

Gaza abductees face systemic abuse and torture in Israeli prisons



Palestinians who were abducted and ill-treated by the Israeli forces are seen in a schoolroom in Rafah in the Gaza Strip (File: Reuters)

Gaza City, May 14 (RHC)-- The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) has reported that Palestinians abducted from the Gaza Strip face systemic abuse and torture in Israeli prisons. PCHR published a 129-page report on Monday documenting the systematic use of torture and inhumane treatment of Palestinians from Gaza abducted by Israel since October 7, 2023.

The report titled "Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza", paints a terrifying picture of systematic crimes against Palestinian abductees from Gaza, and is based on the testimonies of 100 former abductees, including 10 women, and legal visits to 53 others still in custody by PCHR-linked rights experts.

It concludes that the treatment of Palestinians from Gaza amounts to torture and that such torture forms an integral part of the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

Some key findings documented in the report include the mass arbitrary detention of civilians, including children and the elderly, from homes, hospitals, shelters, streets, and at checkpoints, while seeking shelter from bombardments.

Israeli forces stripped them of their personal belongings, homes, and dignity, arrested them under brutal and terrifying circumstances, and deliberately and methodically tortured them solely based on their identity.

After subjecting them to the most horrific forms of abuse and inhumane conditions, the abductees were released in a severely weakened state, many with lasting injuries, and were abandoned into a war zone, fully aware that their chances of survival were strongly diminished.

PCHR concluded that these conditions of life were deliberately designed by the Israeli authorities to induce a slow death, diminishing the chances of survival for torture victims caught amid its ongoing military attacks and blockade, and were therefore calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the Palestinian group.

The detention of Palestinians in Gaza without charge or access to legal counsel, under inhumane conditions, is another finding documented in the report. Other findings are that abductees were subjected to brutal physical and psychological torture, including beatings, electrocution, suspension and sexual violence.

The report documents evidence of intent to destroy the population of Gaza by direct perpetrators, highlighting how genocidal and dehumanizing rhetoric by senior Israeli officials has permeated down to the field, shaping the actions of lower-level personnel, including the systematic use of torture.

PCHR says that to date, thousands of Palestinian abductees from Gaza arrested after October 7, 2023, remain in Israeli detention and continue to be subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

Israeli forces have detained Palestinians from vulnerable groups like children, the elderly, and those with disabilities.

The whereabouts and fate of the vast majority of these abductees remain unknown, with Israeli authorities denying families, lawyers, and international humanitarian organizations access, rendering them victims of enforced disappearance.

Many have been forcibly disappeared by the Israeli forces. An online reporting platform launched by PCHR in August 2024 has already received hundreds of cases of enforced disappearances. These acts were executed with the intent to destroy the Palestinian population of Gaza, PCHR reported.

Euro-Med says the terrible health conditions in which Palestinians were released from Israeli prisons indicate a pattern of torture and abuse until the very last moments.

PCHR has called on countries to enforce international law, prevent genocide and torture, and investigate crimes of genocide and torture under universal jurisdiction.

PCHR urges the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to demand unhindered access to places of detention and urgent action by the ICC to add the commission of the crime of genocide in the arrest warrants against prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former war Minister Yoav Gallant.

Despite widespread recognition of the use of torture against Palestinians from Gaza since October 2023, its use has rarely been analysed within the broader context of the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

This report aims to fill this gap by examining torture not only as a human rights violation or war crime, but also as an integral component of Israel's genocide against Palestinians. For over 18 months, the Israeli regime has been relentlessly bombing Gaza, leaving its 2.3 million residents in a state of unimaginable suffering.

The ongoing genocide by the Israeli killing machine has claimed close to 53,000 Palestinian lives, including thousands of women and children, and injured more than 111,000 others. Countless more remain buried under the rubble, with the true scale of the devastation likely much higher.

[SOURCE: REUTERS and NEWS AGENCIES]

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