

# Gaza: Israeli army systematically uses police dogs to brutally attack Palestinian civilians, with at least one reported rape



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Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Palestinian Territory** – The Israeli military is using police dogs to systematically attack Palestinian civilians during military operations in the Gaza Strip. The dogs are also used to intimidate, beat, and sexually assault prisoners and detainees in Israeli detention facilities.

Numerous incidents of Israeli forces using large police dogs during military operations in the Strip have been recorded by the Euro-Med Monitor field team, particularly during raids of homes, shelters, and medical facilities.

These ways include checking out sites before raids without having to enter them, by strapping surveillance cameras to dogs' backs, as well as allowing dogs to repeatedly maul or otherwise attack civilians, without any interference from members of the Israeli arm. In fact, according to testimonies, Israeli forces often order the dogs to attack civilians, and then mock the victims of the attacks.

The Israeli army's systematic use of dogs during home raids suggests that the recent attack on Dawlat Al-Tanani, an elderly woman in Gaza City whose mauling by a dog was caught on video and went viral, is not an isolated incident. Rather, her case came to light because it was captured on camera and published.

Sixty-year-old Al-Tanani, who was attacked on 14 May by an Israeli army dog in her home in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, told the Euro-Med Monitor team:

"I was sleeping in my house, which I refused to leave after the Israeli army entered the Jabalia camp. I woke up to the sound of Israeli forces breaking through the wall and into my home. A dog wearing a camera on its back attacked me in a matter of seconds, biting my shoulder and eventually reaching my bone with its fangs. He dragged me outside. As I screamed loudly, the soldiers laughed and offered me no assistance or medical attention. When the dog kept biting me while I was screaming, a relative who was present in the house came to my aid and shoved the dog with his crutch. I was bleeding heavily. My relative managed to shut the room's door and, in vain, yelled at the soldiers to assist me. He attempted to halt the bleeding with a scarf, and the following day I was moved to Al-Yemen Hospital, then to Kamal Adwan Hospital and [later to] Al-Awda Hospital. However, the available medical services were limited, and despite wearing a splint, my injury persists."

Testimonies were also given to the Euro-Med Monitor team regarding the use of Israeli army dogs during the recent invasion of the Al-Shifa Medical Complex in March 2024, as well as the mauling of dead bodies and displaced people in the hospital courtyard in late 2023.

"Israeli forces stormed the Al-Youssef Building in the vicinity of Al-Shifa Hospital at around 9 a.m.," 67-year-old Youssef Faza told Euro-Med Monitor.

Faza explained: "When the soldier opened the apartment door, a black dog barked at me, biting me in the chest, ripping my feet off, and dragging me all the way from the front to the back of

the flat. After I had lost a lot of blood, one of the soldiers [eventually] pulled it away from me.”

The following statement was made by a woman who requested anonymity due to safety concerns: “Israeli forces stormed our house [and] brought the dog into the apartment as soon as the door was open. It bit my elderly husband on the chest, stomach, and leg, causing him to bleed profusely, without the army intervening.”

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**Youssef Faza, 67**

Similarly, M.S., a mother of a two-year-old girl, said: “The Israeli forces stormed our house, brought the dogs in, and attacked us. It was a terrifying situation. After taking us outside, they killed my husband’s uncle and grandfather and made us move to the south.”

Dr Islam Sawali revealed last February that the Israeli army stormed Khan Yunis’ Nasser Hospital with dogs to forcibly evacuate the medical staff and displaced people sheltering there.

A Euro-Med Monitor field team documented the use of dogs to attack and terrorise women and children during the storming of shelter centres in different phases of the Israeli army’s ground operations in Gaza City, the Strip’s north, and Khan Yunis.

The most dangerous and horrifying form of this type of violence, however, has been against male Palestinian prisoners and detainees. This is one of the Israeli army’s many crimes of systematic sexual violence against Palestinian detainees, which also included nudity, sexual harassment, threats of rape, and placing sharp objects in the victim’s buttocks.

