

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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July 15, 2024

Public Diplomacy Office
Israel Defense Forces (IDF)
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HRW.org

CC:

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**Re: War Crimes of Inhumane Treatment, Sexual Violence, Outrages on
Dignity**

Dear Minister Gallant,

I am writing on behalf of Human Rights Watch, an international nongovernmental human rights organization whose work involves investigating and documenting violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by state and non-state actors in over 100 countries around the world. We have monitored and reported on the situation in Israel and Palestine for more than three decades.

I am seeking your comment by July 22, 2024, on research we have conducted since hostilities began between Israel and Palestinian armed groups on October 7, 2023. We have found that Israeli military members have repeatedly filmed and published photographs and videos on social media of Palestinians in their custody. In these images, captured Palestinians, predominantly men and boys in Gaza and the West Bank, often appear stripped to their underwear and sometimes completely naked. The pictures show them frequently handcuffed, blindfolded, and sometimes injured. Some of the posts are accompanied by demeaning and humiliating captions.


Forced nudity and publishing of sexualized photos without consent is a form of sexual violence, which amounts to a war crime. Cruel and inhumane treatment and committing “outrages upon personal dignity” of detainees are serious violations of international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, applicable to all parties to the hostilities in Israel and Palestine.

The allegations against Israel Defense Forces (IDF) members parading Palestinians in underwear or other inhumane treatment after they are taken into Israeli custody and that they film and subsequently publish,

have appeared in multiple reports including the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry's June 2024 [report](#), and on news sites including the [BBC](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Haaretz](#), and [the Guardian](#).

We would appreciate responses to the following questions:

1. What measures has the IDF taken in response to these allegations, if any?
2. Has the IDF launched investigations into its members about their conduct toward captured or arrested Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank since the October events? If so, please share the results of the investigations, including whether and what type of disciplinary action was taken and in how many cases.
3. Has the Attorney General taken any steps to investigate these allegations against IDF members? If so, please describe what steps have been taken and the outcome of these investigations.

Should you wish to respond or to provide any additional information, please **email**  **by July 22, 2024**, so that we may have the opportunity to review and reflect it as appropriate in our reporting.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,



Adam Coogle
Deputy Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch