Children were shot and burned alive on October 7, forensic evidence shows

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Israel Police data released on Thursday revealed 27 children between the ages of 0-17 were [shot and burned alive on October 7](https://www.ynetnews.com/magazine/article/by65800qmt). Commander Dudi Katz, the [Israel Police special investigations unit’s Lahav 433](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hk4lv94ch#autoplay)’s cyber unit chief, was tasked with analyzing digital forensic evidence.

One of the recordings received by the cyber team investigating one of the kibbutzim near the Gaza border featured a child's voice. The girl was on a call with the police emergency center while being held by a terrorist. She begged the terrorist to let her go, saying she was just a child and had school the next day. Despite the police dispatcher's pleas, the terrorist shot her to death. Her burnt remains were later located.

This is just one of the many heartbreaking stories that police investigators have uncovered. The data, testimonies and hundreds of thousands of videos have been analyzed by Lahav 433, the national unit investigating the events of October 7.

"We collected 11,666 videos that provide a comprehensive evidentiary basis gathered from various sources from just one kibbutz, which will enable us to file some of the most severe indictments against the perpetrators of these brutal terror acts," said Superintendent Reut Anoim, head of Lahav 433’ cyber investigation division.

The data and testimonies were also collected from [ZAKA Search and Rescue volunteers](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sjuj6mf9r) who operated in the kibbutz. Six days after the deadly assault began, ZAKA personnel returned to ensure no evidence was overlooked, guided by the smell of decay, flies and other signs.

In one room, they found the small body of a child and the body of a woman in the stairwell. Both bodies were so badly burned they were nearly unrecognizable. The only thing left of the mother was her bra, and of the child, only ashes remained.

"Each cyber unit and the International Crime Investigations Unit was assigned to gather and analyze evidence based on specific areas. We relied on a web of testimonies collected from CCTV cameras in the affected towns, private homes near the Gaza border, testimonies from hostages, ZAKA volunteers, Hamas terrorists' body cameras and social media posts,” Anoim said.

Any evidence that could not be verified was dismissed. "All the materials we used helped complete an evidentiary framework as we worked hard to maintain the highest standards of verification and cross-referencing, compared to the fake materials circulating on social media,” she added,

Katz explained the challenge was interpreting the significance of the evidence they located. "As a law enforcement officer, I only work with definitive evidence. When I see a child shot with a severed finger, I can describe and document the scene but cannot definitively state the cause, as the finger may not have been intentionally severed but instead was injured by a fragment from the explosion in the safe room."

However, Katz was unequivocal about one fact: the torture of children by Hamas' Nukhba terrorists. "That children were burned, shot and murdered alongside their parents is a proven fact. Children witnessed their parents being murdered and we found a scene with a pile of bodies from the same family more than once."

Among the other harrowing scenes was a photograph of a baby who was murdered alongside her father who tried to protect his family. She was the youngest victim of October 7. Another case that Katz said he would never forget was the tragic story of the Taasa family from Netiv HaAsara.

The father, Gil, threw himself on a grenade that terrorists had tossed into their home to save his children from witnessing the horror. In another video, "We identified a child around six or seven years old whose body was burnt, but his face remained intact. His glazed expression indicated that he had been burned alive,” Katz recounted.

Over 90 members of Kibbutz Be'eri were murdered on October 7. The kibbutz secretary, Gal Cohen, said that the highest number of children murdered was in his community. "What the children here went through is incomprehensible and we’re still burying our dead. This is an open wound, and we haven't digested it yet.”

“We’re scarred, but we’re rebuilding and trying to recover. Parents and grandparents who lost their children and grandchildren have said they will never set foot in the kibbutz again because they see the victims everywhere they look,” he added.