

# Gender-Based Violence in Israel: Fact Sheet on Hamas' War Crimes

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HADASSAH



In this fact sheet, Hadassah collects and summarizes evidence from **thirteen organizations' reports and eight news outlets' investigative articles** highlighting the systematic and brutal weaponization of sexual violence and rape by Hamas on October 7, 2023 and beyond as reports continue to come forward from hostages.

Multiple sources provide first-hand accounts and evidence that Hamas committed acts of sexual violence in multiple locations as a weapon of war.

Girls were found dead, stripped naked, genitals mutilated, legs spread open and covered with blood and semen.

Women were shot in their vaginas and breasts. Men were found with their genitals removed or mutilated.

Women and men were found with burned genitalia.

Firsthand witness accounts describe rape and gang rape with as many as 10 men gang raping women at one time.

Women were found with nails driven into their thighs and groins. One male survivor recounted being gang raped.

Hostages kidnapped by Hamas reported sexual violence, rape, sexualized torture and more during captivity. One hostage told her story of being forced to perform sexual acts at gunpoint. Another detailed being forced to watch the sexual abuse of other hostages.

This evidence has been gathered from survivors of the Nova music festival, released hostages, emergency personnel, forensic experts, health care professionals, soldiers, rape counselors, eyewitnesses, law enforcement and legal scholars. These testimonies are bolstered further by first-hand photo and video evidence.

# Global Leaders, Organizations and Countries are speaking out to hold Hamas accountable.

- The UN Secretary General's 2024 Conflict-Related Sexual Violence **Report** blacklisted Hamas as a party credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for sexual violence.
- A **United Nations** (UN) fact-finding mission by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and report by the **Commission of Inquiry** (COI) confirmed patterns of sexual violence on October 7, 2023 and against the hostages that were, and are still being held in Gaza. They found that further investigation is needed.
- The European Union (EU) **sanctioned** three terrorist designated organizations, including Hamas, for widespread sexual and gender-based violence in a systemic manner on October 7, 2023. The EU was the first group to call these actions weapons of war.
- Many US officials including **former President Biden**, **former Secretary of State Antony Blinken**, and members of **Congress**, condemned Hamas' horrific use of sexual violence and have called for an unbiased and thorough investigation to hold Hamas accountable.
- The US Department of Justice (DOJ) **charged** Hamas leaders with committing acts of terrorism on October 7, 2023, including for the use of sexual violence as a weapon of brutality and the rape and genital mutilation of Israeli women.

## Here's what you can do:

The world needs to know the truth. Yet, there have been efforts to bury this evidence, cast doubt, deny and rewrite history. We must end the silence and continue to pressure international organizations to use this evidence to build a case and hold Hamas accountable for war crimes. This evidence must meet international standards.



1. Speak out about what really happened on October 7, 2023.
2. Use the facts to dispel antisemitic misinformation.
3. Call on the UN and other global leaders to pursue an unbiased and trauma-informed investigation into Hamas' weaponization of rape and seek justice for the victims.
4. Join Hadassah's **End The Silence** campaign. Sign the petition at **[hadassah.org/endthesilence](https://hadassah.org/endthesilence)**. **Read** and **learn more** about the campaign.

# Evidence of Hamas' Gender-Based Violence in Israel:

## The Times of Israel: Footage of Hamas Assault on Civilians Shows Likely War Crimes, Experts Say

**In the days following Hamas' terrorist invasion, *The Times of Israel* and many other outlets published initial evidence and reports that Israeli women and girls were raped and sexually abused by Hamas on October 7, 2023.**

- One video showed a woman apparently bleeding into her shorts being taken out of a vehicle in Gaza.
- Another video, which was widely shared, showed a woman stripped down to her underwear lying face down in a truck. Sources later confirmed to **CNN** that her death was announced after forensic examiners found a bone fragment from her skull.

## Physicians for Human Rights-Israel: Sexual & Gender-Based Violence as a Weapon Of War

**Physicians for Human Rights — Israel published a paper on November 26, 2023 that compiled the various reports of gender-based violence by Hamas into one source.**

- A male survivor reported seeing Hamas rape and then murder women with knives.
- Israel's Lahav police gathered dozens of accounts of sexual violence.
- Another report detailed the gang rape and murder of a woman, saying "I realized he was raping her and passing her onto another man in uniform." The woman was later shot in the head and mutilated.
- ZAKA volunteers reported finding victims' bodies in different locations where signs of violence indicated rape occurred. Many victims were found with their clothes removed — including one woman who was found with her legs spread open and semen on her back.
- Testimonies from the Shura military base where most of the remains were brought supported ZAKA volunteers' testimony. One female reserves officer, Ma'ayan, who was assigned to the forensic medical team observed signs of abuse in groins and blood-stained underwear. Another reserves officer, Sarai, stated that the victims ranged from young girls to elderly women.

