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Palestine

Israel mistreats Flotilla activists and tortures Palestinian prisoners

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After the Israeli army's violent interception of the Gaza flotilla, activists have denounced humiliation and violence — a long-documented glimpse into the torture and sexual violence suffered by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. More than 430 activists from the 50 boats that set out to break the blockade of Gaza were kidnapped by the Israeli occupation army between Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 May, in international waters off the coast of Cyprus, up to 500 km from the coast of Gaza for the most distant boats and about 100 kilometres for the closest.

Turkey, Spain, Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, Libya, the Maldives and even Meloni's Italy have denounced these abductions as "flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law".

Violence against flotilla activists

On Wednesday, 20 May, Ben Gvir, Israel's Minister of National Security, released a video of flotilla activists kneeling and with their hands tied, after being detained in southern Israel, at the port of Ashdod. Violence constituting an attack on human dignity.

"Welcome to Israel, we are at home," the minister says in these images published on X, with the Israeli national anthem playing in the background. An activist is shown stretched in half and violently pushed by a uniformed guard, whose hand holds his head downwards, before being dragged to the ground. Other prisoners were also subjected to violence, forced to move with their backs bent, their hands tied and their heads held to the ground.

In other propaganda images, Ben Gvir, a large Israeli flag in his hand, proudly points to the tied activists, saying: "Oh they were very proud, look at them now, where are they?" Then he addresses Benjamin Netanyahu: "Give them to us, give them to me, so that we can keep these terrorists in prison for a very long time."

All the kidnapped activists were released at the end of last week, but all of them reported humiliation as well as physical and sexual violence — which is also confirmed by our two comrades from the NPA-Anticapitaliste, Laetitia and Macéo, who are part of this flotilla. This is just a glimpse of the violence against the Palestinian people, especially against prisoners who are subjected to torture and sexual violence on a daily basis.

Torture of Palestinian prisoners

On the eve of Ben Gvir's intervention, a UN special rapporteur, Alice Jill Edwards, denounced the fact that Palestinian prisoners are subjected to torture, sexual violence and other ill-treatment. It said it had documented 52 cases of torture in various forms, as well as 33 cases of sexual torture and other sexual violence.

Among the reported cases are "beatings, stress positions, excessive restraints, electricity, sleep deprivation, malnutrition and starvation, prolonged secret detention", as well as conditions of detention deemed "inhumane and degrading". In a communication to the Israeli authorities, she noted that of the 1,680 complaints lodged against the Israeli intelligence services, none had resulted in an indictment.

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As a reminder, according to *Addameer*, nearly 9,400 Palestinians are detained in Israel, including 2,200 in administrative detention. We must demand that our complicit states stop selling arms to Israel and impose sanctions on this colonial and apartheid state. France banned Ben Gvir from staying in “reprisals”, while condemning “the uselessness of the flotillas” (Jean-Noël Barrot). The fact that the French authorities were forced to take this measure against this Israeli fascist proves that the flotillas were useful — unlike French diplomacy.

29 May 2026

Translated by *International Viewpoint* from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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