

New Testimonies Detail Torture and Abuse of Gazan Detainees in Israeli Jails, Detention Centres

By [Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor](#)

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*New testimonies received by Euro-Med Human Right Monitor from recently-released Palestinian detainees from the Gaza Strip, including women and children, **detail their subjection to torture and ill-treatment by Israeli authorities. The rights organisation cited revelations of crimes such as forced nudity, sexual harassment, and threats of sexual torture, calling for urgent international action to stop these violations.***

Testimonies from a group of recently-released detainees who spent varying lengths of time in Israeli jails and detention centres were provided to the Euro-Med Monitor team. These individuals confirmed that they were subjected to severe beatings, dog attacks, strip searches, and denial of food and bathroom access, among other cruel practices that amount to torture.

The most concerning testimonies that Euro-Med Monitor received concern female detainees who were directly sexually harassed. The female detainees, who preferred to remain unidentified due to safety concerns, said that Israeli soldiers had harassed them by touching their genitals as well as making them remove their headscarves. Additionally, the rights group confirmed that the soldiers forced the female detainees and their families into providing information about others by threatening to indecently assault and even rape them.

A 70-year-old man who requested anonymity spoke with Euro Med Monitor's team as well.

"[Israeli soldiers] took me from my house in the neighbourhood of Al-Amal in Khan Yunis," the man, identified only as "M.N.", stated. "I told them that I was sick and could not move, but they did not care. They forced me to take off my clothes. They took me to a demolished house; I had the impression that I was used as a human shield."

M.N. explained that the Israeli soldiers made more arrests later on and "led us to a detention facility that was nothing more than an iron cage for severe torture". He spent 10 days confined to the prison.

"We were subjected to daily insults and beatings," M.N. added. "We went four days without drinking [anything]. They poured water on the ground in front of us as a form of torture. We were made to sit on our knees, given little food, and only allowed to use the restroom once."

"They asked us to evacuate, so I left with my family west of Khan Yunis," reported

another man, identified only as “K.H.N.” due to safety concerns. “[Israeli soldiers] arrested me at the checkpoint and forced me to take off my clothes. I was severely beaten. Blankets soaked with water were draped over us. We did not drink any water and were abnormally cold.”

K.H.N. stated that the Israeli army

“later transferred us to another place, where we were subjected to another form of torture. Every new place had a unique method of torture. I was struck in the head by an officer, who continued to hit me after I complained.”

The severe cold prevented him from falling asleep, he told Euro-Med Monitor.

“They arrested me from Beit Lahia, and forced me to completely undress,” a third man, identified as “M.W.”, said to the rights organisation. “They detained me in an open area and severely beat me; I felt their hands scour my body. After severely beating me with rugs and rifle butts, they hung me by my legs. I was exposed to severe beatings for 4 to 6 hours [per day].”

He added:

“They threatened to rape my family, and asked for information that I did not know. They forced us to insult certain factions and personalities, to support Israel, and to say that the dog that was attacking us was ‘the crown on our head’.”

“They arrested me at the checkpoint on Salah al-Din Road,” revealed a woman who identified as “G”: “They asked me to head to a sand berm, where they blindfolded me, searched me with their hands, and asked me about Hamas and the tunnels.

“Then they moved me to an open area, then [transferred] me to a detention centre, where I was forced to take off my clothes,” G continued. “They provided me with nothing but [house clothes] and no underwear.” She was questioned multiple times while in custody, she told the rights organisation. “Every time I was stripped nude, with the female soldiers putting their hands on me, while male soldiers occasionally made rude comments, harsh insults that I cannot [repeat], and rape threats.”

According to Euro-Med Monitor, a recent report by Israel’s own media on the detention centre housing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip shows that Israel practises systematic torture, in violation of human rights agreements that were explicitly designed and implemented to prevent torture. The report shows detainees being shackled and forced to sit on the ground in iron animal-like cages—in accordance to the Israeli **Defence Minister Yoav Gallant’s** October 2023 statement that Palestinians in Gaza are “human animals”.

Euro-Med Monitor stressed that Israeli forces are forcibly disappearing Palestinian detainees and subjecting them to brutal violence and even severe torture from the very first moment of their arrest right up until the moment of release. The organisation noted that Israeli authorities have refused requests from multiple human rights organisations, including Israeli ones, seeking information about Gazan detainees. Detainees from the Gaza Strip are being held in newly-established Israeli army detention facilities scattered throughout the Negev and Jerusalem, where they endure severe abuse, torture, and starvation.

According to Euro-Med Monitor, the Israeli army systematically humiliates detainees, holding them for extended periods of time without providing any valid reason, and often forcing them to chant in favour of Israel while disparaging Palestinian groups and individuals. Some Gazan detainees have been blackmailed by members of the Israeli army and Shin Bet, exchanging information with them in order to alleviate their torture, obtain certain “privileges”, or secure their release.

The rights organisation pointed to the concerning lack of an accurate count of detainees from Gaza. The Israeli army recently claimed that there are 2,300 detainees in Gaza; however, estimates based on the testimonies of those released suggest that the actual number of detainees is much higher. One detainee said that Israeli officers had personally informed them that there are thousands of Gazan detainees.

Israel’s Sde Teman army camp, located between Beersheba and Gaza, has been turned into a Guantánamo-like prison, stated Euro-Med Monitor. Detainees there are held in extreme conditions akin to open-air chicken cages, without access to food or drink for long periods of time. The organisation highlighted testimonies it has received about the deaths of two detainees inside the Sde Teman camp, one of whom had an amputated foot; Israel has not officially announced their deaths.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor called on Israel to promptly reveal the names, whereabouts, and fate of all forcibly disappeared detainees, and to immediately stop its policy of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees. Euro-Med Monitor emphasised that Israel’s ruthless assaults on Palestinian detainees, which violate their dignity and purposefully cause them great pain and suffering, are tantamount to crimes against humanity and/or torture, which fall under the purview of war crimes and crimes against humanity as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Euro-Med Monitor stated that these breaches are related to Israel’s ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip, which began on 7 October 2023. Specifically, the killing of Palestinian detainees inside detention centres is considered to be a crime of premeditated murder and an extrajudicial execution. This type of killing is prohibited by international law, especially international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law, which considers intentionally killing civilians a war crime, according to the Rome Statute.

International law also prohibits arbitrary arrest and unlawful imprisonment, and considers them to be war crimes, said the rights group. International law forbids detaining and arresting someone and depriving them of their freedom by failing to provide any information about their whereabouts or fate in an effort to deny them legal protection for an extended period of time. According to the Rome Statute, enforced disappearance is considered a crime against humanity.

The Geneva-based rights group called on the International Committee of the Red Cross to bear its responsibilities and verify the detention conditions of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Euro-Med Monitor also called on the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to open an urgent and impartial investigation into the grave situation. This investigation is needed, it said, to probe the Israeli army’s liquidation of Palestinian civilians after their arrest in different areas of the Gaza Strip, to hold those responsible accountable, and to provide justice to all survivors as well as the families of victims.

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