

# Opinion | Why Israel's Critics Are Wrong to Compare Sde Teiman and October 7

Sharon Zagagi-Pinhas and Ruth Halperin-Kaddari Jul 31, 2024



Zen Read



Protesters outside Sde Teiman, in April. Credit: Eliyahu Hershkovitz



Listen to this article now

03:39



Powered by [Trinity Audio](#)

For many months, since Israel successfully cracked the wall of silence that the world placed around Hamas' crimes of sexual violence on October 7 and afterwards, the country has been the focus of a bitter attack, which tries to create a false symmetry between Hamas' acts and allegations of sexual violence by IDF soldiers against Palestinian detainees.

Cases such as the detainee at the [Sde Teiman detention camp](#), who, according to reports, went for hospital treatment after an apparent sexual assault, fuel this counterattack



**Witnesses, confessions, naked dead bodies. All the evidence of Hamas rape on Oct. 7**

**The unhinged denialist frenzy around Hamas' sexual violence on October 7**

**Report: Nova festival survivor recounts how Hamas terrorists raped him on October 7**

The attempt to make the atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists on October 7 equivalent to incidents of this kind is infuriating. It is completely impossible to compare the atrocities, cruelty, patterns and scope of the crimes committed against civilians, including women and children, on the day of the massacre and which continue to be committed against the men and women hostages, with anything else that we know.

In international law, sexual crimes against a group of civilians committed as part of a general attack against civilians is included in the most severe category of crimes against humanity.

**Israel At War: Get a daily summary directly to your inbox**

Email \*

Sign Up

Please enter a valid email address

By signing up, I agree to Haaretz [terms and conditions](#)

And yet, these claims are reiterated in the media and social media and in reports by international organizations on the subject (such as paragraphs 65-70 in the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territories chaired by Navi Pillay, published in May) which try – sometimes successfully – to blur the severity of that day's acts and the recognition of them.



---

Israel's primary and most important weapon in this context is the investigative mechanisms, examination and indictment of its soldiers if they are suspected of committing offenses against Palestinian detainees. Thus, even if there are forbidden and illegal acts, they are not swept under the carpet.

They are thoroughly investigated and the offenders are indicted and brought to trial by an independent, professional and purposeful judiciary. This justice, which must be seen as it must be implemented, is the legal flak jacket of IDF soldiers against international proceedings, even if the process is painful and difficult. It is a critical and necessary line of defense on the part of the state both for itself and for the soldiers.



The proof that the state examines, investigates and if necessary indicts prevents international orders and sanctions, which are already breathing down our necks and must be treated as a serious threat.

If it discovered that there is truth in the allegations of sexual violence by conscript or reservist IDF soldiers, the necessary legal and moral step is to investigate, indict and punish the offenders by law.

That is what differentiates us from the Nukhba terrorists. Without assuming responsibility, it is impossible to protect our internal compass, upright moral standing and humanity, either personal or national. We have no right to exist as a nation without them.

Any attempt to prevent such an investigation is liable to be interpreted as supporting abuse, which jeopardizes IDF soldiers and commanders in international law, and worse, society as a whole, which will have to be rebuilt after the war.

*Col. (res.) Sharon Zagagi-Pinhas is the former Chief IDF Prosecutor; Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari is the academic*

*Director of the Barak Center for the Study of Terrorism and Counterterrorism*