## New York Times: Accounts of Sexual Violence by Hamas Are Aired Amid Criticism of U.N.

**On December 4, 2023, Hadassah co-sponsored a special session hosted by the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations to bear witness to testimony about Hamas' acts of gender-based violence.**

- Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, told the audience that Hamas' use of rape and sexual violence was a premeditated strategy to defile and mutilate Israeli women and girls.
- First responders, IDF morgue staff, human rights activists and Yael Richert, a superintendent with the Israeli National Police, were among those who testified with firsthand accounts of Hamas' horrific acts of gender-based violence.
- Yael Richert stated that shooting was targeted at sexual organs.
- Shari Mendes, a member of an Israeli military reserve unit, said her team saw several who were killed on October 7, 2023 "who were shot in the crotch, intimate parts, vagina, or were shot in the breast."
- Various attendees, including State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller, raised concerns over the women still being held hostage by Hamas.

## New York Times: 'Screams Without Words': How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Violence on Oct. 7

**On December 28, 2023, *The New York Times* released an investigative report titled "'Screams Without Words': How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Violence on Oct. 7."**

- The NYT used video footage, GPS data and interviews with more than 150 witnesses, including medical personnel, soldiers and rape counselors, to identify at least seven locations where Israeli women and girls appear to have been sexually assaulted or mutilated.
- Emergency responders discovered one woman's corpse in the rubble of a besieged kibbutz with dozens of nails driven into her thighs and groin.
- Two dead Israeli soldiers were found shot directly in their vaginas at a base near Gaza.
- Survivors of the Nova music festival reported terrorists passing women around like an "assembly point."
- Sapir, a survivor of the Nova music festival, saw one woman pulled by her hair made to bend over by one man, while another penetrated her. Every time she flinched; a knife was plunged into her back.

- Terrorists cut off one woman's breasts with a box cutter and then tossed them around like a toy.
- Raz Cohen, another survivor of the Nova music festival, who hid along Route 232, described how he saw five men pull a woman out of a van, rape her, then slaughter her as she screamed.
- Jamal Waraki, a volunteer medic with ZAKA, recalled seeing one young woman found with her hands tied behind her back, bent over, half-naked, her underwear rolled down below her knees.
- Yinon Rivlin, a member of the Nova music festival's production team, described finding a woman along Route 232 lying on her stomach with no pants or underwear, legs spread apart. Her vagina appeared to have been sliced open, "as if someone tore her apart."
- Eight volunteer medics reported discovering the bodies of at least 24 women and girls who were naked, half-naked, mutilated, and tied up.
- A paramedic in an Israeli commando unit said he found the bodies of two teenage girls in Be'eri. One was found with her shorts ripped and bruises by her groin. The other was face down on the ground with her pajama pants pulled down and semen on her back.
- *The New York Times* reported at least three women and one man who were sexually assaulted and survived.

## Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel: Sexual Crimes in the October 7 War

**On February 21, 2024, the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel released a special report titled "Silent Cry: Sexual Crimes in the October 7 War."**

- The report identified identical patterns of sexual violence in three primary locations, Nova music festival, private homes in the Gaza envelope kibbutzim, and IDF bases. The report concludes that the pattern of attacks represents a "clear operational strategy" of sexual violence.
- The attacks included violent acts of rape, accompanied by threats with weapons, targeting women, girls and men.
- Many of the rapes were carried out as a group, often in front of partners, family, or friends, to inflict as much pain, humiliation and terror as possible.
- Many of the bodies of the victims were found bound and shackled.
- The genitals of both women and men were found mutilated, and sometimes weapons were inserted into them. The terrorists cut and mutilated sexual organs, and other body parts.

