

Mallaha



Subdistrict: Safad

Estimated population of Mallaha in 1948: approximately 1,032, including the population statistically associated with 'Arab al-Zubayd

Date of occupation and depopulation: 25 May 1948

Military operation: Operation Yiftach

Israeli settlements established on the village's lands before 1948: None

Israeli settlements established on the village site after 1948: None

Mallaha was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict, located approximately 16 kilometres from the city of Safad. Its inhabitants were displaced and the village was destroyed during the 1948 Nakba.

The village's estimated population in 1948 was approximately 1,032. This figure was derived from the combined 1945 population recorded for Mallaha and 'Arab al-Zubayd rather than from a separate official census conducted in 1948.

Location of Mallaha

Mallaha stood approximately 1.5 kilometres from the northwestern corner of Lake al-Hula, on the edge of the Hula Concession lands and immediately south of Baysamun.

Wadi al-Barid passed near the village and flowed into the northwestern corner of Lake al-Hula. The wadi was fed by the spring of 'Ayn Mallaha, situated south of the village. Historical geographical accounts describe it as one of Palestine's most abundant springs, with a reported flow of between 1,800 and 2,700 cubic metres of water per hour.

The village stood on the northern bank of Wadi al-Barid, a seasonal watercourse that discharged into Lake al-Hula. Its inhabitants were Muslims, and agriculture formed the principal basis of the village economy. Mallaha also lay along a road leading to Safad and Tiberias.

Boundaries of Mallaha

Mallaha lay among the following Palestinian villages, localities, and geographical areas:

- [Baysamun](#) to the north.
- The Hula Plain to the east and northeast, extending toward Lake al-Hula in the southeast.
- [al-'Ulmaniyya](#) to the south.
- The lands of ['Arab al-Zubayd](#) to the southwest.

- Harrawi ('Arab al-Hamdun) to the west.
- al-Nabi Yusha' to the northwest.



The Depopulated Palestinian Village of Mallaha

Village Lands

The lands of Mallaha covered 2,168 dunams. Of this total, 20 dunams constituted the built-up area and 36 dunams were classified as public land, including roads and wadis. Jewish ownership amounted to 294 dunams. The village lands were bordered by the Hula Concession lands and the lands of al-‘Ulmaniyya, Baysamun, Harrawi, Dayshum, and nearby Jewish settlements.

Land Ownership in Mallaha, 1944/45

Ownership category	Area in dunams
Palestinian ownership	1,838
Jewish ownership	294
Public land	36
Total	2,168

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Mallaha, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)	Jewish ownership (dunams)
Cereal cultivation	1,761	294

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)	Jewish ownership (dunams)
Built-up area	20	0
Cultivable land	1,761	294
Uncultivated land	93	0

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The land-use figures do not assign the 36 dunams of public land to a specific agricultural category.

Population of Mallaha

- The 1922 census recorded a combined population of 697 for Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd: 440 inhabitants were identified with ‘Arab Mallaha and 257 with ‘Arab al-Zubayd.
- In 1931, the combined population was recorded as 654 inhabitants living in 161 houses. In 1945, Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd had a combined population of 890. These figures should not be interpreted as population totals for Mallaha alone.
- Mallaha was also identified as an archaeological site containing a mound of ruins and remains of earlier buildings.

Population of Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd

Year	Population	Statistical scope
1922	697	Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd combined
1931	654	Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd combined
1945	890	Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd combined
1948	Approximately 1,032	Later estimate based on the combined population

Year	Population	Statistical scope
Estimated registered refugee population, 1998	6,340	Later demographic estimate

* The 1948 and 1998 figures are demographic estimates rather than contemporary official censuses.

Number of Houses in Mallaha and ‘Arab al-Zubayd

Year	Number of houses	Statistical status
1931	161	Census figure
1948	Approximately 254	Later estimate

Economic Life in Mallaha

Agriculture formed the mainstay of the village economy. In 1944/45, 1,761 dunams under Palestinian ownership were allocated to cereal cultivation. A further 294 dunams under Jewish ownership were also used for cereals.

The inhabitants of Mallaha also raised water buffalo, an activity historically associated with the wetlands and waterways of the Hula Plain.

Archaeological and Historical Significance

Mallaha was recorded as an archaeological site containing a mound of ruins and the remains of earlier structures. The nearby ‘Ayn Mallaha site is also of major archaeological importance, although archaeological findings associated with that site should be distinguished from the documented history of the modern Palestinian village.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Syrian Sufi traveller al-Bakri al-Siddiqi passed a village named al-Mallaha, which may have been the same locality. The American biblical scholar

Edward Robinson also recorded Mallaha northwest of Lake al-Hula in 1838.

Occupation and Depopulation of Mallaha

Israeli forces occupied Mallaha on 25 May 1948, at the end of Operation Yiftach. According to the historical account reproduced in Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*, psychological warfare was used to induce the villagers to leave. A direct military attack cannot be ruled out, however, because most of the documented psychological campaign had taken place approximately ten days before the reported date of the village's depopulation.

Zionist forces also directed mortar fire at several neighbouring Palestinian villages during Operation Yiftach. The surviving documentation does not establish conclusively whether Mallaha itself was subjected to mortar fire. This possibility should therefore be presented as an assessment rather than as a confirmed fact.

Following their displacement during the Nakba, families from Mallaha sought refuge in Syria and elsewhere. Some settled in refugee camps including Daraa, Sayyida Zaynab, and Jaramana. The available village sources document these destinations, but do not provide a comprehensive numerical distribution of the displaced population.

Israeli Settlements on the Lands of Mallaha

No Israeli settlement was established on the officially recorded lands of Mallaha. Yesud ha-Ma'ala, founded in 1883, lies approximately five kilometres southeast of the former village site and was not established on Mallaha's registered lands.

Mallaha Today

The sandy hill on which Mallaha once stood is now largely covered with tall grass and wild vegetation, together with cactus plants and fig, eucalyptus, and date-palm trees. Scattered

stone rubble from the village's destroyed houses remains visible among the vegetation. The surrounding land is cultivated by residents of the nearby Israeli settlement of Yesud ha-Ma'ala.

Sources

- [Palestine Remembered, "Mallaha—Safad"](#).
- [Institute for Palestine Studies, Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*](#).
- Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
 - Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1922*.
 - Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1931*.
 - Government of Palestine, *Village Statistics, April 1945*.