

Ajjur



Ajjur was a Palestinian village in the Hebron Subdistrict that was depopulated during the Nakba. The official population was 3,730 in 1945 and was later estimated at approximately 4,327 in 1948. Most residents fled following military assaults, while those who remained were expelled when Israeli forces occupied the village.

Field	Information
Subdistrict	Hebron
Distance from Hebron	Approximately 24 km northwest of the city
Average Elevation	Approximately 275 meters above sea level

Field	Information
Population in 1931	2,917 inhabitants – including Khirbat al-Sura
Number of Houses in 1931	566 inhabited houses – including Khirbat al-Sura
Population in 1944/1945	3,730 inhabitants – including Khirbat Ammuriyya
Estimated Population in 1948	Approximately 4,327 inhabitants – a later demographic estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	58,074 dunams – including Khirbat Ammuriyya
Attack and Depopulation	'Ajjur was attacked on 23–24 July 1948, an assault associated with the main displacement of its Palestinian population. Israeli forces finally occupied the village on 23 October 1948 and expelled those inhabitants who remained
Final Israeli Control	23 October 1948
Military Operation	The final occupation was carried out in coordination with Operation Yoav; the earlier assault of 23–24 July 1948 preceded Operation Yoav and was not part of it
Military Unit Responsible for the Final Occupation	Fourth Battalion of the Giv'ati Brigade
Cause of Depopulation	The July 1948 Zionist military assault caused the main displacement of the population, followed by the expulsion of the remaining inhabitants during the final occupation in October, as part of the displacement of Palestinians during the Nakba
Settlements Documented on Village Lands	Agur – 1950; Tirosh – 1955; Tzafririm – 1958; Giv'at Yesha'yahu – 1958; Li-On – 1960

General Information about Ajjur

Ajjur lay 24 kilometres northwest of Hebron. Its lands bordered those of Nuba, Tall al-Safi, Zakariyya, Surif, and Dayr al-Dubban. Most of its inhabitants and their descendants live away from the village as a result of the displacement caused by Israeli military assaults in 1948. The final occupation occurred during Operation Yoav in October 1948.

The village extended across a hilly area in the western foothills of the Hebron Mountains. In the late nineteenth century, Ajjur was described as a small village containing olive trees. Its population was predominantly Muslim, and most houses were clustered together, although some stood farther west and south. Ajjur had two schools, two mosques, and four shrines within the village.

The nearby sites of Khirbat Jannaba al-Fawqa and Khirbat Jannaba al-Tahta have been proposed as possible locations of the Battle of Ajnadayn, fought in 634 CE between the Rashidun Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire. The precise identification of the battlefield remains a matter of scholarly debate. The battle ended in a major Rashidun victory and contributed to the subsequent Muslim conquest of much of Palestine.

The architectural character of the old village—particularly a waqf building—suggests that modern Ajjur developed during the early Fatimid period. Local historical accounts date an old mosque to the Fatimid era and state that it remained in use until the village was depopulated.

Economic Life in Ajjur

Ajjur's economy was based primarily on rainfed agriculture, with wheat and olives among its most important crops. In 1944/45, 25,227 dunams were devoted to cereal cultivation, while 2,428 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards. Animal husbandry—especially goat herding—was the village's second most important economic activity.

A Friday market was held on a large tract east of the village. It attracted residents and merchants from towns and villages across Palestine.

Land Ownership in Ajjur

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	44,771
Jewish ownership	0
Public land	13,303
Total	58,074

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The figures include Khirbat Ammuriyya.

Land Use in Ajjur, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	2,428	0	2,428
Olive cultivation**	3,070	0	3,070
Cereal cultivation	25,227	0	25,227
Cultivable land	27,655	0	27,655
Built-up area	171	0	171
Uncultivated land	16,945	13,303	30,248
Total land area	44,771	13,303	58,074

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The figures include Khirbat Ammuriyya.

