Shuja’iyya Massacre 2004: 12 Killed and 20 Children Wounded

At dawn on Wednesday, 11 February 2004, an Israeli undercover unit infiltrated from the Nahal Oz crossing into the Shuja’iyya neighborhood east of Gaza City, followed by heavy military vehicles under cover of intense shelling, pushing about a kilometer and a half into the crowded neighborhood. Within hours 12 Palestinians were killed, more than 40 were wounded, including 20 children, and soldiers blew up a house that was home to three families. [1]

Fifteen Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip that day, 12 of them in Shuja’iyya, [2] [1] and occupation forces prevented ambulances from reaching the wounded. [1] Three weeks later, occupation forces committed the Nuseirat and Bureij massacre in the central Strip.

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The Shuja’iyya massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	Dawn on Wednesday, 11 February 2004, at about 5 a.m. [1]
Place	The Shuja’iyya neighborhood, east of Gaza City, near the Nahal Oz crossing [1]
Perpetrator	An Israeli undercover unit, followed by heavy military vehicles under cover of intense shelling [1]
Depth	About 1,500 meters into the neighborhood [1]
Killed	12 in Shuja’iyya, and 15 across the Gaza Strip that day [1] [2]
Wounded	More than 40, including 20 children; at least 60 according to al-Shifa doctors [1] [2]
Demolition	The two-storey Abu Hassanain family house, home to three families, was blown up [1]

The massacre: dawn on 11 February 2004

At about 5 a.m. an Israeli undercover unit entered from the Nahal Oz crossing and advanced toward a Palestinian National Security Forces post, killing Mohammed Kamal Abu Armana (22) of al-Bureij camp and wounding two of his colleagues. Minutes later the main force advanced with heavy vehicles about 1,500 meters into Shuja’iyya, under cover of intense artillery shelling. [1]

According to doctors at al-Shifa Hospital, the wounded included at least three boys hit while standing in side streets. [2] Most of the victims were killed by live bullets and artillery shrapnel, and occupation forces prevented ambulances from entering the area. [1]

The Abu Hassanain house

Occupation forces surrounded the Abu Hassanain family house, a two-storey, 250-square-meter home lying, according to the circulated account, about 200 meters from the armistice line. They ordered the three families living there, 17 people in all, to leave, then opened fire on the house, where three young men were sheltering, among them the family’s son, Ashraf Abu Hassanain (22). [1]

After the exchange of fire stopped, occupation forces blew up the house with the three young men inside; their bodies were later found nearby: Ashraf Abu Hassanain, Ayman Nasser al-Sheikh Khalil (22) and Mohammed al-Hayek (25). [1]

The killed and the wounded

Name	Age	Notes
Mohammed Kamal Abu Armana	22	National Security Forces officer, from al-Bureij camp
Ashraf Abu Hassanain	22	Killed in his family's demolished house
Ayman Nasser al-Sheikh Khalil	22	Killed in the demolished house
Mohammed al-Hayek	25	Killed in the demolished house
Hani Mahmoud Abu Sukhaila	25	From Jabalia camp
Haitham Zaki Abed	25	From Shuja'iyya
Mohammed Ayesh al-Ajla	45	From Shuja'iyya
Isma'il Mohammed Abu al-Ata	28	From Shuja'iyya
Mohammed Ahmed Helles	17	From Shuja'iyya
Akram Oqailan	25	From al-Shati camp
Mahdi Ya'qoub Zaidia	25	From Shuja'iyya
Amer Othman al-Ghamari	24	From Shuja'iyya

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights documented the names of the twelve killed. [1] More than 40 were wounded, including 20 children and boys under eighteen, some seriously, [1] while al-Shifa doctors said at least 60 were wounded, nine of them seriously. [2]

Reactions

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei called the raid a "crime," Nabil Abu Rudeineh announced that the Authority would submit an urgent complaint to the Security Council "to stop Israeli massacres and crimes," and Saeb Erekat called on

the Quartet to intervene. [2]

The following day the UN Secretary-General deplored “the loss of life during Israeli military incursions in Gaza,” called on Israel to cease “using disproportionate force in densely populated areas,” and noted that the wounded included “several critically wounded children.” [2]

Read about the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people.

Conclusion

On a single February dawn in 2004, occupation forces stormed Shuja’iyya under artillery cover, killing 12 Palestinians, blowing up a house that was home to three families, and wounding more than 40, nearly half of them children, while keeping ambulances from reaching them. The Shuja’iyya massacre remains a testament to the use of excessive force in Gaza’s crowded neighborhoods, condemned even by the UN Secretary-General.

Frequently asked questions about the Shuja’iyya massacre

When did the Shuja’iyya massacre take place?

It took place at dawn on Wednesday, 11 February 2004, not on 11 December as some texts state.

How many people were killed in the Shuja’iyya massacre?

Twelve Palestinians were killed in Shuja’iyya, and 15 across the Gaza Strip that day; more than 40 were wounded, including 20 children.

What happened to the Abu Hassanain family house?

Occupation forces surrounded it, ordered out 17 members of three families, then shelled it and blew it up with three young men inside, all of whom were killed.

Where did occupation forces enter Shuja’iyya from?

An undercover unit entered from the Nahal Oz crossing east of Gaza, followed by heavy vehicles that pushed about 1,500 meters into the neighborhood.

What was the reaction to the Shuja’iyya massacre?

Ahmed Qurei called it a “crime,” the Authority sought a Security Council session, and the UN Secretary-General called on Israel to stop using disproportionate force.

Sources and references

1. “Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, 12 February 2004.
2. “Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: February 2004,” Division for Palestinian Rights, United Nations.