

Sajad



Sajad - Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Ramla Subdistrict

Sajad was a Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict, approximately 16 kilometers south of al-Ramla. It stood in a hilly area at the eastern edge of the central coastal plain, at an average elevation of about 150 meters above sea level.

A secondary road connected the village with a highway to its north linking Gaza with the Ramla-Jerusalem road. Sajad was also among the Palestinian villages that benefited early from the railway network, with a station on the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway opened in 1892.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Ramla
Distance from al-Ramla	Approximately 16 km south
Average Elevation	Approximately 150 meters
Population in 1922	221, all Muslims
Population in 1931	300 in 66 occupied houses
Population in 1945	370, all Muslims
Estimated Population in 1948	429 according to Salman Abu Sitta's Register – a later estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	2,795 dunums
Beginning / Acceleration of Depopulation	Late May–first half of June 1948, depending on the source
Probable Final Occupation	9–10 July 1948
Military Operation	Operation An-Far
Military Unit	Giv'ati Brigade; its First Battalion conducted the principal Operation An-Far offensive
Refugee Destination	The Hebron area, according to the account reproduced by Khalidi
Post-1948 Settlements	No Israeli settlements are documented on Sajad village land

Location

Sajad was built in hilly terrain at the eastern edge of Palestine's central coastal plain.

A secondary road linked it to a highway north of the village, connecting Gaza with the main Ramla–Jerusalem road.

Its location south of Ramla placed it between the rural communities of the southern Ramla region and major transport routes toward Gaza and Jerusalem.

The Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway

Sajad benefited early from the development of Palestine's modern railway network.

In August 1892, the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway opened under the Ottoman administration after construction by a French company, and trains stopped at Sajad.

The station linked the village directly to the transport corridor connecting the Palestinian coast with Jerusalem.

Jiftlik Land at Sajad

Sajad had an unusual land-tenure history.

The land cultivated by the villagers had originally belonged to Ottoman Sultan Abd al-Hamid II. In 1908, the Ottoman government removed it from the sultan's private holdings and classified it as state-owned *jiftlik* land.

The government leased this land to the villagers on long-term arrangements, and the residents continued to cultivate and use it.

This history explains why the 1945 Village Statistics classified the entire Sajad land area as Public rather than registered Arab private ownership.

Population

All recorded inhabitants of Sajad were Muslims.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1922	221	Official Census of Palestine; 102 males and 119 females
1931	300	Official Census of Palestine
1945	370	Village Statistics 1945
1948	429	Later estimate in Salman Abu Sitta's Register, not an official census

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1998	2,636	Estimated refugees and descendants in Abu Sitta's Register, not an independent official census

Houses

The 1931 Census of Palestine recorded **66 occupied houses** in Sajad.

Some later Palestinian databases estimate approximately 94 houses for 1948, but this is a retrospective estimate rather than an official housing census and should not be treated in the same way as the 1931 figure.

Land Ownership in 1945

Sajad's total land area was **2,795 dunums**.

Total	2,795
Official Ownership Category	Area in Dunums
Arab – Registered Private Ownership	0
Jewish	0
Public / Government	2,795

The Public/Government classification does not mean that Sajad's residents did not cultivate or use the land. It reflected the village's jiftlik tenure: government-owned land leased to villagers on long-term arrangements.

No land was recorded in the Jewish ownership category in the 1945 statistics.

Land Use in 1945

Total	2,795
Land Use	Area in Dunums
Cereals	1,687

Total	2,795
Land Use	Area in Dunums
Built-up Area	19
Non-Cultivable	1,089

Cereal cultivation therefore accounted for approximately 60 percent of the village land area.

Economic Life

Sajad's economy depended principally on cereal cultivation.

Its road links and railway station also connected villagers with surrounding markets and settlements, particularly al-Ramla and communities along the Gaza-Jerusalem transport corridor.

The 1945 statistics do not record separate citrus or irrigated-plantation acreage for Sajad.

Education

Sajad did not have an independent school.

During the **1945/46 school year**, children from Sajad began attending the school in nearby Qazaza, southeast of the village.

Village Houses

Homes at Sajad were constructed partly from reused building materials and stone taken from the remains and foundations of earlier settlements at the site.

