

Israel Snubs UN Concerns About Prisoner Abuse in Israeli Jails



Tel Aviv, May 5 (RHC)-- Tel Aviv authorities have rejected the concerns raised by a UN panel probing violations against prisoners, particularly against detained Palestinians in Israeli jails.

Michal Sarig-Kaduri, the deputy director of the human rights department at Israel's Foreign Ministry, told United Nations' Committee Against Torture on Wednesday that punitive measures such as solitary confinement and separation were "extremely restricted and used for short and limited periods of time, for a maximum of 14 days only." Solitary confinement is the practice of isolating inmates in closed cells, depriving them of any human contact.

The remarks come as the UN committee, composed of 10 independent experts, is investigating Israel over a raft of violations of prisoners' human rights. Israeli authorities are to appear before the panel as part of a review into Tel Aviv's conduct as a signatory to the 1991 UN Convention Against Torture.

Jens Modvig, a member of the Geneva-based committee, said that the panel had "received reports that the use of solitary confinement in Israeli jails has doubled between 2012 and 2014," from 390 to 755.

The UN committee compiles its statistics largely from data provided by civil society groups and independent reports. The expert also urged Tel Aviv to respond to reports that Palestinian prisoners were subject to "verbal sexual harassment" and "repeated strip searches."

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