Sirin



Sirin: A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Baysan District

Sirin was a Palestinian village in the Baysan District, located in the far north of the district about 17 kilometres from the city of Baysan, at an average elevation of approximately 200 metres above sea level. Its lands covered 28,445 dunams. Units of the Zionist Golani Brigade occupied the village on 12 May 1948, and its inhabitants were displaced during the Nakba and the occupation of Palestine in 1948.

Basic Information

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Baysan
Distance from district center	17 km North of Baysan
Average Elevation	200 meters above sea level
Population in 1931	630 inhabitants - Official census
Number of Houses in 1931	161 houses - Official census
Population in 1944/1945	810 inhabitants - Government of Palestine statistics: 620 Muslims and 190 Christians
Estimated Population in 1948	About 940 inhabitants - a later demographic estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	28,445 dunams
Attack and Depopulation	Sirin entered the decisive phase of the Nakba in May 1948, as units of the Golani Brigade advanced through the Baysan region and Lower Galilee.
Final Israeli Control	12 May 1948
Military Operation	Gideon
Military Unit	Golani Brigade
Cause of Depopulation	Abandonment based on Arab orders
Settlements Documented on Village Lands	The reviewed sources record no Israeli settlements on the village lands

Location and Name

Sirin stood on a relatively level area of land that sloped gradually toward the southwest. Wadi al-Raduh bordered the village site to the northwest, while Wadi al-Bayadir lay to the southeast.

A secondary road connected the village with the main road leading north toward Samakh and south toward Baysan. Other secondary roads and paths linked Sirin with neighbouring Palestinian villages.

Palestine Remembered gives an interpretation of the name Sirin that connects it with the Aramaic word “sir,” meaning “summit.” PalQuest, however, does not present this derivation as an established explanation of the village name. It is therefore more appropriate to regard it as a traditional interpretation rather than a confirmed linguistic fact.

The Crusaders referred to the village as “Losserin.”

Sirin Through History

In 1596, Sirin was a village in the Jenin subdistrict of the Lajjun district. Sources used by Walid Khalidi record a population of 22 at that time. The inhabitants paid taxes on wheat, barley, goats, beehives, and other products.

In the early nineteenth century, British traveller James Silk Buckingham described Sirin as a village consisting of approximately thirty to forty houses, with around six Bedouin tents nearby.

By the late nineteenth century, the village was surrounded by cactus hedges and had an estimated population of about 100. Its houses were initially clustered around the junction of roads leading to neighbouring villages, but as Sirin expanded, new construction extended toward the northwest and southeast.

Population

The population of Sirin was 581 in the 1922 census and increased to 630 in the 1931 census, when 161 houses were recorded.

In the 1944/1945 Village Statistics, the population stood at 810, including 620 Muslims and 190 Christians.

The figure of approximately 940 inhabitants for 1948, reported by Palestine Remembered, is an estimate of the population shortly before displacement and not an official Government of Palestine census. The same applies to the estimate of

5,770 refugees and descendants in 1998.

Population of Sirin

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1596	22	Historical figure reported in the sources
1922	581	Official census
1931	630	Official census
1944/1945	810	Government of Palestine statistics: 620 Muslims and 190 Christians
1948	About 940	Estimate published by Palestine Remembered
1998	5,770	Estimate of refugees and their descendants
The figures for 1948 and 1998 are estimates and are not official British Mandate censuses.		

Number of Houses

Documented and estimated number of houses in Sirin

Year	Number of Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	161	Official census
1948	About 240	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered
The 1948 figure is an estimate and does not represent an official housing census.		

Land of Sirin

According to the 1944/1945 statistics, the total land area of Sirin amounted to 28,445 dunams. Arabs owned 16,589 dunams, Jews owned 477 dunams, and 11,379 dunams were classified as public land.

Total	28,445
Ownership Category	**Area in Dunams**
Arab ownership	16,589
Jewish ownership	477
Public land	11,379

Agriculture and Land Use

Agriculture was the main foundation of Sirin's economy, and cereals and olives were among its principal crops. The village also had irrigated land and orchards.

According to the 1944/1945 statistics, a total of 15,813 dunams were devoted to cereals. This included 14,854 dunams of Arab-owned land, 471 dunams of Jewish-owned land, and 488 dunams of public land.

A further 413 dunams of Arab-owned land were irrigated or used for plantations, of which 109 dunams were planted with olive trees. The olive acreage formed part of the irrigated and plantation category and should not be added to it as a separate land-use category.

Total	16,589	477	11,379	28,445
Type of Use	**Arab**	**Jewish**	**Public**	**Total**
Cereals	14,854	471	488	15,813
Irrigated and plantation land	413	0	0	413
Built-up area	113	0	18	131
Uncultivable land	1,209	6	10,873	12,088

Education

Sirin had an elementary school for boys. The reviewed sources do not provide sufficiently documented information regarding the date of the school's

establishment, the number of pupils, or the highest grade taught there, and no unverified details have therefore been added.

