

Ministry of Women's Affairs

The Reality Of Palestinian Female Prisoners 2026

on the eve of 8th of March

March 8, 2026



Statement of Her Excellency the Minister:

On March 8th, International Women's Day, we stand in solemn respect for the steadfastness of Palestinian women wherever they may be, with special focus on the Palestinian female prisoners held in Israeli detention, who have been subjected to severe violations that have escalated since October 7, amid the broad aggression against our Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza and the West Bank.

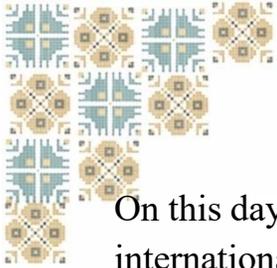
What the female prisoners endure constitutes a grave violation of human rights and the provisions of international humanitarian law. Based on testimonies from released female prisoners and documentation by relevant institutions, repressive practices and ill-treatment have been reported, including solitary confinement, beatings, deprivation of communication with family and lawyers, as well as disturbing accounts of harassment, threats, and assaults that violate human dignity, with some of the affected being minors.

Prisoners from the Gaza Strip face even more complex conditions, with incomplete disclosure of detention locations and restricted visits, including visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which heightens concerns about their physical and psychological safety.

The adoption of the United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution on the situation of Palestinian women is an important international step that strengthens calls for their protection and highlights the violations committed against women and girls in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Ministry has incorporated a dedicated focus on female prisoners within the third generation of the Women, Peace, and Security Plan, reinforcing protection and international accountability for arbitrary detention, gender-based violence, and enforced disappearance.

Additionally, the Ministry launched the "Occupation Violence" section within the National Gender-Based Violence Observatory to document crimes committed against women and girls, using legal methodologies consistent with international humanitarian law, the Rome Statute, and the Geneva Conventions, and to refer cases to relevant UN mechanisms.



On this day, we reaffirm our commitment to continue working with our national and international partners to protect the rights of Palestinian women, foremost among them the female prisoners, and to ensure their cases are represented in all relevant international forums. Protecting Palestinian female prisoners is not merely a humanitarian issue; it is a legal and moral obligation of the international community.

H.E. Mona Al-Khalili
Minister of Women's Affairs



Palestinian Female Prisoners: Reality, Violations, and Challenges on the Eve of International Women's Day 2026

According to data from the Palestinian Authority for Prisoners and Freed Prisoners Affairs, the number of arrests since October 7, 2023, reached approximately 20,000 individuals in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, as of October 7, 2025, of whom around 595 were women. In the Gaza Strip, accurate data is unavailable due to the Israeli occupation's ongoing practice of enforced disappearance of female prisoners, which constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law. This practice exacerbates their vulnerability, prevents legal and medical follow-up, intensifies the suffering of their families, and obstructs any independent monitoring of detention conditions, raising serious concerns regarding their physical and psychological well-being.

As of October 7, 2025, over 11,100 prisoners remain in Israeli detention, including 53 women, two of whom are from Gaza. They endure a tragic reality under harsh imprisonment policies and abusive practices, including solitary confinement, ill-treatment, deprivation of family visits and communication, prolonged interrogation, and detention without trial in some cases, all of which constitute clear violations of human rights.

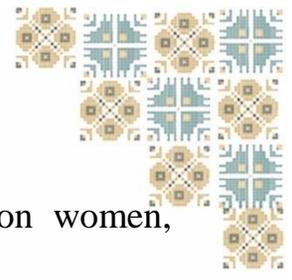
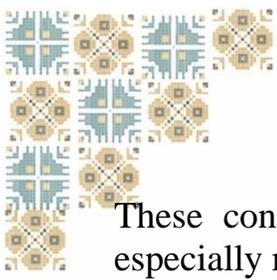
Medical neglect and violations of health rights

Female prisoners suffer from systematic and ongoing medical neglect, including being denied necessary medical care despite suffering from chronic illnesses or injuries sustained during detention. They are also prevented from accessing essential medications and face prolonged delays in treatment, which significantly exacerbates their health conditions.

Among the notable cases is at least one female prisoner who is pregnant and a mother of two young children, facing serious difficulties due to inadequate healthcare, including essential medical examinations and treatments necessary to ensure the health of the mother and the safety of the fetus. Additionally, the lack of proper nutrition and basic necessities further increases her physical and psychological health risks while in prison.

Harsh living conditions and starvation

Female prisoners live in overcrowded cells, with inadequate food and clothing, and poor hygiene conditions, representing a blatant violation of basic living standards.



These conditions exacerbate physical and psychological pressures on women, especially mothers.

Notable cases of imprisoned mothers:

- Haneen Jaber from Tulkarem, mother of two martyrs.
- A prisoner from Qalqilya suffering from cancer.
- Two sisters and mothers, Iman and Afnan Zuhour from Hebron.
- A mother and daughter detained together from Nablus, Dalal Al-Halabi and her daughter Islam.
- Prisoner Aya Al-Khatib, detained since before October 7, 2023.

