

Casualty Statistics

Resolving the discrepancies

Fatalities in the Gaza War: an overview

According to PCHR, some 1,434 Palestinians were killed in Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip; these included 235 combatants, 239 police officers, and 960 civilians. Of the latter, 121 were women and 288 were children (defined as anyone under 18 years old).

Fatalities in the Gaza War: an overview

ICT's research—based both on Hamas websites and on investigation into the circumstances under which people were killed—has so far individually identified at least 314 combatants; as this effort is ongoing, the number will almost certainly increase.

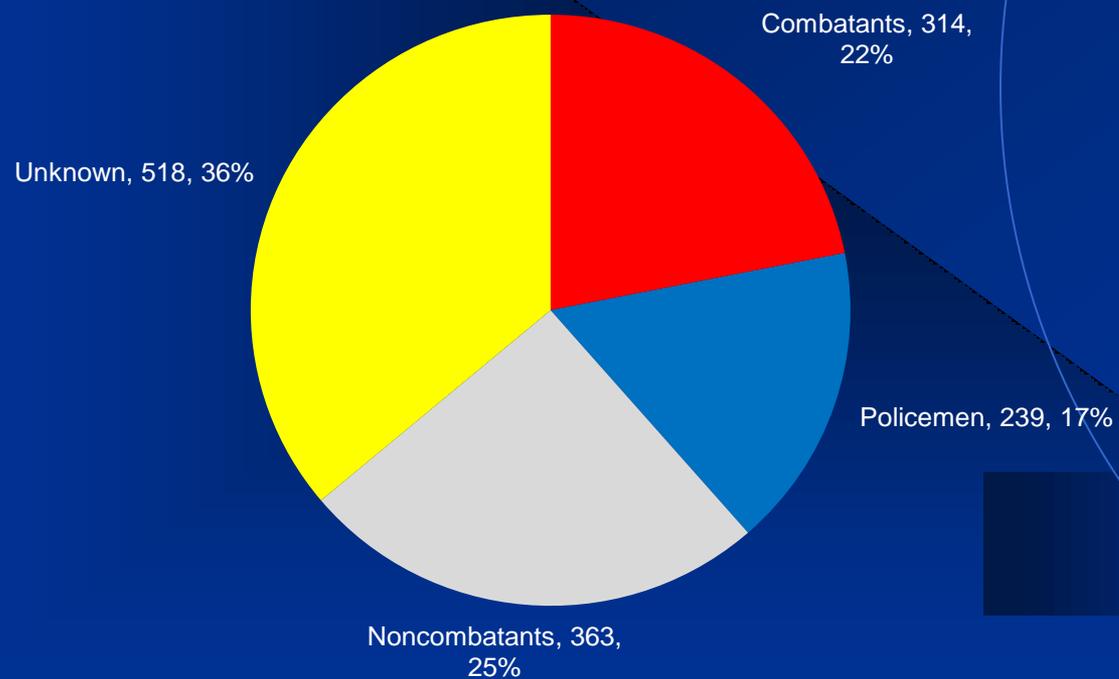
Fatalities in the Gaza War: an overview

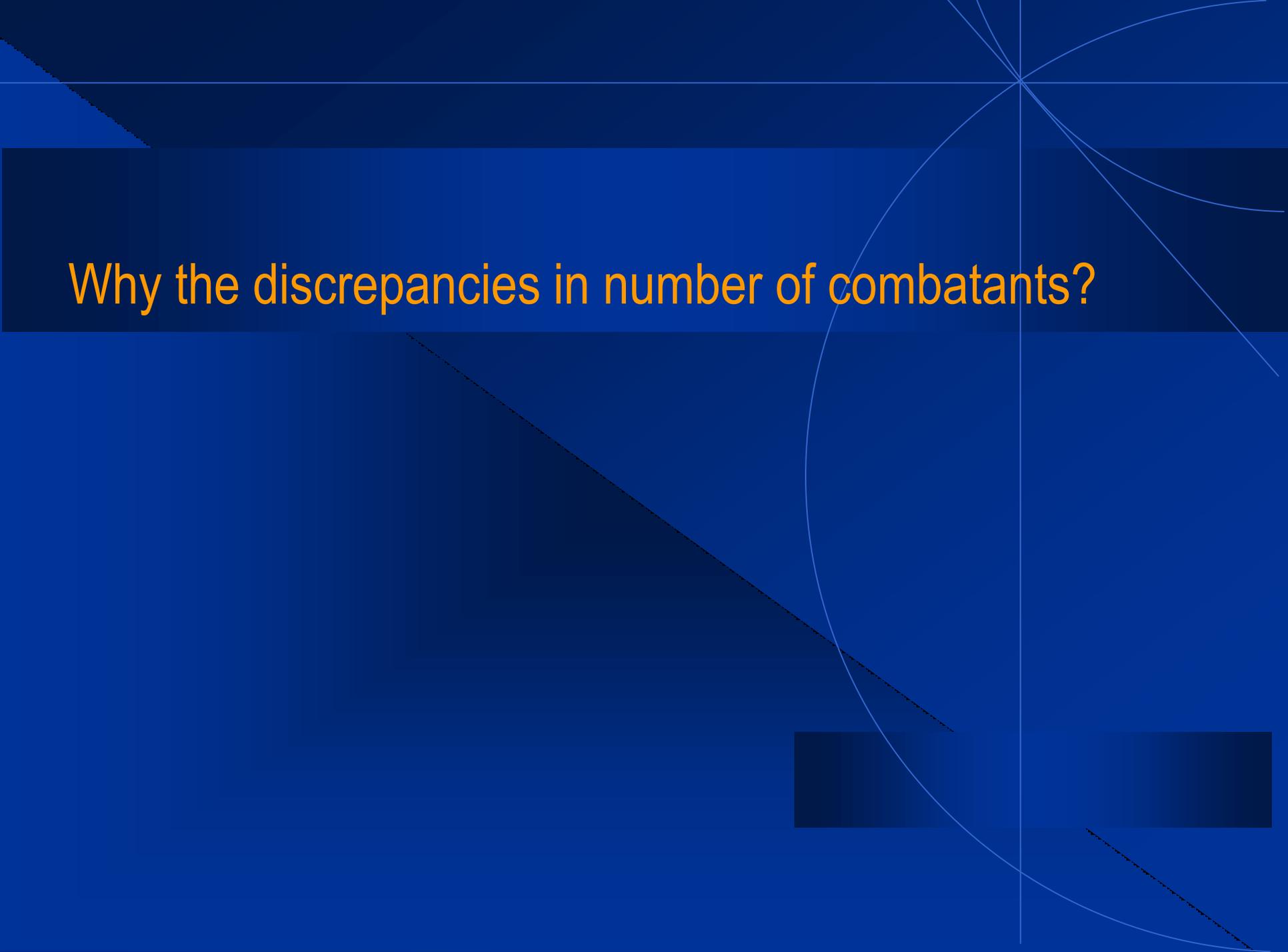
18 of these identified combatants were younger than 18, and thus counted as “children” by PCHR.

