

Dayr Muhaysin



Dayr Muhaysin - Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Ramla Subdistrict

Dayr Muhaysin was a Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict, approximately 12 kilometers southeast of Ramla. It stood on a relatively level, elongated hill running north to south at an average elevation of about 150 meters above sea level.

The village lay close to an important transportation corridor. A spur connected it with the road linking Gaza to the Ramla-Jerusalem highway, which passed approximately 200 meters south of the village, while dirt roads connected Dayr Muhaysin with neighboring Palestinian localities.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Ramla
Distance from Ramla	Approximately 12 km southeast
Average Elevation	Approximately 150 meters
Population in 1931	113

Item	Information
Occupied Houses in 1931	28
Population in 1944/1945	460
Estimated Population in 1948	Approximately 534 – later demographic estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area	10,008 dunums
First Assault / Capture	Early April 1948; Palestinian reference sources differ between 3, 5, and 6 April
Temporary Withdrawal	Haganah forces temporarily withdrew following a British request
Final Reoccupation	Before 15 May 1948; precise date not documented
Military Operation	Operation Nachshon
Military Force	Haganah; Har'el and Giv'ati participated at operation level, but the village-specific brigade or battalion is not conclusively identified
Cause of Displacement	Military assault and fighting during Operation Nachshon
Extent of Destruction	Extensive or near-total destruction and leveling; no documented numerical percentage
Post-1948 Settlement	Beqoa' – established in 1951 on village land

Location

Dayr Muhaysin occupied a level and relatively elongated rise running from north to south.

A short road linked it to the highway connecting Gaza with the Ramla–Jerusalem road, which passed only about 200 meters south of the built-up area.

Its location near the route between the coastal plain and Jerusalem became particularly important during the fighting of 1948.

Names and Earlier History of the Site

Dayr Muhaysin was also known as **Umm al-Shukf**.

Historical sources associate the site with the Crusader-period name **Deirmusim**.

In the late nineteenth century, the Survey of Western Palestine described a large site containing remains of abandoned dwellings, together with older archaeological features including cisterns and caves.

The Built-up Village before the Nakba

The modern village houses were built of masonry along roads radiating from the center.

As the village expanded, houses increasingly extended toward the major road passing to the south.

The residents maintained a mosque and several shops.

Population in 1931

The official 1931 Census of Palestine recorded **113 inhabitants** in Dayr Muhaysin living in **28 occupied houses**.

Year	Population	Occupied Houses
1931	113	28

Population in 1944/1945

The village population had increased to **460** by 1944/45 according to official statistics.

This represents substantial growth from the 1931 census figure.

Estimated Population in 1948

Palestinian databases drawing on Salman Abu Sitta's demographic estimates give approximately **534 inhabitants** for Dayr Muhaysin in 1948.

This figure should be clearly distinguished from the official 1945 total: 534 is a later estimate for the population on the eve of the Nakba and was not produced by an official 1948 census.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1931	113	Official Census of Palestine
1944/1945	460	Official statistics
1948	534	Later demographic estimate

Land Ownership in 1945

Dayr Muhaysin had a total land area of **10,008 dunums**.

The official Mandate categories were Arab, Jewish, and Public. No land was recorded in the Jewish category.

Total	10,008
Ownership Category	Area in Dunums
Palestinian	9,704
Transferred to Zionists	0
Communal/Public	304

In the original Mandate terminology, the categories were 9,704 Arab dunums, zero Jewish dunums, and 304 public dunums.

Land Use in 1945

Total	10,008
Use	Area in Dunums
Cereals	7,909
Plantations and Irrigable Land	45
Total Cultivable / Cultivated Land	7,954
Built-up Area	72
Non-Cultivable Land	1,982

The totals reconcile exactly with the village's overall land area.

Economic Life

Dayr Muhaysin depended primarily on rain-fed agriculture.

Cereals were cultivated on the lower and flatter lands, while fruit trees were planted on the slopes.

The principal agricultural products included:

- Cereals.
- Olives.
- Grapes.
- Figs.
- Almonds.

Cultivated or cultivable land accounted for close to four-fifths of the village's total land area.

Mosque and Shops

The village had a mosque and several shops serving the local population.

The principal sources reviewed for this article do not provide sufficiently firm evidence for a separate village school, so none is added without direct

documentation.

Dayr Muhaysin and the Road to Jerusalem

Dayr Muhaysin's position near the Khulda-Jerusalem corridor made it an early target in the spring of 1948.

On the night of 31 March–1 April, the Haganah leadership decided to launch a special operation to take control of villages along the route linking the coastal plain with Jerusalem.

