

Al Jazeera documents more mass summary executions by Israeli troops

Andre Damon
20 January 2024

With each passing day, there is growing evidence that Israeli troops are functioning as mobile mass execution parties in Gaza.

On Thursday, *Al Jazeera* published video interviews of residents of an apartment building in Gaza City, where residents said Israeli troops systematically tortured and executed 15 men.

Heba Selem, a witness, stated: “They stripped them of their clothes except for their boxers and forced them to lay on their stomachs on the floor. They started to execute the men on the floor. They didn’t leave anyone. I swear to God, they turned the entire place into a bloodbath.

“It’s a day you can’t forget, I can’t forget it.” Her husband was killed during the execution.

“After they tortured my husband in front of us and they broke his jaw, and beat up his face, they beat him until his arms were bleeding. They stripped all the men, tortured them, and humiliated them, then executed them. That all happened while we watched.”

Al Jazeera quoted William Schabas, professor of international law at Middlesex University, as saying the footage would constitute evidence of war crimes at the International Criminal Court. “I should add that it’s not really important to demonstrate that they’re civilians. Summary executions even of fighters, even of combatants is a war crime,” he told the news outlet.

In a subsequent interview, Muhammad Shehada, chief of programs and communications of the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, told *Al Jazeera* that there is a pattern of “systematic” killing in Gaza.

“In at least 13 of field executions, we corroborated that it was arbitrary on the part of the Israeli forces,” he said, adding: “We believe that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has dropped restraint in its conduct in Gaza, enabling soldiers to confidently conduct these

atrocities, without fear of accountability, which is why we’re seeing them in multiple neighborhoods and parts of the Gaza Strip.”

On December 20, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report alleging that Israeli forces carried out a mass execution of civilians in northern Gaza, separating 11 men from their families and summarily shooting them.

In its December 20 report, the OHCHR in the Occupied Palestinian Territories said it “has received disturbing information alleging that Israel Defense Forces (IDF) summarily killed at least 11 unarmed Palestinian men in front of their family members in Al Remal neighborhood, Gaza City, which raises alarm about the possible commission of a war crime.”

The UN agency wrote: “On 19 December 2023, between 2000 and 2300 hours, IDF reportedly surrounded and raided Al Awda building, also known as the ‘Annan building,’ in Al Remal neighborhood, Gaza City, where three related families were sheltering in addition to Annan family.”

Neither *Al Jazeera*’s latest revelations, nor the reports by the United Nations and Euro-Med, have been reported by the US and European media, which have largely dropped any systematic coverage of the genocide.

In a briefing, White House National Security spokesperson John Kirby denied that Israel was carrying out “deliberate” war crimes.

A journalist asked: “Yesterday, Mexico, and Chile requested the International Criminal Court to investigate potential crimes against civilians in Gaza. Any reaction?”

Kirby replied: “We don’t have any indications that there’s deliberate, deliberate efforts to commit war

crimes by the Israeli Defense Forces.”

Kirby declared: “Currently, of course, we’re rightly focused on making sure Israel has what it—continues to have—have what it needs to defend itself.”

As Washington doubled down on its defense of Israel’s war crimes, the US further expanded its war in the Middle East.

On Friday, the US carried out yet another strike on Yemen, marking the sixth such strike in 10 days. Kirby claimed that the “pre-emptive” attacks were taken in “self-defense.”

Kirby threatened to launch more strikes, declaring: “They continue to have offensive capability, and they still continue to be willing to use it.” He added: “We also have plenty of defense capability available to us, and we continue to use it as well.”

These continuous, daily attacks on Yemen make clear that the United States has launched yet another endless war in the Middle East, centrally targeting Iran, as part of its global military offensive aimed at Russia and China.

According to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 32,246 people have been killed in Gaza since October 7, with 62,234 people injured. A staggering 1.95 million people are displaced.

The United Nations reported Friday: “Between the afternoons of 18 and 19 January, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza, 142 Palestinians were killed, and another 278 people were injured.”

Euro-Med said 72,440 homes in Gaza have been fully destroyed, and 190,250 homes have been partially destroyed.

According to the World Health Organization, most of Gaza’s hospitals have completely stopped functioning, while the 15 remaining hospitals are operating at up to three times their capacity.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel will continue its onslaught on Gaza in defiance of international law. “Nobody will stop us—not The Hague, not the [Iranian-led] axis of evil and not anybody else,” Netanyahu said.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)