



A Predatory State

Israeli Systemic
Sexualized
and Gendered
Violence
Against
Palestinians



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Glossary

Glossary

Sexualized Violence

Sexualized violence encompasses rape, sexual humiliation, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced nudity, sexual torture, sexual blackmail and coercion. It also includes physical or verbal threats of a sexual character, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or actions directed against a person's sexuality¹. We use the term sexualized violence rather than sexual violence to demonstrate the sexual character of the power dynamic and violence enacted. Sexualized violence against Palestinians is not only experienced as an individual assault, but is a systemic assault against Palestinians as a collective.

Sexual Humiliation:

Sexual humiliation refers to communicative and physical acts, that are sexually degrading in character, and are carried out with the explicit intent to degrade, humiliate, belittle, make fun of, intimidate, and exert power over another. They do not have to accompany a sexual or physical assault, but they often do. Sexual humiliation may include sexual slurs, forced nudity, stripping, forced witnessing of sexual acts, sexualized threats of physical violence, threats of sexual assault, and sexualized comments or touching meant to degrade.²

1 UN Human Rights Council, "Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3 | Public Hearings, COI Palestine, East Jerusalem & Israel, 11/03/2025," YouTube video, March 12, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xwj-BbeUapxo>.

2 For more on how the UN defines sexual humiliation see: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, A/HRC/31/57 (January 5, 2016), <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/31/57>.

Sexual Torture:

Sexual torture is a form of cruel and inhumane punishment and consists of sexual acts by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person. It includes, but is not limited to, physical torture that is sexualized in character and/or targets sexual and/or reproductive organs. It may include groping, squeezing, punching, and applying pressure to the genitals; forced oral sex; and/or being sexually abused while in stress positions. Sexual torture also includes cases of rape.

Sexual torture targets both individual integrity and collective cohesion.³ Sexual torture is also deployed strategically to extract information, incriminate, and/or entrap an individual under a condition of complete bodily subjugation, often applied to imprisoned, detained, or otherwise confined individuals. Discerning sexual torture from other types of sexualized violence is contextual and is determined by the types and severity of physical and psychological abuse inflicted—often upon intimate body parts—with the explicit aim of causing discomfort, pain, or lasting bodily injury.

Sexual Assault (Including Rape):

Sexual assault, including rape, is any form of physical sexual contact that occurs without consent. It includes, but is not limited to, forcible penetration with an object or body part, simulated acts of rape, and/or sexual torture. Sexual assault encompasses a wide range of nonconsensual physical sexual acts, often accompanied by sexual torture, coercion, humiliation, and/or blackmail.

3 Sahar Francis, "Gendered Violence in Israeli Detention," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 46, no. 4 (2017): 46–61, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2017.46.4.46>.

Sexual Coercion:

Sexual coercion spans a spectrum of pressured behaviors—using language, actions, alcohol, drugs, and/or force—to obtain sexual contact against a person’s will, including persistent attempts after a clear refusal.

Israel deploys sexual coercion as a form of power, wielded to extract information or compel action that the individual would not otherwise take. When sexual coercion is directed at Palestinians, it disproportionately endangers those possessing marginalized, gendered, and sexual identities. Perpetrators use sexual coercion to blackmail individuals, compelling them to betray their communities to avoid cultural stigmatization.

Gendered Violence

Gendered violence constitutes any harmful act or threat of harmful acts directed against an individual or group based on gender identity or perceived gender identity or expression. Gendered violence may be committed against any gender for the purpose of asserting power over another. In some cases, gendered violence can be expressed as an assault on one’s gender identity, for example, through tactics that emasculate. Gendered violence is contextual to social power structures, which denote and reinforce gender roles on individuals. Gendered violence is instrumental to capitalist exploitation, militarism, and imperialism, which rely on subjugation to assert and maintain control. These systems weaponize gender to justify violence and genocide, to seize land and resources, and to profit from the death and suffering of others. Gendered violence as a spectrum of harmful acts also includes sexualized violence, unwanted attention or comments, slurs, or threats directed at someone due to their gender identity or perceived gender identity or expression.

Domicide

Domicide is “the deliberate and systematic destruction of living spaces, targeting intimate places of residence so that any form of stability, physical or emotional, is replaced with a feeling of constant flux.”⁴

⁴ Justin Salhani, “Genocide, Urbicide, Domicide—How to Talk about Israel’s War on Gaza,” Al Jazeera, July 3, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/3/genocide-urbicide-domicide-how-to-talk-about-israels-war-on-gaza>.

Reproductive Genocide

Reproductive genocide refers to the policies, discourses, and practices that target the life-giving and sustaining capacities of communities made vulnerable by systemic military violence and occupation, besiegement, settler colonialism, and/or imperial warfare.⁵ Reproductive genocide includes, but is not limited to, the obliteration of reproductive health medical institutions; environmental degradation resulting in infertility; targeted executions of women and children; and the eradication of entire family genealogies. It may also include systematic efforts that delimit life-giving or sustaining capacities, including but not limited to: prolonged conditions of collective imprisonment, captivity, and besiegement; prolonged endangerment of women, children, and babies; the control and cutting off of vital life-giving sources such as water, fuel, electricity, and food; the denial of access to life-giving and life-saving medical resources; and the devaluation of life through dehumanizing public rhetoric and calls for genocide. Forced conditions of unlivability result in high levels of premature death, prohibit reproductive care for the living, and serve to prevent births of the group, amounting to the crime of genocide.

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF)

In this report, we use Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) as an umbrella term that includes, but is not limited to, Israeli soldiers and military police, prison guards and jailers, police officers, Shabak or Shin Bet, Mossad, and other units of the state's intelligence branch, which together constitute the Israeli state's security services.

Israeli Detention and Prison Facilities

Israeli detention and prison facilities fall under the "Israeli Prison Service," which was established in 1949 and largely modeled on the British prison system and penal codes established during its colonial Mandate in Palestine.

⁵ Palestinian Feminist Collective, "The Palestinian Feminist Collective Condemns Reproductive Genocide in Gaza," Palestinian Feminist Collective, February 11, 2024, <https://palestinianfeministcollective.org/the-pfc-condemns-reproductive-genocide-in-gaza/>.

This includes detainees and prisoners serving criminal and security offenses.⁶ As of February 2026, the total recorded number of Palestinian political prisoners is over 9,000, including 350 child prisoners.⁷ Since the beginning of the genocide in Gaza, Israel has set up makeshift detention and prison camps in residential homes, schoolyards, and football fields, making it extremely challenging to count the number of Gaza's prisoners.⁸ The actual number of prisoners is therefore likely much higher.

Esqat (إسقاط)

Esqat is an Arabic word for “taking down.” It is a method whereby a person is “taken down” through defamation, slander, and character assassination. In the Palestinian context, the IOF often uses this method through invasive surveillance of a person's intimate life, through collecting private information for sexualized blackmail, or through the planting of fake but no less compromising information on a person. Victims of *esqat* are threatened that if they do not comply with IOF orders, the “secret information,” whether true or not, will be outed, and the victim's reputation, integrity, honor, or virtue will be tarnished. Oftentimes, victims of *esqat* may fear for their own safety and lives or that of their families.

The Israeli utilization of *esqat* is a colonial strategy to weaponize Palestinian traditions and culture against both individuals and the collective. It is a manipulation of social stigmas that attempts to sow discord among families, communities, and movements, often by sexually coercing members of society into becoming informants, spies, or traitors to their comrades and struggle. It is a strategy that also exploits other social vulnerabilities under occupation.

6 For an interactive map of Israel's prisons and detention centers, see Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, “Prisons and Detention Centers | Addameer,” Addameer, 2021, <https://addameer.ps/prisons-and-detention-centers>.

7 Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, “Statistics | Addameer,” Addameer, February 9, 2026, <https://addameer.ps/statistics>.

8 Addameer, “Statistics.”; B'Tselem, Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps (Jerusalem: B'Tselem, August 2024), 7-8, https://www.btselem.org/publications/202408_welcome_to_hell; Mohamed Solaimane, “The systematic torture of Gazans in Israel's secret prisons,” The New Arab, May 22, 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/systematic-torture-gazans-israels-secret-prisons>.

Table of Abbreviations

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AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAT	Committee Against Torture
COI	Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel
DCIP	Defense for Children International-Palestine
GSS	General Security Services
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IOF	Israeli Occupation Forces
ISF	Israeli Security Forces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NYT	The New York Times
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
PCATI	Public Committee Against Torture in Israel
PCHR	Palestinian Center for Human Rights
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
SORVO	Systemic Oppression, Reverse Victim, and Offender
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WCLAC	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling
WOAT	World Organization Against Torture

Introduction

Introduction

Since October 7, 2023, a staggering number of Palestinian men, women, and children—from all ages and parts of historic Palestine—have reported enduring or witnessing sexual violence, including rape, committed by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF). Part I of this report collates evidence of Israel’s use of sexualized violence against Palestinians. The report is based on survivor and witness testimonies as they were provided to the international press; local, national, and international human rights organizations; and United Nations agencies and committees since October 2023.

The testimonies reveal that sexualized violence took place at distinct times over the last two years, across multiple sites, including in various detention facilities, prisons, arrest locations, and in both public and private spaces. The assaults were enacted by the IOF, affiliated with multiple agencies, including soldiers, prison guards, police, and intelligence officers. The patterns and methods used in the assaults reveal, beyond a reasonable doubt, that sexualized

violence is a systemic Israeli practice, which has accelerated in frequency and degree of brutality alongside the acceleration of genocide since 2023. Patterns of the documented sexualized violence include, but are not limited to the following: sexual slurs, forced nudity, forced stripping, forced witnessing of sexual acts, threats of sexual assault, sexualized comments or touch meant to degrade; physical torture that is sexualized in character or targets sexual or reproductive organs, including groping, squeezing, punching, and applying pressure to the genitals, forced oral sex, or being sexually abused while in stress positions; and cases of rape including simulated rape, rape by IOF personnel, rape with a range of objects such as batons, phones, metal rods, sticks, or other objects, and rape by trained dogs.

The violence documented follows a clear pattern of intent to sexually humiliate, torture, or assault Palestinians during arrests, while held—without charge—in military detention, and during imprisonment, indicating its use as a tool to destroy the Palestinian people, in whole or in part, as part of the crime of genocide. Evidence points to a broad range of views among the Israeli public that sexualized violence against Palestinians is not only permissible but celebrated, including among politicians holding the highest ranks of Israeli office. Beyond opinion, and despite denial, there is also clear evidence to show that the Israeli military trains its soldiers on methods of sexualized violence (for example, dogs have been trained to rape), demonstrating that the cases reported on are not random acts but part of a broader systemic policy that permits, encourages, premeditates, and afflicts, with intent, sexualized violence against Palestinians.

The systemic character of Israel's sexualized violence is also demonstrated in the chronology of testimonies that shows how sexual violence has been inscribed into Zionist and Israeli military strategies since the Palestinian Nakba of 1948. From being used as a method to expel Palestinians from their land in 1948 to the use of sexualized violence to torture Palestinian detainees and prisoners in the wake of the 1967 War, and beyond, the report shows that while sexualized violence has changed frequency and form, it has remained an ongoing systematic tool of settler-colonial displacement and oppression. Part of this systemic practice includes the use of sexualized coercion, honeytraps, and blackmail.

In accounting for how sexualized violence is structured by uneven relations of power inherent to a colonial matrix, Part II of the report examines five case studies that reveal broader systems of gendered violence embedded into the Occupation's structure. The report examines Israel's systematic targeting of reproductive health and freedom, the desecration of martyred bodies, the assault on Palestinians' homes, forced separations of Palestinian families, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate domicile in the Gaza Strip. Together, these case studies reveal how Palestinian intimate life and gendered practices are governed, delimited, and targeted by the Occupation and how Israeli settler-colonial violence happens at every level: bodily, communal, psychological, environmental, and national, amounting to the crime of genocide.

In her 2015 book, *The Beginning and End of Rape*, Muscogee Creek Nation scholar Sarah Deer reminds us that, "Indigenous people across the world share a common experience—namely, intrusion on their lands and culture by an exterior, hostile outsider. Rape victims experience the same dynamic, but it is played out on their bodies and souls rather than on the land."⁹ Deer's analysis illustrates how sexualized and gendered violence are central technologies of settler colonial projects and that they are structural rather than incidental. As such, this report focuses on the structural and systemic character of Israel's sexualized and gendered violence by illustrating their logics, strategies, methods, and impacts on Palestinians.

Given the:

- systemic use of strategies of sexualized violence, including sexual humiliation, sexual torture and rape against women, girls, boys, and men, at times with clear evidence of genocidal intent;
- systemic utilization of sexualized violence since 1948 in different forms and to different degrees of brutality, including with the intention to expel Palestinians from their land;

9 Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), xiv.

- systemic weaponization of Palestinian cultural norms against Palestinians in cases of sexualized blackmail, coercion, and extortion;
- systemic gendered violence that facilitates the assault on Palestinian life, bodies, reproductive capacities, homes, rituals, and land;

We find that Israeli sexualized and gendered violence is a colonial mechanism deployed to destroy communities in whole or in part. Israel, as a colonializing force, weaponizes sex, gender, and intimacy to achieve military objectives of both physical and psychological devastation, exploiting patriarchal societal norms to intensify the impact of its sexualized and gendered violence on its Palestinian victims and on Palestinian society as a whole.¹⁰

We therefore conclude, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Israel has engaged in and continues to perpetrate systematic sexualized and gendered violence against the Palestinian people, constituting gross violations of but not limited to: International Criminal Law (The Rome Statute including both Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes), International Humanitarian Law (The Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols) and International Human Rights Law (The UN Convention Against Torture). In the context of the broader genocide waged against the Palestinian people, and given the staggering evidence of genocidal intent that accompanies various testimonies and cases of sexual and gendered violence, we further conclude that Israel is guilty of the Crime of Genocide.

¹⁰ Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. *Militarization and Violence against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East: A Palestinian Case-Study*. Cambridge Studies in Law and Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Methodology

Methodology

Decolonial feminist methodologies emphasize that research must confront colonial and racialized structures that shape the ways violence is interpreted and documented. Maria Lugones¹¹ argues that colonial power produces intertwined systems of gender, racial, and epistemic domination whereby gender and sexualized violence function as tools of colonial control. Similarly, Linda Tuhiwai Smith¹² demonstrates how research itself has historically operated as a colonial practice that marginalizes Indigenous and subjugated experiences, particularly in relation to documenting violence experienced by colonized communities. Given these realities, we recognize the need for forms of professional scholarship that treat research as praxis because we view research as an ethical and political practice oriented towards exposing and confronting colonial power. Given the ways Zionism strives to contain, challenge and erase Palestinian narratives of violence, including gendered and sexualized violence, this research sought evidence from a wide range of sources and voices as a commitment to the epistemic authority of Palestinian testimony, collective memory, and oral history, among other sources.

A qualitative, observational methodology was used for this report based on the compilation of data and testimony derived from open-access, secondhand sources. The cases featured are drawn from a range of declassified Israeli archives, Palestinian oral history accounts, witness testimony, news media, academic research, documentary films, social media posts, and reports from human rights organizations, as well as United Nations research reports and press statements.

¹¹ Maria Lugones. "The coloniality of gender." In *Globalization and the decolonial option*, pp. 369-390. Routledge, 2013.

¹² Linda Tuhiwai Smith. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. London: Zed Books.

Research for this project began in December 2025 and concluded in April 2026. Most of the sources analyzed were accessed digitally. Most research was conducted in English, with a smaller portion in Arabic. While the report is by no means comprehensive, the cases provided were selected to show the following:

- the long duration of Israel's use of sexual violence;
- the various methods that comprise Israel's sexualized violence against Palestinians;
- that sexualized violence is a systemic practice of Zionist settler-colonialism;
- that sexualized violence is sanctioned by the Israeli state;
- that sexualized violence is informed by broader forms of gendered violence that are structural features of the Occupation.

Survivor testimonies include real names only when they have spoken about their experiences publicly. Most testimonies are either anonymous or identified by the pseudonym used in the original report. Our research paradigm engages sexualized and gendered violence as structural rather than incidental. In so doing, we borrow four critical methods from Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian's analysis of the systemic sexualized violence committed against Palestinians during the 1948 Nakba. Her framework outlines the following:

1. Analysis of oral testimonies as a critical archive of Palestinian collective memory and history. Threats of rape by Zionist militias, actual cases of rape relayed within families or villages, and testimonies of Palestinians fleeing out of fear of sexual violence are abundant within these collective memories.
2. Accounting of silenced archives and "unspoken" accounts. This orientation demands an awareness of the social conditions under which disclosure is dangerous and collective trauma is encoded. It necessitates that we identify parallel patterns in other war and colonial contexts in which rape is known to have occurred.

3. A gendered analysis of displacement patterns. This includes urgent evacuations of young women ahead of battles, family separation to “protect honor,” and an examination of letters and oral history accounts of parents sharing anxieties of what would happen to their daughters if they “fell into the hands of the militias [soldiers].”¹³

4. The collection and analysis of secondary historical sources documenting isolated cases. This cumulative approach enables us to piece together individual records of sexual violence to identify systemic patterns.

As scholar Revital Madar argues, the wartime rape paradigm, which may be useful in other political contexts, obfuscates Israel’s long history of sexual violence against Palestinians.¹⁴ Her work shows: “(1) the risks of stripping rape of the specific context in which it materializes, (2) the importance of incorporating power structures that transgress the framework of conflict and war-related sexual violence, and (3) the necessity of deciphering and attending to colonial and settler-colonial-related sexual violence.”¹⁵ In the same vein, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian writes that Israel’s security theology, or the framework through which Israeli security functions, justifies surveillance, dispossession, racialization, violence, and control over all aspects of Palestinians’ lives including in public and intimate spaces.¹⁶

13 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Militarization and Violence against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East*.

14 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, ““Five Pillars of Zionist Genocidal Apparatus: A Palestinian Problematic of Genocide Studies,”” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 28, no. 3 (2026):540-552, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2556589>.

15 Revital Madar, “Beyond Male Israeli Soldiers, Palestinian Women, Rape, and War: Israeli State Sexual Violence against Palestinians,” *Conflict and Society* 9, no. 1 (2023): 72–88, <https://doi.org/10.3167/arcs.2023.090105>.

16 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. *Security Theology, Surveillance, and the Politics of Fear*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2015).

As such, our research approach accounts for a set of structural colonial power relations that shape not only when, why, how, and by whom gendered and sexualized violence occurs and is enacted, but also the social and material conditions that limit its reporting and legibility to international circuits of power and influence. Within a Palestinian feminist praxis, gendered and sexualized violence are understood not as incidental byproducts of conflict or warfare, but as constitutive mechanisms through which colonial domination is enacted and sustained.

Uncovering a system of Israeli sexualized violence requires “piecing together recorded cases to identify a systemic pattern.” We utilize this method for our examination of the use of honeytraps and the weaponization of secret information through coercion and blackmail as well. While the Palestinian people are widely aware of how honeytraps, sexualized coercion, and blackmail have been used by the IOF, there are no centralized annals that quantify the number of cases that have taken place over time. Nor is there a record of Palestinians who have been victimized by such schemes, in part because disclosure can be traumatizing and humiliating. The cases provided show how honeytraps and secret information are weaponized in different ways and how diverse segments of Palestinian society, including youth, the unemployed, men, women, and queer Palestinians, have been targets of this form of sexualized violence.

We take seriously the responsibility to document Israel’s ongoing systemic violence against Palestinian lands and people, including the current genocide in Gaza and escalating aggression in and annexation of the West Bank and eastern Al-Quds (Jerusalem). The purpose of this report is three-fold. First, to document the gendered and sexualized violence committed by Israel. Second, to document, expose, and analyze the logics, strategies, policies, and actors that not only permit this violence, but facilitate and encourage it. Third, to understand what this violence does, specifically that it functions as a central technology of Israeli settler colonialism since the state’s formation in 1948 and must be considered a crime of genocide. Given the challenges of documenting sexualized and gendered violence—exacerbated by the precarity of formal archival institutions due to Israel’s destruction and theft of Palestinian spaces of learning and knowledge preservation—this report provides context for these erasures and historicizes Israel’s ongoing practices of gendered and sexualized violence. In the Palestinian context, the practice of bearing witness and keeping material or forensic evidence is criminalized, repressed, or otherwise

denied by the state.¹⁷ As such, documenting gendered and sexualized violence requires an approach grounded in ethical accountability and sensitivity.

Finally, our methodology is one rooted in respect for the Palestinian people, one that recognizes that Palestinians are not merely victims of colonial violence but rather stewards of a land besieged and active agents engaged in a just struggle for liberation. We take seriously the dignity and courage of these women, men, and children in sharing their stories, and as such, we have taken the utmost care to handle this topic with the sensitivity and responsibility it demands. While this report provides an archive of this painful past and present, the pathway to justice and liberation demands this reckoning.

Research Challenges to Documenting Sexualized and Gendered Violence

Scholars, legal advocates, and activists concerned with documenting Israel's record of sexualized violence against Palestinians are confronted with several research challenges. The first is due to the intentional erasure or withholding of evidence by the Israeli state. For example, Israeli officials have long denied that rape and sexual violence were systematically used during the Nakba as a weapon of war against Palestinians. As scholar Hania A.M. Nashef argues, most Israeli archival filings relating to allegations of sexual assault have remained sealed—past the fifty-year threshold—or were released and then reclassified as “top secret.”¹⁸ The evidence that does exist has been reported exclusively by Israeli scholars and sources due to both physical and linguistic access to the records that others are denied.

As scholar Susan Slyomovics notes, however, the absence of these records, or rather, the silencing of them, is also telling: “If no confirmation exists in archival sources that something did or did not happen, such silences merely inform about a lack in the documentation and not that the information does not exist.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Forensic evidence, in the case of sexual assault, constitutes any physical, biological, or digital materials collected from a survivor or perpetrator, and the scene where the assault took place. Such evidence, used in the prosecution of legal cases, may include hair, fibers, skin, or bodily fluids and is collected for the purpose of either identifying or eliminating suspected assailants. It may also include medical evaluations, post-mortem, and autopsy reports. Because of the structural violence of Zionism and settler colonialism in both the construction of inequitable social dynamics and the infrastructure of the state and occupied territories, the difficulties of collecting forensic evidence in cases of sexual as

We note here that because our research relied on digitally accessible materials, the portion on sexualized violence prior to 2023 is limited, given that older documents (prior to the year 2000) are less likely to be digitally accessible. As Slyomovics reminds us, this does not mean that the information does not exist, but rather it indicates the lack of effective documentation. Additionally, the reliance on digitized sources limits our ability to access information in physical archives.

The second challenge is that Palestinian oral history accounts, particularly those of women, are often discredited as unofficial and/or unreliable sources absent forensic or material evidence that can corroborate their claims. This problem is not unique to Palestinians. Absent forensic or other corroborating evidence, survivors are rarely able to successfully achieve justice, accountability, or recourse after disclosing their abuse. In the case of Palestinian survivors, who live under military occupation, everything—from the medical system and forensic research agencies to the court system—is governed by the occupying power, and thus serves the protection of its perpetrators. Because disclosure requires reliving the trauma of abuse, survivors are discouraged from putting themselves through the ordeal of speaking up when a just outcome is highly unlikely, and their testimonies are doubted.

Third, in the context of colonial occupation, disclosure can be dangerous. Speaking up means that a survivor is likely to face social stigma within Palestinian society, where victims fear being perceived as having lost their honor or virtue in the social sphere. The social stigma that plagues victims of gendered and sexualized violence—often a critical factor in determining whether they disclose their abuse—is not unique to Palestinian society. In the Palestinian context, however, there are also material ramifications that make disclosure exceedingly dangerous, including retaliation by the occupying power. Several Palestinian individuals and organizations, after having reported on Israel's use of sexualized violence, have been subjected to state retaliation through criminalization, violent attacks, imprisonment, and/or expulsion.²⁰ Disclosure, there-

sault are compounded. The Israeli occupation has intentionally destroyed or withheld material evidence that corroborates Palestinian testimonies from its inception, including, but not limited to, the desecration of the deceased body, the withholding of documents and forensic evidence found in investigative files, and the obliteration of homes and sites where sexual violence is known to have occurred. The genocide unfolds on the foundation of that erasure and continues it. See: Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, “Five Pillars of Zionist Genocidal Apparatus: A Palestinian Problematization of Genocide Studies,” *Journal of*

fore, is often discouraged out of concern for survivor, familial, and community safety.

Fourth, a vocabulary on what constitutes an assault can be limited among survivors. During a March 2025 hearing of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory at the UN Human Rights Council, Kifeya Khraim, International Advocacy Coordinator with the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, noted the difficulty of collecting data on sexualized violence committed by the IOF due to its weaponization and exploitation of this social stigma.²¹ She further expressed that some actions taken by the IOF against Palestinian women are difficult to categorize as rape or sexualized violence due to a lack of knowledge or terminology regarding these kinds of crimes. She notes an example of multiple women having inspection devices inserted into their vaginas. Due to a narrow conception of judicial law delimiting rape as an act committed by a man with his body, the testimonies that were provided may not be able to capture the gravity of assaults.

Fifth, Israel's gendered violence has evolved since 1948, embedding many of its incidental practices into law and the Occupation's structure to affect daily Palestinian life. As Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian argues, Israel's gendered violence has extended past public life into private life, attacking all aspects of intimacy, family, collective memory, and movement.²¹ Given this, there are challenges in knowing how to properly document the development of Israel's strategies of gendered violence because they are so vast and central to the Occupation itself. In addition to this, continuous release of new information, through new testimonies and research or declassified records renders com-

Genocide Research, 28, no. 3 (2026): 540-552, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2556589>

18 Hania A. M. Nashef, "Suppressed Nakba Memories in Palestinian Female Narratives: Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue Between Sky and Water* and Radwa Ashour's *The Woman From Tantoura*," *Interventions* 24, no. 4 (2022): 567-585.

19 Susan Slyomovics, "The Rape of Qula, a Destroyed Palestinian Village," in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 36-37.

20 Katherine Hearst, "Israel Shut Down NGO for Reporting Rape of Teenager, Ex-US Official Says," *Middle East Eye*, December 5, 2023, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-ngo-shut-down-reporting-sexual-assault-ex-us>.

21 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. *Security Theology, Surveillance, and the Politics of Fear*.

prehensive documentation challenging.

Together, these conditions have presented serious challenges to the comprehensive collection of records cataloging Israel's systematic deployment of sexualized violence against Palestinians since the state's inception. Despite these challenges, this report illustrates—both qualitatively and quantitatively—the historical and ongoing predatory character of the Israeli state in its strategic and systemic application of sexualized and gendered violence as a tool of bodily and psychological control with the ultimate aim of Palestinian collective annihilation.

Part 1

Israel's Systemic Sexualized Violence

Israel's Systemic Sexualized Violence

This portion of the report chronicles Israel's systemic sexualized violence against Palestinians both before and after October 7, 2023. Our findings reveal that threats of sexualized violence, rape, and sexual enslavement were methods purposefully used by Zionist extra-state forces during the 1948 Nakba and by the Israeli state following the Nakba to expedite the displacement of Palestinians from their land. Although appearing in various forms, at different frequencies, and to different degrees of brutality, we illustrate that Israel's sexualized violence is intentional, systematic, authorized by Israeli law, and has been constitutive of the Zionist state's treatment of Palestinians since the state's formation

Sexualized Violence 1948–2023

Israel's historical use of sexualized violence has included: threats of rape; strip-searches and forced nudity; sexualized verbal assault and mocking; non-consensual touching and groping; nonconsensual photos taken while partially

or fully stripped; applications of physical pressure to private body parts; other sexualized nonconsensual physical interactions; castration; sexual, reproductive, and genital mutilation; rape; simulated rape; and rape with an object.

Since the 1967 War, sexualized violence has largely taken the form of sexual torture of Palestinian detainees and prisoners, usually while under interrogation. Sexual torture accelerated throughout the 1970s, making the decade the most brutal period of reported sexualized violence against Palestinians until 2023.

From the 1980s to the 2000s, Israel's use of sexual torture against its captives continued—though slowed in frequency following revisions to penal codes, the adoption of new national laws, and a 1999 Supreme Court ruling that regulated the use of torture against detainees. Such changes were the direct result of mounting pressure on Israel by the international community. Throughout this time, however, the Israeli state and its military apparatuses continued the calculated implementation of sexualized violence, adapting its tactics to maneuver around and undermine changing political contexts, restrictions, and condemnations.

The 1948 Nakba

One of the earliest reports of sexualized violence waged against Palestinian women and girls during the 1948 Nakba took place during the massacre at Deir Yassin on April 9, 1948. Survivors of the Nakba have long explained how news of the sexualized violence and brutal manner in which Palestinians were slaughtered in Deir Yassin reverberated across Palestinian towns and villages, inciting fear that drove Palestinians to flee. Zionist militants often published these threats in leaflets or chanted them on loudspeakers during the Nakba to incite fear. While threats of rape have long been reported, the accounts of sexualized violence at Deir Yassin initially went unverified due to a seal on a 1948 British Mandate criminal investigation file. This changed in 1970, when British journalists Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre retrieved the investigation dossier and publicly reported on its findings.

In the report, Saffiyeh Attiyeh, a survivor of the massacre at Deir Yassin, testified to enduring a sexual assault and that “other women around [her] were

being raped, too.”²² The dossier included physical evidence drawn from medical examinations of the survivors that corroborated Attiyeh's and other witnesses' testimony. British investigator Richard Catling, who was assigned to the case, attested that “many sexual atrocities were committed by the attack[ers]... many young school girls were raped and later slaughtered.”²³ Since Collins and Lapierre's 1970 publication, several documented oral history testimonies have come to light, illuminating the systematic usage of rape as a method of war during the events at Deir Yassin.

*All the inhabitants were ordered into the village square. Here, they were lined up against a wall and shot. One eyewitness said her sister, who was nine months pregnant, was shot in the back of the neck. Her assailants then cut open her stomach with a butcher's knife and extracted the unborn baby. When an Arab woman tried to take the baby, she was shot...Women were raped before the eyes of their children before being murdered and dumped down the well.*²⁴

Rape in other towns and villages is also documented in Palestinian oral history accounts and records. Zubaida El-Natour, one of the interviewees in the documentary 1948: Creation & Catastrophe, testified that she and her family in Akka (Acre) heard the screaming of a girl being raped next door. Her uncle protested and tried to stop the rape and was killed. When Zubaida, hearing the girl's screams, started throwing up, her father told her and her sister to keep quiet so that no one would hear them and come to do the same. This occurred after she awoke to the scene of her husband's and brother-in-law's brains smashed and spread on the stairs.²⁵

The 1951 publication *Min Athar al-Nakba* (Consequences of the Catastrophe) by Muhammad Nimer al-Khatib, a member of the Arab Higher Committee-Haifa, provides a detailed record of the events culminating in the Tantura

22 Matthew Hogan, “The 1948 Massacre at Deir Yassin Revisited,” *The Historian* 63, no. 2 (2001): 309–33, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24450239>.

23 “DYR, the Deniers: ZOA Press Release, March 9, 1998 – ‘Deir Yassin: History of a Lie,’” *Deir Yassin Remembered*, March 9, 1998, <https://archive.is/QHEdu>.

24 Nathan Krystall, “The Fall of the New City, 1947–50,” in *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War*, ed. Salim Tamari (Jerusalem and Bethlehem: Institute of Palestine Studies and Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, 2002), as cited in Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Sarah Ihmoud, and Suhad Dahir-Nashif, “Sexual Violence, Women's Bodies, and Israeli Settler Colonialism,” *Jadaliyya*, November 17, 2014, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/31481/Sexual-Violence,-Women%E2%80%99s-Bodies,-and-Israeli-Settler-Colonialism>.

25 Ahlam Muhtaseb and Andy Trimlett, dirs., *1948: Creation & Catastrophe*, documentary (USA: Factory Film Studio, 2018).

Massacre. Al-Khatib reports on the case of a “female rape victim being treated in a Nablus hospital.”²⁶ Reports of rape at Tantura had largely been denied by the Israeli state until a 2022 documentary film, *Tantura*, by Israeli filmmaker Alon Schwartz, provided an eyewitness account. In the film, Joseph Diamanet, a former member of the Alexandroni Brigade involved in the massacre at Tantura, laughs as he recalls an instance when his fellow soldier raped a 16-year-old Palestinian girl.²⁷

In 2003, a seal was lifted on the personal diary of Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, and other classified Israeli military documents. Reporting on the newly declassified materials, *Haaretz* published a story on the August, 1949, abduction of a teenage Bedouin Palestinian girl from the Naqab, who was forced into sexual enslavement and gang-raped by soldiers at the Nirim military outpost, before she was killed and buried. Ben-Gurion’s August 22, 1949, diary entry shows that the highest ranks were aware of this case. He states, “It was decided and carried out: They washed her, cut her hair, raped her, and killed her.”²⁸

Testimonies from the twenty soldiers involved in the assault indicate that the order came from the platoon commander, identified only as Moshe. After the girl’s abduction, Moshe gave his soldiers a speech on the importance of Zionism and their contributions to the formation of the new state. He concluded his speech by giving his soldiers two options regarding their captive: “She was either to become a kitchen worker or their sex slave.”²⁹ In reply, the soldiers chanted, “We want to fuck!”³⁰ Moshe then arranged a three-day rape schedule for soldiers from three squads to take turns raping her. After the first night of enduring the gang-rape and physical assault, the girl fell unconscious. The following morning, she resisted her assailants and was in turn executed and buried on Moshe’s orders. In a declassified August 15, 1949, Israeli military document reported on by *Haaretz*, Moshe chronicles the case in a letter

26 Muhammad Nimr al-Khatib, *Catastrophe (Min Athar al-Nakba)*. Damascus: The Public Press, 1951.

27 Alon Schwarz, dir., *Tantura*, documentary (Reel Peak Films, 2022), <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/tantura2>.

28 Chris McGreal, “Israel Learns of a Hidden Shame in Its Early Years,” *The Guardian*, November 4, 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/nov/04/israel1>.

29 Al Arabiya News, “RE-EXPOSED: A Horrific Story of Israeli Rape and Murder in 1949,” *Al Arabiya*, August 17, 2015, <https://english.alarabiya.net/perspective/analysis/2015/08/17/RE-EXPOSED-A-horrific-story-of-Israeli-rape-and-murder-in-1949>.

30 Chris McGreal, “Israel Learns of a Hidden Shame in Its Early Years,”

correspondence to his superiors:

Nirim Outpost. To: Company Commander. From: Commander, Nirim Outpost.

Re: Report on the captive

In my patrol on 12.8.49 I encountered Arabs in the territory under my command, one of them armed. I killed the armed Arab on the spot and took his weapon. I took the Arab female captive. On the first night the soldiers abused her and the next day I saw fit to remove her from the world.

Signed: Moshe, second lieutenant.³¹

Following the incident, Moshe and three soldiers involved in the assault were supposedly tried in secret for the murder, but not the rape, and the story was buried until it was exposed after the fifty-year military archive seal lapsed.

Israeli military archives also contain evidence of several rapes in the village of Safsaf during a massacre on October 29, 1948. The document states:

52 men were caught, tied them to one another, dug a pit and shot them. 10 were still twitching. Women came, begged for mercy. Found bodies of 6 elderly men. There were 61 bodies. 3 cases of rape, one east of from Safed [sic], girl of 14, 4 men shot and killed. From one they cut off his fingers with a knife to take the ring.³²

Following its release, the document was ordered to be classified again by the Israeli Ministry of Defense in the 2000s. In his 1978 book, *The Palestinian Exodus from the Galilee, 1948*, Nafez Nazzal provides interview testimony with refugees in Lebanon and Syria who were survivors of the Safsaf massacre. Many recall the rape of at least four girls at Safsaf. One testimony recounts:

As we lined up, a few Jewish soldiers ordered four girls to accompany them to carry water for the soldiers. Instead, they took them to our empty houses and raped them. About seventy of our men were blindfolded and shot to death, one after the other, in front of us. The soldiers took their bodies and threw them on the cement covering of the village's spring and dumped sand on them.³³

31 "I Saw Fit to Remove Her from the World," Haaretz, October 29, 2003, <https://archive.is/QdhKi>.

32 Hagar Shezaf, "Burying the Nakba: How Israel Systematically Hides Evidence of 1948 Expulsion of Arabs," Haaretz, July 5, 2019, <https://archive.ph/o20TA>.

33 Nafez Nazzal, *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee, 1948*, (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1978), 93.

Rape was also weaponized against Palestinian women during the July 10–14, 1948, massacre and expulsion of Lydd. On February 6, 1989, the platoon commander of the 82nd Regiment, responsible for the expulsion of Palestinians from Lydd, recalled:

At night, those of us who couldn't restrain ourselves would go into the prison compounds to fuck Arab women. I want very much to assume, and perhaps even can, that those who couldn't restrain themselves did what they thought the Arabs would have done to them had they won the war.³⁴

Minimizing the allegations and gravity of rape, on July 21, 1948, Aharon Zhisling—who would later serve as Israel's Agricultural Minister—stated in a meeting of the newly established government:

Let us say that instances of rape occurred in Ramle. I can forgive instances of rape, but I will not forgive other acts.³⁵

Palestinian oral history accounts, often told intergenerationally within intimate family and community spaces, have long recounted the systematic use of rape and sexualized violence as a strategy of the Nakba's ethnic cleansing campaigns. Firsthand and secondhand witness testimony, intergenerationally transmitted as communal memory and knowledge, has been overlooked or discredited by international agencies and popular perception alike as unreliable evidence.³⁶ These doubts thus have placed an increased burden of proof on survivors to report a deeply traumatic violence that is not only denied by its perpetrators and doubted by so-called neutral parties, but also socially stigmatized within Palestinian communities.³⁷

34 Amos Kenan and Richard Flantz, "The Legacy of Lydda: Four Decades of Blood Vengeance," The Free Library, February 6, 1989, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+legacy+of+Lydda:+four+decades+of+blood+vengeance.-a06982754>.

35 MEE Staff, "Israeli Minister Said He Could 'forgive Instances of Rape,' 1948 Documents Reveal," Middle East Eye, January 7, 2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-ben-gurion-wipe-out-villages-1948-show-documents>.

36 In the face of such systematic dismissal of first-person testimony, Adania Shibli's Minor Detail offers a powerful narrative that stories the centrality of sexualized violence in maintaining the "continuous structural violence" of the Zionist state. (See Isabella Hammad, "Shibli, Minor Detail," Journal of Palestine Studies 51, no. 4 (2022): [113–117], <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1653512>). See also Rashid Khalidi, The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), xxxviii. Here Khalidi discusses the near-complete erasure of Palestinian accounts of 1948 by Benny Morris in The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949 (1988), in which Morris refuses to utilize any oral testimonies, exclusively referencing "official" Israeli and British archives.

37 For more on these challenges, see Hania A. M. Nashef, "Suppressed Nakba Memories in Palestinian

Nonetheless, when seals were briefly lifted on select classified material, which was later resealed, and when Israeli sources reported on their findings, what Palestinians have long known to be true and spoken of was materially verified. The declassification of the Israeli military archive provides evidence that rape and sexualized violence not only took place but were also deployed systematically and intentionally during the Nakba, with the knowledge of the highest-ranked leaders of the state. A scholar of these archival sources, Benny Morris, has reported extensively on the prevalence of sexualized violence during the Nakba as found in these classified sources. He states:

In Acre, four soldiers raped a girl and murdered her and her father. In Jaffa, soldiers of the Kiryati Brigade raped one girl and tried to rape several more. At Hunin, which is in the Galilee, two girls were raped and then murdered. There were one or two cases of rape at Tantura, south of Haifa. There was one case of rape at Qula, in the center of the country. . . . At the village of Abu Shusha, near Kibbutz Gezer [in the Ramle area] there were four female prisoners, one of whom was raped a number of times. And there were other cases. Usually more than one soldier was involved. Usually there were one or two Palestinian girls. In a large proportion of the cases the event ended with murder. Because neither the victims nor the rapists liked to report these events, we have to assume that the dozen cases of rape that were reported, which I found, are not the whole story. They are just the tip of the iceberg. . . . That can't be chance. It's a pattern. Apparently, various officers who took part in the operation understood that the expulsion order they received permitted them to do these deeds in order to encourage the population to take to the roads. The fact is that no one was punished for these acts of murder. Ben-Gurion silenced the matter. He covered up for the officers who did the massacres.³⁸

Other historians, including Ilan Pappé, have written on the sexualized violence used during the Nakba in Yafa (Jaffa). Pappé states that Yafa “seems to have been a hothouse for the cruelty and war crimes of the Israeli troops. One particular battalion, Battalion 3 – commanded by the same person who had been in charge when its soldiers committed massacres in Khisas and Sa’sa’, and cleansed Safad and its environs – was so savage in its behaviour that its soldiers were suspected of being involved in most of the rape cases in the city, and the High Command decided it best to withdraw them from the town.”³⁹

Female Narratives: Susan Abulhawa’s *The Blue Between Sky and Water* and Radwa Ashour’s *The Woman From Tantoura*,” *Interventions* 24, no. 4 (2022): 567–585.

38 Ari Shavit, “An Interview with Benny Morris,” *Counterpunch*, January 16, 2004, <https://www.counter-punch.org/2004/01/16/an-interview-with-benny-morris/>.

39 Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 209.

The 1967 War

Beginning with the Nakba, but especially in the wake of the 1967 War, sexual torture became the dominant method of sexualized violence as a weapon of war deployed against both Palestinian prisoners and Palestinian detainees under interrogation. Palestinian victims of sexual torture include women, men, and children. Reports of sexual torture have steadily increased across every major war period. Following the 1967 War and Israel's illegal annexation and occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, eastern Jerusalem, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights, the frequency and scale of sexual torture of captive Palestinians accelerated, likely making the late 1960s and 1970s the most brutal period of Israeli sexual torture until 2023.

In a comparative analysis of Israeli tactics of sexual torture and those deployed by the British during their colonization of Kenya, Palestinian NGO Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association states:

The British colonization's deliberate use of sexual violence, including castration, rape, and sexual assault of the Kenyan population, does not fall far from the Palestinian reality. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Israeli occupation used similar tactics, from forcing detainees to sit on glass bottles resulting in genital lacerations to rape using sticks.⁴⁰

One example of sexual torture in the wake of the 1967 War comes from the testimony of Mohammed Kader Derbas. Derbas, who was hospitalized for treatment of injuries incurred under torture, told medical examiners that he was castrated by Israeli forces. His testimony is captured in a UN Working Group, February 11, 1970, report, where he states that several other prisoners, who were not willing to testify, had also been castrated.⁴¹ Similarly, a 1968 report published by the International Committee of the Red Cross documented the widespread torture in Nablus Prison that scores of imprisoned Palestinians endured, such as electrical shock to their testicles, alligator clips attached to their genitals, “the insertion of a birch type refill into the penis until it bled,” and

40 Addameer, “Cell No. 26,” 41. A Study on the Use of Torture Against Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Interrogation Centres,” Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, (Ramallah, 2022) <https://addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/Cell%2026-%20A%20Study%20on%20the%20Use%20of%20Torture%20Against%20Palestinian%20in%20Israeli%20Interrogation%20Centers.pdf>.

41 United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Special Working Group of Experts Established under Resolution 6 (XXV) of the Commission on Human Rights (continued), E/CN.4/1016/Add.4, February 18, 1970, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-179578/>.

blows by rods to the genitals.⁴² In a 1970 report on the torture of Palestinian prisoners, Amnesty International documented various methods of physical torture, stating, “Match Sticks are inserted into the penis and sometimes lit.”⁴³ Similarly, two liberated male prisoners, who were arrested in 1967, recounted to Addameer the torture they endured during their imprisonment in 2020. Both reported that they were threatened with the rape of their female relatives, and one of them, referenced as N.E., reported that “his nipple was pulled out with pliers, and cigarettes were put out on his body, among a plethora of other brutal practices.”⁴⁴

While the majority of reports during and following the 1967 War period emphasize the sexual torture endured by Palestinian male detainees, there are other reports that show the sexualized violence used against women (both detainees and those who were not). The 1970 UN Working Group report captures the story of Dawlat El Sayed Allam, who testified that she had been raped by Israeli soldiers twice. The first incident took place when Israeli soldiers stormed her home, where she, her husband, and her eight children were having lunch. The soldiers lined the family up against the wall and asked for their identity cards before beating her sixty-five-year-old husband. The soldiers then attempted to rape her. Her fifteen-year-old son intervened and allegedly attacked the soldiers with a knife. Soldiers then killed her son on the spot before proceeding to rape her. Mrs. Allam testified that she was raped a second time while attempting to cross into Egypt. She reported that several other women from her village had endured the same sexualized violence and that those who resisted their rape were killed. The same report also includes the testimony of an anonymous woman who stated that she had been “sexually molested by the Governor of Nablus Prison when she went to him to obtain permission to visit her husband. The same witness also stated that, according to her information, four other girls had been taken into a nearby room by Israeli officers who raped them.”⁴⁵

42 International Committee of the Red Cross, “Report on the Treatment of Detainees in Nablus Prison,” confidential report to the Government of Israel, 1968.

