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# Israel/oPt: UN experts appalled by reported human rights violations against Palestinian women and girls

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GENEVA (19 February 2024) – UN experts\* today expressed alarm over credible allegations of egregious human rights violations to which Palestinian women and girls continue to be subjected in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Palestinian women and girls have reportedly been arbitrarily executed in Gaza, often together with family members, including their children, according to information received. “We are shocked by reports of the deliberate targeting and extrajudicial killing of Palestinian women and children in places where they sought refuge, or while fleeing. Some of them were reportedly holding white pieces of cloth when they were killed by the Israeli army or affiliated forces,” the experts said.

The experts expressed serious concern about the arbitrary detention of hundreds of Palestinian women and girls, including human rights defenders, journalists and humanitarian workers, in Gaza and the West Bank since 7 October. Many have reportedly been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, denied menstruation pads, food and medicine, and severely beaten. On at least one occasion, Palestinian women detained in Gaza were allegedly kept in a cage in the rain and cold, without food.

“We are particularly distressed by reports that Palestinian women and girls in detention have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped naked and searched by male Israeli army officers. At least two female Palestinian detainees were reportedly raped while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence,” the experts said. They also noted that photos of female detainees in degrading circumstances were also reportedly taken by the Israeli army and uploaded online.

The experts expressed concern that an unknown number of Palestinian women and children, including girls, have reportedly gone missing after contact with the Israeli army in Gaza. “There are disturbing reports of at least one female infant forcibly transferred by the Israeli army into Israel, and of children being separated from their parents, whose whereabouts remain unknown,” they said.

“We remind the Government of Israel of its obligation to uphold the right to life, safety, health, and dignity of Palestinian women and girls and to ensure that no one is subjected to violence, torture, ill-treatment or degrading treatment, including sexual violence,” the experts said.

They called for an independent, impartial, prompt, thorough and effective investigation into the allegations and for Israel to cooperate with such investigations.

“Taken together, these alleged acts may constitute grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and amount to serious crimes under international criminal law that could be prosecuted under the Rome Statute,” the experts said. “Those responsible for these apparent crimes must be held accountable and victims and their families are entitled to full redress and justice,” they added.

***\* The experts: Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Chair), Claudia Flores, Ivana Krstić, Haina Lu, and Laura Nyirinkindi, Working group on discrimination against women and girls.***

*The experts are part of what is known as the **Special Procedures** of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN human rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent of any government or organisation and serve in their individual capacity.*

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