

Saydun



Saydun - Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Ramla Subdistrict

Saydun was a Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict, approximately 9 kilometers south of the town of Ramla. It stood on the eastern bank of Wadi Saydun, a tributary of Wadi al-Sarar, along the eastern edge of Palestine's coastal plain.

The village had an average elevation of approximately 150 meters above sea level and lay south of the southern branch of the Ramla-Jerusalem road. Local roads and

paths connected it with neighboring villages.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Ramla
Distance from Ramla	Approximately 9 km south
Average Elevation	Approximately 150 meters
Population in 1922	124
Population in 1931	174
Population in 1945	210
Estimated Population in 1948	244 – later demographic estimate, not an official 1948 census
Occupied Houses in 1931	35
Total Land Area in 1945	7,487 dunums
Probable Occupation Date	3 April 1948 or shortly afterward; another Palestinian source gives 6 April
Military Operation	Operation Nachshon
Military Unit	No village-specific unit securely identified; the Giv'ati and Har'el brigades participated in Operation Nachshon generally
Cause of Depopulation	Military attack and takeover during Operation Nachshon; residents of the area left before or during the capture according to Khalidi's source
Extent of Destruction	Most of the village was destroyed; one stone house remained in the historical field description
Post-1948 Settlements	No Israeli settlements are documented on Saydun village land

Location

Saydun stood on the eastern bank of Wadi Saydun, a tributary of Wadi al-Sarar, on the eastern edge of the coastal plain.

It lay south of the southern branch of the Ramla-Jerusalem highway and was linked

by local roads and paths with nearby villages including Khulda, Dayr Muhaysin, al-Mansura, Abu Shusha, al-Na'ani, Umm Kalkha, and al-Khalayil.

Saydun in the Nineteenth Century

Edward Robinson passed through Saydun in 1838 and described it as a large village.

Later nineteenth-century travelers and surveyors described it as a smaller settlement whose houses were largely constructed of adobe or mud brick.

The differing descriptions suggest changes in the size and built environment of Saydun during the nineteenth century.

Built Environment before the Nakba

Later village houses were constructed from mud, cement, and stone and were clustered along the road and paths leading toward neighboring villages.

The village contained several small shops, a maqam associated with a local religious figure, and a well on its northern side that supplied drinking water.

The Mandate antiquities authorities also recorded foundations of earlier structures at the site.

Population

Saydun's inhabitants were predominantly Muslim.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1922	124	Official Census of Palestine
1931	174	Official Census of Palestine
1945	210	Government of Palestine statistics
1948	244	Later demographic estimate, not an official census conducted in 1948

Houses

The 1931 census recorded **35 occupied houses** in Saydun.

Some later databases estimate approximately 49 houses in 1948, but this is not an official 1948 building census and should not be treated as equivalent to the official 1931 figure.

Land Ownership in 1945

Saydun's land totaled **7,487 dunums**.

Total	7,487
Ownership Category	Area in Dunums
Palestinian	6,099
Transferred to Zionists	1,221
Communal/Public	167

The official 1945 Village Statistics use the categories Arab, Jewish, and Public: 6,099 Arab dunums, 1,221 dunums in the Jewish category, and 167 public dunums.

Land Use in 1945

Total	6,099	1,221	167	7,487
Land Use	Palestinian	Transferred to Zionists	Public	Total
Cereals	5,247	1,098	0	6,345
Plantations and Irrigable Land	49	0	0	49
Built-up Area	15	0	0	15
Non-Cultivable Land	788	123	167	1,078

Approximately 6,394 dunums, or roughly 85 percent of the village land, were

classified as cultivated or cultivable.

Economic Life

The inhabitants relied primarily on rain-fed agriculture and livestock raising.

Cereal cultivation dominated agricultural activity, while 49 dunums were irrigated or used for plantations.

Several small shops served the everyday needs of the village population.

