

Qaddita



Qaddita - Depopulated Palestinian Village of Safad

Qaddita was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict of Upper Galilee. It stood on a hillside facing southeast, northwest of the city of Safad. PalQuest gives an average elevation of approximately 750 meters above sea level and a distance of 4.5 kilometers from Safad, although some Palestinian local compilations give a distance of approximately 7 kilometers.

The village lay among a cluster of Upper Galilee villages: Taytaba to the north,

'Ammuqa to the east, 'Ayn al-Zaytun to the south, Mirun to the southwest, Safsaf to the west, and al-Jish to the northwest. A secondary road connected Qaddita with the main road leading to Safad.

Basic Information

Field	Information
Name	Qaddita
Arabic name	قَدِّيتَا
Subdistrict	Safad
Region	Upper Galilee
Location relative to Safad	Northwest of Safad
Distance from Safad	Approximately 4.5 km according to PalQuest; some other Palestinian sources give about 7 km
Elevation	Approximately 750 m above sea level
Palestine Grid	194/267
Total land area	2,441 dunums
Population in 1945	240
Depopulation	The village was empty of its inhabitants by 11 May 1948
Military context	Operation Yiftach
Military unit	Palmach forces operated in the area; the First Battalion spearheaded Operation Yiftach, but a direct First Battalion assault on Qaddita itself is not conclusively documented
Documented cause of depopulation	Impact of the fall of Safad; the sources do not establish a direct assault on Qaddita before its evacuation
Date of destruction	Not established with precision

Name and Etymology

Walid Khalidi and Palestinian reference works suggest that Qaddita may be a corruption of the Syriac word Kaddisha, meaning “sacred.” Older Western sources also rendered the village name as Kadditha.

Location and Geography

Qaddita stood on an elevated slope in Upper Galilee and faced southeast. In the modern period its built-up area extended along a northwest-southeast axis that followed the contours of the hillside. Its stone houses were grouped closely together.

The village was surrounded by Taytaba to the north, 'Ammuqa to the east, 'Ayn al-Zaytun to the south, Mirun to the southwest, Safsaf to the west, and al-Jish to the northwest. A secondary road connected it with the main road to Safad.

The nineteenth-century Survey of Western Palestine described Qaddita as a stone-and-mud village situated on a hillside amid fig gardens and also recorded a pool and a spring in its vicinity.

Qaddita in the Ottoman Period and the Nineteenth Century

In 1596 Qaddita belonged to the nahiya of Jira in the liwa' of Safad. Its population has been estimated at approximately 149 people from Ottoman tax records. The villagers paid taxes on wheat, barley, vineyards, goats, beehives, and other agricultural production. This figure is an estimate derived from a fiscal register rather than a modern population census.

Qaddita was badly affected by the Galilee earthquake of 1 January 1837. When Edward Robinson travelled through the area in the following year, he referred to the vineyards and fig trees surrounding the village and to the severe earthquake

damage it had suffered.

In the 1870s the village was described as a small settlement of roughly ten houses or large household compounds. The Survey of Western Palestine in 1881 described Kadditha as a stone-and-mud village inhabited by about 200 Muslims, with fig gardens on the surrounding slope.

Population

Year	Population	Status of Figure
1596	Approx. 149	Estimate derived from an Ottoman tax register, not a modern census
Late nineteenth century	Approx. 200	Historical estimate recorded by the Survey of Western Palestine
1922	110	Official Government of Palestine census
1931	170	Official Government of Palestine census
1945	240	Official Mandate-period statistics
1948	278	Later estimate, not an official census
1998	1,710	Later estimate of refugees and descendants, not an official census

The village population recorded during the British Mandate period was entirely Muslim.

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Note
1931	32	Recorded in the official 1931 census
1948	52	Later estimate; not an official Mandate census figure

Land Ownership, 1944/45

Total	2,441
Ownership Category	Dunums
Palestinian	2,440
Transferred to Zionists	0
Public	1

The original official statistics used the categories Arab, Jewish, and Public. They recorded 2,440 dunums in the Arab category, no land in the Jewish category, and one dunum of public land. The categories total exactly 2,441 dunums.

Land Use, 1944/45

Total	2,440	1	2,441
Land Use	Palestinian	Public	Total Dunums
Cereals	1,452	0	1,452
Plantations and irrigable land	150	0	150
Built-up land	31	0	31
Non-cultivable land	807	1	808

The land-use figures balance exactly: $1,452 + 150 + 31 + 808 = 2,441$ dunums.

In the 1942/43 season, 77 dunums of village land were planted with olive trees. Because this figure relates to a different agricultural season and represents a crop-specific figure, it should not be added separately to the 1944/45 land-use total.

Economy and Agriculture

Qaddita's economy was based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Grain was among its principal crops, together with grapes, figs, pomegranates, and olives. Sixteenth-century fiscal records also refer to wheat, barley, vineyards, goats, and

beehives.

In 1944/45, 1,452 dunums were devoted to cereals and another 150 dunums were classified as plantations or irrigable land, demonstrating the importance of agriculture to the village economy.

Water and Archaeological Remains

The Survey of Western Palestine recorded a pool and a spring near Qaddita. Rock-cut cisterns recorded around the village also indicate the use of water-storage installations.