43 Amnesty International, “Report on Allegations of Ill-Treatment and Torture in Detention in Israel,” 1970.

44 Addameer, “Cell No. 26: A Study on the Use of Torture Against Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Interrogation Centres,” Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Ramallah, 2022), 26, 41, <https://addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/Cell%2026-%20A%20Study%20on%20the%20Use%20of%20Torture%20Against%20Palestinian%20in%20Israeli%20Interrogation%20Centers.pdf>.

45 United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Special Working Group of Experts Es-

The late 1960s marked a turning point in the scale and frequency of the use of sexual torture against Palestinian detainees. One of the most well-known cases is captured in the testimony of liberated political prisoner Rasmea Odeh. Odeh was arrested in 1969—alongside her father and two sisters—based on allegations that she was involved in a Jerusalem supermarket bombing. She was detained in the former Russian compound—Jerusalem’s al-Moskobiya Detention Centre and Ramle Prison—both known to be some of the most brutal torture sites. During her forty-five-day detention, Odeh underwent twenty-five days of non-stop interrogation involving torture, during which she was coerced into confessing. She was sentenced to life in prison on January 22, 1970.

Under interrogation, Odeh reported that she was “stripped naked, chained and beaten with sticks and metal bars, on her head and on her body, therefore causing her hearing problems for over one year.”⁴⁶ Rasmea also testified that she was raped both while alone with Israeli soldiers and by them in the presence of her father. She was also forced to witness the torture of other prisoners, including her father, sisters, fiancé, and comrades. After her release from prison in a 1979 exchange deal, Odeh reported on the torture—including sexual torture—she endured during her detention to the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.⁴⁷ The Committee also reviewed a medical examination, which corroborated her testimony.

The Special Committee report additionally features the testimony of her father, Yusef Odeh, who was also in Israeli custody at the time and was forced to witness the torture and rape of his daughter after he refused to comply with the soldiers’ demand for him to rape her. In a harrowing retelling of the story, Yusef states:

When they took me back... Rasmiah couldn't stand on her own feet. She was lying on the floor and there were blood stains on her clothes. Her face was blue and she had a black eye. Then she was picked up by two soldiers, and at that moment I star-

tablished under Resolution 6.

46 Rasmea Odeh, “Testimony at the United Nations General Assembly,” in Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, ed. Joshua Ruebner (New York: United Nations, November 13, 1979), <https://www.scribd.com/document/323356610/Rasmea-Odeh-Testimony-at-UN-Compiled-by-Joshua-Ruebner>.

47 United Nations General Assembly, A/34/631, “Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories,” November 13, 1979, 209, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/8810?v=pdf>.

ted crying and screaming and they blindfolded me and I think she was then taken away...I wish I had died rather than see this thing... It's a question of honour... It's all right, interpret, why not? What is there to tell? They held her down and shoved up a stick. [...] One of the interrogators, he said, asked me to [have intercourse] with her, and I said: "Don't even think of that. I would never do such a thing." They were beating me and beating her and we were both screaming. Rasemiah was still saying: "I know nothing." And they spread her legs and shoved the stick into her. She was bleeding from her mouth and from her face and from her end. Then I became unconscious.⁴⁸

Since the 1979 Special Committee hearing and report, Rasmea Odeh has told her story in numerous oral history interviews and public talks, among them a 2007 documentary film by Buthina Canaan Khoury, *Women in Struggle*. In the film, she attests:

The moment they brought my father into the interrogation room while I was naked and they tried to force him to [have intercourse] with me during the interrogation, this was one of the worst moments[...] Even though I was stripped naked and tortured in front of others, in front of my father the situation hit me at a different level.⁴⁹

In Arab Loutfi's 2007 film, *Tell Your Tale*, Little Bird, Rasmea recounts details of her assault, including a female soldier, dressed in black participating by stepping on her belly with her high heels and telling her that she must prepare herself to be raped.⁵⁰

Aisha Odeh, arrested and detained at the same time and with the same allegations as Rasmea, also testified publicly to enduring sexualized torture during her interrogation. In Khoury's *Women in Struggle*, Aisha recounts:

They ordered me to take off my clothes. Of course I did not. So they came and stripped me by force. They stripped me naked and cuffed my hands behind me and tossed me to the ground. They were two men and one woman. The woman stepped on my head and one of the men settled his knee into my abdomen while my hands were cuffed under me on the ground. He then proceeded to squeeze my breasts, meanwhile another [male soldier] secured my legs and tried to violate me using a stick. No matter how much I screamed they would not stop. I remember the pain. It seemed like it came out of the belly of the earth and would come through my

48 "Israel and Torture," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, no. 4 (1977): 191–219, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2535792>.

49 *Women in Struggle*, directed by Buthina Canaan Khoury (2004; Ramallah: Majd Productions)

50 *Tell Your Tale*, Little Bird, directed by Arab Loutfi (2007), documentary film.

body like a twister reaching up to the sky. As if all the injustices of human history—perpetuated by humans against humans—were gathering that night inside them [the soldiers] and they would pour it out on me. They carried me and displayed me. Some carried my hands and some held my legs and they dragged me out in front of a row of men. They had lined up the men just to display me naked in front of them. Then they dragged me back to the room and started the process all over again. At that point I could no longer take it and lost consciousness.⁵¹

Despite the trauma caused by the assaults, Rasmea and Aisha's commitment to speaking out has been heralded by Palestinian feminists as a distinct and laudable example of courage in the face of depraved colonial sexual violence. Testament to this steadfastness, upon her release from captivity, Rasmea states:

The first thing my sister asked me before she saluted me was “did they really dishonor you?”[...] I told her “my honor is my country which I will never give up. It is all that we own in our lives.”⁵²

The violence Rasmea and Aisha endured at the hands of soldiers exemplifies what is often regarded as a brutal decade of Israeli's use of torture, including sexual torture, against Palestinian detainees and prisoners. Since 1967, approximately thousands of Palestinian women have been imprisoned by the IOF. Yet Aisha and Rasmea remain some of the most widely known women who have publicly spoken about what has certainly been endured by hundreds, if not thousands, of others.

International attention to these brutal forms of sexual torture grew as the 1970s progressed. On June 19, 1977, Great Britain's Sunday Times produced an “insight report,” titled “Israel and Torture,” which included interviews with former Palestinian prisoners who alleged Israeli officials had tortured them during their incarceration.⁵³ The report drew on twenty-four interviews with Palestinians who had been tortured during interrogation at the Russian Compound (al-Moskobiya) detention center in Jerusalem. The Times reported that “Nine of those we interviewed spoke of having had their genitals beaten, squeezed or twisted. Consistently, they said this was done mostly from behind, while they stood, naked and with legs apart, facing a wall.” In one particular case,

51 Khoury, *Women in Struggle*.

52 Loutfi, *Tell Your Tale*, Little Bird.

53 “Israel and Torture.”

Omar Abdul-Karim, a Palestinian carpenter from the village of Beit Sahur, was arrested following allegations that he was involved with the fedayeen (guerrillas). He later reported the methods of torture he endured to the International Red Cross, which mediated his release and return to Jordan.

Abdul-Karim attested that he was physically tortured when guards shoved him into a cell where a gas substance was pumped into the room through the Judas hole in the door, suffocating him. He also reported witnessing the beating of his wife, Nijmi, who was also under interrogation at the same time, and enduring electrical shocks. The Times reported that Abdul-Karim was forced “under a cold shower; jammed into a barrel of freezing water; and suspended from his wrists once more while the interrogator Orli squeezed his genitals.” Abdul-Karim attests:

*The mind cannot imagine how that hurts. It was so bad, it made me forget all the other pain.*⁵⁴

The Times reported that details of Abdul-Karim’s torture were “so brutal, so prolonged and, above all, so organized and applied as to leave no doubt—if his story were true—that systematic torture is an Israeli practice.”⁵⁵ The testimonies in The Times report match those of other survivors from this period. Another detainee, A.J. Muhtaseb, from Al-Khalil (Hebron), interviewed in July of 2025, shared that he, too, had to endure severe beatings on the genitalia during several incarcerations in the 1970s.

Women detainees also reported being threatened with rape at high frequency throughout the 1970s. A liberated prisoner, referenced as H.M., reports enduring torture following her 1979 arrest. According to an interview conducted with Addameer, H.M. recalls that “she was beaten and threatened as interrogators used to threaten to rape or strip her.”⁵⁶ H.M. also recounts “one recurrent Israeli practice that primarily aimed to break detainees’ spirit was interrogating them for several weeks before placing them in front of a mirror to see the physical manifestation of the aftermath on their bodies to annihilate their will.”⁵⁷

54 “Israel and Torture.”

55 “Israel and Torture.”

56 Addameer, “Cell No. 26,” 26.

57 Addameer, “Cell No. 26,” 26.

1986 to 2004

Although Palestinian accounts of the 1987 Intifada (First Intifada) are rife with testimonies of sexualized violence enacted upon Palestinian detainees, the late 1980s simultaneously witnessed a decreased frequency of sexual torture and the elimination of certain methods due to mounting international pressure and the adoption of new Israeli laws and regulations. Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mrs. Barghouti, testified to various forms of torture Palestinian prisoners, especially women, were subjected to in 1987, for a report produced by Committee on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, presented to the UN General Assembly Forty-Second Session in November 1987 under agenda item 107. The report outlined Mrs. Somaia Barghouti's testimony:

The Israeli authorities were deliberately using interrogation methods that profoundly offended the traditions of Palestinian Arabs. For example, they raped or threatened to rape, female prisoners in order to dissuade Palestinian women, by intimidating them, from participating in organized political activities and in order to exert pressure on the men in their families. [...] cases of rape and torture at the start of the occupation, after the six-day war and in the early 1970s, had led to a decrease in sexual violence during interrogation. Since then, threats of rape continued to take place, and if [rape is] rarely carried out, none the less, left deep scars on the minds of the female prisoners. Other forms of torture however, were still being practiced.⁵⁸

Understanding the reason for changes in sexualized violence between the 1970s and 1980s, as well as how and why various forms of sexualized violence continued during this time, is critical. While sexual torture of detainees and prisoners is one facet of the broader category of sexualized violence, its documentation and advocacy against it, especially during this period, was largely facilitated by entities and legal statutes concerned with general forms of torture and cruel and unusual punishment. Although the use of torture, including sexual torture, has been systematically and continuously deployed against Palestinian captives in Israeli prisons and detention facilities, particularly under interrogation, sexual torture itself has taken different shapes over time in response to changes to Israeli law and Israeli wartime military strategies and policies.

58 United Nations General Assembly Forty-Second Session, "Summary Record of the 46th Meeting," UNGA, November 13, 1987.

In 1987, the Landau Commission was established in part to investigate Israel's torture of Palestinian captives. The Commission was formed following the 1986 execution of two Palestinian prisoners, tortured to death by Israel's General Security Service, who were suspected of participating in a 1984 bus hijacking. The Commission produced a secret report that detailed and was intended to regulate various methods of torture used by Israeli interrogators. However, the report itself created a legal loophole that permitted "moderate physical pressure," allowing members of the intelligence community to deploy such tactics less frequently (every three months).⁵⁹

As Addameer reports:

Despite that the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a global movement regarding the issue of torture, particularly in the wake of the adoption of the CAT [Committee Against Torture] and uncovering numerous torture cases at the hands of the Israeli occupation, Israel was not deterred as it continued to torture Palestinian detainees well into the late 1980s. It can even be said that the First Intifada was a fundamental reason behind the continuation of the Israeli torture practices to oppress Palestinians and put out the spark of the popular uprising. Former woman prisoner "H.A." recounts the various interrogation methods she endured, including when interrogators placed a bag over her head for long periods of time, particularly as they forced her into stress positions for hours at end, cursed profanities at her, as well as threatened to rape or sexually assault her.⁶⁰

While Israel ratified the UN Convention Against Torture in the wake of the killing of these two captives in 1986, followed by another death by torture of a Palestinian captive in 1991, the loopholes etched into Israeli policy by the Landau Commission provided cover for the continued use of torture. From 1993 to 1994, as more allegations of Israel's use of torture came to light, international human rights organizations, including CAT, conducted investigations into Israel's use of illegal methods. Based on the findings, CAT ruled that "the Landau Commission Report, permitting as it does 'moderate physical pressure' as a lawful mode of interrogation, is completely unacceptable to this Committee."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Israel, Commission of Inquiry into the Methods of Investigation of the General Security Service Regarding Hostile Terrorist Activity (Landau Commission), Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Methods of Investigation of the General Security Service Regarding Hostile Terrorist Activity (Jerusalem: State of Israel, 1987).

⁶⁰ Addameer, "Cell No. 26," 44.

⁶¹ United Nations Committee Against Torture, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 19 of the Convention: Israel (1994).

In 1996, Abdel Samad Hreizat, a Palestinian from Al-Khalil (Hebron), was killed by Israeli forces. The cause of death was shock to the brain caused by violent shaking as a form of torture. Addameer defines violent shaking as follows: “The prisoner is made to sit on a chair, sometimes with the leg of the interrogator placed on the groin area. The prisoner is then shaken violently by the collar or shoulders, forcing the head and neck to jerk violently back and forth. This results in severe pain below the neck, pain in the head and can result in violent vomiting. The process may be repeated, and can cause extreme suffering.”⁶²

A 1997 report by Amnesty International documents the state-sanctioned torture:

*The State of Israel has effectively legalized torture despite being a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture. Israel has effectively made torture legal in three ways. First, the General Security Service's use of “a moderate measure of physical pressure” was sanctioned in the government-approved 1987 Landau Commission Report. The physical and psychological methods which may be used are contained in secret guidelines to this report. Second, since October 1994 the Israeli Government ministerial committee which oversees the General Security Service has renewed, at three-monthly intervals, the right to use increased physical pressure. The use of violent shaking of detainees is also authorized by this committee. And third, in 1996 the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the use of physical force, including the use of violent shaking, could continue against specified detainees.*⁶³

Mounting international pressure at this time resulted in a 1999 Israeli Supreme Court ruling against the use of torture of detainees. The ruling marked the elimination of certain methods of torture by Israel inflicted on its Palestinian captives, including the use of bags over the head. However, like the 1987 Landau Commission Report, the ruling included a legal loophole that permitted torture in certain exceptional cases. That same year, Israel also adopted two other national laws against sexual harassment and abuse: Penal Law: Article

62 Ribhi Qatamish and Nimer Sha'ban, *Torture of Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons*, trans. Diab Zayed (Ramallah: Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association, 2003), 59, https://www.addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/torture-eng_0.pdf.

63 Amnesty International, *Israel and the Occupied Territories: Oral Statement to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the Israeli Occupied Territories* (Amnesty International, 1997), <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/mde150081997en.pdf>.

Five: Sex Offenses; and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law.⁶⁴

Developments within Israeli law in the late 1980s and 1990s—in no small part due to international pressure—resulted in the elimination of certain methods of torture and its reduction in frequency; however, it did not result in the abolition of sexual torture against detainees. Addameer classified these changes in their 2003 report as shifts in state-sanctioned uses of torture:

1. Interrogation techniques using various forms of physical violence, including beating with sticks, electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, subject to extremely hot or cold temperatures, breaking of fingers, blows to sensitive areas of the body (groin area, neck, feet, stomach), and strangulation. These extremely physically violent techniques, usually termed “German/Nazi” techniques, were used until the end of the 1970s.

2. Selective Physical Torture: The second phase of torture saw a decrease in the above physical techniques, focusing more on selective methods that left little or no marks on the body. Later during this stage, the GSS [General Security Service] began to implement various psychological forms of torture, depending on the nature of the accusations.

3. Physical-Psychological Torture: As a result of the more effective role that international human rights instruments began to play in making Israel accountable for its actions, as well as the new Landau regulations, psychological torture was more widely used by the GSS in interrogations. Additionally, “moderate” physical pressure, as regulated by the Landau Committee, was used.⁶⁵

Despite the regulations on the use of torture dictated by Israeli law, Israeli officials have regularly admitted that there are certain exceptions to these rules. “Exceptional” interrogation methods, which include physical pressure, are permitted in so-called “ticking bomb” situations.⁶⁶ Several Israeli spokespeople have argued that such exceptions are made out of “necessity,” providing de-

64 For analysis and background, see Herzog, Fox & Ne’eman, “The Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law: 25 Years On,” *Ius Laboris*, May 10, 2023; and State of Israel, Ministry of Justice, Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law, 5758–1998.

65 Qatamish and Sha’ban, “Torture of Palestinian Political Prisoners”, 57.

66 Qatamish and Sha’ban, “Torture of Palestinian Political Prisoners”, 40.

ceptive cover that not only enables but also sanctions sexual torture.⁶⁷

In 2001, three years after the 1999 Israeli Supreme Court ruling, and during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Israel issued its third periodic report, which proclaimed that the state was adhering to the prohibition of “controversial interrogation practices formerly used by its General Security Service.”⁶⁸ Concerned with the legal loopholes etched into the 1999 Supreme Court ruling and aware of new cases of torture reported by Palestinian captives, members of CAT questioned whether:

*the Supreme Court decision left certain “gaps” under which other modes of interrogation, different from those which were banned, might be applied to detainees to the extent that they became torture, based on perceived “necessity” in a certain situation; and if non-governmental organization (NGO) reports that some forceful interrogation practices continued, including sleep deprivation, slapping, and keeping detainees in the ‘frog’ position, were true.*⁶⁹

The concerns raised by CAT members during this review coupled with continued reports of the use of sexual torture on Palestinian captives following 1999 reveal how the state has systematically sought to legalize torture, including sexual torture, in the face of increased scrutiny and regulation.

The period between 1987 and 2004, for instance, witnessed numerous cases of sexualized violence reported by Palestinian detainees and prisoners. In 1987, Itaf Elia was arrested and tortured.⁷⁰ During her forty-day-interrogation period, soldiers refused to give her sanitary products during two menstrual cycles. She resorted to cutting pieces of an old, dirty blanket and using them as pads. She was also subjected to strip-searches. When she refused to cooperate, she was placed in solitary confinement in a 2-meter-by-1-meter cell enclosed only by a mesh door, leaving her exposed to passing jailers while using the toilet and undressing. In an interview with Rabet, Elia testifies that during her interrogation, she faced a rape attempt by one of her interrogators, who

67 Qatamish and Sha’ban, “Torture of Palestinian Political Prisoners”, 41.

68 UN Human Rights Committee Against Torture, “Committee Against Torture Takes Up Report of Israel,” UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2001, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2009/10/committee-against-torture-takes-report-israel>.

69 UN Human Rights Committee Against Torture, “Committee Against Torture Takes Up Report of Israel.”

70 Rabet, “Freedom Breakers Ep. 7 with Etaf Alayan,” YouTube video, October 30, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QavQbfwgG6A>.

tore off her hijab and jilbab (long overcoat), after her pants were already torn. The interrogator then groped her until another interrogator stopped him. The experience was so traumatic that she stopped talking, eating, and drinking, except for what was essential for survival.⁷¹

Sexualized violence continued following the 1999 Supreme Court ruling. In November 2000, Mufeed Hamamra, a Palestinian child, was arrested by occupation forces. He reported that “interrogators used cigarettes to burn [his] hands and chest, while beating [him] in the groin area. Interrogators also shoved pieces of ice in [his] ears and mouth.”⁷² Similarly, in a report submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) and the World Organization Against Torture (WOAT), Kahara Sa’adi, a resident of Al-Ram, who was arrested on May 1, 2002,

*reported that her interrogators threatened to rape her, beat her and to arrest her sister and brother-in-law. She was under interrogation for nine days, during which she was held in a small solitary cell. A hole infested with insects served as a toilet. She was interrogated each day from 9:00 AM until 3:30 AM with her hands and feet tied to a chair. After her interrogation ended, she was kept in a solitary cell for 115 days. Ms. Sa’adi reports that during this time, an officer called Shlomo would come into her cell and beat her, leaving marks on her body.*⁷³

The PCATI and WOAT report also included the case of Samira Hadar Mahmoud Algenzazra, a divorced mother of two from Al-Arroub in Al-Khalil (Hebron), who was arrested on August 5, 2002. The report states that “two female soldiers searched her in a humiliating manner ...and she was asked to open her blouse in public and in full view of a group of boys.”⁷⁴ After enduring several rounds of interrogation involving physical torture and verbal abuse from various officers, she testified to the abuse she faced. According to the report,

71 Rabet, “Freedom Breakers Ep. 7.”

72 Ribhi Qatamish and Nimer Sha’ban, *Torture of Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons*, trans. Diab Zayed (Ramallah: Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association, 2003), 61, https://www.addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/torture-eng_0.pdf.

73 Public Committee Against Torture in Israel and World Organization Against Torture, *Violence against Palestinian Women: A Report Submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (PCAT, OMCT, 2005), <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/OMCT.pdf>.

74 Public Committee Against Torture in Israel and World Organization Against Torture, *Violence against Palestinian Women*, 12.

the interrogators threatened that if she did not confess to the charges against her, they would rape her and bring in a person who she is close to and torture him in front of her. At the end of the interrogation, Ms. Algenzazra was made to sign a confession written by her interrogators, which she had not admitted to and had not read before she signed it.⁷⁵

The same report also chronicled the testimony of Suheir Issan Abd'Alrazek Alhashlamon, a resident of Al-Khalil (Hebron), who was arrested on November 15, 2002, and threatened with rape during interrogation while Israeli officers attempted to retrieve information on the whereabouts of her husband. The report states:

Ms. Alhashlamon was held for over a month in small, solitary cells, where conditions were bad: the toilet and the basin were filthy and the mattress, blankets, and the room had a bad odor. At times, she was exposed to extremely cold temperatures. The food she received was inedible. During her interrogations at the Russian Compound, her interrogators threatened that they would rape her, beat her, and leave her in solitary confinement for a long time if she did not reveal her husband's whereabouts. Meanwhile, she was told that there were no charges against her and that she would be released shortly. Ms. Alhashlamon was sentenced to six months administrative detention and held under harsh conditions at the Neve Tirza Prison.⁷⁶

Sexualized violence took place at sites outside detention facilities and prisons as well. In 2003, for example, Samar Abu Hamda recounts repeated instances of intimidation, sexual harassment, and threats by an Israeli border officer while she and her family attempted to cross a newly installed gate separating the residents of Zeita (in the Tulkarm District) from the village greenhouses. Samar describes the officer's unsolicited advances and coercive tactics, threatening her with the spread of rumors and physical and sexualized violence if she did not comply. Samar recounts, "When he realized I wasn't being cooperative, he said that he would come to our house and cause problems, and find an excuse to take me from the house, and then do with me what he wished...He said, 'If that is the way you are going to be, you'll see what happens. You'll wait three hours at the gate.'⁷⁷ The next morning, when Samar

75 Public Committee Against Torture in Israel and World Organization Against Torture, Violence against Palestinian Women, 13.

76 Public Committee Against Torture in Israel and World Organization Against Torture, Violence against Palestinian Women, 25.

77 Atef Abu a-Rob, "Zeita: Border Police Officers Sexually Harass and Abuse Farmers, Summer 2003," B'Tselem – the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, August 2, 2003,

and her family went to work in the greenhouse, the border officer returned, threatening to “break [the] head” of Samar’s sister-in-law and pour hot coffee on her husband, Iyad. The officer demanded that the family leave immediately, and as Samar recounts, “for the next three days, they didn’t let us pass through the gate. Each time we got to the gate, the officers closed it.”⁷⁸

2005 to 2012

In 2012, PCATI conducted a survey of 1,500 Palestinian boys and men arrested and/or imprisoned between 2005 and 2012. At least sixty respondents (4 percent) reported enduring instances of torture, including sexual torture, and/or ill-treatment by Israeli authorities. Based on the research, the Committee determined that Israeli “sexual ill-treatment is systemic.”⁷⁹ The PCATI report demonstrates the systemic character of Israeli sexual torture, in part, by showing that perpetrators came from four different government agencies: the police, secret service, soldiers, and jailers.

The report captured thirty-six testimonies of verbal sexual harassment, which included at least eight cases of verbal sexual humiliation. One survivor’s testimony documents sexualized violence against Palestinians with disabilities: “‘He started to humiliate me and told me that because of my handicap I won’t be able to have sex and that girls will not look at me.’ (age 29, perpetrator: secret service).”⁸⁰ At least fourteen survivors reported being threatened with sexual assault. One survivor stated, “‘And they said ‘you maniac, you son of a bitch, terrorist, I’ll fuck you like a homosexual!’ (age 23, perpetrator: secret service).” While another survivor attests, “‘And the police officer... said ‘I will fuck you, and you will sing on my dick’ as part of his threats. (age 16, perpetrator: police).”⁸¹

Nine survivors reported that Israeli authorities made sexually humiliating remarks pertaining to members of the detainees’ families, and in five instances, officers threatened sexual harm to a family member if the detainee did not

<https://archive.ph/cLrf9>.

78 Abu a-Rob, “Zeita.”

79 Daniel J.N. Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men by Israeli Authorities,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 23, no. 46 (2015): 71–84, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rhm.2015.11.019>.

80 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 75.

81 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 76.

cooperate. One testimony states: “They put me in an investigation room with a glass partition and on the other side I saw my brother, dressed as a woman, immodest, in a mini-skirt. [...] They said that they [...] had arranged for him a sex-change surgery in Jerusalem. (age 40, perpetrator: secret service).”⁸²

The report also included thirty-five reports of forced nudity. In many of these cases, survivors were forcibly photographed nude, and some were forced to pose in demeaning torture positions akin to the U.S. military’s widely condemned treatment of Iraqi captives at Abu Ghraib. In one case, a survivor recounted:

Two interrogators lifted me and pushed me to the wall. Then my trousers dropped and I was left in my underwear and the interrogators started to make mocking and very embarrassing remarks that included a sexual, repulsive and humiliating aspect that I remember now in detail. A third interrogator made photographs of me in this humiliating position. (age 34, perpetrator: secret service).⁸³

Another survivor testified:

They forced me to take off all my clothes, even my underwear, in front of all the men and women who were at the place. After that they gave me a piece of white cloth, which sticks to the body and I remained with that, and they started to interrogate me. [...] Four to six hours after the investigation, they moved me to camp [name], at [name] I stayed for only an hour. [...] They moved me to prison [name], while I am still without clothes—hiding my body with the little white cloth that they gave me when they arrested me. (age 25, perpetrator: soldiers).⁸⁴

A third testimony demonstrates that forced nudity is a systemic part of Israeli practices:

They started to do a body search while I was completely nude. I was asked to bend and straighten. During the search I felt that the jailers were provoking me and trying to mock me and especially hurt my honour. (age 20, perpetrator: jailers).⁸⁵

The PCATI report reveals at least six cases of physical sexual assault as well. Four Palestinians testified to enduring hits and kicks to the genitals. One

82 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 76.

83 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 77.

84 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 77.

85 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 77.

survivor recounts: “I was taken to a room, I don’t know where, with my eyes covered. After that, they jumped on my hands that were stretched to the sides, and I got a strong blow in my testicles.’ (age 16, perpetrator unknown).”⁸⁶ One survivor testified to enduring a simulated rape, reporting:

One of the undercover soldiers lay down on me and started to caress my bottom as if he was having sex with me and he started to move his hips and genitals while making sounds. At that point I tried to fight him with all my strength, but my hands were tight behind me and I wasn’t able to. When this undercover soldier got up from me, another came and he too started to caress me and my genitals and buttocks. He tried to take off my trousers, but I kicked him with my feet and they then hit me on all parts of my body with their hands and feet.’ (age 26, perpetrator: soldiers).”⁸⁷ One survivor reported enduring a physical rape with a blunt object and being urinated on: “They took off my trousers and underwear and shove a pole into my behind. [...] They stopped when someone came in and asked what they were doing. [...] A little later, the officer took me to the toilet, locked the door, sat me down and urinated on my face and body.’ (age 23, perpetrator: police).”⁸⁸

Several of the survivors whose testimonies appear in the 2012 PCATI report were minors at the time of their detention and torture. Other agencies also captured sexual abuse of minors. In 2010, Defense for Children-Palestine (DCIP) submitted an investigation request to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture with evidence of at least fourteen cases of threats and instances of sexual assault perpetrated by Israeli interrogators against Palestinian children. Several years later, in 2021, DCIP reported the sexual assault of a fifteen-year-old boy who was raped during interrogation. The report states:

The boy alleges the individual [interrogator] knocked him to the floor while blindfolded and raped him with an object... The individual threatened that the sexualized violence would continue unless he confessed to the allegations against him. The boy was then made to stand against a wall, where the individual inflicted extreme pain on his genitals [...] The Captain subsequently threatened the boy, telling him that the physical and sexualized violence would continue if he told his lawyer what had occurred.”⁸⁹

86 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 77.

87 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 78.

88 Weishut, “Sexual Torture of Palestinian Men,” 78.

89 Defense for Children International – Palestine, Report on the Physical and Sexual Assault of a 15-Year-Old Palestinian Boy at Al-Mascobiyya Interrogation and Detention Facility (February 2021). https://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli_interrogator_sexually_assaults_palestinian_child_detainee

Addameer's 2008 report, "In Need of Protection': Palestinian Female Prisoners in Israeli Detention," states that "beatings, insults, threats, sexual harassment and humiliation are techniques used by Israeli interrogators to intimidate Palestinian women and coerce them into confession."⁹⁰

In April 2009, a 39-year-old Palestinian captive, B.SH., was transferred to Military Intelligence in Qalqilya, where he endured extreme torture. He states:

*The Military Intelligence held me for a month and a half. I was subjected to stress positions for 12 days, during which time I was also blindfolded with my hands tied behind my back. During this time I was flogged on my back and hands.*⁹¹

B.SH. also reports having his hands shackled to the bed for twelve hours a day for a month, enduring slaps to the face, sleep deprivation, insults and verbal abuse by authorities, threats by the prison director that his toes would be cut off with a knife, and sexual abuse.⁹²

2013 to 2023

The systemic intent of Israel's sanctioning of rape and sexualized violence is clearly established by the rhetoric used to incite the Israeli troops during every major war period. One example of this took place following the discovery of the bodies of three settlers who had gone missing in the West Bank in 2014, just as Israel was preparing to wage its war on Gaza:

*Israeli professor Mordechai Kedar of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies remarked on public radio: "the only deterrent for ... those who kidnapped the [Israeli] children and killed them, the only way to deter them is their knowledge that either their sister or their mother will be raped if they are caught ... this is the culture of the Middle East."*⁹³

90 Addameer Prisoner's Support and Human Rights Association, "In Need of Protection': Palestinian Female Prisoners in Israeli Detention" (Ramallah: Addameer Prisoner's Support and Human Rights Association, 2008), 6, <https://www.addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/in-need-of-protection-palestinian-female-prisoners.pdf>.

91 Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, "Stolen Hope: Political Detention in the West Bank (1.1.2009-1.9.2010))" (Ramallah: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, 2011), 27, https://www.addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/EN%2520PA%2520Violations%2520Report%25202009-2010_0.pdf.

92 Addameer, "Stolen Hope,," 27.

93 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud, and Dahir-Nashif, "Sexual Violence, Women's Bodies."

Kedar's remarks were not delivered in a vacuum. The city council of Or Yehuda, an Israeli settlement, hung a banner encouraging sexualized violence against Palestinian women as part of the incitement of the war on Gaza:

*Israeli soldiers, the residents of Or Yehuda are with you! Pound their mother and come back home safely to your mother.*⁹⁴

The phrase “Go pound their mothers, and come back to your mother” became a rallying wartime slogan among Israeli soldiers as they prepared to enter the 2014 war.⁹⁵ Rhetoric such as this corresponds with a statistical increase in reports of sexualized violence in Israeli prisons and detention centers by human rights organizations. For example, in 2015, Addameer produced an annual report based on extensive research, titled “Violations of Palestinian Prisoners’ Rights in Israeli Prisons.”⁹⁶ The researchers reported an increase in the number of child arrests, 929 children at that time and 486 in October alone.⁹⁷ In addition to other forms of human rights abuses logged in their report, the authors state:

*The children were subjected to insults, curses, humiliation, demeaning treatment and sexual threats inside military vehicles. They were left outdoors for long hours with no regard to their health conditions or harsh weather. The majority of children were beaten with rifle butts all over their bodies, causing fractures, loss of sight, and other physical damage. Interrogators do not draw a distinction in treatment between minors and adults. Palestinian children face immense pressure in the form of beatings, cursing, threats of arresting parents, and promises of fictitious deals.*⁹⁸

The affidavit of Nadeem Zahran, from al-Issawiya, who was sixteen at the time of his arrest in 2015, demonstrates not only the abuse that Palestinians endure, but also the way threats of sexualized violence are used to cause psychological harm. He states:

Around 2 in the morning on Monday March 21st, 2015, Israeli soldiers arrested me from my house. After being led out of the house, one of the soldiers placed his hand

94 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud, and Dahir-Nashif, “Sexual Violence, Women’s Bodies”.

95 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud, and Dahir-Nashif, “Sexual Violence, Women’s Bodies.”

96 Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Annual Violations Report: Violations of Palestinian Prisoners’ Rights in Israeli Prisons 2015 (Ramallah: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, 2016), <https://www.addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/website.pdf>.

97 Addameer, Annual Violations Report, 74.

98 Addameer, Annual Violations Report, 75.

on my head and dragged me under the stairs. He then proceeded to handcuff and blindfold me. I was walked to a mountainous area where other detainees were held. I was forced to sit on the ground there for more than an hour and half, during which soldiers would unexpectedly hit me with their hands and feet on my head and across my body. The soldiers cursed at me and my father with vulgar language as well. Following that, the soldiers walked for ten minutes dragging me from opposite directions while handcuffed which was extremely painful. They kept walking until we reached a gas station where suddenly a soldier drove his knees into my back causing me a great deal of pain. I was dragged near a car and soldiers started taking pictures with me; when I tried to defend myself, they threatened to rape me. They tried to force me to get into the car, and threw me on the car floor on my knees when I refused. Along the way, the soldiers continued to hit me with their hands and feet. Some of the soldiers were wearing reinforced plastic gloves that were extremely painful. They kept hitting me until we arrived in Oz police station in Jabal Al-Mukaber. They was took [sic] me out of the car and forced me on my knees on the floor for eight hours without food or water, and I wasn't allowed to use the bathroom. I met with a lawyer and told him I didn't do anything. None of my family was present. I was taken into interrogation which lasted about an hour, during which the interrogator accused me of throwing stones and Molotov cocktails without any evidence. I was released at 6 o'clock into five days of house arrest on the condition of not interacting with any of the others who were detained along with me.⁹⁹

In addition to reporting on rights violations of children, Addameer's 2015 publication also documents cases in which adult prisoners suffering abuse during interrogation were threatened with rape or subjected to sexual humiliation. In one case, Palestinian journalist Mohammed al-Qiq, who was held in administrative detention without charge or trial, was tortured during interrogation for twenty-five days, during which time he waged a hunger strike in protest of his treatment. In addition to being subjected to positional torture daily (hands bound behind his back, sitting in a chair for over seven hours), al-Qiq reported threats of sexual assault. After twenty-five days of continued torture during interrogation, al-Qiq was placed in solitary confinement at Megiddo Prison before being transferred to other prisons due to his declining health.¹⁰⁰

Addameer legal advocates also filed a police complaint on behalf of Bilal Amr Abu Ghanem, a Palestinian detainee who endured abuse and sexual humiliation while receiving medical treatment. Addameer states:

⁹⁹ Addameer, "Annual Violations Report", 80.

¹⁰⁰ Addameer, "Annual Violations Report", 59.

*Abu Ghanem told [an] Addameer lawyer that all the guards used to beat and kick him, while the nurses in Hadassa Ein Karem hospital used to curse and scream at him, hit his bed repeatedly, and not allow him to use the bathroom for long periods of time. The deepest wounds, according to Abu Ghanem, were the humiliation he faced when police officers had photographed him naked in his hospital bed. Sometimes, a police officer would take out his genitals and hold it close to Abu Ghanem's face, while other officers would take demeaning selfies with him.*¹⁰¹

In 2015, a Palestinian woman accused three Israeli officers and three Shin Bet staffers, including a doctor, of rape and sodomy, which took place during a nighttime raid at her home.¹⁰² The woman testified that Shin Bet agents ordered soldiers to conduct internal body cavity searches for a SIM card to access her mobile phone. The assault took place in front of both male and female soldiers. After filing a complaint, the attorney general convened a special meeting to discuss the case. However, in 2021, the Justice Ministry dropped the case, not because the assault “didn’t take place but rather claiming that it was impossible to determine who ordered the act. The three officers who were questioned about the incident blamed one another.”¹⁰³

Between 2001 and 2016, Palestinians filed more than 1,000 complaints with the Israeli Ministry of Justice alleging torture. None of these cases were investigated, and none of the perpetrators who carried out the assaults were held accountable.¹⁰⁴ In the absence of such accountability, following the 2014 war, reports of torture, including the sexual torture of men, women, and children, have steadily increased. In a 2017 report produced by Addameer on 138 cases of Palestinians who endured torture during interrogation at al-Moscabiya revealed that female prisoners “suffer from sexual harassment, whether verbal harassment via sexual suggestions and gestures, or conducting close range interrogation.”¹⁰⁵ For instance, “13% of the women prisoners reported being

101 Addameer, “Annual Violations Report,” 27.

102 Josh Breiner, “Palestinian Demands Israelis Who Conducted Intimate Body Search Stand Trial,” Haaretz, February 16, 2022, <https://archive.ph/StDa0>.

103 Bilge N. Kotan, “Palestinian Victim Seeks New Trial against Israeli Officers Accused of Rape,” TRT World, February 16, 2022, <https://www.trtworld.com/article/12767757>.

104 Ali Abunimah, “Israel Dismisses 1,000 Complaints of Torture,” The Electronic Intifada, December 12, 2016, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israel-dismisses-1000-complaints-torture>.

105 Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, “I’ve Been There: A Study of Torture and Inhumane Treatment in Al-Moscabiyeh Interrogation Center” (Ramallah: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, 2018), 31, https://www.addameer.ps/sites/default/files/publications/al_moscabiyeh_report_0.pdf.

interrogated in such a way that the interrogator leaves zero personal space between them.”¹⁰⁶ The findings also reveal that, in addition to various methods of physical and psychological torture, a staggering 17.1 percent of al-Mosca-biya detainees report enduring suggestive sexual advances, and 13.1 percent report enduring sexual threats.¹⁰⁷

The case of a Palestinian captive, referenced as Q.S., reveals how sexualized violence is systematically sanctioned by Israeli courts. Q.S. was arrested on August 26, 2019. During his arrest, he “sustained injuries to the thigh area and genitalia after being bitten by a police dog accompanying the arresting unit.”¹⁰⁸ Both during the arrest and interrogation, Q.S. was subjected to multiple methods of torture, including long hours of positional torture and beatings all over his body and genitalia, which left marks. Israeli judges extended the duration of his detention, despite his lawyers having filed a petition against it, at which time he was again tortured during interrogation and prohibited from meeting with legal counsel. In a court session on October 7, 2019, a judge ordered Q.S. to undress to see the marks on his body. The marks and bruises were purposefully omitted from the session transcript. Q.S.’s case exposes, then, not only the ongoing sexual torture of Palestinian detainees but also how the Israeli court system knowingly authorizes and conceals these violations.

Israeli systematic sexualized violence also takes many forms outside carceral centers across occupied Palestine. Over the course of several decades, thousands of Palestinians have reported being forcibly strip-searched in their homes during night raids, groped, mocked, harassed with sexually suggestive remarks, and threatened with sexualized violence at checkpoints. Just as the scale of sexualized violence against detainees and prisoners has been increasing since 2014, so too has the frequency of these reports by Palestinians from various cities and villages across occupied Palestine.

One example took place on Monday, July 10, 2023, when dozens of masked Israeli soldiers with dogs invaded the homes of the extended Aljouni family in the southern Hebron neighborhood of Khallat Al-Qaba. Female soldiers forced two women and a teenager in the family to strip nude, including Zeinab Aljouni, a 17-year-old child. All of the women gave testimonies that were docu-

¹⁰⁶ Addameer, “I’ve Been There,” 31.

¹⁰⁷ Addameer, “I’ve Been There,” 30.

¹⁰⁸ Addameer, “Cell No. 26,” 90.

mented by B'Tselem.

Amal Aljouni, a 25-year-old mother of four, recounts being coerced to undress in front of her children:

The [female] soldier ordered me to undress. I started to take off my prayer clothes that I was wearing, and the necklace I had around my neck made some noise, and then the soldier loosened the dog's leash, and it came right up to me. It really scared me and the children, and we all screamed. I begged the soldier to get it away, and I told her that we were afraid of dogs. She moved the dog away and ordered me to continue undressing and also to remove my undergarments. I told her I had nothing on me and that my clothes were light and there was no reason to take off my undergarments. I begged her not to make me do it in front of the children, but she threatened to release the dog again. I had no choice, and I took off everything, weeping. The soldier ordered me to turn around as my children watched, unable to stop crying and shaking with fear.¹⁰⁹

The 17-year-old high school student, Zeinab, testifies to a similar form of subjection:

The [female] soldiers ordered me to undress. I refused, and then one of them yelled at me, threatening she would set the dog on me. I heard Diala yelling that I should do what the soldier said, so I took off my top layers. The soldier ordered me to take off the rest, and I fully undressed, crying. It was humiliating and insulting. The soldier then allowed me to get dressed, and some [male] soldiers came into the room and led me to the TV room, and then they took Rawan, Zakariyah's wife, to be searched and left her kids screaming and crying.¹¹⁰

109 B'Tselem, "Soldiers Enter Homes of Extended 'Ajlouni Family with Dogs, Separate Children from Their Parents and Steal Items. Female Soldiers Strip Search Women," B'Tselem – A Routine Founded on Violence, September 5, 2023, <https://archive.ph/V8XIW>.

110 B'Tselem, "Soldiers Enter Homes of Extended 'Ajlouni Family."

Excerpts from these testimonies were included in a letter delivered by the Palestinian Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) to the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict recounting the systemic use of sexualized violence and harassment by the Israeli military against Palestinian women.¹¹¹ In this letter, Randa Sinoira, Director of the Centre, outlines the obstacles her organization faces around stigma and fear, which have resulted in the mass underreporting of sexualized violence committed by Israeli officials against women and girls in the home and in Israeli captivity.

She asserts:

*All the women WCLAC interviewed following their release from prisons reported receiving threatening phone calls from Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) officers who identified themselves as "Captain Diyab, Captain Hakam, and Captain Nimer."*¹¹²

The calls contained direct threats, warning the women that they would be returned to prison or that harm would be inflicted upon their incarcerated family members if they disclosed their experiences.¹¹³

Ramzy Baroud, writing for The Jordan Times, reported on the sexual humiliation of the Ajlouni family and similar incidents that took place in other cities in the occupied West Bank, including Jericho and Jerusalem, placing them within Israel's long history of sexualized violence against Palestinian women.¹¹⁴

Despite the consistent pattern of systemic Israeli sexualized violence against Palestinians, human rights groups report an uptick in frequency and degrees of brutality against prisoners in 2022 with the appointment of Itamar Ben-Gvir to the position of Minister of National Security. Commenting on this escalation, B'Tselem notes, "Specifically, several decisions by the Israeli government, including/and especially Minister Ben Gvir, months before the

111 Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC), "Written Statement Submitted to the Human Rights Council, Fifty-Fifth Session," UN Document A/HRC/55/NGO/297, March 19, 2024, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/046/29/pdf/g2404629.pdf>.

