



## Palestinian Female Prisoners after Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 2023.

### 1. Background Information:

On the eve of October 2023, the world quaked for stories of rape, harassment, and decapitated babies, without asking for proof. 249 days in, 37746 martyrs, 7000 disappeared persons, and the world is yet to stand for Palestine.<sup>1</sup> I'm not going to talk about the double standards of the international community, nor to tell what stories are credible and what stories are not, my sole purpose is to try and raise alerts on issues that might not make it to the spotlight during these times of mass genocide. Today, we have no actual numbers to show for Palestinian victims, whether they are murdered, disappeared, imprisoned, or even trafficked. The official figures that are announced and mentioned are all of the reported cases, and while the number is extremely alarming and high, detainees for we only know the count of persons kept in official prisons and any number mentioned including the reported 14170 detainees in official prisons would be undermining someone's existence

The situation of Palestinian prisoners in general has been insufferable even before the events that unfolded on Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, yet it became even worse after. As reports emerged of secret make-up detention camps set up inside the green line to keep Gaza detainees in, 36 Palestinian detainees from Gaza are reported by the Israeli authorities to have died in these camps. The situation is exacerbated by the intersectional identities of people, meaning that acts of humiliation, torture, and oppression are felt and experienced differently. Thus, we're focusing on the situation of Palestinian female prisoners in the "official" Israeli prisons (including the detention phase), noting that out of the 7000 disappeared Palestinians there are 4700 women and children.

### 2. Personal Stories/Case Studies:

- All genders suffer from gender-based violence mainly because colonization is inherently violent but also because the Israeli system has reached a point where every torture method one goes through is catered specifically to that person's (victim's) intersectional identity (gender, religion, beliefs, age group, etc.) Many reports aimed to document and investigate this were published despite the harsh circumstances that put everyone working on these reports at risk.

The UNRWA report on Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War shared various stories. It stated that both men and women reported being stripped naked in front of male soldiers and photographed or recorded naked by the soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

A 41-year-old man who was kidnapped and detained by the Israeli forces explained his experience to the UNRWA staff in Gaza telling them about the burns he got in his anus because they made him sit on something similar to a hot metal stick. He also recounts another kidnapped Palestinian dying "after they put the electric stick up his [anus]. He got so sick; we saw worms coming out of his body and then he died"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics," PCBS, accessed June 16, 2024, [https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang\\_en/1405/Default.aspx](https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang_en/1405/Default.aspx).

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. *Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War*. UN, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

Another victim of the Israeli brutality is a 34-year-old woman who clearly describes psychological and sexual torture as she -and the women with her- were called sexual slurs and spat on by soldiers, and threatened to “ put pepper on our sensitive parts [genitals].”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, many alarming bells were ringing through media documentation, such as the Reuters picture that circulated in the early beginnings of the ground invasion. The picture is of a truck filled with men who are blindfolded and stripped down to their underwear, and one woman who is also blindfolded with her Hijab taken off.<sup>5</sup> The picture depicted one of the many degrading actions that Palestinians in Gaza are enduring. Nevertheless, the lone woman in that picture sparked controversy about what is taking place during the arrests. To this point, the UN experts were alarmed by the “unknown number of Palestinian women and children, including girls, [who]have reportedly gone missing after contact with the Israeli army in Gaza.”<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Key Messages:

- Problem Statement: Sexual abuse and harassment of the kidnapped female detainees during arrests and in prison.

- Policy Recommendations:

1. Recognize the gravity of the violation, as introduced in the Rome statute as a war crime and a crime against humanity.
2. Impose an 80-year arms embargo on Israel.
3. Impose economic and political sanctions on the state of Israel.
4. Recognize the current unfolding events, as a continuation of the genocide ongoing since 1948, and the latter being the cornerstone of creating “the state of Israel”
5. Issue an investigation regarding rape and forced disappearance.

