

# SYSTEMIC TORTURE AND INHUMANE TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN DETAINEES SINCE OCTOBER 7, 2023 AND THE ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

## OVERVIEW

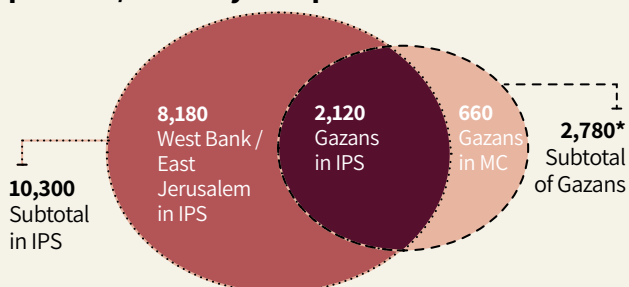
About 11,000 Palestinians are [currently held in detention by Israeli authorities](#), including some 2,780 Gaza residents, according to official state figures from late May 2025.<sup>1</sup> The majority of detainees are held in Israeli Prison Service (IPS) facilities –22 of whom are women and 223 minors under 18 (one of whom is a woman)<sup>2</sup> - while **660 Gazan detainees are still held in military detention camps**.<sup>3</sup> Strikingly, the State's reports to the HCJ in December 2024 and May 2025 show a discrepancy of 144 Gazan detainees, with no explanation or information on their status or whereabouts, despite accounting for arrests and releases.

facilities, detainees are held in inhumane living conditions and suffer from systematic torture and abuse.

## Detention conditions amounting to torture and direct systemic abuse

Since October 7, 2023, **living conditions in Israeli prisons and military detention camps amount to torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment**. Detention facilities suffer from overcrowding and detainees face severe deprivation of basic necessities, including food, water, hygiene, and medical care, resulting in malnutrition and outbreaks of epidemics such as scabies.<sup>4</sup>

### Over 11,000 Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons / military camps



\* This number is an estimation based on data PCATI received in the latest State response to its petition | HCJ 1414/24 The Public Committee against Torture in Israel et. al vs. The Knesset et. al., updated response by the State submitted on May 30, 2025.

The notorious Sde Teiman military detention camp still holds Palestinians from Gaza, despite assurances from the Government of Israel (GOI) in December 2024 that the camp would be gradually closed. Additionally, detainees from Gaza are held in Ofer and possibly in the Naftali military camp. In both IPS and military detention

Human rights organizations have documented **widespread abuses, including physical beatings, sexual violence, harassment, and threats—pointing to systemic and deliberate mistreatment**. In military camps, detainees have reportedly been held in outdoor cages, blindfolded and handcuffed around the clock, forced to kneel for extended periods, and subjected to punishment for the slightest acts of disobedience.<sup>5</sup>

These violations are **compounded by inflammatory rhetoric from high-level officials**. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, who oversees the IPS, has publicly endorsed punitive measures against Palestinian detainees. He has referred to Palestinian prisoners as “[scum](#)” and “[Nazis](#)” and has spearheaded [media campaigns](#) glorifying their mistreatment. Right-wing coalition parties continue to call for the death penalty for those convicted of terrorism-related offenses, further entrenching a culture of dehumanization and impunity.

1 HCJ 1414/24 The Public Committee against Torture in Israel et. al vs. The Knesset et. al., updated response by the State submitted on May 30, 2025.

2 Israel Prison Service, Figures for March 2025: [https://www.gov.il/he/pages/kluim\\_125](https://www.gov.il/he/pages/kluim_125)

3 Information regarding women or minors detained in military camps has not been disclosed to the public.

4 ACRI, April 2024, [Scabies Epidemics in Prisons](#), PHRI February 2025, [Unlawfully Detained, Tortured and Starved](#) - The Plight Of Gaza's Medical Workers in Israeli Custody.

5 [Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps](#), a report by B'Tselem, August 2024.

## Deaths in Custody

Official figures confirm that since October 7, 2023, **dozens of Palestinian detainees have died while in IPS in custody and at least 44 in military camps** – however, the true number may be higher. Numerous requests to disclose the actual numbers have been rejected by the State. Forensic evidence in several cases suggests that severe physical abuse by guards may have contributed to or caused these deaths.<sup>6</sup>

## Lack of Access and Accountability

Since October 2023, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been denied access to Palestinian detainees in both IPS and military facilities. Legal access has also been severely curtailed. Under the Unlawful Combatants Law – amended since October 7, 2023, which is the legal framework for holding most Gazan detainees, detainees may be denied judicial review for up to 45 days and barred from meeting with legal counsel for as long as 70 days (see table below).<sup>7</sup> Such prolonged isolation increases the risk of abuse and prevents external oversight.

### PROCEEDINGS

UCL before October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
(Version of 2002)

Timeframe - Amendment no. 4  
(amendment no. 2), July 2024

#### Issuance of a detention order

96 hours    **30 days**

#### Judicial review

14 days    **45 days** by video conference

#### Denial of counsel

10 days    **45 days** on instruction of official

21 days    **70 days** with court approval

Since October 7, 2023, only two incidents of abuse against detainees by IDF personnel have reportedly led to indictments<sup>8</sup> – both involving abuse of detainees at Sde Teiman, one of which is still being litigated. To our knowledge, no IPS personnel have been indicted for abuse of detainees so far. The stark disparity between hundreds of reported abuse cases and only two cases tried, reveals a systemic failure of accountability within Israel's justice system and falls short of UN standards for prompt, effective investigations.

## CONCLUSION

This imminent and systematic threat to Palestinian detainees' lives, health, and dignity demand an immediate intervention by the international community, calling on Israel to:

- Immediately cease the holding of Palestinian detainees in inhuman and abusive conditions amounting to torture and ill-treatment;
- Disclose the names and whereabouts of all Palestinian detainees that have been arrested following operations in Gaza;
- Grant immediate and unrestricted access for lawyers and ICRC representatives to all Israeli prisons and detention facilities;
- Amend the Unlawful Combatants Law to provide essential procedural safeguards and due process protections, including prompt arrest hearings, access to legal counsel, and effective judicial review, in compliance with Israel's obligations under international law;
- Conduct independent, transparent, and comprehensive investigations into all allegations of torture and abuse, with particular attention to the multiple deaths in IPS prisons and military detention camps.

6 For an estimation of numbers of death see: [Deaths in Israeli Prison](#), a report by Physicians for Human Rights Israel, March 2024; B'Tselem, [Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps](#), a report by B'Tselem, August 2024.

7 [Unlawful Incarceration: Legal Analysis of Israel's Military Detention Regime](#), a report by Diakonia and PCATI, August 2024.

8 The Times of Israel, February 19, 2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/5-idf-reservists-indicted-for-severe-abuse-of-palestinian-detainee-at-sde-teiman/>; The Guardian, July 30, 2024, [https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/30/idf-charges-reservist-with-aggravated-abuse-of-palestinian-prisoners?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/30/idf-charges-reservist-with-aggravated-abuse-of-palestinian-prisoners?utm_source=chatgpt.com)