Netanyahu PANICS After NYT Publishes Israel's Worst Nightmare

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> The New York Times published an opinion article by Nicholas Kristof documenting accounts of sexual abuse from 14 Palestinian men and women allegedly perpetrated by Israeli settlers and security forces. Netanyahu responded by threatening a defamation lawsuit against the newspaper, accusing it of perpetuating a 'blood libel,' while the Times stood by the reporting.

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Following the publication of Nicholas Kristof's New York Times opinion article titled 'The Silence That Meets the Rape of Palestinians,' Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened legal action against the newspaper and Kristof personally, characterizing the reporting as a 'blood libel' that defames Israeli soldiers. The article documents accounts from 14 Palestinian detainees and prisoners—including men, women, and children—who describe sexual assault by Israeli security forces and settlers. The accounts describe severe violence including rape, threats of rape, humiliation, and the use of objects and animals. The Times stated that the accounts were corroborated with witnesses, family members, lawyers, human rights groups, and UN testimony. Netanyahu and the Israeli Foreign Ministry called the article 'one of the most hideous and distorted lies ever published against the state of Israel.' Observers have noted that a potential lawsuit could trigger discovery proceedings that might expose internal New York Times communications about the reporting, and raised concerns that such legal action could endanger alleged victims and witnesses. The article also contextualizes these allegations within broader patterns of documented sexual violence allegations against Israeli forces, and compares the scale of casualties and alleged abuses on both sides of the conflict.

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- Nicholas Kristof's New York Times article documents accounts from 14 Palestinian men, women, and children alleging sexual assault by Israeli security forces and settlers, including descriptions of rape, humiliation, and threats.

Prime Minister Netanyahu threatened a defamation lawsuit against the New York Times and Nicholas Kristof, labeling the reporting a 'blood libel' that defames Israeli soldiers.

The New York Times stated the accounts were corroborated through interviews with witnesses, family members, lawyers, human rights organizations, and UN testimony, and were extensively fact-checked.

Specific allegations include detention facility abuse, cases involving zip-ties and objects, sexual violence by settlers in the Jordan Valley, and threats made to alleged victims against speaking to media.

Legal experts and observers note that discovery in a potential lawsuit could expose internal New York Times communications and potentially endanger alleged victims and witnesses if named in court documents.

The article contextualizes these allegations within a broader pattern of documented claims of sexual violence in Israeli detention facilities reported by UN bodies and human rights organizations.

Observers have questioned whether the lawsuit's intent is genuine legal accountability or a strategy to obtain names of accusers and witnesses, citing patterns of public celebration rather than prosecution of soldiers accused of such conduct.

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Netanyahu's Legal Threat

The New York Times has published a report so serious that Netanyahu is threatening legal action. In a statement, Netanyahu said: "I instructed my legal advisers to consider the harshest legal action against The New York Times and Nicholas Kristof. They defamed the soldiers of Israel and perpetuated a blood libel about rape, trying to create a false symmetry between the genocidal terrorists of Hamas and Israel's valiant soldiers. Under my leadership, Israel will not be silent. We will fight these lies in the court of public opinion and in the court of law. Truth will prevail."

Following the publication of Nicholas Kristof's article in the New York Times, the Israeli Foreign Ministry released a statement calling it "one of the most hideous and distorted lies ever published against the state of Israel in the modern press." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Gideon Saar have instructed the initiation of a defamation lawsuit against The New York Times.

The New York Times Report

The article, titled "The Silence That Meets the Rape of Palestinians," was written by Nicholas Kristof and documents accounts of sexual abuse. According to the reporting, Kristof spoke with 14 Palestinian men and women who described being sexually assaulted by Israeli settlers or members of Israel's security forces. The article does not claim that Israeli leaders ordered any rapes directly, but argues that they built a system where sexual violence has become one of Israel's standard operating procedures. In other words, while not directly ordering such violence, Israeli leadership knew it was happening, turned a blind eye, and appeared to expect it.

The Wall Street Journal responded to the publication by running a piece focusing on alleged rapes committed by Hamas, creating what appears to be a counterbalance in coverage.

Accounts from Detainees

One of the most horrifying accounts comes from Sami Elci, a 46-year-old freelance journalist. After being detained in 2024, Elci says guards threw him to the ground, beat him, stepped on his head and neck, pulled down his pants and boxers, and tried to force a rubber baton into his rectum. He reported that the guards were laughing. Someone then said, "Give me the carrots," and they assaulted him with a carrot. The pain was so severe that Elci said he was praying for death. Though blindfolded, he understood Hebrew and heard someone say, "Don't take photos," which led him to believe someone had pulled out a camera. A female guard grabbed his penis and testicles, joking, "These are mine," and squeezed them until he screamed. Afterward, he was left handcuffed on the ground while the guards took a smoking break. When dumped into a cell, he found other people's vomit, blood, and broken teeth crushed into his skin.

