

Horrific Human Rights Abuses & Torture of Palestinians in Israeli Prisons Documented in New Report

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): A scandal is starting to bubble up in Israel over the fact that there has been very credible reports and even videotaped evidence showing the use of anal rape as a weapon. Used by IDF soldiers on the Palestinian captives and detainees that they have disappeared into camps with no trial, no real due process. These people aren't found guilty of anything. They just pick them up, sweep them off the street. A lot of them end up being released because the Israelis even admit that they were guilty of nothing. Obviously, if they're releasing them, that's an admission that they're not like hardened terrorists or anything. A lot of them there are there before October 7th. Many of them are there not from Gaza, but from the West Bank. So in my view, even if someone is guilty of a heinous crime, anally raping them in prison when they're already helpless and detained is a sick, demented and degenerate thing to do. It's obviously a war crime. It's a crime against humanity. And there is ample evidence that shows that not only is this occasionally being done in Israeli prisons, but it's being done systematically, deliberately, consciously by IDF soldiers who believe they have the right to anally rape detainees. And as this scandal is building up, there are many people on mainstream Israeli television not denying that this happened, but saying, you know what? Yes, I know it is happening and it should happen because we have the right to do it. These people deserve it. I know it sounds like an exaggeration if you haven't seen the videos, but that really is what's happening.

Now, there's an Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, that is composed of Israeli citizens, both Jewish and Arab alike, and they've been a longtime human rights organisation with a lot of credibility around the world. They released a report this week entitled *Welcome to Hell – The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps*. And that term, Welcome to Hell, comes from what one of the IDF soldiers told a Palestinian detainee as soon as they arrived there. And I just want to give you a couple of passages from this report. This report was very comprehensively researched. The evidence is confirmed. They interviewed all kinds of

Palestinian detainees, confirmed it with other sources. And this is what they say, quote, "This report is based on interviews that B'Tselem conducted with prisoners, as well as relatives of individuals who are still incarcerated. All the witnesses, women and men, older or younger from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the State of Israel were released from prison after October 7th. They were held in various military and civilian prison facilities in Israel and the West Bank". So the fact that they were released after October 7th, obviously, is an admission that they weren't hardened terrorists and likely did nothing wrong, or the Israelis would not release them. The report goes on, quote, "The testimonies were collected by B'Tselem field researchers, usually in person or over the phone in a handful of cases. All the testimonies were given in Arabic and translated into Hebrew and then into English. The testimonies were verified and cross-referenced against other testimonies and reliable reports. Some witnesses wish to remain anonymous and their testimonies are being published without identifying details. The quotes appearing here are taken from some of the testimonies we collected as we prepared the report. In some other cases, they have been shortened for easier reading. Just before the war started, the overall number of Palestinians incarcerated by Israel and classified as, quote, 'security prisoners' was 5,192, with about 1319 held without trial as, quote, 'administrative detainees'." Which means Israel can just put them with no trial in prison, not to charge them. They have the right under the law to keep them for six months, and then they just get to renew it every six months as long as they want, with no limit. Quote, "In early July 2024, there were 9,623 Palestinians incarcerated in Israeli prisons and detention facilities, almost 4,781 of whom were detained without trial, without being presented with the allegations against them, and without access to the right to defend themselves. In the months since the war started, thousands more Palestinians have been arrested, held for varying periods of time and released without charges. Various testimonies revealed repeated use of sexual violence in varying degrees of severity, by soldiers or prison guards against Palestinian detainees as an additional punitive measure. The witnesses described blows to the genitals and other body parts of naked prisoners; the use of metal tools and batons to cause genital pain; the photographing of naked prisoners; penises being grabbed and strip-searches for the sake of humiliation and degradation. The testimonies also revealed cases of gang sexual violence and assault committed by a group of prison guards or soldiers. One particularly grave testimony, quoted at length below, reports the attempted anal rape of a Palestinian detainee by several prison guards. Similar incidents were mentioned in other testimonies. The denial of medical care and improper treatment of patients often led to horrific outcomes, causing long-term injuries. One example can be found in the testimony of a prisoner held in Sde Teiman military detention facility, whose leg had to be amputated as a result of injuries caused by soldier violence, harsh incarceration conditions, inadequate treatment, and indifference and negligence on the part of the facility's personnel. Among the Israeli prison system's special units, the Initial Reaction Force (IRF), known in Hebrew as Keter, featured prominently in the testimony given to B'Tselem. Two witnesses referred to it as the, quote, 'death squad'." Let me just say there's no security risk in these prisons at all. If you see any video of it, of the prisoners, and how they're kept, it is shocking. They're bound, they're stripped, they're lying on the floor. None of this is being done for security reasons. You don't have to anally rape prisoners for security reasons or beat them in the genitals. "The collection

of testimonies in B'Tselem's possession show the IRF has been heavily involved in the torture and physical, sexual and mental abuse of prisoners since October 7th."

Here is a video from the Israeli Channel 12 from this week, which is a mainstream Israeli channel, one of the most watched. And here it is, were they are reporting on a video that surfaced that appears to show an anal rape by IDF soldiers on a Palestinian prisoner. And you can just see here, as they lie on the ground, the extraordinarily repressive and humiliated and degraded state they're purposely kept in. They're just lying on the floor with lights on, on their stomachs, with their heads down, with their hands tied behind their backs.

GG: So it's in Hebrew, but you can see they take one of the prisoners lying on the floor. They, multiple soldiers, force him over. He has his hands behind his back and then under a shield, they quite clearly appear to be rectally raping the prisoner. And a lot of reports have surfaced about this incident. Several of the soldiers were actually detained. And now you have Knesset members and other members of the far right in Israel actually going to the prison base to demand their release, the release of the IDF anal rapists. And you have people on Israeli television who are explicitly defending this. I want to show you this one. And it's not obviously everybody in Israel defending it. A lot of people in Israel are horrified and in shock, but there are a lot of people who are not who are actually defending it. And they brought one of these people on to Israeli Channel 12. And here's what happened. I'm going to just read the English subtitles for you, for those of you who are listening to the episode in podcast form rather than watching.

