

Osama bin Zaid School Massacre 2023: Displaced Shelled in Saftawi

On the evening of Friday, 3 November 2023, during [the genocidal war on Gaza](#), Israeli occupation forces struck the Osama bin Zaid school complex in al-Saftawi, north of Gaza City, which was sheltering hundreds of displaced people, mostly women and children. At least 20 Palestinians were killed, dozens were wounded, and others went missing under the rubble. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

Hours later the occupation shelled [al-Fakhura school](#) in Jabalia. [\[2\]](#) It is one of [the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people](#).

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The Osama bin Zaid school massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	Evening of Friday, 3 November 2023, shortly before 8:30 [1]
Place	The Osama bin Zaid school complex, al-Saftawi, north of Gaza City [1]

Item	Details
Sheltering	Hundreds of displaced people, mostly women and children [1]
Perpetrator	The Israeli occupation army [1] [2]
Killed	At least 20, with estimates up to 63 [1] [2]
Wounded	Dozens [1] [2]
Context	Hours before the shelling of al-Fakhura school in Jabalia [2]

Schools turned shelters

When the assault on Gaza began in October 2023, many residents took refuge in schools, believing them protected under international humanitarian law. The Osama bin Zaid school in al-Saftawi was one of them, sheltering hundreds of displaced people, mostly women and children. [\[1\]](#)

The massacre: the evening of 3 November 2023

Shortly before 8:30 p.m. on Friday 3 November, occupation forces struck the school complex. [\[1\]](#) Sources differ on the method: some speak of an air strike, others of tank shelling. [\[1\]](#)

Ambulance and civil defence crews recovered the bodies of at least 20 people, most of them children and women, along with dozens of wounded, while others remained missing. Estimates of the dead ranged from 20 to 63. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

The victims

Airwars documented the names of nine of the dead, eight of them from the al-Araj family: the father Sami, the mother Faten, five of their sons, and the mother’s nephew. [\[1\]](#)

Name	Age
Sami Mustafa Saado al-Araj	48

Name	Age
Faten Saeed Mohammed al-Araj	40
Muhammad Sami al-Araj	22
Muhammad Shaaban al-Araj	19
Mustafa Sami al-Araj	18
Mahmoud Sami al-Araj	17
Musab Sami al-Araj	15
Hamid Sami al-Araj	13
Basma Abu Karsh (Umm Ahmad Shaheen)	—

Among the wounded were Abu Ahmad Shaheen, Bassam Shaheen and Mahmoud Shaheen. [\[1\]](#)

The occupation's pretext

More than two months later, on 12 January 2024, the occupation army published footage claiming an aircraft had spotted Hamas firing from a school and a mosque in Gaza. It did not name the school, but the footage matched its location. The footage did not show a strike on the school, and Airwars found no evidence of militants there or killed in the strike. [\[1\]](#)

Conclusion

Hundreds of displaced people fled the bombardment to the Osama bin Zaid school, and the bombardment followed them there, killing at least 20, among them the al-Araj family, who lost the father, the mother and five sons. That same night and the next morning other shelters for the displaced in northern Gaza were shelled, in a war that spared no refuge.

Frequently asked questions about the Osama bin Zaid school massacre

When did the Osama bin Zaid school massacre take place?

On the evening of Friday, 3 November 2023, during the genocidal war on Gaza.

Where is the Osama bin Zaid school?

In al-Saftawi, north of Gaza City.

How many people were killed?

At least 20, mostly children and women, with some estimates as high as 63.

Who are the known victims?

Eight members of the al-Araj family, including the father Sami, the mother Faten and five of their sons, as well as Basma Abu Karsh.

Were there militants in the school?

Airwars found no evidence of militants in the school or of militants killed in the strike.

Sources and references

1. [Incident ISPT0840 – 3 November 2023, Airwars civilian harm monitor.](#)
2. [“Israeli Strike on UNRWA School Kills 15 and Injures 70, Says Gaza Ministry of Health,” Egyptian Streets, 4 November 2023.](#)