(Detail: 1 14-year-old, 4 16-year-olds, and 13 17-year-olds.)

Not counting policemen, we have so far identified 363 noncombatants, leaving us with around 518 “unknowns” – all of them male.

Fatalities in the Gaza War: An overview



The background is a solid blue color. It features several white geometric elements: a vertical line, a horizontal line, and a large circle. These lines and the circle intersect to form various shapes. There are also several black rectangular shapes scattered across the page, including a large one at the top and two smaller ones at the bottom right.

Why the discrepancies in number of combatants?

Why the discrepancies in number of combatants?

Many of those claimed by PCHR to be “civilians” were in fact hailed as “militant martyrs” by Hamas.

التقرير الأسبوعي - Mozilla Firefox

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http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/w_report/arabic/2008/15-01-2009.html

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مركز الميراث لحقوق الإنسان | إبراهيم عايش سليمان | G... | التقرير الأسبوعي | صور شهداء كتائب القسام | صور الشهيد المجاهد إبراهيم / إ...

وفي ساعات المساء، قصفت قوات الاحتلال بالمنفعية اثنين من المقاومين في منطقة السلاطين، غرب بيت لاهيا، مما أدى إلى مقتلهما، وهما: عمر جمعة، 19 عاماً، وأحمد إبراهيم جمعة، 24 عاماً. كما سُرعِ التصف عن مقتل المواطن عبد الحكيم خضر السنطان، 51 عاماً، أثناء تواجده داخل منزله في نفس المنطقة.

وفي حوالي الساعة 6:45 مساءً، قصفت طائرات الاحتلال منزلاً يقع بالقرب من دور الشيخ زايد، وسط بيت لاهيا، ما أدى إلى إحدك أضرار جسيمة في المنقره والمنازل المجاورة.

وفي حوالي الساعة 7:20 مساءً، قصفت طائرة لستطلاع إسرائيلية مجموعة من المواطنين كانوا يجلسون أمام منازلهم في منطقة الخراب، غرب مكره بيت لاهيا مما أدى لمقتل ثلاثة مواطنين من عائلة واحدة، وإصابة ستة آخرين بجروح. والتكلى، هم: عبد المعطي راتب سثمان، 20 عاماً؛ رامي جمال سثمان، 24 عاماً؛ وسامي عمر سثمان، 35 عاماً.

وفي حوالي الساعة 10:00 مساءً، قصفت طائرات الاحتلال منزل المواطن وحيد أحمد الواقع بالقرب من مسجد التوبة وسط مخيم جباليا ما أدى إلى كتموره، وهو مكون من طابق واحد وتقطعه عائلتان تواسها 14 فرداً.

وفي حوالي الساعة 2:00 فجر يوم الأحد الموافق 11/1/2009، أطلقت طائرة لستطلاع إسرائيلية صاروخاً تجاه منطقة أبراج الكرامة، فسقط بالقرب من منازل المواطنين. ولدى خروج مجموعة من المواطنين من منازلهم، أطلقت صاروخاً آخر، مما أدى إلى مقتل أربعة منهم، من بينهم مواطن وزوجته ونجلهما، ومواطنة مسنة. والتكلى، هم: علاء فتح بشير، وإصابة آخرين من نفس العائلة بجروح، وبعد إخلاء المنزل كانت الجرافات بتكريفه. والتكلى، هما: إبراهيم محمد خلف، 35 عاماً؛ وبلال يحيى محمد خلف، 19 عاماً.

وفي حوالي الساعة 4:20 فجراً، قصفت طائرات الاحتلال مقر الأمن والحماية المجاور لمقر شرطة بيت لاهيا بصاروخ، ما أدى إلى كتموره. كما سقط صاروخ آخر لم ينفجر على مقر الشرطة وتسبب بتوقع أضرار بالغة في مقر بلدية بيت لاهيا، المقابل من الناحية الغربية إلى جانب أضرار في منازل مجاورة.

وفي حوالي الساعة 4:30 فجراً، قصفت طائرات الاحتلال منزل المواطن محمد أبو صقر المكون من أربعة طوابق وتقطعه أربع عائلات تواسها 26 فرداً، ويقع بالقرب من مسجد القسام في مشروح بيت لاهيا، ما أدى إلى كتميره بشكل كامل، وإحراق أضرار في المنازل المجاورة.

وفي حوالي الساعة 9:30 صباحاً، قصفت طائرات الاحتلال مجموعة من المواطنين أثناء تواجدهم في محيط منازلهم بالقرب من منازلهم في منطقة العيون، محيط مسجد أولي العزم في بيت لاهيا، ما أدى لمقتل خمسة أطفال من عائلتين، بينهما شقيقان، وإصابة 7 مواطنين آخرين من عائلة غبن. والتكلى هم: هشام ياسر معروف، 12 عاماً؛ فاطمة محمد رشدي

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❖ إجراء التصف العشوائي من طائرة حربية، قتل المواطن إبراهيم عايش سليمان، 25 عاماً، أثناء تواجده في منطقة أبراج الكرامة في بيت لاهيا.

