

Palestinian groups urge action as UN says reports of sexual assault in Israeli prisons credible

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The file photo shows a Palestinian woman at an Israeli jail. (Via al-Mayadeen)

Ramallah, February 24 (RHC)-- Palestinian prisoner support organizations have urged international institutions to "take action" as a panel of UN experts said the reports of sexual assault against Palestinian women in Israeli detention were "credible."

"This report adds to previously documented abuses of our prisoners, which have led to the death of eight prisoners in the occupation jails and the disappearance of many prisoners of whom there is no information since their arrest," the prisoner support organizations said.

"We call on the international institutions to take action. Reports are not enough; we demand concrete action to protect our detainees in the occupation jails," they stressed. "We have difficulty documenting testimonies from detainees from Gaza; we call on international human rights organizations to assist with this. We also call on the International Committee of the Red Cross to come out of its silence and call out the violations against our prisoners," read the statement, The New Arab reported on Thursday.

The UN panel of experts said in a joint statement on Monday that there was evidence of at least two cases of rape, as well as other cases of humiliation and threats of rape by Israeli forces against Palestinian women.

The UN special rapporteur on violence against women and girls said the true extent of sexual violence could be significantly higher. "We might not know for a long time what the actual number of victims are," said Alsalem, who was appointed special rapporteur by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2021.

"I would say that, on the whole, violence and dehumanisation of Palestinian women and children and civilians has been normalized throughout this war," Alsalem said.

The UN experts said they were "distressed" by the reports that women and girls "have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped naked and searched by male Israeli army officers."

The panel also mentioned other cases of Israeli violence against Palestinian women, saying "Palestinian women and girls have reportedly been arbitrarily executed in Gaza, often together with family members, including their children." "We are shocked by reports of the deliberate targeting and extrajudicial killing of Palestinian women and children in places where they sought refuge, or while fleeing."

"There are disturbing reports of at least one female infant forcibly transferred by the Israeli army into Israel, and of children being separated from their parents, whose whereabouts remain unknown," they said.

The Israeli regime launched the relentless war on Gaza on October 7, following a surprise attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas, who acted in retaliation to the Israeli entity's long-standing violence against Palestinians.

The regime has killed at least 29,410 Palestinians and wounded more than 69,465 others in Gaza since the beginning of the aerial and ground military campaign. The war has also forced 1.9 million people – 85 percent of Gaza's population – to flee their homes.

Many more are Gazans also unaccounted for and believed to be buried under the debris in Gaza, which is under a total blockade by Israel.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/348139-palestinian-groups-urge-action-as-un-says-reports-of-sexual-assault-in-israeli-prisons-credible>



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