- One survivor of the Nova music festival described seeing an “apocalypse of bodies, girls without clothes, some missing their upper, some missing their lower parts.” Another survivor, Sapir, provided a detailed eyewitness reporting of five different rape cases, including one “where one terrorist was raping a woman, another was cutting her and mutilating her body.”
- Yoni Saadon, another survivor, reported hearing a victim screaming “stop it already, I’m going to die anyway from what you are doing, just kill me!” A Hamas terrorist later laughed as he shot her dead.
- Nira Shpak, a resident of Kfar Aza, recounted “several bodies found with exposed intimate organs.”
- A surviving IDF soldier reported being threatened with a weapon to take off her clothes by a Hamas terrorist. Several reports indicate that at least four bodies of female IDF soldiers were found with extensive evidence of sexual violence, including extensive bleeding in the pelvic area.
- The report also included interviews of released hostages, Chen and Agam Goldstein, who knew of at least three women experiencing sexual abuse and assault while being held captive by Hamas.
- Chaim Otmazgin from ZAKA noted that “even when there was no time to complete a rape, there was an intentional attempt to destroy the sexual organs.” Sapir, a survivor of the Nova music festival, reported seeing terrorists brutally cut one woman’s breasts off with a box cutter.
- Bodies of women and men were found with their genitalia shot and mutilated.
- Chaim Otmazgin from ZAKA described how he saw a woman’s body “stabbed in the genitalia with a serrated knife that was used to remove the woman’s internal organs, leaving them between her legs.”
- The report found that the terrorists’ actions matched patterns of wartime sexual violence documented in literature, and that the practices described illustrate the brutality and sadistic characteristics of the way the attacks were carried out.

## Office of Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC): Official Visit of the Office of the SRSG-SVC to Israel and the Occupied West Bank

**On March 4, 2024, Pramila Patten, the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, released a report from her fact-finding mission to Israel. The report determined that there was reasonable evidence to believe that multiple incidents of rape — including gang rape — occurred in and around the Nova music festival site.**

- The report also found clear and convincing information, based on first-hand reports of released hostages, that hostages were subjected to sexual violence, rape and sexualized torture. The SRSG-SVC found reasonable grounds to believe that this behavior is ongoing.
- While in Israel the SRSG-SVC team conducted 33 meetings with Israeli national institutions, the Israeli National Police, President Issac Herzog and more. The team also conducted 34 interviews with survivors, witnesses, first responders and more.
- The team also reviewed over 5,000 photos and 50 hours of video footage.
- There were at least two reported incidents of rape of corpses of women.
- Credible sources reported seeing multiple murdered civilians, mainly women, whose bodies were found naked from the waist down, some totally naked, with some gunshots in the head and/or tied including with their hands behind their backs and tied to structures.
- Along Route 232, which was used as an escape route from the Nova music festival, numerous bodies with severe injuries, including those consistent with sexual violence, rape and gang rape, were found. Several bodies were found with genital injuries.
- Kibbutz Re'im was also used as an escape route from the Nova music festival. The team found reasonable grounds to believe rape took place there, including the rape of one woman outside of a bomb shelter.
- The team also found a pattern of women found naked, and/or tied up. First responders reported finding women naked with their hands tied behind their backs and gunshot wounds to their heads in Kibbutz Kfar Aza.
- The team verified photos of seven soldiers (four men and three women) with multiple gunshot wounds around their genitalia.
- The team reviewed photos of at least 20 victims with exposed breasts or genitalia as a result of torn or missing clothing.
- The reviewed photos and videos revealed widespread mutilation of bodies, including to the genitals.

## The New York Times: Israeli Hostage Says She Was Sexually Assaulted and Tortured in Gaza

**On March 26, 2024, Amit Sousanna bravely came forward in *The New York Times* to share details of the sexual abuse she endured during the nearly two months she was illegally held captive by Hamas.**

- Amit was abducted from her home, beaten and dragged into Gaza on the night of October 7, 2023.

- She was held in a children's bedroom and chained by her left ankle. The guard watching over her would enter into the room, lift her shirt and touch her.
- The guard would repeatedly ask her when her period was due.
- On October 24, 2023, the guard attacked her. He held a gun to her forehead, told her to remove her towel, groped her and then hit her with the pistol. He then dragged her back to the bedroom she was being held in and forced her to perform a sexual act on him at gunpoint.
- Amit was allowed no privacy during her time in captivity — not even to use the bathroom.