Mozilla Firefox - صور الشهيد المجاهد / إبراهيم عايش سليمان (أبو خليل) - شبكة فلسطين للحوار

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http://www.paldf.net/forum/showthread.php?t=353244

وسام إبراهيم نبهان

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مركز الميزان لحقوق الإنسان | "إبراهيم عايش سليمان" - G... | التقرير الأسبوعي | صور شهداء كتائب القسام ... | صور الشهيد المجاهد / إب...



#2

رد : صور الشهيد المجاهد / إبراهيم عايش سليمان [أبو خليل]
الى الفردوس الاعلى ان شاء الله

15:01 21-01-2009

وليد ضابط 109
عضو

رقم العضوية : 56496
التسجيل : 2007 12
الإقامة : غزة

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<http://www.paldf.net/forum/showthread.php?t=353244>

According to PCHR:

“The body of the civilian, Abdallah Abdel Hamid Muamar, 22 years-old, from Al-Nassar Village north of Rafah, arrived at approximately 8:00. He was killed in a mortar attack on the village the previous evening.

*وفي حوالي الساعة 8:00 صباحاً، وصل جثمان المواطن عبد الله عبد الحميد معمر ، 22 عاماً، من قرية النصر ،شمال رفح، جراء القصف المدفعي الذي تتعرض له القرية منذ ساعات مساء أمس.



Abdallah Abdel Hamid Muamar, was hailed as a al-Qassam martyr by the Media Department of Al-Qassam Brigades.

<http://www.almoltaqa.ps/arabic/showthread.php?p=1080683>

Amjad Abu Rayan was described in PCHR as a civilian:

وفي حوالي الساعة 3:30 مساءً، أطلقت طائرة حربية إسرائيلية صاروخين تجاه مجموعة من المواطنين بالقرب من مدرسة تل الزعتر الثانوية للبنات، في بلدة بيت لاهيا أدى القصف إلى مقتل خمسة مواطنين وإصابة 10 مواطنين، بجراح، من بينهم طفلة. والقُتلى هم: احمد محمد أيوب خله، 21 عاماً؛ رامي محمود رجب القدرة، 30 عاماً؛ امجد فضل عبد الله أبو ريان، 27 عاماً؛ هاني محمد عبد الله أبو ريان، 24 عاماً؛ ومراد رزق جميل البناء، 27 عاماً

However, he appeared in PLDF forum as a senior member of a Palestinian group called Al-Ahrar:

<http://www.paldf.net/forum/showthread.php?t=351878>

In the Al-Mezan list he appears as a combatant, as do two others who were killed in the same incident.

According to PCHR report:

“At approximately 17:00, an Israeli drone targeted the two civilians, Humam Muhamad Al-Khudari, 17 years old, and Sameh [should be Samer] Muhamad abu Aser, 17 years old, while they were close to their houses, towards the end of Al-Nazaz st., Eastern Al-Shuja’iya quarter; as a result, they were killed.

* وفي حوالي الساعة 5:00 مساءً، قامت طائرة استطلاع اسرائيلية باستهداف كل من المواطنين همام محمد الخضري، 17 عاماً؛ وسامح محمد أبو عصر، 17 عاماً، أثناء سيرهما قرب منازل ليهما في نهاية شارع النزاز شرق حي الشجاعية، مما أدى إلى مقتلهما.



Humam Al-Khudari was hailed by PIJ's Al-Quds companies as a martyr, targeted by Israeli shelling in Al-Shuja'iya quarter, Jan. 14 (<http://www.saraya.ps/view.php?id=11327>)



Samer Abu Aser was hailed by PIJ's Al-Quds companies as a martyr, targeted by Israeli shelling in Al-Shuja'iya quarter, Jan. 14 (<http://www.saraya.ps/view.php?id=11327>)

PCHR relates the deaths of three civilians:

وفي حوالي الساعة 4:00 فجر يوم الأربعاء الموافق **14/1/2009**، تواصل القصف المدفعي باتجاه منطقة مشروع عامر وأبراج الكرامة، جنوب غرب بلدة جباليا، مما أدى إلى مقتل ثلاثة مواطنين، وهم: هيثم أبو القمصان، **19 عاماً**؛ حمدي فريد أبو حمادة، **27 عاماً**؛ وإياد المقوسي، **27 عاماً**.

At approximately 4:00 on the morning of Wednesday, 14/01/2009, IDF continued shelling Amer project and Abraj Al-Karama regions, South west of Jebalia, causing the death of three civilians, Haytham Abu Al-Qumsan (19), Hamdi Farid Abu Hamada (27) and Iyad Al-Maqusi (27)

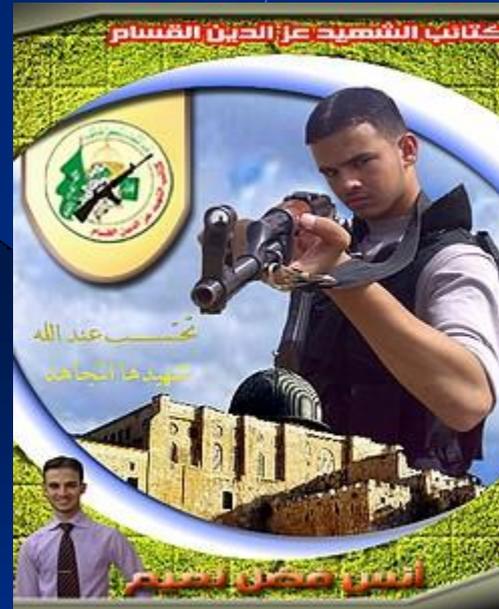
(http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/w_report/arabic/2008/15-01-2009.html)

However, the official site of Martyr Abu Rish Brigades (military wing of al-Fatah). It describes the death of three activists, killed on Jan. 14; one of them, Haytham Abu al-Qumsan, was affiliated with Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.

