

Kirad al-Ghannama



أنقاض في موقع القرية (تموز/ يوليو ١٩٤٧) [كراد الغنامة]

Kirad al-Ghannama - Depopulated Palestinian Village of Safad

Kirad al-Ghannama was a Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict, approximately 11 kilometers northeast of Safad. It stood on a gently sloping volcanic outcrop at the southern edge of the al-Hula Plain and overlooked the plain to the north. Its neighboring village, Kirad al-Baqqara, was described by Walid Khalidi as its “twin.”

Kirad al-Ghannama's history of displacement differed from that of many Palestinian villages permanently emptied in 1948. Its inhabitants left and returned more than once between 1948 and 1951. The village subsequently fell within the Demilitarized Zone established by the 1949 Syrian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement, and its Palestinian population remained connected to the village until the final expulsion to Syria in 1956.

Basic Information

Field	Information
Name	Kirad al-Ghannama
Arabic name	كراد الغنّامة
Subdistrict	Safad
Region	Galilee – southern edge of the al-Hula Plain
Distance from Safad	Approximately 11 km northeast
Elevation	Approximately 150 m according to PalQuest; the Palestine Encyclopedia gives approximately 175 m
Palestine Grid	205/269
Total land area	3,975 dunums
Population in 1945	350
Houses in 1931	54
1948 displacement	Temporary evacuation in March, followed by another temporary or partial evacuation on 22 April during Operation Yiftach
1948 military context	Operation Yiftach
Military unit in 1948	Palmach forces conducted Operation Yiftach; a separate direct First Battalion attack on Kirad al-Ghannama itself is not conclusively documented
Status after 1949	Part of the Israel-Syria Demilitarized Zone

Field	Information
Final expulsion	30 October 1956 according to a later UN record; Khalidi states more generally that the village was emptied by 1956
1956 military unit	A Palestinian oral-history compilation attributes the expulsion to Unit 101; this identification is not independently established in Khalidi's account
Israeli settlements on village land	None according to Khalidi; Gadot and Ayyelet ha-Shahar were nearby

Name and Etymology

Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh suggested that the word Kirad may be a corruption of Akrad, “Kurds,” referring to Kurdish groups who settled in Palestine during or after the medieval period. He also recorded an alternative explanation connecting the term with karrada, associated with traditional water-lifting devices known as kurud.

The Palestine Encyclopedia states that the area was historically frequented by Kurdish and Bedouin pastoralists and that some eventually settled there, producing the two neighboring villages of Kirad al-Ghannama and Kirad al-Baqqara. Local tradition connects the second part of the name, al-Ghannama, with sheep herding and the importance of flocks to the village economy.

These remain historical and traditional explanations rather than a conclusively established linguistic derivation.

Location and Geography

Kirad al-Ghannama stood on a volcanic outcrop at the southern edge of the al-Hula Plain. The site sloped gently, and the village houses were largely constructed of adobe or mud brick and roofed with timber.

Kirad al-Baqqara lay to the east, Tulayl to the north, al-Husayniyya to the northwest, Marus to the west, al-Wayziyya to the south, and Yarda to the southeast. Wadi Mushayrifa ran between the areas of the two Kirad villages, while

Wadi Waqqas passed west of Kirad al-Ghannama.

The village was linked by secondary routes to the Safad-Qunaytra road and the area of the Banat Ya'qub Bridge. Most local roads between the neighboring agricultural settlements were unpaved.

Water Resources

Water was relatively abundant. Khalidi records wells, springs, and nearby Wadi Waqqas as sources used by the villagers. Palestinian local documentation also identifies seasonal watercourses including Wadi Waqqas, Wadi al-Nashif, and Masil al-Dabbagha.

These resources supported agriculture and livestock, although most cultivated land remained dependent on rainfall.

Population

Year	Population	Status of Figure
1931	265	Official Government of Palestine census
1945	350	Official Mandate-period statistics
1948	406	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered, not an official census
1998	2,493	Later estimate of refugees and descendants, not an official census

The population recorded in the 1931 census was Muslim. A figure of 365 for 1931 appearing in one Palestine Encyclopedia entry conflicts with the official census-based figure of 265 and is therefore not used here.

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Note
1931	54	Official 1931 census figure

Year	Houses	Note
1948	82	Later estimate, not an official Government of Palestine census figure

Land Ownership, 1944/45

Total	3,975
Ownership Category	Dunums
Palestinian	3,795
Transferred to Zionists	175
Public	5

The original Mandate statistics used the categories Arab, Jewish, and Public. The three categories total exactly 3,975 dunums, matching the village's total land area.

