



The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Special Procedures Branch at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to transmit the response of the State of Israel to the Joint Communication AL ISR 1/2024 by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, its Causes and Consequences, and the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls, received on 21 February 2024.

The Permanent Mission of Israel requests for this official response to be made public and to be uploaded on the OHCHR Communication database.

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew the Special Procedures Branch at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 11 April 2024



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**THE STATE OF ISRAEL'S RESPONSE
TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATION BY THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, ITS CAUSES AND
CONSEQUENCES, AND THE WORKING GROUP ON DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS
DATED 7 FEBRUARY 2024**

11 April 2024

Introduction

In response to the communication dated 7 February 2024 (Reference AL ISR 1/2024) and received on 21 February 2024, Israel would like to offer the following comments:

1. Following the unprecedented attacks by Hamas and other terrorist organizations on October 7, and the continuous indiscriminate fire against Israeli cities on and since that day, Israel is engaged in a war that it did not want and did not start against Hamas and these terrorist organizations, in accordance with its inherent right to defend its population. As Israel has reiterated time and again, it is doing so in accordance with its obligations under international law.
2. Israel takes seriously allegations of misconduct against its forces, and reviews them in accordance with the robust procedures and mechanisms it has in place to this end. Specifically, Israel views allegations of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with utmost severity. It should be clarified that Israel has not previously received complaints which reflect the allegations raised by the mandate holders in their communication.
3. The allegations raised in the communication are indeed of a very severe nature, yet upon review, it has become apparent that at least some of them rely on unsubstantiated claims and unreliable sources, or misrepresent the actual facts and context. While Israel continues to thoroughly examine every concrete allegation, it outright rejects claims of widespread or systematic SGBV misconduct as the communication attempts to portray. Such alleged acts are in violation of Israel's laws, policies and values and does not reflect the reality on the ground.

4. Israel also wishes to express its deepest regret over the lack of action taken by the concerned Special Procedures mandates regarding the acts of sexual violence committed by Hamas and its allies during and after the October 7 attack. These acts of sexual violence have been widely documented, including by first-hand testimonies and the recent report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, which stated that there are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred at several locations in southern Israel, including in the form of rape and gang rape, during the 7 October 2023 attacks.
5. Regrettably, it is evident that there is an ongoing campaign to attempt to discredit claims of sexual violence widely perpetrated against Israelis on and since October 7. This campaign includes outright denying that these acts happened, underplaying their gravity or ignoring them all together. It also includes spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations of widespread SGBV by Israeli forces in order to raise “counter-claims” that aim to create a false equivalence to the heinous acts of Palestinian terrorists during and since October 7.

Sources of the allegations

6. The allegations in the communication lack any references to the sources of the information they rely upon, which makes it difficult to track and assess those sources and alleged incidents. They also often lack sufficiently concrete details as to the alleged facts of incidents, which in many cases make it difficult to examine and address the facts of such claims.
7. Nevertheless, following an independent review by Israeli authorities, it seems that the mandate holders have relied extensively on publications from the organization "██████████",¹ often repeating allegations nearly word for word, without any apparent additional independent verification being made.
8. "██████████" has made a number of allegations against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) since the October 7 attack, which have been examined by the IDF and found to be untrue. This includes allegations of extrajudicial killings, and the obscene accusation of organ harvesting in the context of the current war.²
9. The founder and current chairman of "██████████", he tweeted "██████████"██████████³ referring to Israeli communities in which scores of Israeli civilians were murdered by Hamas terrorists. ██████████ also tweeted on October 8 that successive generations will remember those who carried out the attack as "██████████" and called for people to "██████████".⁴

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there are some cases of children from Gaza that are detained in Israel due their militant activity as part of the hostilities (in this regard, it should be borne in mind that Hamas' recruitment age to its armed wing is 15), Israel completely rejects the outrageous and baseless allegations that any children were “abducted” or are being arbitrarily kept in Israel, and deeply regrets that not only are they repeated several times within the submission but it is even suggested that it is an act by Israel to “*spread terror*”.

15. Making such grave and false claims is not only outrageous but also a serious violation of the most basic integrity of United Nations mandate holders, which undermines the credibility of Special Procedures as a whole.