These data indicate that the situation of female prisoners in Israeli occupation prisons combines all forms of physical, psychological, and health violations, constituting ongoing breaches of human rights and international humanitarian law, including:

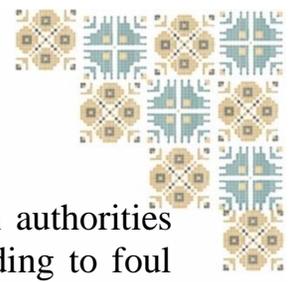
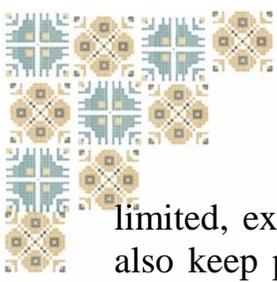
- The Geneva Conventions on the protection of civilians during armed conflicts.
- International laws on women's rights, particularly regarding protection from arbitrary detention and safeguarding mothers and children.
- The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (Resolution 1325), which emphasizes the need to protect women in conflict, ensure their access to essential services and healthcare, and involve them in monitoring, documentation, and preventive policies.

Serious violations against Palestinian women in Israeli occupation prisons

Palestinian female prisoners face systematic and organized crimes within Israeli occupation prisons and interrogation centers. These crimes have escalated significantly and become more severe following the “extermination war,” marking a bloody new phase in Palestinian history. This section highlights the main aspects of their plight.

Harsh Conditions of Detention

The Israeli prison administration deliberately implements additional punitive measures that increase pressure on female prisoners and deepen their suffering. These conditions include extreme overcrowding in rooms and sections, resulting in a lack of privacy, deteriorating general health, and higher risks of infectious disease, amid a clear decline in healthcare and hygiene standards. Testimonies from many released female prisoners indicate that sleeping and movement spaces are extremely



limited, exacerbating physical and psychological burdens. Occupation authorities also keep prisons in continuous lockdown, with poor ventilation, leading to foul odors and humidity, posing additional threats to the lives of female prisoners, especially those with chronic illnesses or injuries caused by torture and mistreatment.

Female prisoners have also been deliberately denied adequate and proper food since October 7, 2023.

Torture and Mistreatment During Interrogation or Detention

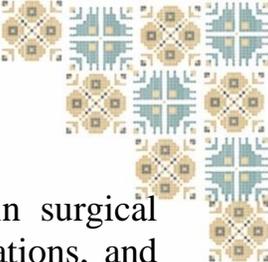
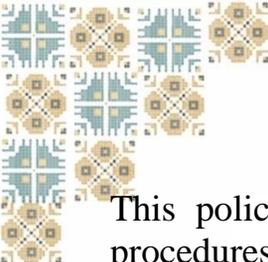
Released prisoners' testimonies, along with reports from the Palestinian Prisoners' Affairs Commission and Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, show that Palestinian female prisoners are subjected to severe violations, including various forms of physical and psychological torture. These abuses begin from the moment of arrest, with many being violently beaten by soldiers in various detention locations, resulting in injuries and wounds across the body. In certain cases, the same weapons are used to assault prisoners, such as being beaten with rifle butts, causing clothing to tear and exposing parts of their bodies humiliatingly, while hands are tied and eyes and heads blindfolded—gross violations of their dignity and basic human rights.

Sexual Harassment, Threats of Rape, and Rape

Such practices constitute blatant violations of numerous international conventions and norms prohibiting torture and gender-based violence, including the Convention Against Torture, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993), and the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, confirming the legal responsibility of the occupation for these crimes and the necessity of holding it accountable.

Denial of Medical Care

Palestinian female prisoners, especially those injured during arrest or suffering from chronic diseases, face deliberate medical neglect in occupation prisons, particularly in Damon Prison. This neglect is not incidental but part of a systematic approach aimed at humiliation and “slow death,” compounding the broader pattern of violations against them. Reports from the Palestinian Prisoners' Affairs Commission in 2018 confirmed that this type of abuse existed before the current aggression and sharply escalated after October 7, 2023.

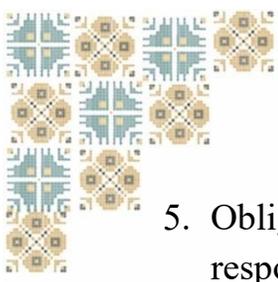


This policy manifests in multiple ways, including repeated delays in surgical procedures, slow response to emergencies, denial of necessary medications, and reliance on painkillers alone, threatening the lives of sick prisoners, particularly those with chronic conditions. In some cases, expired medications have been documented. Prisons lack specialized medical staff in essential fields such as ophthalmology, dentistry, ENT, gynecology, and obstetrics, aggravating the suffering of prisoners requiring special care, including pregnant women, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases, in addition to the absence of 24-hour medical coverage for emergencies.

Additional Israeli policies and practices, such as solitary confinement as a systematic repression method, house arrest policies, and the suffering of pregnant prisoners and minors, along with enforced disappearance of female prisoners from Gaza, create a double burden and a situation of unknown fate.

Recommendation

1. Urgent call to form an independent and neutral international fact-finding committee, with a clearly defined and time-bound mandate, to investigate the situation of Palestinian female prisoners, including allegations of torture, mistreatment, and gender-based violence, ensuring publication of findings and accountability of perpetrators under international law.
2. Demand that the International Committee of the Red Cross fully undertake its responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions, guaranteeing immediate and unrestricted access to all female detention facilities, disclosure of their health and legal status, and enabling communication with families and lawyers without restrictions.
3. Activate UN mechanisms, including Special Rapporteurs, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Committee Against Torture, and the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances, to conduct field visits, verify reported violations, and ensure inclusion of female prisoners' issues in relevant periodic reports.
4. Consider protection of female prisoners as an integral part of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, emphasizing that any violation against them constitutes a breach of international obligations to protect women in armed conflicts.



5. Oblige the international community to assume its legal and ethical responsibilities to immediately stop violations, provide international protection for female prisoners, and link any future cooperation or accountability measures to compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights standards.