7764 1518 · Currently Doha, Qatar · Dutch national (EU)

PROFILE

Award-winning investigative journalist with six years inside the Al Jazeera Investigative Unit. IRE-winning, BAFTA-nominated work that confines satellite imagery analysis, geolocation and chronolocation, ship and aircraft tracking, and confidential datasets to produce accountability journalism across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Solo on self-conceived investigations and collaborator on team projects, delivering across text, (long-form) video and interactive formats.

SELECTED INVESTIGATIONS

Africa's Ghost Reporters — Al Jazeera Investigations (solo byline), March 2025

Exposed a Russia-linked influence campaign in Francophone Africa that used 15+ fictitious journalists and 200+ paid-for articles to push a pro-Russian narrative. Identified a deceased Central African teacher/referee whose photo was used as the profile photo of one of the fake journalists, surfaced Cyrillic strings and a Russian phone number inside Word-document metadata, and reverse-traced the number to a former Internet Research Agency operator with Wagner Group ties. Published as long-form text and a 25-minute documentary. [Long-form feature](#) / [Video](#)

Somalia E-Visa Security Exposure — Al Jazeera Investigations (solo byline), December 2025

Probed Somalia's new electronic-visa portal and found a security flaw that left passport details of thousands of applicants downloadable to anyone who knew where to look. Verified the exposed data and responsibly disclosed before publication. Used Python and CLI to expose the flaw. [News Article](#)

The Island of Secrets — IRE Award (Video, Division 1), 2021

Self-conceived visual investigation revealing India's covert military build-out on the Mauritian atoll of Agaléga. Combined commercial satellite imagery across multi-year time series, vessel-tracking data and rare on-island sourcing to reconstruct the project and its strategic intent. Published as long-form video and written feature. [Long-form feature](#) / [Video](#)

Bangladesh RAB: Intelligence Training and Surveillance — Al Jazeera (co-byline), December 2022

Paired exclusives revealing how Bangladesh's US-sanctioned RAB paramilitary unit obtained intelligence training, mass-surveillance equipment and police dogs from the UK, Poland and the Netherlands. Co-bylined with Zulkarnain Saer Khan and Kevin Hirten. [News Article 1](#) / [News Article 2](#)

Al Jazeera Investigative Unit — collaborative contributions

- *All the Prime Minister's Men* (Amnesty Media Award, 2022) — OSINT on the financial and corporate trails of a sitting head of government; my solo follow-up surfaced UK spyt-training trips by a paramilitary unit later sanctioned for human-rights abuses, and the named army chief was sanctioned by the US Treasury in 2024. [Film](#)
- *The Gold Mafia* (2023) — multi-part series exposing Zimbabwean state-linked gold smuggling, money laundering and sanctions evasion; triggered government inquiries. [Films](#)
- *The Men Who Sell Football* (RTS Award; BAFTA nomination, 2022) — entity tracing across intermediaries and front companies. [Film](#)
- *The Cyprus Papers* (BAFTA nomination; Webby Awards, 2021) — analysis of leaked records to identify high-risk individuals granted EU passports. [Interactive](#) / [Film](#)

EXPERIENCE

Producer/Reporter — Al Jazeera Investigative Unit *Doha, Qatar · Dec 2019 – Present*

- Conceive, report and write OSINT-led investigations end-to-end — solo bylines and team contributions — using satellite imagery analysis, geolocation and chronolocation of photos and video, vessel and aircraft tracking, and structured analysis of large, unstructured datasets.
- Cross-reference leaked and acquired confidential datasets — building entity/link networks across people, companies, properties and movements to surface hidden relationships.
- Partner with investigative reporters, video producers and graphics colleagues to deliver exclusives across text, long-form video and digital formats.
- Cultivate and protect high-value human sources; operate the unit's secure communication channels (SecureDrop) and encrypted communications; coordinate digital security posture with IT and responsible for the team's OPSEC.
- Own the majority of the unit's written output for Aljazeera.com and Ajiunit.com — from breaking-news reactions to long-form features and explainers.
- Build bespoke editorial tools — scrapers, monitors and structured data pipelines — using AI-assisted coding workflows (Claude Code, Gemini CLI) to scale repeatable OSINT tasks and surface signals from noisy sources.

Producer — Al Jazeera Digital News Desk *Doha, Qatar · Jul 2017 – Sep 2019*

- Reported and wrote breaking news, features, explainers and background pieces in a fast-paced, global newsroom.
- Identified original story angles and reworked agency copy to fit Al Jazeera's editorial voice.

Producer — Al Jazeera Interactive Department *Doha, Qatar · Aug 2014 – Jun 2017*

- Built data-driven infographics and interactive web productions embedded in long-form journalism; explored emerging visual storytelling — 360-degree video, VR, gamified explainers — with multiple Online Media and Webby recognitions.

OSINT TOOLBOX

- **Visual investigations:** satellite imagery (commercial providers; change detection across time series), geolocation and chronolocation of photos and video, image and video verification, cartographic visualisation for investigative stories.
- **Movement tracking:** maritime (AIS, port records) and aviation (ADS-B) tracking; cross-referencing with corporate and shipping records.
- **Data investigations:** link analysis and entity resolution across large, unstructured and confidential datasets; cross-jurisdictional asset and corporate tracing.
- **Source protection & digital security:** SecureDrop, end-to-end encryption, OPSEC for sources and reporters.
- **Custom tooling & AI:** build editorial scrapers, monitors and data pipelines using AI-assisted coding (Claude Code, Gemini CLI); production deployment with Git and Bash, plus GIS and cartographic workflows for geospatial analysis.

EDUCATION

B.A. Journalism — Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands.

LANGUAGES

Dutch (fluent) · **English** (fluent) · **German** (reading proficiency) · **French** (reading proficiency)

REFERENCES

Available on request — strong references from former managers at Al Jazeera and Amnesty International UK.