



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on May 15, 2026

Netanyahu: We Will Sue NYT for Exposé Alleging Sexual Torture in Israeli Prisons

Israel is planning to sue *The New York Times* over a shocking report that Israeli prison officials are sexually torturing Palestinian prisoners.

Opinion columnist [Nicholas Kristof's 3,500-word exposé](#) graphically details mind-boggling cruelty, including genital mutilation and using dogs to rape prisoners.

Such a lawsuit won't likely succeed in U.S. courts because the Constitution forbids it. Federal law generally forbids recognizing defamation judgments in foreign courts.

The exposé appeared one day before the *Times* reprised an official Israeli report that detailed Hamas' rape and sexual torture of Israeli prisoners and hostages during and after the October 7, 2023 terror raid.



AP Images
Benjamin Netanyahu

 **Benjamin Netanyahu ...**  
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Today 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 [Show more](#)

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The Story

Palestinians told Kristof about sexual violence against men, women, and children by myriad Israeli assailants: “soldiers, settlers, interrogators in the Shin Bet internal security agency and, above all,



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prison guards.”

Evidence does not show that leaders ordered the rapes, [Kristof explained](#). But a UN report explained that sexual torture is “one of Israel’s ‘standard operating procedures’ and ‘a major element in the ill treatment of Palestinians.’” And the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor [has reported](#) that “systematic sexual violence” is “widely practiced as part of an organized state policy.”

Kristof spoke to 14 victims.

A freelance journalist, Sami al-Sai, 46, told Kristof that Israeli guards raped him with a rubber baton and then a carrot. A sadistic woman guard, he told Kristof, “grabbed him by the penis and testicles and joked, ‘These are mine,’ and then squeezed until he screamed from pain.”

Noting that American tax money has made the U.S. government complicit in the sex crimes, Kristof also detailed a case from the Euro-Med report. It described the repeated rape of a 42-year-old woman, which Israeli soldiers photographed and said would be released if “she did not cooperate with Israeli intelligence.”

Yet abuse, Kristof reported, went beyond — way beyond — rape.

“Many reported that they often had their genitals yanked or were beaten on the testicles. Hand-held metal detectors were used to probe between men’s naked legs and then smashed into their private parts; some men had to have their testicles amputated by doctors after beatings, according to the Euro-Med monitor,” [Kristof reported](#).

A farmer told Kristof that Israeli guards raped him three times with a metal baton. He invited the third assault by asking for a pen and paper to write a complaint.



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"In wrenching interviews, Palestinians have recounted to me a pattern of widespread Israeli sexual violence against men, women and even children," our columnist Nicholas Kristof writes.



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"Most of the rape and other sexual violence has been directed at men, if only because Palestinian prisoners are more than 90 percent male," Kristof reported. But a Palestinian woman described being repeatedly sexually assaulted for days.

"The pattern was always the same," [Kristof revealed](#):

Several guards, men and women together, would come to her cell, forcibly strip her naked, handcuff her hands behind her back and bend her forward at the waist, sometimes forcing her head into the toilet. In this position, she would be beaten and groped all over, she said.

"They had their hands all over my body," she said. "To be honest, I don't know if they raped me," she said, because she sometimes lost consciousness from the beatings. ...

"I'd be stripped and beaten several times a day," she said. "It was as if they were introducing me to everyone who worked there. At the beginning of each shift, they would bring the guys to strip me."

A journalist from Gaza told Kristof about the abuse he suffered. It did not include rape; instead, Israeli guards subjected him to "humiliating, filthy sexual assaults." The guards "zip-tied his testicles and penis for hours while beating his genitals," [Kristof reported](#):

For days afterward, he said, he urinated blood.



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On one occasion, he said, he was held down and stripped naked, and as he was blindfolded and handcuffed, a dog was summoned. With encouragement from a handler in Hebrew, he said, the dog mounted him.

“They were using cameras to take photos, and I heard their laughs and giggles,” he said. He tried to dislodge the dog, he said, but it penetrated him.

Other Palestinian prisoners and human rights monitors have also cited reports of police dogs being coached to rape prisoners. The journalist said that when he was released, an Israeli official warned him: “If you want to stay alive when you return, do not speak to the media.”

And sadistic prison guards aren’t the only culprits in the sexual assaults, [Kristof reported](#):

In a remote Jordan Valley hamlet of Bedouin farmers, I met a 29-year-old farmer, Suhaib Abualkebash, who recounted how a gang of about 20 settlers rampaged through the homes of his family, beating adults and children alike and stealing jewelry and 400 sheep — and also cut off his clothes with a hunting knife and then tightly [zip-tied his penis](#) and yanked.

“I was afraid they would cut off my penis,” Abualkebash told me. “I thought this was the end for me.”

B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights group, backs Kristof’s claims. It published a report titled [Welcome to Hell](#), which documents the abuse of Palestinians since Hamas attacked on October 7, 2023.



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forced to perform “sexual acts on one another” while in captivity, according to the report.

Netanyahu: We’re Going to Sue

As for the Kristof piece, the Israelis claim that he published a pack of lies. Thus Israel, or some official presumably, will sue the *Times* and Kristof for defamation.

“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,” Prime Minister Bejanmin Netyanahu [wrote on X](#):

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.

[The Times called](#) Netanyahu’s threat “part of a well-worn political playbook that aims to undermine independent reporting and stifle journalism that does not fit a specific narrative.” Thus, “any such legal claim would be without merit.”

The victims’ accounts “were corroborated with other witnesses wherever possible, and with people the victims confided in — that includes family members and lawyers,” the [newspaper said](#):

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 U.N. testimony. Independent experts were consulted on the assertions in the piece throughout reporting and fact-checking.

The lawsuit will likely go nowhere, as Rodney Smolla, a First Amendment scholar and law school president, [told CBS News](#). A government can’t sue for defamation in this country, Smolla said, and if Netanyahu or another Israeli official did sue, he’d have a tough row to hoe.

“I think at the end of the day, courts would say this [article] is insufficiently targeting Netanyahu, and to allow him to sue is just too perilously close to allowing a suit by the government itself,” Smolla told CBS.

As well, because of the [New York Times Co. v. Sullivan decision](#) from the U.S. Supreme Court in 1964, Netanyahu or another official would have to prove malice and reckless disregard of the truth to prevail in a lawsuit. The plaintiff would have to show that Kristof and the *Times* published the piece maliciously and either knew that Kristof’s claims were false or disregarded whether they were false. That standard is almost impossible to meet.

Even were Netanyahu to sue and prevail in a foreign court, nothing would likely happen. [28 U.S. Code 4102 says](#) that “a domestic court shall not recognize or enforce a foreign judgment for defamation unless the domestic court determines that” the law in that foreign country provides substantially the same protection for speech as U.S. law, or that the plaintiff would prevail in a domestic court “applying the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States and the constitution and law of the State in which the domestic court is located.”



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