



In testimonies to Euro-Med Monitor, women from Gaza report being subjected to sexual violence, torture by Israeli forces



📅 27 Feb 2024

📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

🔗 Share On [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [✉](#) [📄](#)

AR

Geneva - In new testimonies documented by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, female Palestinian detainees from the Gaza Strip report being subjected to sexual violence, torture, inhuman

treatment, strip searches, sexual harassment, and rape threats while being arrested and held by Israeli army forces.

According to the testimonies of female detainees who were recently released following various periods of detention, they endured severe treatment that amounts to torture, including beatings, threats of rape if they disobeyed orders, forced nudity, strip searches in front of male soldiers, and verbal harassment. Members of the Israeli army not only robbed them of any money and belongings they had at the time of their arrest, but tied the detainees up, blindfolded them for extended periods of time, held them in cages amid freezing weather, and denied them access to food, medicine, essential medical care, and menstrual products. Israeli forces also continuously threatened them with losing the ability to see their children.

The Euro-Med Monitor team personally interviewed dozens of women who reported having experienced verbal and sexual harassment. The rights organisation believes that a greater number of female detainees likely experienced similar violations, however, but are uncomfortable

“ I was threatened with rape and told that I would not see my children if I disobeyed the soldier's orders

disclosing information **N.H., 45, resident of Gaza City** about the crimes due to social norms, trauma, or safety concerns, including persecution or death at the hands of the Israeli army. According to Euro-Med Monitor, it will take more time to determine the precise amount or scope of these violations against Palestinian women and girls.

A 45-year-old resident of Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighborhood, "N.H."—who requested anonymity due to safety concerns—told the Euro-Med Monitor team that she was arrested by Israeli forces on 28 December 2023. She was taken from a UN-run school housing displaced people in the Bureij refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip, and held for 43 days.

According to N.H., the Israeli army stormed the school at dawn, summoned the male residents, forced them to take off their clothes, and detained them. After requesting to see their personal identification cards, the women were ordered to go into a room for a "medical check-up". After entering the room, said N.H., "[W]e were searched while we were completely naked, inside a closed-off area, and the female soldiers beat us severely and continuously."

She explained that she experienced multiple strip searches in public, with male soldiers present, and a female soldier insulted her, spat on her, and made remarks about her body while she was undressing.

N.H. was detained for 11 days inside what she said resembled a cage for animals, and was shackled the entire time in bitter cold, with access to only a single shared restroom and no food or water. She also described being questioned about her family members while cuffed to a chair.

After being held in a cage for four days, the recently released-woman affirmed that she was questioned once more and threatened with not being able to see her kids again if she did not cooperate with the Israeli investigators. She also noted that she was verbally harassed by both male and female soldiers, who photographed her with their mobile phones to record her torture, in total disregard for her physical and psychological well-being.

For her part, 39-year-old "N.M.", who also requested anonymity due to safety concerns, said that three of her brothers were killed in two separate incidents by an Israeli reconnaissance plane prior to her arrest. After storming the school she was sheltering in, Israeli soldiers forced the males there to strip naked before taking them and the women to a nearby mosque, confiscating their ID cards, and interrogating them all individually.

N.M. told Euro-Med Monitor that the Israeli soldiers threatened to rape her and to prevent her from seeing her kids if she disobeyed their orders to film videos attacking the Hamas movement. She said that she was moved to Israel's Damon Prison, where she was subjected to incredibly restricted living

conditions and interrogations on military matters while being unable to leave a small room.

Along the same line, a 20-year-old resident of the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip named “S.D.,” who also asked that her full name be withheld for her safety, told the Euro-Med Monitor team that she was held for 50 days inside a state-run school sheltering displaced people in Gaza City. She described how Israeli forces arrested her, tied her hands behind her back, blindfolded her, and searched her while she was only wearing her underwear. She was taken to Israel’s Zikim base in a military jeep with other female detainees, where they were left for about two hours on a sidewalk at one point while the soldiers mocked them in Hebrew, a language they do not understand.

“The conditions of detention were extremely harsh; I strained a muscle in my handcuffed hand and an Israeli female soldier struck me hard on my back when I attempted to move,” S.D. told Euro-Med Monitor. “After that, we were transported by truck to a detention facility called Anatot in a mountainous area close to Jerusalem. There, the temperature was very low and we suffered from the freezing weather.”

She elaborated on being verbally harassed by Israeli soldiers: “We were left on a sidewalk for approximately an hour before being given gray prison clothes. We were then made to walk in a line while being teased and humiliated. Afterward, we were taken to a location that resembled a hellish

cage, where we were deprived of basic necessities like food and toilets.”