(<http://www.abualrish.com/arabic/print.php?id=1231931404&archive>)

وكان اثنان وعشرون فلسطينياً سقطوا منذ فجر اليوم بينهم ثلاثة استشهدوا متأثرين بجراح أصيبوا بها خلال الأيام السابقة من العدوان، واستشهد ثلاثة مقاومين في الساعة الرابعة من فجر اليوم في تواصل القصف المدفعي على مشروع عامر وأبراج الكرامة جنوب غرب جباليا، وهم هيثم أبو القمصان (**19 عاماً**) من كتائب الأقصى، وحمدي فريد أبو حمادة (**27 عاماً**)، وإياد المقوسي (**27 عاماً**) فيما استشهدت المواطنتان كفا محمد المطوق (**35 عاماً**) وحنان شعبان النجار (**40 عاماً**) وإصابة طفلتها عائشة إبراهيم النجار عام ونصف بجراح بالغة الخطورة، بالإضافة إلى إصابة 5 مواطنين من بينهما طفلان بجراح.

Anas Naim, a nephew of Hamas Health Minister Bassem Naim, who was killed on Jan. 4 in Gaza City, was described in Palestinian reports as a 'medic.'



Discrepancies in responsibility for death

On 6 January 2009, PCHR reported the killing of a certain civilian, Alla Tawfiq Al-Fayumi

(http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/w_report/arabic/2008/08-01-2009.html):

* وفي نفس التوقيت تقريباً، أعلن عن مقتل المواطن علاء توفيق الفيومي، 32 عاماً، جراء تعرضه لإطلاق نار من قناصة الاحتلال أثناء تواجده في منزله بحي التفاح بغزة.

"At the same time, the death of the citizen Alaa Tawfiq al-Fayumi (32), was announced, as a result of shooting by occupant's sniper, while in his house in Al-Tufah quarter in Ghaza."

Discrepancies in responsibility for death

However, there is some evidence that Al-Fayumi was actually shot by a Hamas member, Hamza Hamada

(<http://www.palpress.ps/arabic/index.php?maa=ReadStory&ChannelID=50023>):

وكشف شاهد عيان طلب عدم نشر اسمه: " أن أحد عناصر مليشا حماس قام بقتل الشهيد علاء الفيومي ، ظلماً أثناء العدوان الإسرائيلي وبعد مقتل سعيد صيام .

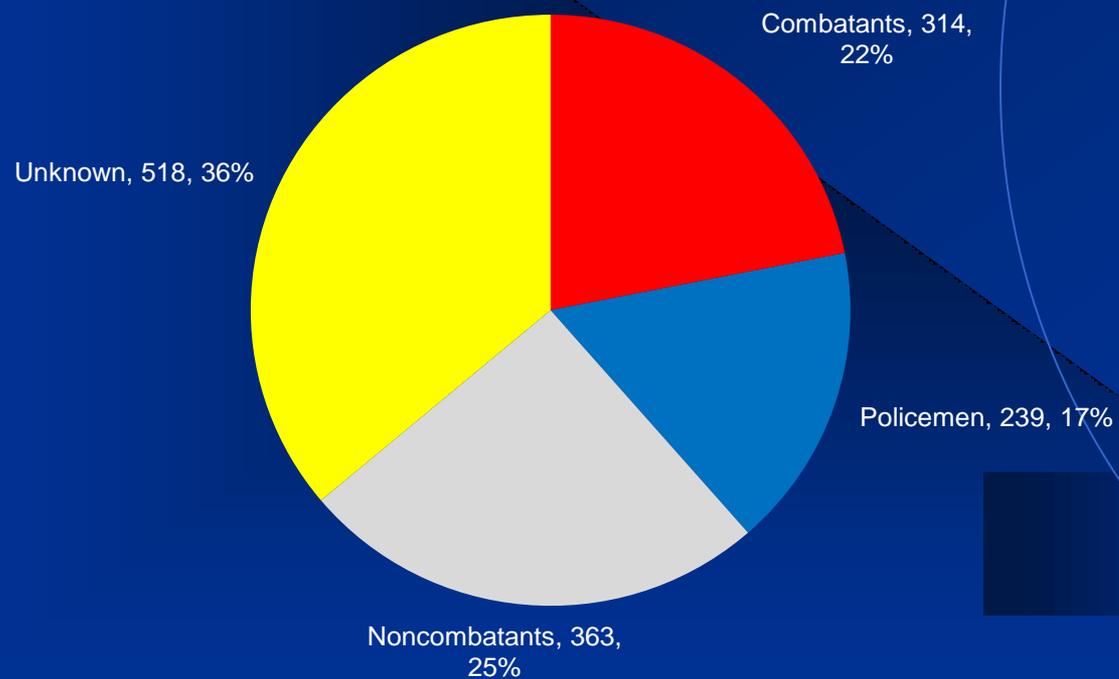
وأضافت الشاهد: "أن الشخص الذي قام بقتله الشهيد علاء الفيومي يدعى حمزة حمادة وهو مرافق سعيد صيام وقد قتله باطلاق النار على راسه من مسدس مباشرة بعد مشاده بينهما حول لماذا يمر من الشارع وينظر اليه في منطقة حي بالتفاح شرق غزة .

"An eyewitness...said: Al-Fayumi was killed by a Hamas militia member... the name of this member is Hamza Hamada... he shot [al-Fayumi] in his head, while crossing the street."

Al-Fayumi may have been killed because he was a Fatah member.

This is one of several reported cases of internal clashes during the operation.

The status of Palestinian policemen



The status of Palestinian policemen

PCHR claims that all 239 policemen killed should “not [be] considered members of armed forces (combatants), unless explicitly recognized as such.”

However, our research into Hamas websites has revealed that a considerable number of these policemen were also members of the Hamas “resistance” apparatus—and thus were “explicitly recognized” by Hamas as combatants.

In any case, the legal status of a “civil” police force organized, staffed, and managed by a terrorist organization is, to say the least, unclear.

The status of Palestinian policemen

At a press conference on 19 January 2009, Abu Abida—the spokesperson for the Az Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades—claimed that out of over 1,300 casualties, only 48 were fighters in the organization, and that all the rest were civilians.

These claims were checked against casualty reports on the online forum of the Az Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades (almoltaqa.ps), in Arabic and in English.

The status of Palestinian policemen

Over the course of the six weeks of coverage, the names and details of 471 Hamas casualties were gathered from the aforementioned online forums.

Of the Hamas casualties, 101 are directly ascribed to the fighting forces of the organization and its various battalions.