Euro-Med Monitor received horrific testimonies from recently released detainees confirming the brutal and inhumane use of Israeli police dogs to rape prisoners and detainees. Lawyer Fadi Saif al-Din Bakr, who was released on 22 February after 45 days of detention, told the Euro-Med Monitor team:

“They held me in a building they called ‘Diapers’ and forced me to wear diapers for two days. Then they dragged me into a dark, musty-smelling, closed-off room with an iron chair in the centre. The soldiers bound my arms while I was sitting on it. I was speaking normally before I lost consciousness for a while. By the time I woke up, my foot had exploded from the electric shocks [they had given me]. The military doctor then gave me an Acamol pill, and since I was unable to move or speak, the soldiers brought me back to a barn’s and [put me in] a container for a few hours. I remained in the barn until, after a while, the soldiers hurriedly drove me and two other young men to a different location in a military jeep.

“There, the soldiers took off the blindfolds covering our eyes for the first time. The soldiers later pulled the young man sitting to my right, forced him to sleep on the ground, and tied his hands and feet. Suddenly, the occupation soldiers let loose trained police dogs on the young man, who was subjected to [rape]. Throughout the entire ordeal I endured, this was among the most awful things that I witnessed. Everything was a lot [to go through], and this was just one more [incident] added to the heap of torments. I was hoping today so that this would not happen to me, but one of the soldiers told me to get ready. [Yet] something miraculous happened in the prison; the torture session quickly ended, and we were brought back to the barn.”

Thirty-six-year-old Hassan Abu Raida, another released detainee, stated: “They moved me and the other detainees to a prison. They threw us to the ground and made the dogs urinate on us [as we lay there]. In addition, one of the soldiers struck my right knee with an iron pipe, and I am still recovering from that injury.”

Dr Hamed Abu Al-Khair, who was detained by the Israeli army from Gaza City’s Al-Shifa Hospital, stated: “We were under attack by multiple squads, including the suppression squad, which attack us twice a week, hurling sound bombs at and around us, and forcing us to sleep on our stomachs and to raise our hands up. Sometimes the dogs were let loose on us, torturing us systematically and sometimes collectively. Dogs used to frequently injure and maul us. A few of us suffered from severe dog bites, to the point where we could hear bones cracking due to the extreme pain they caused. Many of the detainees suffered from suffocation and fractured rib cages as a result of the iron rods they used to beat and assault us.”

According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Israeli army’s practice of carrying out these vicious attacks against Palestinian civilians, intimidating them, violating their dignity, and purposefully causing them great pain and suffering, amounts to the commission of

crimes such as rape, serious sexual violence, torture, and inhuman treatment—crimes that fall under the purview of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

These violations come as part of the Israeli crime of genocide in the Gaza Strip, ongoing since 7 October 2023.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor emphasizes that one of the most abhorrent crimes that needs immediate investigation to ensure its cessation and the accountability of all perpetrators is sexual violence, which has seriously escalated recently and includes the use of dogs to rape prisoners and detainees.

The international community has legal obligations to stop Israel from committing genocide and other serious crimes against the people of the Gaza Strip, including prisoners and detainees. It also needs to use effective pressure tactics to put an immediate stop to Israel's criminal activities, pressure it to abide by international law, and protect Palestinian civilians in the Strip.

The international community must force Israel to immediately cease its practice of forcibly disappearing Palestinian prisoners and detainees from the Gaza Strip; to immediately reveal the location of all secret "detention facilities", i.e. concentration camps; to reveal the identities of all Gazan detainees, along with their fate and places of detention; and to assume full responsibility for their safety and lives.

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on the subject of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment must also swiftly and impartially investigate the detention conditions of all Palestinians in Israeli prisons and detention centres, including those killed there since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the Strip, and take appropriate action to hold those responsible accountable and provide justice to the victims.