Allegations concerning Detention and Incarceration

16. Most of the communication addresses claims concerning detention of Palestinians by Israeli authorities, but for the most part, these claims are also insufficiently concrete, which makes it difficult to examine them on an individual basis. The following paragraphs briefly describe the laws, policies and procedures in relation to detainees. This section will be followed by a segment that addresses the examination and investigation of exceptional incidents.
17. At the time of writing, there are two women who were detained in Gaza in IDF custody, and one woman who was detained in Gaza in IPS custody. All other women who were detained in Gaza were since released back to Gaza.

Detention by the IDF

18. While handling detainees in the context of the current operation in Gaza, all IDF forces are subject to binding Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and correlative orders, which reflect the legal restrictions under international law and Israeli law, as well as further policy limitations imposed by the IDF.
19. These SOPs meticulously oversee various facets of detention, including grounds for detention, treatment of detainees, material conditions of detention, legal procedures and related protections, as well as the transfer to other Israeli authorities or release. They apply from the moment of apprehension.

The Detention Chain

20. IDF ground forces operate in live combat areas, against terrorist organizations whose operatives systematically use civilian clothing while carrying out militant activity. In these areas, IDF forces regularly face individuals suspected of involvement in hostile activity. When suspects are apprehended, they typically undergo an initial screening by the ground forces in the field.
21. Suspects who are reasonably believed to be involved in terrorist activity or who require further questioning, are brought to Israeli territory. When there is no reason to continue holding the person, they are released shortly. IDF protocols instruct to minimize as much as possible the time detainees are held in the field, under the circumstances.

22. Once in Israel, the detainees are transferred to the IDF Military Police forces, and then brought to an IDF questioning and screening facility, intended for temporary holding. Upon arrival to the facility, detainees are registered through an orderly intake process. The IDF detention facility that has mainly been in use so far during the war is located in the "[REDACTED]" military base. Detainees are held only in recognized detention facilities.
23. Based on intelligence and findings from questioning, all detainees are categorized to those who are reasonably believed to be involved in terrorist activities, and those who are no longer suspected to be involved in such activities. The legal procedures that allow the continued detention of individuals from the first group are conducted in accordance with Israeli law, and the detainees are transferred to the care of the Israel Prison Service as soon as practically possible.
24. With regard to those who, following questioning, are found to belong to the second group, IDF orders stipulate that they be transferred back to Gaza as soon as possible. The return to the Gaza Strip is carried out in coordination with IDF forces in the field to ensure the safety of the returned individuals, and when necessary, with the help of the ICRC.

Treatment and Conditions of Detention

25. The IDF's SOPs require that all detainees be treated in a humane and respectful manner at all times. They prohibit violating the dignity of detainees or degrading them, using any type of violence, exercising collective punishment, offending religious beliefs, threatening with unlawful acts, using detainees as hostages or human shields, as well as other restrictions. Any use of sexual violence or threatening of such is strictly prohibited.
26. When clothing is partially removed in order to make sure that no security risk is posed by the detainee (for instance by concealing weapons or explosives), it is required that the detainee be allowed to dress as soon as practically possible. The operational directives of the IDF stipulate that female individuals shall undergo searches conducted exclusively by female officers, and an emphasis is given to their privacy and dignity while conducting the search.
27. As for the material conditions of detention, the IDF's SOPs require providing detainees with, *inter alia*, food, water, medical treatment and hygiene needs as required by their situation. In IDF detention facilities, detainees receive three meals a day, water, medical treatment as required, access to toilet cells, a sleeping pad and blankets, and weather-appropriate clothing. The SOPs also require providing appropriate treatment to vulnerable groups, including women and children, *inter alia* by separating them from adult males in the detention facility unless they are from the same nuclear family.

Oversight

28. To ensure adherence to the IDF's SOPs in the "[REDACTED]" detention facility, authorized senior officers who are not part of facility routinely audit it and indicate issues for fixing or improvement. Furthermore, during the war a closed-circuit television (CCTV) has been installed in the "[REDACTED]" facility in order to ensure discipline and enhance the ability to track any potential deviations from the facility's

rules of behavior. At the general staff level, a weekly assessment of the detainees' status is conducted at the IDF Operations Directorate. These discussions occasionally result in issuing further restrictions or clarifications regarding detainee treatment in the IDF. In addition, under Israeli law, detainees are entitled to a judicial review of their detention at the Courts, in accordance with the applicable laws.

