The massacre of the Nabatiyeh camp



On May 16, 1974, Israeli occupation aircraft destroyed the Nabatiyeh camp in the raids they conducted on it and six other Palestinian refugee camps (including Burj al-Shamali, Rashidiya, and Ain al-Hilweh).

The bombardment led to the martyrdom of more than fifty civilians, most of them women and children, and in a statement from the Red Cross, dozens of children, women, and elderly people were reported injured and trapped under the rubble. The statement indicated that the enemy aircraft focused their attacks on civilians in order to exterminate the Palestinian people, targeting Red Cross clinics and hospitals treating the wounded.

The Nabatiyeh camp is one of the destroyed Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It was established in 1956, covering an area of 13,000 square meters on a high hill about 3 km west of the city of Nabatiyeh in southern Lebanon. The majority of the camp's residents were from the Hawla area in Palestine, especially from the villages of Khalsa, Naameh, Qatia, Ain al-Zeitun, Az-Zawiya, Az-Zuqaq al-Tahtani, Az-Zuqaq al-Fuqani, Lazzaza, Salha, Hunin, and Sahmata. The camp's population was estimated to be around 5,000 inhabitants at its establishment.

The camp was completely destroyed in 1974 by Israeli warplanes. It had previously been partially destroyed in multiple airstrikes starting in 1969 when some sites of Palestinian fedayeen in the camp were targeted. The first airstrike occurred during a meeting of the Fatah movement's leadership at its headquarters in the camp, before subsequent airstrikes in the following years caused partial damage and destruction to the camp. However, in 1974, Israeli aircraft completely destroyed it beyond recognition.

Messages from Arafat to the Kings

The General Commander of the Palestinian revolution, Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestine Liberation Organization, sent a message to all kings and heads of Arab countries, saying: "Our camps have been subjected for the third day in a row to brutal Israeli airstrikes, being executed as part of a permanent Zionist imperial plan aimed at liquidating and exterminating our resilient people."

He added that the joint American-Israeli statement regarding Nixon's visit gave Tel Aviv the green light to continue its attacks.

He concluded his message by saying, "I urge your assistance in this situation, as the residents of these camps have no means of aerial defense."