The article also describes an unnamed Palestinian farmer who says he was raped three times in one day with a metal baton. According to his account, about half a dozen guards held him down, pulled down his pants and underwear, and inserted the baton into his anus while laughing and cheering. Later, after he fainted and woke up in the prison clinic, he says they raped him again. He reported bleeding and crying, and when he asked for pen and paper to file a complaint, guards came back that evening, beat him, raped him a third time, and allegedly told him, "Now you have even more to put in your complaint."

Accounts from Women and Children

The article includes accounts from Palestinian women as well. One woman, arrested at 23 years old, says soldiers threatened to rape her, her mother, and her young niece. She describes male and female guards repeatedly coming into her cell, stripping her

naked, handcuffing her, bending her over, sometimes pushing her head into the toilet, beating her, and groping her. She stated, "I don't know if they raped me" because she sometimes lost consciousness. Her description of the experience is particularly harrowing: "At the beginning of each shift they would bring the guys to strip me." When she was released, officials threatened to rape her, kill her, and kill her father if she spoke about it.

Another account, documented by Euromed, involves a 42-year-old woman who said she was shackled naked to a metal table while Israeli soldiers raped her over two days and filmed it. She stated that they later showed her photos of the rape and threatened to publish them if she did not cooperate with Israeli intelligence. This dual violation—being raped and then having that rape weaponized through blackmail—represents a particularly severe form of abuse.

Kristof's article also documents accounts from Palestinian children. He interviewed three Palestinian boys who had been detained, and all three described sexual abuse. One boy, who was 15 when arrested, said that rape threats were routine, with guards saying things like, "Do this or we'll put this stick up your butt." The other boys described sexual violence during beatings and said rape threats were also directed at their mothers and siblings.

Accounts from Gaza Detainees

Some of the worst allegations come from Gaza detainees. One Gaza journalist told Kristof, "No one escaped sexual assaults." He said guards zip-tied his penis and testicles for hours while beating his genitals, and afterward he urinated blood for days. In another incident, he says he was stripped naked, blindfolded, handcuffed, and held down while a dog was brought in. He says the handler encouraged the dog in Hebrew. The dog mounted him and the guards took photos while laughing. He tried to dislodge the dog, but it penetrated him. After his release, an Israeli official warned him, "If you want to stay alive when you return, do not speak to the media."

Accounts Involving Settlers

Kristof's article also documents violence committed by settlers. In the Jordan Valley, he met Suhaib Abu Kibosh, a 29-year-old Bedouin farmer, who said about 20 settlers rampaged through his family's homes, beat adults and children, stole jewelry and 400 sheep, then cut off his clothes with a hunting knife, zip-tied his penis tightly, and yanked on it. Abu Kibosh said, "I was afraid they would cut off my penis. I thought this was the end for me."

Another Palestinian official, Mohammad Matar, said settlers stripped him, beat him, poked him in the buttocks with a stick, talked about raping him, and posted a photo online of him blindfolded and stripped to his underwear.

Fact-Checking and Corroboration

The New York Times is standing by the article. A statement from the publication says: "Nicholas Kristof's deeply reported piece of opinion journalism starts with a proposition to readers. Whatever our views of the Middle East conflict, we should be able to unite in condemning rape. He draws together on-the-record accounts and cites several analyses documenting the practice of sexual violence and abuse conducted by various parts of Israel's security forces and settlers. The accounts of the 14 men and women he interviewed were corroborated with other witnesses whenever possible, and with people the victims confided in, including family members and lawyers. Details were extensively fact-checked, with accounts further cross-referenced with news reporting, independent research from human rights groups, surveys, and in one case with UN testimony. Independent experts were consulted on the assertions in the piece throughout reporting and fact-checking."

The New York Times published Kristof's article in its opinion section, a decision that raises questions. The Times published earlier coverage of alleged October 7th rapes as fact, yet those articles relied on accounts from people who said they believed there was rape, rather than from direct victims who had experienced it themselves. By contrast, Kristof's article is based on direct testimony from people describing what they say happened to them personally.

The Legal Strategy

If this case goes to court, it will be interesting because discovery—the legal process by which both sides must produce evidence—will come into play. This could put Israel in a position where it would have to produce evidence and witnesses would come forward. However, there are significant concerns about the implications of discovery for the alleged victims and witnesses. If they are named in court documents, their families could face serious danger. There is also speculation that this may be Israel's strategy—to force the New York Times to name all the victims and witnesses so that they can be targeted.

Commentator Eating Fish Burger has noted the strategic value of such a lawsuit: "If they can somehow get to that point, the New York Times internal emails about how this piece was vetted, what they knew about Hamas ties and what doubts existed internally, all of that becomes potentially public. The lawsuit is just how you get there." The implication is that Israel's goal may not be to win the case on the merits, but to use the discovery process to access internal New York Times communications about the reporting and vetting of the article.

Context and Comparisons

These allegations are not isolated to this article. UN reports and other independent documentation have recorded similar allegations of sexual violence in Israeli detention facilities. The scale of allegations is significant—Kristof spoke with 14 people, but the pattern described suggests systemic practice rather than isolated incidents.

