Tubas Massacre 2002: Apache Missiles Kill Four Children

On Saturday, 31 August 2002, Israeli Apache helicopters fired missiles at a Palestinian car in the town of Tubas in the northern West Bank, in an attempt to assassinate Raafat Daraghmeh, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades official in the town. The missiles killed five Palestinians, four of them children: two boys who were in the car, and a little girl and her cousin who were passing in the street. [1] [2] [3]

The massacre came less than three days after the Sheikh Ajlin massacre in Gaza, in a week in which occupation forces killed families and children in the West Bank and the Strip; President Yasser Arafat and Palestinian officials described it as a week of massacres ordered from the highest levels of the occupation government. [4]

Contents

1. The Tubas massacre at a glance
2. The massacre: missiles on a busy street
3. The killed: four children out of five
4. Assassination as policy: killing outside the law
5. Reactions
6. Frequently asked questions
7. Sources and references

The Tubas massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	Saturday, 31 August 2002 [1]
Place	The town of Tubas, northern West Bank [1] [2]
Perpetrator	Israeli occupation army Apache helicopters [1]
Declared target	The assassination of Raafat Daraghmeh, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades official in Tubas [2] [3]
Killed	5, four of them children: two in the car and two passers-by [1] [3]
Wounded	10 according to the circulated Palestinian account

The massacre: missiles on a busy street

Occupation army helicopters carried out a missile attack on Tubas on Saturday, 31 August 2002. [1] According to the circulated Palestinian account, two Apache helicopters fired four missiles at two Palestinian cars in a street inside the town where people were passing.

Raafat Daraghmeh (33, according to the circulated account), the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades official in Tubas, was killed along with two boys who were in the car, while the missiles struck two children who happened to be passing in the street at the moment of the attack, killing them. [2] [3] Ten others were wounded, according to the Palestinian account.

The killed: four children out of five

Name	Age (circulated Palestinian account)	Age (Remember These Children record)	Where they were
Raafat Daraghmeh	33	—	In the car (the target)
Yazid Abdel Raziq	13	16	In the car [3]
Sari Subeih	15	17	In the car [3]

Name	Age (circulated Palestinian account)	Age (Remember These Children record)	Where they were
Dhuhayra (Bahira) Burhan Daraghmeh	6	7	Passing in the street [3]
Osama Ibrahim Mufleh Daraghmeh	12	14	Passing in the street with his cousin [3]

News reports say the dead included “two children,” [1] [4] meaning the two in the street. But the two boys in the car were also under eighteen according to both accounts, which makes four of the five killed children. [3]

Assassination as policy: killing outside the law

The Tubas massacre was not an isolated mistake, but the result of the assassination policy the occupation government adopted during the Al-Aqsa Intifada: executing Palestinians without trial with missiles fired from the air at cars moving through populated streets, missiles that inevitably put passers-by and children in the line of fire. The lists of that year’s victims record many children killed “during an assassination attempt,” as the four children of Tubas were. [3]

Reactions

Israeli officials expressed “regret” over the deaths of the two children, and Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer ordered an investigation. [4] In Gaza, more than five thousand Palestinians took part in an angry march after the Tubas raid. [1]

On the same day, amid that week’s massacres, President Yasser Arafat accused the occupation forces of committing “massacres against Palestinian citizens” on the orders of “the highest political and military levels of the Israeli government.” Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo called for halting political and security contacts with Israel, saying that “after every meeting with the Israelis a new massacre occurs,” while Nabil Abu Rudeineh announced that the Authority would

request an urgent Security Council session, and Saeb Erekat criticized the silence of American and European officials over the killing of Palestinian children. [4]

Read about the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people.

Conclusion

In Tubas, occupation helicopters fired their missiles at a populated street to assassinate a single man, and killed four children with him, among them a girl of no more than seven and her cousin, who were crossing the street. Israeli “regret” and a promised investigation followed, as they had after Sheikh Ajlin, with no accountability. The Tubas massacre remains a testament to an assassination policy that made Palestine’s children expected victims of missiles fired at their streets.

Frequently asked questions about the Tubas massacre

When did the Tubas massacre take place?

It took place on Saturday, 31 August 2002, in the town of Tubas in the northern West Bank.

How many people were killed in the Tubas massacre?

Five Palestinians were killed, four of them children under eighteen, and about ten others were wounded according to the Palestinian account.

Who was the target of the Tubas massacre?

The declared target was the assassination of Raafat Daraghmeh, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades official in Tubas.

Who were the children killed in the Tubas massacre?

Yazid Abdel Raziq and Sari Subeih, who were in the car, and Dhuhayra Burhan

Daraghmeh and her cousin Osama Ibrahim Mufleh Daraghmeh, who were passing in the street.

How is the Tubas massacre related to the Sheikh Ajlin massacre?

The Tubas massacre took place less than three days after the Sheikh Ajlin massacre in Gaza, in the same week of August 2002.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. “Five New Martyrs in Hebron and Jenin after the Tubas Massacre,” Al Jazeera Net, 1 September 2002.
2. “Diary of 2002,” Centre for Arab Unity Studies.
3. “Remember These Children: 2002 Memorial,” record of children killed by occupation forces in 2002.
4. “Arafat Considers Israeli Massacres a Conspiracy to End the Peace Process,” Al Jazeera Net, 1 September 2002.