Incarceration in the Israel Prison Service

Treatment of Women Inmates

29. Women inmates are strictly held separately from male inmates, and the Israel Prison Service (IPS) dedicates special efforts to better address their needs. Special attention is given to every inmate, on an individual basis, through professional assistance provided by physicians, and other officials. The division between inmates is based on their classification as criminal or security prisoners; adults or minors; pre-trial detainees and convicted prisoners. Women security inmates are held in ██████ Prison and searches of women inmates are conducted by women wardens only, in accordance with the law and in an appropriate and private setting.

Medical Care

30. The IPS provides ongoing medical care through prison infirmaries, expert physicians in IPS medical clinics and in expert medical clinics in public hospitals. Medical personnel in IPS service continue to provide medical care at all times, including during war times, as stipulated by the *Prison Ordinance [New Version] 5732-1971* and by the principles of clinical ethics to which they are bound.
31. IPS medical personnel thus provide the required medical care to any and all inmates, in accordance with their medical condition and its urgency, and in cooperation with medical facilities in the community when needed.
32. Accordingly, there is a medical clinic in ██████ Prison, in which the medical staff provides round-the-clock care. Additionally, an on-sight woman physician is employed at the prison and provides medical care when required. Where needed, women inmates are referred to external medical examinations or treatment, which may include, *inter alia*, chemistry and imaging tests, gynecological and psychiatric care.
33. During the initial period after October 7, 2023, and due to the exceptional load on public hospitals in the aftermath of the attack by Hamas that brutally injured thousands of people, some of the non-urgent scheduled medical exams were postponed by the hospitals and rescheduled to a later time, as likewise postponed for the general public. It should be underscored that any medically urgent cases were prioritized and addressed.

Provision of Hygiene Products

34. The IPS provides each inmate with a personal kit upon intake that includes a tracksuit, underwear, a bra, socks, undershirts and a towel. The kit also contains hygiene products such as shampoo, body soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste, toilet paper, laundry detergent and feminine hygiene products including sanitary pads.

35. New hygiene products are regularly issued during daily inspection, according to the needs and requests of the inmates. In addition, a washing machine and a dryer are at the disposal of the inmates.
36. Note that, neither the internal inspection of ██████ Prison, nor the inmates' lawyers raised any issues on this matter.

Protection of Women Inmates and Prevention of Mistreatment

37. IPS views any form of gender-based violence (GBV), including harassment or any conduct that violates the *Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law (5758-1998)*, with the utmost severity. Accordingly, the prevention of GBV and the fostering of gender appropriate conduct has been on the forefront of the IPS's organizational agenda and the subject of many preventive measures.
38. Accordingly, the IPS holds mandatory trainings throughout the year for its staff members on the prevention of GBV. For example, the staff undergoes training by the Gender Affairs Advisors to the Chief of Staff on the *Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law* to every IPS staff member.
39. The Gender Affairs Advisors to the Chief of Staff must themselves undergo a specialized, 18-hour course at the Center for Victims of Sexual Assault on the sensitivities of GBV. The mandatory training to all IPS staff members also includes the instruction on the particular process of inquiry in GBV complaints and the support of the complainants, through theory, practice and simulation.
40. Additionally, the IPS training center provides mandatory training on the prevention of GBV to all IPS trainers, which is integrated into all the core courses.

Supervision Mechanisms over the IPS

41. The *Prisons Ordinance (New Version) 5732-1971*, establishes rules for Official Visitors in prisons, who are comprised of lawyers from, *inter alia*, the Ministry of Justice and other Government Ministries, judges and the Attorney General.
42. Official Visitors are allowed to enter the prisons at any given time (unless special temporary circumstances apply), and inspect the state of affairs, inmates' care, prison management, etc. During these visits, the inmates may approach the Official Visitors and present their complaints. Inmates may also make a complaint with the Prison Director and ask for an interview with an Official Visitor. The authority of the Official Visitors also extends to detention facilities in police stations.
43. Following every visit, the Official Visitors prepare a report regarding the visited facility and any deficiencies observed, including suggestions for their remedy. After obtaining the position of the IPS regarding any such deficiencies and their remedy, the final Official Visitors' report is submitted to the Attorney General, the Minister of National Security and the IPS Commissioner. Such official visits to detention facilities have taken place since October 7, 2023, and shall continue, including to ██████ prison.