## Haaretz: 15 Witnesses, Three Confessions, a Pattern of Naked Dead Bodies. All the Evidence of Hamas Rape on October 7

**On April 18, 2024, *Haaretz* published a report gathering evidence of Hamas' systematic pattern of sexual assault on October 7, 2023.**

- *Haaretz* reporters spoke with sources in the defense establishment, therapists who spoke with survivors, individuals who are involved in the investigation, rescue personnel and specialists tasked with collecting evidence.
- *Haaretz* identified at least 15 survivors of the Nova music festival who witnessed acts of individual or gang rape by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023.
- The *Haaretz* report identified at least 10 survivors who have not yet spoken publicly about what they witnessed during Hamas' attack. Several of these survivors have gone to the SafeHeart organization for support.
  - SafeHeart's CEO said he knew of eyewitness testimony of an armed man raping a woman and shooting her to death, two accounts of gang rape where up to 10 terrorists participated and one account of gang rape where five assailants took part. All attacks ended in the victims' deaths.
  - Dr. Demian Halperin, SafeHeart's head of psychiatry, is personally treating six male survivors. Dr. Halperin spoke about these male survivors who witnessed rapes on October 7, 2023 in the fields surrounding the Nova music festival site. Halperin also heard stories of naked bodies tied to trees along Route 232.
- One witness, Rami Davidian, reported seeing more than five bodies that had been mutilated in intimate places with blood coming from their groins and bullets in their breasts.
- The Secret Forest project in Cyprus told Hamas that they have supported 13 witnesses to Hamas' sexual violence.

- The *Haaretz* article references a brief interview published in a French newspaper in November 2023, in which a survivor tells of her experience being raped and mutilated by Hamas. The relative she was with at the Nova music festival was raped and her corpse subjected to rape.
- Professor Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, former VP of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Founding Director of the Rackman Center for the Advancement of the Status of Women at Bar-Ilan Faculty of Law, shared testimony from a female IDF officer who recounted hearing a rape being committed outside the structure where she was hiding. When she went outside, she found the naked body of another female soldier who had been raped and murdered. She also reported finding a male with his genitalia cut off.
- The report references a confession made by Manar Qassem, from Islamic Jihad, in March 2024 in which he confessed to raping a woman in her home in one of the kibbutzim on October 7, 2023. This was the first time a name and individual was identified for their role in gender-based violence on October 7, 2023.
- With only five forensic pathologists working in the days following October 7, 2023, at least 75% of the bodies were buried without thorough examination. The article chronicles a variety of challenges investigators were confronting in recording the full extent of Hamas' sexual violence.

## The United Nations: 2023 Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Report of the Secretary General

**On April 23, 2024, the UN released its 2023 annual report on conflict-related sexual violence. The report contains a brief statement on gender-based violence that occurred in Israel in 2023.**

- The report largely quotes the results of the UN's fact-finding mission to Israel from March 2024 and reaffirmed that a pattern of sexual violence occurred on October 7, 2023.
- The report quoted that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations across Gaza periphery, including rape and gang rape, in at least three locations: the Nova music festival site and its surroundings, Road 232 and Kibbutz Re'im." At all three locations, there was credible evidence of rape.
- The report also quoted that "the mission team received clear and convincing information that sexual violence, including rape, sexualized torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment occurred against some women and children during their time in captivity and has reasonable grounds to believe that this violence may be ongoing."

## Kastina Communications: Screams Before Silence: Documentary featuring Sheryl Sandberg

**On April 26, 2024, Sheryl Sandberg released her documentary, *Screams Before Silence*, in which she interviews eyewitnesses, released hostages, first responders, medical and forensic experts, and survivors of Hamas' attack about their experiences.**

- Tali Binner, a survivor of the Nova music festival recalled hearing women begging terrorists to stop, stop, stop until there was only silence. She recalled women screaming for 15 or 20 minutes at a time. She recalled a man begging terrorists to leave a woman alone. All of these incidents resulted in the women and men being shot.
  - Once Tali finally came out of hiding, she recalled seeing the bodies of women with their clothes ripped off and their legs spread open.
- The documentary includes footage of naked women being held or taken into Gaza by Hamas on October 7, 2023.
- Agam Goldstein Almog, a teenage girl who was held hostage by Hamas for 51 days, recalled her breasts being touched by her captor.
  - She said half of the women and girls who were held hostage were sexually and physically abused.
- Elad Avraham, security supervisor at the Nova music festival, recalled seeing the bodies of girls whose clothes were ripped, lying on their backs with their legs spread open.
  - He came across one woman whose body parts were mutilated and ripped off.
- Raz Cohen, survivor of the Nova music festival, recalled seeing a woman being raped by a semi-circle of Hamas terrorists. He said the men did whatever they wanted to the woman. The men continued to rape her, even after stabbing her to death.
- Amit Soussana, a hostage held captive by Hamas for 55 days, recalled being asked about sex repeatedly by her kidnapper.
  - Amit recalls how her kidnapper touched her and how she was forced to commit a sexual act on him.
- Simcha Greiniman, a ZAKA volunteer, recalled that most of the bodies he came across in the aftermath of October 7, 2023 were completely naked.
  - One woman was found under a mattress with nails in her groin.
- Eran Mass, a Lieutenant Colonel who went to the scene of the Nova music festival looking for survivors, recalled coming across a body of woman whose tights were covered in blood, even though she was shot in the neck.
- The documentary recalled that approximately 30 women were tied to trees and raped in the woods surrounding the Nova music festival site.