112 WCLAC, "Written Statement Fifty-Fifth Session," 3.

113 WCLAC, "Written Statement Fifty-Fifth Session," 3.

114 Ramzy Baroud, "The Untold Story of the Abuse of Palestinian Women in Hebron," Jordan Times, September 12, 2023, <https://www.jordantimes.com/opinion/ramzy-baroud/untold-story-abuse-palestinian-women-hebron>.

[2023] war marked a significant policy change. Among other things, Ben Gvir issued directives to limit family visits and cancel the option of early release. Some of the changes he instated clearly have no other purpose but to torment Palestinian prisoners. They include reducing the time allocated for showers, and canceling prisoners' ability to prepare their own food and buy from the canteen."¹¹⁵ These developments served as both an indication and a precondition of the torture that was to come in the wake of October 7, 2023.

¹¹⁵ B'Tselem, "Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps" (Jerusalem: B'Tselem, August 2024), 7-8, https://www.btselem.org/publications/202408_welcome_to_hell.

Sexualized Violence Since October 2023

Sexualized Violence Since October 2023

This portion of the report includes documented cases of sexualized violence reported by Palestinians, especially detainees and prisoners, to the press and international human rights agencies since October 7, 2023. Our findings reveal that the years following October 2023 have been the most documented period of Israel's use of sexualized violence against Palestinians. Despite existing international efforts to abolish these forms of sexualized violence and torture, which are in contravention of international law, the Israeli state has sanctioned sexualized violence through various wartime protocols and continues it as a systemic practice against Palestinians en masse.

Our findings also reveal that sexualized violence has been enacted at various prisons, detention facilities, and arrest locations by multiple agencies and individuals, and against both Palestinians and international activists who stand with a free Palestine. These acts of sexualized violence have been legitimized and justified in public rhetoric, including by elected Israeli officials. This pattern leaves no doubt that sexualized violence is a systemic Israeli practice that has accelerated in frequency and scale of brutality since October 7, 2023. We conclude that Israeli sexualized violence is a central method of political, psychological, and physical warfare intentionally deployed to cause mass bodily and mental harm and injury. We further conclude that sexualized violence is intentionally deployed to destroy the Palestinian people in whole or in part and therefore must be regarded as a genocidal act.

Chronology of Reporting and Sources

Sexualized violence against Palestinians since 2023 has been amply documented by human rights organizations, UN agencies and committees, and the international press. In a public statement from February 2024, UN experts appointed to Special Procedures—the entity responsible for independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms—of the Human Rights Council, expressed alarm over Israel's systemic violation of Palestinian women and girls. Special Procedures experts included Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; and members of the working group on discrimination against women and girls, Dorothy Estrada-Tanck (Chair), Claudia Flores, Ivana Krstić, Haina Lu, and Laura Nyirinkindi. The experts stated that they were:

particularly distressed by reports that Palestinian women and girls in detention have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped naked and searched by male Israeli army officers. At least two female Palestinian detainees were reportedly raped, while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence.

They also noted that photos of female detainees in degrading circumstances were reportedly taken by the Israeli army and uploaded online.¹¹⁶ By May 2024, at least two cases of rape of Palestinian women detainees had been submitted to the United Nations for investigation.¹¹⁷

On April 27, 2024, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights published a report titled “Post October 7th, Harsh Measures Taken Against Palestinian Male and Female Detainees, and Israeli Legislative Amendments Taken to Legalize Them.” The report chronicles various forms of torture Palestinian detainees endured since October 7, with compelling evidence suggesting that sexualized violence has become a codified systemic practice. The report also examines various legislative efforts to allow extreme detention and torture methods against Pales-

116 UN OHCHR, “Israel/oPt: UN Experts Appalled by Reported Human Rights Violations against Palestinian Women and Girls,” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, February 19, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>.

117 Julian Borger, “Claims of Israeli Sexual Assault of Palestinian Women Are Credible, UN Panel Says,” The Guardian, February 22, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/22/claims-of-israeli-sexual-assault-of-palestinian-women-are-credible-un-panel-says>.

tinians captured in Gaza, including Palestinian workers, Palestinians sheltering in hospitals, and Palestinians in their homes and at checkpoints.¹¹⁸

In July 2024, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a thematic report on “Detention in the context of escalation of hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024).”¹¹⁹ The report states:

*Allegedly, ISF [Israeli Security Forces] committed acts of sexual and gender-based violence against detained men and women from both Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, descriptions of which included the forced nudity of both men and women; beatings while naked, including on the genitals; electrocution of the genitals and anus; being forced to undergo repeated humiliating strip-searches; widespread sexual slurs and threats of rape; and the inappropriate touching of women by both male and female soldiers. There are testimonies of victims as well as video material, that some almost naked, blindfolded and tightly handcuffed male detainees were filmed and photographed in deliberately humiliating positions. In one instance at least, there is video evidence of blindfolded and handcuffed male Palestinian detainees being transported entirely naked. OHCHR has also received consistent reports of ISF personnel inserting objects into detainees’ anuses.*¹²⁰

In September 2024, following the OHCHR report, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SR-SG-SVC), Pramila Patten, issued a statement expressing grave concern over reported cases of rape and sexualized violence of Palestinians detained by the IOF. Patten stated, “Sexual violence and sexualized torture in detention settings must never be normalized. Impunity emboldens perpetrators, silences victims and undermines prospects for peace. Perpetrators of such heinous crimes must be held accountable and justice must be served.”¹²¹

118 Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, “Torture Report: Al Mezan’s Documentation of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Palestinian Detainees” (Gaza: Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, April 2024), <https://mezan.org/uploads/files/2024/4/1712323548Torture%20report-AlMezan.pdf>.

119 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Thematic Report: Detention in the Context of the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024),” UN OHCHR, July 31, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/thematic-report-detention-context-escalation-hostilities-gaza-october-2023-june>.

120 UN OHCHR, “Thematic Report,” 12-13.

121 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, “UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, Expresses Serious Concerns over Reported Instances of Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence against Palestinian Detainees,” United Nations, September 9, 2024, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/press-release/un-special-representative-on-sexual-violence-in-conflict-ms-pramila-patten-expresses-serious-concerns-over-reported-instances-of-rape-and-other-forms-of-sexual-violence-against-palestinian-detainee/>.

In September 2024, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories submitted a report to the UN General Assembly in which it raised grave concerns over reports not only of sexualized violence committed against Palestinian detainees and prisoners, but also that Palestinian women were being subjected to sexualized violence during home raids and at checkpoints in the occupied West Bank.¹²²

On March 11, 2025, two women—Kifeya Khraim, a Women’s Human Rights Defender, and Witness #3—gave testimony to the UN Human Rights Council after collecting testimonies from female prisoners from Gaza. These testimonies revealed a “systematic trend of sexual violence being used as a weapon of genocide [...] tactics of sexual violence that were used by the Israeli military were all the same so it’s very clear that it is happening as a matter of policy and there’s a directive for the Israeli military to engage in these methods of torture.”¹²³ Such assaults were not limited to the Gaza Strip.

They noted four substantial themes from their fieldwork:¹²⁴

1. sexualized violence used to exert control over a female victim and her entire family, especially male members;
2. sexualized violence used as a tool to threaten women’s honor and shame them—to create social stigma and isolation;
3. digital sexualized violence and blackmail; and
4. overall sexualized violence.

Witness #3 further notes that sexualized violence and rape of Palestinian men and women constitute an attempt to demoralize and humiliate them as a means of fracturing Palestinian society. This practice is illustrated, for instance, in 2023, Palestinian men were shackled and paraded in their underwear

¹²² United Nations General Assembly, “Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories,” United Nations, September 20, 2024, 20, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/79/363>.

¹²³ UN Human Rights Council, “Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3 | Public Hearings, COI Palestine, East Jerusalem & Israel, 11/03/2025,” YouTube video, March 12, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xw-jBbeUapxo>.

¹²⁴ UN Human Rights Council, “Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3.

through the streets of Gaza, and photos where posted online of IOF soldiers posing with Palestinian women's lingerie. These are attempts to publicly debase, violate, and shame Palestinian men and women.¹²⁵

Following these testimonies, among others, in March 2025, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel—which operates under the auspices of the OHCHR—issued a scathing report titled “More than a human can bear’: Israel’s systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since October 2023.”¹²⁶ The report comprehensively detailed numerous firsthand accounts of sexual humiliation, torture, and assault. Speaking at the Human Rights Council’s fifty-eighth session in March 2025, Navi Pillay, the Chair of the Commission, stated that “the evidence collected by the Commission reveals a deplorable increase in sexual and gender-based violence,” and “[t]here is no escape from the conclusion that Israel has employed sexual and gender-based violence against Palestinians to terrorise them and perpetuate a system of oppression that undermines their right to self-determination.”¹²⁷

In May 2025, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) released a report titled “Torture and Genocide,” which features interview testimonies of one hundred Palestinians from Gaza who were arrested, detained, and/or imprisoned between October 2023 and October 2024. The report shows that since October 7, 2023, Palestinian detainees were subjected to brutal physical and psychological torture, including beatings, electrocution, suspension, sexualized violence, extremely tight handcuffing, and forced stress positions. The report includes dozens of disturbing accounts of sexual humiliation, sexual torture, and rape, even as the authors note that “[s]ome forms of ill-treatment were under-reported, particularly those involving sexual violence,” due to the survivors’ reluctance to disclose sexual abuse because of shame and fear of retaliation.¹²⁸ In a November 2025 press release, PCHR concludes:

125 UN Human Rights Council, “Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3.”

126 UN OHCHR, “‘More than a Human Can Bear’: Israel’s Systematic Use of Sexual, Reproductive and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence since October 2023,” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, March 13, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/more-human-can-bear-israels-systematic-use-sexual-reproductive-and-other>.

127 UN OHCHR, “‘More than a Human Can Bear.’”

128 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), *Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees, in Gaza, October 2023-October 2024*, May 12, 2025, 34, <https://pchrgaza>.

[T]he treatment inflicted by IOF, intelligence services, and Israel Prison Service employees not only meets the elements of torture under international law, but also rises to the level of genocide, specifically the following genocidal acts: (1) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; and (2) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.¹²⁹

In July 2025, Special Rapporteur Reem Alsalem “raised alarm over reports of sexual violence, including rape, committed by Israeli forces” in a statement denouncing genocidal violence against women and girls in the Gaza Strip.¹³⁰

In September 2025, as evidence of Israel's systemic sexualized violence against Palestinians began to mount, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories submitted a report to the UN General Assembly stating:

The torture and ill-treatment were such that special procedure mandate holders denounced them as a crime against humanity, warning that the high-profile case of the gang-rape of a detainee in the Israel Defense Forces detention facility of Sde Teiman represented the tip of the iceberg. The Special Committee also received information about the use of rape and gang-rape, including anal rape with objects, targeting both male and female detainees, amid a near-total absence of prison or military investigations and complete lack of accountability.¹³¹

In November 2025, Adalah, PCATI, HaMoked (Center for the Defence of the Individual), Physicians for Human Rights–Israel, and Parents Against Child Detention submitted a joint report to the UN Committee Against Torture titled “Torture as State Policy: Abuse of Palestinian Detainees in Israel and the Absence of Accountability Since October 7, 2023.” The report states:

[org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Torture-and-Genocide-The-Shattered-Futures-of-Former-Palestinian-Detainees-in-Gaza.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-un-expert-denounces-genocidal-violence-against-women-and-girls/).

129 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,” 98.

130 United Nations The Question of Palestine, “Gaza: UN Expert Denounces Genocidal Violence against Women and Girls,” United Nations, July 17, 2025, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-un-expert-denounces-genocidal-violence-against-women-and-girls/>. See also: Al Jazeera English, “UN Expert Says Israel Is Committing ‘Femi-Genocide’ in Gaza,” YouTube video, July 22, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dofy07NB4mE>.

131 United Nations General Assembly, “Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories,” United Nations, September 5, 2024, 7, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/365>.

Testimonies taken since October 7 provide detailed accounts of sexual assault and harassment, sexual humiliation and on some occasions, rape with objects. Multiple Palestinians classified as security detainees, both male and female, reported incidents in which IPS personnel beat and humiliated detainees while naked, including on their genitalia, and threatened sexual violence and rape. Some testified that their humiliation was performed in front of others and recorded on camera by [Israeli Prison Service] personnel.¹³²

In November 2025, PCHR issued a press release as a follow-up to its May 2025 report, containing new testimony that documents, in horrifying detail, cases of sexualized violence and rape endured by Palestinian detainees at the hands of the IOF.¹³³ The testimonies point to systematic, policy-driven practices of collective punishment and the perpetration of violence designed to inflict maximum bodily and mental harm to Palestinians.

The authors note:

These accounts reveal an organized and systematic practice of sexual torture, including rape, forced stripping, forced filming, sexual assault using objects and dogs, in addition to deliberate psychological humiliation aimed at crushing human dignity and erasing individual identity entirely.¹³⁴

All Palestinian prisoners—whether men, women, or children—are subject to this extreme physical and psychological violence. PCHR concludes that “these practices are part and parcel of the ongoing crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in the [Gaza] Strip.”¹³⁵

A November 2025 CAT document also expresses serious concern over what is viewed as “a de facto state policy of organised and widespread torture and ill treatment” of Palestinians in Israeli detention and prisons. Francesca Al-

132 Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, HaMoked – Center for the Defence of the Individual, Parents Against Child Detention (PACD), and Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), “Torture as State Policy: Abuse of Palestinian Detainees in Israel and the Absence of Accountability Since October 7, 2023: Alternative Report Submitted to the UN Committee against Torture in the Context of the 6th Review Israel during the 83rd Session (10–28 November 2025))” (2025), 27, https://stoptorture.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/PCATI-Adalah-HaMoked-PHRI-PACD_Submission-to-UNCAT_Israel-review-2025-1.pdf.

133 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies.”

134 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies.”

135 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies.”

banese's 2026 report to the UN titled, "Torture and Genocide"¹³⁶ echoes these claims. The CAT document said the allegations had "gravely intensified" after October 7, 2023, demonstrating an escalation in both frequency and scale of violence.¹³⁷ In clause 30 of "Principle Subjects of Concern and Recommendations," presented at the December 2025 session of the UN Committee Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Committee expressed:

Serious concern over widespread allegations of sexual abuse of Palestinian detainees, both men and women, amounting to torture and ill-treatment, including allegations of rape, attempted rape, molestation, sexualized forms of torture, beatings administered while detainees were naked specifically targeting their genitals, electrocution of the genitals and anus, the use of repeated, unnecessary, degrading strip-searches, prolonged forced nudity, including in front of members of the opposite sex, with the aim of degrading and humiliating victims in front of both soldiers and other detainees, the forcible removal of women's veils, sexual harassment, the use of sexual slurs, threats of rape, the production of sexually humiliating videos, and various other forms of physical and sexual violence. In this regard, the Committee notes that, according to information available, no charges have been lodged against Israeli security officials to date for such acts (arts. 2, 4, 11-13 and 16).¹³⁸

In April 2026, Euro-Med Human Rights Watch, published a harrowing report titled "Another Genocide Behind Walls: Sexual Violence in Israeli Prisons and Detention Centres and Engineered Impunity: October 2023-October 2025."¹³⁹ This report made clear that rape and sexualized violence against Palestinian detainees and prisoners are not isolated cases but rather evidence a system. In addition to constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity, Israel's systemic sexual violence reveals clear violations of the Genocide Convention. First-hand testimonies provided by former detainees and prisoners from the

136 Francesca Albanese. "Torture and Genocide." United Nations Human Rights Council, March 23, 2026. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session61/advance-version/a-hrc-61-71-aev.pdf>.

137 United Nations Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Israel, CAT/C/ISR/CO/6 (Geneva: United Nations, December 22, 2025), <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=aiRLqnO%2B8B%2FsUx38Br6dO9NuWd5FJUTStS7j5i7Q9nM-9NRfiKx5035VmSRsAdJdZy5X6CnLssOJhllatKcJKEg%3D%3D>.

138 UN Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Israel.

139 United Nations Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Israel, CAT/C/ISR/CO/6 (Geneva: United Nations, December 22, 2025), <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=aiRLqnO%2B8B%2FsUx38Br6dO9NuWd5FJUTStS7j5i7Q9nM-9NRfiKx5035VmSRsAdJdZy5X6CnLssOJhllatKcJKEg%3D%3D>.

Gaza Strip documenting staggering cases of rape and sexual torture, coupled with a thoroughly conducted analysis of the architecture of repression that isolates Palestinians and shreds evidence, Euro-Med's report contributes granular details of the horrific subjugation Palestinians are made to endure. The report urges the international community to take:

*immediate, concrete actions such as pressing for the closure of field and secret detention centres, ending enforced disappearances, releasing arbitrary detainees, and allowing access to independent international monitoring, as well as ensuring prisoners have legal representation and medical care.*¹⁴⁰

Together, this evidence chronicles Israel's systemic sexualized violence against Palestinians, illustrating how the IOF deploys diverse methods of humiliation, torture, and rape. Additionally, this evidence suggests that sexualized violence is enacted by the various agencies and individuals comprising the IOF across a wide range of sites, including, but not limited to, military detention facilities, prisons, checkpoints, and arrest locations. Viewed comprehensively, the cases leave no doubt that sexualized violence is a systemic Israeli practice.

Sexual Humiliation

Sexual humiliation refers to communicative and physical acts, that are sexually degrading in character, and are carried out with the explicit intention to degrade, humiliate, belittle, make fun of, intimidate, and exert power over another. They do not have to accompany a sexual or physical assault but they often do. Sexual humiliation may include sexual slurs, forced nudity, stripping, forced witnessing of sexual acts, sexualized threats of physical violence, threats of sexual assault, and sexualized comments and touching meant to degrade.¹⁴¹

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel stated in 2024 that forced nudity in prisons and detention centers was frequently perpetrated as a means of degrading and humiliating Palestinians in front of soldiers and other detainees. They describe how the IOF was:

¹⁴⁰ UN Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Israel.

¹⁴¹ For more on the UN's definition of sexual humiliation see: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, A/HRC/31/57 (January 5, 2016), <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/31/57>.

*forcing detainees to perform certain movements while naked or stripped and, in some cases, also filmed; subjecting detainees to sexual slurs as they were transported naked; forcing naked detainees into a crowded cell together; and forcing stripped and blindfolded detainees to crouch on the ground with their hands tied behind their back.*¹⁴²

The Commission also received numerous reports that sexual humiliation was often accompanied by religious slurs, death threats, and physical assaults.¹⁴³ A detainee held in Sde Teiman reported the sexual humiliation and threats from a female soldier, stating she:

*forced him and others to make sounds like a sheep, curse the Hamas leadership and the prophet Muhammad, and say, "I am a whore." Detainees were beaten if they did not comply. In another case, a soldier took off his trousers and pressed his crotch to a detainee's face, saying: "You are my bitch. Suck my dick."*¹⁴⁴

A staggering majority of Palestinians detained or imprisoned since 2023 report enduring or witnessing sexual humiliation on a regular basis. While nearly all cases of sexualized violence were accompanied by efforts to sexually humiliate Palestinians, the following are cases that clearly exemplify the various forms of sexual humiliation perpetrated, and their impact on Palestinians.

Sexual Humiliation of Girls and Women

The number of reports of sexual humiliation of Palestinian women and girls by Israeli forces is at once overwhelming and compelling. In addition to being subjected to sexual slurs and insults, numerous Palestinian women reported being forcibly stripped to their undergarments or sometimes naked while subjected to sexually humiliating exposure, photographs, and mocking. Some female detainees were photographed in their underwear, without their consent, in "degrading circumstances in front of male soldiers," and in some cases pho-

¹⁴² Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel: Note by the Secretary-General" (United Nations General Assembly, September 11, 2024), 14, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/262/79/pdf/n2426279.pdf>.

¹⁴³ Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry," 12.

¹⁴⁴ Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry," 15.

tos were posted online.¹⁴⁵

In July 2024, OHCHR reported systemic practices of sexual humiliation, including instances in which “[d]etainees have reported being held in cage-like facilities, forced to be naked for prolonged periods, wearing only diapers, and denied access to the toilet.”¹⁴⁶

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry report in 2024 also documented the extensive sexual humiliation of women, noting that humiliation frequently included threats of rape. The report offers examples of the specific types of sexual harassment enacted by Israeli forces:

*The sexual harassment included attempts to kiss and touch their breasts. They reported repeated, prolonged and invasive strip-searches, both before and after interrogations. Women were forced to remove all clothes, including the veil, in front of male and female soldiers. They were beaten and harassed while being called “ugly” and had sexual insults, such as “bitch” and “whore,” directed at them. In one case, a female detainee in an Israel Prison Service prison was denied access to her lawyer after she had informed him of rape threats.*¹⁴⁷

In an article published by Prism Reports in March 2025, and based on research and reporting conducted by WCLAC, journalist Kylie Cheung reported the presence of shared elements of sexual humiliation and assault in most cases of arrested, detained, or imprisoned Palestinian women:

Women are arrested without charges and held under administrative detention. The women say they are searched, forced to strip, repeatedly beaten on their genitals, photographed naked, and then threatened with or sometimes subjected to rape. The violations occur at detention centers or checkpoints as a condition of the women’s ability to move from one place to another, or, increasingly, when soldiers invade their homes in the middle of the night. Some of the women Khraim has spoken to said they were afraid of falling asleep in Israeli jails because they believed

¹⁴⁵ Independent International Commission of Inquiry, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, 15.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Thematic Report: Detention in the Context of the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024),” UN OHCHR, July 31, 2024, 12, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/thematic-report-detention-context-escalation-hostilities-gaza-october-2023-june>.

¹⁴⁷ Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, “Report of the Independent International Commission,” 15.

| *they'd be raped or assaulted.*¹⁴⁸

When thirty-nine Palestinian women and over 200 children were released in the November 2023 prisoner exchange deal during the four-day ceasefire, a surge of accounts detailing physical abuse and sexual humiliation surfaced, demonstrating that Palestinian prisoners had undergone one of the most brutal periods of torture in detention centers and prisons since the 1970s. Upon her release, freed prisoner Walaa Khaled Tanji, for example, reported to the press how conditions in Israeli prisons had intensified after October 7:

| *They treat us in a very bad way. They threaten us that they would rape us. They prevent us from having food and water. After the 7th of October, we lost everything. We lost our rights. We lost our privacy. They hit us, kicked us every day for 49 days.*¹⁴⁹

Lama Khater and Hanadi Halwani affirm the depths of brutality Tanji speaks of, reporting that they were both explicitly threatened with rape.¹⁵⁰ Khater's and Tanji's testimonies were not unique. Following the November 2023 release, dozens of Palestinian women and children prisoners testified to sexual harassment, threats of rape, being forcibly stripped naked, enduring extreme physical and psychological torture, starvation, and the denial of lawyer visitations and medical care.

Women released in the January 2025 ceasefire agreement reported similar treatment. For example, journalist Danya al-Hanashteh recounted harsh conditions in the prison and reported that "forced strip-searches absolutely no boundaries. Anyone who refused was forced to undergo a strip search."¹⁵¹

150 Kylie Cheung, "Palestinian Women Come Forward with Allegations of Increased Sexual Violence by Israeli Forces since Oct. 7," Prism, March 4, 2025, <https://prismreports.org/2025/03/04/palestinian-women-violence-israel-october-7/>; Dania Akkad, "Israeli Soldiers Have Been Sexually Assaulting Palestinian Women for Decades. Now They're Speaking Out," Middle East Eye, December 4, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-sexual-assault-palestinian-women>.

149 Nick Schiffrin and Zeba Warsi, "Freed Palestinian Prisoner: 'We Have the Right to Defend Ourselves,'" PBS News, November 29, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/freed-palestinian-prisoner-we-have-the-right-to-defend-ourselves>.

150 Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling, "Written Statement Submitted by Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling, a Non-Governmental Organization in Special Consultative Status," United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council, February 6, 2024, 3, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/55/NGO/297>.

151 Sahatenglish (@sahatenglish), "تغطية صحفية: الأسيرة المحررة دانيا الحناشة تروي تفاصيل ظروف الأسس" [The freed detainee, Dania Al-Hanatsha, recounts the details of her imprisonment], Instagram video, January 24, 2025, www.instagram.com/reel/DFOCx3yNxFU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

These types of reports also appear in the United Nations' Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), where female detainees reported being "photographed without their consent and in degrading circumstances, including in their underwear in front of male soldiers. In one case, a detainee was subjected to repeated and invasive strip-searches following her arrest at a police station in northern Israel."¹⁵² Palestinian journalist Bisan Owda also shared the story of a "very young" Palestinian woman who was sexually humiliated and harassed by an IOF soldier.¹⁵³ The numerous stark parallels in these testimonies show that the use of sexual humiliation was practiced across prisons, detention facilities, and arrest sites, and by multiple agencies and officers in the wake of October 7, 2023.

PCHR's May 2025 Report on Torture and Genocide illuminates how Israel used systematic forms of sexual humiliation to degrade Palestinians and cause mass bodily and mental harm. The report states, "The most frequent form of sexual violence reported was verbal abuse. Detainees were relentlessly subjected to sexually explicit insults and degrading comments. Palestinian women, in particular, endured the humiliation of being called 'whores' or 'sluts' by Israeli soldiers – creating an environment filled with fear and a profound loss of dignity."¹⁵⁴ One soldier commented, "I swear, Palestinian women are the sluttiest in the world."¹⁵⁵ As we discuss later, all instances of reported sexual assault and rape also included sexual humiliation.

One woman recalled the "agony of being forcibly stripped of her hijab, only to be thrown into the corner of an armoured vehicle. Men, stripped to their underwear, were thrown on top of her. The soldiers stood by, laughing and taking photos of the scene, while the woman and the men, humiliated and overwhelmed with shame, cried." Another woman described her experience being forced to strip by female soldiers, who then laughed and mocked her in Hebrew while stepping on her bare body.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, "More than a Human Can Bear," 21.

¹⁵³ Bisan Owda (@wizard_bisan1), "Sexual Harassment in the Israeli Prisons!! This Happened and Still Happening until Now!," Instagram video, May 30, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7ltBGIsRn9/>.

¹⁵⁴ PCHR, "Torture and Genocide," 59.

¹⁵⁵ Nadeine Asbali, "IWD: Why Are Israeli Soldiers Obsessed with Gaza Women's Underwear?" The New Arab, March 7, 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/opinion/iwd-israeli-soldiers-obsession-gaza-womens-underwear>.

¹⁵⁶ PCHR, "Torture and Genocide," 59. See also Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), "They

Another Palestinian woman arrested in Gaza City, who was held at a mosque and private home before being transferred to four detention camps, testified to being humiliated with sexist and threatening accusations:

They had set up a base in a bombed house opposite Al-Taqwa Mosque. The interrogation began with questions about my name, age, and family. He then asked, "Are you Hamas? Is your husband affiliated with Hamas or any of your daughters or sons?" He continued accusing me of being a member of Hamas Elite Forces and insulted me by saying "bitch" and "whore," threatening to detain me for five years and take me to Israel.¹⁵⁷

WCLAC officer Kifeya Khraim and Witness #3 corroborate PCHR reports of sexual humiliation, recounting testimonies from women fleeing to southern Gaza who were taken advantage of by IOF soldiers. Three testimonies in particular explain that IOF soldiers, knowing women might flee with jewelry, used this as a pretext to search their undergarments to loot and molest them.¹⁵⁸ Khraim also testified that after October 7, 2023, women in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem reported numerous occasions at checkpoints where soldiers would expose their genitals and sexually humiliate them while standing in camera blind spots at checkpoints.

Khraim's fieldwork revealed that Palestinian women forcibly abducted from Gaza while fleeing to the south frequently ended up in the Zakim or Negev detention center. In these detention centers, women and men were placed together in large halls, forced to strip and sit side by side. She also shared that "Israeli civilians are invited to come to this detention center and mock the Palestinian prisoners while they're naked, photograph them, and watch them as if it's a zoo."¹⁵⁹

Palestinian girls have also reported abuse and sexual humiliation.¹⁶⁰ Witness #3 shared that girls under the age of eighteen are subject to more shame than

Repeatedly Forced Me to Strip Naked," February 19, 2024, <https://pchrgaza.org/they-repeatedly-forced-me-to-strip-naked/>.

¹⁵⁷ PCHR, "Torture and Genocide," 59.

¹⁵⁸ UN Human Rights Council, "Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3".

¹⁵⁹ UN Human Rights Council, "Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3."

¹⁶⁰ Jawaher Elchorouk, "شهادات صادمة لفلسطينيات تعرّضن لاعتداءات جنسية بمستشفى كمال عدوان" [Shocking Testimonies of Palestinian Women Sexually Assaulted at Kamal Adwan Hospital], "الشروق أونلاين [Elchorouk Online], January 16, 2025, <https://www.echoroukonline.com/شهادات-صادمة-لفلسطينيات-تعرضن-لاعتداءات-جنسية-بمستشفى-كمال-عدوان>.

older women, providing three documented cases of sexualized violence. In one case, a girl from occupied Jerusalem was sexually assaulted and groped by settlers while Israeli officers refused to intervene. In another set of testimonies, two girls recount how, on their way to school, IOF soldiers “touched their breasts and their genitals while pretending to search them.”¹⁶¹ Khraim and Witness #3 conclude that numerous Palestinian girls’ and women’s testimonies show evidence of widespread use of forced strip-searches, inappropriate touching and groping, sexual gestures and sounds, and threats of rape as methods of sexual humiliation.

Palestinian women have consistently testified that threats of rape have been levied against them by IOF. In a report published by OHCHR in July 2024 on “Detention in the context of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024),” a well-known Palestinian woman, arrested following October 7, 2023, recounts that male soldiers threatened her with gang-rape, “saying that there were 20 soldiers on standby in the room, [and] they would rape me one by one.”¹⁶² Another pregnant Palestinian woman, also arrested after October 7, 2023, reported being threatened with rape while in detention.¹⁶³

The Palestinian Commission of Detainee Affairs released a statement in 2026 after visiting a mother and daughter from Nablus in Damon Prison, detailing how the two were strip-searched and experienced other forms of maltreatment.¹⁶⁴ A Middle East Eye report further adds to the numerous reports of sexual humiliation and abuse of women by IOF soldiers, noting that pregnant and elderly women were not spared from this violence during a raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital.¹⁶⁵ The journalist notes that many women refused to speak about the violence they witnessed and experienced due to the sensitivity of the matter. It is thus reasonable to assume that the prevalence of sexual humiliation and violence experienced by Palestinians is under-reported and consequently undercounted.

¹⁶¹ Elchorouk, “شهادات صادمة [Shocking Testimonies].”

¹⁶² United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Thematic Report: Detention,” 13.

¹⁶³ UN OHCHR, “Thematic Report,” 13.

¹⁶⁴ Aysar Alais, “Palestinian Mother, Daughter Recount Strip Searches, Harsh Conditions in Israeli Detention,” Anadolu Agency, February 12, 2026, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/palestinian-mother-daughter-recount-strip-searches-harsh-conditions-in-israeli-detention/3828371>.

¹⁶⁵ Maha Hussaini, “Palestinian Women Detail Israeli Sexual Assaults in Kamal Adwan Raid,” Middle East Eye, January 14, 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/north-gaza-palestinian-women-recall-sexual-assault-israeli-forces>.

Several Palestinian women have also reported being forced to answer invasive questions during Israeli interrogation—often at gunpoint—including on their marital status, intimate life, and virginity. One 29-year-old Palestinian woman, who was held at a private home and then transferred to Zikim Camp and later Damon Prison, recounts:

The male soldiers took me to one of the rooms and ordered me to take off my clothes, but I refused, so they brought three female soldiers who searched me and uncovered my stomach. One of the soldiers asked me about the location of tunnels and “saboteurs” in the area. I told him that I did not know anything, so he threatened me saying, “you will pay the price.” He then asked me why I was not married yet and I answered, “it is God’s will.” He laughed and asked if I was still a virgin, and he would know this through the soldiers. I was being interrogated while surrounded by soldiers and at gunpoint. I was very scared and trembling but tried so hard to hide my fear and look brave because I knew that my cries and tears would not help... They escorted us to an empty building, where they severely beat up the men while they tried to touch the sensitive areas of my body, and I tried to move to avoid their touching.¹⁶⁶

Another testimony, documented in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) April 2024 report, highlights that women were sexually humiliated before and after their arrival at Damon Prison, one of the most notorious sites of torture of Palestinian women and girls. A 34-year-old Palestinian woman testified:

[The guards] asked the soldiers to spit on me, saying “she is a bitch, she is from Gaza.” They were beating us as we moved and saying they would put pepper on our sensitive parts [genitals]. They pulled us, beat us, they took us in the bus to the Damon Prison after five days. A male soldier took off our hijabs and they pinched us and touched our bodies, including our breasts. We were blindfolded and we were feeling them touching us, pushing our heads to the bus. We started to squeeze together to try to protect ourselves from the touching. They said “bitch, bitch.” They told the soldiers to take off their shoes and slap our faces with them.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ PCHR, “Torture and Genocide,” 60.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), “Detention and Alleged Ill-Treatment of Detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War,” United Nations the Question of Palestine, April 16, 2024, 2, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/detention-and-ill-treatment-unrwa-report-16apr24/>.

Since October 7, 2023, Palestinian women have reported numerous cases—from across detention facilities, prisons, and arrest locations—of female Israeli soldiers partaking in their sexual humiliation. In several of these cases, Palestinian women were threatened by female soldiers that they would be raped if they did not comply with the interrogators. Furthermore, as PCHR notes, “strip-searches and forced nudity were carried out on a vast scale against detainees, but in some cases, these acts were not just about control—they were sexually charged and deeply degrading.”¹⁶⁸ In one harrowing account, a 39-year-old Palestinian woman, arrested at Netzarim checkpoint and subsequently transferred to an open area, then to Camp Anatot, and finally to Damon Prison, stated:

*Before each interrogation, which lasted eight hours, while strip-searching us and having our legs tied, the female soldiers were biting their lips implying sexual intent and the male soldiers were staring at us. They were laughing at us, insulting us with genital-related swear words and making sexually suggestive [movements].*¹⁶⁹

A 26-year-old freed Palestinian female prisoner, arrested at Netzarim checkpoint and held for fifty days in an unidentified military detention facility before being transferred to Camp Anatot, Damon Prison, and finally to Beersheba Prison, recounted the verbal assaults she endured during a transfer between prisons.

*During our trip to the unknown, the soldier kept telling us, “You are all finished. We will do to you the same Hamas did to our women. Hamas raped our women, and we will let the soldiers rape you.” All the way, he showered me with the most offensive words in Arabic, such as calling me ‘whore and bitch’ and many other honour-related insults.*¹⁷⁰

In some cases, the safety of detained or imprisoned women was used as leverage in interrogations while interrogators tortured their male family members. Such was the case for Tasneem Al-Hams, a 22-year-old Palestinian nurse and daughter of prominent Gaza doctor Marwan al-Hams. She was abducted by undercover informants affiliated with the Israeli-backed Yasser Abu Shabab

¹⁶⁸ PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,” 59.

¹⁶⁹ PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,” 60.

¹⁷⁰ B’Tselem, Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps (Jerusalem: B’Tselem, August 2024), testimony of 26-year-old female detainee arrested at Netzarim checkpoint, https://www.btselem.org/publications/202408_welcome_to_hell.

gang and interrogated at a medical point in al-Mawasi in October 2025, just two months after her father's forced disappearance by an undercover Israeli special forces unit. She reports being first detained at Ashkelon, where her father was being held, as a method of imposing pressure on her father, before being transferred to several other detention facilities and prisons.¹⁷¹ In addition to being held in solitary confinement, Tasneem reports that she and other Palestinian women detainees were assaulted systematically; that they had their hijabs torn from their heads; and that many were prevented from wearing hijabs and jilbabs.¹⁷² She also testified that women were beaten deliberately on sensitive parts of the body, and that soldiers sprayed gas directly onto their faces at close range.¹⁷³

It is not uncommon for IOF to detain, arrest, or torture Palestinian women as either a form of leverage against one of their male family members undergoing interrogation in detention, or as retaliation. For example, in March 2026, IOF launched a raid on the West Bank town of Qalqiliya, arresting 16 women who were mostly, “wives of freed prisoners or detainees, and mothers of killed Palestinians.”¹⁷⁴

Metras has also reported on sexual humiliation experienced by Palestinian women in the West Bank. On May 13, 2025, 52-year-old Intisar Awawdah was captured by the IOF while picking grape leaves. Awawdah shared that the IOF were aggressive with her during the arrest and her detention, physically charging at her and beating her. During her detention, Awawdah was forcibly stripped of her clothes, including her underwear. She reports that she was left without underwear for fifteen days: “I was forced to wrap myself with sheets because there were no clothes.”¹⁷⁵

171 Middle East Eye, "Palestinian Nurse Says She Was Abducted by Israel-Backed Gang and Handed over to Israeli Forces," YouTube video, November 27, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/7r0JPrc-Q9Hc>.

172 Palestine Desk, "Israel Tortured Tasneem Al-Hams to Pressure Her Father, Dr. Marwan," Al-Akhbar English, December 1, 2025, <https://en.al-akhbar.com/news/how-israel-tortured-tasneem-al-homs-to-pressure-her-father>.

173 Palestine Desk, "Israel Tortured Tasneem Al-Hams."

174 Middle East Monitor, "Israeli army arrests 16 women in West Bank raids," March 18, 2026. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20260318-israeli-army-arrests-16-palestinian-women-in-west-bank->

قراءة 50 أسيرة يحتجزهن الاحتلال في سجن الدامون، منهن قاصرتان وحوامل، 175 Metraswebsite (@metraswebsite)، ومرضات سرطان، منهن أمهات وجدات وطالبات، كلهن يعشن ظروف "أشدية القسوة تراكم في قلوبهن وأجسادهن الضعيفة تعباً وشوقاً Instagram post, August 5, 2025 https://www.instagram.com/p/DMCQpfenB/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.

Lina Misk, a 35-year-old woman from Al-Khalil (Hebron), West Bank, who was imprisoned at Damon, reported that soldiers would pull women from their rooms, drag them to the prison yard, beat them, and unleash dogs on them while they were blindfolded and handcuffed. On one occasion, Misk sustained an injury to her hand, which made her bone pop out. She reports that the physical abuse was accompanied by repeated threats of sexual assault and instances in which soldiers would conduct evaluations to identify which of the women prisoners was “better” to rape. These assessments would take place while soldiers laughed and mocked the women.¹⁷⁶ Misk describes these experiences as evidence that soldiers savor the torture.¹⁷⁷

In an interview with Al Jazeera, 25-year-old Lana Fawalaha, a liberated prisoner from the West Bank town of Sinjil, describes the systemic character of Israel's sexual humiliation of Palestinian women, including her own experiences and observations from her time in captivity. She recalls an instance when five women were stripped naked and forced to search one another on the orders of female guards:

Sexual harassment in prison is not an individual act. It's a policy of repression. It's a systematic policy [applied to] all women prisoners. If I want to start speaking about [sexual] harassment I would begin with the forced strip-searches, and the use of methods that have no basis in claims of security. [Their methods] are rather designed to humiliate the body, to sexualize and pornify the body and to transgress women's privacy. This is a whole system designed to sexualize our bodies, transgress our privacy specifically as women. I have many testimonies of strip-searches. [In one occasion] there were 5 prisoners forced to search each other naked. [They were] forced to watch each other under threats from female prison guards [and were told] if they did not abide that they would bring the male guards to take over the task. And of course this is a red line in our Arab and Muslim society and even in terms of women's rights[...]. There are other testimonies from within the prison. For example, I was really careful when I would sleep. I would subconsciously pull my shirt down [to keep myself covered] as if there was a constant threat that something I don't want to happen could happen at any moment. So I would always be pulling on my clothes and my body was always tense. And this is something that does not end in prison. It stays long after prison. We keep living like this because the body remembers the shock more clearly and accurately than the mind. I want to also say that when the women prisoners sleep they wear their hijab 24 hours a day. [Those who don't] sleep holding their hijab in case of any invasion of the cells so

176 Metraswebsite, “قراءة 50 أسيرة [Approximately 50 Female Prisoners].”

177 Metraswebsite, “قراءة 50 أسيرة [Approximately 50 Female Prisoners].”

*that they are ready because they [soldiers] come in without notice or purpose—so women prisoners started taking precautions by wearing hijab or some would sleep and others would stay awake to keep watch.*¹⁷⁸

Consistent with the various forms of sexual humiliation used against Palestinian women prior to October 7, the sexual humiliation tactics deployed by Israel since 2023 are often undertaken by or with female soldiers. These tactics include forced unveiling and undressing, threats of rape, and assaults on Palestinian women's virtue and honor.

Several cases of sexual humiliation have also taken place outside detention centers and prisons. In one example, a Palestinian woman reports that while crossing the Tamar Checkpoint in the West Bank Tel Rumeida neighborhood, a male soldier pulled his trousers down and exposed his penis to her. The soldier asked her, "Do you want it? Come and see."¹⁷⁹ The woman reported that the incident is part of a systemic pattern of sexual humiliation of Palestinian women at checkpoints. Other women have reported that soldiers looked through "personal pictures on their phones while holding their hands or taking pictures of them as they passed through the checkpoints."¹⁸⁰ Verbal abuse, including sexualized insults, is a common experience for Palestinian women crossing West Bank checkpoints.

Sexual Humiliation of Boys and Men

Sexual humiliation of Palestinian boys and men has also accelerated since October 7, 2023, both inside and outside of detention centers and prisons. Since then, hundreds of photos have circulated globally showing Palestinian men and boys being rounded up, stripped to their underwear or nude, blindfolded, and bound, with their hands and sometimes feet tied in uncomfortable positions.¹⁸¹ "They stripped them down of anything that resembles human beings," one witness who worked as a medic at Sde Teiman's makeshift hospital told

178 Al Jazeera Mubasher (@aljazeeramubasher), الأسيرة المحررة لانا فوالحة تكشف شهادات صادمة عن التحرش الجنسي, في سجون الاحتلال #الجزيرة_مباشر, Instagram post, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DR7FWq2jQ2U/>.

179 "Report: Israel Soldiers Sexually Harass Palestinian Women at Hebron Checkpoint," Middle East Monitor, August 30, 2024, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240830-report-israel-soldiers-sexually-harass-palestinian-women-at-hebron-checkpoint/>.

180 "Report: Israel Soldiers Sexually Harass Palestinian Women at Hebron Checkpoint."

181 Abeer Salman, "Imágenes de Gaza muestran a soldados israelíes deteniendo a decenas de hombres obligados a desnudarse hasta quedar en ropa interior," CNN Español, December 9, 2023, <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2023/12/09/soldados-israelies-hombres-obligaron-desnudarse-ropa-trax/>.

CNN. “[The beatings] were not done to gather intelligence. They were done out of revenge,” another witness said. “It was punishment for what they [the Palestinians] did on October 7 and punishment for behavior in the camp.”¹⁸²

In a harrowing social media video posted to Instagram, Gaza-based journalist Abd Sabbah showed what appears to be hundreds of pieces of clothing lying on the ground after Israeli soldiers stormed Kamal Adwan Hospital and the Beit Lahia projects, rounded up the men, and stripped them to their underwear before their mass arrest.¹⁸³ Other documentation shows Palestinian men stripped of clothing, lined up or marching, some on their knees, and others lying down; or stacked in crowded pickup trucks and hauled away by the IOF during arrest.¹⁸⁴ One Palestinian male, subjected to this kind of sexually humiliating treatment, recounts forced nudity in public during his arrest in Beit Lahia:

*The street was crowded with civilians, including men, women, children, and elders, ordered by the soldiers to raise their hands. They ordered men aged 15-60 years to strip to their underwear, and women, children, and the elderly to walk on the main street, known as the Market Street in Beit Lahia housing Project, and head to Kamal Adwan Hospital.*¹⁸⁵

Another report by a 33-year-old male, arrested at the Netzarim checkpoint and held for 129 days, states that he was made to strip and howl like an animal while soldiers hurled sexual insults about his mother at him.

