



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, expresses serious concerns over reported instances of rape and other forms of sexual violence against Palestinian detainees

Press Release: For Immediate Release

New York, 9 September 2024: The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), Ms. Pramila Patten, expresses her deep concern about recently published reports by the United Nations including OHCHR, describing a dramatic deterioration in conditions of detention for Palestinians men, women and children under Israeli custody, since the 7 October attacks and the escalation of hostilities in Gaza. These very disturbing reports of sexual violence and other inhuman and degrading treatment could amount to sexualized torture, perpetrated against Palestinian men and women and include widespread sexual slurs and threats of rape and gang rape, repeated and humiliating strip searches and prolonged forced nudity, beatings and electrocution of genitals and anus, insertion of objects into detainees' anuses, inappropriate touching of women by both male and female soldiers, and photographing or filming of naked or partially undressed detainees in humiliating positions. "Sexual violence and sexualized torture in any form and in any context, and particularly in detention settings, is unacceptable. Such abhorrent acts not only constitute a grave violation of human rights and human dignity but they also undermine efforts towards peace and stability in the region", stated Special Representative Patten who calls for the provision to the victims, of necessary medical and psychological support to begin the healing process.

Special Representative Patten recalls the extensive media coverage of the recent case of the Palestinian male detainee who was hospitalized in July with severe injuries including to his rectum, due to sexual violence allegedly perpetrated in the Sde Teiman military base. Special Representative Patten stresses the importance of upholding international human rights standards and ensuring that detention conditions strictly conform with international norms and standards, and urges Israeli authorities to grant unhindered access to relevant international bodies to detention facilities in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian Territories including Gaza and reiterates her call for independent and thorough investigations by relevant and competent UN bodies into all these alleged violations in order to bring all perpetrators, regardless of rank or affiliation, to justice.

Special Representative Patten acknowledges that some steps were taken by the Israeli Military Police Criminal Investigation Division to investigate the alleged rape of the Palestinian detainee hospitalized in July but remains concerned at the limited number of investigations opened compared to the number of complaints received. "I am particularly concerned about recent attempts by some Israeli political actors, to interfere with ongoing justice processes and/ or to justify the use of these methods. Sexual violence and sexualized torture in detention settings must never be normalized. Impunity emboldens perpetrators, silences victims and undermines prospects for peace. Perpetrators of such heinous crimes must be held accountable and justice

must be served”, added Special Representative Patten who calls for prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigations into all alleged violations.

SRSG Patten also expresses her deep sorrow for the recent tragic events involving the killing of six hostages by Hamas while in captivity. She extends heartfelt condolences to the grieving families and reiterates an immediate and unequivocal call for the safe and unconditional release of all remaining hostages and for an immediate ceasefire.

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