

## Dayshum



**Subdistrict:** Safad Subdistrict

**Estimated population of Dayshum in 1948:** 684, commonly rounded to approximately 680

**Date of occupation and depopulation:** 30 October 1948

**Military operation and probable occupying unit:** Operation Hiram; units of the Sheva' (Seventh) Brigade probably entered the village

**Israeli settlements established on Dayshum's land before 1948:** None

**Israeli settlements established on or near Dayshum's land after 1948:** Dishon, established immediately east of the village site in 1953

Dayshum was located approximately 12.5 kilometres north of Safad.

Dayshum was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict, situated near the Lebanese border. Secondary roads connected it with Safad and the neighbouring Palestinian

villages.

The village stood on rocky but gently sloping land overlooking the ridges along Wadi Fara, which passed to the west. Its closely grouped houses were constructed from stone and mud.

Dayshum had three mills and several small gardens. All its inhabitants were Muslims, and some were descended from Algerian migrants who had fought alongside Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri against French colonial forces. They most probably arrived in the region after his defeat and banishment to Damascus in 1847.

## **Architecture of Dayshum**

In the late nineteenth century, Dayshum was described as a “well-built” village with approximately 400 inhabitants. Its houses stood on the side of a steep hill near the bottom of a valley and had gabled roofs. The closely grouped houses were built from stone and mud. The village contained three mills and several small gardens.

## **Boundaries of Dayshum**

**Dayshum was situated among the following Palestinian villages and localities:**

- North: [Qadas](#).
- Northwest: [al-Malikiyya](#).
- West and southwest: [Alma](#).
- South: [Marus](#).
- Southeast: [Tulayl](#).
- East: [Mallaha \(Arab al-Zubayd\)](#).
- Northeast: [Harrawi \(Arab al-Hamdun\)](#).

## Population of Dayshum

All the inhabitants of Dayshum were Palestinian Muslims. Some were descended from Algerian migrants who had fought alongside Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri against French colonial forces during the 1830s and 1840s. They most probably accompanied or followed him to the region after his defeat and banishment to Damascus in 1847. Because some of their ancestors had been horsemen in Algeria, the villagers developed a strong tradition of horse breeding.

Dayshum had 426 inhabitants in the 1922 British Mandate census. Its population increased slightly to 438 in 1931 and reached 590 according to the official 1945 village statistics.

Later community accounts state that thousands of descendants of Dayshum's displaced inhabitants live in Palestinian refugee communities in Lebanon and Syria, while others remained in Palestine. A reliable, current demographic total specific to the village's descendants could not be established from the academic and official sources consulted.

## Population Records for Dayshum

| Year                                 | Population*      |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1596                                 | Approximately 50 |
| 1922                                 | 426              |
| 1931                                 | 438              |
| 1945                                 | 590              |
| 1948                                 | 684              |
| Estimated number of refugees in 1998 | 4,203            |

\* The 1596 figure is an estimate derived from an Ottoman tax record. The figures for 1948 and 1998 are demographic estimates rather than contemporaneous census counts. Estimates vary between sources.

## Number of Houses in Dayshum

| Year | Number of houses* |
|------|-------------------|
| 1931 | 102               |
| 1948 | 159               |

\* The 1931 figure is an official census count, while the 1948 figure is an estimate.

## Economic Life in Dayshum

- Horse breeding held particular importance in Dayshum. Agriculture was nevertheless the village's principal source of livelihood. Some crops depended on rainfall, while others were irrigated from a stream passing through the village. The inhabitants cultivated mainly cereals, fruit, and olives. They also raised livestock, cut timber, and traded in wood. Trees northeast and southwest of the village supplied both fruit and timber. In 1944–1945, 4,701 dunams under Palestinian ownership were devoted to cereal cultivation, while 611 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards.
- Surface water was available from Sayl al-Handaj, which crossed the village lands and irrigated the surrounding farms. A spring was located near the village square, while rainwater supported the cultivation of rainfed crops.

## Land Use in Dayshum in 1944–1945

| Land-use category           | Palestinian ownership (dunams)* | Public land (dunams)* | Total (dunams)* |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Irrigated land and orchards | 611                             | 0                     | 611             |
| Cereal cultivation          | 4,701                           | 640                   | 5,341           |
| Cultivable land             | 5,312                           | 640                   | 5,952           |

| Land-use category | Palestinian ownership (dunams)* | Public land (dunams)* | Total (dunams)* |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Uncultivated land | 17,081                          | 11                    | 17,092          |

\* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

## Land Ownership in Dayshum

| Ownership category    | Land area (dunams)* |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Palestinian ownership | 22,393              |
| Jewish ownership      | 0                   |
| Public land           | 651                 |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>23,044</b>       |

\* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

## Archaeological Sites in Dayshum

Archaeological sites near Dayshum included two khirbas, Khirbat Dayr Habib and Dayshun. They contained the remains of animal enclosures, piles of building stones, cisterns, buildings, columns, and rock-cut tombs.

## Occupation and Depopulation of Dayshum

- According to Israeli historian Benny Morris, Dayshum was already empty when Israeli forces entered it on 30 October 1948 during Operation Hiram, part of Israel's occupation of Palestine in the Nakba. Units of the Sheva' (Seventh) Brigade probably reached Dayshum as they advanced through the northern Galilee.

- Morris suggests that the village may have been evacuated after news arrived of killings committed by soldiers of the Seventh Brigade in the nearby Palestinian villages of Safsaf and Jish. This sequence remains a historical assessment rather than a conclusively documented explanation for every inhabitant's departure. Given Dayshum's proximity to the border, its inhabitants probably fled or were expelled towards Lebanon.

## **Israeli Settlements Established on or near the Land of Dayshum**

The Israeli settlement of Dishon was established in 1953 immediately east of the former village site. The principal academic source describes it as being just east of the site but does not explicitly state in the relevant entry that it was built directly on Dayshum's registered land. It now uses the surrounding land for livestock grazing and apple cultivation.

## **Dayshum Today**

- Cactus plants and thorns grow across the village site. The principal surviving traces of Dayshum are piles of stones from demolished houses and the remains of agricultural terraces.
- The surrounding land is used by the residents of Dishon for livestock grazing and apple cultivation.

## **Sources**

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question – Dayshum.](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Dayshum.](#)
- [Government of Palestine, Village Statistics, April 1945.](#)
- Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992, pp. 438–439.
- Government of Palestine, *Palestine: Report and General Abstracts of the Census*

*of 1922.*

- Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1931: Population of Villages, Towns and Administrative Areas.*