Guevara of Gaza, Mohammed al-Aswad | The Fighter Who Unsettled Moshe Dayan



The name “Guevara of Gaza” may have eclipsed the real name of **Mohammed Mahmoud Musleh al-Aswad**, the fighter who kept the occupation on edge in Gaza between the late 1960s and early 1970s. Accounts attribute to Moshe Dayan, then the occupation’s war minister, the saying: “We rule Gaza by day and Guevara rules it by night.” [1][2]

He was martyred on 9 March 1973 in Gaza with his comrades Abdel Hadi al-Hayek and Kamel al-Amsi, after occupation forces besieged them in a house behind al-Shifa Hospital. [3][4][1]

Contents

1. At a glance
2. Early life

3. Resistance and imprisonment
4. His method
5. The martyrdom
6. Timeline
7. Frequently asked questions about Mohammed al-Aswad, “Guevara of Gaza”

At a glance

Item	Details
Name	Mohammed Mahmoud Musleh al-Aswad, “Guevara of Gaza”
Born	6 January 1946, Haifa
Affiliation	Arab Nationalists’ Movement, then the Popular Resistance Vanguards, then the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Imprisoned	January 1968 until July 1970
Martyred	9 March 1973, Gaza, with Abdel Hadi al-Hayek and Kamel al-Amsi
Buried	Sheikh Radwan Cemetery, Gaza (per Alwatan Voice)

[3][4][1]

Early life

Mohammed al-Aswad was born in Haifa on 6 January 1946. According to the circulating account his family left for the Gaza Strip after the Nakba while he was a few months old, and settled in one of the UNRWA camps. [3][4]

The circulating text says he tried to complete his university studies in Egypt but poverty stopped him, and he returned to Gaza after a year as a junior clerk. He joined the Arab Nationalists’ Movement in 1963, according to Alwatan Voice and Al-Safsaf. [1][2]

Resistance and imprisonment

After June 1967 he led a fighting group in the “Popular Resistance Vanguards” and later carried on in the ranks of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. [3]

The occupation arrested him in January 1968 and he stayed in prison two and a half years, until his release in July 1970. Sources differ on the day of arrest, between 15 and 25 January. [3][4][5][2]

After his release he took over the military work of the Popular Front in Gaza until his martyrdom, according to the circulating account. [3]

His method

The circulating account attributes to him the tactic “strike your enemy with quick successive blows in several distant places at once”, and says he never spent four hours in one place. [1]

Khaled Barakat describes how he developed “methods of concealment and evasion and of setting tight traps for the occupation forces”. [5]

The martyrdom

On 9 March 1973 the occupation forces learned his location and besieged the house behind al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City with hundreds of soldiers, tanks and air cover, according to Alwatan Voice. [1][2]

He and his comrades Abdel Hadi al-Hayek and Kamel al-Amsi did not surrender; they resolved to fight to the end, and all three were martyred. [2][5]

The account in circulation says Dayan came to Gaza to confirm it, that the officer in charge saluted their bodies, and that the soldiers handed out sweets. Al-Safsaf gives the last as “it is said”, the salute appears only in Alwatan Voice, and Dayan’s presence we did not find in any source. [1][2]

Timeline

Date	Event
6 January 1946	Mohammed al-Aswad is born in Haifa [3]
1963	He joins the Arab Nationalists' Movement [1]
1967	Leads a fighting group in the Popular Resistance Vanguards after June [3]
January 1968	His arrest [3]
July 1970	His release [3]
9 March 1973	The siege of the house behind al-Shifa and his martyrdom with al-Hayek and al-Amsi [1]

Frequently asked questions about Mohammed al-Aswad, "Guevara of Gaza"

Who is Guevara of Gaza?

Mohammed Mahmoud Musleh al-Aswad, a fighter born in Haifa in 1946 who led the Popular Front's military work in Gaza. [3][1]

When was he martyred?

On 9 March 1973 in Gaza with Abdel Hadi al-Hayek and Kamel al-Amsi. [3][5]

What did Moshe Dayan say about him?

He is attributed with: "We rule Gaza by day and Guevara rules it by night." [1][2]

Where is he buried?

In Sheikh Radwan Cemetery in Gaza, per Alwatan Voice. [1]

Sources and references

1. Alwatan Voice, “46 years since the martyrdom of Guevara of Gaza, al-Hayek and al-Amsi” (in Arabic).
2. Al-Safsaf, “Martyr’s Day: the day of Mohammed al-Aswad, Abdel Hadi al-Hayek and Kamel al-Amsi” (in Arabic).
3. Palestinian National Information Center (WAFA), “The Pioneers”, Mohammed Mahmoud Musleh al-Aswad (in Arabic).
4. Quds News Network, “Guevara of Gaza: 46 years since the martyrdom of Mohammed al-Aswad” (in Arabic).
5. Khaled Barakat, “47 years since the martyrdom of Guevara of Gaza: years of embers and revolution (1967–1973)”, Kanaan (in Arabic).