Beit Rima Massacre 2001: A Dawn Raid, the Wounded Left to Bleed

Before dawn on 24 October 2001 Israeli occupation forces stormed the village of Beit Rima northwest of Ramallah with tanks, bulldozers, helicopter gunships and undercover units, killing at least 5 Palestinians, wounding dozens, blocking ambulances from the wounded until one bled to death, and arresting about 50 men. [1] [2] [3]

Beit Rima lies in Area A under Palestinian Authority control, [3] and the massacre is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people during the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

Contents

1. The Beit Rima massacre at a glance
2. Context: a revenge campaign after Ze’evi’s assassination
3. The raid: dawn on 24 October
4. The wounded left to bleed
5. The village under siege
6. The toll and the accounts
7. Frequently asked questions
8. Sources and references

The Beit Rima massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	Before dawn on Wednesday, 24 October 2001, between 1:30 and 2:00 a.m. [1] [3]

Item	Details
Place	Beit Rima, northwest of Ramallah, in Area A under Palestinian Authority control [3] [2]
Forces	Undercover units, tanks, bulldozers and helicopter gunships [1] [3]
Killed	At least 5: 3 National Security Force members and 2 Civil Police; initial reports spoke of 10 in Beit Rima and Deir Ghassana [1] [2] [3] [4]
Wounded	Dozens; over 50 according to initial reports [2] [3]
Ambulances blocked	The occupation barred the village doctor and Red Crescent ambulances until 7 a.m.; one wounded man bled to death [1] [2]
Arrests	About 50 men interrogated at the Halamish settlement; 11 kept in detention [1] [2]
Demolitions	Two homes bulldozed, a third burned, 5 occupied [2]

Context: a revenge campaign after Ze’evi’s assassination

The raid was part of a revenge campaign the occupation escalated after the assassination of Israeli minister Rehavam Ze’evi in occupied Jerusalem. In the preceding week about 50 Palestinians, mostly civilians, had been killed, and occupation forces had invaded Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Ramallah and al-Bireh, all in Area A. [3]

The raid: dawn on 24 October

Between 1:30 and 2:00 a.m. occupation forces entered the village with undercover units, tanks, bulldozers and helicopters, [1] firing heavily, including rockets, on residential areas. [3]

Palestinian security officials in the village received no warning and could not alert their men, some of whom were sleeping in an olive grove. Three National Security Force members and two Civil Police officers were killed. [1] An occupation army

commander admitted that at least two of the dead were armed but not firing, and were trying to flee. [2]

The wounded left to bleed

The occupation army prevented the village doctor and Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances from treating those wounded by its fire until 7 a.m., then let the doctor treat them under military escort. [1] Two of the National Security Force members died of their wounds without receiving any treatment, according to eyewitnesses. [1]

The occupation also barred the Red Cross and the media from entering the village. [3] [2]

The village under siege

The occupation imposed a curfew and sealed the village, and soldiers gathered residents, children among them, in the village centre. [3] [2] About 50 men were arrested and interrogated at the nearby Halamish settlement; 11 were kept in detention and the rest released the same day. [1]

Soldiers used 14-year-old Yusuf as a human shield, forcing him at gunpoint to approach houses ahead of them, and forced Radi Yusuf Ahmad Hajjaj to help them carry out arrests. They took over the home of Hanna Nimr Ahmad al-Barghouti, turned it into a military post while keeping the family inside, and later demolished it. [1] Bulldozers flattened two homes, a third burned during the raid, and soldiers occupied five others. [2]

Human Rights Watch described the use of the boy as a clear violation of the occupation’s obligations to protect children, and the demolition of relatives’ homes as “collective punishment” in breach of international humanitarian law. [1]

The toll and the accounts

Source	Toll
Human Rights Watch	5 killed (3 National Security Force, 2 Civil Police), at least 7 wounded [1]
Palestine Chronology	At least 5 killed, dozens wounded, 11 detained [2]
PCHR (day of the raid)	10 killed according to Israeli military sources, over 50 wounded [3]
MIFTAH (day of the raid)	10 killed in Beit Rima and Deir Ghassana [4]

This article adopts the documented toll: at least 5 killed. The figure of 16 killed found in some accounts could not be documented.

Conclusion

The occupation stormed Beit Rima while its people slept, killed security men who had received no warning, left the wounded to bleed to death, used a boy as a human shield, then demolished homes and arrested the men. The massacre was a model of the collective punishment the occupation practised during the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

Frequently asked questions about the Beit Rima massacre

When did the Beit Rima massacre take place?

Before dawn on Wednesday, 24 October 2001.

How many people were killed in the Beit Rima massacre?

At least 5 according to documentation; initial reports spoke of 10 in Beit Rima and Deir Ghassana.

Why did the occupation raid Beit Rima?

As part of a revenge campaign after the assassination of Israeli minister Rehavam Ze’evi.

What happened to the wounded?

The occupation prevented the doctor and ambulances from reaching them until 7 a.m.; some died of their wounds without treatment.

Where were the detainees interrogated?

At the Halamish settlement near the village; 11 were kept in detention.

Sources and references

1. Human Rights Watch, “In a Dark Hour: The Use of Civilians during IDF Arrest Operations,” April 2002.
2. “Wednesday, October 24, 2001,” Palestine Chronology, Institute for Palestine Studies.
3. Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, “Israeli Forces Kill 10 Palestinians in Raid on Village,” press release, 24 October 2001.
4. MIFTAH, “Israeli Massacres Continue in Beit Rima,” appeal, 24 October 2001.