- ZAKA volunteers shared photos of the bodies of the women that they encountered following October 7, 2023. The bodies were often naked, shot in intimate areas, mutilated and with pieces of metal stuck in their vaginas.
- Shari Mendes, IDF Reservist who worked to identify the bodies of the victims, recalled that many of the bodies were naked or had bloody underwear.
- The documentary included footage of captured terrorists who were interrogated by Israel. One terrorist recalls raping a young Israeli girl himself.
- Mirit Ben Mayor, Chief Superintendent of the Israel Police, says that the force has collected over 2,000 pieces of visual evidence and 2,000 testimonies, many of which speak to the sexual violence that occurred on October 7, 2023.
- Professor Ruth Halperin-Kaddari recalled a survivor's testimony describing seeing the attacker cut off a woman's breasts.
  - Dr. Halperin-Kaddari confirms that there were bodies found with their breasts cut off in several other locations, depicting a pattern of violence.
- Professor Itai Pessach, head of the medical team attending to the released hostages, recalled that many of the hostages were sedated and branded and that many of the women are concerned about what happened when they were sedated.



# The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (COI): Detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel

**On June 12, 2024, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (COI) released its annual report to the UN Human Rights Council. The 2024 report focused on Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack and the aftermath.**

- The COI analyzed open-source items, including reports by international and national NGOs, media articles, social media, photographic and video material, eyewitness testimony and data released by the authorities of Israel. Of note, the COI did not visit Israel and did not speak to any Israeli victims or witnesses.
- The COI identified a pattern of sexual violence on October 7, 2023.
- Witness accounts described bodies that had been undressed, sometimes with exposed genitals and other indications of abuse including bound hands and/or feet. This indicates that the victims had been detained prior to their deaths with their legs spread or bent over, and signs of struggle or violence on the body.
  - Victims had stab wounds, burns, lacerations and abrasions.
- Many bodies taken to the Shura camp showed signs indicative of sexual violence. Some bodies were completely or partially undressed with signs of considerable violence and struggle. One witness described to the COI receiving a body of a girl around 13 years old who was naked with signs of violence to the stomach and broken legs.
- Bodies of women were found completely or partially burnt in several locations. One witness reported bodies of both women and men with burns on their genital areas.
  - The COI analyzed one video where a woman was set on fire with gasoline from the waist down.
- The COI documented cases of sexual violence perpetrated against women and men in several kibbutzim, including in Kfar Aza, Re'im and Nir Oz.
  - Witnesses described seeing corpses with signs of sexual violence in Kfar Aza. One of the victims, a woman in her early twenties was positioned lying face down on a bed, naked from the waist down, with her knees on the floor and her upper body bent over the bed.
- An independent evaluation carried out by a forensic pathologist found evidence suggesting a pair of scissors was inserted in the groin area after death of a naked decomposed body.

- The COI analyzed video and photo footage of several bodies along Route 232 whose clothes were pulled down and their genitals were exposed.
  - One of the women also had blood on her exposed genitals.
- The COI declared that one woman who was kidnapped and taken into Gaza on October 7, 2023, for two months was subjected to gender-based violence after being degraded and denied protection to which she was entitled under international law.
- The COI verified evidence of two women who were killed in Israel and whose body were displayed online while male perpetrators were seen taking selfies with the women's bodies.
  - Several bodies of women and men were taken into Gaza and paraded around by militants.
- One video published to the Telegram group of Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades shows perpetrators standing on the victim's back. The victim is then seen almost entirely undressed, lying on his stomach with his jeans pulled down and his underwear torn.
  - There are wounds on the right gluteal area, which are most likely from a gunshot wound, and his body has multiple cut and stab wounds, as well as gunshot wounds to his lower legs which appear to have been broken.
- In another video, the man's body is seen being taken to Gaza, with men in the background screaming in Arabic, "Here's the dog. Here's the dog. Here's the Jew."
- The COI documented five cases at the Nova music festival where the bodies of victims showed signs of sexual abuse. In all cases the victims were partially undressed. Multiple witnesses corroborated seeing women within the festival grounds and surrounding areas, who were partially undressed and showed signs of sexual abuse.
- Testimonies and video footage reviewed by the COI showed a "distinct gendered element in the form, implementation and impact" of the abduction of Israeli women.
- One video posted online shows a woman in a vulnerable position being degraded and humiliated by male perpetrators during the process of her abduction to Gaza.
  - In the video, she is subjected to degrading language and threats to her person. The woman was held in Gaza for 50 days.
- Several abductees were placed on the back of trucks and motorbikes in between two men, forcing the women into unwanted intimacy.
- The COI documented and verified information and digital footage of sexual and gender-based violence against female soldiers who were killed while unarmed or taken into Gaza as hostages.
  - In one video an abducted female soldier is pulled out of the back of a truck by an armed militant in Gaza. She is seen with multiple injuries and blood stains on her clothes near her genital area.
- Women at the military outpost were found partially undressed and isolated in different rooms. Witnesses said it was clear that the women were isolated, stripped and abused, as they were found in positions of surrender.

