

Sirin



Subdistrict: Baysan

Estimated population in 1948: Approximately 940

Date of occupation and depopulation: 12 May 1948

Military operation: The occupation occurred during the Israeli offensive against Baysan and its surrounding villages, associated with Operation Gideon

Occupying military unit: Golani Brigade

Israeli settlements established on Sirin's lands before 1948: None

Israeli settlements established on the village site or its lands after 1948: None

Sirin was a depopulated Palestinian village in the northernmost part of the Baysan Subdistrict.

A local etymological tradition associates its name with the Aramaic word *sir*, interpreted as “summit” or “head,” although the precise origin of the name has not been conclusively established. The village was situated approximately 17 kilometres north of Baysan, at an average elevation of 200 metres above sea level. Its lands covered 28,445 dunams.

Sirin was occupied by units of the Golani Brigade on 12 May 1948 during Israel’s occupation of Palestine—the Nakba. Its Palestinian inhabitants, estimated at approximately 940 in 1948, were displaced, and the village was subsequently destroyed.

Location of Sirin

- Sirin was located approximately 17 kilometres north of Baysan.
- The village stood on a level tract of land that sloped gradually toward the southwest. Wadi al-Ruduh bordered the village site to the northwest, while Wadi al-Bayadir lay to the southeast.
- A secondary road connected Sirin to the main road leading north toward Samakh and south toward Baysan. Other secondary roads and narrow paths linked the village with neighbouring Palestinian communities. During the Crusader period, the village was referred to as Losserin.
- Sirin was surrounded by several Palestinian villages and communities. Awlam lay to the north, al-Tira to the west, Ma’dhar to the northwest, al-Dalhamiyya to the east, and Danna and al-Bira to the south and southwest. The wider area also included Arab al-Bashatiwa, Jisr al-Majami’, Kawkab al-Hawa, al-Tayyiba al-Zu’biyya, Kafr Misr, and Tamra al-Marj.
- In 1596, Sirin formed part of the nahiya of Jenin in the liwa’ of Lajjun. The historical source used by Walid Khalidi estimated its population at 22. The villagers paid taxes on wheat, barley, goats, beehives, and other agricultural production.

- The British traveller James Silk Buckingham, who visited the area during the early nineteenth century, described Sirin as containing approximately 30 to 40 houses, with about six Bedouin tents nearby.

Boundaries of Sirin

Sirin was situated among the following Palestinian villages and localities:

- To the north: [Awlam](#).
- To the northwest: [Ma'dhar](#).
- To the west: [al-Tira al-Zu'biyya](#).
- To the east: [al-Dalhamiyya](#).
- To the southwest: [Danna](#).
- To the south: [al-Bira](#).



The Depopulated Palestinian Village of Sirin

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Economic Life in Sirin

Agriculture formed the basis of Sirin's economy, and cereals and olives were its principal crops. In 1944/45, 14,854 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were devoted to cereal cultivation. A further 413 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards, of which approximately 109 dunams were planted with olive trees.

The complete land-use records also listed 471 dunams of Jewish-owned land and 488 dunams of public land under cereal cultivation. Accordingly, the total area devoted to cereals was 15,813 dunams, while the total cultivable area amounted to 16,226 dunams.

Land Ownership in Sirin, 1944/45

Ownership category	Land area in dunams*
Palestinian ownership	16,589
Jewish ownership	477
Public land	11,379
Total	28,445

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Sirin, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian-owned land (dunams)*	Jewish-owned land (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	413	0	0	413
Olive groves*	109	0	0	109
Cereal cultivation	14,854	471	488	15,813
Built-up area	113	0	18	131

Land-use category	Palestinian-owned land (dunams)*	Jewish-owned land (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Cultivable land	15,267	471	488	16,226
Uncultivated land	1,209	6	10,873	12,088

* The 109 dunams of olive groves were included within the irrigated-land and orchard category and should not be added separately to the cultivable-land total. One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Archaeological Remains in Sirin

Sirin occupied an archaeological site containing the remains of a mosaic pavement, building foundations, burial sites, and structures dating to earlier periods. A Greek inscription was reportedly discovered in the house of Zayd al-Shihada.

