



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

A year after the 7 October attacks, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, remembers the victims of the attacks and reiterates her call for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages

Press Release: For Immediate Release

New York, 7 October 2024: A year after the brutal attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in southern Israel on 7 October 2023, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, expresses her heartfelt solidarity with all the victims, their families and communities affected by these tragic events. Special Representative Patten stated: “Today we stand united in remembrance of those who lost their lives and in unwavering support of the survivors who bear the scars of that fateful day, in particular the victims of sexual violence, a heinous crime that has devastating physical and psychological impacts.”

She also recalled the conclusions of her mission to Israel earlier this year, that conflict-related sexual violence including rape and gang rape, was committed during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations across the Gaza periphery; and subsequently against hostages during their captivity. She also recalled having reasonable grounds to believe that such violence against hostages may still be ongoing. Special Representative Patten expresses her continued concerns about the plight of hostages still in captivity in Gaza and reiterates her call for their immediate, safe and unconditional release. “In these challenging times, I recognize the courage and resilience of those who have been released but remain gravely concerned for the hostages still held in captivity. I accordingly urge political leaders in the region and all those with influence over the parties to the conflict to intensify their efforts to ensure the release of all remaining hostages as a matter of utmost priority.”

“A year since these heinous attacks, victims, survivors, and their families deserve justice. It is of vital importance to ensure fully-fledged independent investigations into all allegations of sexual violence during or in the aftermath of the 7 October attacks. My mandate stands resolute in its offer of support to the Israeli authorities, in the pursuit of justice and accountability”, added Special Representative Patten.

“As this prolonged conflict continues to exacerbate suffering and loss, a ceasefire is paramount in halting the humanitarian crisis and alleviating the suffering of all affected peoples,” stressed Special Representative Patten. She reiterates the call of the Secretary-General for an immediate ceasefire and urges the international community, regional actors and the involved parties to champion a ceasefire as a foundational move towards enduring peace and the realization of a two-State solution.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Ms. Géraldine Boezio, Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict
Tel: +1 917 367 3306 Email: geraldine.boezio@un.org

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