

Umm al-Zinat



Subdistrict: Haifa

Estimated population of Umm al-Zinat in 1948: approximately 1,705 Palestinians

Date of occupation and depopulation: 15 May 1948

Military unit: Fourth Battalion of the Golani Brigade

Israeli settlements established on Umm al-Zinat's lands before 1948: None

Israeli settlements established on Umm al-Zinat's lands after 1948: Elyaqim

Umm al-Zinat

Umm al-Zinat was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Haifa Subdistrict, situated approximately 20.5 kilometres southeast of Haifa. It stood at an average elevation of about 325 metres above sea level.

The village was located on a rocky prominence in the southeastern part of Mount Carmel and overlooked Bilad al-Rawha. A secondary road connected it to both the coastal highway and the principal Haifa–Jenin road.

In the late nineteenth century, Umm al-Zinat was described as a stone-built village situated on a saddle-shaped hill. Its compact houses were constructed primarily of masonry. The village later expanded northeastwards, giving its built-up area a shape that Palestinian historical sources compare to a tennis racquet with an extended handle.

The village was particularly noted for its extensive olive groves. Its name, Umm al-Zinat, may be translated as “the source of adornments.”

Boundaries of Umm al-Zinat

Umm al-Zinat lay among the following Palestinian villages and localities:

- North and northeast: Daliyat al-Karmel.
 - Northwest: [Ayn Hawd](#).
 - West: [Ijzim](#).
- South: [Daliyat al-Rawha](#).
- East: [Qira and Qamun](#).

Other villages and localities in the wider surrounding area included al-Muharraqa, Abu Shusha, Sabbarin, al-Kafrayn, Kafr Lam, and the lands extending towards Marj Ibn Amir.

Land and Physical Geography of Umm al-Zinat

The village's total cadastral area amounted to 22,156 dunams, making Umm al-Zinat one of the larger villages in the Haifa Subdistrict in terms of land area.

Several wadis crossed or bordered the village lands. Local geographical accounts identify Wadi al-Milh to the east, Wadi al-Natif to the north, and Wadi al-Sarrar to the west. To the south, the terrain opened towards the plain of al-Rawha.

Land Ownership in Umm al-Zinat, 1944/45

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	18,684
Jewish ownership	51
Public land	3,421
Total	22,156

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Umm al-Zinat, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian-owned land (dunams)*	Jewish-owned land (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	1,742	0	0	1,742
Cereal cultivation	9,879	41	0	9,920
Built-up area	69	0	0	69
Total cultivable land	11,621	41	0	11,662

Land-use category	Palestinian-owned land (dunams)*	Jewish-owned land (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Uncultivated land	6,994	10	3,421	10,425
Total cadastral area	18,684	51	3,421	22,156

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

In 1943, approximately 1,834 dunams were planted with olive trees. This figure describes olive cultivation within the wider agricultural categories and should not be added separately to the 1944/45 cultivable-land total.

Population of Umm al-Zinat

An estimated 350 people lived in Umm al-Zinat during the nineteenth century. The British census of 1922 recorded 787 residents: 782 Muslims and five Christians. In 1931, the population rose to 1,029—1,020 Muslims and nine Christians—living in 209 houses.

British Mandate statistics estimated the population at 1,470 in 1945, comprising 1,450 Muslims and twenty Christians. Umm al-Zinat was consequently among the ten largest villages in the Haifa Subdistrict in terms of both population and land area.

The Palestinian population immediately before the village's occupation during the Nakba has been retrospectively estimated at approximately 1,705, often rounded to 1,710. A further estimate placed the number of refugees from Umm al-Zinat and their descendants at approximately 10,472 in 1998. Both figures are demographic projections rather than contemporaneous census counts.

Some families reportedly remained temporarily around the village's outer lands and olive groves after its occupation. Local Palestinian accounts state that the remaining residents were subsequently expelled and that the village was demolished. The precise dates sometimes given for these events—8 and 9 August 1948—could not be independently confirmed from the approved Palestinian and international sources consulted and are therefore not presented as definitive.

Population Record for Umm al-Zinat

Year	Recorded or estimated population	Nature of figure
Nineteenth century	Approximately 350	Contemporary historical estimate.
1922	787	British Mandate census.
1931	1,029	British Mandate census.
1945	1,470	British Mandate village statistics.
1948	Approximately 1,705	Retrospective demographic estimate, sometimes rounded to 1,710.
1998	Approximately 10,472 refugees and descendants	Retrospective demographic projection, not a census count.