Land Use, 1944/45

Total	3,795	175	5	3,975
Land Use	Palestinian	Transferred to Zionists	Public	Total
Citrus and bananas	77	0	0	77
Plantations and irrigable land	20	0	0	20
Cereals	3,451	175	0	3,626
Built-up land	64	0	0	64
Non-cultivable land	183	0	5	188

The table balances exactly: $77 + 20 + 3,626 + 64 + 188 = 3,975$ dunums. Some secondary online tables incorrectly place all 188 dunums of non-cultivable land in the Palestinian category; the official breakdown is 183 Palestinian and five public dunums.

Economy and Agriculture

The village economy depended primarily on agriculture and livestock raising. Grain occupied the largest cultivated area: 3,626 dunums when all ownership categories are counted. Palestinian-owned land also included 77 dunums devoted to citrus and bananas and 20 dunums classified as plantations or irrigable land.

Sheep raising was particularly important, alongside goats and cattle. Dairy products and agricultural produce supplied household needs, while surpluses were traded in nearby villages and markets.

Education

Palestinian sources disagree on the organization of education in Kirad al-Ghannama. The Palestine Encyclopedia states that children from Kirad al-Ghannama and Kirad al-Baqqara attended a shared school with approximately fifty boys and girls.

By contrast, a Palestinian village-history project based in part on oral testimony states that Kirad al-Ghannama had no formal school and that two shaykhs taught boys in private homes, providing basic reading, writing, arithmetic, and Qur'anic instruction.

Because no original school register or equally decisive record has been located, the two accounts should remain visible rather than treating either as conclusively established.

Archaeological Sites

Several archaeological sites lay near the village. Khirbat Nijmat al-Subh and Tall al-Safa contained columns, wall remains, and cisterns. Palestinian local documentation additionally records stone heaps, burials, presses, and carved rock around Tall al-Safa.

Approximately two kilometers to the southwest stood Tall al-Qadah, which Khalidi identifies as a large Bronze-Iron Age site.

Temporary Displacement in March 1948

The first documented displacement occurred in mid-March 1948. Khalidi, citing Israeli sources, reports that a Haganah attack in the neighboring village of al-Husayniyya caused dozens of deaths and prompted the temporary evacuation of Kirad al-Ghannama.

This was not the village's final depopulation. Its inhabitants, or at least a substantial portion of them, subsequently returned.

Operation Yiftach and the 22 April 1948

Evacuation

A second displacement occurred during Operation Yiftach. On 22 April 1948 the villagers, or part of the population, left again. Khalidi links this departure to the effect of a direct military assault on a nearby village, possibly al-'Ulmaniyya, which had been attacked on 20 April.

Palestine Remembered lists the Palmach's First Battalion as the military unit associated with the village's depopulation. The First Battalion was indeed a major participant in Operation Yiftach, but Khalidi's village-specific account does not establish a separate direct First Battalion assault on Kirad al-Ghannama on 22 April. Operation Yiftach is therefore best understood as the military context of this second evacuation rather than 22 April being treated as the village's final occupation date.

The Demilitarized Zone

Israel and Syria signed their General Armistice Agreement on 20 July 1949. The agreement created Demilitarized Zones between the forces and provided for the

gradual restoration of normal civilian life within them.

Kirad al-Ghannama lay within this zone. Its Palestinian population therefore did not disappear permanently from the village in 1948. Residents returned, and the village continued to exist during the following years amid continuing disputes over civilian residence, land use, and control of the Demilitarized Zone.

The 1951 Removal and Return

In the spring of 1951 Arab civilians were removed from portions of the Demilitarized Zone. Palestinian sources record that residents of Kirad al-Ghannama and Kirad al-Baqqara were among those transferred, with a number taken to the village of Sha'ab in the Acre Subdistrict.

On 18 May 1951 the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 93. Among its provisions, the Council determined that Arab civilians removed from the Demilitarized Zone should be permitted to return forthwith to their homes and restricted further population transfers without the procedures established under the armistice machinery.

Later United Nations records confirm that inhabitants of Baqqara and Ghannama returned following the resolution. Palestine Remembered also preserves community documentation of a 1951 petition in which residents of the two villages appealed to United Nations officials for restoration to their homes.

Final Expulsion in 1956

Kirad al-Ghannama remained inhabited after residents returned in the aftermath of the 1951 events. Pressure on the Arab population of the Demilitarized Zone nevertheless continued during the following years.