Hamas casualties according to unit

Battalion	Number of casualties	Number of them that held a position in the Palestinian Police
Al-Nusi'rat Battalion	22	3
Dir al-Balach Battalion	18	4
Jabalaya Battalion	9	9
Al-Burej Battalion	7	2
Al-Mughazi Battalion	6	1
Al-Tufach Battalion	1	1
Salah A-Din Battalion	1	1
Al-Shati Battalion	1	-
Tel Al-Islam Battalion	1	-
The Artillery Unit	6	3
The Special Unit	5	2
The Suicide Bomber Unit	2	2
The Missile Unit	2	-
The Armored Corps Unit	2	1
Members of Palestinian Police		192
With no organizational affiliation	171	
Total	254	

Palestinian policemen: non-combatants?

Despite the fact that our classification scheme counts Palestinian policemen as “**uniformed non-combatants**”, many of the Palestinian police casualties nevertheless held positions in the fighting wings of Hamas.

At least 28 of those identified with the fighting forces of Hamas based on their title, have a *double title*.

On the one hand they are called fighting shahids in various ways, and on the other hand they were members of the police force.

The role of the fighting ranks

171 of the casualties are directly identified as belonging to the fighting forces.

Some of those identified as a “shahid” or “hero shahid” are part of the Palestinian Police.

84 of the casualties are directly connected with the various battalions of Hamas and the other 17 are connected to the various units.

Thus, many of the Palestinian police casualties were also identified by Hamas websites as active in the fighting.

Hamas casualties according to title

Title	Number	Of which have a police rank
The shahid	94	15
The hero shahid	34	5
The fighter shahid	49	10
The hero fighter shahid	3	1
The commander shahid	4	-
The Qassami shahid	23	3
The Qassami hero shahid	1	-
The Qassami fighter shahid	83	13
The Qassami commander shahid	5	1
The hero Qassami commander shahid	1	-
The Qassami Field Commander shahid	2	-
Without affiliating title	33	-

Basel Jihad Muhammad Dababish, appears in the list of policemen killed by Israel
(<http://www.almoltaqa.ps/arabic/showthread.php?t=102851>):

ملازم باسل جهاد محمد دبابش النجدة 27/12/2008 قصف مقر الجوازات

Also appears as a “Kassam Martyr” on the PALDF Site:

"Mulazem (Lieutenant) Basel Jihad Muhammad Dababish, Al-Najda, 27/12/2008, bombing of Al-Jawazat headquarters."

<http://www.paldf.net/forum/showthread.php?p=5084474>

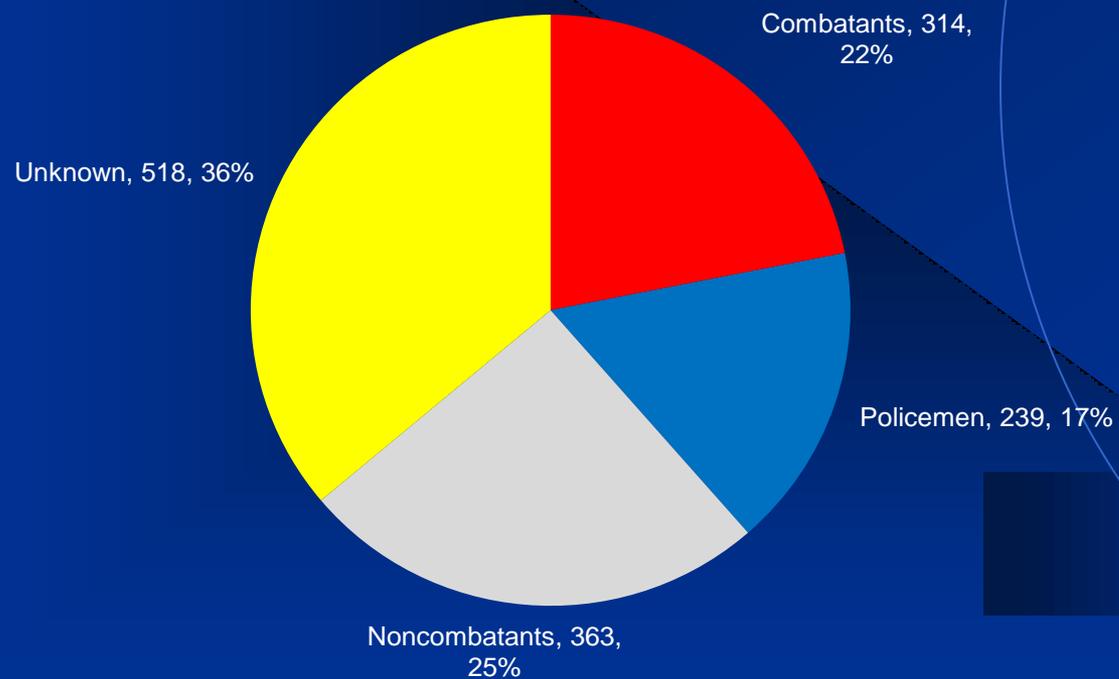


“...picture of Al-Qasam martyr...
brother of Al-Qasam member Nidal
“Dababish...”

The status of Palestinian policemen

- ◆ There is a close connection between Hamas and the Palestinian Police in the Gaza Strip.
- ◆ Not only is the number of Hamas casualties much higher than 48, but many of them come from the operational ranks and units of Hamas and the Palestinian Police, with fewer from the administrative or supporting units.

A closer look at the “unknowns”



A closer look at the “unknowns”

Among the 881 “civilians” (including confirmed noncombatants and “unknowns”), only 121 were women and another 72 were girls.

In addition to the 18 identified “child” combatants, we have identified 263 children (under 18 years old); the “missing” 7 children are due to our working with an earlier version of the PCHR list.

Do the “unknowns” reveal signs of indiscriminate bombing?

What would we expect to see if Israel’s attacks in Gaza were really “indiscriminate”?

