

Khirbat Zakariyya



التل الذي كانت القرية تقوم عليه (حزيران/يونيو ١٩٩٠) [خربة زكريا]

Khirbat Zakariyya - Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Ramla Subdistrict

Khirbat Zakariyya was a Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict, approximately 9 kilometers east of Ramla. It stood on a westward-sloping hill at an average elevation of about 175 meters above sea level.

It must not be confused with the much larger village of Zakariyya in the Hebron Subdistrict. Khirbat Zakariyya of Ramla was a separate locality whose registered land area amounted to 4,538 dunums in the final Mandate years.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Ramla
Mandate District	Lydda
Distance from Ramla	Approximately 9 km east
Average Elevation	Approximately 175 meters
Total Land Area, 1944/45	4,538 dunums
Population in 1931	No independently verified village-specific figure established
Population in 1945	The population cells are blank in the official Village Statistics; the secondary figure of 510 is therefore not used as an official total
Estimated Population in 1948	No reliable independent estimate established; Abu Sitta's Register displays 0 in the population field, reflecting the absence of a separate figure rather than an uninhabited village
Occupation / Depopulation Date	Around 12 July 1948; sources vary within approximately 11–13 July
Military Operation	Operation Dani, around the transition between its first and second phases
Military Unit	No particular brigade or battalion is independently documented at village level
Cause of Displacement	Military assault in the context of Operation Dani and the fall of the Lydda-Ramla area
Extent of Destruction	Most of the village's built environment disappeared; stones, wells, and archaeological remains survived, but no reliable numerical destruction percentage is available
Israeli Settlements on Village Land	None documented; Mevo Modi'im lies northeast of the former village but outside its registered lands

Location

Khirbat Zakariyya stood on a hill sloping toward the west and overlooking a broad expanse toward the coastal plain.

Two wadis bordered the locality from the north and south and joined west of the village to form a shallow watercourse.

Secondary roads connected Khirbat Zakariyya with Lydda and Ramla, while dirt tracks linked it with surrounding Palestinian villages.

Built Environment

Most village houses were built of adobe brick.

The site contained remains predating the modern village, including a vaulted structure, building foundations, rock-cut cisterns, and a press.

A maqam associated with Nabi or the pious figure Zakariyya stood south of the village center.

Population

Khirbat Zakariyya does not have the same independently documented population series available for many other villages of the Ramla Subdistrict.

Most importantly, the official 1945 Village Statistics list *Khirbat Zakariya* and its 4,538 dunums of land but leave the population columns blank.

The frequently repeated secondary figure of 510 inhabitants in 1945 is therefore not used here as an official Mandate figure because it does not appear in the table cited as its source.

Year	Population	Qualification
1931	Not independently verified	No unsupported figure used
1945	Not listed	The official Village Statistics leave the population fields blank for Khirbat Zakariya

Year	Population	Qualification
1948	Not established	Abu Sitta's Register displays 0 in the Population 48 field, reflecting unavailable independent demographic data rather than absence of inhabitants

Land Ownership in 1944/1945

Khirbat Zakariyya's registered land area totaled **4,538 dunums**.

The official Mandate categories were Arab, Jewish, and Public:

Total	4,538
Official Ownership Category	Dunums
Arab	4,538
Jewish	0
Public	0

All registered village land was therefore classified as Arab-owned in the official table.

Land Use in 1944/1945

Total	4,538
Land Use	Dunums
Cereals	2,161
Total Cultivable Land	2,161
Non-Cultivable Land	2,377

Cereal land accounted for approximately 48 percent of the total area, while approximately 52 percent was classified as non-cultivable.

Economic Life

The inhabitants depended on animal husbandry and rain-fed agriculture.

They cultivated cereals as well as fruit and vegetables. The official land-use statistics identify 2,161 dunums devoted to cereals in 1944/45.

Livestock raising formed another important part of the local economy.

Water

A spring at the northern edge of the village supplied water for domestic use.

The rock-cut cisterns and surviving wells also reflect the long history of local water collection and use.

Education and Services

The principal sources reviewed do not establish an independent school in Khirbat Zakariyya before the Nakba.

No school from a neighboring village is therefore reassigned to the locality without direct documentation.

Archaeological Remains and the Maqam

The village site contained several archaeological features, including:

- Remains of a vaulted structure.
- Foundations of older buildings.
- Rock-cut cisterns.
- A press.
- Wells and cut stone elements.

