

Operation Cast Lead: 16 year-old boy killed on his way back from school

On 27 December 2008 Israeli F16 aircrafts bombed the preventive security building in Tal al-Hawa, Gaza City. The time of the strike corresponded to the mid-day change in school-shifts and many children from the nearby Nile secondary school for boys were on the streets coming to school or going back home. Two classmates Yousif (16) and Mustafa (16) were on their way home. As a result of the attack, Yousif lost consciousness and was taken to the nearby Red Crescent al-Quds hospital. He came to at 10:00pm and had sustained severe injuries to his right leg and head for which he had to undergo surgery. He learnt that his friend Mustafa and at least three other schoolmates had been killed in the attack.



The following information is based on an affidavit taken by DCI-Palestine from Yousif on 29 May 2009:

On 27 December 2008, 16-year-old Yousif K. and his friend and classmate Mustafa Khadr Saber Abu Ghanima finished their end-of-semester exams at the Nile Secondary School for boys in Tal al-Hawa. They headed home at about 11:00am and everything was calm.

One the way back home, Mustafa and I were playing around and kicking everything we found, as if we were playing football. We walked on the street that leads to the government security headquarters to the west. Everything was calm and normal. We reached the east fence surrounding the government security headquarters. Mustafa was on my left. Around 20 boys and girls were walking in front of us and behind us.

Suddenly, I heard an explosion. Huge blocks of concrete started to fall on us. Thick dust filled the street. I did not realize what was going on. I tried to bend over but I felt a stone hitting me in the head. I fell onto the ground. I could not understand what was going on.

I was still lying on the ground, when stones and rubbles stopped falling on us. I looked to where my friend Mustafa was walking. I saw him on the ground near the northwest fence of the government security headquarters. I saw him clearly; he was about five metres away. I could not do anything. I tried to run away but I fell on the ground once I stood. I looked at my right leg. It was swinging. I could not stand on it. I was not feeling any pain. Blood was warm, and kept running from my head. For more than five minutes, I was able to see only those lying on the ground.

“Here’s a fatality! Here’s an injury! Carry this. Take this”

I grew tired of trying to stand and saw more than five people lying motionlessness in the street. I think they were children from the school. I did not know what had happened to them. I could not stand, so I crawled on my abdomen. I crawled for about 10 metres and felt dizzy. I felt exhausted and remained where I was. Then, I heard shouting around me, but could not see who was shouting. “Here’s a fatality! Here’s an injury! Carry this. Take this,” I heard them saying. This is what I could hear. After that, I was no longer able to hear anything, but I felt someone carrying me.

At around 10:00pm, I woke up to find myself in the Red Crescent al-Quds hospital. I asked my father what had happened, and he said they had bombed the government security headquarters. He said I had been injured in my right leg and had undergone a surgery. My head was severely injured as well. I asked about my friend Mustafa and my father said he had been killed in the incident.

At least 12 children were killed in the attack:

- Ahmad Reiad Mohammad al-Senwar (3)
- Tamer Hasan Ali al-Akhras (5)
- Odai Abed al-Hakim Rajab Mansi (6)
- Yahia Ibrahim Farouq al-Hayek (11)
- Kamelia Ra'fat al-Bardini (13)
- Khaled Sami al-Astal (14)
- Abed al-Hamid Jamal Khaled al-Sawi (14)
- Hanin Wa'el Mohammad Dhaban (15)
- Yasmin Wa'el Mohammad Dhaban (16)
- Mustafa Khader Saber Abu Ghanima (16)
- Ahmad Rasmi Mohammad Abu Jazar (16)
- Mohammad Jaber Jaber Hweij (17)

Many others were maimed or wounded.

During Operation Cast Lead, many children were killed as a result of Israeli military attacks targeting schools or alleged military objectives located in close proximity to schools. DCI-Palestine, as of today, has documented the killing of at least 32 children and the injuring of at least six who were in/near their schools, or on their way to/from schools when they were killed.

DCI-Palestine, 29 August 2009.