44. Moreover, demonstrating Israel's attention and concern for detention conditions and the well-being of detainees, since October 7, 2023, the Attorney General and her deputies visited ██████ Prison to examine the detention conditions, and the Deputy Attorney General (Criminal Law) conducted an official visit to ██████ Prison.

Monitoring and Complaint Mechanisms Available to Women Inmates

45. Every prisoner or detainee under the care of the IPS has access to the following complaint mechanisms concerning grievances regarding the prison staff and wardens, including claims of wrongful use of force, GBV or any other misconduct:
- filing a complaint to the Prison Director;
 - filing a prisoner's petition to the relevant District Court,
 - filing a complaint to the Warden's Investigation Unit (WIU), through the IPS or directly to the WIU.
 - filing a complaint to the Prisoners Complaint Ombudsman, which is part of the Ministry of Public Security's Internal Comptroller Unit.
46. According to information provided by the IPS and WIU, only a **single** claim regarding the wrongful use of force was raised by a woman security inmate since October 7, 2023 which was raised during a court hearing. The claim was referred to the WIU for further investigation.
47. No complaints have been submitted by female security inmates regarding their detention conditions, including availability of medical care or hygiene products. Similarly, no prisoner's petitions have been filed by women inmates regarding the above-mentioned issues.

Family Visits

48. Currently, and due to the factual situation after the events of October 7, 2023, security inmates are not allowed to receive family visits. However, there is no instruction preventing or restricting the correspondence between inmates and their families.

Access to Legal Counsel

49. The IPS allows inmates to benefit from full access to their legal counsel in accordance with the law, unless there are specific grounds to temporarily prevent such access, which are also determined by law. The entrance of legal counsel to detention facilities is managed and prioritized in accordance with the legal status of the inmate.
50. To date, more than 220 visits of legal counsel were recorded in ██████ Prison since October 7, 2023.

Additional Observations

Investigations into Potential Cases of misconduct by IDF

51. The communication makes no effort to discern between substantiated and unsubstantiated allegations concerning the conduct of Israeli forces. It is important however to emphasize that all allegations have been reviewed, and that concrete complaints of misconduct are examined and investigated in accordance with existing mechanisms.
52. The Military Police conducts criminal investigations whenever there is *prima facie* evidence to substantiate reasonable suspicion of criminal misconduct by soldiers. In early 2017, the specialized National Unit for Operational Affairs was established within the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division.
53. The Unit consists of experienced officers and investigators who undergo in-depth training concerning international law and operational affairs. The Unit is tasked with investigating alleged misconduct by IDF soldiers occurring in the context of operational activity. The Unit enjoys discretionary independence and is guided only by the Military Advocate General (MAG).
54. In order to facilitate the gathering of evidence from witnesses and alleged victims outside Israeli territory, Arabic-speaking interpreters assist the investigators who handle complaints involving Palestinians. The Unit may also deal with gender related complaints. Such complaints are handled by officers and investigators who specialize in the investigation of such issues, including sexually-based offences.
55. Even in cases that seemingly do not indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal misconduct, the IDF will conduct a preliminary assessment of concrete allegations, in order to determine whether a criminal investigation is required.
56. In July 2014, the IDF Chief of General Staff ordered the establishment of a General Staff Mechanism for Fact-Finding Assessments (FFAM), which examines exceptional incidents of possible misconduct during military operations. The FFAM is headed by an officer with the rank of a Major General and relies on high-ranking officers with relevant operational expertise in a variety of fields (such as artillery, intelligence and aerial operations), who are outside the chain of command for the operational activity being examined. The FFAM has broad-ranging powers to obtain information both from within and outside the IDF. Once an FFAM examination is complete, the Military Advocate General (MAG) determines whether there is a reasonable suspicion of criminal misconduct that justifies opening a criminal investigation. In order to make this decision, the MAG may request supplementary examinations and materials from the FFAM.
57. The MAG's decisions may be challenged before the Attorney General, and, as with all other decisions by State authorities, are subject to judicial review by Israel's High Court of Justice.

