Israeli police say extreme sexual violence, rape by Hamas terrorists was systematic

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<https://www.foxnews.com/world/israel-police-say-extreme-sexual-violence-rape-by-hamas-terrorists-was-systematic>

 The first suggestion that [Hamas terrorists](https://www.foxnews.com/world/hamas-militant-islamic-group) committed acts of extreme sexual violence and rape against victims during their Oct. 7 rampage through southern Israel came on social media early on that fateful Saturday morning six weeks ago.

Two short videos, shared by the terrorists themselves, quickly emerged showing groups of cheering Palestinian men, some armed, in the streets of Gaza crowding around half-naked and bloodied young Israeli women.

In one clip, a woman later identified as German-Israeli citizen Shani Louk, 22, can be seen barely clothed lying unconscious in an unnatural position on the flatbed of a pickup as men spit and abuse her body while screaming "Allahu Akhbar."

In another video, 19-year-old Israeli soldier Na’ama Levy is pulled from the back of a jeep by an armed gunman, her hands bound behind her back and  thick blood stains between her legs, as Palestinian men jeer at her.

Louk is now counted among the 1,200 people murdered that day, and Levy is thought to be one of an [estimated 240 hostages](https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/israeli-father-pleads-americans-help-save-wife-three-children-held-hostage-gaza), including babies and children, being held by the terror group inside the Palestinian enclave.

While the victims of gender-based crimes committed during that brutal attack have yet to come forward, either because they were murdered or kidnapped or are still reeling from the trauma, the Israeli police and Israel’s newly formed Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas Against Women believe sexual violence during the terror attack was widespread, systematic and even endorsed by the Islamic fundamentalist group’s religious and spiritual leaders as permissible during war.

Yet collecting the evidence for this intimate aspect of such a massive, multilevel terror attack, which sparked total chaos inside Israel and launched a full-scale war in the Gaza Strip, has proved challenging for criminal investigators. Those investigators hope to bring detailed charges against hundreds of Hamas terrorists now being held by Israel for their role in the assault and for women’s groups, who say that violent sexual crimes in war must be documented and remembered.

"This is the biggest criminal case in Israel’s history," said David Katz, head of the Israeli police’s Lahav 443 criminal investigation’s cyber unit, which is investigating the criminal aspects of the mass atrocity.

"We are dealing with thousands of murders and other crimes," he said. He described how the crime scene, which included more than 20 locations, among them army bases, civilian communities and a sprawling music festival not far from Israel’s border with Gaza, was an active combat zone for the first 48 hours following the attack, hampering police efforts to collect forensic and other evidence.

[In the aftermath of the surprise attack](https://www.foxnews.com/world/israel-strikes-hamas-gaza-surprise-attack-exchanges-fire-hezbollah), police said, the nation’s main focus was on collecting and identifying hundreds of badly mutilated and burned bodies as quickly as possible. Jewish burials are meant to take place immediately. And, although medical teams worked 24 hours a day in the days and weeks that followed, carefully photographing and documenting some of the worst injuries they said they’d ever seen, the typical process for sexual-based crimes was largely overlooked.

"We’re still only in the initial phases of this investigation," said Katz, describing how his team was working to collect statements from thousands of survivors. It was also going to examine more than 60,000 videos taken by the terrorists on phones and bodycams and other footage taken by victims, first responders, CCTV cameras and dashcams.

"At this time, there are no known living victims, and many of the surviving victims still cannot speak about what happened to them," said Katz, adding that much of the details were under a court-authorized gag order and could not be shared with the public. But he estimated that there were "multiple" cases of sexual violence.

At Tuesday’s briefing, the police screened one eyewitness account of a gang rape that she said took place at [the Nova Music Festival,](https://www.foxnews.com/world/israeli-music-festival-survivor-describes-horror-hamas-led-attack-left-260-dead) where more than 300 people were brutally murdered and thousands were injured by hundreds of heavily armed Hamas terrorists.

The witness, identified only by the initial "S," recounted on camera that while she was hiding from the terrorists, she saw a group of them pass a woman with long brown hair among them.

