

# ‘Humiliated’ Palestinian Victims of Israel Sexual Abuse Testify at UN

GENEVA (AFP) – Palestinians who say they suffered brutal beatings and sexual abuse in the Zionist regime’s detention and at the hands of settlers testified about their ordeals at the United Nations this week.

“I was humiliated and tortured,” said Said Abdel Fattah, a 28-year-old nurse detained in November 2023 near Gaza City’s Al Shifa hospital where he worked.

“I was like a punching bag,” he said of one particularly harrowing interrogation he endured in January 2024.

The interrogator, he said, “kept hitting me on my genitals... I was bleeding everywhere, I was bleeding from my penis, I was bleeding from my anus”.

“I felt like my soul (left) my body.”

Fattah spoke during the latest of a series of public hearings hosted by the UN’s independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

This week’s hearings are specifically focused on allegations of “sexual and reproductive violence” committed by Zionist troops and settlers.



*Abdel Fattah, 28, said he was detained near Gaza City’s al-Shifa hospital where he worked as a nurse.*

“It’s important,” COI member Chris Sidoti, who hosted the meeting, told AFP. Victims of such abuse are “entitled to be heard”, he said.

Experts and advocates who testified Tuesday spoke of a “systematic” trend of sexual violence against Palestinians in detention, but also at checkpoints and other settings since October 7, 2023.

Palestinian lawyer Sahar Francis decried a glaring lack of accountability, alleging that abuse had become “a widespread policy”.

All those arrested from Gaza were strip-searched, she said, with

the soldiers in some cases “pushing the sticks” into the prisoner’s anus.

Sexual abuse happened “in a very massive way” especially in the first months of the war, she said.

“I think you can say that most of those who were arrested in these months were subjected to such practice.”

The allegations of abuse are not limited to detention centers.

Mohamed Matar, a West Bank resident, said he suffered hours of torture at the hands of security agents and settlers, even as Israeli

police refused to intervene.

Just days after the October 7 attack, he and other Palestinian activists went to help protect a Bedouin community facing settler attacks.

As they were leaving the compound, they were chased and caught by a group of settlers, who he said were joined by members of Israel’s Shabak security agency.

He and two other men were blindfolded, stripped to their underwear and, had their hands tied before being taken into a nearby stable.

The leader stood “on my head and ordered me to eat ... the faeces of the sheep”, said Matar.

With dozens of settlers around, the man urinated on the three, and beat them so badly during the nearly 12 hours of abuse that Matar said he cried: “just shoot me in the head”.

The man, he said, jumped on his back and repeatedly “tried to introduce a stick into my anus”.

Blinking back tears, Matar showed Sidoti a photograph taken by the settlers showing the three blindfolded men lying in the dirt in their underwear.

Other pictures taken after the ordeal showed him with massive bruises all over his body.

## Protesters Across U.S. Demand Release of Palestinian Activist

CHICAGO (Dispatches) – Demonstrators gathered in the American city of Chicago to demand the release of pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil, who was arrested by federal police for leading protests at Columbia University in New York.

Thousands in Chicago on Tuesday protested the Zionist regime’s occupation of the Gaza Strip and Khalil’s arrest, condemning his detention and the revocation of his green card while chanting slogans and holding signs.

President Donald Trump defended the arrest, calling Khalil a “foreign pro-Hamas student” and stating it was “the first arrest of many to come” as protesters vowed to keep denouncing human rights vi-

olations under his administration.

Lawyer and activist Jinan Chehade told Anadolu that thousands joined the protest in Chicago to demand Khalil’s release. “Mahmoud Khalil is a Palestinian activist who was kidnapped from his home by this system, by this administration.”

Stressing that no force can silence or intimidate the demonstrators, Chehade said: “We are here in the millions across the U.S. to say that we protect each other and we will never be silenced against the genocide in Gaza and our U.S. taxpayer dollars going to pay for the ethnic cleansing and the occupation in Palestine.”

Khalil, a green card holder and a recent Columbia University grad-

uate who helped lead a pro-Palestinian encampment last April, was arrested Saturday at his university-owned residence in New York.

According to Khalil’s lawyer, Amy Greer, Khalil was “wrongfully arrested” by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents who claimed his student visa was revoked -- even though he is a legal permanent resident and not in the U.S. on a student visa. He is married to a U.S. citizen who is eight months pregnant.

U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman in Manhattan blocked the deportation of Khalil from the U.S. on Monday.

“To preserve the Court’s jurisdiction pending a ruling on the

petition, Petitioner shall not be removed from the United States unless and until the Court orders otherwise,” he said in his ruling.

Dozens of demonstrators marched Monday for about half a mile to ICE headquarters in the U.S. capital demanding the release of Khalil.

About a dozen protesters demonstrating in support of Khalil were arrested Tuesday, after clashing with New York City Police (NYPD). Two officers forced one protester to the ground while making an arrest.

