

Jimzu



Subdistrict: Ramla

Estimated population of Jimzu in 1948: 1,752

Date of occupation and depopulation: 10 July 1948

Military unit: Yiftach Brigade (Palmach)

Israeli settlements established on Jimzu's lands before 1948: None

Israeli settlements established on Jimzu's lands after 1948: Gimzo, established in 1950

Jimzu was located approximately 6.5 kilometres east of Ramla.

The village occupied slightly elevated ground above the surrounding central coastal plain. A secondary road connected it with Lydda, while another led to the neighbouring village of Khirbat al-Duhayriyya. Jimzu has been identified with the ancient town of Gimzo, which is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Evidence for identifying the two places is based principally on historical geography and the continuity of the place-name.

Edward Robinson visited Jimzu in 1838 and described it as a relatively large village. A late nineteenth-century survey described it as a village of adobe buildings situated on the slope of a low hill and surrounded by cactus hedges and olive trees.

The village houses were constructed from stone and mud. Most of Jimzu's inhabitants were Muslims, and the village maintained a mosque. An elementary school was established in 1920 and had an enrolment of 175 pupils by the mid-1940s.

Boundaries of Jimzu

Jimzu was situated among the following villages, towns, and localities:

- North: Dayr Abu Salama.
- Northwest: Khirbat al-Duhayriyya.
 - West: [Daniyal](#).
 - South: ['Innaba](#).
- Southeast: [Kharruba](#).
 - East: al-Midya.
- Northeast: [Khirbat Zakariyya](#).

Land of Jimzu

Jimzu's lands covered a total of 9,681 dunums. Of this area, 9,460 dunums were under Palestinian ownership and 221 dunums were classified as public land. No land was recorded

as being under Jewish ownership in the official 1944–1945 village statistics.

The village lands bordered those of Khirbat Zakariyya, Khirbat al-Qubayba, Dayr Abu Salama, Khirbat al-Duhayriyya, Daniyal, ‘Innaba, Kharruba, and the town of Lydda.

Land Ownership in Jimzu

Ownership category	Land area (dunums)*
Palestinian ownership	9,460
Jewish ownership	0
Public land	221
Total	9,681

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Jimzu in 1944–1945

Land-use category	Area (dunums)*
Citrus and banana cultivation	77
Irrigated land and orchards	1,605
Olive cultivation	1,400
Cereal cultivation	5,577
Built-up area	50
Total cultivable land	7,259
Uncultivated land	2,372

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The 1,400 dunums planted with olive trees formed part of the 1,605 dunums classified as irrigated land and orchards and should not be added separately to the total.

Population of Jimzu

The British Mandate census of 1922 recorded 897 inhabitants in Jimzu, all of whom were Muslims. The population increased to 1,081 in 1931 and reached 1,510 in the 1944–1945 village statistics.

Historical Population Figures for Jimzu

Year	Population*
1922	897
1931	1,081
1944–1945	1,510
1948	1,752 (estimated)
Estimated number of Palestinian refugees descended from the village population in 1998	10,757

* The figures for 1922, 1931, and 1944–1945 are based on British Mandate records. The figures for 1948 and 1998 are later demographic estimates rather than contemporary census counts.

Number of Houses in Jimzu

Year	Number of houses*
1931	268
1948	434 (estimated)

* The 1931 figure is derived from the British Mandate census, while the 1948 figure is a later estimate.

Economic Life in Jimzu

Most of Jimzu's inhabitants worked in agriculture and animal husbandry, with grain and fruit forming the principal crops. In 1944–1945, 77 dunums were devoted to citrus and bananas, 5,577 dunums to cereals, and 1,605 dunums to irrigated cultivation and orchards. Olive trees accounted for approximately 1,400 dunums of the land classified as irrigated or planted with orchards.

Ottoman tax records from 1596 indicate that the inhabitants paid taxes on wheat, barley, fruit, goats, and beehives, as well as other forms of agricultural production.

Buildings and Public Facilities in Jimzu

Accounts of Jimzu before its occupation in 1948 identify the following buildings and public facilities:

- One elementary school.
- One mosque.
- The shrine of Shaykh Ahmad al-Jimzawi.
- A large guesthouse located beside the mosque.
- Three olive presses.
- One grain mill.

Occupation and Depopulation of Jimzu

Several historical sources report that the Israeli army's Yiftach Brigade occupied Jimzu on 10 July 1948 during the first phase of Operation Dani. Egyptian writer Muhammad 'Abd al-Mun'im states that the Israeli infantry units that entered Lydda on 11 July approached it from the direction of Jimzu. Contemporary reporting in *The New York Times* described the occupation of Jimzu and several nearby villages as part of an encircling movement directed towards Ramla.

Jimzu was depopulated during the Israeli military assault. The available sources do not provide a detailed account of precisely what happened to its inhabitants during the occupation. On 13 September 1948, Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion included Jimzu among fourteen Palestinian villages designated for partial demolition. Israeli historian Benny Morris does not specify whether or when this particular order was implemented, although the surviving ruins confirm that most of the village's buildings were subsequently destroyed.

Israeli Settlement on Jimzu's Lands

The Israeli settlement of Gimzo was established on Jimzu's lands in 1950. Sources differ in describing whether it was constructed directly on the former built-up site or on the village's wider lands; the PalQuest entry, based on Walid Khalidi's research, identifies it as being on village land.

Jimzu Today

Only scattered stones and sections of crumbling walls remain from the village houses. Shrubs and thorny plants cover much of the site. Other vegetation found on the village lands includes Christ's-thorn trees, foxtail grass, cactus plants, and several abandoned olive trees.

Sources and References

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question \(PalQuest\), "Jimzu"](#) .
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- Walid Khalidi (ed.), *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992, pp. 386–387.