Our Palestine — Depopulated village — Akka (Acre) — 15 July 1948

Mi'ar

Mi'ar: A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Acre District

Mi'ar, also rendered as Mi'ar or Ma'ar, was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Acre District. It stood approximately 17.5 kilometers southeast of Acre on a rocky hill at the eastern edge of the Acre plain, at an average elevation of about 275 meters above sea level.

The Government of Palestine's 1944/1945 statistics recorded 770 inhabitants, all Muslims, and a total land area of 10,788 dunums. During the Nakba and the occupation of Palestine in 1948, Mi'ar was subjected to military pressure and

entered by units of the Sheva' Brigade, also known as the Seventh Brigade, between 15 and 18 July during the second phase of Operation Dekel. Its Palestinian population was displaced and scattered among neighboring Palestinian towns and villages and outside Palestine.

Key Facts About Mi'ar

- **Subdistrict:** Acre.
- **Distance from Acre:** approximately 17.5 kilometers southeast.
- **Average elevation:** approximately 275 meters above sea level.
- **Population in 1944/1945:** 770.
- **Estimated population in 1948:** 893 according to Palestine Remembered.
- **Total land area:** 10,788 dunums.
- **Occupation:** between 15 and 18 July 1948; Palestine Remembered gives 15 July as a specific date.
- **Military operation:** Operation Dekel.
- **Unit that entered the village:** Sheva' (Seventh) Brigade.

Location of Mi'ar

Mi'ar stood on a rocky hill at the eastern edge of the Acre plain, approximately 275 meters above sea level.

A secondary road connected the village with al-Damun to the northwest and from there with the road network leading toward Acre and neighboring villages.

The village lands bordered those of Sha'b, Kabul, Kawkab Abu al-Hija, Sakhnin, and Tamra. Mi'ar itself lay approximately three kilometers south of Sha'b.

The Origin of the Name Mi'ar

The Palestinian Encyclopedia suggests that Mi'ar or Ma'ar may derive from an ancient Canaanite name, Ma'ara, interpreted as meaning an “exposed place” or a

“place bare of trees.” The interpretation corresponds to the village's position on a rocky, exposed hill.

This linguistic derivation remains a historical hypothesis rather than a conclusively established etymology.

During the Crusader period, the village was known as Myary.

Mi'ar During the Ottoman Period

In 1596, Mi'ar was recorded in the nahiya of Acre within the liwa' of Safad and had an estimated population of approximately 55.

The inhabitants paid taxes on wheat, barley, fruit, goats, beehives, and other forms of agricultural production.

In 1859, the population was estimated at approximately 1,500, cultivating about thirty faddans of land. This figure should be understood as a historical estimate rather than an official census directly comparable with the later Mandate censuses.

Mi'ar During the 1936–1939 Palestinian Revolt

Mi'ar was subjected to severe British punitive measures during the 1936–1939 Palestinian Revolt.

Palestinian local documentation records that on 25 October 1938 the British army shelled the village after gunfire had twice been directed from the area toward British soldiers.

The attack and subsequent punitive measures destroyed approximately forty houses. Hundreds of villagers were detained, and residents were also compelled to perform road-building labor.

Many inhabitants temporarily left the village following the attack but later returned. It is therefore more accurate to state that Mi'ar suffered extensive

destruction in 1938 rather than that the entire village was permanently destroyed at that time.

The Built Environment of Mi'ar

The houses of Mi'ar were closely clustered and constructed mainly of stone and mud brick, with narrow streets and alleys following the contours of the rocky hill.

The built-up area covered approximately 37 dunums according to the 1944/1945 statistics.

The surrounding village lands combined rough rocky terrain with cereal fields, orchards, and olive trees.

Population of Mi'ar

The 1922 Census of Palestine recorded 429 inhabitants in Mi'ar.

In the 1931 census, the population had increased to 543, including 262 males and 281 females, living in 109 houses.

The Government of Palestine's 1944/1945 statistics recorded 770 inhabitants, all Muslims.

The figures of 893 inhabitants for 1948 and 5,485 refugees for 1998 published by Palestine Remembered are later demographic estimates rather than official censuses.

Population of Mi'ar

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1596	About 55	Historical estimate based on Ottoman tax records
1859	About 1,500	Historical estimate, not an official census

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1922	429	Official census
1931	543	Official census
1944/1945	770	Government of Palestine statistics; all Muslims
1948	893	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered
1998	5,485	Later refugee-population estimate published by Palestine Remembered
Historical estimates, official censuses, and later demographic estimates should be distinguished from one another.		

Number of Houses in Mi'ar

The 1931 Census of Palestine recorded 109 houses in Mi'ar.

The figure of 179 houses for 1948 published by Palestine Remembered is a later estimate rather than the result of an official census conducted that year.

Number of Houses in Mi'ar

Year	Number of Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	109	Official census
1948	179	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered

Education in Mi'ar

The Ottoman authorities established a school in Mi'ar in 1888.

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, this school was closed during the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

Palestinian local documentation provides a somewhat different chronology, stating that the school was closed during the Second World War and that the British Mandate authorities constructed an elementary school in Mi'ar in 1944.

Because the accounts differ, both are preserved with attribution rather than combined into an uncertain single chronology.

Land Ownership in Mi'ar

The Government of Palestine's 1944/1945 statistics recorded a total land area of 10,788 dunums for Mi'ar, with no Jewish land ownership recorded.

The Arabic Palestine Remembered table uses the categories “Palestinian,” “Transferred to Zionists,” and “Masha'.” These terms are retained below as the terminology used by that source. The corresponding official Government of Palestine categories were “Arab” and “Public.”