The response to this article has also included attempts to discredit Kristof personally. An article he wrote in 2010 for Father's Day discussed his father being drafted into the Romanian army and fighting alongside the Nazis for a year. Critics have circulated this information as an apparent attempt to undermine Kristof's credibility, though the relevance of his father's wartime service to allegations of contemporary abuse remains unclear.

Broader Context

The disparity in casualty numbers between the two sides provides context for understanding the dynamic described in Kristof's reporting. During the October 7th attacks, approximately 1,200 people were killed, roughly half of whom are said to have been killed by Israel itself, meaning around 600 were killed by Palestinian forces. The Israeli response resulted in thousands upon thousands of Palestinian deaths. When one side kills 600 and the other kills tens of thousands in response, the pattern of disproportionate force is clear. Given this pattern—where Israel has consistently responded to Palestinian actions with force multiplied many times over—the allegations of systematic sexual violence described in Kristof's article represent a continuation of this approach applied to a different form of harm. It is not a logical leap to believe that soldiers who had been told repeatedly that Hamas committed systematic rape, that October 7th included extreme violence, and that there was a policy of rape by the other side, might then commit similar or worse acts against Palestinians in their custody.

Recent Media Reports on Sexual Violence in the October 7th Attack

A Wall Street Journal article has documented allegations of sexual violence by Hamas during and after the October 7th attack. The piece, titled "The Truth About Hamas: Documenting Its Rape, Torture and Mutilation," presents what the Israeli foreign ministry describes as material that is "difficult to read and impossible to ignore." The report draws on the Civil Commission's findings, including forensic evidence, hostage accounts, more than 10,000 photos and video segments, and over 430 interviews with survivors, witnesses, and experts.

Testimony compiled from multiple sites describes rape, assault, screams and pleas, gunshots to the face and genitals, mutilation, burning bodies, and other graphic

scenes of violence. The Wall Street Journal article frames this evidentiary record as documenting what "the world must never forget nor deny." Similarly, NBC News has reported on hostages held by Hamas for extended periods, with several former captives describing repeated sexual assaults in addition to isolation, torture, and starvation. One hostage, Guy Gilboa Dallal, kidnapped from the Nova Music Festival on October 7th, has spoken about assaults that began shortly after his capture, including an incident a year into his captivity following a severe beating.

Questions About Media Framing and Selective Presentation

However, some observers have raised questions about how these reports have been presented. A documentary screening of selected footage was shown to journalists and commentators, with viewers then making public statements affirming the authenticity of what they witnessed. Critics note that not all observers were permitted to independently view and scrutinize the full documentation, instead relying on secondhand accounts from Israel-supporting commentators who emerged from the viewings. This selective access has been cited as a concern about the independence of media verification.

Allegations of Systemic Sexual Abuse by Israeli Forces

While acknowledging that allegations of Hamas sexual violence deserve serious attention, reports have also emerged documenting claims of sexual abuse by Israeli forces against Palestinians. Multiple sources, including reports from the EU, UN bodies, and various human rights organizations, have documented allegations of systemic sexual assault. A significant incident involved videos allegedly showing Israeli soldiers sexually abusing Palestinian prisoners. Rather than facing prosecution, some of these soldiers were bailed out immediately and publicly celebrated, with footage showing them being hailed as heroes.

This public celebration of soldiers accused of sexual violence, combined with widespread reporting of such incidents, has led some observers to view allegations of Israeli sexual abuse as substantiated by evidence and testimony beyond speculation. Reports indicate this conduct may reflect policy rather than isolated incidents.

Comparative Assessment of Allegations on Both Sides

Accounts acknowledge that serious atrocities, including sexual violence, have been documented or alleged on both sides of the conflict. Historical precedent from various wars, including conflicts involving American forces, demonstrates that soldiers in war zones may commit atrocities—sometimes as isolated acts, sometimes as policy. The assertion is that both sides may include individuals capable of committing terrible acts, and that neither side emerges from conflict with a clean record.

However, the scale and nature of allegations differ. While Hamas is accused of serious crimes during the October 7th attack and thereafter, reports and testimony suggest Israeli security forces have engaged in systematic practices of sexual abuse against Palestinian prisoners and detainees. The public treatment of accused Israeli soldiers—their bail and celebration rather than prosecution—stands in contrast to typical accountability measures and has been interpreted as institutionalizing rather than condemning such conduct.

Netanyahu's Legal Response and Questions About Intent

Netanyahu has announced legal action in response to reporting on alleged Israeli sexual abuse. Some observers express skepticism about the intent behind such litigation, viewing it as a tactic to obtain the names of accusers, to instill fear among Palestinians and witnesses, and to create chilling effects on future testimonies rather than to establish accountability through genuine legal proceedings. This skepticism is rooted in broader distrust of the Israeli government's handling of accountability mechanisms and in the pattern of public celebration rather than prosecution of accused soldiers.

#Gaza and Palestine – detention and sexual abuse allegations

#Israeli security forces – accountability and human rights

#New York Times reporting – Nicholas Kristof article

#Netanyahu – defamation lawsuit threat

#Sexual violence in conflict – documentation and testimony

#Media coverage and fact-checking – Israel-Palestine conflict

#Legal strategy – discovery and witness protection

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