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Women living under Hamas rule in Gaza describe to the Mail how they are sexually abused by the terror group's fighters and forced to have sex in return for food aid

Natalie Lisbona

10–12 minutes

The world has heard harrowing accounts of Israeli men and women sexually brutalised in [Hamas](#) captivity — but now chilling new testimony is emerging from inside [Gaza](#) itself.

Gazans living under Hamas rule are beginning to break their silence, describing sexual abuse by multiple men, sexual blackmail for aid or money and abuse by people in positions of power.

It comes as concerns grow that the group is re-establishing control, while global attention shifts to the conflict in [Iran](#).

Human rights organisations in Gaza have told the Daily Mail that up to 60,000 women are vulnerable, with reports also indicating a rise in child marriages and pregnancies.

The Daily Mail has obtained rare video testimony, filmed by Jusoor News from inside the Strip, where speaking out carries severe risk.

In one account told by a male Gazan, whose identity has to remain anonymous for his safety, he described how he found a widow displaced in the war being molested inside a tent by 'a bunch of Hamas members and was warned to stay silent.

'We were contacted by the wife of a friend. She had asked a Qassam Brigades commander to help her, but he took advantage of her,' he said.

'His behaviour is disgraceful. We investigated the matter and found her in a tent in the Gharabli area where a bunch of Qassam members were taking advantage of her.

'We informed the leadership but we were told we had to keep silent about it.'

An elderly Gazan woman told Jusoor News that charitable organisations in Gaza are deceiving and exploiting 'women who are desperate'

Another anonymous woman accused religious organisations in the Strip of 'sexual harassment, psychological abuse, and harassing young women'

Hamas fighters ride on top of a humanitarian aid truck in Rafah, Gaza Strip, December 19, 2023

The Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades is the military arm of Hamas.

Another Gazan man confirmed that a similar episode had happened with one of his female neighbours, who was blackmailed by 'one of Hamas's charity organisations... they wanted her to wh*** herself in exchange for a food parcel, or an aid voucher, or 100 shekels'.

Another man, who identified as being in the Qassam Brigades, confirmed this was the case with widows.

He said he had told the leadership that some Qassam members were taking advantage of the 'wives of Martyrs' in a tent in the Gharabli area, which is in Deir al-Balah.

He was ordered to keep it quiet. 'We told them it was an insult to our honour and dignity,' he said, and tore down the tent in anger.

The testimonies come amid wider allegations of sexual violence in the conflict, including accounts made by many Israeli hostages including Arbel Yehoud, who told the Daily Mail she was raped every day during captivity while held in tents after being kidnapped from her kibbutz on October 7, 2023.

Meanwhile Hamas, who are rejecting proposals to disarm in the ceasefire agreement, still rule with an iron fist — and, according to people on the ground in Gaza, that includes taking advantage of vulnerable women.

Abdullah (not his real name), a journalist from Jusoor News who filmed the testimonies, spoke to the Daily Mail from hiding, for fear of being found by the group.

'Unfortunately, there are many cases — very widespread. In every area, many women are exploited, especially widows and divorced women, because they have no support and no income. Their vulnerability is taken advantage of, and the situation is getting worse day by day.'

Noor (not her real name), a divorced mother of four displaced during the war, spoke to the Daily Mail from Gaza, whispering down the phone for fear of being caught.

She described sexual coercion in return for aid when a religious figure started to harass her at her lowest point.

'I didn't receive any aid, so I went to a charitable organisation. A man there, who appeared religious and respectable, promised to help me.

'I am a mother of four children. I am displaced because of the war and I do not belong to a recognised displacement camp, so I did not receive any aid. I went to an Islamic charity that distributes aid to displaced and needy people in Gaza.

'I was welcomed by a man who looked religious, like a sheikh. He said he would stand by me and help me. I told him I was separated from my husband. He said: "Oh, separated? A woman as beautiful as you?"'

He took Noor's phone number, which she says she believed would lead to fatherly support — but instead he suggested a late-night video call.

'From the beginning, the way he spoke to me felt like harassment. I am much younger than him. I trusted him because he was an older man; I saw him like a father. He is the age of my father, but he harassed me directly. I was afraid, of course. He was pursuing me.

'I asked him how he could talk to me like that. And he should be ashamed.

'I told him I would expose him. He said: "You cannot expose me, I am the government here."

Noor says this reflects a wider pattern, where vulnerable women are targeted because they lack providers and rely on aid.

'They exploit women's need for help. But the women are too scared to speak up.'

