Idnibba

Idnibba – Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Ramla Subdistrict

Idnibba was a Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict, located approximately 20.5 kilometers south of al-Ramla. It stood on hilly ground at an average elevation of about 150 meters and overlooked broad plains to the west, north, and south.

A secondary road running north linked the village with a highway connecting Gaza to the Jerusalem–Ramla road, placing Idnibba within the road network linking central and southern Palestine.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Ramla
Distance from al-Ramla	Approximately 20.5 km south
Average Elevation	Approximately 150 meters
Population in 1922	275 – official Census of Palestine
Population in 1931	345 – official Census of Palestine
Occupied Houses in 1931	87
Population in 1944/1945	490, all Arabs
Estimated Population in 1948	568 according to Salman Abu Sitta's Register – a later estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	8,103 dunums
Occupation / Displacement Date	9–10 July 1948; clearing and destruction operations in the area continued into mid-July
Military Operation	Operation An-Far
Military Unit	Giv'ati Brigade; its First Battalion formed the principal force in Operation An-Far
Cause of Displacement	Military assault and expulsion during Operation An-Far
Extent of Destruction	Most of the village fabric was destroyed, while ruins, walls, and stone-house remains survived; no reliable numerical destruction percentage exists
Post-1948 Settlements on Village Land	No Israeli settlement is documented on Idnibba's village lands by Khalidi/PalQuest

Name and Earlier History

The village is recorded as Idnibba, with variants including Idnebbeh.

Walid Khalidi considers it possible that Idnibba occupied the site of the Roman settlement of **Danuba**, a name also used for the locality by the Crusaders.

The identification represents a historical interpretation of the site's continuity

rather than conclusive archaeological proof for every phase of settlement.

Idnibba under Ottoman Rule

In 1596, Idnibba was recorded as a village in the nahiya of Gaza within the liwa' of Gaza.

Khalidi's reconstruction from the Ottoman tax register gives approximately **198 inhabitants**.

The village paid taxes on wheat, barley, sesame, goats, and beehives, indicating an economy combining cultivation and livestock raising.

The Village in the Nineteenth Century

In the late nineteenth century, Idnibba was described as a stone-and-mud village standing on elevated ground.

Cactus hedges surrounded the settlement, while a fig orchard was located on its southern side.

The houses were built close together in the compact pattern characteristic of many Palestinian agricultural villages.

Population during the British Mandate

The official 1922 Census of Palestine recorded **275 inhabitants** in Idnibba, all Muslims.

By the 1931 census, the population had risen to **345**, living in **87 occupied houses**.

The 1944/45 official statistics gave **490 inhabitants**, all Arabs.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1596	About 198	Reconstruction from Ottoman tax records

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1922	275	Official Census of Palestine
1931	345	Official Census of Palestine
1944/1945	490	Government of Palestine statistics
1948	568	Later estimate in Salman Abu Sitta's Register, not an official census

Refugees and Descendants

Salman Abu Sitta's Register estimates approximately **3,491 refugees and descendants in 1998** associated with Idnibba.

This is a later demographic estimate rather than a comprehensive official census of all people originating from the village.

Houses

The official 1931 census recorded **87 occupied houses**.

Some Palestinian databases give an estimated 143 houses for 1948. That figure was not produced by a formal 1948 housing census and should therefore be treated as a later estimate rather than equated with the official 1931 count.

Land Ownership in 1945

Idnibba's total land area was **8,103 dunums**.

Total	8,103
Ownership Category	**Area in Dunums**
Palestinian	6,827
Transferred to Zionists	1,082
Communal / Public	194

The original Government of Palestine statistics use the categories Arab, Jewish, and Public. Palestine Remembered presents the same land figures using the wording Palestinian / Transferred to Zionists / Communal.

Land Use in 1945

Total	6,827	1,082	194	8,103
Land Use	**Palestinian**	**Transferred to Zionists**	**Public**	**Total**
Cereals	5,277	885	0	6,162
Plantations and Irrigable Land	85	0	0	85
Built-up Land	25	0	0	25
Non-Cultivable	1,440	197	194	1,831

A total of 6,247 dunums, or approximately 77 percent of village land, was classified as cultivable.

Agriculture and Economic Life

Most villagers depended on agriculture and animal husbandry.

Idnibba's lands provided good spring pasture, making livestock raising an important part of the local economy.

Grain cultivation dominated agriculture. In 1944/45, 6,162 dunums were classified as cereal land when the Palestinian and Jewish-category holdings are combined.

Olive cultivation was also significant. Of the 85 dunums classified as plantations and irrigable land, approximately **64 dunums were planted with olives**.

Archaeological Khirbas

Three substantial khirbas were located near Idnibba.

Their remains included ruined structures, cisterns, caves, foundations, door lintels, and a rock-hewn wine press.

Later Palestinian local documentation identifies sites including Khirbat al-Mansiyya, Khirbat Dayr al-Nu'man, and Khirbat al-Shaykh Dawud.

