The 1953 Attack on Falamya: Mortars on a Border Village

On the night of 28–29 January 1953, an Israeli occupation army force of 120 to 150 soldiers crossed the armistice line and attacked the border village of Falamya, northeast of Qalqilya, with mortars and explosive charges. The village mukhtar was killed, seven villagers were wounded, three houses were demolished, and the Mixed Armistice Commission condemned Israel. [1]

The attack on Falamya was one of the raids that paved the way for the Qibya massacre in October of the same year. It is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people. [1]

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The attack on Falamya at a glance

Item	Details
Date	The night of 28–29 January 1953 [1]
Place	The village of Falamya, northeast of Qalqilya, about 1.5 km from the armistice line [1] [2]
Perpetrator	An Israeli occupation army force of 120 to 150 soldiers [1]
Weapons	2-inch, 3-inch and 81-mm mortars, PIAT anti-tank launchers and Bangalore torpedoes [1]
Duration	Four and a half hours [1]
Toll	The village mukhtar, Shaykh Qasim Muhammad Qasim, killed; seven wounded; three houses demolished [1] [2]
UN position	The Mixed Armistice Commission condemned Israel [1]

The village of Falamya

Falamya is a Palestinian village about 5 kilometres northeast of Qalqilya and about 1.5 kilometres east of the 1949 armistice line. It borders Kafr Jammal to the east, Jayyous to the south and Kafr Sur to the northeast. Most of its roughly 1,200 people work in farming. [2] [3]

After the Nakba Falamya became a border village exposed to repeated attacks. Local sources say the occupation blew up a house there in 1951, killing its owner Mujahid Salih Abu Dhahir, his son Tahir and his daughter Yusra. [3] [2]

Three weeks of tension

According to the report of the UN Truce Supervision Organization, the attack on Falamya “marked the culmination of three weeks of rapidly developing tension.” On 22 January 1953 an Israeli patrol crossed the armistice line and exchanged fire with the people of Falamya, and an Israeli soldier was killed. [1]

The attack: the night of 28–29 January 1953

On the night of 28–29 January 1953 an Israeli force estimated at 120 to 150

soldiers crossed the armistice line and attacked the villages of Falamya and Rantis. It used 2-inch and 3-inch mortars and PIAT anti-tank launchers, and the attack on Falamya lasted four and a half hours. [1] A memorandum by the acting chairman of the Armistice Commission noted that the attackers also used 81-mm mortars and Bangalore torpedoes. [1]

Local sources say the villagers fought back, and the force withdrew after fierce resistance in which the patrol commander was killed. [3]

The toll: what do the sources say?

Source	Toll
UN Truce Supervision Organization report	The mukhtar killed, seven wounded, three houses demolished [1]
Arab League account (cited by local sources)	The mukhtar killed, seven wounded in the two villages, three houses demolished [2]
Local sources	The mukhtar, Shaykh Qasim Muhammad Qasim, killed; four of his sons wounded; two houses demolished [2] [3]

The victim was the village mukhtar, Shaykh Qasim Muhammad Qasim. [2] [3] The circulating figures of “nine killed” and “more than twenty wounded” could not be found in any documenting source.

UN condemnation

The Jordanian–Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission condemned Israel for this attack. [1] On 27 October 1953 General Vagn Bennike, the UNTSO Chief of Staff, presented the attack on Falamya to the Security Council as part of the series of attacks that preceded the Qibya massacre. [1]

Falamya was not the last village in the area struck by the occupation; it was followed by the 1956 Qalqilya massacre.

Falamya today

The occupation still targets Falamya’s land. About 91.5% of it is classified as Area C, under full Israeli control, and the apartheid separation wall has cut off about 1,507 dunums. In 2017 the occupation extended military orders seizing land in Falamya and Jayyous behind the wall. [4]

Conclusion

On a winter night in 1953 more than a hundred Israeli soldiers crossed the armistice line and pounded Falamya with mortars and explosives for four and a half hours, killing its mukhtar, wounding seven and demolishing three houses. Seventy years later the occupation is still eating away at the village’s land with the wall and military orders.

Frequently asked questions about the attack on Falamya

When did the attack on Falamya take place?

It took place on the night of 28–29 January 1953.

Where is Falamya?

About 5 kilometres northeast of Qalqilya and about 1.5 kilometres east of the armistice line.

How many people were killed in the attack on Falamya?

The village mukhtar, Shaykh Qasim Muhammad Qasim, was killed, seven were wounded and three houses demolished, according to the UN.

What weapons were used in the attack on Falamya?

2-inch, 3-inch and 81-mm mortars, PIAT anti-tank launchers and Bangalore torpedoes.

Did the UN condemn the attack on Falamya?

Yes. The Mixed Armistice Commission condemned Israel, and General Bennike presented the attack to the Security Council.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. Security Council, verbatim record of the 630th meeting (S/PV.630), report of UNTSO Chief of Staff Vagn Bennike, 27 October 1953.
2. “Falamya: History, Location, Origin of the Name and Families,” Qalqilya Times blog, December 2016.
3. Mohammad Hamdan, “Falamya Village – Qalqilya Governorate,” 8 January 2017.
4. “New Extensions of Israeli Military Orders in Jayyous and Falamya within Qalqilya Governorate,” POICA (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem), March 2017.