During those days, she told Euro-Med Monitor, no food was served except milk, which detainees shared between themselves. “We were subjected to nasty verbal abuse and foul language, and we were only allowed to use sanitary pads in extremely small amounts—not enough for even a single day—and bathe infrequently,” she stated.

“The soldiers were harassing us, keeping us outside in the rain, and preventing us from praying,” she continued. She further reported that after eight days, she was moved to Damon Prison—after being attacked multiple times by female soldiers. “One of the female soldiers took the blindfold off my eyes and asked me to kiss the Israeli flag during the transfer process,” she added. “When I refused, my face was severely beaten. The female soldier continued to provoke and assault me in retaliation.” S.D. said that she endured a series of torturous interrogation sessions in Damon Prison until she was eventually released, and that she was also subjected to medical negligence there.

A 31-year-old resident of northern Gaza City, “R.R.,” who also requested anonymity due to safety fears, said that she was detained on 3 December 2023 while attempting to cross the Netzarim military checkpoint on foot to head to the southern section of the Strip. She told Euro-Med Monitor that all of her belongings—gold, cash, a phone, and personal items

—were seized upon her arrest. She also stated that Israel forces made her undress before tying her hands together, blindfolding her, and transporting her to a detention facility at the Zikim site, where she endured excruciating interrogation sessions that included verbal abuse, beatings, and torture.

R.R. explained that she was repeatedly blackmailed, asked to work for Israeli intelligence, and that Israeli forces threatened to torture or even kill her if she refused. She also stated that her most basic needs during her menstrual period were not met. R.R. told Euro-Med Monitor that she was subsequently bussed to Damon Prison, where an Israeli soldier severely beat her. The interrogations continued; she spoke of being physically assaulted while undressed and detained outdoors in the bone-chilling cold up until her release on 19 January.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor confirmed that all of the aforementioned violations come as part of a larger campaign to dehumanise all Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, especially children and women, and thus justify and normalise all crimes committed against them. These crimes also come as a result of Israeli officials' public incitement against all residents of the Gaza Strip, while their perpetrators enjoy absolute immunity, with no action being taken to hold them accountable at any level or from any party.

The Geneva-based rights group noted that a statement issued by United Nations experts week

expressed concern over verified reports of flagrant human rights violations of Palestinian women and girls in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including sexual violence, rape and threats of rape, torture, and denial of food and medical care.

Euro-Med Monitor emphasised that, in accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Israel's practice of torturing Palestinian female detainees by detaining them in inhumane conditions and committing sexual violence against them including rape, threats of rape, indecent assault, and forced nudity, are all acts which intentionally violate their dignity and cause great pain and suffering, and are considered war crimes and crimes against humanity. Additionally, said the rights organisation, these violations are a part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, ongoing since 7 October 2023.

In view of the growing number of cases of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, administrative detention, and Israel's application of its "illegal combatants" law—which violates international law—to prisoners and detainees in the Gaza Strip, as well as the documentation of testimonies regarding the systematic Israeli torture of Palestinian detainees, Euro-Med Monitor reiterated its call for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to take up its responsibilities and investigate the conditions of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, particularly those involving women and girls.

The rights group urged the ICRC to take public stances and release statements each time Israel blocks it from carrying out its mandated duties, the most notable of which is paying visits to Palestinian detainees and prisoners.

Euro-Med Monitor also called on Alice Jill Edwards, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the subject of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, to look into the serious crimes and grave violations that Palestinian female detainees have suffered, and to submit reports on these violations in order to help international courts and investigative committees with their work in examining and trying cases involving crimes committed by the Israeli army against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

In addition, Euro-Med Monitor renewed calls for the formation of an independent international investigation committee specialising in Israel's ongoing genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, and to enable the independent international investigation committee concerned with the Occupied Palestinian Territory that was formed back in 2021 to carry out its work. This would include ensuring the committee's access to the Gaza Strip and opening the necessary investigations into all crimes and violations committed against Palestinians there, including the crimes of torture and inhuman treatment to which Palestinian women are exposed, as well as all forms of sexual violence.



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR

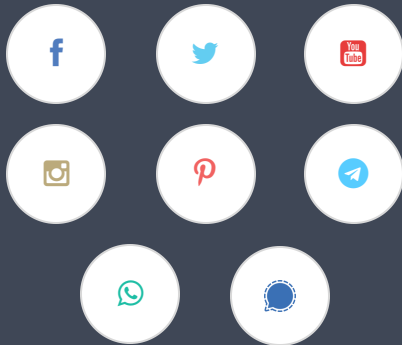
Defending freedom Throughout
the MENA Region and Europe

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor is a Geneva-based independent organization with regional offices across the MENA region and Europe

FOCUS AREAS



CONNECT WITH US



NEWSLETTER

Get News & Action Alerts in
Your Email.

Subscribe

Subscribe

[Privacy Policy](#)