

3 August 2025

Israel's Compliance with the
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or
Punishment.

83rd Session of the Committee Against Torture, Geneva
10 – 28 November 2025

Submission of List of Issues on Family-Targeted Torture committed by Hamas on October 7
and during the Captivity of the Hostages

**Submission for the Consideration of the Committee Against Torture – of the Civil
Commission's Kinocide Report**

I. Reporting Organization

1. The Civil Commission on October 7 Crimes Against Women and Children ("the Civil Commission") was founded in the wake of Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, with the goal to document, research, and raise international awareness of the war crimes and gender-based violence committed by Hamas and their collaborators against women, children, and families. The Commission's archive serves both as a memorial and a vital historical record of the horrific October 7th assault, which resulted in more than 1,200 deaths and the kidnapping of more than 250 individuals, many of which consisted of entire or large parts of families.
2. While documenting the atrocities, we identified an extreme form of torture and systematic violence directed at families. **It became clear to us that families were not random victims—they were similarly tortured, and centrally targeted.**
3. After months of rigorous documentation and testimony collection, on December 17, 2024, the Civil Commission, together with the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights in Canada ("RWCHR"), we published the report *Kinocide: Uncovering the Weaponization of Families on October 7* (attached here).¹ The report reveals findings on at least six consistent and repetitive patterns ~~six consistent and repetitive patterns~~, which in conjunction with the distinct timing and circumstances of the attack, suggest the October 7 attack on families was widespread and systematic, exploiting familial bonds and emotional ties to maximize pain and suffering.² Among the identified patterns of its operation were, *inter alia*, acts of violence, including killing and severe injury, in the presence of other family members, the elimination of familial units, the abduction and hostage-taking of families, the use of digital and social media to directly broadcast footage of abuse to

¹ "A Crime Without a Name for Victims Without a Voice, Kinocide: Uncovering the Weaponization of Families on October 7, 2023" ("hereinafter: the Kinocide Report"), available here: <https://www.civilc.org/cco7-1-1>.

² The Executive Summary, The Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1.

families of the victims, intentional separation of family members, and the incineration and vandalization of family homes, often with families present within the home.

4. These patterns did not end on October 7, and rather continue, to this day, to be inflicted upon victims of hostages still held **in captivity by Hamas**. These acts of violence were not random, rather intentional and systematic, in a way that indicates cases of torture.
5. Led by Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, a 2024 Israel Prize laureate and expert in human rights and international law, the Civil Commission works to advocate for the victims of the sexual and gender-based violence and atrocities of the October 7 attack, as well as for their loved ones and communities. Together with Prof. Irwin Cotler, former Minister of Justice of Canada, they coined a new term—*kinocide*—to describe the systematic torture of families and the strategy of exploiting familial bonds to intensify victims' suffering.³
6. As described in the report, the term *kinocide* represents the systemic and targeted attack against families, characterized by the exploitation of the fundamental bonds between family members to inflict and exacerbate harm and suffering.⁴ It recognizes that an attack on families is qualitatively different from other forms of violence. This stems from the role of the family as the most fundamental unit of human society. Familial relationships are among the most potent protective factors that help people overcome adversity and trauma. Conversely, when the family unit is compromised and violently impacted, the individual is stripped of this vital protective shield. The outcomes are singularly destructive, expansive, and protracted, rippling through all life facets of individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. These factors require heightened protection for families.⁵
7. We further demonstrate that such targeted torture against families is not unique to October 7, but has emerged in numerous past and present violent conflicts around the world — from the Armenian Genocide to Rwanda, Syria, present-day Ukraine, and beyond.⁶

II. Family-targeted Torture on October 7 and During Captivity

8. Acts of Torture on October 7 – The October 7 events included a widespread and systematic targeted attack directed against the family unit, as detailed extensively in the Kinocide Report. Hamas led an organized attack, infiltrating residential areas and family homes, where they inflicted severe physical and psychological injuries on family members. The perpetrators killed and violently kidnapped parents, siblings, and grandparents in the presence each other, and forcibly separated families both during the attack and in captivity. For example, we documented in at least 10 different Kibbutzim, how Hamas employed a systematic pattern of family-targeted torture in the form of murder and infliction of physical

³ Cochav Elkayam-Levy, Michal Gilad, Ilya Rudyak, Irwin Cotler, *The New Crime of Kinocide*, ARTICLES OF WAR (March 3 2025) (hereinafter: “Elkayam, The New Crime of Kinocide”), available here: <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/tag/kinocide/>

⁴ The Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1.

⁵ Elkayam, *The New Crime of Kinocide*, *supra* note 3.