Water

A well on the northern side of Saydun supplied drinking water.

Agriculture was predominantly rain-fed, consistent with the strong emphasis on cereal production.

Education

Walid Khalidi's village description does not identify an independent school in Saydun before the Nakba.

No school in a neighboring locality is therefore reassigned to Saydun without direct evidence.

Operation Nachshon

Operation Nachshon began in early April 1948 as an offensive intended to seize and control villages and strategic positions along the route from the coastal plain toward Jerusalem.

PalQuest explicitly lists Saydun among the villages affected by the operation.

The first-stage operational orders called for the capture of Saydun together with Khulda and Dayr Muhaysin in order to control the western entrance to the

Jerusalem corridor.

Occupation and Depopulation

No detailed village-specific military report establishes the precise moment Saydun was occupied.

Walid Khalidi's account, as reproduced by PalQuest, considers it probable that Saydun fell on **3 April 1948 or shortly after the beginning of Operation Nachshon**.

Palestine Remembered gives a different date of **6 April 1948**.

The present article therefore treats 3 April as the probable date according to Khalidi/PalQuest while preserving 6 April as an alternative date found in another Palestinian source.

Military Unit

PalQuest identifies the **Giv'ati and Har'el brigades** as participants in Operation Nachshon at the operation-wide level.

The reviewed sources do not establish which one directly entered Saydun.

The most accurate formulation is therefore:

Executing unit: not independently established at village level; Giv'ati and Har'el participated in Operation Nachshon generally.

Occupation and Displacement Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Village before the Offensive	Until early April 1948	A small agricultural village south of Ramla, dependent mainly on cereals and animal husbandry.

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of Operation Nachshon	3 April 1948	The operation began, and its first-stage orders called for Saydun to be captured.
Probable Occupation	3 April or shortly afterward	This is the chronology considered most likely by Khalidi/PalQuest, although no detailed village battle account survives in the source.
Alternative Palestinian Date	6 April 1948	Palestine Remembered uses this date for Saydun's occupation.
Destruction	Probably shortly after occupation	Khalidi considers it likely that Saydun was destroyed soon after capture, as happened to nearby Khulda and Dayr Muhaysin.
End of Operation Nachshon	15 April 1948	By this stage control of several localities at the western entrance to the Jerusalem corridor had changed substantially.

Cause of Displacement

Saydun's depopulation was directly connected with the military offensive and seizure of the area during Operation Nachshon.

Khalidi's account states that inhabitants of the surrounding area left before or during the capture of their villages.

The reviewed sources do not provide a separate written expulsion order or a family-by-family account specific to Saydun.

The most supportable description is therefore **flight and complete village depopulation under the pressure of military attack and conquest during Operation Nachshon**.

Extent of Destruction

Khalidi considers it probable that Saydun was destroyed shortly after its

occupation, as occurred in several neighboring villages in the Jerusalem corridor.

In the later historical field description, only one stone house remained.

No reliable numerical destruction percentage exists, so no unsupported percentage is provided.

Refugees and Descendants

Palestine Remembered gives an estimated **1,496 refugees and descendants in 1998** originating from Saydun.

This is a later demographic estimate rather than an official comprehensive census of all Saydun descendants.

Israeli Settlements on Saydun Land

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest state that **no Israeli settlements were established on Saydun village lands**.

Nearby settlements should therefore not be attributed to Saydun solely because of geographic proximity.

Saydun Today

The available description of the site is based on historical field research incorporated into Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains* and does not constitute direct field verification in 2026.

According to that description, cactuses and numerous grapevines grow across the village site.

Only **one stone house** remained, with a flat roof and a round-arched doorway; it was being used for storage.

The surrounding village lands were being cultivated at the time of the historical

field survey.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Saydun](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Nachshon](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains](#)
- [Village Statistics 1945 – Ramla Subdistrict: Saydun Population and Land Ownership](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Saydun, Ramla](#)