Shujaiya Massacre 2014: A Night of Shelling on Gaza's East

From the evening of Saturday 19 July to midday Sunday 20 July 2014, occupation artillery, tanks and aircraft rained shells on the Shujaiya neighbourhood east of Gaza City at a rate of three to four a minute. More than sixty Palestinians were killed in a single day, most of them women and children cut down as they tried to flee, and more than 250 were wounded. [1]

The Shujaiya massacre was the largest of the occupation's massacres in the 2014 war on Gaza. [2] It is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people, ten years after the 2004 Shujaiya massacre.

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The Shujaiya massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	From Saturday evening, 19 July, to midday Sunday, 20 July 2014 [1] [3]

Item	Details
Place	The Shujaiya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City [1] [2]
Perpetrator	Occupation army artillery, tanks and warplanes [1] [3]
Intensity	3–4 shells a minute, more than 600 artillery shells [1] [4]
Killed	More than 60 on the day, later estimates from 65 to over 75, mostly women and children [1] [4] [3] [2]
Wounded	More than 250 [1]
Ambulances	The occupation barred ambulance crews from entering the neighbourhood [1]

The Shujaiya neighbourhood

Shujaiya is one of the largest and oldest neighbourhoods of Gaza City, on its eastern side, and is described as “the eastern guardian of the Strip.” It was built in the Ayyubid era in the 13th century and bears the name of the commander Shuja al-Din al-Kurdi. It is overlooked by al-Muntar hill, about 85 metres above sea level. [2]

The night of shells

On the fourteenth day of the assault on Gaza, occupation artillery began shelling Shujaiya at about 7 p.m. on Saturday, and the bombardment went on until midday Sunday at a rate of three to four shells a minute. [1] The occupation fired more than 600 artillery shells at the neighbourhood after its ground forces came under attack. [4] F-16 jets and tanks joined the bombardment, and the aircraft dropped dozens of one-tonne bombs. [3]

Many of the dead were killed trying to flee the neighbourhood. Seventeen-year-old Shireen Ayyad was killed when a shell hit a group of civilians as her family evacuated their home. [5] Occupation forces barred ambulance crews from entering the neighbourhood, leaving many bodies in the streets and remains under the rubble. [1] [2]

A Palestinian paramedic and a journalist were among those killed in the shelling. [1]

Killing during the “humanitarian truce”

At midday on Sunday, at the Red Cross’s request, the occupation agreed to a two-hour “humanitarian truce” to evacuate the wounded and recover the dead, which ended around 4 p.m. [1]

During that truce, 22-year-old Salem Shamaly was searching for his family in the rubble when an Israeli sniper shot him dead; the video of his killing spread worldwide. His mother Amina said: “I only have one demand: I want to meet the killer.” [3]

Naser Shamaly, the sole survivor of his family, recounts that soldiers shot his brother Muhammad, his sister-in-law Hamdiya and their sons Issam and Arafat: “The soldier was three metres away from me.” Sami al-Areer, 50, was killed by a missile on his way to the mosque, and his son Fathi, 20, and two of his uncles were shot dead in a garage. [3]

The toll: what do the sources say?

Source	Toll
Al Jazeera Net (day of the massacre)	More than 60 killed, mostly women and children, more than 250 wounded [1]
Juan Cole (Informed Comment)	At least 65 civilians [4]
Al Jazeera English	About 72 [3]
Arabic Post	More than 75, and hundreds wounded [2]

Bodies were still being pulled from the rubble for days after the massacre. [4]

The Shujaiya market massacre

The night of 19–20 July was not Shujaiya's last massacre in that war. On 30 July 2014, during a four-hour "truce" declared by the occupation army, it shelled the Shujaiya market crowded with shoppers, killing at least 16 people, among them the journalists Rami Rayan and Sameh al-Aryan and camera assistant Mohammed Nour al-Din al-Deiri. [6]

Conclusion

In a single night the occupation poured hundreds of shells on Shujaiya, three or four a minute, killing more than sixty of its people as they fled, barring ambulances from reaching them, and then killing those searching for their loved ones during a "humanitarian truce." Ten days later it shelled the neighbourhood's market during another truce.

Frequently asked questions about the 2014 Shujaiya massacre

When did the 2014 Shujaiya massacre take place?

From the evening of Saturday 19 July to midday Sunday 20 July 2014, during the Israeli war on Gaza.

How many people were killed in the 2014 Shujaiya massacre?

More than 60 on the day according to Al Jazeera Net, with later estimates ranging from 65 to more than 75, mostly women and children.

How many shells were fired at Shujaiya?

More than 600 artillery shells, at three to four a minute, in addition to air strikes.

Who was Salem Shamaly?

A 22-year-old shot dead by an Israeli sniper while searching for his family in the rubble during the “humanitarian truce” on 20 July 2014.

Was there another massacre in Shujaiya during the 2014 war?

Yes. The occupation shelled the Shujaiya market on 30 July 2014 during a truce, killing at least 16, among them journalists.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. “About 100 Killed in Gaza, Most in the Shujaiya Massacre,” Al Jazeera Net, 20 July 2014.
2. “Named after an Ayyubid Commander and Scene of Israel’s Largest Massacre of the 2014 War: The History of Shujaiya,” Arabic Post, 4 November 2023.
3. “Shujayea Families Remain Haunted by Loss,” Al Jazeera English, 22 July 2017.
4. Juan Cole, on explosive weapons in populated areas, Informed Comment, April 2015.
5. “Child Profile: Shireen Fathi Othman Ayyad,” Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, 15 June 2015.
6. “Mohammed Nour al-Din al-Deiri,” Committee to Protect Journalists.