

No charges for Israel Defense Forces rapists, original prosecutor faces prison

Robert Stevens
16 March 2026

Israel's top military lawyer has dropped all criminal charges against five Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reservists who brutally assaulted—including raping—a Palestinian detainee held at the notorious Sde Teiman military detention centre during Israel's genocidal war on Gaza.

The only person now facing charges and even a jail sentence relating to the events is Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi—the IDF's previous Military Advocate General who exposed the crime in the first place and initiated the original investigation and indictments. It was Tomer-Yerushalmi who released in August 2024 the infamous video showing the soldiers surrounding and raping a blindfolded Palestinian detainee against a wall for around 15 minutes.

Investigators are examining allegations against Tomer-Yerushalmi linked to the leak and related actions, such as obstruction or false statements, abuse of office, and disclosure of official information by a public servant. If convicted she could face up to three years in prison.

The case centred on a July 5, 2024 assault by soldiers from the Force 100 unit on a Palestinian detainee from Gaza who was hospitalized with terrible injuries, including severe rectal damage—due to being stabbed in the rectum with a sharp object. Sde Teiman, located in the Negev desert near the Gaza border, has become synonymous with the torture and abuse of Palestinians captured during Israel's assault on Gaza.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported, the prisoner “had been raped so violently that he had to be transferred to a hospital... for treatment for severe injury to his anus, a ruptured bowel, lung damage, and broken ribs that left him unable to walk.” The soldiers wore masks as they carried out a war crime, with the view of an overhead camera at the facility deliberately obscured by a group of soldiers holding up riot shields.

The Palestinian victim was never charged with any crime and was later released back to Gaza under an October 2025 ceasefire.

Charges against the soldiers were dismissed on March 12

by Military Advocate General Maj. Gen. Itai Ofir, who claimed preposterously that prosecutors lacked sufficient evidence and cited “exceptional circumstances” making a fair trial impossible. Ofir included as a reason the fact that “the vast majority of the defendants’ actions are obscured by shields.”

He justified the decision by citing the “complexity regarding the existing evidence” and the release of the detainee back to Gaza, which made it difficult to secure testimony. He referenced claims by the defendants of “abuse of process” due to the prior leak of security footage, arguing these factors affected the fairness of the trial. Ofir further cited “procedural difficulties” in transferring investigative materials from the police, which he claimed could harm the defendants’ right to a fair trial. He concluded that “the accumulation of all these exceptional circumstances, and their impact on the fundamental and basic right to a fair trial, requires, in the view of the military advocate general, the cancellation of the indictment.”

The decision to drop the case was celebrated by Israel's far-right government, which appointed Ofir to oversee the case, replacing Tomer-Yerushalmi. She resigned on October 31, 2025, was arrested two days later, later placed under house arrest and remains under criminal investigation.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said, “The blood libel known as the ‘Sde Teiman affair’ against the fighters of Force 100, which smeared Israel's reputation around the world in an unprecedented way, has come to an end.” Defense Minister Israel Katz declared “justice has been done,” while National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir insisted IDF “soldiers need to have our full support.”

Despite overwhelming evidence of their guilt, there was no serious investigation of the soldiers involved. Ten soldiers, according to *Haaretz*, were initially detained in July 2024, but only five were formally indicted. They were never named, and none were charged with rape.

IDF soldiers and right-wing activists publicly defended the accused, gathering outside Sde Teiman and breaking into military bases in order to obstruct arrests. When it became

known that the soldiers had been transferred to Beit Lid base for questioning, 1,200 rioters gathered outside, accusing soldiers serving there of being “traitors.” Dozens broke into the base before being dispersed by police, who made no arrests.

Among the demonstrators were armed and masked soldiers, some wearing the Force 100 logo of the unit re-established at the start of the war and tasked with guarding Gazan detainees at Sde Teiman.

Joining these thugs were several coalition cabinet ministers, including Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu, MK Nissim Vaturi (Likud), and MK Zvi Sikkot (Religious Zionism). No indictments were brought against these political actors, highlighting the exceptional protection afforded to perpetrators of abuse and those defending them.

As a result of this campaign, one of the suspects--Meir Ben-Shitrit--was elevated into a media personality, appearing on far-right Channel 14 as a “hero of Israel.” He gave lengthy interviews on the Fathi and Shai programme, initially appearing with his face concealed before later revealing his identity on mainstream television.

Human rights organisations condemned the cancellation as a license for further atrocities.

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) accused the military prosecutor of granting soldiers immunity for sexual violence and torture. Executive director Sari Bashi said, “Israel’s military attorney general just gave his soldiers licence to rape, so long as the victim is Palestinian.” PCATI highlighted medical evidence and video footage showing the detainee’s condition, which reflected “blood-curdling cruelty inflicted by guards for a long time.”

Legal experts underlined the extraordinary nature of the decision. Suhad Bishara of Adalah noted that security footage and medical evidence clearly documented severe sexual and physical abuse.

Erika Guevara Rosas of Amnesty International described the ruling as “yet another unconscionable chapter in the Israeli legal system’s long-standing history of granting impunity to perpetrators of grave crimes against Palestinians.” Amnesty observed that, despite extensive evidence since October 2023, only a single Israeli soldier has been convicted for assaulting a Palestinian detainee.

Evidence of other war crimes at Sde Teiman—known as Israel’s Guantanamo—emerged in October 2025. Palestinian officials in Gaza reported that 135 mutilated bodies returned under the Gaza ceasefire had been held at the military camp. The *Guardian* reported that many of those killed were blindfolded, with hands tied behind their backs, and some had ropes around their necks.

Other survivors recently released from Israeli detention recounted gang rapes, beatings, and sexual torture, including

assaults with objects or trained dogs. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) highlighted that these were part of a “policy of collective punishment designed to humiliate Palestinians and inflict maximum psychological and physical harm.”

Survivors’ accounts, documented by PCHR, describe extreme psychological terror, repeated rapes, and injuries severe enough to require hospitalization. Men and women were assaulted with sticks, bottles, and dogs; restrained, blindfolded, and left naked for hours. PCHR stressed that the abuse was not incidental but “part and parcel of the ongoing crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in the Strip.”

Moreover, detainees face ongoing threats, including coerced confessions and potential execution under new Israeli legal measures. PCHR warned that thousands face death following a draft law approved in November 2025 authorizing the death penalty for Palestinian prisoners. Coerced confessions extracted under torture could render all remaining detainees vulnerable to mass executions.

The cancellation of charges against the Sde Teiman soldiers graphically demonstrates the brutality of the Israeli state and the sickness of the society over which it presides.

When details of the crime first emerged, the WSWS noted, “World leaders and the corporate media have largely remained silent about Israel’s crimes at Sde Teiman, in Gaza and the West Bank because Israel enjoys the support of all the imperialist powers now themselves slashing democratic rights and freedom of speech to suppress all opposition to their domestic and foreign policies.”

The same silence has greeted the exoneration of the IDF torturers.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact