

Al-Husayniyya



منزل خرب في الجزء الجنوبي من موقع القرية (سنة ١٩٩٠) [الحسينية]

al-Husayniyya: A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Safad District

al-Husayniyya was a Palestinian village in the Safad District, situated approximately 11 km northeast of Safad on a low hill in the southwestern corner of the Hula Plain, at an average elevation of about 125 metres above sea level. Its Muslim inhabitants depended principally on agriculture and livestock raising in an area rich in surface and groundwater. Al-Husayniyya suffered two deadly Palmach

attacks in March 1948, in which dozens of Palestinians were killed. Those who remained or returned were finally displaced on 21 April 1948 amid Haganah mortar fire, ground attacks, and fear of further assaults during Operation Yiftach.

Location of al-Husayniyya

al-Husayniyya stood on a low hill in the southwestern corner of the Hula Plain.

The village was approximately 11 km northeast of Safad and had an average elevation of about 125 metres above sea level.

It stood on the eastern side of a main road leading toward Safad and Tiberias.

Neighboring Tulayl expanded westward during the late Mandate period while al-Husayniyya expanded eastward, and the two communities eventually became virtually contiguous and shared several services.

Nearby Palestinian communities included Tulayl, al-'Ulmaniyya, Kirad al-Ghannama, and Kirad al-Baqqara, together with lands cultivated by 'Arab al-Zubayd in the Hula Plain.

al-Husayniyya through History

The medieval Arab geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi noted the antiquity of structures in the area.

He described an old building that local tradition claimed may originally have been a temple and perhaps associated with Solomon.

Yaqut wrote that very hot but clear and sweet water emerged from twelve openings in the structure and recorded traditions attributing a different healing property to each stream.

He regarded the place as one of the wonders of the world.

The claimed association with Solomon and the medicinal qualities of the waters

should be understood as a medieval geographical account and local tradition rather than as conclusions established by modern archaeology.

Architecture of al-Husayniyya

The houses of modern al-Husayniyya were principally built of stone.

By the end of the British Mandate, the eastward expansion of al-Husayniyya and the westward expansion of Tulayl had made the two villages virtually contiguous.

The 1944/45 statistics record 48 Arab dunums of built-up land for the combined al-Husayniyya–Tulayl statistical unit.

The available official statistics do not allow this built-up area to be reliably divided between the two villages.

Population of al-Husayniyya

The inhabitants of al-Husayniyya were Muslim.

The official Government of Palestine census of 1922 recorded 127 inhabitants in the Husainiyeh area, all Muslim.

From the 1931 census onward, al-Husayniyya and neighboring Tulayl were counted together, which is essential when interpreting later demographic figures.

Population figures for al-Husayniyya and the combined al-Husayniyya–Tulayl statistical unit

Year	Population	Notes
1922	127	Official census figure for al-Husayniyya itself; all Muslim
1931	274	Official census; includes al-Husayniyya and Tulayl together
1944/45	340	Official statistics; includes both villages; all Muslim

Year	Population	Notes
1948	394	Later estimate for the combined statistical unit; not an official Mandate census
Estimated refugees in 1998	2,422	Later estimate associated with the combined unit and not safely attributable to al-Husayniyya alone

The current Arabic Palestine Remembered page displays 296 inhabitants for al-Husayniyya in 1922. The official Government of Palestine census, however, records 127 for Husainiyeh; 296 is associated in other records with Tulayl. The official figure of 127 is therefore used here.

Number of Houses

Houses in the combined al-Husayniyya-Tulayl statistical unit

Year	Number of houses	Notes
1931	64	Includes al-Husayniyya and Tulayl together

The principal approved sources do not provide a reliable separate 1931 house count for al-Husayniyya itself or an official independent house count for 1948.

Education in al-Husayniyya

al-Husayniyya shared an elementary school with neighboring Tulayl.

PalQuest's Tulayl entry states that the school was established by the local Society of Village Improvement and was one of the facilities shared by the two increasingly contiguous communities.

The principal approved sources used here do not provide a securely documented founding year or enrollment figure, so no unsupported numbers are added.