Palestinian reference material identifies two nearby ruin sites. Khirbat Rubayyis, northwest of the village, contained remains of foundations and walls as well as pottery fragments. Khirbat al-Qayyuma contained building remains, a column, rock-cut cisterns, burials, and a press. These remains are not assigned here to a specific archaeological period because the sources consulted do not establish such a dating with sufficient certainty.

Education and Public Services

The principal sources consulted do not provide independent documentation of a school in Qaddita before the Nakba. A Palestinian reference compilation states that the village had no administrative or service buildings. Accordingly, no local school, enrolment figures, or teacher numbers can be established from the available documentation.

Occupation and Depopulation

Qaddita was depopulated in the context of Operation Yiftach, launched by Palmach forces in eastern Galilee between mid-April and 25 May 1948. The capture of Safad and its surrounding area formed a central stage of the operation.

According to the material cited by Walid Khalidi and PalQuest from Israeli military

intelligence, several Galilee villages were evacuated directly after the fall of Safad, Qaddita among them. By 11 May 1948, the village had been emptied of its residents under the impact of Safad's fall.

The available historical account does not establish that Qaddita was subjected to a separate direct attack before it was emptied. Khalidi's account notes that it is unclear whether Haganah forces mounted a direct assault on Qaddita when they entered it. It is therefore important to distinguish between Qaddita's inclusion within the geographical and military scope of Operation Yiftach and proof that a specific unit captured it in a distinct village battle.

Palestine Remembered lists the Palmach's First Battalion as the attacking unit. The First Battalion did indeed spearhead Operation Yiftach as a whole. However, because Khalidi's village-specific narrative does not independently establish a direct First Battalion attack on Qaddita, this attribution should be treated cautiously rather than as a conclusive identification of the unit that entered the village.

Cause of Depopulation

The intelligence report cited in Khalidi's account attributes Qaddita's evacuation to the impact of the fall of Safad. The most cautious formulation is therefore that the village population left amid the military collapse around Safad and the pressure generated by Operation Yiftach, while the available sources do not conclusively document a direct assault on Qaddita before its evacuation.

A later stage of displacement is also documented. Khalidi reports that in 1949 some refugees from Qaddita were transported to 'Akbara, immediately south of Safad, where they endured extremely difficult living conditions for years.

Destruction

The historical source does not establish a precise date for Qaddita's destruction, nor does it establish that the houses were destroyed when forces entered the

village in May 1948. Later fieldwork documented that most of the village's buildings had disappeared, leaving stone rubble and cemetery remains.

It is therefore more accurate to state that Qaddita was largely destroyed after its depopulation while leaving the exact date and process of demolition unresolved, rather than automatically assigning the destruction to 11 May 1948.

Ethnic Cleansing in Source Classification

Palestine Remembered classifies Qaddita using the term “ethnic cleansing.” The more specifically documented events are that the village was emptied in the context of Operation Yiftach and the fall of Safad, that some villagers were later removed or transferred to 'Akbara, that the village became largely destroyed, and that its original inhabitants were unable to return to their village.

Occupation Chronology

Date	Event
15 April 1948	Operation Yiftach began in eastern Galilee.
9 May 1948	Units of the Palmach's First Battalion attacked 'Akbara as part of the pressure exerted on Safad.
10–11 May 1948	The final assault on Safad took place and the city fell during Operation Yiftach.
By 11 May 1948	Qaddita had been emptied of its inhabitants under the impact of Safad's fall. The sources do not establish a separate direct assault on Qaddita before this.
After depopulation	Occupation forces entered the village, but the exact date and mechanism of the destruction of its houses are not conclusively documented.
1949	Some Qaddita refugees were transported to 'Akbara, according to the account cited by Walid Khalidi.

Israeli Settlements on Qaddita's Lands

According to the fieldwork used by Walid Khalidi before the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992, there were no Israeli settlements on Qaddita's village lands. Sifsofa, to the northwest, had been established on the lands of Safsaf, while Dalton, to the northeast, had been established on the lands of Dallata.

Later Palestinian community documentation published by Palestine Remembered in 2003, however, identifies houses belonging to an “unrecognized settlement” on Qaddita's lands. Khalidi's statement should therefore be understood in its historical timeframe rather than treated as a description of conditions in 2026; later documentation indicates that land use at the site subsequently changed.

Qaddita Today

According to the field description published by Walid Khalidi, only several cemetery tombs and scattered stone rubble from destroyed houses remained at the village site. Thorns and wild vegetation covered the area, together with a number of neglected fig and olive trees, while nearby settlements had planted forests and fruit trees on portions of the surrounding land.

Later Palestinian community documentation from 2003 records remains of the cemetery, ruined houses, wells, and houses associated with an unrecognized settlement on parts of the village lands. This material constitutes later community documentation rather than a comprehensive archaeological or cadastral survey.

Khalidi's description derives from fieldwork conducted before the 1992 publication of *All That Remains*. It should therefore be understood as a documented historical description rather than a comprehensive, direct field verification of Qaddita's condition in 2026.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Qaddita](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Yiftach](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Qaddita, Safad District](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Qaddita entry from Walid Khalidi's All That Remains](#)
- [Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Qaddita and bibliography](#)
- [Survey of Western Palestine – Birzeit University Repository copy](#)