Fourteen members of Congress, including Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley have signed a letter demanding his release.

## Israeli Drones Violate Lebanese Airspace Despite Ceasefire Deal

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime’s drones violated Lebanese airspace on Wednesday, in the latest violation of a ceasefire agreement.

Drones flew at low altitude over the capital Beirut and its southern suburbs and Hermel town and its surrounding villages in eastern Lebanon, the state news agency NNA reported.

Zionist troops also conducted a sweeping operation using machine guns on Hamamis Hill in Marjeyoun in southern Lebanon,

NNA said.

The violations came a day after the regime handed over four Lebanese citizens held by Tel Aviv to the Red Cross. A fifth Lebanese prisoner was expected to be released later on Wednesday.

Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the release “a goodwill gesture” toward Lebanon’s newly elected President Joseph Aoun, according to a statement from his office.

There is no information available regarding the total number of Lebanese prisoners currently held by the Zionist regime.

Lebanon continues to demand Israeli withdrawal from five border outposts and the release of Lebanese prisoners who were taken during the recent conflict with Hezbollah.

A fragile ceasefire has been in place in Lebanon since November 2024, ending months of warfare between the occupying regime and Hezbollah that es-

calated into a full-scale conflict last September.

Under the ceasefire deal, the regime was supposed to fully withdraw from southern Lebanon by Jan. 26, but the deadline was extended to Feb. 18 after the regime refused to comply. It still maintains a military presence at five border outposts.

Lebanese authorities reported nearly 1,100 Israeli violations of the ceasefire, including the deaths of at least 85 people and injuries to more than 280 others.

## Moroccan Handed Jail Term for Praising Stabbing Operation Against Israelis

RABAT (Dispatches) – A Moroccan activist has been sentenced to two years in prison for “incitement to hatred” over social media posts praising a stabbing operation in the Israeli-occupied territories, his lawyer says.

Redouane El Kastit, a member of the al-Adl Wal Ihssane movement, was sentenced by a court in Tangier, his lawyer Mohamed Serroukh told AFP.

El Kastit was arrested on February 5 and charged with “incitement to ha-

tred,” “discrimination,” and “insulting a public body” after about 15 posts he made on Facebook, his lawyer said.

According to the prosecution, the posts described a late-January operation against five Zionists in Tel Aviv as the start of a “blessed campaign.”

El Kastit denied making the posts on social media, the lawyer added.

He was also accused of posting a photo of the fighter and praising his Moroccan identity.

The lawyer said he will appeal the “harsh ruling.”

Zionist troops shot and killed a young Palestinian man in Tel Aviv on January 18, deep inside the Israeli-occupied territories, over the alleged stabbing attack.

The Israel Police claimed in a statement that the man had stabbed Israelis on Levontin Street, seriously injuring them, before being shot and killed by an armed settler at the scene.

## Leader... (Continued From Page One)

in West Asia are bitter and painful. But, thank God, the Islamic Republic continues to grow, progress, and increase its power.

“This year, thank God, we have strengths and capabilities in various ways. Last year, we did not have these.”

## Warships... (Continued From Page One)

said the Iranian Navy’s powerful participation in exercises demonstrated the strength and capability of the force in operating across the international waters.

In a message to Navy chief Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, the top diplomat said the drills were a testament to the Navy’s decisive attitude and its ability to operate on the global stage, adding maritime security and development likewise require an assertive presence in expansive oceanic areas.

Araghchi emphasized Iran’s unwavering determination to maintain and enhance the security of the strategic and sensitive Persian Gulf region, the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz within it, the Sea of Oman, and beyond.

## Yemen... (Continued From Page One)

imposed new conditions and demanded a full disarmament of Hamas’s military wing, threatening a resumption of war on the strip.

New Israeli army Chief of Staff, Eyal Zamir, has approved new invasion plans for the Southern Command to resume the war.

Israel has shut all border crossings and cut off the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza. It has also cut off electricity to the enclave, affecting a major desalination plant and reducing access to fresh water by 70 percent.

Israeli attacks on Gaza martyred at least 12 people in the last 24 hours, according to the strip’s health ministry on Wednesday. Over 130 have been killed since the truce went into effect.

Yemen halted its pro-Palestine operations when the ceasefire took effect, but has repeatedly warned that it will take military action if the agreement collapses.

In its Tuesday statement, the YAF reiterated solidarity with the resilient Palestinian population in both the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, which has similarly come under escalated deadly Israeli aggression, reaffirming their “unwavering support for the Palestinian resistance.”

## Official... (Continued From Page 2)

former top anti-terror military official General Qassem Soleimani, as well as high-ranking resistance officials, who used to lead the fight against Israeli terrorism and occupation throughout the region.

His remarks also addressed Washington’s de-listing of the anti-Iran terrorist cult of Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), which is responsible for killing some 17,000 Iranian civilians and officials since the victory of the country’s historic 1979 Islamic Revolution.