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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2025]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



# **Torture and Genocide: The Suffering of Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Prisons after October 7th, 2023**

## **1. Introduction**

The systematic torture practiced by the Israeli occupation authorities against Palestinian prisoners is one of the most serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Since the occupation of Palestine, the occupation authorities have adopted a repressive policy and brutal torture methods, including physical and psychological abuse, as well as deprivation of basic rights. These violations are carried out within a systematic framework targeting Palestinian prisoners in prisons and detention centers, which have been designed to serve policies of repression and abuse.

The severity of these violations escalated to an unprecedented level after October 7, 2023, as the occupation authorities exploited political and military developments to intensify arbitrary arrests and employ more brutal torture methods, leading to the death of several prisoners due to torture and deliberate medical neglect. Cases of rape and sexual violence have also been documented.

This report aims to shed light on these systematic crimes by reviewing the patterns of torture faced by Palestinian prisoners and linking them to the broader context of genocide practiced by the occupation authorities. The report also presents firsthand testimonies from surviving prisoners, in addition to documenting cases of deaths inside Israeli prisons.

## **2. Crimes of Torture in the Context of Genocide**

The Israeli occupation authorities have engaged in systematic torture against Palestinian prisoners since the beginning of the occupation of Palestine, using various methods of physical and psychological abuse. Israeli police and border guards employ violence and beatings from the moment of arrest to interrogation centers, even before questioning begins, to instill fear and enforce psychological submission.(1)

Israeli prisons and detention centers are part of a systematic framework aimed at torturing and mistreating Palestinian prisoners while depriving them of their fundamental rights. The design and infrastructure of these facilities reflect a deliberate policy of repression and human rights violations. There are at least 30 known prisons and detention centers, in addition to several internment camps established during the ongoing war on Gaza. Additionally, the Israeli authorities have constructed an underground prison in Ramla.(2)

Violations against Palestinian prisoners have intensified, including arbitrary detention and continuous torture, in the absence of any legal restrictions or accountability mechanisms, particularly after October 7, 2023.(3) The occupation authorities have exploited this date to escalate their oppressive policies and implement their genocidal plans, reaching unprecedented levels of torture and severe violations, including the deliberate killing of prisoners. This has resulted in the highest recorded number of deaths inside prisons and detention centers since 1967.(4)

Although the crimes of torture against Palestinian prisoners have been well-documented and ongoing since before October 7, 2023, the assaults have significantly intensified since that date without any accountability or punishment. This has led to the death of many prisoners inside Israeli prisons due to torture, ill-treatment, and medical neglect. Human rights reports confirm that Israel is the only country in the world that legalizes torture within its legal framework and ranks third globally in exporting torture devices.

The Israeli occupation authorities practice various forms of torture against Palestinian prisoners, including women and children. These practices include binding hands and legs, blindfolding for prolonged periods, waterboarding, sleep deprivation, exposure to extreme cold, forcing prisoners to kneel on gravel, humiliation, extortion, electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, and forced drug intake.

Additionally, multiple cases of sexual violence, including rape and threats of rape, have been documented, committed by Israeli soldiers and security personnel against both male and female prisoners.

Israeli forces also resort to other practices aimed at increasing the suffering of prisoners, including beatings, intimidation, stripping them of their clothing, and exposing them to physical violence in the process. These actions are deliberately carried out by the prison administration and its special units as part of punitive and retaliatory measures without any legal basis or judicial oversight. There are also severe restrictions on the work of Palestinian prisoners' lawyers, who have barely been able to visit prisoners and monitor their conditions.(5)

### **3. Cases of Torture**

Testimonies from Palestinian prisoners have reported severe abuses during their arrest and interrogation by occupation forces. One prisoner, who was arrested from a school in Beit Lahia, recounted being bound from behind with plastic ties and blindfolded. He was severely beaten on his head and body, forced to kneel for extended periods on a gravel floor, and subjected to continuous insults and verbal abuse. Later, he was transferred to the "Petah Tikva" interrogation center, where he remained in detention for 130 days and endured extreme torture.(6)

In another testimony, a detained child from Gaza described harrowing detention conditions. He stated that he was stripped of his clothes before being severely beaten. He was then forced to kneel all night and was continuously tortured through beatings and being held in a freezing cold cell. He also reported that soldiers whipped him with wires on his back, causing him to bleed. He was later transferred to Ofer Prison, where his foot continued to bleed for three days without receiving any medical care.(6)