Noor (not her real name), a divorced mother of four displaced during the war, spoke to the Daily Mail from Gaza, whispering down the phone for fear of being caught

One man, who identified as being in the Qassam Brigades, was told to 'keep quiet' by leadership after he reported that women were being raped by Hamas fighters

A male Gazan, whose identity has to remain anonymous for his safety, described how he found a widow displaced in the war being molested inside a tent by 'a bunch of' Hamas members

A report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has found a surge in child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in Gaza.

Pre-war figures show adolescent marriage rates fell to 11 per cent in 2022, down from 26 per cent in 2009, highlighting a reversal of earlier progress.

It said at least 400 girls aged 14 to 16 were registered married over just four months in 2025, though the UNFPA warned this likely represents only a fraction of the true scale due to underreporting and the collapse of formal registration systems.

'We are witnessing the dismantling of a generation's future,' said Nestor Owomuhangi, UNFPA Country Representative for the State of Palestine, who said the trend has been driven by war and worsening humanitarian conditions.

'Honestly, they are deceiving women. There are charitable organisations exploiting women. They deceive women who are desperate. They are desperate for a bit of sugar or a grain of rice,' an elderly Gazan woman told Jusoor News, her identity concealed to protect her safety.

Another woman said: 'A guy will say: "Come, we have a relief package for you". He represents an Islamic organisation — a movement whose name I won't mention, but it is a political organisation. "If you come with me and do so and so, I'll give you so and so" — and the women, who have no life experience, end up getting exploited.'

She continued: 'This shouldn't be happening at all, it just shouldn't. One charity in Gaza is unfortunately the biggest perpetrator. From its chairman all the way down to its doorman, it's being done by all their employees and members, as though it's an organisation set up for sexual harassment, psychological abuse, and harassing young women.'

During the Israel-Hamas war, Associated Press documented several incidents in 2025, including the case of a 38-year-old woman who believed she had found a lifeline when she turned to aid for her six children.

After weeks of struggling she was told a man could help with food, aid, and a job.

She approached him after being separated from her husband and forced to shut her business, but then he took her to an empty apartment. He complimented her and told her to remove her headscarf.

He told her he loved her and would not force her, she said, but he also would not let her leave. Eventually, she said, a sexual encounter took place. She declined further detail, saying she felt fear and shame.

'I had to play along because I was scared, I wanted out of this place,' she told AP.

Before leaving, she was given 100 shekels (about £25). Two weeks later, she received a box of medicine and a box of food. 'The promised job never materialised,' it reported.

'Women are being sexually abused now, worse than during the war,' said Gazan writer and author of 'Seashells on the beach of Gaza', Hamza Howidy.

A Palestinian militant stands guard as trucks loaded with humanitarian aid enters the Gaza Strip, January 25, 2025

He warned many victims remain silent due to stigma and fear of social consequences.

'The problem is that most women will never speak about it publicly because society considers it shameful...

'It's not only widows who are being affected, but also unmarried women.

'Many women are now forced to seek assistance simply to feed their children, and in doing so they become vulnerable to exploitation. It is heartbreaking.'

He said the cycle will continue unless women are given economic independence.

Abdullah added: ' Hamas has exploited media channels, spreading exaggerated or false numbers.

' Hamas have lied about everything, they stole the aid, created the famine narrative and the gullible West believes it. They have no respect for anyone.'

Smaller platforms like Jusoor, he said, are among the few bringing testimonies out.

'We have a duty to amplify these voices.'

He described threats to his life, including armed men arriving at his location.

'If I had been there, they would have shot me.'

He said he has been forced into hiding and continues reporting despite risks.

The Daily Mail contacted UN Women, who didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Two other human rights groups inside Gaza were contacted, one of which said they were unaware of women being exploited.

This is echoed by Ahmed Fouad Alkhatib, director of Realign for Palestine, who says that many won't speak for fear of Hamas infiltration or lack of access.

'I have seen videos showing women being covered up and sold under the guise of helping them find a husband.

'Many women in Gaza have been subjected to exploitation — but there is no central body documenting these cases,' he said.

'Many NGOs and organisations that are supposedly concerned with women's issues are unable to be of help, either for fear of Hamas or its enforced notion that Gazan women are perfectly fine under its control or authority.'

https://www.dailymail.com/news/article-15732903/Women-living-Hamas-rule-Gaza-Mail-sexually-abused-terror-groups-fighters-forced-sex-return-food-aid.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=social-twitter_mailonline