** Olive acreage is a supplementary crop figure contained within the broader agricultural classifications and must not be added again to the cultivable-land total.

Population Figures for Ajjur

Year	Population*
1596 estimate	193
1922	2,073
1931	2,917
1945	3,730
1948 estimate	Approximately 4,327
Estimated refugees and descendants, 1998	26,571

* The 1922 and 1931 figures derive from the British Mandate censuses, while the 1945 figure comes from the official Village Statistics. The 1948 and 1998 figures are later estimates. The 1931 total includes Khirbat al-Sura, and the 1945 total includes Khirbat Ammuriyya.

Education in Ajjur

Ajjur had two schools. The Abu Hasan private school had operated since the Ottoman period and occupied the waqf building mentioned above. A second school opened in 1934. Children from other villages in the region also attended Ajjur's schools.

Mosques in Ajjur

The village had two mosques: an old mosque associated with the Fatimid period and a second, more recently constructed mosque.

Archaeological Sites in Ajjur

- Ajjur stood in an area rich in archaeological remains. In addition to the

village itself, at least twenty-two archaeological sites lay within its lands.

- Four religious shrines stood inside the village, with another four in its vicinity on village land.

Occupation and Depopulation of Ajjur

Ajjur experienced more than one Israeli military assault in 1948. Israeli historian Benny Morris identifies an assault on 23–24 July as the primary cause of depopulation. Most inhabitants had fled by October. During Operation Yoav, the Fourth Battalion of the Giv'ati Brigade occupied Ajjur on 23 October 1948; those residents who remained were expelled. The occupation of the village formed part of Israeli operations extending into the Hebron Subdistrict while the main offensive targeted the southern coastal region.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
First Military Assault	23–24 July 1948	'Ajjur was subjected to a Zionist military assault during the second truce period. The sources associate this attack with the beginning of the main displacement of the village's Palestinian population.
Beginning of the Population's Displacement	23–24 July 1948 and afterward	The military assault caused most of the inhabitants to leave the village, while a smaller number remained in or near 'Ajjur until its final occupation in October.
Beginning of Operation Yoav	15 October 1948	Israeli forces launched Operation Yoav in southern Palestine in an effort to expand military control and connect Israeli forces in the Naqab with those positioned farther north.

Stage	Date	Details
Giv'ati Advance toward Villages in the Hebron Subdistrict	Second half of October 1948	The Giv'ati Brigade advanced toward a number of Palestinian villages in the Hebron Subdistrict in coordination with Operation Yoav and related military operations.
Final Occupation of 'Ajjur	23 October 1948	The Fourth Battalion of the Giv'ati Brigade occupied 'Ajjur, after which the village remained under Israeli control.
Expulsion of the Remaining Inhabitants	23 October 1948	Most inhabitants had already been displaced following the earlier assault. Those Palestinians who remained in the village at the time of its final occupation were expelled toward the Hebron area.
Completion of the Village's Depopulation	Late October 1948	The displacement of 'Ajjur's Palestinian population was completed during the Nakba, and its inhabitants were not permitted to return and re-establish their village after the Israeli occupation.

Israeli Settlements on Ajjur's Lands

Five Israeli settlements were established on village lands:

- Agur, established near the village site in 1950.
- Tirosh, established in 1955 northwest of the site.
- Givat Yeshayahu, established in 1958 near the boundary between Ajjur's lands and those of Zakariyya.
- Tzafririm, established in 1958 southeast of the site.
- Li-On, established in 1960 southeast of the site.

Ajjur Today

Published field surveys report that only three village houses remained: two were deserted and one had been converted into a warehouse. Cactuses and eucalyptus, almond, and carob trees grow among truncated stone walls and rubble. The site is

fenced and used for grazing, while parts of the surrounding land have been taken over by the settlement of Agur.

Sources

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question \(PalQuest\): Ajjur.](#)
- [Government of Palestine, Village Statistics, April 1945, reproduced by Palestine Remembered.](#)