

Israeli troops admit to using Palestinians as human shields in Gaza



Tel Aviv, May 25 (RHC)-- Israeli forces are systematically forcing Palestinians to act as human shields in Gaza, sending them into buildings and tunnels—often at gunpoint—to check for bombs and potential threats, according to a report.

The Associated Press report drew on accounts from multiple Palestinians who described being used as human shields in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, as well as two members of Israel's military who admitted to engaging in the practice.

One of the witnesses who spoke to the AP, Abu Hamadan, was detained in August after being separated from his family in northern Gaza. He said Israeli forces told him he'd be helping with a "special mission."

Dressed in army fatigues with a camera fixed to his forehead, Abu Hamadan said he was forced into houses across Gaza to ensure they were clear of bombs and gunmen. For 17 days, he was compelled to search homes and inspect tunnels, while Israeli soldiers stood behind him and entered buildings only after

he had cleared them for threats.

Each night, Abu Hamadan said he was bound in a dark room, waking the next day to repeat the ordeal. The only time he wasn't blindfolded or restrained was when he was used as a human shield, the report said.

In response to the AP report, Israel's military claimed it "strictly prohibits using civilians as shields." However, the two Israeli soldiers interviewed by the AP said their commanders were aware of and tolerated the use of human shields, with some officers explicitly ordering it.

A third soldier, speaking to the whistleblower group Breaking the Silence, said using Palestinians as human shields sped up operations, saved ammunition, and spared combat dogs from injury or death. "These are not isolated accounts; they point to a systemic failure and a horrifying moral collapse," said Nadav Weiman, executive director of Breaking the Silence.

Rights groups say the Israeli military has used Palestinians as shields in Gaza and the occupied West Bank for decades, but that throughout the regime's 19-month genocidal war in Gaza, the practice has become so widespread.

International law forbids the use of civilians to shield military activity or forcibly involve them in combat operations. The Israeli Supreme Court explicitly banned the practice in 2005, yet rights groups continue to document violations.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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