‘Lucky there were no children’: School near Tel Aviv ravaged by Houthi missile warhead

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/lucky-there-were-no-children-school-near-tel-aviv-ravaged-by-houthi-missile-attack/>

A multistory school building in Ramat Gan that collapsed when it was hit by the rocket warhead from[a partially intercepted ballistic missile](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-pounds-yemen-believes-it-paralyzed-all-3-houthi-ports-missile-fired-at-israel/) fired at Israel by Houthi rebels in Yemen will be torn down and rebuilt, the city’s mayor said Thursday as he visited the site and locals assessed the heavy damage.

Ramat Gan Mayor Carmel Shama-Hacohen estimated the damage at NIS 40 million ($11 million) and said the Ramat Ef’al elementary school would get a replacement building.

The Israel Defense Forces initially said that overnight it intercepted a missile fired at central Israel by Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthis. It said sections from the missile or from an interceptor fell to the ground, with one chunk landing on the main building of the school, demolishing it.

Later Thursday, however, the military said that according to an initial probe, the school was likely hit by the missile warhead after a partial interception.

There were no injuries in the incident, though parked cars in the area were damaged by falling debris.

The missile set off sirens in the central region, sending millions of Israelis to bomb shelters in the middle of the night.

Students will be transferred to another school in the meantime, Shama-Hacohen said, and the city’s psychological services will provide support.

“Fortunately, the damage was in the middle of the night,” he said.

Visiting the site Thursday, Education Minister Yoav Kisch assessed that the students would be able to return to their routine in a couple of weeks, as the school already has a recently built building available that can be used.

As the Houthis fired the missile, Israel Air Force jets were on their way to Yemen on a preplanned bombing mission, retaliation for previous missile and drone attacks.

The IAF strikes[hit ports and the capital Sana’a](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-pounds-yemen-believes-it-paralyzed-all-3-houthi-ports-missile-fired-at-israel/), the IDF said, with the aim of preventing weapons deliveries from Iran to the Houthis.

Kisch said he was glad the Air Force “hit the Houthis hard, and the message that the long and strong arm of Israel will reach all arenas that act against us must resonate in the Middle East.”

Nir, a father of students at the school, told the Ynet news site that he had heard the bang as missile chunks hit the school during the night.

“It is awful,” he said. “It is lucky that there were no children here.”

Ravit Baranes, the mother of a student at the school and head of its parents’ committee, said students have mixed feelings about the incident, with some hoping it will mean no school for a few days.

Modiin Mayor Haim Bibas said that shrapnel, apparently from IDF interceptor missiles, had also fallen in two places in the central city, causing minor damage but no reported injuries.

Sirens didn’t sound in the city during the attack, and Bibas said he was in contact with the IDF’s Home Front Command to understand why.

Two small interceptor fragments were also found outside the Knesset building in Jerusalem, a spokesman said, adding that “no damage was caused and the fragments of the interceptor were removed from the scene by Israel Police sappers.”

The Houthis have launched over 200 missiles and 170 drones at Israel in the past year, claiming they were doing so in support of Gaza, where Israel has been battling Palestinian terror group Hamas since it led an October 7, 2023, cross-border onslaught on the country that killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and saw 251 hostages taken to Gaza.

According to the IDF, the vast majority of Houthi missiles did not reach Israel or were intercepted by the military and Israeli allies in the region, though several have hit buildings and one killed a civilian in Tel Aviv.