Water Resources

The village lands were fertile and richly supplied with both surface and underground water.

The inhabitants drew on springs, streams, and artesian wells for agricultural and household needs.

The water-rich environment of the Hula Plain supported both irrigated cultivation and the raising of water buffalo.

Economic Life in al-Husayniyya

Agriculture was the principal source of livelihood.

The villagers cultivated various kinds of fruit as well as cereals, onions, and maize, especially on lands north of the village.

They also raised livestock, particularly water buffalo, which were used for ploughing and for milk, dairy products, and meat.

Bedouin from 'Arab al-Zubayd cultivated land between the village and Lake Hula.

In the combined 1944/45 statistics for al-Husayniyya and Tulayl, 3,388 Arab dunums were devoted to cereals, together with 1,637 dunums in the Jewish land category. A further 22 Arab dunums were irrigated or used for plantations.

Land Ownership of al-Husayniyya and Tulayl

The 1944/45 land statistics were not recorded separately for al-Husayniyya and Tulayl. The two villages formed a combined statistical unit totaling 5,324 dunums.

PalQuest's official table uses the categories Arab, Jewish, and Public. To preserve the ownership terminology used in the Arabic Palestine Remembered format, the table below renders these as Palestinian, Transferred to Zionists, and Communal/Public, while correcting the numerical display error on the current

Arabic page by reference to PalQuest and Palestine Remembered's English table.

Total	5,324
Ownership category	Area in dunums
Palestinian	3,556
Transferred to Zionists	1,753
Communal/Public	15

The current Arabic Palestine Remembered page contains an evident display error, showing zero in the “Transferred to Zionists” category and only 15 as the total. PalQuest and Palestine Remembered's English page both record 1,753 dunums in the Jewish category and a total of 5,324 dunums.

Land Use, 1944/45

Total	3,556	1,753	15	5,324
Land use	Palestinian	Transferred to Zionists	Communal/Public	Total
Plantations and irrigable land	22	0	0	22
Cereals	3,388	1,637	0	5,025
Built-up area	48	0	0	48
Non-cultivable land	98	116	15	229

Cultivated or cultivable land totaled 5,047 dunums, approximately 95 percent of the combined area: 3,410 Palestinian dunums and 1,637 dunums in the category “Transferred to Zionists.”

Non-cultivable land amounted to 229 dunums and built-up land to 48 dunums, for a combined total of 277 dunums.

PalQuest's displayed subtotal gives 227 dunums for the non-cultivable and built-up

category, but this is an evident arithmetic error: $229 + 48 = 277$, and $5,047 + 277 = 5,324$, exactly matching the registered land total.

The First March 1948 Attack

More than a month before Operation Yiftach began, al-Husayniyya was subjected to a major Palmach assault.

Walid Khalidi identifies the Palmach's Third Battalion as the force responsible for the March attacks.

In the first raid, on 12–13 March 1948, houses in the village were blown up.

A contemporary newspaper report reproduced by Khalidi states that approximately fifty raiders entered the village at about 1:40 a.m. on 13 March and demolished twelve houses under heavy covering fire before withdrawing.

According to the same account, fifteen Palestinians were killed and twenty wounded.

British police and troops entered the area after the attack and imposed a curfew.

The 16–17 March Massacre

A second attack struck al-Husayniyya on 16–17 March 1948.

According to a report filed by a Palmach battalion and reproduced by Khalidi, more than thirty Arab adults were killed in the attack, excluding women and children from the stated figure.

Israeli sources cited in Khalidi put the overall death toll from the attacks at several dozen.

Khalidi explicitly refers to survivors of the “massacres,” making it historically appropriate to describe the March events as a massacre while preserving the casualty figures exactly as the sources present them.

The military account cited by the source claimed that the attack was carried out in retaliation for a land mine intended to obstruct Jewish traffic in the area.

The violence also spread fear to nearby communities, and inhabitants of al-'Ulmaniyya and Kirad al-Ghannama temporarily or permanently left their villages.

March Attacks versus the Final April Depopulation

al-Husayniyya's displacement did not occur in one simple event.