Khalidi records that by 1956 the approximately 2,200 Arab inhabitants of the Demilitarized Zone as a whole had been driven out, and Kirad al-Ghannama was emptied for a third time.

A later United Nations record states that the inhabitants of Baqqara and Ghannama were forced across into Syria on 30 October 1956. One Palestinian village-history compilation is internally inconsistent, giving both 30 October and 30 November in different sections. The article therefore uses 30 October while noting the discrepancy.

The same Palestinian compilation attributes the final expulsion to Unit 101. Because this unit-level identification is not independently specified in Khalidi's published village account, it is retained only as an attributed claim rather than a definitive military identification.

Cause of Depopulation

Kirad al-Ghannama cannot accurately be assigned a single depopulation cause or date. The March 1948 evacuation followed events in neighboring al-Husayniyya. The second evacuation on 22 April occurred within the context of Operation Yiftach and under the influence of an attack on a neighboring village. Residents later returned, were removed again in 1951, returned after United Nations intervention, and were finally expelled to Syria in 1956.

Destruction

Village buildings were damaged or destroyed during successive phases of displacement, and Palestinian oral-history material records that returning villagers rebuilt homes after earlier removals, particularly after their return in 1951.

Khalidi's later field description confirms that the village ultimately became a ruined site, with only house rubble remaining. It is therefore inaccurate to assign the village's final destruction automatically to 22 April 1948; the process continued through the later history of the Demilitarized Zone and culminated in the 1956 expulsion.

Ethnic Cleansing in Source Classification

Palestine Remembered classifies Kirad al-Ghannama using the term “ethnic cleansing.” The specific documented events include repeated displacement in 1948, subsequent returns, inclusion within the 1949 Demilitarized Zone, the removal and return of residents in 1951, and the final expulsion of the remaining villagers toward Syria in 1956, followed by the destruction of the village site.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Date	Event
Mid-March 1948	Temporary evacuation following the attack on neighboring al-Husayniyya; residents later returned.
20 April 1948	Attack on nearby al-'Ulmaniyya, which Khalidi considers a possible immediate factor in the subsequent evacuation of Kirad al-Ghannama.
22 April 1948	Second temporary or partial evacuation during Operation Yiftach.
1948–1949	Residents or a substantial part of the population returned; the April evacuation was not final.
20 July 1949	Israel-Syria General Armistice Agreement; Kirad al-Ghannama became part of the Demilitarized Zone.
30–31 March 1951	Arab civilians were removed from the central sector of the Demilitarized Zone; residents of the two Kirad villages were affected.
18 May 1951	UN Security Council Resolution 93 called for the return of Arab civilians removed from the Demilitarized Zone.
1951	Residents of Kirad al-Ghannama and Kirad al-Baqqara returned to the area.
30 October 1956	Final expulsion toward Syria according to a later United Nations record; one Palestinian secondary source alternatively gives 30 November.
After the final expulsion	The village was destroyed and its inhabitants did not return to permanent residence there.

Israeli Settlements on Kirad al-Ghannama's Lands

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, no Israeli settlement was established on Kirad al-Ghannama's village lands. Gadot, founded in 1949, lies very close to the site, while Ayyelet ha-Shahar, founded in 1918, lies nearby to the west.

An entry in the Palestine Encyclopedia gives a different account, associating Ayyelet ha-Shahar with Kirad al-Ghannama's lands. Because Khalidi's village-specific description explicitly distinguishes the nearby settlements from the village lands, this article follows his classification while preserving the source disagreement.

Kirad al-Ghannama Today

According to the field description used by Walid Khalidi before the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992, only the rubble of the village houses remained standing at the site. Wild vegetation, grasses, shrubs, and some trees covered the area, while surrounding lands were used for cultivation and livestock grazing.

Palestine Remembered contains later community documentation of the site, including photographs taken during subsequent visits, with material dating to 2014. These documents continue to show rubble, vegetation, and surviving trees around the former village area.

Such material constitutes community documentation rather than a comprehensive archaeological or cadastral survey. Khalidi's description likewise derives from fieldwork conducted before the 1992 publication of *All That Remains* and should be treated as a documented historical description, not as a comprehensive direct field verification of the site's condition in 2026.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Kirad al-Ghannama](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Kirad al-Ghannama, Safad](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Kirad al-Ghannama entry from Walid Khalidi's All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Encyclopedia – Kirad al-Baqqara and Kirad al-Ghannama](#)
- [Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Kirad al-Ghannama](#)
- [United Nations – Israel-Syria General Armistice Agreement, 20 July 1949](#)
- [United Nations – Security Council Resolution 93 \(1951\)](#)