The built-up area was relatively compact, amounting to approximately 19 dunums in the 1945 statistics.

Beginning of Depopulation in Late May and Early June 1948

The sources differ over the precise beginning of Sajad's final depopulation.

Salman Abu Sitta records **31 May 1948**, while Palestine Remembered displays **1 June 1948**.

Walid Khalidi's account states that military operations during the first half of June accelerated the evacuation of Sajad and at least fifteen other villages in the region.

Late May and the first half of June are therefore best understood as the period in which evacuation began or intensified, rather than as an unquestionably established date of final military occupation.

Operation An-Far

Operation An-Far began on 8 July 1948 and continued until 15 July.

The Giv'ati Brigade conducted the offensive on the southern front, with its First Battalion carrying out the principal operation.

The operation sought to expand Giv'ati control eastward and southward and to connect the Israeli-held coastal area with Jewish settlements in the Naqab.

PalQuest also describes the removal of civilians from the occupied area as an objective and records the displacement of inhabitants of approximately sixteen villages near the intersection of the Ramla, Gaza, and Hebron districts.

Sajad is explicitly listed among the affected villages.

Probable Final Occupation of Sajad

Walid Khalidi considers it probable that Sajad fell during the first phase of Operation An-Far on **9-10 July 1948**.

The chronology therefore distinguishes between the earlier departure of some villagers or the acceleration of evacuation in late May and June and the probable final military capture of the village site in July.

The villagers reportedly moved toward the Hebron region.

Occupation and Displacement Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Pre-Nakba Village	Until 1948	Sajad had 370 inhabitants in 1945 and depended primarily on cereal cultivation on state-owned jiftlik land leased to villagers.
Abu Sitta's Recorded Date	31 May 1948	The Nakba Register assigns this date to Sajad and also references the first half of June.
Acceleration of Evacuation	First half of June 1948	Khalidi records that military operations in the region accelerated the evacuation of Sajad and other nearby villages.
Beginning of Operation An-Far	8 July 1948	The Giv'ati Brigade launched a major offensive south of Ramla toward the Naqab.
Probable Final Capture	9–10 July 1948	Khalidi considers it probable that Sajad came under final military control during the first phase of Operation An-Far.
Refugee Destination	After Displacement	The villagers reportedly moved toward the Hebron region.

Military Operation and Unit

Military Operation: Operation An-Far.

Military Unit: Giv'ati Brigade. At the operation-wide level, the First Battalion conducted the main An-Far offensive.

The available source does not identify a smaller company or platoon as the specific

force that entered Sajad, so no more precise village-level attribution is made.

Cause of Displacement

The departure of Sajad's inhabitants was connected to military operations south of Ramla during late May, June, and July 1948.

The sources describe military operations as accelerating the village's evacuation, followed by Operation An-Far, whose objectives included taking control of the region and removing civilians from the occupied zone.

The most accurate formulation is therefore **displacement under military pressure and attack, culminating in the village's probable final capture during Operation An-Far.**

Extent of Destruction

No reliable numerical destruction percentage is available for Sajad.

Palestinian sources describe the village as depopulated and inaccessible, while Palestine Remembered considers the original built-up locality most likely destroyed.

No unsupported figure such as 90 or 100 percent is therefore used.

Settlements on Sajad Land

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, **no Israeli settlements were established on Sajad village land.**

Military use of the land after depopulation is not classified here as the establishment of a civilian settlement.

Sajad Today

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest describe the former Sajad village site as lying within an **inaccessible closed military zone**.

This has limited documentation of surviving village remains compared with localities where post-Nakba field surveys were possible.

No civilian Israeli settlement is documented on Sajad's land, while the area has been used for military purposes.

This description is based on published sources and does not constitute direct field verification of the site in 2026.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Sajad](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation An-Far](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Sajad, Ramla](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Sajad entry from All That Remains](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1922: Sajad](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1931: Sajad](#)
- [Village Statistics 1945 – Ramla Subdistrict: Sajad Population and Land Ownership](#)
- [Village Statistics 1945 – Sajad Land Use](#)
- [Village Statistics 1945 – Sajad Built-up and Non-Cultivable Land](#)
- [Salman Abu Sitta – Register of Depopulated Palestinian Localities: Sajad](#)