# Human Rights Watch: “I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind” Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel

**On July 17, 2024, Human Rights Watch released a report on the crimes against humanity committed by Hamas-led groups on October 7, 2023.**

- Human Rights Watch conducted research in October and November 2023 in Israel, and remote research through June 2024 about the atrocities of October 7.
  - The research included interviews in person and remotely with 144 people including survivors and their family members, released hostages, first responders, forensics experts and more.
- Human Rights Watch found evidence of acts of sexual and gender-based violence by fighters including forced nudity, and the posting without consent of sexualized images on social media.
- In the report, Human Rights Watch calls for an investigation of further crimes against humanity — including rape or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity.
- One video analyzed by Human Rights Watch shows a 22-year-old dual Israeli and German citizen stripped to her underwear in the back of a pickup truck surrounded by terrorists. The images and videos of the woman’s naked body were shared widely on social media.
  - The woman was later confirmed dead.
- Human Rights Watch reviewed photographs of the bodies of several women surrounding the Nova music festival site with blood stains surrounding the women’s genitals.
- Several witnesses described witnessing gang rapes and mutilation at the Nova music festival location.
- In one interview, ZAKA member Nachman Dyksztejn recalled finding the body of one woman with a knife lodged into her genital area near her vagina.
- The Human Rights Watch report quoted much of Special Representative Pramila Patten’s March report and the COI’s June report when analyzing the gender-based violence which occurred on October 7, 2023.
- Human Rights Watch verified photos and videos of men and women, alive and dead, who are displayed in the nude, in public places, by Hamas fighters.
- One verified video shows a hostage being forced by his captors to remove his clothing and until he is only in his underwear. He is then beaten.
- One hostage, released in November 2023, told an Israeli parliamentary committee that while in captivity she comforted a younger female hostage who told her she had been sexually assaulted by a captor.

## The Times of Israel: In First, Male October 7 Survivor Recounts Rape at Hands of Hamas Terrorists

On July 24, 2024, *The Times of Israel* published portions of an interview from a survivor of the Nova music festival who was the first male victim to publicly recount the sexual abuse he experienced on October 7, 2023. The interview which was originally given in Hebrew to Channel 12 news in Israel was translated and republished by *The Times of Israel*.

- The victim whose identity was hidden, described being pinned to ground, undressed, humiliated and spit on by Hamas terrorists. He went on to say that his genitals were touched, and he was raped.
- The man described being raped by a group of terrorists who only stopped when other fighters called to them.
  - He said the rapists were drunk, celebrating and laughing with pistols and knives.

## State of Israel Ministry of Health: The State of Israel's Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Report on Hostage Taking as Torture: Legal Frameworks, Supporting Victims and Families, and Strengthening Global Response

On December 23, 2024, the State of Israel Ministry of Health released a report detailing the abuse, including sexual assault, endured by the women, men and children who were held hostage by Hamas in Gaza.

- The report was built from the testimonies of hostages released in the November 2023 hostage deal between Israel and Hamas.
- Before being taken by Hamas, the hostages witnessed their homes burning, acts of rape and looting in their communities. On the journey to Gaza, they endured beatings, humiliation, and verbal, physical, and sexual violence.
- Several of the hostages recounted that their captors sexually assaulted them, including one who reported being sexually assaulted at gunpoint.
- On several occasions, captors forced women of all ages to undress while others, including the captors, watched. Additionally, some of the women reported that they were tied to beds while their captors stared at them.
- Additionally, as the **Times of Israel** reported, the Hebrew version of the State of Israel Ministry of Health's report also recounts, the captors forced two minors to perform sexual acts on one another and compelled them to take off their clothes in front of captors, who also touched the minors' private parts and whipped their genitalia.