Number of Houses in Umm al-Zinat

Year	Number of houses	Nature of figure
1931	209	Recorded in the British Mandate census.
1948	Approximately 346	Retrospective estimate; no contemporaneous 1948 housing census has been identified.

Education in Umm al-Zinat

Umm al-Zinat had an elementary school for boys established under Ottoman rule in approximately 1888. During the British Mandate, it operated as a government-supervised school and provided free elementary education to boys from the village. Local accounts state that it also received pupils from nearby Bedouin communities.

The school stood in an area west of the village known locally as Arus al-Bayadir. Its curriculum included Arabic, arithmetic, English, and social studies. Local accounts indicate that instruction eventually extended through the seventh elementary grade. Pupils wishing to continue into secondary education had to attend schools outside Umm al-Zinat.

Economic Life in Umm al-Zinat

The residents obtained water for domestic use from several wells. Their economy was based primarily on agriculture and animal husbandry. They cultivated cereals, vegetables, olives, and other fruit-bearing trees and also raised poultry and livestock.

By 1943, approximately 1,834 dunams had been planted with olive trees. Palestinian historical sources describe this as the largest continuous area of olive cultivation in the Haifa Subdistrict.

The village had four manually operated olive presses.

During the 1944/45 agricultural year, 9,879 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were devoted to cereal cultivation, while another 1,742 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards. The original statement that Umm al-Zinat had the largest olive area “in the subdistrict” has been retained, while its accidental repetition in the Arabic text has been removed.

Archaeological Remains in Umm al-Zinat

The village itself contained evidence of earlier settlement, including the foundations of ruined buildings, tombs cut into the rock, and a stone sarcophagus in its eastern section.

Approximately one kilometre south of the village stood Khirbat al-Haramis, where the remains of an ancient settlement were found. The available sources do not establish a firm date for this site.

Occupation and Depopulation of Umm al-Zinat

During the night of 19–20 January 1948, a Zionist unit consisting of approximately ten armed men reportedly approached Umm al-Zinat while dressed in British military uniforms. The Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* reported that the attack was repelled and did not record any casualties.

Following the occupation of Haifa in late April 1948, Haganah forces occupied several

Palestinian villages in the surrounding area during Operation Bi'ur Hametz, whose name may be translated as “Passover Clearing.” Umm al-Zinat was occupied slightly later, on 15 May 1948, by the Fourth Battalion of the Golani Brigade.

The village stood along an inland route used as an alternative supply road to Haifa while the coastal route remained affected by Palestinian resistance around the villages of the Little Triangle. Contemporary international reporting on 15 May stated that Zionist forces had occupied several Palestinian villages on the slopes of Mount Carmel and near Marj Ibn Amir.

Although Umm al-Zinat's occupation formed part of the broader sequence of military advances that followed Operation Bi'ur Hametz, the available evidence does not establish conclusively that its occupation on 15 May was formally conducted as part of that operation. The village's Palestinian residents were displaced during the military assault and its aftermath.

Israeli Settlement Established on Umm al-Zinat's Lands

The Israeli settlement of Elyaqim was established in 1949 on the southern side of the former village site, after the Palestinian population had been displaced and the village's houses had been reduced to ruins.

No Israeli settlement had been established on Umm al-Zinat's cadastral lands before 1948.

Umm al-Zinat Today

The village houses have been reduced to rubble, piles of which remain scattered across the site. Thorns, bushes, cactus plants, and fig and pomegranate trees grow among the ruins, while a small wooded area covers part of the site.

The village cemetery remains visible. Parts of the surrounding Palestinian land are used as livestock pasture, while other areas have been planted with fruit and olive trees.

Sources

- [PalQuest: Umm al-Zinat — location, population, land, village history, occupation, and present condition.](#)
 - [Institute for Palestine Studies: Umm al-Zinat Village.](#)
 - [Institute for Palestine Studies: Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains*.](#)
 - [Palestine Remembered: Umm al-Zinat, Haifa Subdistrict.](#)
- [Sami Hadawi, *Village Statistics of 1945: A Classification of Land and Area Ownership in Palestine*.](#)
 - [Palestine Open Maps: Umm al-Zinat.](#)
- [Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992.](#)