Many inhabitants left following the March attacks, but Khalidi states that some survivors may have remained in or returned to the village in the following days.

According to an Israeli military intelligence report reproduced by Khalidi, the inhabitants did not finally leave al-Husayniyya until 21 April 1948.

The March massacre and the April final depopulation should therefore be treated as distinct stages of the village's destruction.

Operation Yiftach and the Final Depopulation

Operation Yiftach began on 15 April 1948 and was conducted by Palmach forces to seize control of eastern Galilee before the end of the British Mandate.

The Palmach's First Battalion spearheaded the broader operation.

Khalidi's account states that the remaining inhabitants of al-Husayniyya left on 21 April as a result either of Haganah mortar bombardment and ground attacks carried out in the context of Operation Yiftach or of fear that such attacks were imminent.

PalQuest lists al-Husayniyya among the villages directly affected by Operation Yiftach.

Palestine Remembered identifies the Palmach's First Battalion as the unit associated with the final occupation.

A distinction is nevertheless necessary: Khalidi specifically identifies the Palmach's Third Battalion as responsible for the March assaults, whereas the First Battalion spearheaded Operation Yiftach overall. Khalidi's dedicated al-Husayniyya entry does not explicitly identify the battalion that carried out the final village-specific action on 21 April.

Some later Palestinian registers give 20 April as the depopulation date, while Khalidi, PalQuest, and Palestine Remembered use 21 April. The latter date is used here while noting the one-day discrepancy.

Chronology of the Occupation and Depopulation

12-13 March 1948: First major assault by the Palmach's Third Battalion; houses were demolished, and the cited account records fifteen Palestinians killed and twenty wounded.

16-17 March 1948: Second attack and massacre; a Palmach report cited by Khalidi records more than thirty Arab adults killed.

15 April 1948: Operation Yiftach begins in eastern Galilee.

21 April 1948: Date used by Khalidi, PalQuest, and Palestine Remembered for the final depopulation of al-Husayniyya amid bombardment, ground attacks, or fear of renewed attack.

Palmach Third Battalion: specifically identified with the March attacks.

Palmach First Battalion: spearheaded Operation Yiftach generally and is identified by Palestine Remembered with the final occupation, but Khalidi's village entry does not explicitly confirm it as the village-specific unit on 21 April.

Israeli Settlements Associated with the Village Lands

Khalidi lists Chulata and Sde Eli'ezer in the section concerning settlements associated with al-Husayniyya's lands.

Chulata was established in 1937 about 3 km east of the al-Husayniyya site near Tulayl. PalQuest's dedicated Tulayl entry states more specifically that Chulata was established on Tulayl's land, so it should not be described as belonging exclusively to al-Husayniyya's lands.

Sde Eli'ezer was founded in 1952 approximately 1 km west of the al-Husayniyya site and is listed by Khalidi in the section concerning settlements associated with the village.

Because al-Husayniyya and Tulayl were statistically and geographically intertwined in the Mandate records, settlement-land attribution should be presented with this qualification.

al-Husayniyya Today

According to the field description published by Walid Khalidi in *All That Remains*, only piles of stones and sections of walls from demolished houses remained at the village site.

Thorns, wild grasses, and scattered Christ's-thorn trees covered the area.

The former village site was used as pasture, while the surrounding lands were cultivated.

Palestine Remembered preserves later user-contributed photographs showing wall fragments, doorways, partially buried arched structures, fig and pomegranate trees, and the rubble of demolished houses.

These photographs are valuable community documentation but do not constitute a systematic independent archaeological or field survey.

Khalidi's principal field photographs date from around 1990 and his book was published in 1992. His account should therefore not be presented as a direct field verification of the site's condition in 2026.

The approved sources used here do not provide a sufficiently comprehensive and

independent recent survey to establish the precise present condition of every part of al-Husayniyya.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: al-Husayniyya](#)
- [PalQuest – Tulayl: statistical data shared with al-Husayniyya](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Yiftach](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – al-Husayniyya, Safad District](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – al-Husayniyya entry from All That Remains](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1922](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – All That Remains, Walid Khalidi](#)