Additionally, a case of rape against a Palestinian prisoner has been documented, in which multiple Israeli soldiers sexually assaulted him under surveillance cameras in "Sde Teiman" Prison. Footage leaked from the prison clearly showed the prisoner lying on the ground, handcuffed and blindfolded, before being dragged violently near barbed wire and assaulted by soldiers and their police dogs.(7)

In a documented case of prisoners dying under torture, a medical report confirmed that prisoner Mohammed Hussein Al-Aref, from Nur Shams Refugee Camp in Tulkarm, was deliberately executed during interrogation.(8) He was subjected to severe physical assault that led to his death. Additionally, the death of Dr. Al-Rantisi was documented due to torture while being held in an interrogation center operated by the Israeli Shin Bet in Ashkelon.(9)

Human rights reports indicate that the number of Palestinian prisoners who have died in Israeli prisons has reached 54 since the beginning of the genocide war.(10)

### **4. Conclusion**

Here is the shortened version, reduced by approximately 90 words while maintaining clarity and impact:

In light of the grave violations suffered by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, including systematic torture, harsh treatment, and medical neglect, these practices blatantly violate international humanitarian and human rights law, particularly the 1984 Convention Against Torture, which prohibits all forms of torture and degrading treatment.

These violations also contradict the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which require occupying states to protect prisoners from violence, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which classifies torture as a crime against humanity when practiced systematically.

There is an urgent need for independent international investigations into torture and ill-treatment under UN supervision to ensure accountability and prevent impunity. This includes activating prosecution mechanisms through the International Criminal Court.

Enhancing documentation efforts is crucial by supporting local and international human rights institutions in collecting evidence on Israeli prison violations for submission to judicial bodies. Human rights organizations should also be granted access, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, to monitor detainees' conditions and ensure medical care and legal protection.

Ending torture requires political and diplomatic pressure to compel Israel to comply with international law, repeal policies legalizing torture, ensure independent oversight of detention centers, and impose international sanctions on Israel for its ongoing violations.

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- (1) Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, "Torture and Cruel Treatment," available at: <https://n9.cl/1toxx>.
  - (2) Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, <https://n9.cl/adjia>
  - (3) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "UN Experts: Israel's Escalating Use of Torture Against Palestinian Detainees Constitutes a Preventable Crime Against Humanity," (August 5, 2024), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/ar/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable>
  - (4) Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Palestinian Prisoners Affairs Commission, Palestinian Prisoners Club, "Fact Sheet on the Arrest Campaigns Carried Out by the Occupation After October 7 and the Major Transformations Imposed by This Stage on the Issue of Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Prisons and Camps," (October 7, 2024), available at: <https://n9.cl/2bidb>
  - (5) Tala Nasser, "Horrorific Scenes of Torture Displayed to the World... Amidst the Occupation's Impunity," (July 3, 2024), Institute for Palestine Studies, available at: <https://www.palestine-studies.org/ar/node/1655808>
  - (6) Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, "The Occupation, Human Rights, and Types of Violations against the Gaza Strip." (June 25, 2024): <https://addameer.org/node/5368>.
  - (7) Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, "Press Statement by the Head of the Commission, Qadoura Fares, Regarding the Recent Rape Crime Committed Against a Detainee in Sde Teiman Camp," (July 29, 2024), available at: <https://www.cda.gov.ps/index.php/ar/ar-news-2/17771-2024-07-30-05-26-50>
  - (8) Palestinian News & Information Agency – Wafa, "Medical Report Confirms the Death of Detainee Mohammed Al-Aref Under Torture in Occupation Prisons," (January 23, 2025), available at: <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/112456>
  - (9) Palestinian Information Center, "Iyad Al-Rantisi... A Doctor from Gaza, a Victim of Torture in Occupation Prisons," (June 19, 2024), available at: <https://palinfo.com/news/2024/06/19/894982/>
  - (10) Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs "Prisoner Institutions Issue a Special Report on Key Issues and Data Related to the Reality of Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons During 2024," (December 31, 2024), available at: [https://t.me/commission\\_of\\_detaineesaffairs/5090](https://t.me/commission_of_detaineesaffairs/5090)