Al-Husayniyya Massacre 1948: Two Palmach Raids in the Hula Valley



In March 1948 Palmach forces attacked the village of al-Husayniyya in the Hula Valley twice within days. In the first attack they blew up 12 homes, killing 15 Palestinians and wounding twenty; in the second, on the night of 16–17 March, they killed more than thirty of the village's men, excluding women and children, and pursued those fleeing the massacre. The toll exceeded sixty. [1] [2]

The massacre came weeks after the al-Khisas and Sa'sa' massacres in the same Galilee, part of the series of raids that paved the way for the depopulation of the

Hula Valley villages. About a month later, the remaining people of al-Husayniyya were driven out for good. [1]

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The al-Husayniyya massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	First attack: 12–13 March 1948; second attack: 16–17 March 1948 [1] [2]
Place	The village of al-Husayniyya, southwestern corner of the Hula Valley, Safad district [1]
Perpetrator	A Palmach force, about fifty armed men in the first attack [1] [2]
First attack	12 houses blown up, 15 killed and 20 wounded [1] [2]
Second attack	More than 30 men killed, excluding women and children [1] [2]
Total toll	More than 60 according to WAFA, and “dozens” according to the Interactive Encyclopedia [2] [1]
Depopulation	Its people were finally driven out on 21 April 1948 [1]

Al-Husayniyya

Al-Husayniyya was a Palestinian village of the Safad district, on a low hill in the

southwestern corner of the Hula Valley, 11 kilometers from Safad, at an elevation of about 125 meters. It had 340 inhabitants in 1945. [1] It was built of stone, had a school, and its land was rich in groundwater and springs; 3,388 dunums were devoted to cereals and 22 dunums to irrigated farming and orchards, alongside livestock. [2] [1]

The first attack: 12–13 March

On 12 March 1948 a Palmach force blew up five houses in al-Husayniyya. At 1:40 a.m. on 13 March, about fifty raiders stormed the village and, “under heavy covering fire,” blew up twelve houses before withdrawing; fifteen Palestinians were killed and twenty wounded. [1]

After the attack, British police and troops entered the village, imposed a curfew and evacuated its residents. [1] [2] Some villagers, however, returned after the first attack. [2]

The second attack: 16–17 March

On the night of 16–17 March 1948 the Palmach attacked al-Husayniyya again. According to the attacking battalion’s own report, “more than 30 Arab adults (excluding women and children) were killed” in this attack. [1] WAFA says Palmach forces pursued those fleeing the massacre and killed some of them. [2]

The toll

Attack	Killed	Wounded
First (12–13 March)	15, with 12 houses blown up	20 [1] [2]
Second (16–17 March)	More than 30 adult men, excluding women and children	— [1] [2]
Total	More than 60 according to WAFA; “dozens” according to the Interactive Encyclopedia	— [2] [1]

Notably, the highest figure comes from Israeli estimates, as WAFA notes, and the attacking battalion's own report did not count the women and children among the dead. [2] [1]

Expulsion and the erasure of the village

After the two massacres, Zionist forces kept shelling the village's homes, and its remaining people fled after 20 March. [2] According to the Interactive Encyclopedia, the last residents did not leave until 21 April 1948, under Haganah mortar and ground attacks during Operation "Yiftach," crossing the border. [1]

Today nothing remains of al-Husayniyya but piles of stones and sections of walls from demolished houses, overgrown with thorns and Christ's-thorn trees and used as pasture, while the surrounding land is cultivated. The settlements of "Chulata" and "Sde Eli'ezer" lie nearby. [1]

Read about the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people.

Conclusion

In less than a week in March 1948, the Palmach attacked the small village of al-Husayniyya twice, blowing up its homes, killing dozens of its people and pursuing those who fled. A month later the rest were driven out, and the village was erased but for piles of stones. The al-Husayniyya massacre remains a testament that the depopulation of the Hula Valley began with massacres months before the occupation state was declared.

Frequently asked questions about the al-Husayniyya massacre

When did the al-Husayniyya massacre take place?

In two stages: the first attack on 12–13 March 1948, and the second on the night of 16–17 March 1948.

Where is al-Husayniyya?

In the southwestern corner of the Hula Valley, Safad district, 11 kilometers from Safad.

How many people were killed in the al-Husayniyya massacre?

Fifteen in the first attack and more than 30 men in the second, excluding women and children; the total exceeds 60 according to WAFA.

Who carried out the al-Husayniyya massacre?

It was carried out by the Palmach, the strike force of the Zionist Haganah organization.

When were the people of al-Husayniyya driven out?

Some fled after 20 March 1948 under shelling, and the last left on 21 April 1948 during Operation “Yiftach.”

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. “Al-Husayniyya,” Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question, Institute for Palestine Studies.
2. “Israeli Massacres,” Palestinian National Information Center (WAFA).