This became Operation Nachshon, whose goal was to open and secure the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road.

Operation Nachshon

Operation Nachshon began in early April 1948 within the broader framework of Plan Dalet.

Large Haganah and Palmach forces were mobilized, with operational orders treating Arab villages along the Khulda-Jerusalem axis as hostile assembly points or potential attack bases.

PalQuest explicitly lists Dayr Muhaysin among the villages affected by Operation Nachshon.

Disagreement over the First Capture Date

The Palestinian sources used here do not provide one completely consistent date for Dayr Muhaysin's first capture.

Source	Date Given
PalQuest village entry	3 April 1948
PalQuest overall chronology	5 April 1948

Source	Date Given
Khalidi-derived Palestine Remembered entry	6 April 1948

Because of this discrepancy, the most careful formulation is “**early April 1948**” for the first capture, while 6 April remains the date most commonly reproduced in Palestinian village databases.

Fighting at Dayr Muhaysin

Khalidi reports that the *History of the Haganah* characterized the village's capture as relatively easy.

A British military communiqué cited in the same account, however, stated that fighting continued until nightfall.

Arab forces subsequently attempted twice to retake the village but failed to establish lasting control.

Temporary Haganah Withdrawal

After the first capture, British forces stationed at Latrun intervened.

They asked the Haganah to leave Dayr Muhaysin because the nearby road was important to British military supply lines.

The Haganah temporarily withdrew after receiving assurances regarding British convoy security.

Reoccupation of Dayr Muhaysin

The exact date on which Haganah forces returned after the temporary withdrawal is not documented.

Walid Khalidi considers it most likely that reoccupation occurred soon afterward and in any case **before 15 May 1948**.

Accordingly, 3, 5, or 6 April should not automatically be described as the village's final occupation date. Those dates refer to the first capture, which was followed by a temporary withdrawal and later reoccupation.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Operational Decision	Night of 31 March–1 April 1948	Haganah leadership decided to launch an operation against villages along the coastal plain–Jerusalem corridor.
Beginning of Operation Nachshon	Early April 1948	The operation sought to open and secure the Jerusalem road.
First Capture of Dayr Muhaysin	3–6 April 1948 depending on source	Haganah forces attacked and gained control during the opening stage of Operation Nachshon.
Arab Counterattacks	Following days	Arab forces twice attempted to recover the village but did not retain it.
Temporary Haganah Withdrawal	Early April 1948	British forces requested evacuation of the village because of its importance to their military supply route.
Final Reoccupation	After the British-requested withdrawal and before 15 May 1948	Haganah forces returned; the precise date is unknown.

Military Operation and Unit

Military Operation: Operation Nachshon.

Military Force: Haganah.

PalQuest lists the **Har'el and Giv'ati brigades** among the forces participating in Operation Nachshon as a whole, together with Haganah and Palmach formations.

The village sources, however, do not conclusively identify which brigade or battalion specifically entered Dayr Muhaysin. Neither Giv'ati nor Har'el should therefore be assigned as the village-specific executing unit without stronger direct evidence.

Cause of Displacement

The immediate cause of Dayr Muhaysin's depopulation was **military assault and fighting associated with Operation Nachshon**.

Khalidi's account indicates that villagers left before or during the Haganah assault amid military operations directed against communities along the Jerusalem-road corridor.

“Military assault” is therefore the most supportable description without imposing one unsupported narrative on every family's departure.

Destruction

Khalidi's account states that Dayr Muhaysin was apparently leveled soon after its capture, in a pattern similar to other villages taken during Operation Nachshon.

The post-Nakba site description confirms that the village area was bulldozed and substantially flattened.

The destruction can therefore be described as **extensive or near-total**, although no reliable numerical destruction percentage is documented.

Post-1948 Settlement on Village Land

Beqoa' was established in **1951** on Dayr Muhaysin village land.

It lies in the northwestern part of the historical village area.

Dayr Muhaysin Today

The available site description derives primarily from the historical field research incorporated into Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains* and should not be treated as a comprehensive direct field verification for 2026.

According to that description, the village site had been bulldozed and leveled and was largely covered by wild vegetation.

Almond, mulberry, and pomegranate trees grew on the site, while a row of fig trees remained along its western side.

Beqoa', established in 1951, lies on village land northwest of the former built-up site.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Dayr Muhaysin](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Nachshon](#)
- [PalQuest – Overall Chronology: Operations Nachshon and Har'el](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Dayr Muhaysin entry from All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Dayr Muhaysin: Population, Land Ownership, and Land Use](#)