

## In a Single Hour, Israeli Snipers Killed Seven Bystanders at the Jenin Refugee Camp

Jenin has endured plenty of rough days lately, but May 21 outdid them all. What happened?



*Kamal, the 5-year-old son of the slain Dr. Jabareen, holds a picture of his family.*

Credit: Alex Levac

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Mounds of rubble in the Jenin refugee camp; once again mounds of rubble in the Jenin camp. A putrid stench rising from sewage flowing in the streets, dirt paths, streets reduced to pits and heaps of stones. The refugee camp was rehabilitated amazingly with a donation from the United Arab Emirates in 2002 following the Israel Defense Forces' incursion that spring. But now there isn't a street that hasn't been razed by IDF bulldozers, not a public square that hasn't been reduced to rubble, along with many stores that have been destroyed.

The IDF has [raided the camp](#) and the city in which the camp is situated multiple times recently; every incursion leaves behind dozens more killed or wounded. It looks as though the soldiers would rather be in the Gaza Strip and are compensating themselves by behaving in Jenin as though that's where they were. In "[Little Gaza](#)," as the Jenin refugee camp is known these days, the images speak for themselves. Two armed militants on a moped pass us in the wrecked alleyway, despair hangs palpably in the air.

Jenin has endured plenty of rough days lately, but May 21 outdid them all. In the course of one hour in the morning, snipers killed seven of the city's residents, all of them innocent passersby, even though the streets were quiet and the soldiers had no cause to open fire. They shot from high up in two buildings, called Rabia and A-Rein, just outside the camp, and the dead included two teenagers and the director of the surgical ward at the Jenin Governmental Hospital, who was just getting out of his car in the hospital's parking lot.

And if that bloodbath wasn't enough, just hours later, at dusk, soldiers burst into the Jenin home of Wafa, a 51-year-old social activist who had never been arrested before, ransacked the house and took her with them when they left. She remained in their jeep, bound, for about four hours. Then, as the

vehicle started to move out toward their base, it exploded (apparently after a device was thrown at it), leaving the woman seriously wounded; both legs were subsequently amputated above the knee. She is hospitalized in serious condition in Jenin's Ibn Sina Hospital, ventilated and barely responsive.



*A pile of ruins in the Jenin refugee camp following the recent IDF operation.*  
Credit: Alex Levac

A single day in Jenin. This week we walked through the streets of the city and the alleyways of the refugee camp in the wake of the events of May 21.

Dr. Osaid Jabareen lived in a fine stone house in the city's al-Marah neighborhood, together with his wife, Haneen Jarrar, 41, and their five children, aged 4 to 16. He attended medical school in Leningrad, when the Russian city still bore that name, and did a residency in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Dr. Jabareen, 50, was the director of the surgical ward at the Shaheed Dr. Khalil Suleiman Governmental Hospital. Over the years he operated on thousands of people wounded by the IDF in the city and the camp. His late father, Kamal, was a professor of geography at Bir Zeit University, adjacent to Ramallah, and also lectured at Princeton and Harvard. His cousin is attorney Hassan Jabareen, the general director of Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel. His family has its origins in the city of Umm al-Fahm, in northern Israel.

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- **No policy, no goals: Israel's rolling campaign on two fronts could become an all-out war**
- **Israel is hiding its draconian detention of Palestinians from the public**

Dr. Jabareen was the first of the fatalities in Jenin on May 21. Soon after dropping off his children at their respective schools and kindergarten, he arrived at the hospital. He got out of his car in the parking lot and had walked 16 meters – measured by Abdulkarim Sadi, a field researcher for the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem – when suddenly, with no prior warning, he came under fire. A bullet struck him in the back, slamming into his spinal cord, killing him on the spot.

On the slain doctor's balcony, which overlooks the city and its refugee camp, his brother, attorney Qais Jabareen, a resident of Jordan, says that the Red Crescent logo was pasted on the windshield of the car in addition to a sign: "Doctor on call." "If I were a sniper I would have seen those identifying marks of a physician," his brother says, adding that Aseed never belonged to any political organization and that his only interest was his work as a surgeon. Over the years he turned down offers to work in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. "He had a commitment to the wounded of Jenin, who couldn't afford to pay and would come to the governmental hospital," Qais says.



*From left: Qais Jabareen, brother of Dr. Osaid Jabareen, another relative and Kamal, the 5-year-old son of the slain doctor, at his home in Jenin. Credit: Alex Levac*

His brother was rushed from the parking lot into the hospital – but all the physicians there could do was to pronounce their colleague dead. His son Kamal, a fine-looking boy of 5 named for his grandfather, arrives on the porch with a bashful smile. He already knows what happened to his father.

Sadi's investigation found that the streets were quiet at the time, and that no one was aware that undercover snipers had taken over two rooftops in the city as the platforms for their killing spree. After investigating the background of all seven of those who were killed in the first hour, Sadi's unequivocal conclusion is that all were innocent civilians who were shot for no reason.

Minutes after they shot the physician, the snipers shot and killed Allam Jaradat, a 48-year-old teacher who was on his way to the school where he taught; Amir Abu Amira, 21, and his uncle, Moamar Abu Amira, 50, both of whom tried to come to Jaradat's aid; Mahmoud Hamadna, 15, who was shot about 100 meters from the site of the physician's killing as he was riding his electric bike on the way home from school (when it became known that snipers were in the city classes were canceled and the students were sent home); another teenager, Osama Hajeer, 16, who worked as a delivery boy; and – the last of the snipers' victims in the first hour – Bassem Turkman, a passerby of 53.