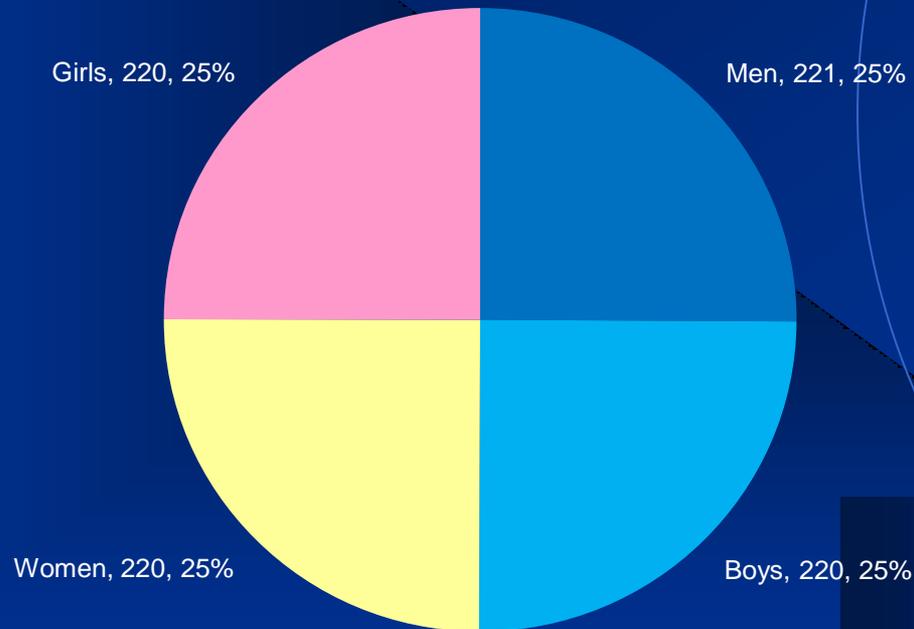
By definition, random attacks on a civilian population will kill a random selection of people; and if a large number of people are killed, their demographic profile (age, gender, and so on) should resemble that of the broader population.

This means that civilians killed indiscriminately should be approximately 50% female.

Do the “unknowns” reveal signs of indiscriminate bombing?

The Gaza Strip has a very young population, with a median age of around 17 years. This means that around 50% of those killed indiscriminately should be children.

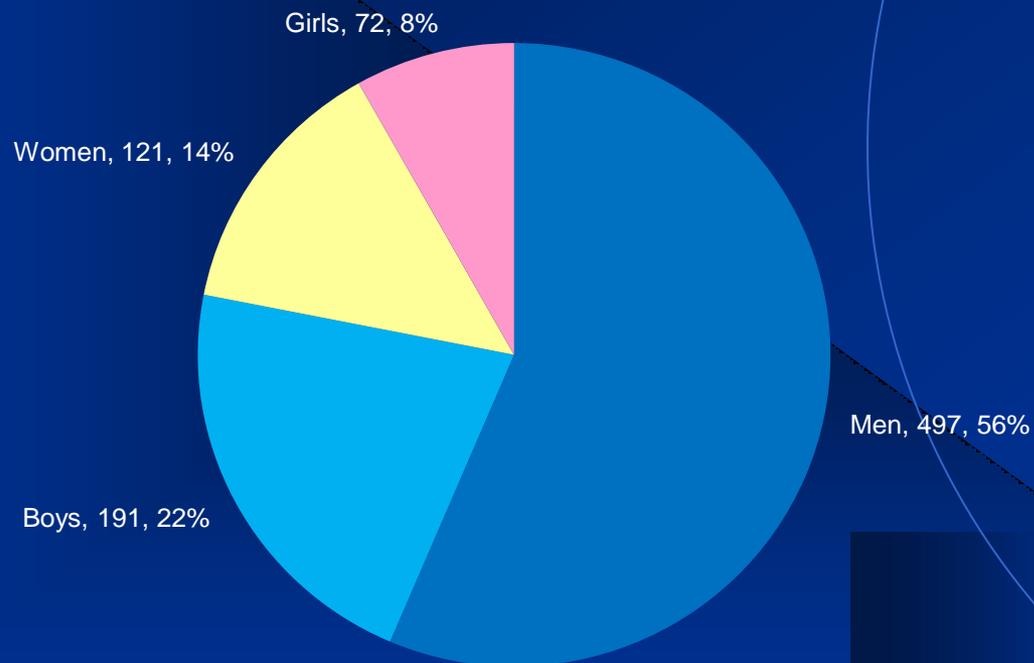
Do the “unknowns” reveal signs of indiscriminate bombing?



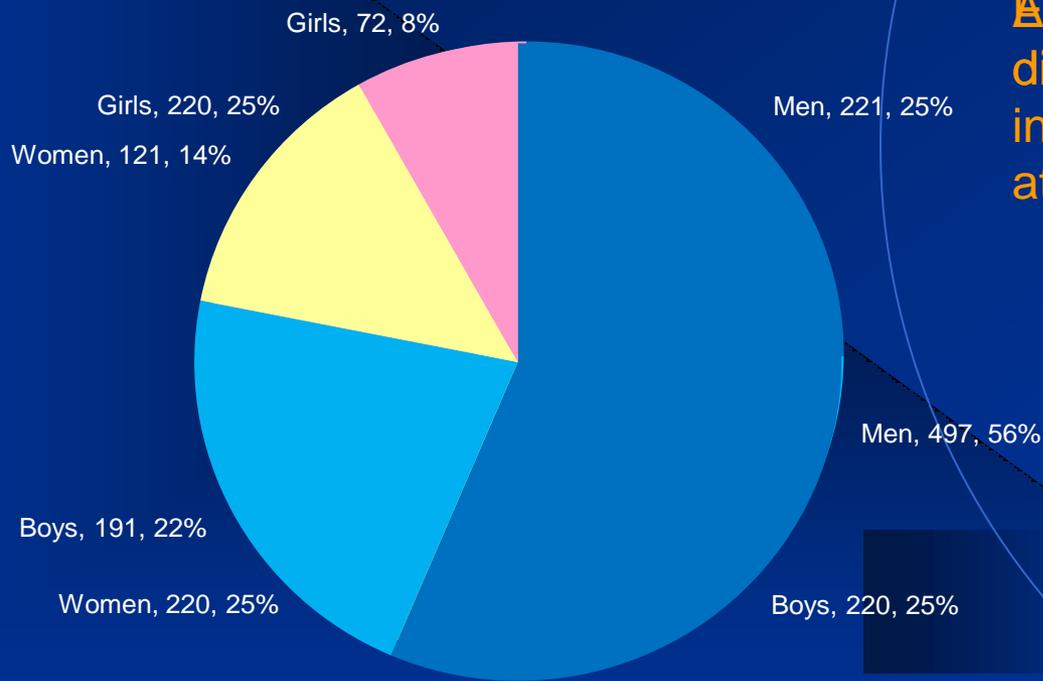
Do the “unknowns” reveal signs of indiscriminate bombing?