58. The IDF does not tolerate soldiers' misconduct in relation to the treatment of detainees, and seriously addresses any suspicion in this regard. Accordingly, a number of criminal investigations have already been initiated by the Military Police in relation to suspected misconduct in the treatment of detainees during the war in Gaza. With regards to accusations in the field of SGBV, a preliminary assessment of allegations that appear in the communication is currently being conducted by the Military Police, aimed to inquire whether there could be merit in starting a more thorough examination.
59. The communication also contains allegations of so-called "summary executions". The alleged incident in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been referred to the FFAM for information gathering, promptly after it appeared in a news report online. Another claim noted in the communication concerning an alleged incident from 21 December 2023 has been sent to review.

Investigations into potential cases of misconduct by ISA interrogators

60. The Inspector for Complaints against Israel Security Agency (ISA) Interrogators at the Ministry of Justice investigates complaints against ISA interrogators. Since 2018, cameras were installed in all ISA interrogation rooms, broadcasting live to a control room with MoJ designated supervisors, that have an obligation to immediately report to the Inspector in cases where they believe that illegal means were employed during an interrogation.
61. Additionally, the ISA is subject to review by the State Comptroller, the State Attorney's Office, the Attorney General, the Knesset and the Courts. There are also internal procedures in place for judges and prosecutors to document complaints of abuse brought before them.

Investigations into potential cases of misconduct by Israeli Police

62. The Department for Investigation of Police Officers (DIPO) operates within the State Attorney's Office in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It is entirely independent of the Police and all of the DIPO investigators are civilians. The DIPO is specifically designated to investigate complaints regarding involvement of police personnel in the commission of offences, including complaints of police misconduct, such as unlawful or excessive use of force and related offences.
63. The Police and the DIPO view instances of police officers' ill-treatment and disproportionate use of force against detainees with the utmost severity. Any person, whether an Israeli national or otherwise, may file a complaint with the DIPO at any of its branches situated throughout the country or via an online form, which is also available in Arabic and Amharic.
64. With regards to police conduct of physical search on women, the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Detention and Search) [New Version] 5729-1969, stipulates unequivocally that it may only be exercised by a female police officer. This legal requirement is implemented by internal police procedures and strictly enforced.

65. The Unit for Gender Equality and Cultural Diversity within the Israel Police coordinates all aspects of gender equality and cultural diversity within the Police and *vis-à-vis* the general public. The Unit is responsible for advising the Police Commissioner on such issues, collecting information and promoting awareness of gender considerations in the course of law enforcement. The Unit operates to prevent sexual harassment and discriminatory behavior by, *inter alia*, providing gender-sensitive information and making it accessible to all, drafting and updating relevant procedures and facilitating the filing of complaints.

Sexual and Gender based violence perpetrated by Hamas on and since October 7

66. As expressed above, Israel is extremely dismayed by the absolute indifference demonstrated by the mandate holders who signed this communication *vis-a-vis* the widespread sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by Hamas against Israeli women and girls on and since October 7, including with regard to women and girl hostages.

67. In this regard, it must also be mentioned that the communication claims that 19 women were kidnapped by Hamas during the October 7 attack which is factually incorrect. In fact, Hamas abducted 67 women, as well as 40 children. 19 women and 2 children are still in captivity, suffering unspeakable horrors including reports of sexual violence. The fact that this is undermined also raises question

68. The concerned mandate holders have not issued a single press release, communication or report which has substantially focused on the horrific, widespread accounts of gender and sexual based crimes committed against Israeli women on October 7, including rape and genital mutilation. This is despite evidence from various sources.