Archaeology in Sirin

Sirin and its surroundings contained several archaeological remains. A Greek inscription was discovered in the house of Zayd al-Shahada.

The sources also document remains from the Byzantine period, including a mosaic floor and a vaulted spring containing the remains of a decorated architectural element.

The frequently repeated reference to a “Cornice Castle” in the village has not been included because it does not correspond with the archaeological description provided by PalQuest and Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*. It appears to have resulted from an inaccurate translation of the description of the architectural element associated with the spring.

The Nakba and the Occupation of Sirin

Sirin entered the decisive phase of the Nakba in May 1948, as units of the Golani Brigade advanced through the Baysan region and Lower Galilee.

Date of Occupation and Military Unit

Units of the Golani Brigade occupied Sirin on 12 May 1948, most likely in connection with the fall of the city of Baysan during the same period. In the same military advance, the villages of Ulam, Hadatha, and Ma'dhar also fell to Golani forces.

Operation Gideon

The occupation of Sirin occurred during the same period in which the Golani Brigade was carrying out Operation Gideon, between 10 and 15 May 1948. The

operation was intended to seize control of the Baysan Valley and displace its Palestinian population.

Palestine Remembered directly associates the occupation of Sirin with Operation Gideon. The PalQuest page on Sirin confirms that Golani units occupied the village on 12 May but does not explicitly name the operation in the village entry itself. It is therefore more precise to state that Sirin was occupied in the context of the Golani offensive against Baysan and its surrounding area, coinciding with Operation Gideon, while noting this difference in the level of specificity between the sources.

Circumstances of the Population's Displacement

PalQuest reproduces an account from the *History of the Haganah* stating that the inhabitants of Sirin, Ulam, Hadatha, and Ma'dhar left their villages out of fear of the advancing Zionist forces. This account links the displacement directly to the military advance that ended with Golani forces taking control of the villages on 12 May.

PalQuest also reports a different account attributed to Israeli historian Benny Morris, who claimed that the inhabitants of the four villages had already left on 6 April 1948 on orders from the Arab Higher Committee. PalQuest itself describes this version as less credible.

Both accounts are mentioned here because they are reproduced by PalQuest, a Palestinian source used in this article, rather than through direct reliance on the Israeli sources in which they originally appeared. Because the accounts differ, the claim concerning orders from the Arab Higher Committee should not be presented as an established historical fact.

Fate of the Population and Buildings

The Palestinian inhabitants of Sirin were displaced during the Nakba, and most of the village buildings were destroyed after the occupation. The people of Sirin became refugees and displaced Palestinians away from their village.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
The Nakba and the Occupation of Sirin	May 1948	Sirin entered the decisive phase of the Nakba in May 1948, as units of the Golani Brigade advanced through the Baysan region and Lower Galilee.
Date of Occupation and Military Unit	12 May 1948	Units of the Golani Brigade occupied Sirin on 12 May 1948, most likely in connection with the fall of the city of Baysan during the same period. In the same military advance, the villages of Ulam, Hadatha, and Ma'dhar also fell to Golani forces.
Operation Gideon	10 and 15 May 1948	The occupation of Sirin occurred during the same period in which the Golani Brigade was carrying out Operation Gideon, between 10 and 15 May 1948. The operation was intended to seize control of the Baysan Valley and displace its Palestinian population.

Israeli Settlements Established on the Lands of Sirin

Neither PalQuest nor Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains* records the establishment of an Israeli settlement on the lands of Sirin.

Settlements on the Lands of Sirin

Period	Settlements
Before 1948	No documented settlements on the village lands
After 1948	The reviewed sources record no Israeli settlements established on the village lands
According to PalQuest and *All That Remains*.	

The Site of Sirin Today

According to the field documentation published by Walid Khalidi, only the cemetery and a single house, which was being used as a barn, remained from Sirin. Piles of

stones surrounded by cactus plants were also visible at the site.

The village site was being used as a cattle enclosure, while a stone structure covered the spring located in the centre of the site. Some of the surrounding lands were cultivated with cotton.

This description reflects the period in which the original field documentation was conducted and should not necessarily be interpreted as a field survey of the site in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Sirin.
- PalQuest: Operation Gideon.
- Palestine Remembered: Sirin, Baysan District.
- Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains*: Historical account of Sirin, reproduced by Palestine Remembered.
- Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics, *Village Statistics, 1945*, as reproduced in PalQuest and the Palestinian sources cited above.
- Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains*, entry on Sirin, as reproduced by PalQuest and Palestine Remembered.


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