



Following reports of executions, intl. community must pressure Israel to reveal whereabouts of hundreds of Gazan detainees



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📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Geneva - The international community must put pressure on Israel to end its genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and immediately cease all crimes it is committing against Gazans there, said Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, citing the arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention, and forced disappearance of hundreds of Palestinian detainees. The rights group called for the disclosure of detainees' whereabouts and physical conditions, stating that it has received numerous of Palestinians being subjected to torture, abuse, and extrajudicial executions.

Israeli military police reportedly opened an investigation last Sunday, 31 December 2023, into the likely killing of a Palestinian prisoner by an Israeli soldier who was supposed to be guarding him. Euro-Med Monitor noted that this incident is not an isolated case, as it has received multiple testimonies concerning the Israeli army's killing of dozens of Palestinian detainees in the region and carrying out extrajudicial executions, mainly in the Gaza Strip. Several Palestinians, it said, have been tortured to death in the Israeli army's detention camps.

According to Euro-Med Monitor, Israeli police brought up the case of a Palestinian man who was apprehended by Israeli army forces on Saturday evening, 30 December 2023, in the Gaza Strip. Following an interrogation, the prisoner was given over to a soldier who was assigned to protect him. The soldier is said to have opened fire on the prisoner, however, killing him; he later claimed that he felt threatened.

Euro-Med Monitor confirmed that it has received hundreds of reports regarding Palestinians going missing in the Gaza Strip. It is suspected that these people were taken into custody directly from their homes or from shelter centres during raids by Israeli forces, following Israel's ground invasion of Gaza; dozens of them have been subjected to arbitrary and extrajudicial executions.

The Geneva-based organisation said that these executions are a continuation of the widespread killings and field executions that the Israeli army has carried out during military operations and home and shelter centre raids, noting that detainees from Gaza Strip are subjected to forced disappearance amid a total blackout of names, number of cases, and detention places and conditions, which increases the chance of Israel's immunity from accountability and impunity for crimes related to murder under torture and arbitrary and extrajudicial executions.

Euro-Med Monitor warned of a dangerous occurrence in which Israeli forces handed over dozens of bodies in two stages, with dozens more handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross without any information about their identities or details pertaining to their arrest. Some of these bodies belonged to Palestinians who were detained by the Israeli army, Euro-Med Monitor stated, pointing to physical evidence of severe torture.

Euro-Med Monitor called on the International Committee of the Red Cross to assume its responsibilities, stressing that—given the role the Committee is playing—it could be involved in covering up the horrific crimes being committed by the Israeli army. Euro-Med Monitor called on the organisation to lead an international campaign to ensure that it is allowed to visit all Palestinian detainees in order to fulfil its obligations under the Geneva Conventions, which include looking for missing persons and informing relatives about their whereabouts, plus facilitating family communications and reunification.

Whoever Israel prevents from carrying out its mandated responsibilities, including visiting Palestinian detainees and prisoners, must take public stances and issue statements, Euro-Med Monitor said.

Roughly 7,000 people—mostly women and children—are reported missing in the Gaza Strip. Most of them are assumed to have perished beneath the debris of houses and other buildings hit by Israeli airstrikes, while some are believed to be somewhere on the streets of the Strip or in Israeli custody, especially as many individuals have vanished from neighbourhoods during Israeli army ground incursions.

Euro-Med Monitor indicated that there is no accurate count of Palestinian detainees, specifically, due to Israel's ongoing enforced disappearance policy, the

difficulty of receiving reports in the Gaza Strip given the high number of displaced persons, and the near-total disruption of communications and the Internet. However, preliminary estimates suggest that more than 3,000 people have been detained by Israeli forces, including 200 women and young girls. These Palestinians are being held in detention in blatant violation of international law, with no official information available regarding their charges or conditions.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor called for immediate action to end the arbitrary detention and forced disappearance of hundreds of Palestinian detainees from the Gaza Strip. The rights group noted that States are required to consider enforced disappearance a crime punishable by law with appropriate penalties, given its extreme seriousness, under the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which went into effect in 2010.

The agreement states that forced disappearance is illegal and qualifies as a crime against humanity if it is carried out extensively or methodically, as in the current case of the Israeli army forces' activity in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military has detained over 3,000 people whose whereabouts are still unknown, Euro-Med Monitor reiterated, while no information has been released about them.

Parallel to this, Euro-Med Monitor appealed to the international community to compel Israel to allow

civil defence teams to retrieve bodies from Gaza's streets and under the rubble, and to expedite the provision of the tools and equipment required for these operations. This will also allow for the number of people who are dead versus missing and/or thought to be detained by Israeli forces to be determined.



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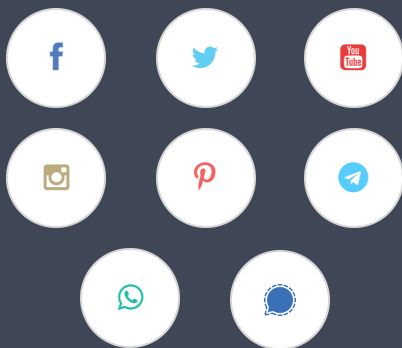
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