[Soldiers] took us out and led us into a room after they untied my handcuffs, and I remained blindfold. The soldiers asked us to sing and then howl while they curse and swear at us: “Son of sharmouta (prostitute), son of a bitch, we will rape all of

182 Baker Zoubi, “‘More Horrific than Abu Ghraib’: Lawyer Recounts Visit to Israeli Detention Center,” +972 Magazine, June 27, 2024, <https://archive.ph/qXyJ8>.

183 AbdalQader A Sabbah (@abd.sabbah), هذا المكان يُجسد إحدى ممارسات قوات الاحتلال الإسرائيلي ضد الفلسطينيين, في شمال قطاع غزة ومناطق أخرى من القطاع، حيث تم اعتقال عدد من الأسر, Instagram post, https://www.instagram.com/reels/DFIW0_qNkO_/.

184 Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, “‘More than a Human Can Bear’: Israel’s Systematic Use of Sexual, Reproductive and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence since 7 October 2023,” report to the United Nations Human Rights Council, A/HRC/58/CRP.6, March 13, 2025, 46–47, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/>.

185 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), “PCHR Documents Testimonies of Systematic Rape and Sexual Torture in Israeli Detention against Released Palestinian Detainees,” November 10, 2025, 57, <https://pchr-gaza.org/pchr-documents-testimonies-of-systematic-rape-and-sexual-torture-in-israeli-detention-against-released-palestinian-detainees/>.

you.” Then they ordered us to take off all our clothes, completely naked, and ordered us to turn to the wall, raise my hands up, and go up and down. I felt inferior, as if someone were raping me. And the soldiers mocked us. I could see they were taking videos of us. This was not enough. They also assaulted me with an iron stick beating and punching with their feet and punching my stomach.¹⁸⁶

There is a recognizable pattern of Palestinian male detainees being sexually humiliated as a form of entertainment for soldiers. Speaking with Mondoweiss, Munther Amira recalled the sexual humiliation he was subjected to while in Israeli detention:

They took me to an office. They said, “let’s start the party.” They said it in Hebrew [...] and take some pictures. I was afraid that something would happen because I heard before what [was] happening [to] the prisoners there. They told me “we are doing a security check so you have to take off your clothes.” So I tried to take [off] my t-shirt and they said “your trousers” so I said okay. At the end, they want[ed] me to take off my underwear. I was like, ten times in the Israeli jails before. Nothing happened like that. So I refused. They started beating me again and handcuffed me and I was on the ground. So they took [off] my underwear. It’s the worst thing that happened [to] me in my life. Touching me in this aggressive way. This is the first time that I knew that it was the hardest experience that could happen to you to be [sexually] harassed by them. They asked me to stand up raise my right leg, left leg. I assumed that they were taking pictures or videos so I didn’t know if they would, you know, launch these videos, spread them. I don’t know. But there were a lot of soldiers there. These soldiers were males and females. This was hurting me more. And they were laughing, trying to humiliate me. Before that, I can tell you, I didn’t know the real meaning of sexual harassment.¹⁸⁷

In her March 2025 testimony, Khraim noted that Palestinian men she visited in Ofer Prison told her they were also threatened by prison guards with the rape of their daughters.¹⁸⁸ Numerous threats of sexualized violence and other forms of sexual humiliation were also reportedly used against Palestinian children in Israeli detention and/or prison. A 16-year-old Palestinian boy, arrested

¹⁸⁶ PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,” 62.

¹⁸⁷ Leila Warah, “Palestinian Activist Munther Amira Tied Up, Beaten, and Arrested by Israeli Forces in Aida Refugee Camp,” Mondoweiss, December 20, 2023, <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/12/palestinian-activist-munther-amira-tied-up-beaten-and-arrested-by-israeli-forces-in-aida-refugee-camp/>. See also: Munther Amira, “Palestinian Recounts Sexual Abuse in Israeli Prison,” interview by Mondoweiss, Mondoweiss, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/C-GKnihswjv/>.

¹⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, “Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3 | Public Hearings, COI Palestine, East Jerusalem & Israel, 11/03/2025,” YouTube video, March 12, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xw-jBbeUapxo>.

in Gaza and held at a private home before being transferred to an unidentified military detention facility, reported:

*At 19:00 on the tenth day of detention, soldiers came with their large dogs and ordered us to sleep on our stomachs and place our hands on our heads, and warned us that whoever moves would get raped.*¹⁸⁹

The UN International Independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) also reported on the sexual humiliation of men and boys.¹⁹⁰ One report, corroborated by a video, speaks to an instance in which female IOF soldiers sexually humiliated boys: “One witness described how a female Israeli soldier in Gaza ordered two teenage boys who had been stripped to their underwear to dance in front of other detainees and recorded a video of them while she was laughing. The Commission also verified digital footage confirming that Palestinian boys were detained and stripped down to their underwear along with adults in Yarmouk Stadium in December 2023.”¹⁹¹ The report further states:

*The Commission found that forced nudity, with the aim of degrading and humiliating victims in front of both soldiers and other detainees, was frequently used against male detainees, including through repeated strip-searches; interrogation of detainees while they were naked; forcing detainees to perform certain movements while naked or stripped and, in some cases, also filming them; subjecting detainees to sexual slurs as they were transported naked, forcing naked detainees into a crowded cell together, and forcing stripped and blindfolded detainees to crouch on the ground with their hands tied behind their back.*¹⁹²

There are various reports of sexual humiliation of Palestinian boys and men in the West Bank. In one incident caught on videotape, a child between the ages of ten and twelve was arrested by soldiers in the West Bank. During the arrest, Israeli soldiers are recorded saying, “Now your punishment will take

189 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), “PCHR Documents Testimonies of Systematic Rape and Sexual Torture in Israeli Detention against Released Palestinian Detainees,” November 10, 2025, 63, <https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-documents-testimonies-of-systematic-rape-and-sexual-torture-in-israeli-detention-against-released-palestinian-detainees/>.

190 Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, “‘More than a Human Can Bear’: Israel’s Systematic Use of Sexual, Reproductive and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence since 7 October 2023,” report to the United Nations Human Rights Council, A/HRC/58/CRP.6, March 13, 2025, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/>.

191 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “More than a Human Can Bear,” 22.

192 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “More than a Human Can Bear,” 14.

place. We will teach you and give you new lessons.” The boy’s hands were bound behind his back, and he was blindfolded. In an interview posted on TRT World following his release, the boy describes what he endured:

They took me and started hitting me inside the Jeep, cursed at me and threatened me. They used me like a human shield so that no one would target them, so that if someone shot at them the bullet would hit me. They threatened me with imprisonment and rape. With everything they threatened me. They threatened me with five years in prison and said “you will not get out of here for five years.” They took photos of me, insulted me and beat me. My eyes and foot/leg were hurting from the pain. I couldn’t sleep at night from the [eye] pain. They were constantly spraying me with water.”¹⁹³

Other reports of adult males in the West Bank experiencing sexual humiliation by the IOF during raids have also come to light following an August 2024 report titled “Unleashed,” published by B’Tselem.¹⁹⁴ In one incident, Muhammed Natsheh, a 22-year-old man from the Tel Rumeida neighborhood in the center of Al-Khalil (Hebron), recounts being attacked by soldiers on July 14, 2024. He states:

The soldiers cursed me with humiliating swear words, and some of them stepped on my legs. It hurt a lot and I couldn’t say anything. One of them got an office chair and put it on my legs. He sat on it from time to time, which hurt a lot. They kept swearing at me the whole time, and one of them spat at me, too. It went on like that for about an hour, and then one of the soldiers said to me in Arabic: “We’ll rape you.” One of them grabbed my head, and another soldier tried to open my mouth and shove a rubber object in it. I made a huge effort not to open my mouth. I heard him say in Hebrew: “Film him, film him.” [...] Then a soldier who spoke Arabic came. He came over and ordered me to get up, but I couldn’t. He grabbed me by the neck, lifted me up and made me stand facing the wall, and then he started pushing my head left and right violently with his hands, saying: “If I see you in this place again, I’ll rape you and kill you. I’ll do the same to anyone else I see here.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ TRT World, “Palestinian child Imran Shaheen recounts the brutality he was subjected to after he was arrested by Israeli soldiers during a raid of Nablus in the occupied West Bank,” Facebook video, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1269837140995473>

¹⁹⁴ B’Tselem, Unleashed: Abuse of Palestinians by Israeli Soldiers in the Center of Hebron (B’Tselem, December 2024), <https://archive.ph/AZQEg>.

¹⁹⁵ B’Tselem, Unleashed, 17.

Sexual Humiliation with Genocidal Intent

Numerous accounts surface across multiple reports that sexualized humiliation tactics frequently included a threat to kill. For instance, a 43-year-old man, arrested in a private home in Gaza, describes direct threats of rape by soldiers expressing their intent to kill off the entirety of the Palestinian population. He states that he received:

Constant death threats such as I will die, I do not deserve to live, and I and the rest of the Palestinians are human animals who do not deserve to live. Once, I was verbally threatened that they would rape me and all the others with “sodomy” during my detention in the camp, which I believe was in Zikim. [...] They constantly insulted us with the most offensive and degrading insults, including, but not limited to, “You are animals, and you are not human beings.” One of the soldiers told us, “We are only giving you food to keep you alive, and we do not care about you or your health. You will all die, if not today, it will be tomorrow. We are just having fun.”¹⁹⁶

Another testimony that demonstrates this systematic intent came from a 39-year-old man arrested at Netzarim checkpoint, transferred to an unidentified military detention facility, and later to Ofer and Negev prisons:

The IOF and its personnel insulted us with abnormally bad language, and hearing that language made us feel extremely stressed and sad. They threatened me to assault my family like “we will rape your women” and threatened to completely destroy the Gaza Strip.¹⁹⁷

Sexualized humiliation of Palestinian men during their detention, consistent with Israeli practices prior to October 7, 2023, often included Islamophobic rhetoric alongside degrading sexual insults pertaining to female family members of the detainee. In the case of a 38-year-old male worker from Gaza arrested in Israel, sexual humiliation also accompanied declarations that Palestinians were deserving of death.

I was subjected to vulgar and humiliating insults such as “dog,” “animal,” “son of a whore,” and “son of a prostitute,” which were constantly repeated by the soldiers. They told us as detainees that we were Hamas and that we deserved to die, and they insulted our religion and the divine (God), especially at the beginning of the

¹⁹⁶ PCHR, “Torture and Genocide,” 109.

¹⁹⁷ PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,” 111.

| *detention.*¹⁹⁸

These testimonies, coupled with those detailed below about sexualized violence and rape, provide evidence of an intent to kill and destroy the Palestinian population, in whole or in part, consistent with genocidal acts.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security reported on September 11, 2024, that:

“Statements by Israeli leaders, social media posts by IDF soldiers, and testimony from Palestinians who have experienced or witnessed sexualized violence, including released detainees, not only establish the widespread and systematized nature of sexualized violence but also document the broader sexualization of the conflict itself by the Israeli state and armed forces. This sexualization alone is indicative of genocidal violence, as it indicates a desire to destroy Palestinians as such by desecrating symbols of generation and undermining the ability of Palestinians to reproduce biologically and culturally. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security has identified several specific patterns of sexualized violence that are indicative of a genocidal process. These include: the widespread use of sexualized violence against men and boys; life force atrocities (including ritualized humiliations); separation of families and other reproductive violence; and possible elitocide¹⁹⁹ through the use of sexualized violence.”²⁰⁰

198 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,” 111.

199 Elitocide describes the targeted killing or elimination of a group's leadership, educated class, and clergy, typically at the beginning of a genocide.

200 Lemkin Institute, “The Genocidal Dimensions of Israel's Use of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) against Palestinians,” Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security, September 11, 2024, [https://www.lemkininstitute.com/statements-new-page/the-genocidal-dimensions-of-israel%E2%80%99s-use-of-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-\(sgbv\)-against-palestinians](https://www.lemkininstitute.com/statements-new-page/the-genocidal-dimensions-of-israel%E2%80%99s-use-of-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-(sgbv)-against-palestinians).

Sexual Torture and Rape

Sexual torture includes, but is not limited to, physical torture that is sexualized in character and/or targets sexual and/or reproductive organs. It may include groping, squeezing, punching, and application of pressure to the genitals, forced oral sex, sexual abuse while in stress positions. Sexual abuse using objects or rape by trained dogs. All incidences of sexual torture and rape included humiliation as outlined in the previous section. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry report from September 2024 documented more than twenty cases of sexualized and gendered violence against both male and female Palestinian detainees. The evidence in their report includes findings from “multiple sources of information, collected thousands of open-source items and conducted remote and in-person interviews with victims and witnesses.”²⁰¹ The twenty documented cases they present occurred across more than ten military and Israel Prison Service facilities:

*in particular in Negev prison and Sde Teiman camp for male detainees and in Damon and Hasharon prisons for female detainees. Sexual violence was used as a means of punishment and intimidation from the moment of arrest and throughout detention, including during interrogations and searches. Acts of sexual violence documented by the Commission were motivated by extreme hatred towards and a desire to dehumanize the Palestinian people.*²⁰²

What follows is a presentation of evidence of Israel’s institutionalized policies and practices of sexualized violence against Palestinian girls, women, boys, and men across numerous settings and types of encounters.

Sexual Torture and Rape of Girls and Women

Since October 7, 2023, there has been a cascading number of reports in which Palestinian women have testified to enduring or witnessing gruesome and humiliating sexualized violence committed by the IOF. Baraah Abo Ramouz, a Palestinian journalist who was released during the November 2023 exchange, reported to the press that “The situation in the prisons is devastating. The prisoners are abused. They are being constantly beaten. They’re

201 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry,” 3.

202 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry,” 14.

being sexually assaulted. They are being raped. I'm not exaggerating. The prisoners are being raped."²⁰³ Israa Jaabis, also released in the November 2023 exchange, reported: "I left little girls in my prison cell crying. Why? Because unspeakable things are happening to them there... Unimaginable things at the hands of the [Israeli] soldiers."²⁰⁴

In February 2024, United Nations experts expressed alarm over credible allegations of sexual assault of women and girls by Israeli officers, stating that they were "particularly distressed by reports that Palestinian women and girls in detention have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped naked and searched by male Israeli army officers." They reported that "[a]t least two female Palestinian detainees were reportedly raped while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence," and noted that "photos of female detainees in degrading circumstances were also reportedly taken by the Israeli army and uploaded online."²⁰⁵

In June of 2024, OHCHR's thematic report outlined various forms of rape and sexual torture being used against Palestinian detainees, including a group of Palestinian female university students, arrested on November 14, 2023, who reported that they were sexually assaulted.²⁰⁶ Khraim also noted that there were three documented cases of sexualized violence against girls under eighteen. A girl from occupied Jerusalem was sexually assaulted, groped, and touched by settlers, and the IOF soldiers or Zionist police did nothing to stop it. In occupied Jerusalem, another 14-year-old girl was molested by a soldier who claimed to be doing a "routine search" while she was on her way to school, and she is now afraid to return.²⁰⁷

The PCHR's November 2025 press release includes devastating, detailed testimonies from survivors of prison rape and sexual torture, including from N.A., a 42-year-old Palestinian mother, arrested in Gaza while going through an Israeli checkpoint in November 2024. Her painful but courageous testimony

203 The New Arab Staff, "Surge in Abuse, Torture against Palestinians in Israel Jails," The New Arab, January 3, 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/surge-abuse-torture-against-palestinians-israel-jails>.

204 The New Arab Staff, "Surge in Abuse, Torture against Palestinians."

205 UN OHCHR, "Israel/oPt: Appalled by Reported Human Rights Violations against Palestinian Women and Girls."

206 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Thematic Report," 13.

207 UN Human Rights Council, "Kifeya Khraim & Witness #3."

details multiple anal and vaginal rapes by different IOF soldiers, sometimes on the same day, including the first day of her arrest. Each incident of rape she details also includes torture (being shackled to a table), humiliation, physical beatings, and psychological torture. An excerpt from her lengthy testimony reads as follows:

At dawn I heard the soldiers shouting, saying that morning prayers were forbidden, and I think it was the fourth day after my arrest from Gaza. The soldiers moved me to a place I didn't know because my eyes were blindfolded, and they ordered me to take off my clothes. I did so. They put me on a metal table, pressed my chest and head against it, cuffed my hands to the end of the bed, and pulled my legs apart forcefully. I felt a penis penetrating my anus and a man raping me. I started screaming, and they beat me on my back and head while I was blindfolded. I felt the man who was raping me ejaculate inside my anus. I kept screaming and being beaten, and I could hear a camera—so I believe they were filming me. The rape lasted about 10 minutes. After that, they left me for an hour in the same position, with my hands cuffed to the bed with metal handcuffs, my face on the bed, my feet on the floor, and I was completely naked.

Again, after an hour, I was raped fully in the same position, with penetration into my vagina, and I was beaten while I screamed. There were several soldiers; I heard them laughing and the camera clicking as it took pictures. This rape was very quick and there was no ejaculation. During the rape they beat me with their hands on my head and back.

I cannot describe what I felt; I wished for death every moment. After they raped me, I was left alone in the same room, hands still cuffed to the bed and without clothes for many hours. I could hear the soldiers outside speaking Hebrew and laughing. Later, I was raped again vaginally. I screamed, but they beat me whenever I tried to resist. After more than an hour, I'm not sure about the time, a masked soldier entered, removed my blindfold, lifted his face covering; he had white skin and was tall. He asked if I spoke English; I said no. He said he was Russian and ordered me to masturbate his penis. I refused, and he hit me in the face after raping me.

That day I was raped twice. I was left naked the whole day in the room where I spent three days. On the first day I was raped twice; on the second day I was raped twice; on the third day I remained without clothes while they looked at me through the door slit and filmed me. One soldier said they would post my photos on social media. While I was in the room, my period started; then they told me to put on clothes and transferred me to another room.²⁰⁸

208 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), "PCHR Documents Testimonies of Systematic Rape and Sexual Torture in Israeli Detention against Released Palestinian Detainees," November 10, 2025, ht-

While our report separates sexual humiliation from sexual torture and rape, it is important to recognize that sexual torture and rape always include sexual humiliation, as expressed by a 39-year-old woman, arrested at Netzarim checkpoint, and held for forty-two days: “I told the interrogator that on October 7th I was at the hospital, and he commented that all you Gazan women are liars and hypocrites, and the Israeli women’s shoes are better than you. He insulted me with the worst words that I cannot repeat. They were always sexually harassing the female detainees by touching their necks and breasts and removing our hijabs [...] In one of the torture methods during the interrogation, the soldiers forced me to bend, and they made the female soldiers throw [sic] themselves on me, choosing the fattest.”²⁰⁹

Sexual Torture and Rape of Boys and Men

Sexualized violence against Palestinian detainees included children. A “severely disabled” 14-year-old Palestinian boy, diagnosed with autism, was reportedly sexually, physically, and psychologically assaulted while in detention. Arrested at 4:30 a.m. from his home in Yafa (Jafa), he reported being “forced to do things” by other cellmates –who were also being tortured– while in detention. A juvenile court judge refused to act to protect him until clear evidence of sexual assault emerged, at which point he was transferred to solitary confinement.²¹⁰ In the wake of the assault, the boy’s attorney, Yigal Dotan, reported that “The situation before the war was very bad, but it is not comparable to what happened in Israeli prisons after October 7. [...] They have become torture facilities—sites of organized, industrialized revenge. I see it with my own clients and those of other lawyers. Their condition is horrific.”²¹¹

<https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-documents-testimonies-of-systematic-rape-and-sexual-torture-in-israeli-detention-against-released-palestinian-detainees/>.

209 Al Haq et al., “Joint Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on Israel’s Crimes of Sexual Torture against Palestinians,” April 24, 2024, 37–38, https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/2025/03/22/joint-submission-to-the-special-rapporteur-on-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading-treatment-24-april-2024-redacted-for-publication-1742664950.pdf.

210 Middle East Monitor, “Autistic Palestinian Boy Allegedly Sexually Assaulted in Israeli Prison,” Middle East Monitor, November 13, 2025, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20251113-autistic-palestinian-boy-allegedly-sexually-assaulted-in-israeli-prison/>.

211 Maya-Yair Altman and Nora Lester Murad, “Israeli Prison Lawyers Say Conditions for Palestinian Detainees Are Atrocious – and Getting Worse,” +972 Magazine, November 12, 2024, <https://archive.is/OtUXm>.

Numerous accounts of sexualized violence against men amounting to what the Independent International Commission calls sexual torture have been reported. The Commission reported that:

*Male detainees were subjected to attacks on their sexuality and reproductive organs, including violence to their genitals and anus, and were forced to perform humiliating and strenuous acts naked or stripped as a form of punishment or intimidation, with a view to extract information from them.*²¹²

Two men arrested at Netzarim checkpoint, ages thirty-nine and thirty-three, held for 129 and 50 days, respectively, reported fainting as a result of the pain caused by soldiers grabbing and squeezing their testicles. The latter also reported lasting psychological effects from the assault.²¹³ Other portions of these testimonies were featured earlier in this report in the “Sexual Humiliation of Boys and Men” section.

*“One of [the soldiers] grabbed me by my testicles and squeezed them hard, saying in Arabic, “Thank God you have sons.” He continued to squeeze my testicles hard for about two minutes. I fainted and woke up to a blow from his Bostar (military boots) on my buttocks, saying, “Get up, stop acting”: He made me stand up and ordered me to put on the tracksuit within a minute, and started counting to ten, but I could not, so he punched me in the stomach and kicked me with his feet [...] and told me he’ll count again, but he counted slowly, so I put on the clothes...[While detained in an unidentified military detention facility in the Negev] I was heading to drink from a tap until one of the soldiers saw me and kicked me so hard with his foot on my waist that it made me vomit. He then dragged me to a room surrounded by barbed wire, ordered me to strip naked, grabbed my genitals and lifted me up, so I fainted. I woke up from the severe beating I had been subjected to while I was unconscious, and this was repeated three or four times, after which, he ordered me to put on my clothes while the beating continued. I have never been as broken and humiliated in my life as that time.”*²¹⁴

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry report documents a similar account in which a detainee, who had been held in Negev prison by Israeli security forces, stated that, in November 2023, members of the Keter Unit of the Israel Prison Service had forced him to strip and then ordered him

212 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry,” 21.

213 PCHR, “Torture and Genocide,” 61.

214 PCHR, “Torture and Genocide,” 61.

to kiss the Israeli flag. When he refused, he was beaten, and his genitals were kicked so severely that he vomited and lost consciousness.²¹⁵

In some cases, Palestinian men have reported being raped by Israeli soldiers in public. One such survivor, a 30-year-old man arrested at the Netzarim checkpoint, endured 104 days in detention—first at a private home and military outpost inside Gaza, then at Ofer Prison. He courageously shared his experience, describing the humiliation and physical injuries he suffered.

*There were also instances of groping and physical assault on my genitals. On the day of my arrest, I was stripped of all my clothes except for my boxers at the Netzarim checkpoint, in front of dozens of young men and Israeli soldiers. The feeling of humiliation and degradation was indescribable. After that, inside the prison, we were ordered daily by the new duty officers to lower our pants to our knees. On one occasion, when I was asked to lower my pants and boxers, one of the soldiers attempted to insert a stick into my rectum, causing me significant injury and resulting in a wound in that area.*²¹⁶

A 52-year-old businessman, arrested at a private home in Gaza City and held for twenty-eight days first in a private home, and then an open area before being transferred to a military detention facility, describes the sexual assault of an elderly man inside a tank by soldiers.

*While we were inside the tank, the soldiers beat an elderly man. I knew that from his voice, as he was screaming. The soldiers severely beat him on his head and all over his body and ordered him to have sex with them inside the tank. One of the soldiers, who was speaking Arabic fluently, told him: "I want you to suck my dick," and they forced him to do that. I knew that from the sound I heard. The elderly man tried to prevent them, but in vain as I heard his gargling sound while the soldier was beating him and saying: "suck my dick or I will kill you."*²¹⁷

PCHR's report provides a graphic testimony from a 41-year-old Palestinian father arrested at Kamal Adwan Hospital in December 2023. Given the pseudonym T.Q., he reveals the terrifying depravity of the prison guards, as he was subjected to twenty-two months of torture, including sexualized violence. He details one instance where a prison guard raped him with a wooden stick:

215 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry,"¹⁴.

216 PCHR, "Torture and Genocide," 62.

217 PCHR, "PCHR Documents Testimonies," 62.

One of the soldiers raped me by violently inserting a wooden stick into my anus. After about a minute he removed it and then inserted it again more forcefully while I screamed loudly. After another minute he removed it and forced me to open my mouth and put the stick in my mouth to lick it. From sheer anguish I lost consciousness for minutes, until a female officer came and forced them to stop beating me. She untied my hands, gave me a white overall to wear, and brought me a cup of water which I drank. I felt blood flowing from my anus and asked to go to the bathroom. She gave me tissues and I went to a plastic toilet there. They removed the blindfold; when I wiped my anus there was blood. After I finished and the bleeding stopped, I put the white overall back on. As soon as I came out, they blindfolded me again and tied my hands behind my back with plastic ties. I was then moved to a room where I was held with several detainees for about eight hours, during which soldiers periodically returned to beat and insult us brutally.”²¹⁸

M.A., an 18-year-old man who was detained near an aid distribution center in Gaza, testified to being raped four times while in Israeli captivity. One of those attacks happened alongside five other men. They were told to kneel, and guards used a bottle to rape them. Dogs were positioned behind the survivors during the assault, creating the perception that it was the dogs raping them: “There was also a dog behind us, as if the dog was raping us.”²¹⁹ M.A. learned that it was in fact the soldiers using a bottle by observing what happened to the other detainees. His testimony speaks to the devastating impacts of such violence, not just on the body but also on the psyche.²²⁰

The soldiers ordered me and six other detainees to kneel, and they raped us by inserting a bottle into the anus, pushing it in and pulling it out. It happened to me four times, with about ten in-and-out motions each time. I screamed, and so did the others with me. Of the four times, twice it was just me, and twice it was with others—once with six people and once with twelve people. I saw what they were doing to the others while they did it to me, and I realized it was a bottle.”²²¹

Another testimony, by 37-year-old Hamada from Gaza, reveals how IOF used a range of objects to assault Palestinians. Spending nearly seven months in Israeli prisons, Hamada testified:

During one of the interrogation sessions, I was completely naked, and they remo-

218 PCHR, “Torture and Genocide,”.

219 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,”.

220 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,”.

221 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,”.

*ved my blindfold. They forced me to sit on an artificial penis fixed to the ground until it penetrated my anus. I felt terrible pain and screamed loudly, after which I was severely beaten.*²²²

Similarly, Amer Abu Halil provided a harrowing testimony chronicling the varied methods of sexual and physical torture he was subjected to while imprisoned in October and November of 2023. In one particular incident on October 29, 2023, Abu Halil and ten other prisoners were stripped naked and dragged out of their cells into the kitchen of the Ktzi'ot Prison, where they were beaten with clubs and spat on. Soldiers then proceeded to rape them using carrots. Days later, prisoners were dragged back to the kitchen, where soldiers lunged at and kicked their testicles repeatedly for twenty-five minutes while shouting, "We are Bruce Lee," and "This is your second Nakba."²²³ Abu Halil's testimony is matched by a description, featured in the OHCHR 2024 thematic report, of an incident where a Palestinian detainee was raped with a vegetable while prison guards filmed the assault on their phones:

*I felt like I was broken from the inside as they took us back to our cell. We were in the room in a state of shock, tears falling from our eyes without a sound. No one was talking to each other. None of us wanted to look at each other.*²²⁴

Testimonies of this kind of sexual torture and rape, provided to the international press, are not unique to Abu Halil. Scores of other male prisoners have testified to either enduring or witnessing rape in Israeli prisons since October 2023. On December 19, 2025, the BBC ran a news story in which they spoke with two Palestinian journalists who reported enduring sexual abuse while in administrative detention. Sami Al-Saei, a 46-year-old freelance journalist from Tulkarem, was in administrative detention for sixteen months in Megiddo Prison in the north. Al-Saei reported that during his detention, five to six guards stripped him naked and raped him with a baton and other sharp objects on or around March 13, 2024. Acknowledging the risk of ostracization in his decision to disclose his abuse, Al-Saei nevertheless decided to speak publicly about the ordeal:

²²² Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, "Another Genocide Behind Walls," 25.

²²³ Gideon Levy and Alex Levac, "Palestinian Released from Israeli Prison Describes Beatings, Sexual Abuse and Torture," Haaretz, April 28, 2024, <https://archive.ph/IOidN>.

²²⁴ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Thematic Report: Detention," 13.

*They were laughing and enjoying it. The guard asked me: "Are you enjoying this? We want to play with you, and bring your wife, your sister, your mother, and friends here too." [...] I was hoping to die and be done with that, as the pain was not only caused by the rape, but also from the severe and painful beating.*²²⁵

Al-Saei stated that his assault lasted around twenty minutes, during which the guards also squeezed his genitals, and raped him with two objects.²²⁶ In another interview with The Times of Palestine, Al-Saei states:

*For 22 days, I bled continuously with my psychological condition worsening, until the bleeding eventually stopped [...] They knew I was a journalist from the moment I was detained and the torture intensified because of it.*²²⁷

The deliberate killing of journalists during the genocide in Gaza has been well documented. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that Palestinian journalists have been systematically subjected to sexualized violence as well. In addition to the case of Sami Al-Saei, the Committee to Protect Journalists has "documented 17 journalist testimonies involving sexualized violence and 19 more describing humiliating strip-searches. The alleged acts included assaults on the journalists' genitals, attempted forced penetration with objects, forced nudity and recording, threats of rape, and other methods of sexualized coercion."²²⁸

Like Al-Saei, other Palestinians have also reported enduring sexual torture during Israeli military operations in the West Bank. Wisam Dufosh, a 35-year-old father of three from the neighborhood of Tel Rumeida in the center of Al-Khalil (Hebron), was attacked by soldiers on June 24, 2024. He recounted his experience to B'Tselem:

225 Jon Donnison, "Palestinians Tell BBC They Were Sexually Abused in Israeli Prisons," December 19, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8dy8r7lq0go>.

226 Times of Palestine (@paltimesnews), "They stripped me of my lower clothes, forced me into a prostration position on the ground, and began raping me indirectly," Instagram video, July 20, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DMVMQrAlTo-/>; Emma Graham-Harrison and Quique Kierszenbaum, "'I Could Not Stay Silent': Palestinian Prisoner Tells of Sexual Abuse in Israeli Jail," The Guardian, January 21, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/21/not-stay-silent-palestinian-prisoner-sexual-abuse-israeli-jail>.

227 Times of Palestine (@paltimesnews), "They stripped me of my lower clothes."

228 Committee to Protect Journalists, "'We Returned From Hell': Palestinian Journalists Recount Torture in Israeli Prisons," February 19, 2026, <https://cpj.org/special-reports/we-returned-from-hell-palestinian-journalists-recount-torture-in-israeli-prisons/#Sexual-violence>.

*The five soldiers surrounded me and started hitting me with their guns. One of them hit me on the head with a rifle. I fell down and they continued beating me, aiming deliberately for my testicles and other sensitive parts. The beating lasted a few minutes. I started feeling faint. [...] When I came to, I was in an ambulance. It took me to the Aliya Governmental Hospital in Hebron, where they did X-rays. I also had bruises all over my body, especially on my testicles. My head wound was stitched and the doctors wanted to keep me at the hospital for 24 hours for observation, but I chose to go home after my daughter Rital called me, crying, because she'd seen pictures of me bleeding on the neighborhood WhatsApp group. It's been a week and my testicles still hurt badly. I'm getting medical treatment and am worried I'll find out I have major damage in that area. I also have severe pain in my back and feel that my health is deteriorating day by day.*²²⁹

B'Tselem's 2024 report chronicles testimony from at least three other Palestinian men from the West Bank who reported that Israeli soldiers physically beat them during arrest. The men described being beaten on their testicles, and one man reported being beaten with the barrel of a gun.²³⁰

Sexual torture however has not only been committed by Israeli forces but also by settlers. In March 2026, Qusai Abu-al Kebash was attacked by seven settlers in his small village. The attackers stripped him to his underwear, zip-tied his genitals, paraded him around his town while beating him. He reported:

*"They cut my belt off with a knife, as well as my boxers. They zip-tied my penis, tightened it and then dragged me all around the village....." "It was very, very painful. ... I thought they were going to kill me."*²³¹

Sexual torture and rape were not only used against adult males. Two Palestinian boys, Sami, age sixteen, and Mahmoud, age seventeen, also reported their sexual assault to the international press. They told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that they were abducted while together at an aid distribution site in Gaza on June 29, 2025, and eventually transferred to an Israeli prison. There, the boys reportedly experienced both physical and sexual torture. Sami recounts:

229 B'Tselem, "Unleashed," 16.

230 B'Tselem, "Unleashed," 17.

231 Jeremy Diamond, and Zeena Saifi. "Palestinian Man in the West Bank Says He Was Sexually Assaulted by Israeli Settlers." CNN, March 19, 2026. <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/18/middleeast/west-bank-resident-sexual-assault-violence-intl>.

They took me from the aid distribution site and transferred me to a hospital in Rafah where I was interrogated for an hour. [...] They stripped me and conducted a body search. Then, they loaded me into a Jeep and transported me to a prison in Israel. [...] During the interrogations, they tortured us—handcuffing us, beating us with sticks, and using electric shocks. [...] I was tortured for a week until I lost all sense of time and awareness. [...] They put me in a one-square-meter cell, where I spent the entire week. I never saw daylight, never stepped outside. They only came to deliver food. They asked if I knew anyone from Hamas, and whether I had crossed over on October 7. [...] They kept pressing me about who I knew and who I had seen. I told them I was just walking down the street—I didn't know anything [...] They would beat me. Each person that talked to me would beat me [...] I was handcuffed, blindfolded, and they put electricity in my legs.²³²

And Mahmoud describes:

[During the arrest the soldiers] began hurling insults, cursing at us, and accusing us of being with Hamas. [...] They stripped us of our clothes and took us to Kerem Shalom, completely naked, with nothing. There, the beatings and torture began. [...] The Israeli women soldiers beat us. They stripped us and “played” here, and here, and there [indicating his genitals]. They beat us with sticks. Got on us while we were lying on the ground. We were handcuffed like that and naked. [...] When I was released from prison, I had a breakdown. [...] I felt mentally exhausted and deeply disgusted. What I witnessed—no one should ever have to see. [...] I was tortured, we are children [...] What have we done?²³³

A report filed to the UN Committee Against Torture by Adalah, PCATI, Ha-Moked (Center for the Defence of the Individual), Physicians for Human Rights–Israel, and Parents Against Child Detention, makes Israel's systematic sexualized violence against Palestinian captives clear. In one testimony, given to PCATI in December 2023 and written into the report, a Palestinian detainee named R. detailed how wardens in Ktzi'ot Prison oversaw and directed sexualized violence against prisoners. R. states that wardens would:

[U]ndertake searches while the prisoners were naked, using violence; around 12 prisoners were placed in a small toilet stall, creating severe congestion.... Wardens would conduct searches while the prisoners were naked, place naked prisoners against each other, and place the aluminum device used in the searches in their bu-

232 Brett Wilkins, “Palestinian Boys Allege Sexual Assault, Torture by Israeli Jailers,” Common Dreams, August 24, 2025, <https://www.commondreams.org/news/palestinian-teens-sexually-abused-by-israeli-soldiers>.

233 Wilkins, “Palestinian Boys Allege Assault.”

*ttocks. In another instance, the wardens passed a card in a prisoner's buttocks. All of this took place in sight of other prisoners and wardens, while the wardens took pleasure in beating the prisoners' genitals.*²³⁴

On July 31, 2024, Khaled Mahagna was the first lawyer granted visitation rights with a client, 42-year-old journalist Mohammed Arab, held at Sde Teiman military prison. Mahajna publicly reported the kinds of abuse Palestinian men were facing in the military prison. He stated that the testimony he had received from Arab exceeded in brutality anything he had heard in his fifteen years as a lawyer. Mahajna described several cases of sexual torture, which caused serious injury and bleeding,²³⁵ including an incident in which a detainee had a phone shoved into his rectum.²³⁶ At a briefing with the international press, Mahajna provided more details about the testimony he had obtained from his client(s) regarding the sexualized violence and rape taking place, including against prisoners at Ofer. He recounted that at Ofer Prison, a 27-year-old prisoner was stripped naked, handcuffed, forced to the ground, and then violated with a fire extinguisher—soldiers inserted the nozzle into his rectum and activated it, releasing chemicals “in front of the eyes of all the other detainees.” Mahagna described this as a calculated act of terror, as the suffering was intended to be witnessed, “to teach all the detainees a lesson that any detainee could be subject to such brutal methods.”²³⁷

Upon his release, Mohammed Arab spoke out regarding the sexual torture and rape he witnessed during his detention. In one testimony provided to Euro-Med, Arab details being forced to witness assaults: “Six prisoners were forced to strip naked and stand against the wall. One of them was then raped

234 Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, HaMoked – Center for the Defence of the Individual, Physicians for Human Rights Israel, and Parents Against Child Detention, *Torture as State Policy: Abuse of Palestinian Detainees in Israel and the Absence of Accountability since October 7, 2023* (November 2025), 28, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCAT%2FNGO%2FISR%2F66407&Lang=en.

235 Baker Zoubi, “More Horrific than Abu Ghraib’: Lawyer Recounts Visit to Israeli Detention Center,” +972 Magazine, June 27, 2024, <https://archive.ph/qXyJ8>.

236 Mohammad Watad, “المحامي يحاكن الموت.. المحامي يحاكن الموت.. المحامي يحاكن الموت.. [They Are Living death... Lawyer Al Mahajna Tells Al Jazeera Net about the Conditions of Prisoners in Sde Teiman,” Al Jazeera Net, June 20, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2024/6/20/-المحامي-يحاكن-الموت-يحاكن-الموت-يحاكن-الموت>.

237 Khaled Yousry (@khaledyousry22), “Khaled Mahagna, a Palestinian Lawyer Who Visited Two Palestinians Kidnapped by Israel from Gaza, Reported That Israeli Prison...,” Instagram video, July 15, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/C9cynqeMEsl/>.

with a stick in front of us, and we were crying in terror.”²³⁸ His testimony shows how coerced, forced witnessing of assaults was also a systemic Israeli practice of sexual humiliation and terror.

In several cases, Palestinians have reported witnessing and/or learning about sexual assaults. Murad, for example, reported two cases of rape that took place in Sde Teiman in December 2023 and January 2024. The first, he bore witness to. He describes:

*We were handcuffed and blindfolded on an underground floor, but I could still see because the blindfold didn't fully cover my eyes. We were forcibly placed on our backs in a stressed suspension position, causing intense pain in our backs and feet. Six soldiers in Israeli army uniforms then arrived and dragged one detainee to the far end of the large room. They stripped him of his underwear and took turns raping him for more than 40 minutes, amid his screams, to which they responded by beating him. When they finished, they brought him back to us, and he was screaming. Then he completely broke down and cried hysterically because of what had happened.*²³⁹

The second case Murad describes took place the following month when soldiers came and hauled away another prisoner. Murad explains: “When they brought him back, he told me in a low voice that he was being raped repeatedly every two or three days and that he was suffering from severe pain in his anus as a result.”²⁴⁰

The consistency of testimonies evidencing rape and sexual torture at Sde Teiman cannot go unnoticed. Dr. Khaled Alser, a surgeon who was arrested at Nasser Hospital in March 2024, and who was held for seven months in various prisons, reported that during his detention at Sde Teiman, many prisoners approached him seeking medical advice after being sexually assaulted:

*I heard a lot of testimony from prisoners inside the prison. They came to me seeking medical advice, because they [had been] sexually assaulted by the soldiers using batons and sometimes using the electrical guns in their sensitive areas. And sometimes they spray their faces and private parts [with] pepper spray.*²⁴¹

238 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Another Genocide Behind Walls,” 37-38.

239 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Another Genocide Behind Walls,” 26.

240 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Another Genocide Behind Walls,” 26.

241 Democracy Now, “Free Dr. Abu Safiya: Calls Grow for Israel to Release Imprisoned Gaza Healthcare Workers,” Democracy Now!, October 14, 2025, https://www.democracynow.org/2025/10/14/naji_abbas.

Additional testimonies from prisoners at Sde Teiman detailing rampant sexual violence have been documented by various sources. In one testimony given to Al Mezan, R. H., a 38-year-old man from Tal Zaatar in Jabalia, Gaza, described being stripped naked and placed among a large group of one hundred or more detainees. He continued:

At midnight, we were taken to the basement below the building and were brutally assaulted. They kicked us with their boots with a wave of insults and curses. We were given nothing but a small piece of bread. When we asked for water, they would intentionally pour it on our heads. We stayed in the basement for two days, and during that time, some of us were sexually assaulted. I saw three of us get taken to the room where I slept, and sticks were inserted into their behinds, one of them was bleeding.²⁴²

These reports are corroborated by other testimony. Younis al-Hamlawi, a 39-year-old paramedic, for example, testifies to the rape he endured while in military detention at Sde Teiman. According to his testimony, a “female officer ordered two soldiers to penetrate his rectum with a metal stick, causing him to bleed and experience unbearable pain.”²⁴³

As we have seen documented in several cases of sexual humiliation, female Israeli soldiers were also responsible for raping Palestinian detainees and prisoners. In one report provided to Euro-Med, Hassan explains being raped by four female soldiers:

I was taken to a detention camp, which I later found out was Sde Teiman. About a month and a half after my arrest, I was raped by female soldiers. I was completely stripped naked and not blindfolded. There were four female soldiers dressed in Israeli army uniforms. After stripping me, they mockingly laughed at me while I was handcuffed and shackled. Then, one of them pushed me, and I fell to the ground. Another grabbed a stick and inserted it into my anus. I cried out in pain as they laughed. This continued for roughly two minutes before they left, spitting on me and shouting obscenities. I was in pain for over two weeks after the incident.²⁴⁴

242 Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, “Torture Report: Al Mezan’s Documentation of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Palestinian Detainees” (Gaza: Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, April 2024), 5–6, <https://mezan.org/uploads/files/2024/4/1712323548Torture%20report-AlMezan.pdf>.

243 Maureen C. Murphy, “Israel’s Desert Torture Camp Faces Legal Challenge,” Electronic Intifada, June 11, 2024, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/maureen-clare-murphy/israels-desert-torture-camp-faces-legal-challenge>.

244 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Another Genocide Behind Walls,” 25.

If the countless Palestinian prisoner testimonies were not enough to reveal the systematic sexual torture and rape deployed by the IOF and prison guards against Palestinian captives, the Sde Teiman military prison gang-rape catapulted the question of Israel's systematic sexualized violence against Palestinians into the international spotlight. In August 2024, leaked CCTV video showed soldiers gang raping a Palestinian at Sde Teiman military prison with a sharp object and metal batons.²⁴⁵ According to the indictment, the captive was taken to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with "a ruptured bowel, a severe injury to his anus, lung damage and broken ribs."²⁴⁶ Unable to circumvent international outrage and pressure, five soldiers were arrested on July 29, 2024, by Israeli military police, making them the first perpetrators arrested for committing sexualized violence against Palestinian detainees and/or prisoners.

Sexual Torture and Rape With Genocidal Intent

Not surprisingly, this extreme sexualized violence frequently resulted in detainee deaths. Between October 2023 and August 2025, at least ninety-four Palestinians died of abuse in Israeli detention or prison.²⁴⁷ In October 2025, more than one hundred bodies of Palestinian prisoners were released, identified by numbers instead of names, leaving families to desperately search through thousands of photos to identify their loved ones, a cruel task that compounded the trauma the prisoners had endured before their deaths. Most of the bodies showed signs of torture and abuse, some including signs of sexualized violence, and some had died while still in handcuffs and blindfolds, indicating summary execution.²⁴⁸

One of the most well-known cases of Palestinians who died by torture is Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh, head of orthopedics at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. While working at the Al-Awda Hospital in December 2023—after Al-Shifa and the

245 Abubakr Al-Shamahi and Simon Speakman Cordall, "What We Know About the Torture, Abuse of Palestinian Prisoners by Israel," Al Jazeera, October 18, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/18/what-we-know-about-the-torture-abuse-of-palestinian-prisoners-by-israel>.