Remains associated with the Byzantine period included a mosaic pavement and a vaulted spring containing a fragment of a stone cornice. Several surrounding khirbas also contained archaeological remains. The reference in some local accounts to a structure called “Qal‘at Qarnish” could not be verified conclusively in the principal academic source and has therefore not been presented as an established identification.

Architectural Development of Sirin

In the late nineteenth century, Sirin had approximately 100 inhabitants who cultivated an estimated 35 faddans of land. The historical faddan was not a fixed unit in Palestine and could represent approximately 100–250 dunams depending on the period and locality.

The village’s earliest houses were concentrated around the junction of roads leading to neighbouring communities. As Sirin expanded, newer houses extended along a northwest–southeast axis. Prickly-pear hedges surrounded parts of the built-up area.

Education in Sirin

Sirin had an elementary school for boys. The available sources do not provide sufficient information about its date of establishment, number of pupils, or highest grade of instruction.

Population of Sirin

The British Mandate census of 1922 recorded 581 inhabitants in Sirin. By 1931, the population had risen to 630 people living in 161 houses.

In 1944/45, the village had 810 inhabitants, comprising 620 Muslims and 190 Christians. Its population on the eve of the Nakba was estimated at approximately 940. The number of refugees descended from the village population was estimated at approximately 5,770 in 1998.

Population Figures for Sirin

Year	Population*
1596	Approximately 22
1922	581
1931	630
1944/45	810
1948 estimate	Approximately 940
Estimated descendant refugee population in 1998	Approximately 5,770

* The 1596 figure is a historical estimate. The figures for 1922 and 1931 are census results, while the 1944/45 figure comes from official British Mandate statistics. The 1948 and 1998 figures are demographic estimates.

Number of Houses in Sirin

Year	Number of houses*
1931	161
1948 estimate	Approximately 240

* The 1931 figure is a documented census count. The figure for 1948 is a later estimate rather than an official housing census.

Occupation and Depopulation of Sirin

Units of the Golani Brigade occupied Sirin on 12 May 1948, during the Israeli offensive against Baysan and its surrounding Palestinian villages. The occupation followed the fall of Baysan on the same day. Sirin, Awlam, Hadatha, and Ma'dhar were seized during the same broader military offensive.

Accounts concerning the precise sequence of the population's displacement differ. Some sources assign an earlier date in April to the villagers' departure, while Palestinian accounts record Sirin's occupation and the displacement of its inhabitants on 12 May, following the fall of Baysan. Because the earlier account depends primarily on disputed Israeli claims concerning alleged evacuation orders, it has not been adopted here as an established fact.

The more securely documented facts are that Israeli forces took control of Sirin by 12 May 1948, its Palestinian population was displaced during the Nakba, and the village was subsequently demolished. Palestinian accounts record that the displaced inhabitants sought refuge primarily in Jordan and Syria. Only a small number reportedly remained in Palestine, particularly in Nazareth and nearby Palestinian localities.

Sirin Today

Only the village cemetery and one Palestinian house remain standing. The surviving house has been used as a storage building for straw. Piles of stone from the destroyed buildings are

visible among clusters of cactus plants.

The village site has been used as a cattle enclosure. A stone structure covers the spring located near the centre of the site, and some of the surrounding village land has been cultivated with cotton. No Israeli settlement was established directly on Sirin's village site or registered village lands.

Sources and References

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Sirin](#)
- Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies.
 - [Palestine Remembered: Sirin, Baysan Subdistrict](#)
- [Al-Quds Al-Arabi: A Palestinian Historical and Oral-History Journey through Sirin](#)
- [Birzeit University, Awraq Digital Archive: Palestinian Villages Depopulated in 1948](#)
 - Government of Palestine, *Village Statistics, April 1945*, population, land-ownership, and land-use tables for Sirin.