

Ein el-Hilweh Massacre 1984: Storming the Camp near Sidon

On the night of 15-16 May 1984, on the eve of the expected Israeli withdrawal from Sidon, Israeli occupation forces surrounded and stormed the Ein el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near the city, spreading killing and destruction until the following day. Sixty Palestinians were killed or wounded, homes were demolished, and 150 camp residents were arrested, including women, children and the elderly. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

The chairman of the UN Committee on Palestinian rights told the Security Council the operation “shocks the human conscience.” [\[3\]](#) The massacre came less than two years after [the Sabra and Shatila massacre](#), under the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

Contents

1. [The Ein el-Hilweh massacre at a glance](#)
2. [The camp under occupation](#)
3. [The massacre: the night of 15-16 May 1984](#)
4. [The toll](#)
5. [The UN: “Shocks the human conscience”](#)
6. [Frequently asked questions](#)
7. [Sources and references](#)

The Ein el-Hilweh massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	The night of 15-16 May 1984, from midnight until late the following day [1] [2]

Item	Details
Place	Ein el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, near Sidon, southern Lebanon [1]
Perpetrator	The Israeli occupation army in southern Lebanon, with 1,500 soldiers and 150 vehicles according to the Palestinian account [1] [2]
Casualties	60 killed or wounded according to the UN [1]
Destruction	About 30 houses according to the UN, and 140 according to the Palestinian account [1] [2]
Arrests	150, including women, children and the elderly [1] [2]
International response	The Security Council debated an Arab complaint, and the UN Committee chairman said the operation “shocks the human conscience” [3]

The camp under occupation

Ein el-Hilweh is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, near the city of Sidon in the south. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the camp came under occupation. In the spring of 1984 an Israeli withdrawal from Sidon was expected, and the raid on the camp came on its eve. [\[2\]](#) [\[1\]](#)

The massacre: the night of 15-16 May 1984

According to the Palestinian account, Israel instructed one of its agents, named Hussein Akar, to infiltrate the camp, and a force of 1,500 soldiers and 150 vehicles then surged in behind him. [\[2\]](#) Occupation forces surrounded and entered the camp and carried out a military operation against its civilian residents. [\[1\]](#)

Under the light of flares over the camp, the attackers spread destruction and killing indiscriminately from midnight into the following day. In the morning Israeli forces confronted a protest organized by the camp’s residents and imposed a siege, barring entry and exit, even to ambulances, until late in the day. [\[2\]](#)

The toll

Item	UN documents	Palestinian account
Killed and wounded	60 [1]	15 [2]
Houses destroyed	About 30 [1]	140 [2]
Arrested	150 [1]	150, including women, children and the elderly [2]

The victims, according to the Palestinian account, included young men, the middle-aged, children and women. [\[2\]](#) The UN Committee said it was not yet clear on the day whether the demolitions were a collective punitive measure. [\[1\]](#)

The UN: “Shocks the human conscience”

On 16 May 1984 the Acting Chairman of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People wrote to the Secretary-General, reporting that occupation forces had surrounded and entered the camp, that 60 Palestinians had been killed or wounded, and that 150 had been arrested. [\[1\]](#)

On 21 May the Security Council began debating a complaint by the Arab Group regarding the camp, and the Committee’s chairman, Ambassador Sarr of Senegal, said that “the operation carried out during the night of 15 to 16 May in the refugee camp of Ein El Helweh shocks the human conscience.” [\[3\]](#)

Read about [the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people](#).

Conclusion

On the eve of its withdrawal from Sidon, the occupation army stormed Ein el-Hilweh camp under flares, killing and wounding dozens, demolishing homes, arresting 150 of its residents, and barring even ambulances from entering. The Ein el-Hilweh massacre remains a testament that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon paid the price of the Israeli occupation, less than two years after Sabra and Shatila.

Frequently asked questions about the Ein el-Hilweh massacre

When did the Ein el-Hilweh massacre take place?

It took place on the night of 15–16 May 1984, on the eve of the expected Israeli withdrawal from Sidon.

Where is Ein el-Hilweh camp?

It lies near the city of Sidon in southern Lebanon, and is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon.

How many victims did the Ein el-Hilweh massacre claim?

Sixty killed or wounded according to UN documents, in addition to 150 arrested and dozens of homes demolished.

What did the United Nations say about the Ein el-Hilweh massacre?

The chairman of the UN Committee on Palestinian rights told the Security Council the operation “shocks the human conscience.”

Were ambulances prevented from entering the camp?

Yes; according to the Palestinian account, occupation forces besieged the camp, barring entry and exit, even to ambulances.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. [Letter from the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the Secretary-](#)

[General, 16 May 1984, A/39/263-S/16568.](#)

2. ["Zionist Massacres between 1947 and 1996," Palestine Remembered.](#)
3. [Division for Palestinian Rights Bulletin, May/June 1984, Vol. VII, No. 5-6, United Nations.](#)