- Benefits of Action: If the above actions are pushed forward,

1. The Gaza genocide will stop, as Israel will not be able to cover the economic bill on its own.
2. It will set a precedent for future similar actions and hopefully prevent them
3. The economic and political sanctions will reinforce the shared values of the UN member states and their commitment to justice.
4. Perpetrators of crimes will be held accountable in the ICC or other international tribunals.

### 4. Supporting Evidence:

Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, The US alone has provided \$12.5 billion in military aid to Israel and approved \$26.38 billion more in The Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024. This not only makes the US a direct accomplice to the genocide in Gaza but raises questions about the war bill that Israel can carry. This means that any halt of funds will directly limit the amount of atrocities taking place in Gaza including sexual assaults and abuse in prison and during arrest.

While sanctions are a last resort, Israel has long crossed that threshold. The case for sanctions is always cited to be the dismantling of the apartheid regime in South Africa through economic and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Zeliger, Yossi. Israeli soldiers stand by a truck packed with shirtless Palestinian detainees, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in the Gaza Strip. 8 Dec. 2023. Reuters.Com, Reuters, Gaza, Palestine, <https://www.reuters.com/pictures/pictures-israel-hamas-war-2023-1223/BXPAUDZTGBHIXHE277HA65CFQM/>. Accessed 9 June 2024.

<sup>6</sup> “Israel/oPt: UN Experts Appalled by Reported Human Rights Violations against Palestinian Women and Girls.” United Nations, 19 Feb. 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>. Accessed 9 June 2024.

political sanctions. Not allowing things to feed into the apartheid regime made it grow weaker until it finally collapsed. The same should be done with Israel.

Moreover, an arms embargo for 80 years means that Israel will not risk any weapons they have at the moment, which will force them to take humane pathways to things instead of the usual oppression and terror.

#### 5: Call to Action

I'm calling on all special rapporteurs to push and advocate for more states and countries :

To join the South Africa case against Israel in the ICC.

To impose immediate sanctions on Israel and any party that directly funds them.

To call upon the neighboring country in the region to halt relations as long as the genocide is still ongoing.

To Issue an investigation on all acts committed in Gaza including Rape, sexual assaults, and forced disappearance.

To assign an international commission to conduct quarterly visits to all prisons and detention centers where Palestinian detainees are kept.

#### 6. Conclusion

The plight of Palestinian female detainees following the events of October 7th, 2023, underscores a distressing reality that transcends mere statistics and legal frameworks. It unveils a narrative of profound suffering, where women are subjected to unspeakable horrors within the confines of Israeli prisons and detention camps. Despite international legal obligations aimed at safeguarding the rights and dignity of female prisoners, the lived experiences of Palestinian women paint a starkly different picture.

The legal framework, encompassing international instruments such as the Nelson Mandela Rules, the Geneva Conventions, the UNCAT, CEDAW, and the Rome Statue unequivocally mandates humane treatment and gender-sensitive care for female detainees. However, the testimonies and documented abuses reveal a flagrant disregard for these obligations.

The experiences of female Palestinian detainees serve as a poignant call to action. The silence and inaction of the world amid the ongoing genocide and oppression demand a reevaluation of priorities and a reaffirmation of commitment to justice and human rights. It is imperative that concerted efforts be made to hold perpetrators accountable, ensure the safety and well-being of Palestinian women, and work towards a just and lasting resolution. Only through collective action and unwavering solidarity can the voices of Palestinians in general and Palestinian women in specific be heard.

I urge you to implement targeted sanctions against Israel, similar to what was done with Russia, specifically focusing on their key economic sectors and political leaders.

I would be happy to provide any additional information you may need and am willing to follow up on our discussion regarding the proposed sanctions. You can reach me via email at [Raghadadwan26@gmail.com](mailto:Raghadadwan26@gmail.com) , or via phone number on +970 595524941.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further discussion on this matter.

Thank you for all your hard work, time and effort.