246 Alex MacDonald, "Israeli Media Publishes Video of Soldiers Allegedly Raping Palestinian Detainee," Middle East Eye, August 7, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-media-publishes-video-soldiers-allegedly-rape-palestinian>.

247 Jon Donnison, "At Least 94 Palestinians Died in Israeli Prisons in Two Years, Human Rights Group Says," November 18, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crreg2l7kezo>.

248 Al-Shamahi and Cordall, "What We Know About the Torture."

Indonesian hospitals became inoperable—Al-Bursh was arrested by Israeli soldiers. The IOF's stated cause for his abduction was "national security reasons." He was reportedly taken to Sde Teiman and, in April, to Ofer Prison. There, news broke that Dr. Al-Bursh had died after experiencing brutal forms of sexual and physical torture.²⁴⁹ In a witness testimony provided by another prisoner at Ofer to HaMoked, Al-Bursh's screams while being tortured could be heard by other prisoners. He was then dragged into Ofer's prison yard, "naked from the waist down, bleeding and unable to stand."²⁵⁰ Prisoners who witnessed this recognized him and took him to a nearby room, where he died moments later.

In the wake of the news, UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese stated: "A doctor. A stellar surgeon. The embodiment of Palestinian ethics. Likely raped to death," and "[t]he racism of Western media who are not covering this, and Western politicians who are not denouncing this, together with the thousand other testimonies and allegations of rape and other forms of mistreatment and torture that Palestinians have suffered in Israeli jails, is absolutely sickening."²⁵¹

One of the most harrowing testimonies of rape and sexual torture that led to death comes from in an interview between UNRWA staffers and a 41-year-old man. He reported his own sexual assault and described the killing of another prisoner who succumbed to his injuries from sexual torture:

They made me sit on something like a hot metal stick and it felt like fire – I have burns [in the anus]. The soldiers hit me with their shoes on my chest and used something like a metal stick that had a small nail on the side...They asked us to drink from the toilet and made the dogs attack us...There were people who were detained and killed – maybe nine of them. One of them died after they put the electric stick up his

249 Al Jazeera (@ajplusarabi), "بحالة يُرثى لها، كان الجزء السفلي من جسده عارياً".." تقرير جديد يكشف تفاصيل آخر أيام، "الطبيب الشهيد عدنان البرش، وشهادات أسرى عن تعذيبه حتى الموت في سجن"، Instagram video, November 20, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/reel/DCmBMJ_NNjC/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNW-FIZA%3D%3D.

250 Simon Speakman Cordall, "Dying in 'Hell': The Fate of Palestinian Medics Jailed by Israel," Al Jazeera, November 24, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/24/dying-in-hell-palestinian-medics-jailed-by-israel>.

251 Ana Vračar, "Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh's Death by Torture Underscores Brutal Targeting of Palestinian Health Workers by Israel," Peoples Dispatch, November 20, 2024, <https://www.peoplesdispatch.org/2024/11/20/dr-adnan-al-burshs-death-by-torture-underscores-brutal-targeting-of-palestinian-health-workers-by-israel/>.

| *[anus]. He got so sick; we saw worms coming out of his body and then he died.*²⁵²

As these testimonies show, sexual torture has often preceded the deaths of detainees and prisoners, and therefore must be considered part and parcel of the crime of genocide waged against the Palestinian people. As Basel al-Sourani, international advocacy officer at PCHR, states: “They know once they rape someone with a dog or with a stick that these people won’t be able to carry out their jobs or live their lives normally. [...] It’s part of their genocidal intention to destroy [Palestinians].”²⁵³

Sexual Torture and Rape by Trained Dogs

Since October 7, 2023, there have been numerous reports that Israeli soldiers have trained and ordered dogs to rape Palestinians. A December 19, 2025, BBC report chronicles the case of a man, identified by the pseudonym Ahmed, who lives in the West Bank with his family and children. Ahmed was arrested in January 2024 for a social media post after October 7 and accused of “incitement of terrorism.” The BBC reported on Ahmed’s sexual abuse by the guards:

*The prison guards, three of them, took me into a bathroom and stripped me completely naked before forcing me to the ground [...] They put my head in the toilet bowl and a massive man, maybe 150kg (330lb), stood on my head, so I was bent over. Then, I heard the voice of someone talking to the prison dog. The dog was named Messi, like the footballer.*²⁵⁴

In addition to the guards beating him regularly, including on his genitals, Ahmed describes how the dog was used to sexually humiliate him. He said his trousers and underwear were removed, and the dog mounted his back: “I could feel its breath... then it jumped on me... I started to scream. The more I screamed, the more they beat me until I almost lost consciousness.”²⁵⁵

The use of dogs to strip, maul, and sexually abuse Palestinian detainees

252 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), “Detention and Alleged Ill-Treatment,” 2.

253 Joshua Carroll, “Israeli Prison Guards Are Using Dogs to Rape Palestinians, Former Detainees Say,” Novara Media, November 25, 2025, <https://novaramedia.com/2025/11/25/israeli-prison-guards-are-using-dogs-to-rape-palestinians-former-detainees-say/>

254 Jon Donnison, “Palestinians Tell BBC They Were Sexually Abused in Israeli Prisons,” December 19, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8dy8r7lq0go>.

255 Donnison, “Palestinians Tell BBC They Were Sexually Abused.”

and prisoners has been reported elsewhere as well. On June 27, 2024, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reported on “horrific testimonies from recently released detainees confirming the brutal and inhumane use of Israeli police dogs to rape prisoners and detainees.”²⁵⁶ Fadi Saif al-Din Bakr, a 25-year-old lawyer who was in Israeli detention for forty-five days, is a survivor of sexual torture and witness to a sexual assault of another prisoner involving a trained dog. During his detention, Bakr reported that soldiers put cigarettes out on his mouth and attached something heavy to his testicles, which made them swell.²⁵⁷ In one particular incident, he reported to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor that:

There, the soldiers took off the blindfolds covering our eyes for the first time. The soldiers later pulled the young man sitting to my right, forced him to sleep on the ground, and tied his hands and feet. Suddenly, the occupation soldiers let loose trained police dogs on the young man, who was subjected to [rape]. Throughout the entire ordeal I endured, this was among the most awful things that I witnessed. Everything was a lot [to go through], and this was just one more [incident] added to the heap of torments. I was hoping to die so that this would not happen to me, but one of the soldiers told me to get ready. [Yet] something miraculous happened in the prison; the torture session quickly ended, and we were brought back to the barn...²⁵⁸

PCHR’s “Torture and Genocide” report featured the testimony of another 25-year-old man who was held for twenty-nine days, during which he witnessed the rape of another detainee by a trained dog:

Later, I was called out along with two other detainees (whom I did not know) and we were taken to a concrete yard. They removed our blindfolds and took one detainee, stripped him naked and brought a police dog. The dog raped the detainee thoroughly and had sexual intercourse with him, he was screaming loudly. This torture continued for two minutes. Then they took me and the other detainees to a new barracks and the sound of the screams of the man who had been raped disappeared.²⁵⁹

256 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Gaza: Israeli Army Systematically Uses Police Dogs to Brutally Attack Palestinian Civilians, with at Least One Reported Rape,” June 27, 2024, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6383/Gaza:-Israeli-army-systematically-uses-police-dogs-to-brutally-attack-Palestinian-civilians,-with-at-least-one-reported-rape>.

257 B’Tselem, Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps (Jerusalem: B’Tselem, August 2024), testimony of Fadi Baker (Gaza Strip, held in Sde Teiman), <https://archive.ph/V3gbt>.

258 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Gaza.”

259 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies.”

Another victim of Israeli dog rape was A.A., a 35-year-old father from Gaza who was arrested at Al-Shifa Hospital in March 2024. He told PCHR—then reported on by Middle East Eye in November 2025—that he was raped by a dog inside Sde Teiman military camp after enduring weeks of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse there. The man stated that soldiers pulled detainees to an area without cameras before unleashing dogs on them:

*The dog did it deliberately, knowing exactly what it was doing, and inserted its penis into my anus, while the soldiers kept beating and torturing us and spraying pepper spray in our faces.*²⁶⁰

The man reports that the abuse left him with enduring physical wounds, including a head injury that required seven stitches, fractures to his limbs, a rib fracture, and bruises across his body. He states that following the abuse, he experienced “a severe psychological breakdown and deep humiliation,” adding, “I lost control because I could never have imagined experiencing such a thing.”²⁶¹

Similarly, 43-year-old former prisoner Wajdi reported to Euro-Med, being shackled to a bed and repeatedly raped by soldiers, then a dog. He shared:

*I felt severe pain in my anus and screamed, but every time I screamed, I was beaten. This continued for several minutes, while soldiers filmed and mocked me. The soldier left after ejaculating inside me. I was left in a humiliating position. I wished for death. I was bleeding.*²⁶²

The sexual violence did not end there. Wajdi reported that after untying him, a dog raped him, and later “another soldier forced his penis into the victim’s mouth and urinated on him.”²⁶³ Over the following days, the abuse continued, with repeated rapes carried out by multiple soldiers.

260 PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies,”.

261 Tamara Turki, “Rape and Humiliation: Report Accuses Israel of ‘Systematic’ Torture of Palestinian Prisoners,” Middle East Eye, November 11, 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/systematic-practice-sexual-torture-israeli-prisons-rights-group-says>.

262 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Another Genocide Behind Walls,” 24. See also: Katherine Hearst, “‘I Wished for Death’: Sexual Violence in Israel’s Prisons Is an ‘Organised State Policy,’” Middle East Eye, April 11, 2026. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/i-wished-death-sexual-violence-israels-prisons-organised-state-policy>.

263 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Another Genocide Behind Walls,” 24.

Euro-Med's 2026 report includes reports from two other Palestinian men who testified that they were raped by trained Israeli dogs. A.S., who was held at Sde Teiman, reported:

*We heard dogs barking in the area, and from time to time, the dogs would urinate on us while we were detained in the metal cages. The shock came when they forced me to lie down, and a dog climbed on top of me and tried to insert its penis into me. At first, I did not understand what was happening, but then I realised that I was being raped.*²⁶⁴

Similarly, during his detention at Sde Teiman, Firas witnessed the rape of another prisoner by a trained dog:

*During my detention in Sde Teiman, they called me and two other detainees I did not know and took us to a concrete courtyard. They removed our blindfolds, took one detainee, stripped him of his clothes, and brought in a huge dog that raped him in front of us. The dog appeared to have been trained to do so. The young man screamed loudly for two minutes, after which they took the other detainee and me to another location. I do not know what happened to the detainee who was raped.*²⁶⁵

As Firas, Wajdi, and A.S. testimonies reveal, Palestinians who have been subjected to, or witnessed rape by dogs detail an awareness that the dogs were not only trained but deliberately ordered and intentionally positioned, by soldiers, to rape.

PCHR's report also includes the testimony by an eighteen-year-old who described the crushing consequences of being raped by a dog:

*There was also a dog behind us, as if the dog was raping us. They violated our dignity and destroyed our spirits and our hope for life. I had wanted to continue my education; now I am lost after what happened to me.*²⁶⁶

Survivor testimonies of rape by dogs consistently mention the intentionality of this type of violence, pointing to the fact that dogs were given commands to rape. One survivor, Muhammad Zaki al-Bakri, abducted from Hamad, reported that in 2024, the "soldiers" who attacked him and five other Palestinians had

264 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, "Another Genocide Behind Walls," 27.

265 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, "Another Genocide Behind Walls," 37.

266 PCHR, "PCHR Documents Testimonies."

a “code between them,” as well as “a signal given to the dogs.”²⁶⁷ He reports that the soldiers had dogs, sex toys, and rods with them for the sexual torture. First, the men were stripped naked. Then, on command, the dogs were ordered to rape as the soldiers laughed. Al-Bakri reported that it was the “worst and most severe forms of torture.”²⁶⁸

PCHR’s May 2025 report chronicles at least one other case of sexual assault by trained Israeli dogs. In another incident, a 48-year-old man arrested at Al-Shifa Hospital and held for fifty-six days across five different military detention facilities—recounts witnessing a trained dog sexually assault a fellow prisoner, leading to the prisoner’s death:

*They unleashed police dogs on us again, allowing them to tear into our flesh. One dog attacked a fellow detainee, [name redacted] (45), and started mauling his genitals (penis). He bled to death in my arms. A doctor, shielded in a cage, examined him from a distance and said, “Throw him outside.”*²⁶⁹

Similarly, Khaldoun Barghouti, a freed prisoner, told Al Jazeera: “[It] was 20 of us, all naked—young, old, children. Some prisoners were raped. Some with sticks, some with carrots, some with dogs. They order you to bark, to make sounds like dogs, cats, monkeys, and donkeys. The blood was dripping from their [the prisoners’] arms and from their feet.”²⁷⁰

Assault of International Activists

While Israel’s systemic sexualized violence against Palestinians must be understood as part and parcel of the crime of genocide, and in contravention of numerous international legal statutes that prohibit sexualized and gendered violence, it is also important to understand that this tactic extends to international activists as a method to silence political critique, stifle opposition to Israeli policies, and punish resistance to its occupation and subjugation of the Palestinian people. There is no better example of this systemic sexualized vio-

267 Translating Palestine (@translating_falasteen), “‘Dogs Were Unleashed on Us to Rape Us.’ Muhammad Zaki al-Bakri Says He Was Abducted from Hamad Town in Khan Younis on 4 March 2024,” Instagram video, February 24, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DVJX3JPADNp/>

268 Translating Palestine, “Dogs Were Unleashed on Us.”

269 PCHR, “Torture and Genocide,” 64. See also: Carroll, “Israeli Prison Guards.”

270 Al Jazeera (@aljazeeramubasher), “الانتحار في سجون الاحتلال.. عندما يتجسّد الخلاص في المسوّت #الجزيرة_” Instagram post, August 2, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reels/C-L8AYtIXCG/>.

lence as a tool of controlled political repression than the cases of non-Palestinians engaged in the global movement for Palestinian liberation, who have also been subjected to sexual threats, insults, humiliation, and assaults since October 7, 2023.

Alex Colston, Emily Wilder, and Noa Avishag Schnall, three U.S. journalists who joined the Global Sumud Flotilla, detailed how Israeli soldiers, who disregarded their press credentials, engaged in physical and psychological abuse, made rape threats, and hurled racist and misogynistic insults while detaining them.²⁷¹ Schnall said she and approximately 150 activists who were taken prisoner in international waters, in violation of international law, were threatened with extreme brutality by Israeli guards: “During the evening, the men were tormented by guards with attack dogs and guns. The women were threatened with pepper spray. Our cell was awoken with threats of rape.”²⁷²

Australian activists Abubakir Rafiq, Juliet Lamont, Hamish Paterson, Surya McEwan, Bianca Webb-Pullman, Cameron Tribe, and David Adler also recounted being subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, including forced nudity and threats of sexualized violence.²⁷³ One captured flotilla activist reported that she was stripped of her hijab and clothes and that her breasts were ridiculed by soldiers.²⁷⁴ Another activist described that while being forced to strip, he was commanded to undo his hair and “dance like a monkey” in front of prison guards.²⁷⁵ Surya McEwan recalled his sexual assault as follows:

I was stripped naked and sexually assaulted by Israeli officers while being held hostage. One held a gun to my head, angrily threatening that he would kill me, while the other yanked and pulled on my genitals, perversely and almost gleefully. While the-

271 Ahmed Zidan, “US Journalists on Aid Flotillas Allege Israeli Soldier Abuse,” Jacobin, December 2, 2025, <https://jacobin.com/2025/12/gaza-journalists-flotilla-israeli-abuse>.

272 Democracy Now!, “Journalist Abducted by Israel Says She Was Tortured in Israeli Custody” Democracy Now! October 14, 2025, https://www.democracynow.org/2025/10/14/headlines/journalist_abducted_by_israel_says_she_was_tortured_in_israeli_custody.

273 Amnesty International, “Israel’s Abduction and Torture of Several Global Sumud Flotilla Activists is a Flagrant Breach of International Law,” Amnesty International Australia, October 7, 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org.au/israels-abduction-and-torture-of-several-global-sumud-flotilla-activists-is-a-flagrant-breach-of-international-law/>.

274 Eva Corlett, “Gaza Flotilla Passengers Allege Poor Conditions in Detention as Israel Prepares to Deport Dozens of Activists,” The Guardian, October 6, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/oct/06/gaza-flotilla-passengers-allege-poor-conditions-in-detention-as-israel-prepares-to-deport-dozens-of-activists>.

275 Amnesty International, “Israel’s Abduction and Torture of Several Global Sumud Flotilla Activists.”

*re is a psychic cost to this experience, I absolutely refuse to feel shamed, lessened, or stained by it, as these all belong solely to the perpetrators. This small taste of the sadism that Zionist colonizers inflict en masse on Palestinians has not weakened my commitment, but rather strengthened my resolve to work toward liberation.*²⁷⁶

Swedish activist Greta Thunberg also recounted being subjected to sexual humiliation and insults. “They moved me very brutally to a corner that I was turned towards. ‘A special place for a special lady,’ they said. And then they had learned ‘Lilla hora’ (Little whore) and ‘Hora Greta’ (Whore Greta) in Swedish, which they repeated all the time,” she told the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet.²⁷⁷ Thunberg also said Israeli guards wrote “whore” and drew images of a penis and the Star of David on her luggage.²⁷⁸ Thunberg has stated, “If Israel, with the eyes of the world on it, can treat a well-known white person with a Swedish passport like this, imagine what they do to Palestinians in secret.”²⁷⁹

On December 21, 2025, at an international conference in solidarity with Palestinian political prisoners, Anna Liedtke, a German journalist aboard the November 2025 Freedom Flotilla ship Conscience, disclosed for the first time publicly that she was raped by Israeli forces after being intercepted, some one hundred nautical miles off the coast of Gaza:

*After I was kidnapped by Israeli forces, I was subjected to repeated physical and sexual abuse. During a forced strip search, I was raped by Israeli female guards. I am coming forward not for myself, but for all the women who have endured sexual violence and sexual torture in Israeli prisons—for those who did not survive these attacks, for those who are experiencing this abuse now, and for those who cannot speak about it.*²⁸⁰

276 Freedom Flotilla Coalition, “FFC Condemns Sexual Assaults by Israeli Forces,” press release, Freedom Flotilla Coalition, January 2, 2026, <https://freedomflotilla.org/2026/01/02/ffc-condemns-sexual-assaults/>.

277 Caitlin A. Johnstone, “Israel Tortured and Sexually Humiliated Greta Thunberg,” MR Online, October 17, 2025, <https://mronline.org/2025/10/17/israel-tortured-and-sexually-humiliated-greta-thunberg/>.

278 Alex Croft, “Greta Thunberg Says She Was Kicked, Starved and Called a Wh*** in Israeli Detention,” The Independent, October 17, 2025, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/greta-thunberg-israel-detention-gaza-aid-flotilla-torture-b2847089.html>.

279 Ynet, “Greta Thunberg Accuses Israel of Abuse, Humiliation During Gaza Flotilla Detention,” Ynet Global, October 15, 2025, <https://archive.ph/hoH59>.

280 Freedom Flotilla Coalition, “FFC Condemns.” See also: “Freedom Flotilla Urges Global Inquiry into Israeli Sexual Crimes against Its Activists,” Al Manassa, January 4, 2026, <https://manassa.news/en/news/29523>.

Another international activist aboard the ship Conscience reported that he was raped while detained by Israel. Italian journalist Vincenzo Fullone recounted being assaulted three times:

On three separate occasions, I was ordered to enter a small, specially arranged room where I was completely stripped and subjected to invasive and painful anal searches. I remained silent each time to avoid provoking further violence and to deny the guards the satisfaction of my suffering. During the third search, the pain became unbearable and was compounded by mockery, verbal abuse—including the words, “Don’t you like it, Hamas whore?”—and the photographing of my body. I am still unable to find peace because if they were willing to do this to me, I can’t imagine what they’ve done—and continue to do—to the Palestinians under their complete control.²⁸¹

Rape Rhetoric and Public Incitement

The widely publicized rape of Palestinian detainees at Sde Teiman is not an isolated instance of soldiers deviating from a code of conduct, but rather indicative of a systematic practice. While ten soldiers were initially arrested for the assault, only five were charged with aggravated abuse causing serious bodily harm. None of them were held in custody or placed under legal restrictions during the investigation.²⁸² Nevertheless, the Israeli public’s outcry against the arrest of the accused soldiers demonstrates the broad complicity of Israeli society in sustaining an entire ecosystem of systematic sexualized violence against Palestinians. In the wake of the announcement of the investigation, the Israeli public rioted, storming Sde Teiman, carrying posters that read “Free Our Hero Soldiers.” An Israel Democracy Institute opinion poll conducted in 2025 showed that “the majority of the Israeli public oppose investigating soldiers when they are suspected of having abused Palestinians from Gaza.”²⁸³

The Israeli public’s opinion on the rape of Palestinian detainees should come as no surprise, given the justifications for rape provided by senior political lea-

281 Jara Nassar, “German Media Ignores Allegations That Israel Raped German Journalist,” The Electronic Intifada, February 6, 2026, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/german-media-ignores-allegations-israel-raped-german-journalist/51210>.

282 United Nations Human Rights Council, Legal Analysis of the Conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, A/HRC/60/CRP.3 (Geneva: United Nations, September 16, 2025), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf>. Tamara Turki, “Rape and Humiliation.”

283 Donnison, “Palestinians Tell BBC They Were Sexually Abused.”

ders and the widespread dissemination of snuff films in Israeli society depicting Palestinians being tortured in detention.²⁸⁴ In a Knesset hearing on the Sde Teiman case, Israeli leaders from multiple parties condemned the arrests of the perpetrators, arguing that these soldiers were heroes and should be respected. This echoes the lamentations of the soldiers themselves who decried the investigations and claimed they were the victims.²⁸⁵ Ahmad Tibi, one of the only Palestinian Arab members of the Israeli Knesset, asked if it was legitimate “to insert a stick into a person’s rectum.”²⁸⁶ Hanoach Milwidsky, a member of Netanyahu’s ruling Likud party, responded: “Shut up, shut up [...] Yes, everything is legitimate if they are Nukhba [elite Hamas fighters who took part in the 7 October attacks]. Everything.”²⁸⁷ Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich demanded a probe, not to seek justice for the Palestinian rape victim, but to find and punish whoever leaked the video of the assault.²⁸⁸

The vitriol that followed the release of the leaked CCTV footage included the political repression of Major General Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi, who admitted to leaking the video to “counter false propaganda against the army’s law enforcement authorities.”²⁸⁹ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Tomer-Yerushalmi of “selective enforcement,” while far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir issued a public video telling her to “take [her] hands off” the soldiers.²⁹⁰ After resigning from her post and going into hiding, To-

284 Jonathan Ofir, “‘We Are the Masters of the House’: Israeli Channels Air Snuff Videos Featuring Systematic Torture of Palestinians,” Mondoweiss, March 6, 2024, <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/03/we-are-the-masters-of-the-house-israeli-channels-air-snuff-videos-featuring-systematic-torture-of-palestinians/>.

285 Jonathan Ofir, “The Main Suspect in the Sde Teiman Gang Rape Case is Now a Media Star in Israel,” Mondoweiss, August 28, 2024, <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/08/the-main-suspect-in-the-sde-teiman-gang-rape-case-is-now-a-media-star-in-israel/>. See also: Palestine.pixel (@palestine.pixel), “Gang Rapi*ts from Sde Teiman Have Appeared on TV Multiple Times, Masked, Unapologetic, and Crying,” Instagram video, November 7, 2025, https://www.instagram.com/reel/DQxy7y8gN_s/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.

286 “Israeli Lawmaker Justifies Rape of Palestinian Prisoners,” Middle East Eye, July 29, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/israeli-lawmakers-justifies-palestinian-prisoners-rape>.

287 Donnison, “Palestinians Tell BBC They Were Sexually Abused.”

288 Brett Wilkins, “Ex-IDF Legal Chief Who Leaked Sde Teiman Rape Video Arrested After Going Missing,” Common Dreams, November 3, 2025, www.commondreams.org/ <https://www.commondreams.org/news/sde-teiman-video-arrestnews/sde-teiman-video-arrest>.

289 Donnison, “Palestinians Tell BBC They Were Sexually Abused.”

290 Jeremy Sharon, “Timeline of a Scandal: The 17 Months of the Sde Teiman Abuse and Video Leak Affair,” The Times of Israel, November 3, 2025, <https://archive.ph/DHqcj>. See also Itamar Eichner and

mer-Yerushalmi was arrested and detained for suspicion of fraud and breach of trust, abuse of office, obstruction of justice, and disclosure of information as a public servant. She was placed under house arrest, while the perpetrators of the rape were recognized as national heroes.

The silencing of Tomer-Yerushalmi, the Israeli public's broad support for the perpetrators of rape, and the debates within the Israeli Knesset on the legality of rape reveal a stark reality: a state that systematically justifies rape against its Palestinian captives and seeks to legalize sexualized violence. Rhetoric that encourages or justifies sexualized violence against Palestinians and incites the public appears in various other moments and contexts during the genocide in Gaza.

Following October 7, 2023, soldiers stationed in Gaza were seen posting images to their social media accounts of themselves rummaging through women's lingerie and posing on beds—signaling to Palestinians that their most intimate spaces had been invaded and conquered, and that their belongings had been violated and claimed.²⁹¹ Some images, such as an Israeli soldier dangling a woman's underwear over the open mouth of another, or a soldier squeezing the cups of a bra, are not only crude but also enact sexual fantasies without consent, and as such constitute symbolic rape.²⁹² Many posts contain slut-shaming captions or display pilfered lingerie as trophies. Equally, if not more, disturbing are the confessions of IOF soldiers who admit to raping Palestinians.²⁹³ All are meant to shatter Palestinian women's sense of privacy and safety within their own bedrooms. The circulation of these images by Israeli forces—alongside sexually humiliating rhetoric in captions that accompanied many of the social media posts—signaled the sexualized violence taking place. So too did messages sent in coffee bags to IOF soldiers in Gaza that com-

Liran Tamari, "Netanyahu Slams Top IDF Lawyer's Leak as 'Worst PR Disaster' in Israel's History," Ynet Global, November 2, 2025, <https://archive.ph/GsgCq>.

291 Middle East Eye (@MiddleEastEye), "British-Born Israeli Soldier Rummages through Lingerie Drawers in Gaza Homes," YouTube video, accessed February 19, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/EgQd1k4Fhdk>.

292 Estelle Shirbon and Pola Grzanka, "Israeli Soldiers Play with Gaza Women's Underwear in Online Posts," Reuters, March 28, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-soldiers-play-with-gaza-womens-underwear-online-posts-2024-03-28/>. See also: Belén Fernández, "Weaponising Underwear: Genocide with a Semi-Pornographic Twist," Al Jazeera, April 12, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/4/12/weaponising-underwear-genocide-with-a-semi-pornographic-twist>.

293 News Desk, "We Rape Palestinian Women Also, IDF Soldier Confesses to Livestreamer," The Siasat Daily, February 15, 2026, <https://archive.ph/k27b2>

manded them to rape Palestinian women “with a rusty bar.”²⁹⁴ In addition to photos posted on social media, Israeli soldiers left graffiti at a women’s shelter in Gaza. One such example read:

*You sons of bitches, we came here to fuck you, you and your mothers, you bitches. You ugly Arab we will burn you alive you dogs [sic].*²⁹⁵

Furthermore, since October 7, 2023, Israeli officials and soldiers have incited public harassment campaigns targeted at Palestinians, especially women. The March 2025 COI report expressed concern over “online harassment and smear campaigns by Israeli officials and soldiers, including by doxing, a practice in which private information about a person is shared online by others, with the intention to humiliate and isolate the victim.”²⁹⁶ Clauses 83, 84, and 90 speak to several specific incidents in which soldiers and high-level officials, including National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, posted personally identifiable information and degrading photos and videos of Palestinian women, or of soldiers rummaging through women’s intimate apparel.

83. The Commission documented several videos and photos, recorded by Israeli soldiers and posted online, depicting them searching homes in the Gaza Strip, deliberately humiliating and mocking Palestinian women based on their gender and ethnicity. The videos and photos, most of which were originally published in ISF soldiers’ private Instagram or X accounts, were later widely reposted on social media. In one case, a video shows a soldier filming himself while going through underwear and other private belongings in a house in the Gaza Strip, directing gendered and sexualized insults to Palestinian women, stating: “I’ve always said Arabs [female pronouns used] are the biggest sluts out there... There you go, here are the sets [of lingerie] here, inside, another new one in the package, they haven’t opened it yet, look at these sets, who wants elastic bodysuits?”²⁹⁷

84. In a second video, an ISF soldier is filming himself describing how when searching the premises for weapons, the soldiers had found money and lingerie: “Two or three drawers stuffed with the most exotic lingerie that you can imagine, just piles, loads of it, in every single house. Unbelievable. These naughty naughty Gazans.” In a third case, an ISF soldier published a photo on a dating application depicting

294 Nadav Rapaport, “‘Rape Them with a Rusty Bar’: Message Sent to Israeli Troops on Coffee Bag Draws Online Support,” Middle East Eye, June 11, 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/rape-them-rusty-bar-message-sent-israeli-troops-coffee-bag-draws-online-support>.

295 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “More than a Human Can Bear,” 20.

296 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “More than a Human Can Bear,” 20.

297 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “More than a Human Can Bear,” 20.

himself posing in front of a collection of Palestinian women's underwear. The Commission found that many of the original videos and photos had been removed from the public domain, and the social media accounts of these Israeli soldiers had been either closed or set to private.²⁹⁸

90. Between 7 October and December 2023, Israel's National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, posted on his X account pictures of six Palestinian women who were detained in Israel and the West Bank. The captions to the photos asserted that the women had links with terrorism, mostly referencing crimes such as incitement and hate speech linked to the events of 7 October 2023. The captions added by the Minister included the following statements: "We started talking to them in a language they understand," and "This is a clear message to all those inciting keyboard-heroes - the Israel Police will reach each and every one of you. Don't test us." In three cases the women's names were included in the caption together with their pictures. While the Commission documented similar photos of male detainees on the minister's social media account, the men's names were not disclosed and their faces were often blurred, preserving their anonymity.²⁹⁹

The matter of filming and photographing sexual humiliation and assaults of Palestinian men is also named as a serious concern in the COI March 2025 report.³⁰⁰

The Commission documented three particularly egregious cases of sexual and gender-based violence during arrest and detention that were filmed and disseminated online by soldiers. One case involved a video depicting severe mistreatment and abuse of male detainees. The video was posted on X and Telegram by Israeli soldiers. The Commission geolocated it to Hebron, in the West Bank, noting it was filmed on 31 October 2023. In the footage, six men are seen blindfolded, undressed and lying on the ground. Two of the men are completely naked with their genitals exposed. [...] One of the naked men appears to be unconscious or lifeless, while the other is yelling in pain before being pushed to the ground. A soldier is seen stepping on the face of one man who is wearing only trousers with his hands and feet tied. The man is then pulled by his legs, while yelling in pain.

In a third video, filmed at night, three completely naked, barefoot and blindfolded Palestinian men are seen being forced onto a bus by ISF soldiers. An ISF soldier is heard swearing at the detainees in Arabic and Hebrew, and making spitting sounds, saying: "brother of a bitch," "son of a whore," "you pig," "your sister's cunt" and "you pimp." The Commission found that the video was likely filmed in Ofer pri-

298 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "More than a Human Can Bear," 20.

299 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "More than a Human Can Bear," 21.

300 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "More than a Human Can Bear," 23.

son in the West Bank and showed the transfer of Palestinian detainees. The video was first published on Israeli Telegram news channel D4747 on 13 November 2023 with the description: "Documentation from the transfer of the terrorists who participated in the October 7 massacre in Otef." Shortly after, the video was posted with the description: "The Nazi pigs of Nukhba are led naked straight to the Shin Bet basements."

The systemic character of Israel's sexualized violence is largely made visible by the normalization of rape rhetoric and justifications of sexualized violence illustrated, through staggering evidence, by the public commentary and social media patterns of the IOF, elected politicians, and the general public.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evidence collated and presented in this section of the report registers the overwhelming prevalence of sexualized violence committed against Palestinians of all ages and genders, in every arena (checkpoints, detention centers, prisons, arrest sites, the streets, schools, hospitals, homes, and other buildings) where Palestinians came into contact with the IOF. The preponderance of sexualized violence against Palestinians since October 7, 2023, is certainly breathtaking. So too are the intentional, premeditated, and systematic protocols, practices, and technologies of sexualized violence enacted by the IOF and legitimized by the highest holders of Israeli office. It must be noted, for instance, that dogs must be trained to rape a human, suggesting, beyond a reasonable doubt, the systematic intent of Israel's sexualized violence. The cheering on, support, encouragement, and justifications from Israeli society for the use of sexualized violence, in all its forms, are not separate from, but rather symptomatic of, the systems designed to occupy, subjugate, control, kill, and erase Palestinians as part of an ongoing genocidal project. Every form and instance of Israeli sexualized violence presented in this segment constitutes the elements of a machine—a system built to fracture and render a people as “non-beings.” Together, sexual humiliation, sexual torture, rape, and other forms of sexualized violence aim to fracture Palestinian bodies, families, communities, psyches, and land. Given that the systematic perpetration of numerous methods and practices of sexualized violence is accompanied by genocidal threats, actual cases of torture leading to death, and direct attacks on the reproductive organs and capacities of Palestinians, we conclude that Israel's systemic sexualized violence must be registered as one method of many amounting to the crime of genocide.

Mechanics of a Predatory State: Case Studies on *Esqat*

Mechanics of a Predatory State: Case Studies on *Esqat*

For decades, the IOF has weaponized sex, gender, and intimate relationships as part of its illicit intelligence-gathering operations. Through invasive surveillance of Palestinian intimate life and the planting of fake but damaging information, the IOF weaponizes the private lives of Palestinians through a military strategy Palestinians call *esqat*. This portion of the report examines methods that the IOF uses as part of the *esqat* strategy, including sexpionage, often through honeytraps, the weaponization of “secret” information, fabrication of information, intimidation, sexualized tactics of political information, sexualized intimidation and more. These methods rely on sexualized and gendered coercion or blackmail. *Esqat* comprises an important component of Israel’s larger system of sexualized violence.

For the purpose of clarity, *Esqat* loosely translates to “taking down.” It is a colonial strategy through which the IOF threatens to expose information – whether true or not – that may tarnish a victim’s reputation, credibility, political integrity, religious virtue, or cultural dignity in the eyes of one’s family or community. Oftentimes, victims of *esqat* may fear for their own safety or that of their families. The strategy seeks to psychologically alienate Palestinians from themselves and their society, as well as sow discord within Palestinian families, communities, and movements by degrading trust.

Honeytraps, sometimes referred to as sexpionage, are a method of sexual coercion in which the IOF tasks operatives to forge romantic or sexual relationships with their targets, then blackmail them for intelligence. Israel, specifically the Shin Bet (Shabak) and Mossad, has a long history of using

honeytraps to lure Palestinians, Israeli dissidents, and government opposition forces into relationships based on deception with the intent of blackmail.³⁰¹ Often, threats are made that if the target does not comply with IOF orders, they will be exposed to their community for extramarital sexual relations, queer or same-sex encounters, or enduring a sexual assault.^{302, 303} Honeytraps are a method of sexualized and gendered violence, not only because they invade privacy under false pretences, but also because the intelligence gathered is based on emotional, physical, or sexual proximity gained through coercion and deception rather than informed consent. In certain cases, honeytraps operate online: Operatives foster relationships with Palestinians to obtain sexual or intimate photographs, videos, text exchanges, or other compromising information for blackmail.

In addition to honeytraps, the IOF will also weaponize secret information through invasive forms of surveillance on Palestinians. This method also relies heavily on sexualized and gendered blackmail. However, the tactics used to gather information are what distinguish the two. For decades, Palestinians have testified to how the IOF has spied on, gathered, and weaponized “secret” information regarding the intimate lives of Palestinians. More recently, this kind of surveillance has largely been facilitated through wire-tapping, secret video surveillance, and spyware installed on phones.³⁰⁴ In some cases, the IOF plants doctored photographs and videos of Palestinians and threatens to publicize fabricated stories as a method during interrogations.³⁰⁵ If Palestinians do not surrender names and information or offer false confessions, threats are made to “out” the compromising material to their families and communities.

301 The “Shin Bet” or “Shabak” are both acronyms for the Israeli Security Agency, which focuses on internal intelligence gathering for the Israeli state. Mossad is responsible for foreign intelligence. The two are completed by the Aman – military intelligence agency. All three form the intelligence arm of the IOF.

302 We use “queer” as an overarching term for gender and sexual identities that are inclusive of non-cisgender and non-heterosexual individuals, as well as anyone whose identity challenges sexual and gender binaries. Queerness represents the spectrum of gender and sexual identities. We understand queerness as a political identity that is targeted and weaponized by the Israeli occupation through methods such as pinkwashing and threatening to “out” queer Palestinians if they do not reveal sensitive information about their communities (see *Esqat*).

303 While sexual assault is not consensual, survivors often harbor fear of societal rejection based on their own self-blame as well as larger cultural norms around “purity.”

304 Peter Beaumont, “Israeli Intelligence Veterans Refuse to Serve in Palestinian Territories,” *The Guardian*, September 12, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/12/israeli-intelligence-reservists-refuse-serve-palestinian-territories>.

305 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Abeer Otman, and Rasmieyh R. Abdelnabi, “Secret Penetrabilities: Embodied Coloniality, Gendered Violence, and the Racialized Policing of Affects,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 22, no. 4 (2021): 266–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15240657.2021.1996735>.

Methods of *esqat* differ from other forms of sexualized violence because they are often used in pursuit of a compulsory exchange to either strengthen the Israeli Occupation's control or infiltrate and weaken Palestinian political movements. The typical outcomes include gaining intelligence, the recruitment of informants, coercing (false) confessions, and fabricating evidence for later use. According to a former IOF intelligence officer, "Whether said individual is of a certain sexual orientation, cheating on his wife, or in need of treatment in Israel or the West Bank—he is a target for blackmail."³⁰⁶ Thus, *esqat* constitutes violence against gendered bodies by "foreclos[ing] possibilities for the colonized through coercive and disciplinary practices."³⁰⁷ Additionally, the relationships formed are shaped by gendered, classed, racialized, and religious dimensions that reinforce Israeli military control over Palestinians, including over their private and intimate lives.³⁰⁸

In this portion of the report, we offer select case studies of *esqat* in which the victims document their experiences. Based on the witness testimony provided below, we conclude that honeytraps and the weaponization of secret information gathered by surveillance, through intimidation, sexpionage, infiltration, and information fabrication, all factor into the strategy of *esqat*.

Case Study 1: Sexpionage through Honeytraps

Sexpionage is the process of collecting, exploiting, and threatening to expose information or evidence directly pertaining to sex, sexuality, or sexualized violence through honeytraps. It relies heavily on the strategy of *esqat* and demonstrates that sexualized violence is part and parcel of Israeli intelligence operations.

A. False Romantic and Sexual Relationships

Ibrahim Muhammad was an unemployed college graduate living in Gaza with his family, including his disabled father and eleven siblings.³⁰⁹ Muham-

306 Hayden Cooper, "Israeli Soldiers from Elite Wire-Tapping Unit Refuse to Use 'Extortion,' 'Blackmail' on Palestinians," ABC News, September 12, 2014, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-13/israeli-soldiers-refuse-to-spy-on-palestinians/5741492>; Philip Weiss, "Israel Surveils and Blackmails Gay Palestinians to Make Them Informants," Mondoweiss, September 12, 2014, <https://mondoweiss.net/2014/09/blackmails-palestinian-informants/>.

307 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, "Secret Penetrabilities," 270.

308 See subsection "Conjuring Consent" for more information.

309 Hamza Abu Eltarabesh, "Israel Uses Online Blackmail to Recruit Collaborators," The Electronic Intifada, February 27, 2018, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/israel-uses-online-blackmail-recruit-collaborators/23461>.

mad met someone online in 2015 who claimed her name was “Suha.” The two began a virtual long-term romantic and sexual relationship. During their relationship, Suha would ask Muhammad about his family, his neighborhood, and to send photos of mosques nearby under the guise of caring about the details of his daily life and supporting his spirituality. After nine months, Suha told Muhammad she and her brother would help him leave Gaza. Following a group call with the three of them, Suha disappeared. He soon got a call back from someone identifying himself as an Israeli agent, informing Muhammad that all of his sexual encounters with “Suha” were in his possession and that unless he complied with their requests for information, he would be exposed. Muhammad complied and eventually worked for multiple Israeli intelligence agents. He was ultimately caught by Palestinian militias and stopped his collaboration. After the fact, a Hamas spokesperson said of the incident: “Israeli agents target a specific profile, mostly among unemployed youth. All are men between the ages of 22 and 28 and about a fifth of them hold university degrees.”³¹⁰

Given the widespread poverty and systematic medical and food shortages caused by the Israeli siege, as well as recurring attacks on Gaza’s infrastructure, leaving is an aspiration of many who wish to secure financial stability for themselves and their families. Thus, Suha’s offer, after months of building a romantic and sexual relationship under false pretences, was compelling.

B. Honeytraps on Queer Palestinians

Queer Palestinians are also victims of *esqat*, many of whom have been the targets of IOF honeytraps. Threats against queer Palestinians exploit the fear that being outed for same-sex relations or gender-queer expression may have detrimental social, familial, or economic repercussions. Israeli intelligence targets queer Palestinians through dating apps, like Grindr, as well as Instagram and Facebook, luring them into relationships that end in blackmail. A 2024 Drop Site News article notes that this:

has sown suspicion across the West Bank and frayed trust. “Israel’s objective in the occupied Palestinian territory is control, domination, and subjugation,” said Jalal Abukhater, who works at 7amleh, a Palestinian digital security organization. Its larger goal, he said, “to instill fear in Palestinians, preventing them from acting or socializing naturally.”³¹¹

310 Eltarabesh, “Israel Uses Online Blackmail to Recruit Collaborators.”

311 Theia Chatelle, “How Israel’s Elite Intelligence Unit Targets Queer Palestinians in the West Bank,” Drop Site News, August 30, 2024, <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/how-israels-elite-intelligence-unit>.

Unit 8200 of the IOF and the Shin Bet have used this tactic to blackmail queer Palestinians. Adham was a 20-year-old Palestinian who connected with someone through Grindr, a dating app primarily geared toward the queer community. The two began messaging on WhatsApp. After the person declared they were an Israeli intelligence operative, Adham was bombarded with photos and links showing intimate familiarity with his family's social media pages.³¹² The agent repeatedly threatened to expose Adham's queerness to his family unless he complied with their demand to gather intelligence on his cousins, who were incarcerated in an Israeli prison and awaiting trial for allegations of militarism:

*He told me that I should go to their homes, search and question their parents and get as much information about them as possible.*³¹³

The agent hounded Adham the entire night via SMS until Adham threw his SIM card away. In the end, Adham refused to comply and stated he would rather be outed than comply with the IOF. In this specific instance, Adham was not exposed, which is a rare outcome for those who refuse to comply with the IOF. Nonetheless, the fear of future exposure remains a constant source of stress, demonstrating the lasting trauma that honeytraps have on Palestinian intimate relationships.

For Adham, the fear of exposure and outing was weaponized against him. This threat carried even more weight, since Adham already knew someone else who had been "outed" to family and friends by the IOF. The results for some Palestinians caught in these situations can be devastating and dangerous.

Other queer Palestinians have reported that, as victims of honeytraps, they were subjected to sexualized slurs, insults, beatings, and interrogations to pressure them to become informants.³¹⁴ The precarity faced by queer Palestinians places them at particular risk, where a honeytrap scenario sets up a double bind—that is, the belief that their only options are to either risk their livelihoods and families or betray their people and homeland.

