



June 4, 2026

H.E. António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General
Office of the Spokesperson
for the UN Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Re: False allegations of conflict-related sexual violence against Israel in Secretary-General's report

On April 21, 2026, the U.N. Secretary-General released his report entitled Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, adding the State of Israel to the “blacklist” of countries engaged in conflict-related sexual violence.¹ Israel’s inclusion on the list follows a “notice for potential listing” in the July 2025 Report.² The 2025 Report alleged that Israeli armed and security forces were linked to “verified” incidents of conflict-related sexual violence against Palestinian detainees.³

The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ)⁴ has thoroughly reviewed the 2026 Report and found serious flaws and ethical violations by its authors. Simply put, the Report gives a free pass to Hamas and other terrorists from Gaza who commit extreme forms of sexual violence and makes false allegations of sexual violence against Israeli institutions.

The Secretary-General’s Report provides specific details about the so-called “verified” acts of sexual violence by Israel against Palestinian detainees.⁵ Those alleged incidents include sexual abuse as a form of torture against fourteen men, seven women, nine boys, and one girl from Gaza and the West Bank.⁶ The alleged abuses included rape, gang rape, rape with objects, attempted rape, genital violence, invasive searches, forced nudity, unwanted sexual touching, and threats of rape.⁷ Nine victims were allegedly subjected to rape or gang rape, most of whom were from Gaza.⁸

¹ Rep. of the Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence*, U.N. Doc. S/2026/321 (Apr. 21, 2026) [hereinafter *2026 Sexual violence report*].

² Rep. of the Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence*, U.N. Doc. S/2025/389, at 34 (July 15, 2025).

³ *Id.* ¶ 36.

⁴ The ECLJ is a non-profit organization dedicated to defense of human rights around the world. The ECLJ also holds Special Consultative status with the ECOSOC.

⁵ *2026 Sexual violence report*, *supra* note 1, ¶ 35.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

Responsibility for these alleged acts is attributed to members of the Israel Defense Forces, the Israel Prison Service, and the Police Counter-Terrorism Unit (Yamam).⁹ The Report states that the alleged violations occurred primarily during detention and interrogation, but also at checkpoints and during military operations, and that some incidents were photographed or filmed.¹⁰ Female detainees were reportedly subjected primarily to threats of rape, forced nudity, unwanted touching, and degrading strip searches, while male detainees and boys were allegedly subjected to rape, attempted rape, and genital violence.¹¹ The Report further alleges that five male victims suffered serious rectal injuries and that women and girls in Gaza continue to face heightened risks of sexual violence due to the humanitarian conditions created by the conflict.¹²

During a press conference subsequent to the release of the Secretary-General's 2026 Report, Pramila Patten, the U.N.'s Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and author of the Report, admitted that *she did not conduct any independent investigations* to ascertain the veracity of the absurd allegations against Israeli forces.¹³ Answering reporters' questions regarding whether she had seen the evidence instead of relying on reports by other U.N. monitors, Patten stated: "No, because that's not my job."¹⁴ "I receive information from U.N. human rights monitors,"¹⁵ apparently referring to the U.N. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (COI) (discussed below). When asked if she had verified the evidence provided to her, she stated: "it's not the responsibility of my office to do any verification."¹⁶

From Patten's own statements and citations provided in the Secretary-General's Report, the Report primarily relies on the COI's erroneous reports alleging sexual violence—the very reports that themselves are devoid of any actual evidence.¹⁷ The Secretary-General's Report simply regurgitates the false and baseless allegations made by the COI.

Shamefully, the COI falsely accuses Israeli soldiers of committing sexual violence by ridiculously labeling instances of destruction of hospitals or the roads leading to them, the scarcity of maternity equipment, and the shortage of menstrual pads and healthy food for pregnant women as *reproductive violence*.¹⁸ It further labels strip searches of detainees (a lawful action during war) as *egregious gender-based violence*. According to the COI, Gazan women having to use children's nappies instead of sanitary pads during menstruation, eating canned tuna instead of bread, milk, and eggs during pregnancies, and having to wear a veil due to the conflict are serious examples of sexual, reproductive, and gender-based violence.¹⁹

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ UNITED NATIONS, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – Presser*, at 30:21 (YouTube, May 29, 2026), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2ZUC8_tKeA.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 35:09.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 31:47.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 30:20.

¹⁷ Indep. Int'l Comm'n of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including E. Jerusalem, and Isr., "*More than a Human Can Bear*": *Israel's Systematic Use of Sexual, Reproductive and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence Since 7 October 2023*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/58/CRP.6 (Mar. 13, 2025) [hereinafter *COI Report*].

¹⁸ *Id.* ¶¶ 45, 76, 169.

¹⁹ *Id.* ¶¶ 65, 77.