In fact, though, the “civilian” victims of Operation Cast Lead show a demographic profile very different from this expectation. 78% were males, and 70% were adults.

Do the “unknowns” reveal signs of indiscriminate bombing?



Do the “unknowns” reveal signs of indiscriminate bombing?



**Expected
distribution for
indiscriminate
attacks**

The demographics of the “unknowns” is far from random

The demographics of these noncombatant and “unknown” fatalities are so strongly different from what we would expect from random, “indiscriminate” attacks on a civilian population that they cannot be dismissed as mere “statistical noise”.

Some explanation must be sought to account for the relative lack of women and children among these “civilians”—for example:

The demographics of the “unknowns” is far from random

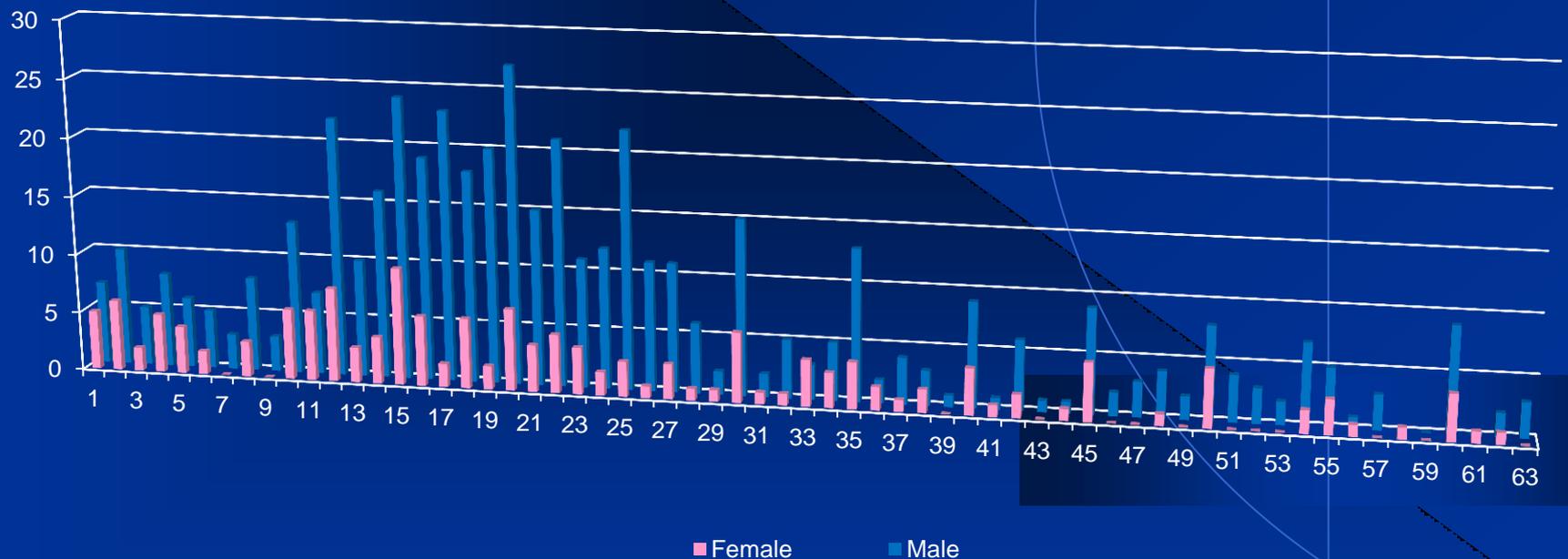
To the extent that Israel announced in advance that certain targets or areas were to be attacked, it is possible that women, children, and the elderly were more likely to be evacuated to safety—leaving a “human shield” population consisting disproportionately of men and (to a lesser extent) boys.

The demographics of the “unknowns” is far from random

In “up close” encounters, Israeli forces may have been more likely to fire on men who appeared to be of “combat age”.

Many of the men classed by PCHR as “civilians”—and by ICT as “unknown”—may in fact have been combatants.

The demographics of the “unknowns” is far from random



The demographics of the “unknowns” is far from random

The age distribution of these fatalities shows a huge “excess” of combat-aged males, as well as a smaller “excess” of males at all ages.

This graph actually *understates* the number of adult males killed, since our database is missing over 150 of them and the graph includes only what is in our database.

The demographics of the “unknowns” is far from random

(It is also interesting to note a pronounced “five-year rounding bias” in the reported ages of victims—we see peaks at age 10, 15, 20, 25, and so on.

This is a common bias in “anecdotal” age reporting, and indicates a degree of unreliability in the PCHR-reported data.)

What the demographics tell us

There is no single “correct” way to use demographic data to imply the size of the genuine civilian noncombatant population killed. Still, we can draw some conclusions from this data:

- ◆ Whatever explanation we choose for the demographics of the noncombatant and “unknown” victims of Operation Cast Lead, it is very clear that the majority of those killed by Israeli forces were not killed “indiscriminately”—since truly random attacks on civilian targets would have killed a lot more women and children.

What the demographics tell us

- ◆ It would appear overwhelmingly probable that a large number of the 500 or so men of “unknown” combatant status—all classified as “civilians” by PCHR—were in fact combatants. Some of these may have been affiliated with terror organizations, and others may have simply grabbed a gun to attack invading Israeli forces.