GG: "I told my friends that I don't give a rat's ass about what they do to a guy like that". "What? Is that the way you really think?", someone said. "Unequivocally, yes." "Wait wait wait. I'll explain." "Soldiers who are suspected in the criminal offence of rape of a cuffed prisone, it doesn't interest you? Does the morality of our soldiers not interest you?" "No." "By the way, they're not soldiers. In fact, they're not soldiers, they're criminals." "Again, I don't give a rat's ass what they do to that Hamas man. I always remember, first of all, the only thing that is a problem for me here, is that it's not a regulated policy of the state to abuse detainees. Because first of all, they deserve it. And it's great revenge that we need to give to them. And secondly, maybe it will also serve us a little more as a deterrent. That is the movement, the other side, who we need to remember, Josh, we need to remember it well and never lose our focus or cool down. These people tied 30 of our daughters to trees on October 7th and they did them acts that are not less severe. I don't even want to make a comparison severe in an extreme way. So first of all, they deserve it. It's a very appropriate revenge. It's just a shame that we don't do it in institutionalised way as part of regulations for torture of prisoners. Because then the next guy who thinks about doing another October 7th will say, do you see what they're doing in Israel? Don't even think about it."

GG: So he said the only thing he regrets about the use of anal rape on detainees, who he says deserve it even though they have not been convicted, is that the Israeli state should legalise it and regulate it. As opposed to leaving it to the soldiers to do on their own. It should be an official policy of the state to anally rape prisoners as a form of torture, deterrence and revenge. Anyone who says that is an absolute sick degenerate. And of course, they're calling

for the legalisation of classic war crimes. And as I said, it's not like he's some weird guy that they invited on, some random guy. He's a known television pundit. But also he's defending a policy that many IDF soldiers are also defending, and that right wing members of the Knesset went to an Israeli military base to, used physical force and violence to break in, to try and free those Israeli soldiers who are charged with doing that. Here is the State Department spokesman, Matt Miller – speaking of people who have corroded and rotted souls, who was asked about this in a briefing yesterday. And here's what he said with the little smirk he always wears.

Journalist: Going back to Israel. Israeli media today released a video showing Israeli soldiers raping a Palestinian detainee at Sde Teiman detention camp. The footage was very disturbing. I know you have commented on the reports about this detention centre before, but we now have new evidence, which is video. Have you seen that video? And do you have anything to say on that? And also the reports of rape in Israeli prisons?

Matt Miller (MM): So we have seen the video and reports of sexual abuse, of detainees are horrific. They ought to be investigated fully by the government of Israel, by the IDF. Prisoners' human rights need to be respected in all cases. And when there are alleged violations, the government of Israel needs to take steps to investigate those who are alleged to have committed abuses and, if appropriate, hold them accountable. And it is appropriate that the IDF in this case has announced an investigation, has arrested a number of people, who are alleged to have been involved. And, I won't speak to the outcome of that investigation, but it ought to proceed swiftly. And if they're determined to be in violation of criminal laws or violations of the IDF's code of conduct, then of course they ought to be held accountable.

Journalist: And actually, this is not the first rape incident we have been hearing about in Israeli prisons. And Israeli human rights group B'Tselem on Monday released a report saying that Sde Teiman is only the tip of the iceberg and that Israeli detention centres turned into a network of torture camps for Palestinians. Its report cited testimonies from 55 Palestinian detainees. So, I know the Israelis are investigating this, but would you support an independent investigation into those allegations?

MM: So I would have to look at what the specific independent investigation people are calling for, and pass judgement, on the merits. But, look, there ought to be zero tolerance for sexual abuse, rape, of any detainee, period. That's a fundamental belief of the United States. And if there are detainees who have been abused, if they are detainees who have been, sexually assaulted or raped, the government of Israel and the IDF need to fully investigate those actions and hold anyone responsible, accountable to the full extent of the law.

Journalist: Just a final one on that. You know, what is your reaction to that Israelis, including politicians and lawmakers, protested, actually, the arrest of Israeli soldiers who are suspected of abuse and rape. And, you know, we have also seen comments from Israeli lawmakers trying to justify the rape of Palestinians. Have you seen those remarks?

MM: So, obviously, with respect to the last question, there is no justification for rape of anyone.

GG: First of all, just compare if you will the unless global reaction to claims of rape and the use of rape by Hamas on October 7th. It just went on and on and on. Sheryl Sandberg, the billionaire from Facebook, produced a massive video about it. All kinds of celebrities came forward. The media repeatedly covered it forever. Even though the evidence of it has always been in doubt in terms of the scope of it or how much it happened, the New York Times published an article that they had to clarify or correct in several important instances when purporting to corroborate those claims. But leave that aside. Look at the reaction to it. And all you can really get from the US government is we don't support this. We think it should be investigated. Do you think the Israeli government, having spent the last ten months openly mocking the Biden administration, openly defying everything that they've said, making very clear that the US government will continue to fund them and arm them, they will not listen to a single thing the United States cares about or wants, that the Israelis will do whatever they want and the US will continue to fund... Do you think they care in the slightest about what something like this is getting up and saying, we expect the Israelis to investigate and we hope that people will be held accountable?! It's stunning the amount of evidence that has emerged just in the last two weeks about how systemic this sexual assault, deliberate systemic use of it by Israeli soldiers in Palestinian prisoners.

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