While these instances are a sad consequence of armed conflicts, they do not constitute sexual or reproductive violence. What is more alarming is that the Secretary-General's Report relies on the COI's mislabeling and false information and its so-called "findings" to place Israeli military on par with terrorists from Gaza who gang-raped Israeli women, shot them while still raping them, shoved foreign objects in their vaginas, cut their genitals, and left hundreds of bodies naked after sexually assaulting them—all of which is actual and egregious sexual violence and all of which is documented, including by the terrorists themselves.

The COI gives a handful of examples of "sexual assault and harassment" allegedly suffered by female detainees at the hands of the Israeli forces.²⁰ These include threats and insults, but no physical sexual assault is alleged.²¹ Further, the COI cites to one case of a Palestinian man in detention who it *claims* was "raped."²² Ironically, the COI's evidence for this case is an indictment in an Israeli military court, meaning Israel is investigating and prosecuting the case in a proper forum.²³ Based on this case alone, the COI makes generalized statements that it "documented *cases of rape* and sexual assault of male detainees."²⁴ This is extremely irresponsible and once again demonstrates the COI's lack of credibility.

The fact that the COI could only point to one alleged instance of sexual assault shows that Israel does not have any policy or practice of sexual or reproductive violence. Ironically, the COI's report instead proves that Israeli forces honor the Law of Armed Conflict, unlike Hamas and other terrorists in the region. It further shows the high level of discipline by the IDF in conducting its military operation in Gaza and elsewhere, even after watching videos of terrorists from Gaza raping hundreds of Israeli women and mutilating them, and picking up thousands of body parts, including genitals of men and women.

The COI is obligated to investigate *all* alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law *in* Israel and in the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" with independence, impartiality, and objectivity.²⁵ The COI, however, is not a credible mechanism because it operates in breach of these obligations. Yet, Pramila Patten relies on COI's statements and includes them in the Secretary-General's Report as "verified" acts of rape and sexual violence.²⁶ This is not only irresponsible, but also outright unethical.

When dealing with Hamas, the Secretary-General's Report dedicates a couple of sentences to atrocities committed by Hamas and other terrorist organizations against innocent Israelis (and others). Although there is a plethora of publicly available evidence supporting these atrocities, the Report does not include specific details of the allegations against Hamas, and even calls them mere unverified "allegations" against Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza.²⁷

²⁰ *Id.* ¶ 124.

²¹ *Id.* ¶¶ 124-25.

²² *Id.* ¶ 120.

²³ *Id.* ¶¶ 120, 155.

²⁴ *Id.* ¶ 119 (emphasis added).

²⁵ Office of the U.N. High Comm'r for Human Rights, *Commissions of Inquiry and Fact-Finding Missions on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: Guidance and Practice*, U.N. Sales No. HR/PUB/14/7 (2015).

²⁶ 2026 *Sexual violence report*, *supra* note 1, ¶ 35.

²⁷ *Id.* ¶ 33.

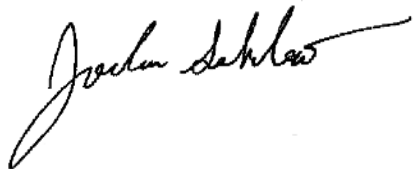
Furthermore, the Report shamelessly states that Hamas has not formally recognized the sexual violence, as if the sexual violence does not exist just because Hamas denies it.²⁸

Finally, the Report states that the validity of claims against Hamas could not be verified because Israel continues to deny access to U.N. officials to conduct investigations.²⁹ Israel denies these claims, stating that the U.N. was invited to review the allegations in Israel.³⁰ Pramila Patten confirmed the receipt of the invitation from Israel and *her* refusal to visit detention facilities.³¹ Responding to questions regarding Ambassador Danny Danon’s invitation to visit Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention facilities, Patten responded: “And even throughout the engagement to the permanent mission, I made it clear that I will not visit detention facilities even if they offered because that is not my mandate and that’s not my role, and relevant U.N. entities need to have access.”³² Responding to another question, she stated: “I have made it clear you would roll out the red carpet for me, I will not accept your offer of visiting any detention facility because this is not my mandate and that the relevant U.N. entities with the mandate should have access and that has never happened.”³³

All of this evidence should give the Secretary-General pause to think of the hundreds of men, women, and children who were gang raped and sexually mutilated by terrorists from Gaza on October 7, 2023, and thereafter while in Hamas captivity. To place Israeli institutions on the same list as Hamas terrorists is simply preposterous.

We urge the Secretary-General to reconsider his decision, recant the recent Report which includes false allegations against Israeli forces, engage in a proper investigation, and pursue truth and justice instead of blindly relying on the COI’s ridiculous and unreliable “findings.”

Respectfully submitted,



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²⁸ *Id.* ¶ 34.

²⁹ *Id.* ¶ 33.

³⁰ Danny Danon (@dannyanon), X (May 28, 2026, 6:51 AM), <https://x.com/dannyanon/status/2059950610619785330?s=20>.

³¹ UNITED NATIONS, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – Presser*, *supra* note 13, at 28:17.

³² *Id.* at 28:13.

³³ *Id.* at 59:01.