UN sexual violence envoy: Israelis were raped, sexually tortured on October 7

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By Tamar Uriel-Beeri

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<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-790204>

A mission team led on a trip through Israel by United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, found that there was substantial evidence to conclude that both hostages and survivors of October 7 were sexually [abused and raped](https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-784636) by Hamas terrorists.

Patten, therefore, called on Hamas to ‘immediately and unconditionally release all individuals held in captivity and to ensure their protection, including from sexual violence.’

The team, traveling and researching with Israel’s full cooperation, found ‘clear and convincing information that sexual violence, [including rape, sexualized torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-786494) has been committed against hostages.’

They have ‘reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing against those still held in captivity.’

Patten’s team, which visited throughout the first two weeks of February, was comprised of ‘nine experts drawn from the United Nations, including… specialists trained in safe and ethical interviewing of survivors/victims and witnesses of sexual violence crimes; a forensic pathologist; and a digital and open-source information analyst.’

The team also found ‘that there are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred in multiple locations during the 7 October attacks, including rape and gang-rape in at least three locations, namely: the Nova music festival site and its surroundings, Road 232, and Kibbutz Re’im.’

This region was the same area specified in the report released two weeks prior by the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel (ARCCI), which summed up the evidence available so far regarding sexual violence on October 7.

‘In most of these incidents, victims first subjected to rape were then killed, and at least two incidents relate to the rape of women’s corpses,’ the report stated, once again confirming what the ARCCI had reported.

**Patterns of sexual violence uncovered during investigation**

They found a ‘pattern’ that ‘may be indicative of some forms of… sexualized torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment’ in which ‘victims, mostly women, [were] found fully or partially naked, bound, and shot across multiple locations.’

This was based on piles and piles of evidence, including 50 hours of footage, 5,000 photographs, and 34 independent interviews.

The report did, however, claim that two reports of sexual assault in Kibbutz Be’eri, including that which revealed that a pregnant woman’s womb was torn open before she was killed, were ‘unfounded.’

‘Regarding genital mutilation overall, the mission team was not able to establish a discernible pattern.

‘Overall, the mission team is of the view that the true prevalence of sexual violence during the 7 October attacks and their aftermath, may take months or years to emerge and may never be fully known,’ the report concluded.

They recommended that Israel permit the office of the UN’s OHCHR and the International Commission of Inquiry on the occupied Palestinian Territory to conduct investigations.

After formally submitting the report to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Patten further called for a humanitarian ceasefire.

Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz, a couple of hours before the embargo lifted on the sexual violence report, recalled Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, due to alleged UN attempts to keep the report quiet.

‘I ordered our ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, to return to Israel for immediate consultations regarding the attempt to keep quiet the serious UN report on the mass rapes committed by Hamas and its helpers on Oct. 7,’ he said.

‘Despite the authority granted to him, the UN secretary-general did not order the convening of the security council in light of the findings, in order to declare Hamas a terrorist organization and impose sanctions on its supporters.’

‘What else needs to happen to motivate Netanyahu and members of the cabinet to stop this cruelty that the hostages go through every day?’ hostage families said in response to the report. ‘The people of Israel will not forgive Prime Minister Netanyahu and the members of the cabinet if they do not put an end to the atrocities that the hostages have been going through for 150 days.’

The IDF revealed just hours before the UN report was released that four UNRWA employees were proven to have been involved in the October 7 massacre, in addition to the 12 names already revealed to have been active participants in the sexual assault, kidnapping, and murdering of Israelis. They released a recording in which two of the UNRWA employees discuss the [violent atrocities they had committed.](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-782493)

The IDF said that it can confirm 400 officials of UNRWA are affiliated with Palestinian terror groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

This was seemingly in response to a report by the New York Times, which, one day prior, claimed that several Gazans died in Israeli detention camps, [including innocent civilians](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-782805), while others were beaten, sexually abused, and tortured, citing a report compiled by UNRWA.

UNRWA is a United Nations organization responsible specifically for the welfare of Palestinian refugees that is currently under investigation for a handful of its employees having been involved in the October 7 massacre of Israelis led by Hamas.

The IDF firmly denied the allegations, stating that several of those imprisoned died due to preexisting illnesses and the like and that no undue violence was used. They said no sexual abuse had been committed and that music had been ‘played at a low volume’ to prevent the prisoners from coordinating before each was individually interrogated.