⁶ The Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1.

injury in the presence of other family members.⁷ As is recounted by survivors, family members were forced to witness their loved ones, often their own children or parents, murdered or physically harmed. In many cases, the survivors who witnessed the death or injury of family members were young children, as is the case of Roe Idan who was shot and killed while holding his three-year-old daughter and while his other two children witnessed his murder. Idan's youngest, three-year-old daughter was later kidnapped and taken to Gaza. The Commissions' findings also identified a number of cases in which Hamas and its collaborators conducted "selective killings".⁸ The trauma from these acts of violence often continued for hours, as survivors had to treat their wounded family members and pass on the news of their murder to other family members. In some cases, entire family units were executed, and in at least 8 communities, there were cases where every family member present in a household were murdered. On October 7, 37 families and 41 children, ranging from the ages of four-and-a-half months to 17 years old, were violently abducted from their homes and held in captivity in Gaza. Another form of family-targeted violence involved the methodical incineration, looting, and extreme vandalism of family homes while families were still hiding or seeking refuge inside their homes.⁹

9. Acts of Torture in Captivity – Unfortunately, the family-targeted torture continues to be inflicted upon families by Hamas, to this day, throughout the captivity of family members, the torture of hostages and the use of videos, often sent directly to family members.⁹ Many family members were abducted together, with some forcefully separated prior to their abduction, during their time in captivity, or upon their release.¹⁰ During the hostage-taking itself, Hamas had sometimes taken family members selectively, while intentionally leaving other family members behind.¹¹
10. The Civil Commission wishes to draw the Committee's attention to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: hostage-taking as torture, in which the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that hostage-taking inevitably entails forms of physical and mental torture of families.¹² The Rapporteur concluded in her report that hostage-taking consists of concentric circles of psychological torture, primarily experienced by the direct victims, but also experienced by family members.¹³ She, therefore, concludes, that families of hostages "can be victims of torture or inhuman and degrading treatment".¹⁴ The Special Rapporteur specifically pointed to the lack of contact with the hostages or any indication of their welfare, and in some cases, no proof of life. In this sense, the Special Rapporteur found that the "concealment,

⁷ Factual chapter, The Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1.

⁸ Factual chapter, The Kinocide Report"), available here: <https://www.civilc.org/cco7-1-1>.

⁹ United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report on hostage-taking from the perspective of the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/58/55 (February 2025) (hereinafter: "the Report of the Special Rapporteur").

¹⁰ Factual chapter, the Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1.

¹¹ The Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1, p. 22 – 23.

¹² The Report of the Special Rapporteur, *supra* note 10, para. 52.

¹³ *Ibid*, para. 61-63.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, para. 63.

destruction or violation of the bodies of victims may infringe on the rights of family members to be free from torture and ill-treatment”.¹⁵

11. Use of Social Media, Broadcasting, and Manipulation of Information – As the Civil Commission exposed in the Kinocide Report, Hamas systematically used social media and live streaming to widely disseminate the atrocities to the public, and mostly to the victims’ loved ones.¹⁶ Hamas’s actions on October 7 **were filmed by the perpetrators and widely disseminated** as they entered homes showing acts of torture, separation and slaughter of entire families or kidnapping them for use as hostages. Victims were filmed by the perpetrators in real time; **victims had their social media accounts hijacked** by Hamas’ perpetrators to further broadcast the horror to their family members in real time. In several cases, the perpetrators commandeered their victims’ own phones and social media accounts – **sending images to family members, posting or live streaming the brutalities as they unfolded, even uploading victims’ images and videos on the victims’ personal profiles.** For example, after murdering an elderly grandmother in Nir Oz, the attackers “posted footage of [her] body... on her Facebook account,” forcing her family to learn of her fate on social media.¹⁷
12. A report by a UK parliament report similarly indicates that such deliberate hijacking and broadcasting of victims’ accounts was a calculated strategy to “widely disseminate the atrocities to the public and directly to the victims’ loved ones,” magnifying the psychological torment for families in the midst of the attack.¹⁸
13. Our findings show that the use of social media and personal accounts of victims was not random acts but repeating acts of torture and terror that weaponize kinship ties to increase suffering and dismantle a society from within. The use of digital hijacking represents a modern evolution of psychological warfare, intensifying the reach and durability of trauma far beyond the battlefield.¹⁹
14. In some cases, perpetrators filmed themselves committing atrocities or engaging with the survivors after committing brutalities, like in the case of the Kaploun children who were filmed immediately after the murder of their mother.²⁰
15. These act of torture continue in Hamas captivity - Hamas often staged, filmed, and then distributed footage of hostages in captivity, including emotional pleas to their families – causing psychological harm to the hostages themselves and their families.²¹ One such case is Yarden Bibas who was filmed at the very moment when his captors informed him of the murder of his wife and two infant sons (four-year-old Ariel Bibas and nine-month-old Kfir, who are now known to have been murdered by Hamas) and was subsequently instructed to share the news on video which was then publicly shared.²² Hamas has also released edited video segments of executed hostages after their deaths, with their final messages to their

¹⁵ Ibid, para. 74.

