# Nuseirat and Bureij Massacre 2004: 14 Killed, Four Children

**At dawn on Sunday, 7 March 2004, Israeli occupation forces stormed the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip with heavy vehicles and helicopters, seizing homes and turning their roofs into sniper positions, and firing indiscriminately into the crowded camp's streets. Within six hours 14 Palestinians were killed, including four children, and more than 80 were wounded, including 26 children.** [1]

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights described the operation as "an Israeli military attack in a Palestinian residential area," [1] the UN Secretary-General strongly deplored it, and the Arab League called it a "savage military operation." [2]

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## The Nuseirat and Bureij massacre at a glance

| Item | Details |
|---|---|
| Date | Sunday, 7 March 2004, from about 3 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. [1] |
| Place | Nuseirat camp and the area between the Nuseirat and Bureij camps, central Gaza Strip [1] [2] |

| Item | Details |
|---|---|
| Perpetrator | Israeli occupation forces with heavy vehicles and helicopters, coming from the Netzarim settlement [1] |
| Method | Snipers on the roofs of seized homes, indiscriminate gunfire in the camp’s streets, and helicopter fire [1] |
| Killed | 14, including four children [1] [2] |
| Wounded | More than 80, including 26 children [1] |
| International response | The UN Secretary-General “strongly deplores,” and the Arab League condemns [2] |

## The massacre: six hours in the camp

At about 3 a.m. occupation forces, with heavy vehicles and aircraft, advanced south from the Netzarim settlement along Salah al-Din Street to a point between the Nuseirat and Bureij camps, then pushed west into Nuseirat camp. At 6 a.m. additional forces entered the camp. [1] According to the circulated account, the operation began with an attempt by “special units” to infiltrate the edges of the two camps; when they were discovered, tanks moved in and began searching homes on the pretext of looking for wanted men.

Soldiers seized three residential buildings owned by the Quweider, Aliyan and Ghazal families, held the residents inside, and forced Majed Ibrahim Aliyan (30) to walk in front of them as a human shield as they searched the buildings. Snipers then took up positions on the upper floors, soldiers fired indiscriminately into the camp’s streets, and helicopters flying overhead also opened fire. The forces withdrew at about 9:30 a.m. [1]

The circulated account says five of the victims were killed by soldiers’ gunfire, and the rest by fire from US-made Apache helicopters, which shot “at everything that moved.”

## The killed

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights documented the names of the fourteen killed, among them four children shot dead by occupation fire: [1]

| Name | Age |
|---|---|
| Mahmoud Abdullah Younis | 11 |
| Mohammed Amer Abu Zuraiq | 12 |
| Mohammed Ali Bedawi | 15 |
| Haitham Mohammed al-Issawi | 16 |
| Mohammed Ismail al-Shatali | 21 |
| Shadi Abed al-Saidni | 21 |
| Faris Fathi al-Hawajri | 25 |
| Omar Mohammed al-Jamal | 18 |
| Hazem Rauhi Aqel | 20 |
| Ahmed Hassan Harb | 22 |
| Khaled Qassem al-Hazqi | 23 |
| Moussa Manar Hemo | 25 |
| Yousef Mahmoud al-Sinwar | 26 |
| Hassan Ahmed Zuhud | 42 |

The other ten, according to PCHR, were killed while confronting the invading forces. [1] More than 80 civilians were wounded, including 26 children, ten of them seriously. [1]

## Reactions

The following day the UN Secretary-General issued a statement saying he “strongly deplores the Israeli military raids,” which killed “at least 14 Palestinians” and wounded dozens. The Arab League condemned the incursion, and its Secretary-

General Amre Moussa called it a “savage military operation.” [2]

According to the circulated account, the massacre came three weeks after the Shuja’iyya massacre, making it the second largest massacre since the announcement of the Gaza “disengagement” plan.

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## Conclusion

In six hours on the morning of 7 March 2004, occupation forces turned Nuseirat camp into a shooting range: they seized homes, held their residents, used one of them as a human shield, and fired indiscriminately into streets crowded with refugees. Fourteen were killed, including four children, and more than 80 were wounded, nearly a third of them children. The massacre remains a testament that Gaza’s refugee camps were an open target for the Israeli war machine.

## Frequently asked questions about the Nuseirat and Bureij massacre

### When did the Nuseirat and Bureij massacre take place?

It took place at dawn on Sunday, 7 March 2004, with the incursion lasting from about 3 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

### How many people were killed in the Nuseirat and Bureij massacre?

Fourteen Palestinians were killed, including four children, and more than 80 were wounded, including 26 children, according to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights.

### Who were the children killed in the Nuseirat massacre?

Mahmoud Abdullah Younis (11), Mohammed Amer Abu Zuraiq (12), Mohammed Ali Bedawi (15) and Haitham Mohammed al-Issawi (16).

### How were the victims of the Nuseirat and Bureij massacre killed?

By snipers positioned on seized homes, by indiscriminate fire into the camp's streets, and by helicopter fire.

### What was the international reaction to the massacre?

The UN Secretary-General strongly deplored the raids, and the Arab League called it a "savage military operation."

## Sources and references


1. "Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories," Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, 11 March 2004.
2. "Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: March 2004," Division for Palestinian Rights, United Nations.