"I understood they were raping her," S said. "They were passing her from one person to the next. She was alive and standing on her feet. She was bleeding from her back."

S then described how one of the terrorists sliced off the woman’s breast and began playing around with it. Another, the witness said, shot the woman in the head while he was still penetrating her.

"He did not even lift up his pants and shot her in the head," S said, adding that she spied another terrorist haul a naked, dead woman over his shoulder and walk off with her. Another, she said, cut off someone’s head and was walking around with it like a trophy.

Additionally, the police shared graphic photographs and video footage from the festival showing women, charred and bloody, their underwear visibly ripped and their legs spread apart.

Videotaped interrogations of some of the captured terrorists show them confessing that they had orders to murder, rape and kidnap Israeli civilians. One suspect told Israeli interrogators he and his men had received religious permission to kill children "because they’ll grow up to be soldiers" and to decapitate "to sow fear among the Israelis."

[First responders](https://www.foxnews.com/world/deadly-desert-rave-front-lines-israeli-reserve-soldier-recounts-concert-massacre) from both the Israeli military and the country’s civilian services have described in detail the disturbing brutality and atrocities carried out by an estimated 3,000 Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists who entered Israel Oct. 7.

A commander with the Israeli army’s National Rescue Unit told journalists in the initial days after the attack that he had found multiple bodies of dead women who had been stripped naked. In one case, on Kibbutz Be’eri, Col. (Res) Golan Vach, said he found two women tied together on the same bed with no clothes on.

"I don’t know what happened to them before they were killed," he said. "But I do know that most regular women go to bed wearing pajamas."

In another case, a soldier from the army’s special forces unit who was sent to search for survivors on a kibbutz told [one media outlet](https://twitter.com/EylonALevy/status/1717109976420741504?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1717109976420741504%7Ctwgr%5E0ecd7bc62173ef74db6a2e9a8894bde387ac2602%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ynet.co.il%2Fnews%2Farticle%2Fbjnxpwufp) he found the dead bodies of two young girls together in one room.

"There was a teenage girl, 14 or 15. She was lying on the floor, on her stomach, her pants were pulled down, and she was half naked. Her legs were spread out, wide open, and there was the remains of sperm on her back," he said. "Someone executed her straight after he brutally raped her.

"It was like a slap in the face," the soldier said. "It was the first time I realized that we are not acting against terrorists here, we are acting against savages."

In the morgue, too, those working to identify the dead and prepare their bodies for burial spoke about brutalities consistent with rape and sexual assault.

"We saw evidence of rape," Shari, who works with a team of female volunteers tasked with cleaning the bodies of murdered women, told Fox News Digital in a previous interview. "Pelvises were broken, and it probably takes a lot to break a pelvis. … And this was also among grandmothers down to small children. These are things we saw with our own eyes."

Speaking this week on a Zoom panel organized by the Maimonides Society at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, chair of Israel’s newly formed Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas Against Women, said her team had also been working to compile a database of gender-based atrocities "to ensure that the Oct. 7 victims of sexual and other violence against women are never forgotten and that their stories are adequately told."

Elkayam-Levy, a legal expert from Hebrew University added, "We established the commission on the eighth day of the war as more and more evidence of gruesome crimes against women and children emerged," she told the panel.

She said that even though some of [Hamas’ crimes](https://www.foxnews.com/world/hamas-committing-crimes-against-humanity-world-act-swiftly-stop-them-law-experts-warn), which were broadcast in real-time on social media, "showed clear violations of international law and brutal crimes committed against women and children," there was little international condemnation.

"Therefore, we took it upon ourselves to call for recognition and action," Elkayam-Levy said. "We also realized that these crimes must be documented and brought to the attention of the international community."

"This is not an isolated event in history where crimes against women can be ignored. What we’ve seen in Israel were rape and gender-based crimes under clear orders and under full control.

"It was rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape and crimes made to kill and torture women, using them and their bodies as an instrument to force exile of those communities in Israel. It was rape to be seen and heard by others, women’s and girls’ bodies used as spectacles of victory, trophies of war."