Benjamina Massacre

On 31 March 1948 the Zionist Stern Gang mined the Cairo–Haifa railway near the settlement of Binyamina, south of Haifa, and blew up the express train as it passed, killing 40 passengers, most of them Arabs, and wounding 60. [1] [2]

It was the second time in a single month that the gang had struck the same train, and it is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people. [2]

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The Binyamina train massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	31 March 1948 [1] [2]
Place	The Cairo–Haifa railway near the settlement of Binyamina, south of Haifa [1] [3]
Perpetrator	The Zionist Stern Gang (Lehi) [1] [2]
Method	Mines laid on the track and detonated as the express train passed [1]
Killed	40, most of them Arab passengers [1] [2]
Wounded	60 [1]

The Cairo–Haifa train as a Stern Gang target

The Cairo–Haifa train linked Egypt to Haifa along the Palestinian coast, carrying civilian passengers as well as British military carriages. [4] [2]

On 29 February 1948 the Stern Gang blew up the train's military carriages near Rehovot, killing 27 British soldiers and wounding dozens; the gang claimed the attack as "reprisal" for the Ben Yehuda Street explosion in Jerusalem. [5] [4] A month later it struck the same train again, and this time its victims were civilian passengers, most of them Arabs. [2]

The massacre: 31 March 1948

On 31 March 1948 Stern Gang members laid mines on the track near Binyamina. When the Cairo–Haifa express passed, the mines exploded, killing 40 people on the spot and wounding 60. [1] Most of the victims were Arab civilians. [2]

The massacre came at the end of March 1948, weeks before the Haifa massacres, which ended with the expulsion of the city's people.

The toll and the accounts

Source	Date	Toll
Arabi21 (Cairo–Haifa train, Stern Gang)	31 March 1948	40 killed, 60 wounded [1]
Jewish Currents	31 March 1948	40 civilians, mostly Arabs [2]
Palestine Remembered	27 and 31 March 1948	Two bombings: 24 killed and over 61 wounded, then over 40 killed and 60 wounded [3]
Arabi21 (Haifa–Jaffa train near Netanya, Haganah)	31 March 1948	40 killed [1]

This article adopts the bombing of 31 March 1948 with its documented toll: 40 killed and 60 wounded. The 27 March bombing mentioned in the circulating

account could not be documented and may be a confusion with the train bombing near Rehovot on 29 February, whose victims were British soldiers. [3] [5]

Conclusion

The Stern Gang drew no line between soldier and passenger. After blowing up the Cairo–Haifa train in February 1948, it returned at the end of March to mine it again near Binyamina, killing 40 passengers, mostly Arabs, and wounding 60. The massacre was one link in the chain of terror that preceded and paved the way for the Nakba.

Frequently asked questions about the Binyamina train massacre

When did the Binyamina train massacre take place?

It took place on 31 March 1948.

Who carried out the Binyamina train massacre?

It was carried out by the Zionist Stern Gang (Lehi).

How many people were killed in the Binyamina train massacre?

40, most of them Arab passengers, with 60 wounded.

Was there a second bombing on 27 March 1948?

The circulating account mentions one with 24 killed, but we found nothing documenting it; it may be a confusion with the train bombing near Rehovot on 29 February 1948.

Had the Stern Gang targeted the same train before?

Yes. On 29 February 1948 it blew up the train’s military carriages near Rehovot,

killing 27 British soldiers.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. Hana al-Kahlout, “The Assassination of a Homeland: 37 Israeli Massacres in the Year of the Nakba,” Arabi21, 15 May 2014.
2. “February 29: The Stern Gang,” Jewish Currents.
3. “Zionist Massacres between 1947 and 1996,” Palestine Remembered.
4. UN Palestine Commission, Daily News Summary No. 23, 1 March 1948.
5. UN Palestine Commission, letter from the UK delegation on the train attack near Rehovot, document A/AC.21/UK/55, 3 March 1948.