312 Chatelle, "How Israel's Elite Intelligence Unit Targets Queer Palestinians."

313 Chatelle, "How Israel's Elite Intelligence Unit Targets Queer Palestinians."

314 Chatelle, "How Israel's Elite Intelligence Unit Targets Queer Palestinians."

C. Infiltration of Political Spaces

The third way that honeytraps, blackmail, and coercion are used is through infiltration to directly access Palestinian communities and intelligence and to thwart organizing efforts. A key example of this tactic is the formation and function of *Musta'ribeen* – an Israeli intelligence unit that began as a unit of sleeper agents in the mid-twentieth century to thwart Palestinian national movement building efforts. Their agents were expected to operate for long periods, integrate into the Palestinian population, and even marry Muslim Palestinian women.³¹⁵ This group of agents underwent military, political, and cultural training and eventually assumed roles such as merchants, Quran teachers, and businessmen, embedding themselves within the Palestinian towns they inhabited. They functioned by using Arabs or Arab-passing Israeli agents to pose as Palestinian refugees in various villages, with the goal of disrupting nationalist communities and garnering intelligence:

*They slipped in and out of Arab towns around Palestine, practiced dialect, saw what fooled people and what didn't, and collected bits and pieces for the Hagana's Information Service as the Jews prepared for the fight that their more insightful leaders knew was coming. The agents would sometimes bring back nuggets of military value, like a description of an armed rally in the town of Nablus.*³¹⁶

By the mid-to-late 1950s, several of these men married women and had children, all under the guise of being Arab nationalists and taking thorough advantage of the trust they garnered. “The use of ‘deception’ and ‘the strategic blurring’ of conventional and unconventional tactics are not only reflective of Israel’s operational methods but also deeply rooted in the historical and cultural narratives that shape its national security policy.”³¹⁷ After several years, growing reservations about the operation’s efficacy came to a head, and Shabak leadership disagreed over whether the project was worth continuing.³¹⁸ Furthermore, they feared the intelligence risk posed by the double agents’

315 Liora Sion, “Passing and Telling: Israeli Arabized Soldiers,” *Current Sociology* 73, no. 3 (March 12, 2025): 342–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921251323602>.

316 Matti Friedman, *Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2019) 13.

317 Nazife Selcen Pinar Akgül, “Shadows in Disguise: The Evolution of Mista'arvim Units in Israel's Strategic Culture,” *Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi* 9, no. 1 (2025): 110–22.

318 The “Shin Bet” or “Shabak” are both acronyms for the Israeli Security Agency, which focuses on internal intelligence for the Zionist project. Mossad is responsible for foreign intelligence. The two are completed by the Aman – military intelligence agency. All three form the intelligence arm of the Israeli security forces, the umbrella name for all Zionist police, military, and intelligence agencies.

lies, which resulted in forcing Palestinian mothers and their children to either assume an Israeli lifestyle or leave Palestine and cut off all ties:

I remember telling one of the women, "Madam, your husband is not a Muslim. He is a Jew. He loves you, but will not give up on his family. Come to Israel, live as a Jew, raise your children as Jews and we will care for you until the age of 120". The woman didn't answer - she just fainted..." Three rabbis were brought to the Israeli embassy in Paris, including Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the Chief Rabbi of the IDF, in order to properly convert the women... After the women were converted, Jewish wedding ceremonies were conducted under heavy distress. To save the proselytized women from being murdered for disgracing their families, it was decided to leave them in Paris for a while, where they were attached to Jewish families and their children were sent to Jewish schools.³¹⁹

Eventually, after 1964, the Shabak ended the operation, though there are many documented cases of psychological trauma endured by the wives and children who had "families" with Musta'ribeen agents.³²⁰

The blatant manipulation of trust, especially by those who established families through romantic sexual relationships, is an unnerving violation of consent and a form of sexualized violence, in addition to the massive manipulation of nationalist politics rooted in family trauma, land loss, and ongoing political struggle. The Musta'ribeen are significant because they reveal the systemic character of honeytrapping and its foundational role in the Israeli mission in the early twentieth century. The use of deception to trick vulnerable Palestinians and obstruct organizing labor that challenges Israeli colonization and militarization continues.³²¹

As Israel's settler-colonial project and Palestinian conditions have changed over time, the Musta'ribeen have expanded to incorporate a variety of tactics, timelines, and operations into their intelligence work and have been known to collaborate with other units of the IOF. From posing as professionals to gain access to sensitive spaces to pretending to be protestors and sabotaging mobilization spaces as provocateurs, the Musta'ribeen are still vital to Israeli

319 Marina Golan, "The Children of the Agents," Israel Defense, February 22, 2015. See also: Jewniverse, "Jewish Spies and Arab Wives," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, October 19, 2012, <https://archive.ph/PBKp2>; Ofer Aderet, "Ex-Spy Who Set Up Zionist Underground in Iraq Dies at 95," Haaretz, November 1, 2019, <https://archive.ph/00EZY>; Akiva Novick, "60 Years Later, Spies' Lives Revealed," Ynet, 2012, <https://archive.ph/yI9u7>.

320 Jewniverse, "Jewish Spies and Arab Wives," and Ofer Aderet, "Ex-Spy."

321 The Jerusalem Fund, "Mista'arvim: Israeli Spies Disguised as Arabs," The Jerusalem Fund, December 12, 2019, <https://archive.ph/tyqpn>.

intelligence operations today.

The Musta'ribeen have been commonplace at Palestinian protests for decades. Like their predecessors, Musta'ribeen agents focus on agitating at protests and communal gatherings. These agents undergo over a year of training to assume linguistic, religious, and cultural fluency.³²² Once trained, they work with Israeli intelligence to identify protests, donning wigs and disguises, and marching alongside other Palestinians to gather as much intelligence as possible. At a certain point, agents typically incite violence that leads to Palestinians' arrests, and they often participate in IOF brutality against protestors.³²³ There are other documented instances of Musta'ribeen raiding refugee camps, kidnapping, and physically forcing Palestinians to spy on each other.³²⁴ For instance, the Duvdevan Unit of the Musta'ribeen was responsible for shooting and killing Shireen Abu Akleh.³²⁵

In December 2024, it came to light that a Musta'ribeen agent, disguised as a French journalist, and IOF soldiers kidnapped Dr. Marwan al-Hams.³²⁶ Posing as Arab men bent on "family revenge," a group of armed Musta'ribeen shot multiple journalists and medical professionals before kidnapping Dr. al-Hams, then spokesperson of the Gaza Ministry of Health and the director of the Abu Youssef Al-Najjar Hospital.³²⁷ The ISF was convinced Dr. al-Hams knew where an Israeli soldier was allegedly being held. Three months later, the same forces used another guise to kidnap Dr. al-Hams's daughter, Tasneem. The IOF imprisoned and tortured Tasneem with the goal of pressuring Dr. al-Hams into revealing the whereabouts of the missing soldier. Eventually, Tasneem was returned. These two incidents were part of IOF plans to systematically render all hospitals unusable and accelerate the already dire genoci-

322 Guardian News, "Dramatic Footage Catches Undercover Soldiers Arresting Palestinian Protesters," YouTube video, December 13, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8VRPRA7xUE>; Linah Alsaafin, "Musta'ribeen, Israel's Agents Who Pose as Palestinians," Al Jazeera, April 10, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/10/mustaribeen-israels-agents-who-pose-as-palestinians>.

323 Guardian News, "Dramatic Footage Catches Undercover Soldiers"; Alsaafin, "Musta'ribeen, Israel's Agents Who Pose as Palestinians."

324 DAWN, "U.S.: Enforce Leahy Laws Against IDF's 'Duvdevan' Unit For Extrajudicial Killings, Perfidy," DAWN, October 10, 2025, <https://dawnmena.org/u-s-enforce-leahy-laws-against-idfs-duvdevan-unit-for-extrajudicial-killings-perfidy/>.

325 "Duvdevan Unit – an Undercover Force Known for Its Cunning and Disguise, Accused of Killing Shireen Abu Akleh," Al-Estiklal Newspaper, n.d., <https://www.alestiklal.net/en/article/duvdevan-unit-an-undercover-force-known-for-its-cunning-and-disguise-accused-of-killing-shireen-abu-akleh>.

326 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) "PCHR Condemns Abduction of Dr. Marwan al-Hams and Holds Israel Responsible for His Safety," July 22, 2025, <https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-condemns-abduction-of-dr-marwan-al-hams-and-holds-israel-responsible-for-his-safety/>.

327 PCHR, "PCHR Condemns Abduction of Dr. Marwan al-Hams."

de in effect. Additionally, according to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, they weaponized the kidnapping of his daughter in an attempt to coerce information out of him.³²⁸ As of the time of writing, Dr. Marwan al-Hams is still missing:

Eyewitness testimonies collected by PCHR have confirmed IOF's direct involvement in this crime as the perpetrators fled towards an area under IOF control, affirming that it was either an IOF's special force, a Mista'arvim unit, or part of armed militia formed by IOF. By this, Israel entrenches the policy of enforced disappearance that has been systematically implemented by IOF over the past months. To date, no official or verified information has been released about the health official's fate.³²⁹

Case Study 2: Sexualized Blackmail

A. Intimidation Through Surveillance

The weaponization of secret information is largely facilitated through intimidation. Intimidation in this instance refers to the weaponization of information to weaken communal ties, disrupt organizing, and elicit compliance with Israeli military power. It is achieved through any combination of brute force, evidentiary blackmail, threats to job security, and other comparable actions. By threatening to expose “secret information,” the IOF attempts to reinforce colonial power over Palestinian women and men by attempting to compromise their status socially and politically. Below are examples of sexualized surveillance and blackmail used to control and fracture Palestinian communities.

Yasmin, a 23-year-old Palestinian woman, details how the IOF used intimidation as a form of coercion during a house raid in the middle of the night. To Yasmin, the gendered implications of the IOF alleging they held secret information about her held dangerous consequences for her, as an unmarried woman:

[The Israeli authorities] invaded the house in the middle of the night, claiming they have ‘secret information’ about my political activism. I am not a man and won’t become a political hero—the way it operates for me . . . I am an unmarried woman . . . Their “secret information” was about me joining a reading group, and assisting in organizing and exposing youth to our city became an accusation. It resulted in excluding me socially and politically, and I applied to many positions as a teacher, but their “secret information” prevented employers from recruiting me. Who knows

328 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, “Israel Abducts and Forcibly Disappears Nurse Tasneem al-Hams, Must Be Held Accountable for Her Well-Being,” October 5, 2025. <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6874/israel-abducts-and-forcibly-disappears-nurse-tasneem-al-hams>.

329 PCHR, “PCHR Condemns Abduction.”

| *whether I will ever find a job? (Yasmin, 23 years old)*³³⁰

Additionally, intimidation threatens familial structures by targeting one family member with the aim of applying pressure to another. In these instances, intimidation eliminates any semblance of privacy for families, increasing the type of secret information with which they are threatened. This type of gendered violence targets working women and mothers, creating familial stresses and placing the burden of how to react to the information, which can jeopardize their families, on women.

| *My son was 12 years old when he was arrested for stone throwing. Seven years have passed since his first arrest and during those seven years I was called to the police station and interrogated over 30 times. They have all our information on their computers, they tap our phone conversations, surveil my family and neighbors. They know where I get my groceries from. They even threatened to revoke our IDs and I lost my job. The police officer told me they have "secret information" against me and my personal relationships with men and he will use it if we do not behave according to their laws. (Nawal, 44 years old)*³³¹

| *I am a lawyer working on various human right [sic] violations against Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and two years ago, my husband needed to renew his passport. The officer refused, explaining that "there is a big secret file" with accusations against me as someone who works against the state. My husband came back terrified. He explained that I might lose my license as a lawyer, the safety of family members, his sister's plans to study abroad . . . including a threat of losing the family house . . . are all at stake.*³³²

| *When I applied for family reunification they told us they have "secret information" about me. What "secret information"? I am only 21 years old, just finished high school, and got married shortly after. I just had my first son and due to their "secret information" I even fear going alone to the pharmacy to purchase medicine.*³³³

330 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, "Secret Penetrabilities," 270.

331 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, "Secret Penetrabilities," 271–272.

332 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, "Secret Penetrabilities," 272.

333 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, "Secret Penetrabilities," 270.

In all of these instances, so-called secret information was utilized to blackmail Palestinians, specifically in the examples above, Palestinian women. Patriarchal social values undergird the expectation that women will comply with IOF orders to avoid familial and societal ostracization. In the three cases presented above, personal virtue, career ambitions, and familial relations were all jeopardized by the IOF weaponizing “secret information.” In other instances, women describe the material implications of being blackmailed and coerced:

*He kept on telling me that for the past two years they collected information about our political activities, including the dissemination of pamphlets against the Israeli military. They pushed me, handcuffed me, and left me all night sitting on a chair. This caused major pain to my body, but I stayed silent, not a word. I used my eyes, gazing over them like I didn't care. This is why I ended up in prison for eight months.*³³⁴

*The “secret information” they presented in court resulted in the demolition of our home. As a woman, I experienced the demolition of home as a major penetration of my body and viscosity. I felt naked without a roof, a right to have a home, an intimate space to be protected and build a family. (Lama, 47 years old)*³³⁵

*Two security men came twice, yelled at me ... claimed that I violated Israeli law, that I don't live in Jerusalem, that they have “secret information” about me and my son ... and sat here for hours asking about him, my family members, relations with others, my movements ... they even knew that I used to sell home-baked pastries to friends ... they cut off my breathing, scaring me with “secret information” ... so, I don't move out, don't see anybody, and lost all my income. (Salwa, 72 years old)*³³⁶

Honeytraps, blackmail, and coercion are wielded against Palestinians according to the same logic by which Israel deploys other forms of sexualized violence and sexual humiliation. Social stigma is weaponized against Palestinians as both a tool of coercion and cover for Israeli crimes. Understanding honeytraps, blackmail, and coercion as forms of sexualized violence exposes how these assaults target not only the individual but also Palestinian collective cohesion.

334 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, “Secret Penetrabilities,” 274.

335 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, “Secret Penetrabilities,” 272.

336 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Otman, and Abdelnabi, “Secret Penetrabilities,” 268.

In 2026, The Grayzone reported that a former Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) employee confessed to his role in nearly two decades of surveillance, informancy, and blackmail of Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank.³³⁷ After being solicited by an Israeli intelligence officer in 2004, the man spent several years using his position as an emergency responder to monitor political activity in the neighborhoods he served. He constructed a network of informants who were tasked with luring Palestinians into sexual relationships based on deception, or in exchange for money, and secretly filmed or audio recorded these exchanges to be used for sexualized blackmail. The information gathered was part of an *esqat* operation which targeted at least sixteen young Palestinian men and women from Nablus, al-Khalil and Bethlehem from 2004 until 2019. The informant's main collaborator was an Israeli spy, codenamed "Suzy," who was reportedly a U.S. citizen, and was in West Bank to organize humanitarian aid deliveries. The PRCS employee and "Suzy" established a dedicated space at Red Crescent's Nablus headquarters that had "cameras for filming" where they would record sexual interactions with informant targets.³³⁸ The PRCS employee explained that after being compromised, the victims "were forced to cooperate with us" and those who refused were "threatened with exposure." One of the victims of the operation was another PRCS volunteer. She attests that the informant "provided her with assistance and established a sexual relationship with her," recording "sexual phone calls between us."³³⁹ Through this coercive relationship, the woman was forced to supply intelligence that assisted Israel's April 2007 assassination of an Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades commander in Nablus: "Due to her proximity to his residence and her ability to monitor him closely without arousing suspicion," the agent was able to provide "immediate, up-to-date information about his hiding place."³⁴⁰

*Essential to note in this example is that this person's role started with seemingly innocuous contributions, such as non-descript reporting. It eventually grew to incorporate coercive sexual deception and bribery of local residents, ultimately culminating in him serving as an assassin: "The collaborator deposited the IED [Improvised Explosive Device] – set to detonate within 15 minutes of activation – before returning home" which led to the assassination of two Palestinian fighters.*³⁴¹

337 Kit Klarenberg and Jonathan Urmeneta, "Drugs, sexual blackmail: shocking confession letter exposes Israel's Red Crescent spy ring," The Grayzone, March 25, 2026, <https://thegrayzone.com/2026/03/25/blackmail-confession-israels-red-crescent/>.

338 Klarenberg and Urmeneta, "Drugs, sexual blackmail."

339 Klarenberg and Urmeneta, "Drugs, sexual blackmail."

340 Klarenberg and Urmeneta, "Drugs, sexual blackmail."

341 Klarenberg and Urmeneta, "Drugs, sexual blackmail."

B. Fabrication of Information

This type of blackmail relies on both the creation of false narratives and the use of sexualized violence and torture to blackmail Palestinians into a “confession.” While other sections of this report detail the use of sexualized torture, in this case study, as sexual torture relates to blackmail, torture is deployed strategically with an aim other than the mere infliction of pain, degradation, and brutality.

Since October 7, 2023, over 9,600 Palestinians have been taken into administrative detention.³⁴² As established by several reports, interviews, and commissions, the IOF has tortured thousands of those prisoners. While other sections of this report thoroughly unpack the various forms of (sexual) torture endured by Palestinians, this section provides an example of the material relationship between torture and coercion. A common tactic utilized by the IOF is torturing men into false confessions of rape and publicizing those confessions to legitimize ongoing Israeli military pursuits. Since October 7, these false confessions have been used to justify the genocide in Gaza. As shared earlier in the report, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel stated:

The Commission has determined that detainees were routinely subjected to sexual abuse and harassment, and that threats of sexual assault and rape were directed at detainees or their female family members. The Commission received information about detainees being forced to undress and lie on top of each other while subjected to verbal abuse and forced to curse their mothers. One detainee was subjected to an attempted rape with a carrot in the anus in front of the other detainees. Another detainee held in Sde Teiman reported that female soldiers had forced him and others to make sounds like a sheep, curse the Hamas leadership and the Prophet Muhammad, and say “I am a whore.” Detainees were beaten if they did not comply. In another case, a soldier took off his trousers and pressed his crotch to a detainee’s face, saying: “You are my bitch. Suck my dick”... In view of the apparent

342 “Medical Neglect Endangers the Lives of Detainees Held in the Clinic of Ramla Prison,” Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs (CDA), February 22, 2026, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://cda.gov.ps/index.php/en/51-slider-en/21925-april-2026-update-on-numbers-of-palestinian-political-detainees-in-israeli-occupation-s-prisons&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1776551005732965&usg=AOvVaw0n7caZt4nUfYJdb9mvm7Cr>.

*coercive circumstances of the confessions appearing in the videos, the Commission does not accept such confessions as proof of the crimes confessed.*³⁴³

The IOF manipulated these “confessions” to fuel political support for their ongoing attacks on Gaza:

*Israeli officials have used sexual violence committed on Israeli women on 7 October to mobilize support for the ISF military operations in the Gaza Strip and continue the war, referring to Hamas as “a rapist regime” that has weaponized sexual violence as a means of terrorizing the Israeli population while “the international community remains silent.” This message has been amplified and circulated by the ISF in videos of detained Palestinian males allegedly confessing to acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the 7 October attacks...*³⁴⁴

343 Independent International Commission of Inquiry “More than a Human Can Bear,” 28.

344 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, “More than a Human Can Bear,” 19.

Conclusion

At its core, *esqat* relies on an organized, planned, and carefully executed exploitation of intimacy, sex, and sexuality to subjugate and degrade Palestinians individually and collectively. Because of the standardization of this strategy, *esqat* comprises a crucial component of Israel's system of sexualized violence. Second, these kinds of operations and tactics are used as part of the Occupation's counterinsurgent political warfare against Palestinian liberation movements, figures, and acts, thus seeking to uphold an internationally condemned and illegal military occupation of Palestine that itself weaponizes sexual violence for means of social control.

As other sections illustrate, Israel's systemic sexualized violence heavily exploits social standards tied to honor, virtue, or dignity. By doing so, the tactic pulls on a double bind that encourages silent compliance for fear of the victims being alienated by their community, while also potentially experiencing material retaliation from Israel. The weaponization of cultural norms against individuals is fundamentally rooted in sexualized and gendered exploitation. In other words, much power is garnered through manipulating perceived Palestinian and Arab cultural values in ways that ultimately reify a colonial heteronormativity. Following a persistent assault during a three-month administrative detention, Khitam Saafin, the leader of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, stated:

It's not something that's done by an individual soldier who decided to humiliate or mistreat [the prisoners], it's part of the process, part of the policy, in order to affect the entire society and put it under pressure... because they are aware that [gender] is a sensitive subject in Palestinian society.³⁴⁵

In line with this, the IOF capitalizes on financial insecurity caused by colonial and capitalist material conditions. There are some instances where honeytraps include payments or gifts as part of the entrapment itself. Other times, Israeli intelligence operatives have blackmailed Palestinians while offering financial payments for their compliance, such as in Ibrahim's case. Here, there is a blatant exploitation of a person's precarity to operationalize spying.

345 Dylann N, "Sexual Harassment and Violence against Palestinian Women in Israeli Prisons," The Jerusalem Fund, August 3, 2018, <https://archive.ph/HGiUj>.

As one Israeli soldier, who has spoken about these forms of exploitation, has stated:

If you're homosexual and know someone who knows a wanted person—and we need to know about it—Israel will make your life miserable. If you need emergency medical treatment in Israel, the West Bank or abroad—we searched for you. The state of Israel will allow you to die before we let you leave for treatment without giving information on your wanted cousin.³⁴⁶

Whether it is a material or perceived vulnerability based on gender and queerness, the desperation of escaping poverty caused by colonial restrictions, or the use of targeted violence, all of these factors exploit vulnerable members of society and coerce them into informing. The impact of this form of sexualized violence is not only felt by the individual. The examples provided and the thousands more speak to the integral role gender, sexuality, and class play in sustaining Israeli control over Palestinian life and land. Honeytraps, blackmail, and coercion are systematically built into Israel's governmental operations, and have been used across locations and time periods in historic Palestine.

Israel's gross manipulation of sex, gender, and intimacy is also part of its global intelligence gathering and counterinsurgency strategies. For example Israel has a long-recorded history of using honeytraps against its non-Palestinian political opponents. The most famous case of a Mossad honeytrap took place against Mordechai Vanuna, a dissident citizen journalist and activist who Israeli intelligence feared would release information to the public about its illegal nuclear weapons program to the British press in 1986. Furthermore, the Mossad has entrapped dozens of politicians, using documented – sometimes staged – sexual acts as leverage.³⁴⁷ Today, media reporting on Jeffrey Epstein's ties to Israel raises significant concern about Israel's use of honeytraps as a method of political warfare through intelligence tradecraft and blackmail.³⁴⁸ While it is still to be determined whether there is merit to allegations

346 "Any Palestinian Is Exposed to Monitoring by the Israeli Big Brother," The Guardian, September 12, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/12/israeli-intelligence-unit-testimonies>.

347 Gordon Thomas, *Gideon's Spies: The Secret History of the Mossad*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

348 It is reported on Drop Site News that Epstein's relationship with Israel ran deep – he was known to have a relationship with former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and hosted IOF soldiers at his Manhattan residence. More recently, it was revealed that the Israeli government installed and maintained

that Epstein was indeed a spy for the Mossad, and that he established his sex-trafficking ring of women and children (of over one thousand victims) for the purpose of Israeli “sexpionage,” it is undeniable that there are many connections that exist between Epstein’s systemic entrapment of politicians and his unwavering support for furthering Israeli financial and political interests.

a security system in his Manhattan apartment. Lastly, Epstein also brokered deals and functioned as a backchannel between Israel and other countries, including Nigeria, the United Arab Emirates, Côte d’Ivoire, and Mongolia. See Drop Site’s collection of articles on the subject: <https://www.dropsitenews.com/s/epstein-and-israel/archive?sort=new>.

Part 2

Israel's Systemic Gendered Violence

Israel's Systemic Gendered Violence

Israeli colonialism in Palestine operates as much through mundane, embodied, and everyday assaults on Palestinian intimacy as through hypervisible forms of state violence.³⁴⁹ We contend that Israel attacks everyday Palestinian life through the utilization of gendered mechanics. We dedicate this section of the report to case studies exploring gendered violence to offer a bird's-eye view of how gendered violence is integral to Israeli colonialism and, thus, sexualized violence is an inevitable outcome of the colonial tactics in place. Because sexualized violence often functions as gendered domination, grasping the extent of Israeli state-sanctioned sexualized violence requires consideration of the range of spaces and sites that are socially and materially organized around gender. As we also explore with more detail later in "Conjuring Consent," Israel's investment in racist, Islamophobic, and Orientalist narratives intrinsically genders Palestinians in ways that justify its brutal deployment of sexualized and gendered violence. Because of this, when reproductive health services and facilities are destroyed, homes are invaded by soldiers or surveillance technologies, family structures and roles are destabilized, or the dead are denied dignity, deeply gendered spaces are disrupted and violated in both meaning and function. Targeting these spaces as intimate infrastructures through which gendered life is sustained can and often does become a pathway to sexualized violence.

We classify gendered violence as an array of actions or threatened actions that are motivated by targeting an individual's or group's gender identity, expressions, or perceived gender identity.³⁵⁰ Due to this, attacks on family structures, spaces, and bodily functions become the starting place of assaults against the Palestinian people. This occurs through the creation of systemic policies legalizing siege, displacement, surveillance, incarceration, destruction, and bombardment of Palestinian infrastructure, which compromise the rhythms of life such as birth, martyrdom, mourning, loving, and living. Thus, understanding Israel's gendered violence across Palestine requires recognizing

349 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology*.

350 See the glossary for an in-depth explanation of how we classify gendered violence.

that Israel's eliminatory project operates at a scale that attempts to dismantle all conditions of life that sustain Palestinian existence across generations, resulting in sexualized violence as one intensified outcome.

Under Israeli settler-colonial logics, assaults on gender are not only targeted against women and girls but are also inclusive of all genders, including men and boys, to attack Palestinian life, families, and communities with the aim of eliminating and eradicating Palestinians from their land. For example, the gendered and sexualized abuse of Palestinian men, including assault on their sexuality and reproductive organs, is orchestrated as a form of reproductive and psychological warfare, as it invades not only the Palestinian male body but also the psyche, and infiltrates the intimate relations that form the character of the Palestinian family and social system. Additionally, home invasion as a method of psychological warfare is simultaneously a form of gendered violence through its assault on intimacy, and the breaking apart of Palestinian kinship relations by attacking gendered roles within families.

Below, we provide five case studies that register Israel's systemic gendered violence against Palestinians. First, we look at assaults on reproductive health and reproductive genocide. Second, we look at the desecration of martyred bodies. Third, we investigate the impacts of Israel's Law 5763, creating family separation. Fourth, we detail the investigation into assaults on Palestinian homes. Fifth, we conclude by examining the use of AI in Gaza and its role in domicile.³⁵¹ Through these case studies, we illuminate gendered violence as systemically prevalent in all aspects of Palestinian life, from birth to death and martyrdom. Additionally, these case studies reveal how logics of gendered violence and sexualized violence, as one outcome, are constituted and enacted against every layer of Palestinian life.

While these are five iterations that we track as part of Israel's systemic gendered violence, we recognize that there are a multitude of other case studies available, as well as a plethora of examples that shed light on the expansive nature in which Israel targets Palestinian life, death, social structures, and communities in gendered ways. The purpose of this section is to showcase the inseparability of gendered and sexualized violence across Palestine as part and parcel of the Israeli settler-colonial project, as well as how it affects Palestinians in the first beginnings of life until martyrdom and in between. Additionally, we trace these examples across history and areas of occupied Palestine to demonstrate the inseparability of gendered violence as a methodical attempt to dispossess Palestinians of their land.

³⁵¹ See the glossary for a definition of domicile.

Case Study 1: Assaults on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Genocide

The womb is an intimate site where past, present, and future converge in the gendered body. To theorize the Palestinian womb as a site of futurity is to recognize that Israel's settler-colonial project against Palestinians is fundamentally a war against time: against the possibility that Palestinians will persist, continuing to create life, transmitting identity, memory, and relationship to land across generations.³⁵² The womb, in this sense, is the most intimate archive of a people's cultural continuity. It carries not only new life and the promise of future generations of Palestinians in Palestine, but it is also the accumulated memory of dispossession, resistance, and collective identity that Israeli settler colonialism seeks to extinguish.

Palestinian futurity is fundamentally incompatible with Israeli settler-colonial elimination. Because Israel defines itself as a Jewish state, Palestinians, especially those living within its borders, are cast as a "demographic threat" whose fertility must be contained, if not eliminated. Historically, Israel has employed anti-natalist policies that have sought to discourage Palestinian birth rates and fertility and, simultaneously, pro-natalist policies that have sought to increase Jewish demographic presence in Palestine.³⁵³ Israeli political discourse and media routinely depict Palestinians as excessive reproducers whose very existence jeopardizes Israel's "modern" and "progressive" character.

For example, in 1995, Israeli geographer Arnon Soffer warned that "the most serious threat Israel faces is the wombs of Arab women," and in a widely circulated pamphlet, argued that Palestinian birth rates endanger national security.³⁵⁴ Golda Meir remarked that her nightmares stemmed from the knowledge that "another Palestinian child will be born."³⁵⁵ These statements – and the policies that accompany them – reveal that targeting Palestinian reproductive life, both symbolically and materially, is not incidental but central to Israel's function as a predatory state. Israeli gendered violence enacted against preg-

352 Sarah Ihmoud, "Countering Reproductive Genocide in Gaza: Palestinian Women's Testimonies." *Journal of Native American and Indigenous Studies* 12, no. 1 (2025): 33–53, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/957106>.

353 Rhoda Kanaaneh, *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

354 Kanaaneh, *Birthing the Nation*, 74.

355 Simona Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women's Resistance* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 65.

nant Palestinian women's bodies and those of their children is thus deeply embedded in a larger structure of settler-colonial dispossession.³⁵⁶

A 2002 study on Palestinians' reproductive health rights in the occupied West Bank concluded that mobility restrictions, curfews, and checkpoints make it difficult for women to reach clinics and doctors' offices, resulting in increased home deliveries and cesarean sections due to pregnancy complications.³⁵⁷ Additionally, women were more likely to ask for inductions due to fear of being trapped by curfews, heightening existential concerns. A UN report from the High Commissioner for Human Rights similarly reported in 2005 the dangers pregnant women face and endure at checkpoints:

*61 women had given birth at checkpoints between September 2000 and December 2004 and 36 of their babies died as a result. A breakdown of these figures shows that in 2000-2001, 31 pregnant women delivered at checkpoints and 17 of the babies died; in 2002, 16 women gave birth in similar conditions and 11 babies died; in 2003 and 2004, the numbers decreased: 8 and 6 women gave birth at checkpoints and 3 and 5 of the babies died, respectively... Since 2001, UNFPA had recorded more than 70 cases of women in labour who had been delayed at checkpoints, which resulted in unattended and risky roadside births, causing maternal as well as newborn deaths.*³⁵⁸

These material conditions continue and have worsened today. On March 20, 2025, the OHCHR reported that there were 73,000 pregnant women in the occupied West Bank, but due to movement restrictions and checkpoint closures, access to antenatal, postnatal, and delivery care – especially for those who encounter critical health risks – is limited.³⁵⁹

In Gaza, at the start of Israel's assault in October 2023, the United Nations estimated that there were 50,000 pregnant women, birthing 5,500 ba-

356 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, "The Politics of Birth and the Intimacies of Violence against Palestinian Women in Occupied East Jerusalem," *British Journal of Criminology* 55, no. 6 (2015), 1187-1206, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv035>.

357 Marleen Bosmans, Dina Nasser, Umayyeh Khammash, Patricia Claeys, and Marleen Temmerman, "Palestinian Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in a Longstanding Humanitarian Crisis," *Reproductive Health Matters* 16, no. 31 (2008): 103-111, 106, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080\(08\)31343-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(08)31343-3).

358 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Issue of Palestinian Pregnant Women Giving Birth at Israeli Checkpoints," *United Nations: The Question of Palestine*, April 14, 2005, 2, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-183639/>.

359 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "On the Brink: Women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," UN OHCHR, March 20, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2025/03/brink-women-occupied-palestinian-territory>.

bies each month, and that many would require emergency care that no longer exists.³⁶⁰ Miscarriages rose at the time by over 300 percent, and widespread malnutrition, anemia, and lack of prenatal supplements intensified risks of pre-term birth, low birth weight, and fatal bleeding during labor.³⁶¹ With clean water, menstrual products, and basic supplies blocked, many resorted to homemade pads or taking birth-control pills to stop their periods.³⁶² Bombed hospitals have no fuel, electricity, anesthesia, or sterile equipment, forcing people to give birth in overcrowded shelters, homes, or streets. Cesarean sections are routinely performed without anesthesia, and new mothers cannot access formula, diapers, or food and water.³⁶³

At the same time, since October 2023, Israel's assault on Gaza has, in part, operated through the systematic destruction of reproductive health care facilities and other everyday infrastructures that make Palestinian life precarious, as well as impossible. We have previously named this constellation of practices reproductive genocide.³⁶⁴ In addition to the human rights violations committed against pregnant Palestinians at checkpoints, Israel has targeted Gaza's reproductive health care system, destroying maternity wards, in vitro fertilization (IVF) units, and clinics. In December 2023, an Israeli strike on the Al-Basma IVF Center – Gaza City's largest fertility clinic – blew open liquid nitrogen tanks and wiped out over 4,000 embryos.³⁶⁵ These attacks on Palestinian reproduction are compounded by Israel's use of weapons like white phosphorus and other toxic munitions, which will have long-term, intergenera-

360 Angelica Wahono, "Reproductive Violence in Gaza: A Gendered Atrocity under International," Women's Initiative for Gender Justice, February 10, 2025, <https://4genderjustice.org/reproductive-violence-in-gaza-a-gendered-atrocity-under-international-law/>.

361 Wahono, "Reproductive Violence in Gaza."

362 Lina AbiRafeh, "No Freedom without Reproductive Freedom for Palestinian Women," International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), December 8, 2023, <https://www.ippf.org/featured-perspective/no-freedom-without-reproductive-freedom-palestinian-women>.

363 Wahono, "Reproductive Violence in Gaza."

364 Reproductive genocide is the constellation of policies, narratives, and state actions that constrain or eliminate the reproductive capacities, choices, and possibilities of communities rendered vulnerable by siege, militarism, occupation, settler-colonial violence, or imperial warfare. This framework includes practices such as mass imprisonment, psychological warfare, collective punishment, ethnic cleansing, sexualized and gendered violence by Israeli occupying forces, enforced conditions of unlivability, and the violation of bodies both living and dead. Put differently, reproductive genocide refers to the deliberate use of strategies that erode a people's ability to bear children, nurture families, and sustain future generations. See: "The Palestinian Feminist Collective Condemns Reproductive Genocide in Gaza," Palestinian Feminist Collective, n.d., accessed March 5, 2026, <https://palestinianfeministcollective.org/the-pfc-condemns-reproductive-genocide-in-gaza/>.

365 Hala Shoman, "Reprocide in Gaza: The Gendered Strategy of Genocide Through Reproductive Violence," Institute of Palestine Studies, August 20, 2025, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1657726>.

tional effects on fertility.³⁶⁶

Since October 2023, thousands of mothers in Gaza have been left to grieve the murder of their children and, as of October 2024, at least 15,000 children have lost their mothers. Hundreds of thousands of mothers remain the sole caretakers of their families as widows or partners to political prisoners, delimiting their rights to care for their children in freedom and safety. Thousands more have been severed from being with their families as a result of systematic expulsions and incarcerations. Palestinian mothers in Gaza have been left to shoulder the impossible task of giving life and caring for their children despite the widespread starvation, displacement, and disease.

While there are thousands of cases that show how Israel's genocide in Gaza includes efforts to prevent births within the group and an assault on Palestinian children, mothers, and reproductive capacities, we share two cases that clearly reveal Israel's systematic assault on Palestinian reproductive capacities, life, and infrastructure. Rania Abu Anza, for example, went through ten years of IVF treatment until she finally gave birth to twin babies, Naeim and Wissam. Both babies were executed in an airstrike, along with their father, in March 2024. In another case that illustrates reproductive genocide in Gaza, two days after delivering twin babies, Jomana Arafa was martyred, along with her babies, and her own mother, while the family was seeking shelter in a safe humanitarian zone. Her husband was spared because he had gone out to retrieve the birth certificates of the two newborn children.

Abu Anza's and Arafa's cases are only the tip of the iceberg. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory reported that the IOF systematically targeted reproductive health care practices and facilities, all but exterminating maternity wards, prenatal treatments, fertility clinics, and neonatal intensive care units:

Awdah Hospital, the main reproductive healthcare provider in northern Gaza, was targeted repeatedly by Israeli security forces from November 2023 to January 2024, and again in May. It was targeted despite the fact that the Israeli authorities had been given the hospital's geographical coordinates by Médecins sans frontières, which had informed all parties that it was a functioning hospital. Three doctors, including two from Médecins sans frontières, were killed in a strike on 21 November. The hospital was under siege in December, with some 250 people trapped inside facing severe shortages of food, water and medicine. During the siege,

366 Reuters, "Human Rights Watch Says Israel Used White Phosphorus in Gaza, Lebanon," Reuters, October 13, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/human-rights-watch-says-israel-used-white-phosphorous-gaza-lebanon-2023-10-12/>.

*all males over 15 were ordered to exit the hospital in their underwear, and several medical staff, including the hospital director, were arrested. Several persons, including medical staff and a pregnant woman, were reportedly killed by snipers...*³⁶⁷

*In April, it was reported that only two of the 12 partially functioning hospitals offering sexual and reproductive health care were actually able to provide such services. Direct attacks against the main maternity wards in Shifa' and Nasr hospitals rendered them inoperative. Facilities specifically designated as sexual and reproductive healthcare centres were directly targeted or forced to cease operations. Those facilities include Emirati Maternity Hospital, Awdah Hospital and Sahabah Hospital, which are the primary maternal healthcare facilities in the south and north of Gaza. In parallel, several maternity wards in other hospitals were forced to close, including the maternity ward of Aqsa Hospital in January. The Basmah in vitro fertilization centre, the largest fertility clinic in Gaza, was the direct target of air strikes in December 2023 that reportedly resulted in the destruction of approximately 3,000 embryos.*³⁶⁸

Taken together, the Commission notes that the attacks on reproductive health care were intentional and are expected to have long-term physical, psychological, and emotional consequences for women and girls:

*[T]he deliberate destruction of sexual and reproductive healthcare facilities constitutes reproductive violence and has had a particularly harmful effect on pregnant, post-partum and lactating women, who remain at high risk of injury and death. Targeting such infrastructure is a violation of women and girls' reproductive rights and the rights to life, health, human dignity and non-discrimination. In addition, it has caused immediate physical and mental harm and suffering to women and girls and will have irreversible long-term effects on the mental health and the physical reproductive and fertility prospects of the Palestinian people as a group.*³⁶⁹

Severe Israeli limitations on access to food for Palestinians led to a human-made famine for the first time in Gaza's history, with the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification confirming level 5 (catastrophic food insecurity) in the Gaza governorate.³⁷⁰ A recent report by Physicians for Human Rights,

367 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry," 7.

368 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry," 8.

369 Independent International Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry," 20.

370 Al Jazeera Staff, "What Has Led to a Famine Being Confirmed in Gaza?" Al Jazeera, August 22,

which interviewed clinicians deployed in Gaza, notes that medical practitioners observed:

*widespread physiological signs and symptoms of acute malnutrition [in Palestinian women], including disruptions to menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation, as well as impacts on infants' survival. These effects are consistent with the known medical mechanisms of acute malnutrition and starvation and their impact on reproductive health.*³⁷¹

In fact, acute malnutrition and severe food insecurity not only disrupt the body's hormonal balance, but it also leads to irregular or absent menstrual cycles and reduced fertility.³⁷²

The systematized destruction of Gaza's health infrastructure, combined with restrictions on food and medical supplies, including baby formula, created an environment in which "the fundamental biological processes of reproduction and survival have been systematically destroyed, resulting in known and foreseeable harm, pain, suffering, and death."³⁷³ This reproductive genocide enacted through the targeting of the material foundations of reproduction, infant and maternal care, and bodily survival, indicates a type of sexualized, gendered violence intent on making Palestinian life impossible. As we discuss reproductive genocide in this case study, we note that all the violence documented in this report – torture, murder, mutilation, and desecration of dead bodies – is part of a genocidal logic targeting Palestinians, whether it occurred before or after October 2023.

Case Study 2: Desecration of Martyred Bodies

The Palestinian martyr has long been subjected to systems of surveillance, bureaucratic control, and political instrumentalization by Israeli state and military authorities.³⁷⁴ Across the occupied territories, Israel has maintained

2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/22/what-has-led-to-a-famine-being-confirmed-in-gaza>.

371 Physicians for Human Rights, "Destroying Hope for the Future: Reproductive Violence in Gaza" (January 14, 2026), 23, https://phr.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Destroying-Hope-for-the-Future_Reproductive-Violence-in-Gaza_PHR-Report_Jan-2026.pdf.

372 Physicians for Human Rights, "Destroying Hope for the Future," 23.

373 Physicians for Human Rights, "Destroying Hope for the Future," 3.

374 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, "Necropenology: Conquering New Bodies, Psychics, and Territories of Death in East Jerusalem," *Identities* 27, no. 3 (2020): 285–301, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2020.1737403>; Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, "Persistent Faces: Palestinian Fatherhood against Necropower," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 29, no. 2 (2023): 82–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2020.1737403>.

extensive mechanisms for managing Palestinian martyrdom – from requiring permits for burials and controlling access to cemeteries, to withholding the bodies of Palestinians killed during military operations or alleged attacks.³⁷⁵ The martyr, in this framework, is not released from political life at the moment of death; rather, it enters a new phase of state custody and juridical negotiation that affects martyrs' bodies based on their gender, especially against Palestinian men.

In 2023, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor recorded at least 145 martyred Palestinians being held by Israel in its morgues, and 255 in an off-limit cemetery near the Jordanian border.³⁷⁶ This gendered practice to allow the army and police to hold onto the bodies of martyred Palestinians became permissible in 2019 by the Israeli Supreme Court and passed into law by the Israeli Knesset in 2021. A more recent example of this is the continued holding of martyrs, including Walid Daqqa, who was martyred in 2024 after thirty-eight years in prison. The reasoning for holding his body was to be used in a potential prisoner exchange, denying his family the right to bury his body in a dignified way. This practice of body retention, which human rights organizations, including HaMoked and B'Tselem, have documented extensively, transforms the Palestinian martyr into a site of ongoing punishment and leverage.³⁷⁷ Families are denied the ability to mourn, perform religious rites, and bury their dead in accordance with Islamic tradition – a form of collective punishment that extends grief beyond the individual and into the broader community.

Not only does body retention affect families' ability to mourn their martyrs with dignity, but more insidious desecrations also happen to Palestinian martyrs, as well, through organ stealing. Historically, this practice of organ stealing dates back to the 1987 Intifada, when Palestinian doctor Dr. Hatem Abu Ghazaleh noticed martyrs' bodies, after being returned, were missing eyes and kidneys.³⁷⁸ Abusing martyrs' bodies in this fashion, by stealing their body parts and then desecrating their bodies to hide the theft, demonstrates how

org/10.1037/pac0000680.

375 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, "Criminality in Spaces of Death: The Palestinian Case Study," *British Journal of Criminology* 54, no. 1 (2014), 38–52, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azt057>.

376 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, "Int'l Committee Must Investigate Israel's Holding of Dead Bodies in Gaza," November 26, 2023, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5982/Int%E2%80%99l-committee-must-investigate-Israel%E2%80%99s-holding-of-dead-bodies-in-Gaza%E2%80%8B>.

377 B'Tselem, "Living Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps" (Jerusalem: B'Tselem, January 2026), <https://archive.ph/sEI8e>.

