



## **Testimony by B. A.: Gaza's Oldest Church Bombed**

21 October 2023

At dawn on 9 October 2023, B. A., 40, left her own home for her family's house, following the bombing of a residential building next to her house in Al-Mina area (near the Gaza City port) which caused severe destruction to her house.

On 13 October 2023, after Israel ordered residents in the north to head south, churches in Gaza City opened their doors to shelter Christian residents in particular who had no place to go or relatives in the southern areas to take them in. Churches were believed to be a safe place from the bombings.

Many sought refuge in the Church of Saint Porphyrius, a Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza, and when Al-Ahli Arab Hospital was bombed on 17 October 2023, shrapnel reached the yard of the church, damaging water tanks. Yesterday (20 October 2023) evening between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m., a warning missile was fired at "commercial spaces" near the church. Shortly after, within seconds, a heavy missile struck the same location, causing severe damage to the church where approximately 100 people were taking shelter.

Everyone in the church knew each other and many of them had family ties. Most of the injured were children and women. Eighteen people were killed and recovered from under the rubble, with a majority being children. One older woman passed away due to fear. Many of the wounded are in critical condition and have been admitted to the ICU at al-Shifa Hospital.

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B.A. was in a hall inside the church, only 20 meters away from the incident. She recounted the events while in a very bad psychological state.