Neighboring Localities

Idnibba lay among a group of villages in southern Ramla Subdistrict and the adjoining zone, including Jilya, al-Khayma, al-Tina, Mughallis, and Tall al-Safi, with local territorial connections toward al-Burayj and Shahma.

Operation An-Far

Operation An-Far began on 8 July 1948 and continued until 15 July during the Ten Days between the First and Second Truces.

The Giv'ati Brigade conducted the operation on the southern front, with its First Battalion assigned a central attacking role.

The operation aimed to expand Giv'ati's area of control southward and eastward, establish a connection toward the Naqab, and remove civilians from territory brought under military control.

PalQuest explicitly lists Idnibba among the villages affected by Operation An-Far.

Idnibba and Operation Dani

Operation An-Far overlapped chronologically with Operation Dani, which began in the Lydda–Ramla sector on 9–10 July 1948.

Idnibba, however, is specifically associated by Khalidi and PalQuest with **Operation An-Far** and the Giv'ati Brigade, not with Operation Dani.

Operation Dani should therefore not be listed as Idnibba's military operation merely because the village lay in Ramla Subdistrict and was occupied during the

same period.

Occupation and Displacement

Giv'ati Brigade forces advanced toward Idnibba during the Ten Days between the two truces.

Walid Khalidi places the village among those taken on **9–10 July 1948** during Operation An-Far.

Palestine Remembered gives 9 July, while Salman Abu Sitta's Register records 9–10 July. This article therefore uses the two-day range rather than presenting one day as completely undisputed.

Expulsion and Destruction in July 1948

The initial capture was followed by further clearing and destruction.

A Giv'ati Brigade headquarters report dated 16 July recorded that forces had entered Idnibba and several nearby villages, expelled their inhabitants, and demolished or burned a number of houses.

This corresponds with the broader record of Operation An-Far, during which orders to remove civilians were issued for parts of the captured area.

The evidence therefore provides stronger support for military assault and expulsion than for reducing Idnibba's depopulation simply to the influence of the fall of a neighboring locality.

Occupation and Displacement Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
End of the First Truce	8 July 1948	Operation An-Far began under the Giv'ati Brigade on the southern front.

Stage	Date	Details
Attack and Capture of Idnibba	9–10 July 1948	Giv'ati forces reached and took the village as part of their advance through the villages south of Ramla.
Displacement of the Population	July 1948	Residents were displaced during the military offensive and clearing of the Operation An-Far area.
Giv'ati Headquarters Report	16 July 1948	The report recorded entry into Idnibba and nearby villages, expulsion of residents, and the demolition or burning of houses.

Military Unit

Brigade: Giv'ati Brigade.

Operational Framework: Operation An-Far.

Principal Operation-Level Unit: the First Battalion of the Giv'ati Brigade, which received the main operational assignment in An-Far.

There is no basis for assigning Operation Dani brigades to Idnibba merely because they were active in Ramla District during the same days.

Cause of Displacement

The departure of Idnibba's inhabitants was directly connected with the military assault during Operation An-Far.

Sources on the operation document instructions to remove civilians from parts of the captured zone, while the later Giv'ati report records the expulsion of the inhabitants of Idnibba and neighboring villages.

The most supportable formulation is therefore:

Military assault and expulsion from the village during Operation An-Far in July 1948.

Extent of Destruction

Idnibba was subjected to demolition and burning after its capture.

Sources document the destruction and burning of houses, while Khalidi's field description later recorded demolished walls and surviving fragments of stone houses scattered across the site.

Some later databases summarize the village as completely destroyed, but the surviving ruins and absence of a complete building-by-building inventory make a numerical figure such as 100 percent inappropriate.

The more accurate description is: **most of the built-up village was destroyed, with scattered ruins, walls, and building remains surviving.**

Israeli Settlements on Idnibba Land

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, **no Israeli settlement was established on Idnibba's village lands**.

Kefar Menachem, established in 1937 before the Nakba, lies approximately two kilometers southwest of the village site.

Charuvit was established in the early 1950s about one kilometer west of the site, served for a period as a transit camp for new Jewish immigrants, and later ceased to be inhabited.

Neither is listed here as a settlement established on Idnibba land because the principal source explicitly distinguishes their locations from the village lands.

Idnibba Today

The available site description is based primarily on historical field research incorporated into Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*, including documentation dating to around 1990. It is therefore not a direct 2026 field verification.

According to that description, the village site and surrounding land had been converted into pasture and woodland, while a broad area had been leveled by bulldozers.

Remains of stone houses and demolished walls were scattered across the site.

Natural caves with artificially shaped arched entrances remained visible along the upper western edge of the former village.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Idnibba
- PalQuest – Operation An-Far
- Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1922
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1931
- Palestine Remembered – Idnibba, Ramla District
- Salman Abu Sitta – Register of Depopulated Palestinian Localities: Idnibba
- Palestine Land Society – Nakba Documentation: Idnibba, July 1948