378 Healthcare Workers for Palestine, "A Brief History of Israel's Theft and Trafficking of Palestinian Organs," Mondoweiss, February 22, 2025, <https://mondoweiss.net/2025/02/a-brief-history-of-israels-theft-and-trafficking-of-palestinian-organs/>.

the Palestinian martyr is gendered in a way to deny their dignity, especially of young men resistance fighters. This showcases how the logic of bodily violation, whether alive or dead, is systemically practiced. Additionally, the Orientalist mindset inherent in the Israeli psyche classifies Palestinian bodies at the bottom of a hierarchy of organ harvesting operations since they were the bodies of “terrorists” or “enemies.”³⁷⁹ As Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Donald Boström write about the infamous Dr. Hiss, who was behind most of the organ harvesting operations in Israel until it was exposed in 2009:

*He described himself as a patriot and as a scientist who had nothing but disdain for the... “Orientals” (Arabs) who prevented him from using the organs for medical material, commerce, and collection.*³⁸⁰

Hiss’s protégé, Dr. Chen Kugel, continues, “If there were any complaints coming from [Palestinian] families...they were the enemy and so, of course, they were lying and no one would believe them.”³⁸¹ Palestinian martyrs’ stolen body parts were used for a range of practices, including to treat IOF soldiers medically, to perform transplants, to conduct research, and to sell in illegal organ markets.³⁸² More recently, in Gaza, the IOF systemically practiced body stealing from cemeteries and organ stealing from martyred Palestinians.³⁸³

Additionally, in Gaza, the Israeli military’s genocidal campaign beginning in October 2023 pushed the criminalization and abuse of Palestinian martyrs to an extreme and widely documented scale. Mass graves discovered at Nasser Hospital and Al-Shifa Hospital in 2024 revealed bodies that had been buried in conditions described by UN investigators and forensic experts as deeply concerning, with some showing signs of having been bound or handled in ways inconsistent with combat death alone.³⁸⁴ Healthcare Workers for Palestine writes:

379 Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Donald Bostrom. “The Body of the Enemy.” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 19, no. 2 (2013), 261, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b1ba7746c3c4e559a7a8c5/t/5a33a73753450a16519856f1/1513334584865/Body+of+the+Enemy-NS-H%26Bostrom.pdf>.

380 Scheper-Hughes and Bostrom, “The Body of the Enemy,” 252.

381 Healthcare Workers for Palestine, “A Brief History of Israel’s Theft and Trafficking of Palestinian Organs.”

382 Healthcare Workers for Palestine, “A Brief History of Israel’s Theft and Trafficking of Palestinian Organs.”

383 Healthcare Workers for Palestine, “A Brief History of Israel’s Theft and Trafficking of Palestinian Organs.”

384 “Uncovering of Mass Graves in Gaza’s Nasser Hospital: What You Need to Know,” *Al Jazeera*, April 24, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2024/4/24/uncovering-of-mass-grave-at-gazas-nasser-hospital-what-you-need-to-know>.

On August 5, 2024, three hundred and three days into their genocidal onslaught on the people of Gaza, the Israeli Occupation returned to Khan Younis the bodies of 89 Palestinians in a shipping container. The living, desperate to identify their loved ones, were met instead with the embodiment of mass death. Decomposed beyond recognition, the corpses retained none of their histories. Were these the bodies of tortured detainees? Were they corpses stolen from bulldozed graves in Gaza? The Occupation refused to say. Without the ability to do DNA testing, Palestinian officials were unable to identify the bodies and had no choice but to bury them, bag by bag, in a single large grave near Nasser Hospital.³⁸⁵

After the so-called ceasefire in 2025, ninety martyred Palestinians were returned to Gaza as part of the agreement. In an exchange for forty-five martyrs, medics and forensics teams reported that Palestinian martyrs were returned blindfolded and handcuffed, showing signs of physical abuse, torture, and execution. Many bodies were burned, decomposing, and missing limbs or teeth.³⁸⁶ The abuse and torture that they experienced in life are carried on into martyrdom, where their bodies are still mistreated. The permission structures inherent in Israel's sexualized and gendered violence – rooted in racialized and sexualized othering of Palestinian men and women – create a situation in which it is permissible to destroy graveyards with bulldozers, exhume buried bodies, and obstruct humanitarian access to retrieve and identify the martyred. These acts have only compounded the horror of genocide.³⁸⁷

Entire families have been killed in strikes with no possibility of proper identification or burial, as morgues overflowed and civil infrastructure collapsed entirely.³⁸⁸ The sheer scale of death – with tens of thousands killed – combined

385 Healthcare Workers for Palestine, "A Brief History of Israel's Theft and Trafficking of Palestinian Organs."

386 News Agencies, "Gaza Medics Find Signs of Torture on Palestinian Bodies Returned by Israel," Al Jazeera, October 15, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/15/gaza-medics-find-signs-of-torture-on-palestinian-bodies-returned-by-israel>.

387 Permission structures are a concept that explains how actions being done publicly in one instance communicates to audiences to replicate those actions in other contexts (See: R.J. Lambert, Randall W. Monty, Kimberly Morquecho, and Sarah Warren-Riley, "Introduction to Special Issue on Unjust 'Permission Structures' in/as Technical Communication," *Technical Communication and Social Justice* 3, no. 2 (2025): 1-6, <https://techcommsocialjustice.org/index.php/tcsj/article/view/88>). In this case, permission structures created and inherent in the Israeli government and the IOF regarding the permissible methods of abuse against Palestinians become further practiced not only when they are alive but also after they are martyred.

388 Mohamed Solaimane, "Gazan Families Grapple with Loss of Loved Ones as Forensic Infrastructure Collapses amid Israel's Ongoing Genocide," *The New Arab*, February 24, 2026, <https://www.newarab>.

with deliberate interference in burial and identification processes, constitutes what scholars of necropolitics describe as a total exercise of sovereign power over life and death, where even the afterlife of the body is denied dignity, legibility, and rest.³⁸⁹ Over 120 mass graves have been created in Gaza since October 2023, and many Palestinians in Gaza utilized the ceasefire in January 2025 to be able to create final resting places for their loved ones.³⁹⁰

We understand the desecration of Palestinian martyrs as an attack on Palestinian intimacy itself – on the relational and affective bonds through which a people know themselves, mourn their losses, and transmit life across generations. To deny a people their martyrs is to deny them a future; it is an Israeli colonial technology aimed not merely at physical elimination but at the rupture of the intimate infrastructures – of memory, of touch, of burial rites, of collective grief – through which Palestinian life and identity are reproduced and held.

Case Study 3: Family Separation and Israel's Law 5763

The Israeli occupation has built a robust military architecture that severs Palestinian land, communities, and families from one another, fragmenting and dismantling Palestinian intimate familial and kinship social relations. Policies such as the ID card and permit regimes work to “fragment and police Palestinian populations into separate and unequal territories (Gaza, 1948 [Palestine], the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the shataat), limiting geographic movement, economic mobility, and intimacies through militarized surveillance, control and the erection of checkpoints, walls and boundaries.”³⁹¹ This assault on the Palestinian family and social structure is not merely a military practice or a consequence of Israel's architecture; it is, in fact, a systemic policy codified by law.

In 2003, the Israeli parliament passed the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (5763), which bars Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territories from living in Israel and the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds (Jerusalem) with

[com/features/gazans-face-heartbreaking-forensic-collapse-amid-genocide](https://www.theguardian.com/features/gazans-face-heartbreaking-forensic-collapse-amid-genocide).

389 Randa May Wahbe, “The Politics of Karamah: Palestinian Burial Rites under the Gun,” *Critique of Anthropology* 40, no. 3 (2020): 323–340, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X20929401>.

390 Tareq S. Hajjaj, “With a Ceasefire in Gaza, Families Find a Rare Opportunity to Bury Their Dead with Dignity,” *Mondoweiss*, January 25, 2025, <https://mondoweiss.net/2025/01/with-a-ceasefire-in-gaza-families-find-a-rare-opportunity-to-bury-their-dead-with-dignity/>.

391 Sarah Ihmoud, “On Love the Palestinian Way: Kinship, Care and Abolition in Palestinian Feminist Praxis,” *State Crime Journal* 12, no. 2 (2023): 206–224, 210 <https://doi.org/10.13169/statecrime.12.2.0206>.

spouses who hold Israeli IDs.³⁹² Introduced in the aftermath of the Second Intifada, the law drastically restricted family reunification; a 2005 survey found that 78 percent of the occupied West Bank and Gaza applicants had requests that were never processed.³⁹³ The law prevents Palestinians from acquiring citizenship, permanent residency, or temporary residency through marriage, and denies children from the occupied West Bank and the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds the right to reside with a parent with Israeli citizenship.³⁹⁴ Applied retroactively, it affected couples whose applications were still pending as of May 2002.

The law grants the Interior Minister broad authority to revoke residency, refuse residency to children born in Israel, and strip individuals of their ID cards if they are abroad for too long. Because possession of an ID determines the right to live and work in specific areas, losing it effectively erases one's legal presence. In 1981, the Israeli Civil Administration formalized this system through color-coded IDs: green for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and blue for Palestinians in Israel and the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds.³⁹⁵ These IDs govern every aspect of life – especially movement and family unity. Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza cannot freely enter Israel or the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds; those in Gaza face the most severe isolation under Israel's blockade. Combined, Law 5763 and the color-coded ID system became ways to distinguish and hierarchize Palestinians based on their location, determining whether it is permissible for them to be in relations with one another or to stay united.

Section 2 of the law explicitly prohibits granting citizenship, residency, or permits to Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds. As a result, thousands of families have been forced apart, compelled to live abroad, or left to reside in Israel under threat of deportation. Residents of Al-Quds risk losing their “permanent residency” – and their right to return – if they move outside the city. Later amendments in 2007 and 2008 banned citizens of Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq and imposed additional res-

392 “The Nationality and Entry into Israel Law,” Adalah, n.d., accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7371>.

393 Nabila El-Ahmed and Nadia Abu-Zahra, “Unfulfilled Promise: Palestinian Family Reunification and the Right of Return,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 45, no. 3 (2016): 34, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/200819>.

394 Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P). “Israeli Law Tears Palestinian Families Apart,” July 22, 2013, https://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli_law_tears_palestinian_families_apart.

395 Linah Alsaafin, “The Colour-Coded Israeli ID System for Palestinians,” *Al Jazeera*, November 18, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/18/the-colour-coded-israeli-id-system-for-palestinians>.

trictions on Gaza residents.³⁹⁶ Israeli officials continue to justify the law as a “security measure,” even as it functions primarily as a demographic tool to limit Palestinian presence and prevent family unification.

Israel’s forced separations of families and prohibitions on family reunification shape the most intimate decisions Palestinians make about pregnancy, birth, and family formation, illustrating how bureaucracy and occupation intrude directly on Palestinian reproductive life. In Kufr ‘Aqab, a liminal zone cut off from the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds by the separation wall, couples with different ID statuses (an Al-Quds ID and an occupied West Bank “green ID”) are forced to live in this border neighborhood because Israel’s Law 5763 blocks Palestinians from acquiring residency through marriage. To secure their babies’ “permanent residency,” Palestinian women must cross military checkpoints while pregnant to give birth in Al-Quds hospitals, since residency can only be passed to children born within Al-Quds’ boundaries, and even then, it is not guaranteed.³⁹⁷ These colonial separation rules apply exclusively to Palestinians; Jewish Israelis face no such restrictions.³⁹⁸

Additionally, permanent residency itself is precarious. Under Israel’s “Center of Life” policy, Palestinians must constantly prove they live within Al-Quds’ municipal borders or risk losing their status and being expelled to the occupied West Bank.³⁹⁹ Since 1995, this policy has enabled Israel to quietly revoke more than 10,000 residency permits, often enforced through unannounced night raids meant to verify a family’s presence in their home.

Israel’s Law 5763, as one example of legalizing the practice of family separation, details how surveillance of Palestinian families affects their abilities to exist and see each other. Such surveillance of where Palestinians live, move, marry, and give birth exemplifies the state’s assault on intimacy: a biopolitical system that governs the conditions of Palestinian life and reproduction, and polices the very spaces where families form, raise children, and imagine futures. As a public statement from Amnesty International in 2006 states:

396 Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order), 5763-2003, SH 544.

397 Layaly Hamayel, Doaa Hammoudeh, and Lynn Welchman, “Reproductive Health and Rights in East Jerusalem: The Effects of Militarisation and Biopolitics on the Experiences of Pregnancy and Birth of Palestinians Living in the Kufr ‘Aqab Neighbourhood,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 25, sup1 (2017): 87–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09688080.2017.1378065>.

398 Together Against Apartheid, “Apartheid Laws in Israel,” n.d., accessed March 5, 2026, <https://togetheragainstapartheid.org/apartheid-laws-in-israel/#citizenship-and-entry-into-israel-law>.

399 Danielle C. Jefferis, “The ‘Center of Life’ Policy: Institutionalizing Statelessness in East Jerusalem,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 50 (2012): 94, <https://doi.org/10.70190/jq.i50.p94>.

Thousands of couples are affected by this discriminatory law, which forces Israeli Arabs married to Palestinians to leave their country or to be separated from their spouses and children. Israeli military law forbids Israelis from entering the main population centres in the Occupied Territories and Israeli citizens cannot join their Palestinian spouses there, and at the same time Palestinian spouses staying in Israel without a permit are constantly at risk of being deported and separated from their families. Thus, Israeli-Palestinian couples would ultimately be forced to move to another country in order to live together – an option which is neither feasible nor desirable for those concerned. In addition, Palestinian Jerusalemites would lose their residency and their right to ever live in Jerusalem again if they move out of the city...

The provision in the law which allows for the discretionary granting of temporary residence permits for Palestinian male spouses over 35 and female spouses over 25 is arbitrary in nature and does not alter the discriminatory character of the law. It will also not benefit the majority of Israeli-Palestinian couples, who marry at a younger age. Moreover, the permit applications of spouses who meet the age criteria can be rejected on the grounds that a member of his/her extended family is considered a “security risk” by Israeli security services. Thousands of Palestinians seeking family reunification prior to the passing of this law were rejected on unspecified “security” grounds in circumstances where the failure to provide detailed reasons for each rejection made it impossible for those rejected to mount an effective legal challenge to the decision.⁴⁰⁰

As the report details, the Palestinian men’s and women’s ages become justifications for discrimination, recreating Orientalist impressions of young Palestinians that mark them as higher “security risks” to be granted citizenship after marriage. Lastly, the utilization of this law to separate families attempts to dispossess Palestinians of their land by way of their aspirations to maintain a unified family. This places families in a situation in which they must choose between their families and their homeland, creating strain on family structures and on the continuity of their relationships with one another and their land. Lastly, this law, as one of many, legalizes the notion of demographic threats discussed in the first case study in this section. As Zena Al Tahhan writes on March 15, 2022, after the renewal of the law by the Israeli Knesset, she interviewed Budour Hassan of the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center. In the article, Hassan states:

400 Amnesty International, “Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law: Israeli High Court Decision Institutionalizes Racial Discrimination,” United Nations: The Question of Palestine, May 16, 2006, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-207202/>.

For Israeli policymakers, even one additional Palestinian is too many. It's part of the architecture of domination over Palestinians that Israel has always tried to construct and fortify, but this will not be the issue that tilts the demographic ratio.

I think it has to do with senseless cruelty of controlling, restricting and putting boundaries on Palestinian intimacy, and perpetuating the fragmentation of Palestinians.

*The things that Palestinians – women especially – have to consider before getting married, such as where their address will be and how they will register their children, are definitely beyond anything that any newlyweds or people in love think about.*⁴⁰¹

Case Study 4: The Assault on Palestinian Homes

Palestinian homes and home life remain one of the largest targets of systematic Israeli violence. The assault on Palestinian homes is not only a military strategy to seize Palestinian land and dispossess Palestinians; it is also a form of psychological warfare that entrenches a colonial power relation between Israelis and Palestinians. No place is safe from violence, not even private life and intimate home space. As scholar Ariella Azoulay notes, Israeli settler colonialism turns the Palestinian home into “the arena where the boundaries of the body politic are demarcated,” where boundaries “separate those whose homes are protected, and worthy of protection, from those whose house walls are exposed, penetrable, given to violation and demolition.”⁴⁰²

Ferdoos Abed-Rabo Al Issa, in 2024, wrote extensively on the assault on Palestinian homes through home invasions, drawing on interviews with women refugees living around Beit Lahm (Bethlehem).⁴⁰³ In her interviews, she concludes that “home invasion is narrated as a form of collective punishment that targets women’s domain, and, in so doing, constitutes domestic, gendered, and sexual violence that affects neighbors, kin, and communities.”⁴⁰⁴ The Palestinian home is a place that stewards cultural values of collectivity, resistance, and national identity; therefore, assaults on the home not only constitute a material invasion of familial privacy but also an attempt to eliminate the

401 Zena Al Tahhan, “‘Devastating’: How Israel Is Pulling Palestinian Families Apart,” Al Jazeera, March 15, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/3/15/devastating-how-israel-is-pulling-palestinian-families-apart>.

402 Ariella Azoulay, “When a Demolished House Becomes a Public Square,” in Ann Laura Stoler (ed.), *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 201.

403 Ferdoos Abed-Rabo Al Issa, “Home Invasion as Incursion into Body and Homeland: Feminism and the Politics of Life and Death in Palestine,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 26, no. 4 (2024): 744–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2024.2387107>.

404 Al Issa, “Home Invasion as Incursion into Body and Homeland,” 745.

Palestinian psyche.

Each day, Palestinians in the eastern part of occupied Al-Quds receive orders to demolish or evacuate their homes. Homes in the occupied West Bank are often sites of settler vigilante violence, stormed and looted, sometimes vandalized, and other times set ablaze.⁴⁰⁵ The colonial separation wall – which severs Palestinian lands and homes throughout the occupied West Bank – the vast expansion of settlements, and their accompanying settler-only roads, and the overall military architecture, including checkpoints, roadblocks, and surveillance towers, have together resulted in the destruction of thousands of Palestinian homes. No method of Israeli violence toward Palestinians is documented more than the thousands of home raids by occupation forces. These raids, often carried out to make arrests, almost always serve to harass families and destroy property.⁴⁰⁶ Raids on Palestinian homes often occur at night, when Palestinians are in their underwear and pajamas, and Muslim women are not wearing their hijabs.⁴⁰⁷

Palestinians understand that the assault on Palestinian homes is symptomatic of larger colonial gendered and sexualized power relations, intent on inciting fears of sexualized violence. Fadel Tamimi, from Nabi Saleh, says he has lost count of how many times his home has been raided by the IOF in the last twenty years:

*The reason they do this is to scare everyone. To show who is in charge. They never say why or show an order or piece of paper... On one occasion, I remember I had gone to the mosque for the first early morning prayers. When I came back the soldiers were in my house. They had put all of my family in the kitchen. When I went into my bedroom, I found three soldiers resting on the bed. The consequences are psychological. You feel your privacy is being invaded. It's horrible for a conservative family and a traditional society. The aim is to control and humiliate.*⁴⁰⁸

In the latest genocide in Gaza, for example, scores of Israeli soldiers posted

405 Al Jazeera Staff, "Israeli Settlers Torch Homes and Vehicles in Palestinian West Bank Villages," Al Jazeera, November 17, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/11/17/israeli-settlers-torch-homes-and-vehicles-in-west-bank-villages>.

406 Zena Al Tahhan, "In the Dead of Night: Israel's Military Raids into Palestinian Homes," Al Jazeera, April 17, 2023, <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2023/israel-home-invasions-palestine-in-the-dead-of-night/>.

407 Al Tahhan, "In the Dead of Night."

408 Peter Beaumont, "Dehumanising: Israeli Groups' Verdict on Military Invasions of Palestinian Homes," The Guardian, November 29, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/29/dehumanising-israeli-groups-verdict-on-military-invasions-of-palestinian-homes>.

photographs of themselves in Palestinian homes, sifting through Palestinians' belongings, including intimate family mementos, women's undergarments and lingerie, and children's toys, bikes, and stuffed animals. Al Jazeera's 2025 investigative report compiling Israeli war crimes in Gaza tracks IOF soldiers' photographs and videos of the wanton destruction they caused in Gaza.⁴⁰⁹ The report documents footage of soldiers gleefully laughing while destroying homes through detonation and arson, as well as looting Palestinian homes. After October 2023, IOF soldiers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza documented themselves mocking Palestinian women's sexuality by displaying and wearing their lingerie.⁴¹⁰ They also mocked Palestinian children by posing with their stuffed animals or by sleeping in their cribs.⁴¹¹ Many of the IOF soldiers' humiliation propaganda videos were filmed inside Palestinian homes, before and after their destruction. These photographs signaled to Palestinians that it was unsafe to return to their homes because they had been invaded and conquered, and, by extension, the sexual and intimate lives of Palestinians had been invaded too.

Additionally, it was reported on September 28, 2025, that families in Gaza were blackmailed by the IOF to collaborate to create militias or gangs to support Israel or lose their homes and family members. Families, including the Bakr, Dairi, and Doghmush, all reported being approached with this "offer," an offer they all refused, resulting in increased shelling, detonations, and martyrdom of Palestinians in their neighborhoods.⁴¹²

The assault on Palestinian homes, whether in the occupied West Bank, Al-Quds, or Gaza, notes a systemic devaluation of Palestinian humanity, intimacy, and privacy. Overall, the assault on Palestinian homes remains a site of Israeli gendered logics, which see the home as a place that can be invaded and violated, at the expense of Palestinian men, women, and children. As Lottie Kissick-Jones writes, assaults on Palestinian homes affect conceptions of safety, family structures, and parental roles to undermine the ability of parents to take care of their children or for men to maintain roles as "protectors" of the

409 Al Jazeera Staff, "The First Livestreamed Genocide: Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit Compiles Evidence of Potential Israeli War Crimes in Gaza," Al Jazeera, April 16, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2025/4/16/israeli-soldiers-filmed-themselves-destroying-gaza-see-the-video-evidence>.

410 Al Jazeera Staff, "The First Livestreamed Genocide."

411 Al Jazeera Staff, "The First Livestreamed Genocide."

412 "'Spy for Us or Die': Israel Blackmails Gaza Families into Milias," Quds News Network, September 28, 2025, <https://qudsnen.co/public/post?id=65053&slug=spy-for-us-or-die-israel-blackmails-gaza-families-into-milias>.

family, creating psychosocial impacts.⁴¹³

Domicide as an Act of Gendered Violence

Domicide, thus, becomes another strategy that Israel used to hunt and target all aspects of Palestinian life, intimacy, and family. The assault on Palestinian family structure in Gaza represents one of the most deliberate and devastating dimensions of the broader attack on Palestinian intimacy. The mass killing of entire family lineages – what Palestinians call the wiping out of *nasab*, a genealogical line – has meant that in countless cases, there is no surviving family member left to mourn, identify, or remember the dead, severing the intergenerational transmission of memory, land knowledge, and kinship that constitutes the connective tissue of Palestinian social life. Forced displacement, with over a million people pushed repeatedly from north to south and back, has not only separated families across geography but has also systematically destroyed the spatial intimacies through which Palestinians relate to land – the particular olive tree, the family home, the neighborhood cemetery, the street where a grandmother was born – dismantling what Shalhoub-Kevorkian calls the “intimate geographies” through which belonging and identity are lived and felt.⁴¹⁴ These aspects of society, now completely decimated, create a ripple effect that targets all Palestinian men, women, and children of all ages in Gaza by robbing them of the right to live and have and raise families in a safe and healthy environment.

Case Study 5: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Facilitating Domicide in Gaza

By assaulting the intimate, gendered spaces where bodily integrity, reproductive capacity, family and society building, and nurturing happen, militarized tracking through AI extends the reach and force of the predatory state by targeting the heart of reproductive and intimate life: the home. By displacing or killing as many Palestinians in a home as possible, AI-generated programs disrupt the conditions and spaces for pleasure, sexual intimacy, caregiving, and generational continuity. It is important to understand these attacks as not only attacks on bodies but also as attacks on the relational and reproductive infrastructure central to sexual and gendered life.

413 Lottie Kissick-Jones, “(Un)Making Masculinities: Tracing How Men’s Responses to Violence Impact the Home in the Occupied West Bank,” Harvard Kennedy School Student Policy Review, March 31, 2023, <https://studentreview.hks.harvard.edu/unmaking-masculinities-tracing-how-mens-responses-to-violence-impact-the-home-in-the-occupied-west-bank/>.

414 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, “Infiltrated Intimacies: The Case of Palestinian Returnees,” *Feminist Studies* 42, no. 1 (2016): 166–193, <https://doi.org/10.1353/fem.2016.0013>.

Israel began tracking Palestinian biometric data in 1999 with the Basel System in Gaza and the occupied West Bank for the purposes of developing AI surveillance and defense systems.⁴¹⁵ Since then, Israel has invested heavily in improving AI technologies for military deployment, making the identification and location of “human targets” faster and on a larger scale than ever before.⁴¹⁶ The IOF’s military AI began to be trained to create, collect, and enhance databases that track Palestinians through cities, checkpoints, and roads.⁴¹⁷ For example, the 2021 assault on Gaza was classified by the IOF as the “First AI War,” utilizing AI systems to power semi-autonomous military robots to replace soldiers and killing over 253 Palestinians in just eleven days.⁴¹⁸ This integration of AI systems into already active surveillance architectures facilitated the systematic and large-scale targeting of Palestinian individuals, families, and homes in Gaza that the globe witnessed between October 2023 and 2025. Since October 7, 2023, the IOF has knowingly and intentionally deployed a militarized AI architecture in Gaza to wipe out entire households, targeting men, women, and children of all ages.⁴¹⁹ In this case study, we investigate AI’s role in domicile across Gaza. In its ruling on Israel’s crimes of genocide, including domicile, the 2025 Gaza Tribunal states:

*Domicide is more than the intentional mass destruction of residential properties and their infrastructure—electricity, water and sanitation. A home is about love, life, a repository of memories, hopes and aspiration. Its destruction causes displacement, trauma, the disintegration of communities and profound cultural loss.*⁴²⁰

415 Amnesty International, Automated Apartheid: How Facial Recognition Fragments, Segregates and Controls Palestinians in the OPT, (Amnesty International, May 2, 2023), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6701/2023/en/>; Keren Weitzberg, Biometrics and Counter-Terrorism: Case Study of Israel/Palestine (Privacy International, May 2021), https://privacyinternational.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/PI%20Counterterrorism%20and%20Biometrics%20Report%20Israel_Palestine%20v7.pdf.

416 Amnesty International, Automated Apartheid: Weitzberg, Biometrics and Counter-Terrorism; Yuval Abraham, “‘Lavender’: The AI Machine Directing Israel’s Bombing Spree in Gaza,” +972 Magazine, April 3, 2024, <https://archive.is/pvXcH>.

417 Sibel Düz and Muhammed Sefa Koçakoğlu, Deadly Algorithms: Destructive Role of Artificial Intelligence in Gaza War, (SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, February 2025), <https://media.setav.org/en/file/2025/02/deadly-algorithms-destructive-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-gaza-war.pdf>.

418 Nasim Ahmed, “Remembering Israel’s 2021 Onslaught on Gaza,” Middle East Monitor, May 6, 2022, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220506-remembering-israels-2021-onslaught-on-gaza/>; Marwa Fatafta and Daniel Leufer, “Artificial Genocidal Intelligence: How Israel Is Automating Human Rights Abuses and War Crimes,” Access Now, May 9, 2024, <https://www.accessnow.org/publication/artificial-genocidal-intelligence-israel-gaza/>.

419 Abraham, “‘Lavender.’”

420 Gaza Tribunal, “Final Statement of the Gaza Tribunal Jury of Conscience,” October 27, 2025, <https://gazatribunal.com/final-statement-of-the-gaza-tribunal-jury-of-conscience/>.

Project Lavender: Where's Daddy and The Gospel

Automating categorization and implementation through AI relies on Israeli systems that create racist classification systems of Palestinians.⁴²¹ Through IOF-collected surveillance data from al-Khalil (Hebron) and eastern al-Quds (Jerusalem), AI systems were trained by Unit 8200 to mark, identify, target, and attack individuals to support bomb-strike calculations. This was the beginning of Project Lavender in 2020.⁴²² Between 2023 and 2025, according to The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, Project Lavender used broad criteria to classify Palestinian men as Hamas operatives based on their age, location, and communication behaviors.⁴²³ Later in the report, it cites the now widely circulated investigative report by Yuval Abraham for +972 Magazine and Last Call on the use of AI in the genocide, noting that at times, AI models expanded their classifications of Hamas operatives even more broadly to target all civil personnel working in Gaza.⁴²⁴ While IOF military officers should review all AI recommendations, +972 Magazine's report notes that officers typically would only verify whether targets are male.⁴²⁵ The report continues:

[T]he army also decided during the first weeks of the war that, for every junior Hamas operative that Lavender marked, it was permissible to kill up to 15 or 20 civilians; in the past, the military did not authorize any "collateral damage" during assassinations of low-ranking militants. The sources added that, in the event that the target was a senior Hamas official with the rank of battalion or brigade commander, the army on several occasions authorized the killing of more than 100 civilians in the assassination of a single commander.⁴²⁶

Additionally, Sada Social, on May 18, 2024, revealed that Meta's collaboration with the IOF supported Lavender's platform development by providing data from WhatsApp groups containing the names of Palestinians or activists

421 For more about this, read Amnesty International "Automated Apartheid: How Facial Recognition Fragments, Segregates and Controls Palestinians in the OPT," May 2, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6701/2023/en/> and Sibel Düz, "Gaza as a Testing Ground: Israel's AI Warfare," SETA, July 3, 2025, <https://www.setav.org/en/gaza-as-a-testing-ground-israels-ai-warfare>.

422 Elizabeth Dwoskin, "Israel Built an 'AI Factory' for War; It Unleashed It in Gaza," Stars and Stripes, December 30, 2024, https://www.stripes.com/theaters/middle_east/2024-12-30/israel-ai-factory-gaza-war-16323321.html.

423 Abraham, "'Lavender.'"

424 Abraham, "'Lavender.'"

425 Dwoskin, "Israel Built an 'AI Factory' for War."

426 Abraham, "'Lavender.'"

wanted by Israel.⁴²⁷

This section focuses on assessing the gendered ways that AI functioned to uphold and perpetuate genocide, particularly domicile, in Gaza from 2023 to 2025. Project Lavender, which includes Where's Daddy and The Gospel, was deployed in Gaza to provide recommendations that eliminated entire Palestinian family trees and destroyed homes, infrastructure, and public buildings.⁴²⁸ Where's Daddy Project Lavender, which the IOF developed to track supposed members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas, relied on Where's Daddy as the next step of surveillance: tracking targets into their homes.⁴²⁹ The +972 Magazine report, which claims to be the first to document these military tactics, states that Where's Daddy is "specifically [used] to track the targeted individuals and carry out bombings when they have entered their family's residences."⁴³⁰ This technology emerged as an outcome of Lavender's tracking systems, further extending its functionality.⁴³¹ It was not enough to track individual members of PIJ and Hamas; what was needed was a mechanism to track individuals into their homes, among their families and loved ones. What Where's Daddy provided was a "real-time" tracking system that would make it possible for the IOF to "easily and automatically 'link' individuals to family houses," bombing them at the moment of entry. Where's Daddy is just one of several real-time tracking software systems that "track[s] thousands of individuals simultaneously, identify when they are at home, and send[s] an automatic alert to the targeting officer, who then marks the house for bombing."⁴³²

*You put hundreds [of targets] into the system and wait to see who you can kill... It's called broad hunting: you copy-paste from the lists that the target system produces.*⁴³³

427 "Sada Social Calls for Immediate Investigation into Meta's Leak of WhatsApp Users' Data to the Israeli Military," Sada Social, May 18, 2024, <https://sada.social/post/sd-soshal-ydaao-l-thkyk-aaagl-ofory-ltsryb-myta-byanat-mstkhdm-y-oatsab-l-algysh-alsrayly>.

428 Importantly, Israel's AI technologies are also reported to be used in the 2026 US-Israeli assault on Iran, confirming Palestine's role as a testing ground for the regional expansion of these technologies of war. See: Al Jazeera Staff, "US military confirms use of 'advanced AI tools' in war against Iran," Al Jazeera, March 11, 2026. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/11/us-military-confirms-use-of-advanced-ai-tools-in-war-against-iran>. See also: Loewenstein, Antony. 2023. *The Palestine Laboratory: How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation Around the World*. London: Verso Books.

429 Abraham, "Lavender."

430 Abraham, "Lavender."

431 Abraham, "Lavender."

432 Abraham, "Lavender."

433 Abraham, "Lavender."

Where's Daddy made it possible for the IOF to automate its killing while maximizing the level of death and destruction, at the level of the home. According to a report published by Airwars, a “watchdog which tracks, assesses, archives and investigates civilian harm claims in conflict-affected nations,” the first twenty-five days of the genocide in Gaza were “unprecedented by modern historical standards.”⁴³⁴ It states:

*As demonstrated throughout this report, by all major metrics used to measure rates of civilian harm, the pace at which civilians were killed in this 25-day period in Gaza outpaces any recent military campaign. The number of civilians killed, the rate of women and children killed, and the rate of munitions used are all on a scale never before documented by Airwars.*⁴³⁵

This level of death and destruction was enabled by AI systems like Where's Daddy and its tracking technologies:

*We were not interested in killing [Hamas] operatives only when they were in a military building or engaged in a military activity... On the contrary, the IDF bombed them in [their] homes without hesitation, as a first option. It's much easier to bomb a family's home. The system is built to look for them in these situations.*⁴³⁶

The goal was not only to kill those they deemed as resistance fighters, but rather to target their families and even entire generations. According to various Palestinian reports, including the WAFA News Agency, by October 15, 2023, forty-seven Palestinian families were entirely erased from the Palestinian civil registry.⁴³⁷ This number increased, and by November 2024, over 1,400 Palestinian families were erased by the IOF due to its usage of AI military systems.⁴³⁸

Where's Daddy is a highly sophisticated military intelligence system that relies on AI and mass surveillance to track behavioral patterns and convert them into targetable coordinates. The objective is to conduct air strikes on

434 Ryan Geitner, “Patterns of Harm Analysis: Gaza, October 2023,” ed. Emily Tripp and Joe Dyke, (Airwars, December 2024), <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/>.

435 Geitner, “Patterns of Harm Analysis.”

436 Abraham, “‘Lavender.’”

437 “47 Palestinian Families Erased from Civil Registry in Gaza under Israel’s Genocidal Aggression,” WAFA Palestinian News & Info Agency, October 15, 2023, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/138295>.

438 “1,410 Palestinian Families Erased from Civil Registry by Genocide in Gaza,” Middle East Monitor, November 27, 2024, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241127-1410-palestinian-families-erased-from-civil-registry-by-genocide-in-gaza/>.

residential buildings. Used mainly by the IOF's 8200 Unit:

There's the sense in 8200 that there's no option for failure because often the missions are life or death. If you fail, people die. If you choose wrong, people die. If you aren't good enough, people die. Members are extremely driven to succeed any way they can. The pressure is enormous. Some online articles tell stories that Unit 8200 can infiltrate a terrorist cell by gaining access to all their communications; cell phone towers, text messages, phones, e-mails, and more. Once you're in a smart phone, you might be able to enable the camera or microphone or get the GPS coordinates and know exactly where your target is and what they're doing.⁴³⁹

The Gospel

The Gospel is another AI software that supported Project Lavender, generating up to one hundred targets per day.⁴⁴⁰ Focused on tracking buildings and infrastructure, it provides the necessary data to create targeted recommendations of where to strike alleged resistance fighters.⁴⁴¹ While the IOF claims to use The Gospel to minimize "collateral damage," Richard Moyes of Article 36 notes in 2023 that, given the destruction to Gaza's physical landscape, this claim is implausible.⁴⁴² Utilizing The Gospel, the IOF bombed private residences, public buildings, high-rise buildings, and "power targets" to create pressure points to harm Palestinian civilians.⁴⁴³ In the same report from +972 Magazine, an anonymous source notes:

Nothing happens by accident... When a 3-year-old girl is killed in a home in Gaza, it's because someone in the army decided it wasn't a big deal for her to be killed — that it was a price worth paying in order to hit [another] target. We are not Hamas. These are not random rockets. Everything is intentional. We know exactly how much collateral damage there is in every home.⁴⁴⁴

439 Shira Shamban and Jack Rhysider, "EP 28: Unit 8200, Advanced Persistent Threat," Darknet Diaries, podcast, December 15, 2018, <https://darknetdiaries.com/episode/28/>.

440 Muzen Ismailovic, "Algorithmic Targeting: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Israeli Strikes in Gaza and Its Ethical Implications," Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRIP), April 2, 2025, <https://www.grip.org/algorithmic-targeting-the-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-israeli-strikes-in-gaza-and-its-ethical-implications/>.

441 Abraham, "Lavender."

442 News Desk, "AI Plays 'Central Role' in Israeli Assault on Gaza: Report," The Cradle, December 1, 2023, <https://thecradle.co/articles/ai-plays-central-role-in-israeli-assault-on-gaza-report>.

443 Yuval Abraham, "A mass assassination factory': Inside Israel's Calculated Bombing of Gaza," +972 Magazine, November 30, 2023, <https://archive.ph/EvIsl>. Power targets include city centers, high-rises, residential towers, universities, banks, and government offices

444 Abraham, "A mass assassination factory."

The Gospel focused primarily on power targets and homes of supposed Hamas members. Between October 5 and 11, 2023, 1,329 of 2,687 targets bombed were power targets.⁴⁴⁵ This resulted in the decimation of entire neighborhoods across Gaza, targeting and destruction of media towers, civilian buildings, hospitals, bakeries, shopping malls, and sanitation centers, to name a few. “The bottom line is that they knocked down a high-rise for the sake of knocking down a high-rise.”⁴⁴⁶ The usage of The Gospel’s recommendations, along with Where’s Daddy and Project Lavender, has resulted in 2,700 families in Gaza being entirely wiped from the Gaza civil registry since October 2023.⁴⁴⁷ As SETA notes about The Gospel’s capabilities and how the IOF justifies who they have killed:

*[The Gospel] reportedly created a list of 37,000 people labeled as Hamas members, many of them low-ranking or without confirmed military roles. These individuals were frequently targeted in their homes at night, when their families were present. For example, a strike on a United Nations school in Nuseirat on July 7, 2024, killed 23 people and injured over 80; the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) later claimed that only eight of the dead were Hamas members. Sources from within the IDF admitted that operators referred to low-level targets as “garbage” and accepted that most casualties were women and children. The system also allowed for a “collateral damage threshold” of up to 20 civilians per strike, applied automatically without assessing the actual threat posed by each target.*⁴⁴⁸

These AI systems indiscriminately targeted Palestinians using technology trained on anti-Palestinian biases that assumed all Palestinian men were Hamas fighters and all Palestinians were at risk of supporting Hamas or PIJ – thus justifying their murder. Beginning with Wolf Pack, this infrastructure was deployed to commit genocide in Gaza, targeting individuals, families, homes, and public infrastructure to ensure as many Palestinian deaths as possible, as easily as possible. As an Airwars report notes, “By almost every metric, the harm to civilians from the first month of the Israeli campaign in Gaza is incomparable with any 21st-century air campaign.”⁴⁴⁹

445 Abraham, “A mass assassination factory.”

446 Abraham, “A mass assassination factory.”

447 Julia Conley, “‘The Intent of Genocide’: 2,700 Gaza Families Entirely Wiped Out by Israeli Attacks,” Common Dreams, January 27, 2026, <https://www.commondreams.org/news/family-in-gaza>.

448 Düz, “Gaza as a Testing Ground.”

449 Ryan Geitner, *Patterns of Harm Analysis: Gaza, October 2023*, ed. Emily Tripp and Joe Dyke, (Airwars, December 2024), 2 <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/>.

Israel's integration of AI in all aspects of life attempts to map, categorize, and gather data on Palestinians to refine their own systems, in addition to automating arrests, bombings, and strikes. While this AI technology is framed by war profiteers and Israel as a method for reducing human error, automating processes, and providing precise results, in reality, Israel's AI is programmed to assume that each Palestinian is a potential threat and to recommend eliminating those threats with a total disregard for Palestinian life, infrastructure, society, and families.

AI-Generated Domicide

On April 15, 2024, the United Nations issued a press release condemning the use of AI to commit domicile in Gaza.⁴⁵⁰ It stated that the use of AI systems such as Project Lavender, The Gospel, and Where's Daddy – with minimal human checks to minimize death and infrastructural decimation – is the only explanation for why there was such a high death toll and level of home destruction within the first six months of the genocide.⁴⁵¹ The utilization of AI warfare contributed to the now estimated over 3 million Palestinian life-years⁴⁵² lost in Gaza, approximately 10 percent of the population in two years, according to the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, and corroborated by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.⁴⁵³ Israel's deliberate targeting of the spaces where life is made, nurtured, and sustained demonstrates how gendered violence systemically targets Palestinian intimate and familial spaces. Israeli air and ground attacks have systematically struck homes, hospitals, ambulances, orphanages, schools, playgrounds, and places of worship. In just two years, more than 90 percent of Gaza's housing

450 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, "Gaza: UN Experts Deplore Use of Purported AI to Commit 'Domicide' in Gaza, Call for Reparative Approach to Rebuilding," press release, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, April 15, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/gaza-un-experts-deplore-use-purported-ai-commit-domicide-gaza-call>.

451 No matter how many human checks were mandated by the IOF, we know that they would still result in anti-Palestinian bias and continued colonization of Palestine. As B'Tselem – the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories reports on December 5, 2023, even when Israel "adheres to the letter of [international] law," it still results in mass casualties that could be avoided. Ultimately, the current application of international law is not a correct metric to understand the rules of engagement between a colonized people and their colonizer. See: B'Tselem, "Israel Is Not Fighting against Hamas but against Civilians, Implementing a Criminal Policy of Bombings," December 5, 2023, <https://archive.ph/LjiDm>.

452 Sammy Zahran and Ghassan Abu-Sittah, "Over 3 Million Life-Years Lost in Gaza," *The Lancet* 406, no. 10517 (2025): 2317–2318, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(25\)02112-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(25)02112-9).

453 "Geneva Academy Warns Gaza Death Toll May Exceed 200,000 as Population Drops by Over 10%," Quds News Network, February 11, 2026, <https://qudsnen.co/post?id=67213&slug=geneva-academy-warns-gaza-death-toll-may-exceed-200000-as-population-drops-by-over-10>.

has been destroyed, with nighttime bombings of residential buildings aimed at wiping out entire families.⁴⁵⁴ In Palestine, the home is not merely a private dwelling but a repository of lineage, memory, and continuity. Its destruction is therefore an intentional attempt to sever intergenerational ties and extinguish the forms of collective remembrance and resistance rooted in domestic space.

The destruction of homes and public infrastructure showcases the systemic character of domicide across Gaza.⁴⁵⁵ A Bellingcat report tracked social media use by IOF soldiers in 8219 Commando, a combat engineering battalion, which was responsible for demolishing residential homes, neighborhoods, and infrastructure, such as mosques, in Gaza during the genocide. This report created an archive of Facebook posts and videos of soldiers celebrating the bombing and demolition of Gaza's residential buildings and places of worship, sometimes showing them casually smoking cigarettes or hookah amid the destruction. As the captain of 8219 Commando posted on Facebook after the leveling of residential homes in Khuza'a and Khirbat Ikhza'a:

*The IDF in a special effort decided to take land from the enemy and through us destroy the village of the murderers, after we blow up about 150 buildings the bulldozers will come and level the area in order to bring the fence closer and reduce the enemy's area by one and a half km.*⁴⁵⁶

The report notes that the IOF is not only trying to demolish Palestinian homes, but "[t]hey are trying to take apart a society."⁴⁵⁷ As we showcase here, the utilization of AI created not just a staggering loss of life among women and children but also the systematic assault of entire familial genealogies. Domicide, a key facet of the genocide in Gaza, is not new to Palestinian society, which has experienced targeted home demolitions for over seventy-five

454 Beyza Binnur Donmez, "UN Migration Agency Says Over 90% of Homes in Gaza Destroyed or Damaged," Anadolu Ajansi, April 23, 2025, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/-un-migration-agency-says-over-90-of-homes-in-gaza-destroyed-or-damaged/3546666>.

455 Nick Waters, "'We've Become Addicted to Explosions': The IDF Unit Responsible for Demolishing Homes Across Gaza," Bellingcat, April 29, 2024, <https://archive.is/aNXhE>. Although we cite Bellingcat as a primary source of information regarding the social media use of IOF 8219 Commando, we recognize Bellingcat as a Western intelligence operational service that supports and services U.S. imperialism. Additionally, its founder and writers have ties with or history with U.S. and British military and intelligence, reflecting the politics and approaches that Bellingcat deploys in their open-source, investigative journalism.

