

Al-Ja'una



Subdistrict: Safad Subdistrict

Estimated population of al-Ja'una in 1948: Approximately 1,334 Palestinians

Reported date of occupation and depopulation: 9 May 1948. Sources differ over the precise date on which most residents left.

Military operation and units: Operation Yiftach; the Palmach's First Battalion

Jewish settlement established on land purchased from residents of al-Ja'una before 1948: Rosh Pinna

Israeli-built areas established or expanded over the village site and lands after 1948:
Neighbourhoods and extensions of Rosh Pinna

Al-Ja'una was a Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict. It was located approximately 5 kilometres east of Safad, on the slopes of Mount Kan'an, at an average elevation of about 500 metres above sea level.

The village overlooked the Ghawr—the low-lying Jordan Valley region—from every direction except the west. It stood near the western side of the road connecting Safad and Tabariyya.

Al-Ja'una's population was entirely Muslim. Most villagers worked in agriculture or construction. Despite limited water resources, they cultivated cereals, olives, figs, prickly pears and grapes. The village also had an elementary school for boys.

Boundaries and Neighbouring Villages

Al-Ja'una was surrounded by the following Palestinian villages and towns:

- **North:** [Fir'im](#).
- **West:** Safad.
- **Southwest:** [Akbara](#).
- **South:** [Jubb Yusuf](#).
- **East:** [al-Zanghariyya](#), also known locally as Zihliq.



The Depopulated Palestinian Village of al-Ja'una

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Population of al-Ja'una

The British Mandate census of 1922 recorded 626 residents in al-Ja'una. By 1931, the population had risen to 799 Muslims living in 149 houses. The British Mandate's 1945 Village Statistics recorded 1,150 residents, all of whom were Palestinian Muslims.

The population on the eve of the Nakba has been retrospectively estimated at approximately 1,334, with about 248 houses. These 1948 figures are projections rather than the results of a new official village census. Palestine Remembered estimated the number of refugees from al-Ja'una and their descendants at approximately 8,192 in 1998; this is also a retrospective estimate rather than a census of a single resident population.

Historical Population of al-Ja'una

Year	Recorded or estimated population	Notes
1596	Approximately 171	Estimated from Ottoman tax registers.
Late nineteenth century	Approximately 140–200	Contemporary survey estimates vary within this range.
1922	626	Recorded in the British Mandate census.
1931	799	Recorded as an entirely Muslim population living in 149 houses.
1945	1,150	Recorded in the British Mandate's Village Statistics.
1948	Approximately 1,334	Projected estimate rather than a new official census.
1998	Approximately 8,192 refugees and descendants	A retrospective estimate published by Palestine Remembered.

Number of Houses in al-Ja'una

Year	Number of houses	Status of figure
1931	149	Recorded in the British Mandate census.
1948	Approximately 248	Later estimate; no comparable official 1948 village census has been identified.

Economic Life in al-Ja'una

Most residents of al-Ja'una worked in agriculture or construction. Although the village had relatively limited water resources, its farmers cultivated cereals, olives, figs, prickly pears and grapes.

In 1944/45, 248 dunams were allocated to cereal cultivation, while 172 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were irrigated or used for orchards. A further 7 dunams of Jewish-owned land were classified as irrigated or orchard land.

Land Ownership in al-Ja'una, 1944/45

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	824
Jewish ownership	7
Public land	8
Total	839

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in al-Ja'una, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Jewish ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	172	7	—	179
Olive cultivation, included within the preceding category	171	0	—	171
Cereal cultivation	248	0	—	248
Built-up area	43	0	—	43
Cultivable land	420	7	—	427
Uncultivated land	361	0	8	369

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Education in al-Ja'una

Al-Ja'una had one elementary school for boys. The school had been founded during the Ottoman period and provided instruction through the fourth elementary grade.

Local descriptions indicate that the school stood east of the village. It was built of stone, roofed with tiles and had white-tiled floors.

Occupation and Depopulation of al-Ja'una

The fate of al-Ja'una was closely connected with that of the nearby city of Safad. The village was occupied during Operation Yiftach, a Palmach campaign conducted between mid-April and late May 1948 to seize Safad and establish Zionist control over eastern Galilee. The Palmach's First Battalion spearheaded the operation.

The precise date on which most residents left al-Ja'una is disputed. Israeli historian Benny Morris states in one account that the evacuation occurred before 2 May 1948 and contributed to panic among the Palestinian residents of Safad. Elsewhere, he dates the village's depopulation to 9 May, during the final phase of the assault on Safad. The village is therefore commonly assigned an occupation or depopulation date of 9 May 1948, although the available evidence indicates that displacement unfolded in stages.

Some Palestinian residents remained in al-Ja'una after its occupation. On the night of 5 June 1949, Israeli military forces surrounded al-Ja'una and two other villages with trucks and forcibly removed their remaining inhabitants. Contemporary testimony cited by Morris describes physical abuse during the removal. The expelled residents were taken to a barren hillside near Akbara, approximately 5 kilometres southwest of al-Ja'una, where they remained under overcrowded and difficult conditions.

Because a Palestinian population remained until June 1949, the village's final depopulation cannot be reduced to a single uncontested date. The principal displacement occurred during Operation Yiftach in May 1948, while the documented forced removal of the remaining residents took place on 5 June 1949.

Rosh Pinna and the Lands of al-Ja'una

Rosh Pinna lies southeast of the former village site. Its first settlement was established in 1878 on land purchased from residents of al-Ja'una. After that initial settlement failed, it was re-established in 1882.

Rosh Pinna had fewer than 400 residents at the beginning of 1948. By 1953, its population had increased to approximately 1,480, many of whom were recent immigrants. As the settlement expanded, it extended beyond the land acquired by its original founders and occupied additional land belonging to the depopulated Palestinian village of al-Ja'una.

Al-Ja'una Today

Rosh Pinna now occupies the village site. Many Palestinian houses remain standing. Some have been restored and are used by residents or businesses in Rosh Pinna, while other stone houses are abandoned, damaged or partly destroyed. One of the surviving buildings has an entrance distinguished by a basket-handle arch.

Sources

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question \(PalQuest\), “al-Ja'una”](#). The village entry is based substantially on Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*.
- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question \(PalQuest\), “Operation Yiftach”](#).
- [Palestine Remembered, “al-Ja'una—Safad”](#).
- [Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*](#), Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992.
 - Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1922*.
 - Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1931*.
- Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics, *Village Statistics, April 1945*.
 - Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, Cambridge University Press.