

OIC and resistance groups condemn Israeli forces' strip-search of Palestinian women as UN urges investigation



Palestinians protest in Gaza on September 5, 2023, after reports emerge of Israeli forces' strip-search of women in the West Bank city of al-Khalil. (Photo by Ma'an news agency

United Nations, September 8 (RHC)-- The United Nations has called for an investigation into the forced stripping of five Palestinian women by Israeli soldiers during a raid on their home in the southern West Bank city of al-Khalil as the move also draws condemnation from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The regime forces broke into the Ajluni family's house in the early morning of July 10. Two female troops took the 53-year-old mother, her 17-year-old daughter and the mother's three daughters-in-law, all in their 20s, into the children's room, where they were forced to undress.

Carrying rifles and an attack dog, the occupation soldiers also threatened to unleash the dog if the Palestinian women did not comply with the order to strip nude. This is while the soldiers conducted body searches of the men while they were clothed.

Asked about the assault, Farhan Haq, the deputy spokesman for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, said, "We would stand against any form of collective punishment." "Obviously, this reported incident needs to be looked at and investigated thoroughly," he told a press briefing on Wednesday.

Additionally, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that such incidents are "absolutely appalling," noting, "This relentless assault on people and rights must end."

Amal Ajluni, one of those strip searched, told the Israeli rights group B'Tselem, "I can't forget what happened. The search and the humiliation I went through in front of the [female] soldiers, and the helplessness and shame I felt in front of my children. They are now afraid to sleep in their room at night and come to our bed. They don't sleep well and wet the bed, and when they wake up, they are scared to go to the bathroom."

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the assault and urged international bodies to put pressure on Israel to end its daily breaches of human rights in Palestine. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh also denounced the outrageous violation against the Ajluni family.

"Violating the sanctity of our homes and harming our women is a provocative, disgraceful, and terrible act, which is practiced only by those who are stripped of morals and human values," he said.

Meanwhile, the human rights committee of the Palestinian parliament said in a statement that the strip search demonstrated "the extent of the ugliness and fascism of the occupation before the world," urging the formation of an international investigation committee.

The Hamas resistance movement also vowed revenge, saying that the incident represented a "dangerous escalation that the Palestinian people and their resistance will not ignore."

The "violations committed by the fascist occupation [...] will fall in the face of our steadfastness [...] until the last soldier and settler are uprooted from our occupied land," the Gaza-based group added. Tarik Salami, a spokesperson of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement, called on Palestinians in al-Khalil and other West Bank cities to "escalate their confrontations with the occupation" and "avenge" the assault.



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