## The United Nations Human Rights Council: Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: Hostage-taking as Torture

**On March 4, 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Alice Jill Edwards, released a report on the crime of hostage taking. As part of her investigation, she visited Israel and the locations of October 7, 2023, attacks and spoke to Israeli former hostages and hostage families.**

- The report referenced evidence from the reports of Pramila Patten, UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the COI that found evidence that the hostages experienced sexual and gender-based violence in captivity.

## All-Party Parliament Group for UK-Israel: 7 October Parliamentary Commission Report

**On March 18, 2025, the All-Party Parliament Group (APPG) for UK-Israel released a report, developed from January 2024 to January 2025, which details the acts of systematic rape and sexual abuse committed on October 7, 2023, against Israeli citizens.**

- The APPG report gathers and examines open-source information, such as photo and video evidence from social media, body cameras and CCTV footage, interviews with survivors, family members of victims and hostages, members of the IDF, Israeli Police, first responders, Israeli government ministries, medical professionals and civil society groups.
  - Medical and military professionals in the UK and Israel were also consulted to provide insight and independent analysis of the attack.
- The APPG report found that “Women and girls were particularly vulnerable during the attacks. Reports detailed gang rapes, sexual mutilation and assaults on both living and deceased victims. There was a pattern across various locations attacked on 7 October of ‘fully naked or partially naked bodies from the waist down [that] were recovered — mostly women — with hands tied and shot multiple times, often in the head.’ This was particularly prevalent at the Nova Festival.”
- “On 7 October 2023, members of Palestinian armed groups crossed the Israeli border and committed acts of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). These include acts of rape, gang rape, forced mutilation, sexualized torture, forced nudity and posting sexualized images of victims on social media without consent.”
- The APPG report referenced Special Representative Pramila Patten’s March 2024 report and the COI’s June 2024 report when analyzing the gender-based violence which occurred on October 7, 2023. Additionally, the report referenced reports by non-governmental organizations, including the Israel Women’s Network (IWN), the Women & War Research and Documentation Collective and the Dinah Project.

- The APPG report gathered testimony from survivors given to various outlets and organizations, including:
  - Ron Freger, a Nova Festival attendee, who testified to Open University, recalled hearing girls screaming from nearby bushes, “they are raping me, help me!” Freger testified that a moment after the girl’s rape, she was shot in the head.
- “Rescue and emergency response teams that removed bodies from the Nova Festival site, described recovering the bodies of partially clothed and naked victims, many of which displayed heavy pelvic bleeding and genital mutilation.”
- Various first responders reported finding women and girls stripped of their underwear with semen present on bodies.
- The APPG reported “one witness who received victims’ bodies described a girl around 13-years old, who arrived naked with signs of violence to the stomach area and both legs broken.”
- Additionally, the APPG report found that bodies of both men and women were recovered with burn marks on their genital areas.
  - “Forensic analysis showed indications that gasoline was used to set victims’ genitals on fire, which was corroborated by a video of a female victim who was set on fire with gasoline from the waist down.”

## The New York Times: She Was Released. Now She’s Campaigning for Her Partner Still in Gaza.

**On March 25, 2025, the *New York Times* released an article and interview with Ilana Gritzewsky, a former hostage, outlining her experience on October 7, 2023 and during her time held captive.**

- Gritzewsky related how her kidnappers beat and then molested her as they drove her into Gaza on October 7, 2023. One kidnapper groped her and touched her breasts. Eventually she passed out.
- When she woke up, she was surrounded by gunmen, her shirt up with her breasts exposed and her pants pulled down, unsure of what happened while she was passed out.
- “One of her captors hugged her and told her, while pointing his pistol at her, that even if there was a deal, she would not be released because he wanted to marry her and have her children, the *New York Times* wrote.”

## **CBS: 60 Minutes Overtime: Freed Israeli Hostages Yarden Bibas, Keith Siegel, Tal Shoham Describe Horrors of Being Held Captive by Hamas**

**On March 30, 2025, CBS released a 60 Minutes Overtime segment featuring freed Israeli hostages Yarden Bibas, Keith Siegel and Tal Shoham who recounted their experiences being held captive for over fifteen months in Gaza by Hamas.**

- One of the men, Keith Siegel, an Israeli-American, recounted that female hostages were sexually assaulted by Hamas captors and other hostages, including himself, were forced to watch.
- Siegel also recounted that his captors shaved his head and private parts, saying “maybe it amused them... I felt humiliated.”