What the demographics tell us

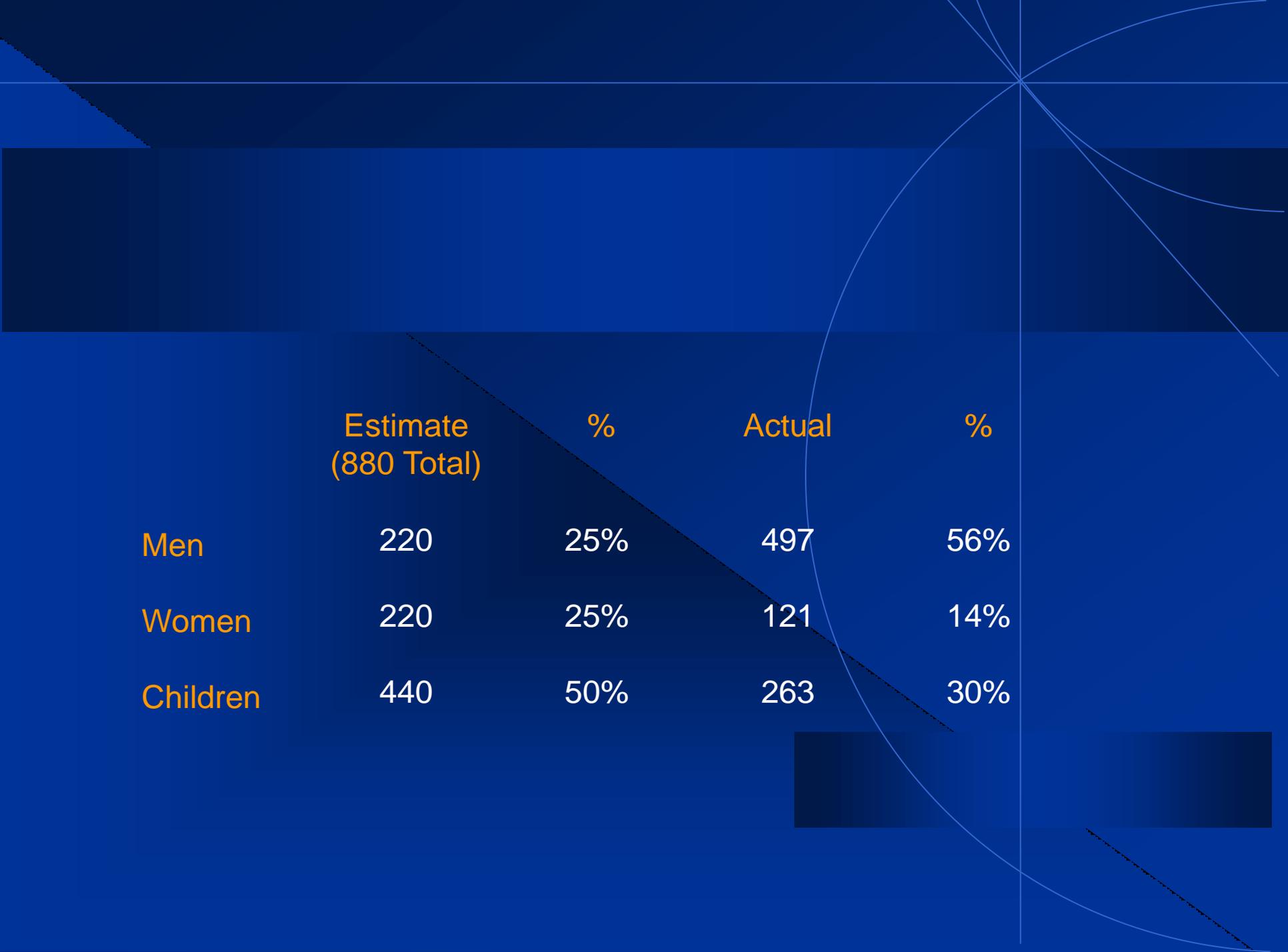
- ◆ If we assume that all women and children killed were the result of random attacks on civilian targets with no warning issued in advance, then we must also assume that they were accompanied by a “reasonable” number of noncombatant men.
- ◆ Depending on how we do the math, we can use the number of women and children killed to estimate a “civilian fatality” population of between 400 and 550.
- ◆ This would imply that the remainder—between 900 and 1,070 (63% to 75%) of those killed—were specifically targeted, either because they were genuine combatants or because Israeli forces believed they were combatants.

What the demographics tell us

- ◆ If we assume that a substantial number of Palestinian civilians were deliberately used by Palestinian combatants as “human shields”, it is more difficult to estimate the size of the civilian population killed—since it is possible that women, children, and the elderly would have been (at least somewhat) preferentially evacuated from areas of known danger, leaving a disproportionate number of adult male “shields”.

What the demographics tell us

- ◆ This would mean that the total number of noncombatants killed was higher than the 400-to-550 figure estimated based on the number of women and children; but it would also mean that the number of victims of “indiscriminate attacks” was *lower*, since a target would have to be specifically identified in order for selective evacuation to take place.
- ◆ (Of course, it is also possible that women and children were *preferred* as “human shields”, which would imply that a larger number of young-adult males were in fact combatants; this bears further investigation.)



	Estimate (880 Total)	%	Actual	%
Men	220	25%	497	56%
Women	220	25%	121	14%
Children	440	50%	263	30%

Conclusions

There is no objective standard under the Geneva Conventions or other elements of international law to determine what constitutes an acceptable level of “collateral damage” when attacking military targets.

Obviously, real-world results will depend on the nature of the particular conflict; and equally obviously, Hamas and its allies did everything possible to maximize the extent to which the civilian population of the Gaza Strip would be exposed to combat should Israel respond in force to cross-border missile attacks on Israeli towns.

Conclusions

Further, Hamas had engaged in a publicity campaign for many months before the invasion, proudly claiming that “unpleasant surprises” would await any invading Israeli forces.

These Hamas claims led to (and justified) Israeli tactics designed to minimize IDF casualties, including heavy use of force and considerable reliance on “stand-off” weaponry such as artillery and aerial bombardment.

Conclusions

Considering all this, the fact that at least 63% to 75% of the Palestinians killed in Operation Cast Lead appear to have been specifically-targeted combat-aged males, PCHR's own data refutes its claim that Israel's attacks were "indiscriminate".