Al-Ruways

Al-Ruways – Depopulated Palestinian Village in Acre Subdistrict

Al-Ruways was a Palestinian village in the Acre subdistrict. It stood on a small rocky hill overlooking the plain of Acre, approximately 12 kilometers from the city of Acre, at an average elevation of about 35 meters above sea level. It was among the smaller villages of the subdistrict in both population and land area.

The village had 330 inhabitants in the official 1944/45 statistics and a registered land area of 1,163 dunums. During the Nakba and the 1948 occupation of

Palestine, its population was displaced amid the July 1948 military operations in Galilee. Its occupation was associated with the final phase of Operation Dekel and the advance of units of the Sheva' or Seventh Brigade into western Galilee.

Key Facts about Al-Ruways

Field	Information
Name	Al-Ruways
Subdistrict	Acre
Status	Depopulated Palestinian village
Distance from Acre	Approximately 12 km
Average elevation	35 m above sea level
Population, 1944/45	330
Registered land area	1,163 dunums
Military operation	Operation Dekel
Unit specifically associated with the village's capture	Units of the Sheva' / Seventh Brigade
Occupation and depopulation	Mid-July 1948; the exact date differs among sources
Cause of depopulation	Bombardment, military advance, and the fall of nearby urban centers and localities
Israeli settlements established on village lands	No settlement is documented as having been established directly on Al-Ruways's lands

Location of Al-Ruways

Al-Ruways stood on a small rocky hill overlooking the Acre plain. A secondary road connected it with the villages of al-Damun and al-Birwa to the north and from there with the Acre–Safad highway. The same route also linked the village with the main Acre–Haifa coastal road.

The village lay close to the lands of al-Damun and Tamra in the eastern part of the Acre plain and along the western approaches to the hills of Galilee.

Al-Ruways before the Nakba

Walid Khalidi records that the village occupied a site associated in Crusader sources with the place-name “Careblier.” In the late nineteenth century, Al-Ruways was described as standing in open country with olive groves to the north. Its population at that time was estimated at about 400, all Muslims.

Al-Ruways was one of the smaller villages of the Acre region. Its houses were initially constructed of stone, while reinforced concrete became increasingly common in new construction from the 1930s onward. The village was divided into two quarters separated by a road.

Population of Al-Ruways

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
Late nineteenth century	About 400	Historical estimate in the Survey of Western Palestine
1922	154	Official British Mandate census
1931	217	Official British Mandate census
1944/45	330	Official statistics; all classified as Arab
1948	383	Later estimate reported by Palestine Remembered, not an official census
1998	2,351 refugees	Later refugee estimate reported by Palestine Remembered

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	44	Official 1931 census figure
1948	77	Later estimate reported by Palestine Remembered

The figure of 77 houses in 1948 should therefore not be presented as an official census count.

Land Ownership in Al-Ruways

The total registered land area of Al-Ruways in the 1944/45 statistics was 1,163 dunums. Using the terminology of the simplified ownership table presented by Palestine Remembered:

Ownership Category	Dunums
Palestinian	1,159
Transferred to Zionists	0
Communal/Public	4
Total	**1,163**

This corresponds with the official table, which records 1,159 Arab dunums and 4 Public dunums.

Land Use in 1944/45

For official land-use statistics, the original Arab and Public categories should be retained rather than merged with the simplified ownership categories above.

Land Use	Arab	Public	Total
Cereals	844	0	844
Plantations and irrigable land	222	0	222
Built-up area	15	0	15
Non-cultivable land	78	4	82
Total	**1,159**	**4**	**1,163**

A total of 1,066 dunums was classified as cultivated or cultivable, while 97 dunums consisted of built-up and non-cultivable land. Cultivable land therefore accounted

for approximately 92 percent of the village's registered area.

Of the 222 dunums devoted to plantations and irrigable land, approximately 40 dunums were planted with olive trees. This is a crop-level detail within the 222-dunum category and should not be added again to the village's total land area.

Economic Life in Al-Ruways

The inhabitants of Al-Ruways depended principally on agriculture. Documented crops included wheat, barley, sesame, watermelons, and olives. The 1944/45 statistics demonstrate the importance of cereal cultivation, with 844 dunums devoted to cereals and 222 dunums to plantations and irrigable cultivation.

Olive cultivation was also part of the village economy, and nineteenth-century descriptions noted olive groves to the north of the village.

