

Umm Khalid



Subdistrict: Tulkarm

Population in 1944/45: 970

Estimated population in 1948: 1,125

Date of depopulation: 20 March 1948

Locality established nearby before 1948: Netanya, founded in 1929 west of the village; its later expansion absorbed most of Umm Khalid's lands.

Localities later covering parts of the village lands: Netanya and Sha'ar Hefer.

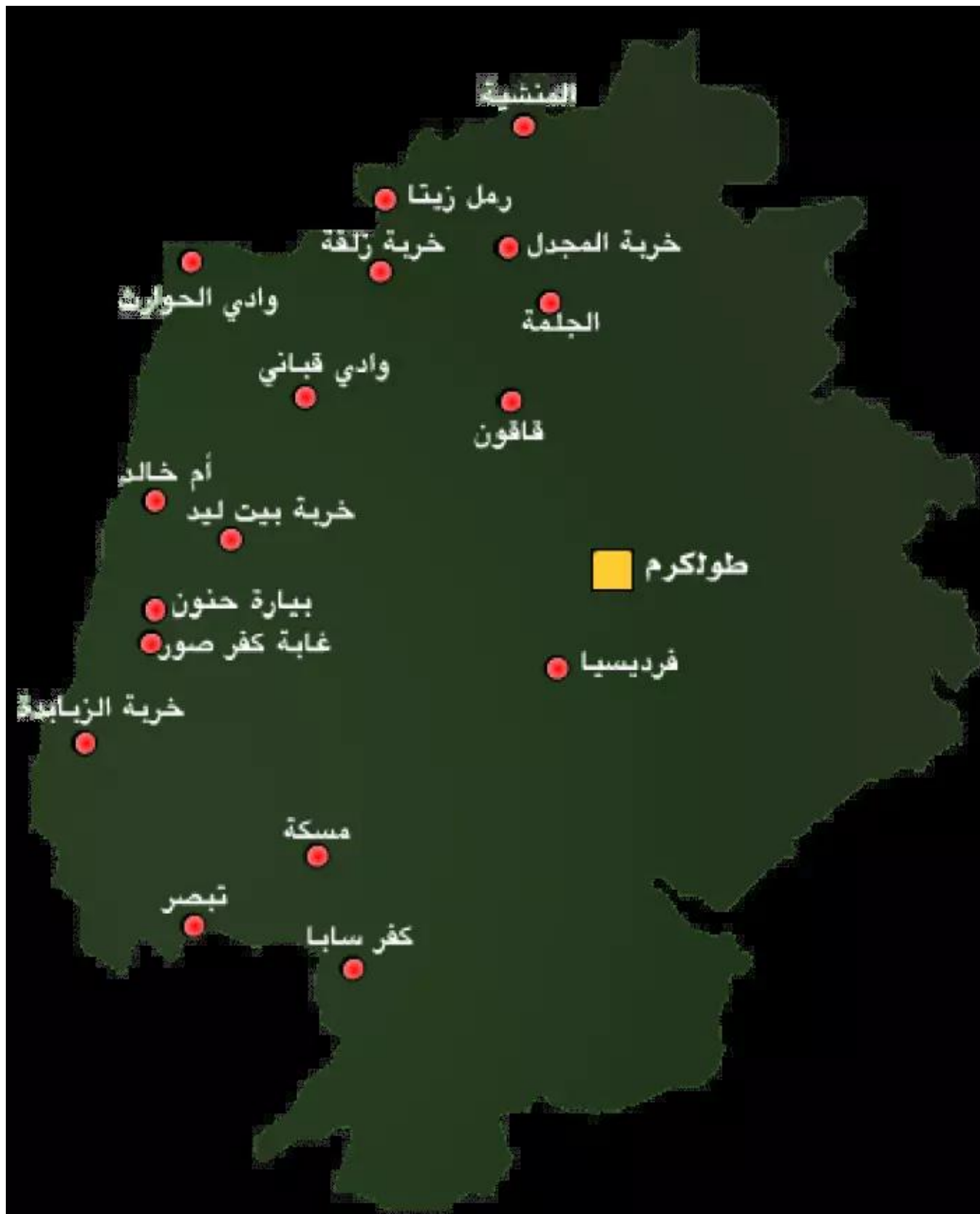
Umm Khalid was a Palestinian village in the Tulkarm Subdistrict during the British Mandate. It

stood approximately 15 kilometres west of Tulkarm and less than two kilometres east of the Mediterranean coast. The village was depopulated in March 1948, and its site and much of its land were subsequently absorbed into the expanding city of Netanya.

Boundaries and Surrounding Localities

Umm Khalid lay among the following villages, localities, and lands:

- **North:** [Wadi al-Hawarith](#).
- **Northwest:** Wadi Qabbani.
 - **West:** Netanya.
- **South:** [Bayyarat Hannun](#).
- **Southeast:** Qalansuwa.