A maqam associated with Zakariyya stood south of the village center.

Operation Dani

Khirbat Zakariyya's depopulation was connected with **Operation Dani**, the major July 1948 offensive in the Lydda–Ramla region and the approaches to Jerusalem.

The operation ran from 9 to 18 July and consisted of two phases:

- First phase: 9–12 July, during which Lydda, Ramla, and surrounding localities were captured.
- Second phase: 13–18 July, when operations shifted eastward toward al-Latrun and the Ramallah road.

Har'el, Yiftach, the Eighth Armored Brigade, Kiryati, Alexandroni, and other forces participated on different axes.

Date of Occupation and Depopulation

The sources differ slightly over the precise day on which Khirbat Zakariyya was depopulated.

Palestinian official compilations give **12 July 1948**, while other databases use 13 July.

Salman Abu Sitta's Register displays 11 July in one date field and 12–13 July in a comparative source field.

The most cautious formulation is therefore that **Khirbat Zakariyya was occupied and depopulated between 11 and 13 July 1948, with 12 July the most commonly cited reference date.**

First or Second Phase of Operation Dani?

Several secondary sources describe Khirbat Zakariyya as having been taken in the “second phase” of Operation Dani.

PalQuest, however, defines the first phase as 9–12 July and the second as 13–18

July.

If the village was depopulated on 12 July, this places the event on the final day of the first phase. If final occupation occurred on 13 July, it falls at the opening of the second.

This article therefore describes the event as occurring **during Operation Dani, around the transition between its first and second phases.**

Military Unit

No village-specific source reviewed here conclusively identifies one brigade or battalion as the force that entered Khirbat Zakariyya.

Several brigades operated in the area during Operation Dani, but participation in the wider operation is not sufficient evidence for assigning the village to a particular unit.

Military Unit: not independently established at village level.

Cause of Displacement

The available documentation associates Khirbat Zakariyya's depopulation with military assault during the Israeli offensive in the Ramla district.

The event took place amid the fall of Lydda and Ramla and the spread of Israeli forces through their eastern hinterland during Operation Dani.

The most supportable formulation is therefore **military assault in the context of Operation Dani and the fall of the Lydda-Ramla area.**

Occupation and Displacement Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Village before Operation Dani	Until July 1948	A small pastoral and rain-fed agricultural village east of Ramla.

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of Operation Dani	9 July 1948	The major offensive against the Lydda–Ramla area and the Jerusalem corridor began.
Capture of Lydda	10–11 July 1948	Israeli forces expanded through the city's rural hinterland.
Capture of Ramla	12 July 1948	Israeli control widened around Khirbat Zakariyya's surrounding region.
Depopulation of Khirbat Zakariyya	11–13 July 1948	Sources differ by one or two days; 12 July is the most commonly cited reference date.
Second Phase of Operation Dani	13–18 July 1948	The offensive shifted eastward toward al-Latrun and the Ramallah road.

Extent of Destruction

Most of Khirbat Zakariyya's village structures disappeared after its depopulation.

The site was not stripped of every historical trace, however. Scattered stones, wells, their cut-stone coverings, and older archaeological remains continued to be visible.

No reliable numerical destruction percentage is available, so the article does not assign an unsupported figure such as 100 percent.

Israeli Settlements on Village Land

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest state that **no Israeli settlement was established on Khirbat Zakariyya's registered village land.**

Mevo Modi'im, established in 1964, lies northeast of the former village site but outside the village lands.

It should therefore be described as a nearby settlement rather than as a settlement built on Khirbat Zakariyya land.

Khirbat Zakariyya Today

The available site description derives mainly from historical fieldwork incorporated into Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*, including documentation from around 1990. It is therefore not a direct 2026 field verification.

At the time of that documentation, the village appeared from a distance as a bare hill overgrown with thorns and wild vegetation.

Stones were scattered throughout the site, which was being used for grazing, making it difficult in places to distinguish natural stones from those that had once formed village houses.

The remains of village wells and the cut stones that covered them were still visible.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Khirbat Zakariyya](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Dani](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Khirbat Zakariyya entry from All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Khirbat Zakariyya, Ramla District](#)
- [Village Statistics 1945 – Ramle Subdistrict: Khirbat Zakariya Land Ownership](#)
- [Village Statistics 1945 – Khirbat Zakariya Land Use](#)
- [Salman Abu Sitta – Register of Depopulated Palestinian Localities: Zakariya K / al-Ramla](#)