According to Sadi, the Israeli special forces had never before killed with such indiscriminate abandon. By the end of the day, the IDF would kill another three people, two of whom were in fact wanted individuals. In the course of the day, some 50 residents of the city were wounded, some of them seriously. One of them was Anton Zubeidi, who belongs to the camp's best-known family of fighters. Sitting in the entrance to Ibn Sina Hospital in black attire is the father of the family, [Jamal Zubeidi](#), one of the most amazing, courageous and tragic figures of the Jenin camp, someone who has been featured in many of these columns over the years.



*Anton Zubeidi, in the hospital this week. He was on his way to work when he heard the gunfire. Frightened, he retraced his steps back toward the camp. A bullet struck his right leg, shrapnel sliced into his back. Credit: Alex Levac*

Over the last year and a half, Jamal has buried two of his sons: Hamudi, who was killed on November 29, 2023, and Naim, killed almost exactly a year earlier, on December 1, 2022. Jamal's other son, Yusuf, is in administrative detention – imprisonment without charges or a trial – and now Anton, his eldest son, is seriously wounded. Anton's cousin, Zakaria Zubeidi, who was like a brother to him while growing up, is the most famous figure in the family, having served as the leader of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in Jenin during the second intifada. During that same period, Zakaria's two brothers and his mother were killed.

Initially, there were fears for Anton's life, because he had lost so much blood. Now he's recovering in room 208 of Ibn Sina Hospital, still unable to stand on his legs.

Anton, 38, was walking from the camp to his job as an automotive glazier in the city's industrial zone. He had just passed the refrigerator of the cadavers in the hospital's east wing when he heard the gunfire that killed Dr. Jabareen. Frightened, he quickly retraced his steps back the short way toward the camp.

It was 7:50 A.M. A bullet struck his right leg, shrapnel sliced into his back. Falling to the ground, he began to crawl in search of shelter. Finally he hid behind a tree and waited about 20 minutes, wounded and not daring to budge.



*Israeli forces at the entrance to Jenin this week. Credit: AFP*

In the meantime, Anton also called his father, who immediately summoned a Red Crescent ambulance. "We're on the way," they told Jamal. But the shooting continued, and the ambulance arrived only 20 minutes after Anton was shot. He was bleeding profusely, and according to Jamal the ambulance was shot at even after his son was in the vehicle. The driver managed to reach the nearby Governmental Hospital, but because of the seriousness of Anton's wound, he was transferred to the more advanced and better-equipped Ibn Sina Hospital.

It is in fact a polished, impressive institution. In our visit this week, we were ushered into a smartly designed modern office, where we were presented with an overview of the hospital before proceeding to room 208. Anton and his wife, Asma, have three children, with a fourth on the way. This was not the first time he's been wounded, and he has already undergone several operations here. He lost a lobe of one lung after being shot by an army drone. When he was 14 he was in a car in the camp when soldiers opened fire on the vehicle, killing the driver before Anton's eyes. On the other hand, he's the only member of the family who's never been arrested, other than very briefly last December. His father was worried that he wouldn't get his medications in prison, but fortunately Anton was released after three days without being charged.

The daughter and brother of Wafa, the social activist who was abducted and had to have her legs amputated, enter Anton's room. (They asked not to be identified by name.) They show us photographs of the destruction the soldiers wrought during a search of their home. Wafa continues to be hospitalized in the intensive care unit of Ibn Sina. Her family hasn't been given any information about the circumstances in which she was wounded, and there were no witnesses. Initially it was decided to leave her in administrative detention, but after nine days of hospitalization at Haemek Hospital in Afula, where her legs were amputated, she was transferred to the hospital in Jenin. Her family says that at first they were told that her condition was less serious than it actually is.



*Ruins in the Jenin refugee camp, this week. Credit: Alex Levac*

They add that the soldiers who came to the house to take Wafa behaved roughly and that there wasn't one female soldier among them, as is customary when an Arab woman is being arrested, even by the IDF. Her husband, Abd el-Jaber, has been incarcerated without trial for some months, and his administrative detention was recently extended by an additional four months.

Besides the double amputation, Wafa is suffering from internal injuries. Being on a ventilator makes it impossible for her to speak – her family is unclear about her mental state and they don't know if she is aware that she has lost both legs. "If it was an explosive device, how is it that only she was wounded and not a single soldier?" they ask.

Jamal Zubeidi leaves his son's room in the hospital with the aid of his heavy walker, and we drive to his home in the camp. The scenes along the way are grim, and an oppressive silence is felt in the car. It was also Jamal who led us through the refugee camp when it was destroyed by the IDF 22 years ago.

The IDF Spokesperson said in response to a request for comment: "During an operation to thwart terrorism in Jenin, which lasted about 40 hours, defense forces exchanged fire with armed terrorists, dozens of whom were hit. During the operation, army forces identified a large number of armed assailants hiding in civilian areas, like the Jenin Governmental Hospital. The circumstances under which uninvolved civilians were hit are under investigation."

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