



Letter from Global Organizations to UN Secretary-General Guterres Demanding Action, Justice and Accountability around Hamas' Use of Rape as a Weapon of War on October 7

HADASSAH



End The Silence

**THE HADASSAH
FOUNDATION**

jwi JEWISH WOMEN
INTERNATIONAL

NCJW™

National Council of Jewish Women

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March 25, 2024

His Excellency
Mr. Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
760 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Dear Secretary Guterres:

Cc: Ms. Sima Sami Bahous
Executive Director, UN Women
405 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Cc: Ms. Ana Peláez Narváez
Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneve 10, Switzerland

Dear Secretary Guterres:

The undersigned 118 organizations collectively call on the United Nations (UN) to conduct an independent, unbiased investigation into the reports and documented evidence of Hamas' rape, mutilation, gender-based violence and murder of Israeli women and girls and prosecute these war crimes to the fullest extent. We also reiterate our call for the UN to demand that Hamas release the hostages it continues to hold, including women and girls, especially given evidence showing horrific levels of continued torture and abuse.

We welcome your recent statement condemning gender-based violence and acknowledging that "accounts of sexual violence during the abhorrent acts of terror by Hamas on October 7 must be vigorously investigated and prosecuted." As UN Women also acknowledged, any investigation into gender-based violence should be conducted "with the rights of the victim at the core." These were critical steps forward, but we remain deeply concerned.

Unfortunately, the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which claims to be charged with conducting the investigation, has a long and clear track record of antisemitism and bias against Israel. The COI chair, Navi Pillay, has repeatedly and falsely

declared Israel to be an “apartheid” state, and promoted discriminatory boycotts against Israel.¹ Commission member Miloon Kothari has made statements to justify terror attacks against Israeli civilians, accused Israel of “ethnic cleansing,” and made comments suggesting that Jews “control” social media.² The COI’s reports have also been criticized for displaying this bias.³

Senior United States leaders share our concern about the COI’s clear bias and history of targeting Israel. US President Biden has “reaffirmed the United States’ strong opposition to the open-ended and biased nature of the UN Commission of Inquiry established in May 2021.”⁴ US Secretary of State Blinken noted that the US “continues to strongly oppose biased and disproportionate treatment of Israel, reflected in the Commission of Inquiry.”⁵ In June 2023, the US issued a joint statement on behalf of 27 countries expressing concern about the Commission’s bias.⁶

The delay by the UN and UN women in condemning Hamas and acknowledging the evidence that Hamas used gender-based violence as a weapon of war against Israeli women cost us crucial time in conducting the investigation, which may affect the collection and analysis of physical evidence. It also undermined the UN’s and UN Women’s credibility as to its role in protecting women across the globe.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has declared that it works to ensure women’s rights are protected before, during and after conflict.⁷ And UN Women states that one of its four main priorities is to ensure that all women and girls live free from all forms of violence. However, putting the investigation of serious and egregious acts of sexual violence used as a weapon of war into the hands of the biased COI calls into serious question the UN’s intent and ability to conduct a full and impartial investigation, and will force victims and survivors to relive their trauma in an environment that is not safe for them as Israeli women and girls. **Therefore, we call on the UN to establish a truly independent, impartial investigation into these crimes and pursue vigorous prosecution to hold Hamas accountable. This is the very least we can do to ensure justice for Israeli women and girls.**

Sincerely,

Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America
The Hadassah Foundation
Jewish Women International
National Council of Jewish Women

¹ UN Watch, “[Request for Navi Pillay to Recuse Herself for Bias or the Appearance Thereof](#),” February 24, 2022.

² US Mission to International Organizations in Geneva, “[Statement on Antisemitic Remarks by a Commissioner of the UN Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry on the Situation in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza](#),” July 28, 2022.

³ Jerusalem Post, “[Jewish organizations denounce UN’s COI report: ‘Distorted and biased’](#)”

⁴ “[Readout of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.’s Meeting with President Isaac Herzog of Israel](#).” October 26, 2022.

⁵ Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, “[UN Human Rights Council Pre-Recorded Statement](#).” March 2, 2023.

⁶ United States Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Council Michele Taylor, “[Joint Statement on the COI of Israel](#).” June 20, 2023.

⁷ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, “[General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations](#),” October 18, 2013.

Achoti (Sister) for Women in Israel
ADL
Advocating for Change, female lawyers forum
ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
Ameinu
American Muslim and Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council
Avoda Shava
Baasher Telchi
Baltimore Jewish Council
Center for Jewish Philanthropy of Greater Phoenix
Center for Women's Justice
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Coalition for Jewish Values
Combat Antisemitism Movement
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley
Cong. Beth Shalom-Seattle
Economic Empowerment for Women
Eden
Elluminate
Eemunah
Eemunah of America
Forum Dvora - Women In Foreign Policy and National Security
Furth, Wilensky, Mizrahi, Knaani Law Office
Greater Miami Jewish Federation
Hartman Institute
Her Academy: Vocational school for women coming out of prostitution and abuse
HERhealthEQ
Hope Center
I Was Supposed to Have a Baby
Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council
International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)
International Women Forum - Israel Forum
Israel Councilwomen Union
Israeli American Council (IAC)
Jewish Community Center and Federation of Augusta
Jewish Community Relations Council of Atlanta
Jewish Community Relations Council of Chicago
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Phoenix
Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas
Jewish Community Relations Council of Northeast Florida
Jewish Community Relations Council of Omaha
Jewish Community Relations Council of Silicon Valley
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Birmingham Jewish Federation Jewish
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington
Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester New York
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas
Jewish Federation of Greater Nashville
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia's Women of Vision
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
Jewish Federation of Greater Rockford
Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo
Jewish Federation of Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County
Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey
Jewish Federation of Springfield, Illinois - Jewish Community Relations Council
Jewish Federations of North America
Jewish Fertility Foundation
Jewish Funders Network
Jewish National Fund-USA
Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance
Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Chicago
Jewish Women's Aid
Jewish Women's Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh
Jewish Women's Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago
Jewish Women's Foundation of New Jersey
jGirls+ Magazine
Keshet
Lada'at- Choose Well
Levine Center To End Hate, Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester, New York
Memphis Jewish Federation
MERCAZ USA
Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation
Moving Traditions
Murder Victims Families Organization
NA'AMAT USA
National Council of Jewish Women of Australia
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
New York Jewish Agenda
NOGAFEM- Transforming women's health
Project Keshet
Project Keshet Israel
Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbinical Council of America
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Seed the Dream Foundation
T'ruah
Task Force on Human Trafficking
Temple Beth Am
Temple Beth El
The Civil Commission on Oct 7th Crimes Against Women and Children, Dvora Institute
The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island

The Miriam Fund
The Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA)
TURNING THE TABLES
UJA-JCC Greenwich
Union for Reform Judaism
Ve'ahavta Health Clinic
WiSpace Israeli Women In Space Association
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO)
Women's League for Conservative Judaism
Women's Rabbinic Network
World Jewish Congress, North America
Yahel - Israel Service Learning
Yesh Tikva
Young Women Politicians
Youngstown Area Jewish Federation
Zioness
Zionist Organization of America (ZOA)