The Depopulated Palestinian Village of Umm Khalid

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Population of Umm Khalid

The inhabitants were predominantly Muslim. Many had moved to Umm Khalid from other villages in the Tulkarm Subdistrict in search of agricultural work. The 1931 census recorded 586 residents—580 Muslims and 6 Christians—living in 131 houses; these figures included Arab al-Balawina. The official 1944/45 statistics recorded 970 residents, comprising 960 Muslims and 10 Christians.

Population and Depopulation

Umm Khalid had 970 inhabitants in the official 1944/45 statistics. Its 1948 population is commonly estimated at 1,125; the figure is an estimate rather than a census count. An Israeli military intelligence report cited by historians dates the village's evacuation to 20 March 1948. Netanya had been founded nearby in 1929, west of Umm Khalid, and its later urban expansion absorbed most of the village lands. Parts of the lands were also incorporated into Sha'ar Hefer.

Built Environment

The village had a rectangular layout extending from north to south. Its closely clustered houses were constructed of stone and mud and separated by narrow alleys. At the centre of the village stood a mosque, an elementary school for boys, and four shops selling groceries and textiles.

Economic Life

Agriculture formed the mainstay of the village economy. The inhabitants cultivated watermelons, citrus fruit, vegetables, and cereals. In 1944/45, 47 dunams were devoted to citrus and bananas, while 1,830 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were planted with cereals. The villagers also raised livestock and produced dairy products, including milk and cheese.

Land Ownership in Umm Khalid

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	1,923

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Jewish ownership	882
Public land	89
Total	2,894

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Jewish ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Citrus and bananas	47	0	0	47
Cereal cultivation	1,830	882	0	2,712
Built-up area	23	0	0	23
Cultivable land	1,877	882	0	2,759
Uncultivated land	23	0	89	112

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. Cultivable and uncultivated totals are aggregate categories and should not be added again to their component uses.

Population of Umm Khalid

Year	Population	Source status
1922	307	British Mandate census
1931	586	British Mandate census; includes Arab al-Balawina
1944/45	970	Official village statistics
1948	1,125	Estimate
Estimated refugees in 1998	6,910	Demographic estimate

Archaeological Remains

Archaeological finds in and around the village included the remains of towers and fortifications, as well as wells, reservoirs, cisterns, and pottery. Flint tools found near the site suggest possible habitation from prehistoric times. The site also contained the remains of the Crusader-period Lombard Castle of Roger.

Location of Umm Khalid

The village stood on a sandstone hill less than two kilometres east of the Mediterranean shore.

The Tulkarm–Netanya road passed to its south, while the Haifa–Jaffa road ran to the east.

Umm Khalid occupied a relatively elevated position on the Palestinian coastal plain, approximately 25 metres above sea level, which offered some protection from flooding.

Its fertile lands benefited from abundant groundwater. Wadi al–Hawarith lay to the north, Khirbat Bayt Lid to the east, and Netanya to the west and south. Jewish settlements established in the wider surrounding area before 1948 included Kfar Haim and Beit Yitzhak.

Area of Umm Khalid

The village lands covered a total of 2,894 dunams. Of this total, 1,923 dunams were under Palestinian ownership, 882 dunams under Jewish ownership, and 89 dunams were classified as public land, including roads and wadis. The soil was fertile, and groundwater was readily available.

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Occupation and Depopulation

According to an Israeli military intelligence report, Umm Khalid was evacuated on 20 March 1948 amid a general climate of fear. Historian Benny Morris notes that several villages north of Tel Aviv underwent similar processes as attacks intensified during the early weeks of the war. The coastal area contained a dense concentration of Jewish settlements and was regarded by the Zionist leadership as central to the territory of the proposed Jewish state. In that context, the removal of Arab residents before 15 May was considered desirable by that leadership. The

consulted academic reference does not identify a specific assault on Umm Khalid, a named military unit, or a discrete military operation as the direct cause of its depopulation.

Umm Khalid Today

The village site is now part of Netanya. Some village houses have survived and have been used as residences or for commercial purposes, including warehouses operated by Israeli companies. Nearby land has been planted with citrus trees.

Netanya, founded in 1929 approximately one kilometre west of the village, later expanded across most of Umm Khalid's lands. Gan Hefer, founded in 1940, and Nira, founded in 1941, were merged in 1953 to form Sha'ar Hefer, which covers part of the village lands.

Neighbouring Localities

Wadi al-Hawarith and Kfar Haim lay to the north; Beit Yitzhak and Khirbat Bayt Lid lay to the east; and the lands of Netanya extended to the south and west.