## **The Dinah Project: A Quest for Justice: October 7 and Beyond**

**On July 8, 2025, The Dinah Project released a report that details the nature and scope of sexual violence that occurred during and after the October 7, 2023, attack. The report concluded that Hamas used sexual violence as a tactic of war during the October 7, 2023, attack.**

- The Dinah Project examined open-source information, including testimony from fifteen returned hostages, and one additional first-hand survivor, who reported sexual assault and harassment, threats of and attempted rape, and a forced sexual act. The report reviewed evidence from seventeen eyewitnesses addressing at least fifteen cases of sexual assault and twenty-seven first responders regarding thirty different accounts of conflict-related sexual violence.
  - All the first responders to the Nova music festival describe the same scene: “Dozens of female bodies naked or partially naked from the waist down, many of them bleeding from the genitalia as a result of gunshots.”
- The report establishes that sexual violence was widespread and systematic during the October 7, 2023, attack, occurring across at least six different locations: the Nova music festival, Route 232, Nahal Oz military base, and Kibbutzim Re'im, Nir Oz, and Kfar Aza.
- The report identified a pattern in the perpetration of sexual violence, with reports detailing partial or full nudity, gang rape, genital mutilation and public humiliation. Multiple hostages reported that sexual violence continued in captivity, detailing forced nudity, physical and verbal sexual harassment, sexual assault, and threats of forced marriage. A pattern of threats of forced marriage to the female hostages also emerged.

# The United Nations: 2024 Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Report of the Secretary General

**On August 14, 2025, the UN released its annual 2024 report on conflict-related sexual violence. The report blacklists Hamas and adds the terrorist group to the report annex as a party credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for sexual violence.**

- The report cites Special Representative Patten's March 2024 report, the COI's June 2024 report and the International Criminal Court (ICC) May 2024 arrest warrants for three political and military commanders of Hamas as evidence for Hamas' addition to the blacklist.
- The Secretary-General states:
  - "Both my Special Representative and the Commission of Inquiry found that the 7 October attacks were led and coordinated by Hamas, joined by other Palestinian armed groups, including the military arms of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Palestinian Mujahideen Movement, as well as civilians from Gaza."
  - "My Special Representative concluded that the complexity and modus operandi of the attacks demonstrated a significant level of planning, coordination and detailed prior knowledge of the targets selected."

## The Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas Against Women and Children: Silenced No More Sexual Terror Unveiled: The Untold Atrocities of October 7 and Against Hostages in Captivity

**On May 12, 2026, the Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas Against Women and Children (Civil Commission) released a comprehensive report of the sexual atrocities committed on October 7, 2023, and during captivity.**

- The report reviewed over 10,000 photographs and video segments of the attack and conducted over 430 interviews with survivors, witnesses, returned hostages, experts and family members.
- The Civil Commission identified thirteen recurring patterns of sexual and gender-based violence committed across multiple locations. This includes:
  - Rape, gang rape and other forms of sexual assaults
  - Sexual torture, including intentional burning and mutilation
  - Deliberate shootings to the head, face and genital area

- Killings and executions following or committed in conjunction with sexual violence
- Postmortem sexual abuse and desecration of bodies
- Forced nudity and exposure
- Handcuffing, binding and restraint of victims
- Public displaying and parading of women and children
- Abduction of mothers and children
- Sexual violence inflicted in the presence or near vicinity of family members
- Filming and digital dissemination of sexual violence, including use of social media to amplify the atrocities
- Threats of forced marriage
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence against boys and men.
- Interviews with survivors show how those who survived, and those who witnessed these crimes, suffer severe and enduring physical and psychological injuries.
- One witness at the Nova music festival described:
  - “A beautiful woman ... and 8 or 10 fighters beating and raping her.” He heard her scream, “Stop it, already, I am going to die anyway from what you are doing, just kill me!” When they finished raping her, they shot her in the head.
- Another described a scene where a male victim’s genitals had been severed and placed in a nearby women’s hand.
- A first responder shared a story where a victim was half-naked with tin cans inserted into her genital area.
  - Another first responder testified that he observed the body of a man with severed male genitalia in his mouth.
- The report documents how sexual assaults, sexual humiliation, and sexualized torture routinely persisted during captivity in locations across Gaza. In some cases, the sexual and gender-based abuse of hostages continued for months.
- Hamas and its collaborators systematically staged, produced, and disseminated videos of hostages during captivity.

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