Water Resources

The inhabitants obtained their drinking water principally from domestic wells that collected rainwater during the winter. The village's dependence on household cisterns and wells reflected the local pattern of water supply.

Mosque and Education

Al-Ruways had a mosque serving its residents. No independent village school is documented in the principal source used here; instead, children from Al-Ruways attended school in nearby al-Damun.

The principal sources reviewed do not provide sufficient documentation to establish the existence of a church in Al-Ruways, and this claim has therefore not been included as a verified village institution.

Archaeological Remains

Southwest of Al-Ruways was a ruin containing remains of walls, wells, and rock-cut tombs. Roman milestones were also discovered approximately one kilometer southeast of the village.

These remains indicate earlier activity in the area, but the principal sources do not provide enough archaeological evidence to assign them a more precise historical interpretation.

Operation Dekel

Operation Dekel lasted from 8 to 18 July 1948 and formed part of the Israeli occupation forces' military campaign in lower and western Galilee. Units from the Sheva' / Seventh Brigade, Carmeli Brigade, and Golani Brigade participated in the operation as a whole on different axes and at different stages.

For Al-Ruways specifically, however, Walid Khalidi's account as digitized by PalQuest identifies units of the Sheva' / Seventh Brigade as the forces advancing toward the village. It would therefore be inaccurate to identify every brigade participating in Operation Dekel as a unit that directly entered Al-Ruways.

Occupation and Depopulation of Al-Ruways

The precise date of Al-Ruways's occupation is not entirely consistent across the available sources. Palestine Remembered's summary table gives 15 July 1948, while the detailed narrative derived from Walid Khalidi states that Seventh Brigade units advanced toward several villages in the Acre region, including Al-Ruways, after the occupation of Nazareth on 16 July.

The most cautious formulation is therefore that Al-Ruways was occupied and depopulated in mid-July 1948 during the final phase of Operation Dekel, while noting that the exact day remains inconsistent in the sources.

According to Khalidi, most civilians fled under artillery bombardment and the advancing military forces, or in response to the fall of nearby urban centers and localities, including Nazareth and Shafa 'Amr.

Palestine Remembered classifies the cause of depopulation as a direct military assault and describes the complete removal of the village population as ethnic cleansing. In directly descriptive terms supported by the sources, the village lost its entire Palestinian population amid bombardment, military advance, and the associated displacement, and its community was not subsequently restored to the village.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Operation Dekel	8–18 July 1948	A broader military operation in Galilee involving several brigades on different fronts.
Occupation of Nazareth	16 July 1948	Khalidi's narrative places the Seventh Brigade's subsequent advance toward Al-Ruways after the capture of Nazareth.
Advance toward Al-Ruways	After 16 July according to the detailed narrative	Units of the Sheva' / Seventh Brigade moved toward western Galilee villages, including Al-Ruways.
Population flight	Mid-July 1948	Most residents fled under artillery bombardment, military advance, and the impact of the fall of nearby towns and localities.
Date listed by Palestine Remembered	15 July 1948	The site's summary table gives this date, but it conflicts with the chronology of the detailed narrative and is therefore not treated here as conclusively established.
Destruction	Precise date not established in the principal sources reviewed	Most village structures were destroyed, leaving debris from wells, concrete roofs, and other structures at the site.

Israeli Settlements and Al-Ruways's Lands

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest do not identify any Israeli settlement as having been established directly on the lands of Al-Ruways.

Yas'ur, established in 1949, lay north of al-Damun rather than on Al-Ruways's village lands. Its residents, however, cultivated lands belonging to Al-Ruways.

Settlement	Established	Relationship to Al-Ruways
Yas'ur	1949	Not established on Al-Ruways's lands, but its residents cultivated village lands

Al-Ruways Today

In Walid Khalidi's field description prepared before the publication of *All That Remains*, the village site was deserted and covered with the debris of old wells and concrete roofs. Eucalyptus trees and cactus plants covered much of the site, while nearby lands were being cultivated by residents of Yas'ur.

This description derives from field research undertaken before the publication of Khalidi's book in 1992. It is therefore a documented historical description of the site's condition at that time and should not be treated as a comprehensive direct field verification of conditions at Al-Ruways in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Al-Ruways
- PalQuest – Operation Dekel
- Palestine Remembered – Al-Ruways, Acre District
- Walid Khalidi – All That Remains: Al-Ruways
- Institute for Palestine Studies – All That Remains, Walid Khalidi