Total	**10,788**
Ownership Category	**Area in Dunums**
Palestinian	10,785
Transferred to Zionists	0
Masha' (source terminology)	3

Land Use in Mi'ar in 1944/1945

A total of 2,991 dunums was cultivated or classified as cultivable, all recorded as Arab land.

Cereals occupied 2,878 dunums, while plantations and irrigable land covered 113 dunums.

The built-up area covered 37 dunums. Non-cultivable land totaled 7,760 dunums, consisting of 7,757 dunums of Arab land and 3 dunums of public land.

Total	10,785	0	3	10,788
Land Use	**Arab**	**Jewish**	**Public**	**Total**
Plantations and Irrigable Land	113	0	0	113
Cereals	2,878	0	0	2,878
Built-up Area	37	0	0	37
Non-Cultivable Land	7,757	0	3	7,760

Palestine Remembered separately records 361 dunums planted with olive trees. This figure is presented as supplementary agricultural information and is not added again to the official land-use categories.

Economic Life in Mi'ar

Agriculture formed the basis of Mi'ar's economy, and grain cultivation was particularly important.

Palestinian local documentation states that the village was known for its cereal production, part of which was sold to surrounding villages and transported by camels and pack animals.

The inhabitants also cultivated olives, fruit, and orchards, while goats and beehives had formed part of the local economy since the Ottoman period.

Archaeological Remains in Mi'ar

Mi'ar occupied a site of archaeological significance, with remains in and around the village indicating a long history of settlement.

Recorded remains included rock carvings, traces of ancient buildings, column fragments, olive presses, and water cisterns.

Khirbat Ra's al-Zaytun lay north of the village, while Khirbat al-Jumayjima was situated between Mi'ar and Sakhnin.

Operation Dekel

The occupation of Mi'ar was associated with Operation Dekel, an Israeli military offensive carried out between 8 and 18 July 1948 during the renewed fighting between the two truces.

The operation resulted in the occupation of most of Lower Galilee, including Nazareth, and expanded Israeli military control in western Galilee.

The Sheva', Golani, and Carmeli Brigades participated in different phases of Operation Dekel.

Mi'ar itself, however, was entered during the second phase by units of the Sheva' Brigade, also known as the Seventh Brigade.

The Occupation and Depopulation of Mi'ar

During the second phase of Operation Dekel, units of the Sheva' Brigade advanced toward Mi'ar from areas of Lower Galilee that had recently come under Israeli control.

Walid Khalidi, citing Israeli historian Benny Morris, records that the brigade entered Mi'ar between 15 and 18 July 1948. Palestine Remembered gives 15 July as the specific occupation date.

The account cited by Khalidi indicates that the inhabitants left either as a result of artillery fire or under the influence of the occupation of large areas of Lower Galilee.

Palestinian local documentation additionally records artillery shelling and gunfire accompanying the approach of the attacking forces, forcing the population to leave.

Information originating in Israeli sources is presented here through the Palestinian intermediary sources Walid Khalidi and PalQuest rather than through independent

reliance on Israeli sources.

The People of Mi'ar After the Nakba

After the Nakba, the people of Mi'ar were dispersed among Palestinian towns and villages as well as neighboring Arab countries.

The Palestinian Encyclopedia and local documentation record significant communities of internally displaced people from Mi'ar in Kabul, Sakhnin, Sha'b, 'Arraba, Tamra, al-Makr, Shafa 'Amr, Haifa, and Nazareth.

Other villagers and their families were displaced to Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere.

Because contemporary estimates of the community's total population vary according to date and the inclusion of descendants, this article does not use an undated modern total as a definitive figure.

Israeli Settlements on Mi'ar's Lands

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest identify three principal settlements established on the lands of Mi'ar after the Nakba:

- Segev: established in 1953 east of the former village site.
- Ya'ad: established in 1975 northeast of the village according to PalQuest; some Palestinian local sources give 1974.
- Manof: established in 1980 on Mi'ar's lands.

Palestinian local documentation states that Segev was reorganized or transformed into Atzmon in 1983 and also associates part of the later settlement of Rakefet with Mi'ar's lands.

Yuvallim, established in 1982 approximately two kilometers east of the village site, is identified by Walid Khalidi as standing on land traditionally belonging to neighboring Sakhnin and is therefore not included among the settlements established on Mi'ar's lands.

The Destruction of Mi'ar

The built-up area of Mi'ar was demolished after the displacement of its inhabitants. Palestinian local documentation states that the Israeli authorities completed the destruction of the village houses in 1963.

The destruction of the houses did not eliminate every physical trace of the village. Portions of stone walls, graves, and old trees remained visible, as also recorded in Walid Khalidi's field description.

The Site of Mi'ar After the Nakba

According to Walid Khalidi's historical field description, truncated stone walls and simple graves remained on the village site, together with fig and olive trees.

Cypress trees covered much of the site, and the area had been converted into recreational and picnic grounds.

Palestinian local documentation additionally records two cemeteries and surviving fig, olive, and cactus plants and describes the former village site as lying within the area known as Segev Forest.

Khalidi's description is based on fieldwork conducted for *All That Remains* and should not necessarily be treated as an updated field survey of the site today.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Mi'ar
- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Operation Dekel
- Palestine Remembered: Mi'ar – Acre District
- Palestinian Encyclopedia: Mi'ar
- Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia: Mi'ar / Ma'ar
- Filastunna: The Depopulated Village of Mi'ar