69. On the 5 December 2023, the BBC published a report in which it said it had seen and heard evidence of rape, sexual violence and mutilation of women during the 7 October Hamas attacks.¹³

70. On the 28 December, the New York Times published an article which documented seven locations where Israeli women and girls appeared to have been sexually assaulted or mutilated.¹⁴ There have also been a number of public testimonies from first responders, those who were appointed to identify victims' bodies¹⁵ and released hostages pointing to sexual violence both on and after October 7.¹⁶

¹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67629181>

¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/oct-7-attacks-hamas-israel-sexual-violence.html> - after having received comments on the publication, the NYT stated that it stands behind its inquiry, save one case.

¹⁵ <https://news.sky.com/video/7-october-attacks-shari-mendes-tells-yalda-hakim-about-sexual-violence-she-witnessed-13061095>

¹⁶ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/former-hostage-tells-lawmakers-fellow-captive-was-sexually-abused-by-guard/>

71. In addition, on 21 February, the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel published a report according to which Hamas attacks on October 7 included brutal sexual assaults carried out systemically and deliberately towards Israeli civilians.¹⁷ Numerous testimonies and pieces of disclosed and classified information throughout this report present a clear picture of identical patterns of action repeated in each of the attack zones – [REDACTED]. It also found that there is a high likelihood that women and men taken hostage are still at risk of sexual abuse at any given moment.
72. According to the report, Hamas's attack included violent acts of rape, accompanied by threats with weapons, and in some cases targeted towards injured women. Many of the rapes were carried out as a group, with the participation of terrorists who exercised brutal violence as part of the rape. Often, the rape was perpetrated in front of an audience – partners, family, or friends – in a manner intended to increase the pain and humiliation. Hamas's terrorists hunted young women and men who fled [REDACTED] and according to testimonies, dragged them by their hair amid screams. In most cases, the victims were killed after or even during the act of rape.
73. As previously mentioned, on 4 March 2024, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict published a mission report following an official visit which took place between 29 January and 14 February 2024.¹⁸ The report highlights that there are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred at several locations across the Gaza periphery, including in the form of rape and gang rape, during the 7 October 2023 attacks. The team also found credible circumstantial information, which may be indicative of other forms of sexual violence, including genital mutilation, sexualized torture, or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, was also gathered.
74. With regards to the hostages, the SRSG team found clear and convincing information that some hostages taken to Gaza have been subjected to various forms of conflict-related sexual violence and has reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing.
75. In addition to this, [REDACTED] published an interview with former Gaza hostage, [REDACTED], who states that [REDACTED] was sexually assaulted at gunpoint and tortured [REDACTED] in Hamas captivity in Gaza.
76. Given the extensive evidence, it would have been expected that the mandate holders address these atrocities.

¹⁷ https://www.facebook.com/AssociationRapeCrisisCentersIsrael/posts/700506058910258?ref=embed_post
¹⁸ <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/report/mission-report-official-visit-of-the-office-of-the-srsg-svc-to-israel-and-the-occupied-west-bank-29-january-14-february-2024/20240304-Israel-oWB-CRSV-report.pdf>

Conclusion

77. This communication by the mandate holders contains many grave allegations which appear to rely on unsubstantiated claims. This does not only undermine the credibility and integrity of the mandate holders themselves but also the Special Procedures mechanism as a whole.
78. Since the issuing of the communication and subsequent press release, the mandate holders have continued to spread unsubstantiated allegations, some of which have already been proven false.
79. There is an ongoing campaign to attempt to discredit claims of sexual violence by Hamas on and after October 7. Spreading of unsubstantiated and false allegations of sexual violence against Israeli forces and authorities is part of this disturbing phenomenon. In this regard, it is hard not to notice the proximity between the time of conclusion of the visit to Israel of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who published a press release¹⁹ on the visit on February 6, 2024, and the present communication which is dated February 7, 2024.
80. Given that a copy of this communication was shared with the Palestinian delegation, Israel can only conclude that no similar communication was issued regarding atrocities perpetrated by Hamas, since such a copy has not been shared with Israel. It is expected of mandate holders to clearly and unequivocally condemn the acts of gender and sexual based violence by Hamas on and after October 7.
81. Israel wishes to assert once again its unwavering commitment to its obligations under international law and to address allegations thoroughly. As stated, in order to do so, allegations must be substantiated and conveyed along with concrete information in order to allow the authorities to conduct examinations.

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/un-special-representative-patten-concludes-visit-to-israel-6-feb-2024>