¹⁶ The Kinocide Report, supra note 1, p. 19.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 35.

¹⁸ 7 October Parliamentary Commission (APPG for UK-Israel), *The Roberts Report on The October 7 Attacks* (January 2025), p. 302. Available at: <https://www.7octparliamentarycommission.co.uk..>

¹⁹ The Kinocide Report, supra note 1, p. 19-20.

²⁰ Id.

²¹ Ibid, p. 20.

²² Id.

families, further tormenting their grieving relatives.²³ Similarly, recently, hostage Eitan Horn was filmed during the moments of his separation from his brother hostage Yair Horn.²⁴ Hostage Elkana Bochbut was forced to stage a phone call with his wife and young son and to plea for their help.²⁵

16. The Special Rapporteur on torture echoes this form of torture by drawing special attention to the release of “videos of hostages that torment family members”.²⁶

III. Concluding Observations

17. In broad brushstrokes, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment defines torture as the intentional infliction of “severe pain or suffering,” which can be physical or mental, by or at the direction of a public official for specific purposes. Such purposes include “obtaining [information] from . . . punishing . . . intimidating or coercing [a person],” or, notably, another person, as well as “any reason based on discrimination of any kind”.²⁷ CAT also imposes an obligation on States to prevent “other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture” as defined above.²⁸ As shown in the Kinocide Report and in the summarized descriptions included above the pattern of violence against families committed by Hamas on October 7 and during captivity inflicted extensive, severe, and persistent pain and suffering on families.²⁹

IV. Recommended Questions

18. Please provide information on the torture of families committed on October 7 and during captivity. Please detail the measures taken, in the past and present, to identify instances of torture on October 7 and during captivity, and the measures taken to investigate this form of torture.
19. Please provide information on measures taken by Israel to investigate, monitor, document, and report incidents of family-targeted torture and violence committed on October 7 and in Hamas captivity, including whether families targeted by Hamas receive recognition and compensation.

²³ Id.

²⁴ Einav Halabi, Yael Ciechanover, *Hamas releases video of freed hostage Eitan Horn and his brother Yair Horn, still in captivity*, Ynet (3 January 2025), available here: <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sj7waocjyx>

²⁵ BBC News, *Briefing: Hamas Releases Video of Hostage Pleading for Trump’s Help*, (20 April 2025), available here: <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/b0003qtg>; The Committee can refer to further information on this use of social media and information dissemination by Hamas as a form of torture in the Kinocide report, supra note 1, p.19 – 20.

²⁶ The Report of the Special Rapporteur, supra note 10, para. 74.

²⁷ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Article 1.

²⁸ Ibid, Article 16.

²⁹ The Kinocide Report, supra note 1, p. 56.

20. Please provide information on the mechanisms in place to minimize the dissemination of video footage of the atrocities and hostages, especially any mechanisms in place to protect and support families of victims in this context.
21. Please provide information on the measures taken to recognize victims and hostages' families and relatives as victims of torture and terror. Please elaborate on the state-mandated mechanisms put forth to support the victims and their families and ensure their mental and physical well-being and health.

V. Suggested Recommendations

22. Israel should work to proactively analyze the collected data to help identify patterns and trends that may provide indications of family-targeted torture and facilitate the implementation of timely interventions and prevention strategies.³⁰
23. Israel should establish the institutional capacity to respond quickly and strategically to individual or mass hostage-taking. Israel and other international organizations and non-state actors should work to allow for full access to all places where individuals are held hostage or deprived of their liberty, for independent monitoring and assistance, including but not limited to, medical treatment.³¹
24. Israel should take proactive measures to acknowledge the physical and psychological toll on victims of hostage-taking and their families and recognize that hostage-taking involves forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment.³² Israel should establish accessible and appropriate compensation mechanisms, support systems, and rehabilitation programs to assist hostages and their families, addressing the psychological and physical consequences of hostage taking,³³ and particularly those arising from the digital dissemination of video footage. Particularly, Israel should implement a suitable victim-recognition mechanism for family members, as well as the direct victims themselves, who are entitled to effective reparation, rehabilitation, and support.³⁴
25. Israel should consider pursuing concrete actions to increase prevention and culpability for perpetrators of hostage-taking,³⁵ by conducting thorough investigations into family-targeted violence and torture committed by Hamas on October 7 and in captivity, and adopting relevant legislation to incorporate these types of assaults in the domestic legal framework and compensatory schemes.

³⁰ The Kinocide Report, *supra* note 1, p. 61.

³¹ The Report of the Special Rapporteur, *supra* note 10, para. 87(d).

³² *Ibid*, para. 87(b)

³³ *Ibid*, para. 87(k)

³⁴ *Ibid*, para. 87(j).

³⁵ *Ibid*, para. 87(b).