456 Waters, "'We've Become Addicted to Explosions.'"

457 Waters, "'We've Become Addicted to Explosions.'"

years with the aim of preventing Palestinian return.⁴⁵⁸ Critically, the evolution of domicide in the Palestinian context reveals how gendered violence is not only a key aspect of Israeli society and IOF decision-making but also a fundamental infrastructural logic in its military technology systems. Lastly, the utilization of mass surveillance and AI expands beyond the genocide in Gaza and occupied Palestine to areas such as Lebanon to target resistance against Israel for the purpose of targetting families and homes. In December 2025, Alex Karp, co-founder of Palantir, revealed in his book the extensive support they provided to the IOF during their 2024 pager attacks, resulting in 42 murdered and thousands injured across Lebanon.⁴⁵⁹ While Palantir began its relationship with the IOF before 2024, its technology was specifically deployed in Gaza and Lebanon.⁴⁶⁰ This reveals that more research on the role of IOF surveillance systems, including AI programs, must be investigated to understand the expansive ways Israel's intent to commit genocide functions not only in occupied Palestine, but regionally in attempts to grab more land for the settler colonial project.

458 Bree Akesson, "'We May Go, but This Is My Home': Experiences of Domicide and Resistance for Palestinian Children and Families," *Journal of Internal Displacement* 4, no. 2 (2014), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2476146>.

459 MEE Staff, "Israel used Palantir technology in its 2024 Lebanon Pager Attack, Book Claims," *Middle East Eye*, December 10, 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-used-palantir-its-2024-lebanon-pager-attack>

460 Al Mayadeen English, "Palantir Complicity in Deadly Israeli Pager Attack on Lebanon Exposed," *Al Mayadeen English*, December 10, 2025, <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/technology/palantir-complicity-in-deadly-israeli-pager-attack-on-lebano>

Conclusion

In conclusion, through these five case studies, we highlight how Israel's systemic gendered violence infiltrates all aspects of Palestinian life, as well as martyrdom. Israeli systems target sexuality, kinship relations, and the intimate social spaces through which Palestinians reproduce and sustain life, social relations, and futurity. In other words, systemic gendered violence encompasses more than the destruction of bodies and lifeworlds; it is an attack against all infrastructures that make collective survival possible – the reproductive body, the home, the family, and the social worlds that bind communities together.

Israel's gendered violence, perpetuated by the IOF and concretized through laws, affects Palestinians of all ages and genders across every aspect of life. Israel's systematic assault on Palestinian reproductive capacity, on the sanctity of the womb, kinship structures, the home as a site of refuge and meaning-making, and the dignity of Palestinian martyrdom and mourning, is understood here as a deliberate targeting of the most intimate and daily conditions of Palestinian life. These are not incidental nor collateral violations; they are the calculated destruction of the relational and embodied spaces through which Palestinians constitute themselves as a people – spaces through which they imagine, inhabit, and transmit their present and their future. To assault Palestinian gendered life is to wage war not only on living people but also on the very possibility of Palestinian continuity, belonging, and becoming.

While gendered violence is usually tracked as the impact on Palestinian women and girls, we posit that the gendering of all Palestinians, including boys and men, is necessary to track, to understand: 1) the scale of Israeli gendered violence, and 2) its systemic character, given the Orientalist, anti-Arab tropes that already mark Palestinian bodies and lives as lesser than Israelis. As we note in the introduction, sexualized and gendered violence cannot be separa-

ted because they are both inherent in Israel's genocidal logics. The systemic character of sexualized violence provides permission for these actions to go beyond Palestinians' detention and into their everyday lives. This is the true meaning of occupation and what it means to impose domination over populations in every aspect of life and martyrdom. Together, these five case studies track how the dehumanization of Palestinians occurs across gendered lines through emasculating Palestinian men from their role as the protectors of their families, destroying entire familial genealogies, forcing familial separation, and invading and destroying homes. We conclude that Israel's systemic gendered and sexualized violence must be registered as one method of many amounting to the crime of genocide.

Conjuring Consent: An Analysis of Gender, Race, and Colonial Logics

Conjuring Consent: An Analysis of Gender, Race, and Colonial Logics

There have been an estimated “three million life-years” of Palestinians lost in Gaza, mostly women and children, since October 2023.⁴⁶¹ Israel continues to commit mass murder with the openly stated intention to eradicate Palestine. It also restricts movement, confining and obstructing the movement of Palestinians living under its military occupation, and engaging in 24/7 surveillance of our communities. The denial of Palestinian sovereignty, safety, and freedom of movement has impacted the regeneration of our communities, with Palestinian elders, women, children, and men all targeted for extermination.

Our research has documented systematic and institutional practices of gendered and sexualized violence against Palestinians since October 2023. Through the process of documenting and analyzing these practices, we have also identified consistent patterns and methods that make this violence possible at every level: discursive, representational, spiritual, psychological, corporeal, environmental, and collective. These patterns and methods include colonial constructions of Palestinian men, the reliance on security theology, mass rape accusations with genocidal intent, the use of liberal feminist discourses of sexualized violence, and racialized and sexualized violence against Palestinian men.

⁴⁶¹ Zahran and Abu-Sittah, “Over 3 Million Life-Years Lost in Gaza.”

Colonial Constructions of Palestinian Men

The first pattern we observed is the deployment of Western depictions of Arabs and Muslims as dangerous, which Edward Said framed as racial and colonial conjurings of depravity within Orientalist structures. These constructions of depravity mirror the ways settlers have always characterized the Indigenous “other” as violent and dangerous, and are evidenced in Zionist justifications for the genocide, as well as all the verbal abuse, slurs, and narratives that have accompanied the sexualized humiliation and violence presented throughout this report.⁴⁶² As colonialism displaces its own violence, specifically sexualized violence, onto the figure of the colonized man, it simultaneously manifests the colonizer’s self-image as a moral defender of virtue while simultaneously masking the sexual conquest at the heart of empire.⁴⁶³

The racialized constructions of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim men as other, violent, aggressive, and sexually deviant mirror the colonial histories and patterns across colonial projects where Indigenous and Black men have been imagined as threats, primarily to white women. The fact that fabricated graphic accounts of the rape of some 300 Israeli women on October 7, 2023 immediately circulated before and even without independent, thorough investigations points to the weaponization of such allegations to construct Palestinians as barbaric and depraved.^{464, 465} For decades, the international community and Israel have remained silent about the rape of Palestinian women. Yet, after October 7, Israeli settler women have been positioned as the ultimate victims. This double standard replicates a historical pattern: the feminine fragility of white – and in this case, Jewish – women is weaponized to construct the image of the dangerous Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim man. Further, naming AI programs such as Where’s Daddy, were made to specifically target Palestinian men assumed to be Hamas or PIJ operatives. IOF testimony confirmed that the only necessary criterion needed to approve AI-recommended

462 Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Times Books, 1978); Kim Anderson and Robert A. Innes, eds., *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015).

463 Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

464 Nada Elia, “Weaponizing Rape,” *Jadaliyya*, January 19, 2024, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/45725>.

465 Omny Miranda Martone, Katie Knick, Lia McDonald Meteer, and Michelle Reilly, “SORVO Case Study: Israel, Zionist Entities, & Palestine” (Sexual Violence and Prevention Association, September 2025), <https://s-v-p-a.org/sorvo-palestine/>.

bombings was that targets were male.⁴⁶⁶ This gendered logic resulted in murdering not only Palestinian men, but their past, current, and future lineages and families. The testimonies and evidence offered and analyzed in this report animate the ways Israel's racist and sexist mythology about Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular, is used to further their campaign of total Palestinian annihilation.⁴⁶⁷

Security Threats Create the Moral Colonizer

The next pattern we noticed builds on the colonial constructions of Muslim and Palestinian men as dangerous and threatening by deploying security discourse alongside these conjurings. Because security threats are elevated to sacred discourse⁴⁶⁸ in the settler state, its logics of celestial destiny can neither be challenged nor critiqued. Sexualized violence and racial terror inflicted on Palestinians are then inextricably linked through the logic of elimination.

*In addition to rape and other forms of sexual violence, the racialized logic of sexual violence energizes the very imaginary and project of conquering and cultivating Palestinian land, in transforming it into the Jewish polis.*⁴⁶⁹

These logics are then enshrined as theology, and Palestinian men are codified as existential threats to justify extreme violence and oppression in the name of security. Hence, the racist and colonial construction of Muslim and Palestinian men as dangerous not only justifies genocide, but simultaneously constructs the colonizer as more moral and peaceful, or what Edward Said refers to as “redeemer and civilizer.”⁴⁷⁰

466 Abraham, “‘Lavender.’”

467 As another example of this is when Israeli influencer, Einav Avizemer, nicknamed the 2024 Lebanon pager attacks “Operation Below the Belt” (see Mera Aladam, “Lebanon pager attack: Social media users condemn ‘inhumane’ posts mocking blast victims,” Middle East Eye, September 20, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/trending/israel-supporters-mock-lebanons-deadly-pager-attacks>). This name referred to emerging memes and mockery about the attacks resulting in Hezbollah members’ penises being blown off after pager explosions (see Andrew Silow-Carroll, “No Laughing Matter? Hezbollah Pager Explosions Become Fodder for Online Jokes,” The Times of Israel, September 20, 2024, <https://archive.is/bOnyp>). Others used Islamophobic notions, claiming that Hezbollah members who were murdered were unable to enjoy their 72 virgins due to their penises being blown off in the attack. This dehumanizing logic, reliant on colonial constructions of Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian men demonstrates how insidious Israel’s gendered violence and ideology perpetuates their society. Rabab Abdulhadi. “Israeli Settler Colonialism in Context: Celebrating (Palestinian) Death and Normalizing Gender and Sexual Violence.” *Feminist Studies* 45, no. 2–3 (2019): 541. <https://doi.org/10.15767/feministstudies.45.2-3.0541>.

468 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear*.

469 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud & Daher Nashif, “Sexual Violence, Women’s Bodies.”

470 Dubravka Zarkov, “From Women and War to Gender and Conflict? Feminist Trajectories,” in *The*

Mass Rape Accusations with Genocidal Intent

The next pattern we observed builds on the two aforementioned patterns, and is expressed through mass rape accusations against Palestinian men. Within hours of the Hamas operation on October 7, 2023, volunteers at ZAKA, an ultra-Orthodox Israeli search and rescue organization, who were among the first responders, spoke to the press testifying that they found evidence of mass sexual assault committed against Israeli women. The story began with volunteer commander Chaim Otmazgin, who claimed he “saw the body of a teenager, shot dead and separated from her family in a different room. Her pants had been pulled down below her waist.”⁴⁷¹ Otmazgin recounted the scene in front of the press and later the Israeli Knesset, suggesting that the bodies that ZAKA volunteers found were naked and in sexually suggestive positions.⁴⁷² Yossi Landau, another ZAKA volunteer, claimed he had seen a dead pregnant woman eviscerated, with her unborn child pulled out of her belly.⁴⁷³

By December 2023, both Otmazgin’s and Landau’s accounts were proven to be untrue. Otmazgin walked back his original claims when, under international pressure, Israeli leaders could not corroborate that the woman he suggested had been sexually assaulted on October 7 had actually been sexually assaulted at all. He recounts that information provided by the Israeli military showed that a “group of soldiers had dragged the girl’s body across the room to make sure it wasn’t booby-trapped. During the procedure, her pants had come down.”⁴⁷⁴ Similarly, Landau’s original testimony was debunked. What he originally described as a pregnant woman with “her stomach butchered open” and a “baby who was connected to the cord...stabbed” was in fact the body of a heavyset woman with an unidentified bundle next to her.⁴⁷⁵ After both their

Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict, ed. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin et al. (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2018), 29, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199300983.013.3>. See also: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

471 Tia Goldenberg and Julia Frankel, “How 2 Debunked Accounts of Sexual Violence on Oct. 7 Fueled a Global Dispute over Israel-Hamas War,” PBS News, May 22, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/how-2-debunked-accounts-of-sexual-violence-on-oct-7-fueled-a-global-dispute-over-israel-hamas-war>.

472 Goldenberg and Frankel, “How 2 Debunked Accounts of Sexual Violence on Oct. 7 Fueled a Global Dispute.”

473 Goldenberg and Frankel, “How 2 Debunked Accounts of Sexual Violence on Oct. 7 Fueled a Global Dispute.”

474 Goldenberg and Frankel, “How 2 Debunked Accounts of Sexual Violence on Oct. 7 Fueled a Global Dispute.”

475 Tia Goldenberg and Julia Frankel, “Takeaways from AP Examination of How 2 Debunked Accounts of Sexual Violence on Oct. 7 Originated,” AP News, May 22, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-ha->

claims were discredited by the evidence, ZAKA was thrown into the alternative news media spotlight not only for its own sexual abuse scandal but also for its shoddy investigative protocols and untrained handling of forensic evidence.⁴⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the speculative accounts prompted by Landau and Otmazgin set off a media storm that Israeli government officials used to launch a widespread campaign alleging mass rape on October 7. By mid-November, the allegations circulated rapidly and were subsequently picked up by NGOs, international agencies, the international press, and international state actors.⁴⁷⁷

Such allegations that Hamas engaged in systematic rape on October 7 are rooted in the long-standing racialized colonial demonization of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim men.⁴⁷⁸ Of significant importance is that, until today, there is no credible forensic evidence, nor victim testimony, corroborating the October 7 mass rape allegations – only second- and third-hand testimonies, statements from individuals and organizations that serve Israel, and social media accounts. The Electronic Intifada, among others, has offered detailed substantive, methodological, and evidentiary critiques of the allegations and alleged evidence.⁴⁷⁹ These reports point to:

1. the lack of forensic and testimonial evidence of mass rapes on October 7;
2. the fabrication of the allegations;

mas-gaza-sexual-violence-zaka-a12f75ddecab75989426f4dc24906ba9. See also: Arun Gupta, “American Media Keep Citing Zaka – Though Its October 7 Atrocity Stories Are Discredited in Israel,” *The Intercept*, February 27, 2024, <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/27/zaka-october-7-israel-hamas-new-york-times/>.

476 Gupta, “American Media Keep Citing Zaka”; Arun Gupta, “Claims of Mass Rape by Hamas Unravel Upon Investigation,” *Yes!*, March 5, 2024, <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2024/03/05/israel-hamas-oct7-report-gaza>.

477 Lilia Luciano, “Witnesses, Evidence Indicate Hamas Committed Acts of Sexual Violence During Oct. 7 Attack,” *CBS News*, December 15, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/witnesses-evidence-indicate-hamas-committed-acts-of-sexual-violence-during-oct-7-attack/>; Jeremy Scahill, Ryan Grim, and Daniel Boguslaw, “‘Between the Hammer and the Anvil’: The Story Behind the New York Times October 7 Exposé,” *The Intercept*, February 28, 2024, <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/28/new-york-times-anat-schwartz-october-7/>.

478 Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); Ziauddin Sardar, *Orientalism* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999).

479 Ali Abunimah, “Debunking ‘Screams Before Silence,’ Sheryl Sandberg’s 7 Oct. ‘Mass Rape’ Film,” *The Electronic Intifada*, May 4, 2024, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/debunking-screams-silence-sheryl-sandbergs-7-oct-mass-rape-film>.

3. the reliance on the case of one prominent alleged victim, whose family members rejected the claims, noting how the accounts were misrepresented;⁴⁸⁰

4. the shift to focusing attention on new allegations of rape of the unreleased hostages once the original fabricated allegations had been debunked;

5. and Physicians for Human Rights–Israel’s repudiation of the false claims.⁴⁸¹

The question is not whether sexualized violence occurred, but rather the fabrication of the scope and the related implication that it was systematic. What is instead clear are the racial overtones of the reports, and the way they weaponize the fabricated accusation of widespread, calculated, sexualized violence to both justify the openly genocidal campaign to annihilate Gaza and to obfuscate the unending evidence (forensic, visual, and testimonial) of the sexualized violence committed by IOF soldiers against Palestinians.⁴⁸²

NGOs Disregard the Legal Threshold Required to Verify the Allegation

On November 7, 2023, Physicians for Human Rights–Israel issued a position paper titled “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as a Weapon of War During the October 7 Hamas Attacks.” The paper was not the result of any kind of investigative research, but rather an aggregation of publicly available information, such as “testimonies of survivors” of the October 7 attack (not sexualized violence), statements from emergency personnel, and visual materials. Not mentioned in their executive summary is a sentence on page 2 of the report stating that they did “not aim to attempt to meet legal thresholds” of evidence. Nonetheless, the report concludes with a statement that “sexual and gender-based violence [likely occurred] during the Hamas-led attacks on October 7, 2023.”⁴⁸³

480 The Short String, “Family of Key Case in New York Times October 7 Sexual Violence Report Renounces Story, Says Reporters Manipulated Them,” Mondoweiss, January 3, 2024, <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/01/family-of-key-case-in-new-york-times-october-7-sexual-violence-report-renounces-story-says-reporters-manipulated-them/>.

481 Physicians for Human Rights Israel, “Physicians for Human Rights Israel’s Clarification on the Organization’s November 2023 Position Paper on Sexual Violence,” n.d., accessed March 6, 2026, <https://www.phr.org.il/en/clarification/>.

482 For a tracker of openly genocidal statements of intent, see Law for Palestine: <https://intent.law4palestine.org/>.

483 Physicians for Human Rights Israel, “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as a Weapon of War Du-

In an exposé for Mondoweiss, Lana Tatour explains that the abovementioned report by Physicians for Human Rights–Israel failed to meet professional human rights reporting standards and instead relies on speculation rather than reliable evidence, reflecting a lower evidentiary threshold when Palestinians are the subject of the allegations.⁴⁸⁴ She points to the timing and framing of the report as playing into Israeli state narratives that dehumanize Palestinians, thereby inadvertently aiding the genocide rather than advancing credible accountability.

The International Press Deviates from Investigative Fact-Finding Protocol

On November 18, 2023, Jake Tapper, a CNN anchor, produced a segment with alleged testimonies about “rape crimes” on October 7. One of the testimonies came from a video of an IOF soldier, claiming to be a paramedic who was among the first to respond at the Be’eri Kibbutz. With his back turned to the camera, he states that two young sisters (ages thirteen and fifteen) were found killed in a house, one of them naked, with semen on her. A December 1, 2023, Mondoweiss investigative piece into the Tapper story found that “every single witness and expert in the CNN report proves to either be lacking in credibility or have ties to Israeli government officials and institutions.”⁴⁸⁵ The story’s holes were largely due to the lack of evidence documenting two young girls matching that description at that site. Within weeks of Tapper’s report, Israeli state spokesmen and affiliated groups launched a major campaign alleging mass rape of Israeli women by Hamas fighters on October 7. Feminist scholars and activists were then subsequently criminalized and punished for pointing to the lack of forensic evidence for these alleged rapes.^{486, 487}

About a month after the CNN Report, The New York Times (NYT) published the infamous “Screams Without Words: How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Vio-

ring the October 7 Hamas Attacks,” Position Paper, November 26, 2023, <https://archive.is/n19Rr>.

484 Lana Tatour, “How Human Rights Organizations Are Aiding the Israeli Assault on Gaza,” Mondoweiss, December 12, 2023, <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/12/how-human-rights-organizations-are-aiding-the-israeli-assault-on-gaza/>.

485 The Short String, “CNN Report Claiming Sexual Violence on October 7 Relied on Non-Credible Witnesses, Some with Undisclosed Ties to Israeli Govt,” Mondoweiss, December 1, 2023, <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/12/cnn-report-claiming-sexual-violence-on-october-7-relied-on-non-credible-witnesses-some-with-undisclosed-ties-to-israeli-govt/>.

486 MEE Staff, “Prominent Palestinian Academic Arrested in Israel for ‘Incitement,’” Middle East Eye, April 18, 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-academic-arrested-incitement-nadera-shalhoub-kevorkian>.

487 Judy Maltz “Head of Canadian Sexual Assault Center Fired for Questioning Accounts of Hamas Raping Israeli Women,” Haaretz, November 19, 2023, <https://archive.ph/4gXbp>.

lence on Oct. 7” article. The piece was perhaps the first from a mainstream news source to claim a thorough, independent journalistic investigation into the allegations against Hamas had been conducted. NYT reportedly examined “video footage, photographs, GPS data from mobile phones and [conducted] interviews with more than 150 people, including witnesses, medical personnel, soldiers and rape counselors.”⁴⁸⁸ The piece identified at least seven locations where Israeli women and girls appear to have been sexually assaulted or mutilated.⁴⁸⁹

A deeper look at the report, and investigations that followed by alternative media sources, uncovers that the NYT abandoned standard journalism procedures in favor of sensationalism driven by ideological bias.⁴⁹⁰ While the NYT stated that the Israeli police admitted that they did not collect semen samples, request autopsies, or closely examine crime scenes of any of the slain bodies they suspected were victims of rape, and while NYT reporters acknowledged they were not able to speak to direct survivors of October 7 sexualized violence, the certainty with which they draw their conclusions is perplexing. Their conclusions, that “the attacks against women were not isolated events but part of a broader pattern of gender-based violence on Oct. 7,” rely on six exhibits and witness testimony, all later proven to be untrue and debunked.⁴⁹¹

The UN: No Evidence After a Month-Long Fact-Finding Mission

In March 2024, the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) published a report on sexualized violence in conflict. The report resulted from a fact-finding mission led by Secretary-General Pramila Patten in January–February 2024, at the invitation and facilitation of the Israeli government.⁴⁹² While the report notes that there are “reasonable grounds to

488 Jeffrey Gettleman, Anat Schwartz and Adam Sella “Screams Without Words,” New York Times, December 28, 2023, <https://archive.is/EPZfh>

489 Jeremy Scahill, Ryan Grim, Daniel Boguslaw, “Between the Hammer and the Anvil: The Story Behind the New York Times October 7 Exposé,” The Intercept, February 28, 2024, <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/28/new-york-times-anat-schwartz-october-7/>.

490 Al Jazeera Investigative Unit and Richard Sanders, “October 7: Forensic Analysis Shows Hamas Abuses, Many False Israeli Claims,” Al Jazeera, March 21, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/21/october-7-forensic-analysis-shows-hamas-abuses-many-false-israeli-claims>; Cheung, “Palestinian Women Come Forward with Allegations of Increased Sexual Violence by Israeli Forces since Oct. 7.”

491 Max Blumenthal and Aaron Maté, “Screams without Proof: Questions for NYT About Shoddy ‘Hamas Mass Rape’ Report,” The Grayzone, January 10, 2024, <https://thegrayzone.com/2024/01/10/questions-nyt-hamas-rape-report/>.

492 “Briefing by SRSG-SVC, Ms. Pramila Patten to the Security Council: Findings of Visit to Israel and the Occupied West Bank, 11 March 2024,” United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the

believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred” on October 7, it also admits there was an “absence of comprehensive forensic evidence,” which limited the team’s ability to draw definitive conclusions.⁴⁹³

The report’s contradictions are indeed glaring. After conducting thirty-three meetings with government officials from various institutions and thirty-four interviews with the survivors and witnesses of the October 7 attack, and following a review of 5,000 photo images and over fifty hours of video footage, the mission was unable to provide even one piece of non-circumstantial evidence that corroborated the allegation of mass rape on October 7. Yet they conclude that they:

*Received clear and convincing information that sexual violence, including rape, sexualized torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment occurred against some women and children during their time in captivity and has reasonable grounds to believe that this violence may be ongoing.*⁴⁹⁴

A close read of the report shows that the mission’s conclusion was, in fact, antithetical to the facts found during its visit. The conclusion, they admitted, rested on purely circumstantial evidence and speculation, largely derived from a pattern of Israeli women found dead, partially or fully nude. There are two problems here. First, there is no mention of the locations, descriptions, or numbers that establish this pattern. Second, and more importantly, as the ZAKA volunteers’ refuted claims had already demonstrated, the undressing of the slain Israeli girl at Kibbutz Be’eri was caused when IOF soldiers relocated her body by dragging it across the room. In short, finding a partially or fully nude body in the aftermath of a violent event demands a careful investigation, guided by experts in forensics; instead, the most widespread accounts are built on racist claims about violent “terrorists” that rely on long-standing colonialist stereotypes.

The authors admit in the very same report that Israel could not provide even one October 7 sexual assault witness or survivor testimony. Yet the more

Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, March 11, 2024, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolence-inconflict/press-release/briefing-by-srsg-svc-ms-pramila-patten-to-the-security-council-findings-of-visit-to-israel-and-the-occupied-west-bank-11-march-2024/>.

493 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, “Mission Report: Official visit of the Office of the SRSG-SVC to Israel and the occupied West Bank, 29 January-14 February 2024,” United Nations, March 4, 2024, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/mission-report-official-visit-of-the-office-of-the-srsg-svc-4mar24/>.

494 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, “Mission Report” 18.

glaring part of the report was what they actually found by investigating the different sites of the Hamas attack. The findings at these various locations do not substantiate the mission's conclusion. At Kibbutz Kfar Aza, the report states that "while circumstantial information may indicate some forms of sexual violence, the mission could not verify reported incidents of rape." At Kibbutz Be'eri: "the mission team determined that at least two allegations of sexualized violence, which had been widely reported in the media, were unfounded. These included the graphically publicized case of a pregnant woman whose womb had reportedly been torn open, before she was killed, and her fetus stabbed while still inside her."⁴⁹⁵ Similarly, the mission team working with Pramilla Patten at the Nahal Oz military base, reported that they could not verify accounts of "genital mutilation in either female or male soldiers."⁴⁹⁶ The ZAKA volunteers responsible for the accounts openly admitted to "using [their] imagination" to fabricate the stories, claiming in an Israeli Foreign Ministry video that "the walls, the stone shouted: 'I was raped.'"⁴⁹⁷ Beyond the lack of evidence of systematic sexual assault, the team demonstrated that the most sensationalized, damaging stories used to justify the genocide were actively generated on totally unfounded claims.

Liberal Feminist Discourse of Sexualized Violence

The weaponization of false accusations of sexualized violence against Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim men discussed in the previous pattern did not begin on October 7, 2023, but rather has been ongoing for decades.⁴⁹⁸

Fabricating accusations of sexual assault not only serves to legitimize oppression, violence, and even genocide, but it also functions to elevate and exaggerate incidental claims of sexualized violence while obscuring systematic and institutional forms of colonial sexualized violence, including the sexual torture and rape of Palestinian detainees and prisoners, reproductive violence.

⁴⁹⁵ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, "Following visit to Israel and the occupied West Bank, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Ms. Pramilla Patten, finds sexual violence occurred on 7 October, and against hostages and calls for a fully-fledged investigation," United Nations, March 4, 2024, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/press-release/israel-west-bank-mission/>.

⁴⁹⁶ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, "Following visit to Israel and the occupied West Bank, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Ms. Pramilla Patten, finds sexual violence occurred on 7 October, and against hostages and calls for a fully-fledged investigation."

⁴⁹⁷ Jeremy Scahill, Ryan Grim, and Daniel Boguslaw, "Between the Hammer and the Anvil: The Story Behind The New York Times October 7 Exposé," *The Intercept*, February 28, 2024, <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/28/new-york-times-anat-schwartz-october-7/>.

⁴⁹⁸ Abunimah, "Debunking Screams Before Silence," 2024.

ce, and sexualized humiliation that Palestinians have been subjected to for decades.⁴⁹⁹

*Zionists cry rape, and the world is shocked. Meanwhile, the Israeli Occupation Forces have committed grave and systematic sexual assault against Palestinian men, women, and children taken as hostages, human rights violations that the world doesn't want to know about.*⁵⁰⁰

Lawyer and sociologist Randa Abdel-Fattah alludes to how “rape atrocity propaganda” works to mobilize Western states and organizations to legitimate and accelerate military, diplomatic, and financial support for Israel’s ethnic cleansing.⁵⁰¹ This tactic, sometimes called SORVO (Systemic Oppression, Reverse Victim, and Offender) was used to: 1) create a narrative that ensured unwavering support for the mass extermination of Palestinians in Gaza from 2023; and 2) to evoke “a threat-defense logic” that can be weaponized militarily, as we’ve witnessed with the case of Palestine, especially since 2023.

*[O]ppressive groups deny, omit, erase, and re-define their acts of sexual violence while sensationalizing, exaggerating, falsifying, and re-defining the actions of the groups they oppress. In doing so, oppressive groups position themselves as “victims” and the population(s) they oppress as “offenders.” This increases support for repressive acts including genocide, settler colonialism, segregation, and systemic sexual violence.*⁵⁰²

In the months following October 7, legal scholar Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, military prosecutor Sharon Zagagi-Pinhas, and former judge Nava Ben-Or founded the Dinah Project.

The Dinah Project was named after the biblical figure Dinah in Genesis 34. According to the scriptures, Dinah was the first Hebrew rape victim, sexually assaulted by Shechem. In retaliation, Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, state “Should he [Shechem] deal with our sister as with a harlot?” before they proceed to kill all the men in Shechem’s city as punishment for the assault. As the authors of the project note: “Our name is taken from the story of our Biblical sister, Dinah, whose rape is the first recorded in the Bible and is a symbol

499 Maryam Khalid, “Gender, Orientalism and Representations of the ‘Other’ in the War on Terror,” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23, no. 1 (2011): 15–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14781158.2011.540092>; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear*.

500 Randa Abdel-Fattah, “A Critical Look at The New York Times’ Weaponization of Rape in Service of Israeli Propaganda,” *Institute of Palestine Studies*, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1655054>.

501 Abdel-Fattah, “Critical Look at The New York Times’ Weaponization of Rape.”

502 Martone, Knick, McDonald Meteer, and Reilly, “SORVO Case Study,” 2.

for recognition for all victims of sexual abuse.”⁵⁰³

The project’s theological reference, transposed onto a contemporary political crisis in the wake of October 7, is terrifying. It suggests that recourse for an incidental case of sexualized violence, requires the execution of all men of the perpetrators community. Yet the Dinah Report does much more than transpose theological interpretations and inferences onto contemporary political contexts. It doubles down on claims—previously established in other circuits—that Palestinians engaged in “premeditated” mass rapes on October 7th which included the ““systemic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.”⁵⁰⁴ The conclusion one naturally draws from such references, is that genocide is not only justifiable, but a necessary part of establishing accountability for the alleged victims of October 7 sexualized violence.

A problematic logic in the Dinah Project discourse, when applied to Palestinians on October 7, is the emphasis on sexualized violence as systemic rather than incidental. Without credible forensic evidence or survivor testimonies, the Dinah Project, like other international organizations and press associations, relies on and applies Orientalist and racialized colonial conjurings of depravity to Palestinian men. They too, affirm that October 7 rapes were “premeditated.”

This project among several other initiatives whereby Zionists and imperialists appropriated feminist rhetoric to mobilize support for genocide. The “Me Too” catchphrase, for example, was refashioned in a campaign called “Me Too Unless You Are a Jew.” The campaign founders sought to create an emergency international call to “be the voice of all Israeli women who were brutally raped, abused, burned, beheaded and murdered.”⁵⁰⁵ Nicole Froio, writing for Prism, states: “The co-optation of the ‘Me Too’ hashtag through campaigns like ‘#MeToo unless you’re a Jew’ is not only infuriating because it uses feminist language to justify genocide, but also sickening, considering how many war crimes against Palestinian women are committed daily and subsequently ignored by the international community.”⁵⁰⁶

503 The Dinah Project, <https://archive.is/FA9A9>.

504 The Dinah Project.

505 Danielle Ofek, “#MeToo_UNless_UR_a_Jew,” #MeToo_UNless_UR_a_Jew, n.d., accessed March 6, 2026, <https://archive.is/VTtOF>.

506 Nicole Froio, “As Israel Continues to Use Debunked Claims of Sexual Violence to Justify Genocide, Feminist Movements Must Push Back.” Prism, October 9, 2024, <https://prismreports.org/2024/10/09/feminist-movements-push-back-against-debunked-sexual-violence-claims/>.

These paradigms invert and obscure power relations. When the “Me Too” movement first appeared, its goal was to empower survivors to speak out against men in power and the patriarchal structures of industries and the state that protect and enable perpetrators of sexualized violence. In the context of Palestine, the alleged victims identify with the structure of power, not as victims of it. Israeli and Zionist politicians weaponized the allegations of mass rape to justify genocide and provide cover for Israel’s sexualized violence against Palestinians. High-profile, white, colonial feminists weighed in, perpetuating the lies about mass rape. “There are exactly no circumstances that justify rape,”⁵⁰⁷ Sheryl Sandberg told the United Nations in December 2023, with Hillary Clinton agreeing and stating, “Rape is never acceptable.”⁵⁰⁸ Following a screening of Sandberg’s film *Screams Before Silence*, about the alleged Hamas rapes, Kamala Harris stated, “we cannot look away, and we will not be silent.”⁵⁰⁹ The colonial and imperialist feminist strategy of co-opting feminist movement catchphrases to serve state power was evidenced by the fact that in December 2023, the primary architects of the genocide, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Joe Biden, condemned international organizations for their silence on the alleged rapes of Israeli women on October 7.⁵¹⁰ Meanwhile, these figures have never spoken of or denounced the sexualized violence enacted upon Palestinian men, women, and children, despite ample documentation.

When Bret Stephens wrote in the NYT that “Silence is violence, but not when it comes to Israeli rape victims,” it was a clear example of an appropriation of a catchphrase, initially meant to address structures of patriarchal power, to obfuscate structural power and colonial domination in the context of Palestine. Without the impediments to documentation that Palestinians face, the Israeli state was able to supply virtually no evidence to their claims, expecting instead that the allegations would be taken as fact and that no questions would be raised pertaining to the structural power relation between Israelis and Palestinians: the former an occupying military force and the latter

507 Batya Jerenberg, “Sheryl Sandberg at UN – Silence over Hamas Rapes Is Not an Option,” World Israel News, December 5, 2023, <https://archive.ph/pQmYn>.

508 Belinda Luscombe, “Sheryl Sandberg Calls for More Outrage Over Attacks on Women on Oct. 7,” Time, December 4, 2023, <https://time.com/6342428/israel-hamas-sheryl-sandberg-oct-7/>.

509 JTA, “‘We Cannot Look Away,’ Kamala Harris Says After White House Screening of Sheryl Sandberg Documentary on Oct. 7 Sexual Violence,” Philadelphia Jewish Exponent, June 18, 2024, <https://archive.ph/7MDe8>.

510 TOI Staff, “Netanyahu, Biden Slam Global Silence on Hamas Sexual Violence against Israeli Women,” The Times of Israel, December 6, 2023, <https://archive.is/xgHG7>.

a colonized, deprived, and subjugated people.

Racialization and Sexualized Violence Against Palestinian and Muslim Men

The final pattern we identified is that victims of sexualized violence represented in this report were overwhelmingly boys and men. In the context of military occupation, normative patriarchal relations inscribed in power must be reconsidered. Scholars of gender studies have extensively researched how systemic sexualized violence, for instance, has been perpetrated against Arab and Muslim men alongside U.S. military invasions and occupations.⁵¹¹ In the case of Abu Ghraib, a U.S. prison camp in Iraq, evidence of U.S. female soldiers sexually abusing Iraqi men highlights the ways in which imperial and colonial material conditions can alter the power dynamics traditionally associated with sexualized violence.⁵¹² Dr. Jasbir Puar writes about the specific role that anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism has in these cases of militarized, sexualized violence. She highlights the fact that it is the external perception of gendered dynamics, roles, and expectations in Arab/Muslim cultures that informs the kinds of violence Arab men and boys are subjected to. In the case of Abu Ghraib, U.S. female soldiers raped Arab men while menstruating because even in consensual sexual encounters, such acts are religiously forbidden.⁵¹³

Identifying patterns of sexualized violence in other military occupations is essential to understanding why so many of the documented reports of sexualized violence in this report are from Palestinian men and boys. Over the course of many years, there have been numerous videos, photographs, and testimonies of the IOF beating, laughing at, and physically dragging Palestinian men who are either stripped nude or in their underwear. These events occur in public places, in front of other men, with the explicit goal of sexualized humiliation. The racialized portrayal of Arab/Muslim/Palestinian men as savage rapists not only distorts perceptions of relations inscribed in colonial and imperial power but also obscures the way they, too, are subjected to systematic sexualized violence by occupation forces.

511 Gargi Bhattacharyya, *Dangerous Brown Men* (London: Zed Books, 2008).

512 Aziza Ahmed, "When Men Are Harmed: Feminism, Theory, and Torture at Abu Ghraib," *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law* 11, no. 1 (2011), https://scholarship.law.bu.edu/faculty_scholarship/3104.

513 Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

Conclusion

When Israel uses falsified allegations of sexualized violence supposedly perpetrated by Palestinians to establish moral justification for genocide, it is reversing the realities of power, repositioning Israeli settlers as victims and Indigenous Palestinians as perpetrators. And while this reality-bending is a form of epistemic violence, even worse is the way it manufactures consent for mass extermination through genocide. While currently focused on the now largely debunked allegations that Hamas systematically sexually assaulted settler women on October 7, it is important to consider why such allegations became so widely disseminated and upheld even when admittedly fabricated.⁵¹⁴ Understanding that racially colonized and Indigenous men are portrayed by colonial and imperial regimes as hyper-violent, culturally backward, and politically antithetical to modernity and progress is paramount to exposing the ways accusations of sexualized violence have been weaponized by Israel to justify genocide in Gaza and renewed wars across the region. Such gendered stereotypes position the colonial and white or Western culture, women, and men as the progressive and morally superior counterpart, greenlighting any actions taken by the dominant group as aligned with progress and modernity for the greater good. However, beyond this othering, these depictions work to activate and justify colonial violence. As we have seen with the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and its so-called forever “War on Terror,” racist cons-

⁵¹⁴ Israeli prosecutor Moran Gez publicly acknowledged that no forensic evidence exists to support rape claims. See: Ilana Curiel, interview in Yedioth Ahronoth, January 1, 2025, <https://archive.ph/yEKjp>; Ali Abunimah, “Israel Still Can’t Find Any 7 October Rape Victims, Prosecutor Admits,” The Electronic Intifada, January 6, 2025, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israel-still-cant-find-any-7-october-rape-victims-prosecutor-admits>.

tructions of Arab and Muslim men as terrorists and uncivilized savages are intentionally manufactured to solicit consent for imperialist warfare.⁵¹⁵ These racial and colonial conjurings are central to understanding the contemporary accusations of sexualized violence leveled against Palestinian men in the wake of October 7, 2023.

Through multiple avenues of information dissemination, Israelis tapped into pre-existing Orientalist, racial, and gendered stereotypes long held by Western audiences. As recently as July 8, 2025, news sources such as the BBC continue to perpetuate this narrative of “ Hamas’s widespread sexual violence” despite not only the lack of evidence to support the claims, but also the stark evidence that reflects the narrative was orchestrated by the highest ranks of leadership in the Israeli state to justify and provide cover for genocide in Gaza.⁵¹⁶

While allegations, like those that spawned in the wake of October 7, follow a long-standing history of racialized demonizations of Palestinian/Arab/Muslim men, they also served another function. They were instrumentally deployed to obscure and cast doubt on the very real reports of sexualized violence reported by Palestinian detainees and prisoners.

515 Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation After 9/11* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Louise Calkins, Pauline Homsy Vinson, and Amira Jarmakani, eds., *Sajjilu Arab American: A Reader in SWANA Studies* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2022); Bhattacharyya, *Dangerous Brown Men*.

516 David Gritten, “ Hamas Used Sexual Violence as Part of ‘ Genocidal Strategy,’ Israeli Experts Say,” BBC, July 8, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1mz8gxzg82o>.

Key Findings

Key Findings

Sexualized and gendered violence have historically been an intrinsic feature of the Zionist project, and continues to animate the systematic war waged on Palestinian bodies, intimacy, home life, and spaces. Since October 7, 2023, there has been a dramatic increase in reports of sexualized violence against Palestinian men, women, and children committed by the IOF. Palestinians have reported: threats of rape, strip-searches and forced nudity, sexualized verbal assault and mocking, nonconsensual touching and groping, photographing and filming while partially or fully stripped nude or during assaults, application of physical pressure to private body parts, and other sexualized nonconsensual physical interactions that are sexually humiliating. There are also scores of reports of Israeli soldiers and prison guards sexually torturing Palestinian detainees and prisoners, including, but not limited to, sexual, reproductive, and genital mutilation, insertion of sharp and sometimes searing objects into the anus, rape, simulated rape, and rape by trained dogs.

As stated earlier, the Lemkin Institute's September 2024 report notes the extensive ways that Israeli leaders and IOF soldiers systematize sexualized violence against Palestinians, indicative of genocidal intent.⁵¹⁷ In addition to this, they note that the desire to prevent Palestinians from reproducing "biologically and culturally" becomes indicative of Israel's extensive gendered violence targeting Palestinian life, sociality, and martyrs by attacking Palestinian generationality, homes, reproductive health, and family unity. As we

⁵¹⁷ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security, "The Genocidal Dimensions."

track Israeli gendered violence against Palestinian men, women, and children throughout major aspects of life and martyrdom, we identify how the logics of Israel's gendered and sexualized violence against Palestinians is intrinsic to its state structure. Attacks on Palestinians as a people attempt to cause mass bodily and mental harm, in order to ultimately dispossess them of their land, supporting or reinforcing the colonial state structure. The findings of this report confirm, beyond any doubt, that gendered and sexualized violence are constitutive of and systematically deployed by Israel's broader project of colonial domination and genocide. These findings are based on the following key institutional patterns:

1. The scale and consistency of the evidence—cases documenting distinctive, severe acts carried out with a consistent pattern—rule out any claim that the abuse represents isolated incidents. The evidence and details of gendered and sexualized violence put forth in this report illustrate the institutionalized dehumanization orchestrated to enact collective harm and punishment on Palestinians and an attempt to thwart resistance to a condition of collective subjugation. The sheer scope and scale of sexualized brutality spans ages, genders, locations, and interface with Israeli forces from various stations and units. The evidence we have collated suggests that all spaces where Palestinian life is made, nurtured, confined, and buried are systematically targeted for Israeli sexual violence.

2. The methods of sexualized violence constitute a pattern that is derived from a coordinated policy, not random nor “lone” acts of criminality. The report highlights systematic sexualized abuse carried out with such consistency that it can only be the result of directed protocols. The report demonstrates standardized implementation of practices—from sexual humiliation and forced witnessing to implementation of physical force—as well as the uniformity of these approaches across multiple sites, from intimate to carceral. While there are numerous practices of sexualized torture and gendered violence represented throughout this report, we bring attention to the training of dogs to rape Palestinians as an essential indicator of Israel's methodical use of sexualized violence to dominate and destroy Palestinian life and the will to resist. We contend that the only way a dog violates and rapes a human is if it has been trained to do so. The coordinated methods of sexualized violence standardized consistently across multiple sites demonstrate its implementation throughout all levels of the Israeli entity, from its governing systems

to its sociocultural structures.

3. The systematic, patterned sexualized violence outlined in this report, as demonstrated by its context and impact, reveals that its purpose is to inflict collective terror on Palestinian life. We regard it as a marker of Israel's genocidal intent to ethnically cleanse Palestinians through devastating torture, trauma, and injury. The sheer depravity, combined with breadth and scope, of the sexualized violence detailed in this report reveals an intent to not only dehumanize and terrorize Palestinians but also to eliminate them through ethnic cleansing and mass murder. That so many of the testimonies we present contain reports of Israeli forces' explicit articulations of intent to kill cannot be overlooked or underestimated. The testimonies we have outlined document the operationalization of Israeli officials' explicit statements to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians. Several of the cases we present here do not survive systematic sexualized torture, and that is by design. Those who have survived to speak offer a glimpse into the devastating impacts of the gendered and sexualized violence on themselves as victims, their families, and communities. The bare minimum they are owed is for the world's people of conscience to listen and act.

4. The acceleration of sexualized violence against prisoners and detainees with Ben Gvir's appointment to the position of Minister of National Security in 2022, and with reports particularly expanding following the 2023 genocide in Gaza, indicates beyond reasonable doubt that sexualized violence is part of a larger arsenal of strategies used to destroy the Palestinian people and must be regarded as central to the crime of genocide.

Given that these violations constitute grave breaches of International Criminal Law (The Rome Statute, including Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, and the Crime of Genocide); International Humanitarian Law (The Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols); and International Human Rights Law (The UN Convention Against Torture), and considering Israel's compulsory obligations under international law, impunity is not an option.



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