

(Al-Haram (Sayyidna 'Ali



Subdistrict: Jaffa

Estimated Palestinian population of al-Haram (Sayyidna Ali) in 1948: approximately 603

Occupation and depopulation: The precise date is not firmly documented. Palestinian academic sources indicate that the village was occupied and depopulated before the end of the British Mandate on 15 May 1948; some local compilations give 12 April 1948.

Israeli settlements established on al-Haram's lands before 1948: Kfar Shemaryahu, established in 1937; Rishpon was established in 1936 along the northern boundary of the village lands.

Construction on the village site and lands after 1948: Parts of Kfar Shemaryahu and the subsequent expansion of Herzliya.

Al-Haram (Sayyidna Ali)

Al-Haram was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Jaffa Subdistrict, situated approximately 16 kilometres north of Jaffa.

The village stood on a low sandstone hill in the central coastal plain and overlooked the Mediterranean Sea. It was also widely known as Sayyidna Ali because it developed around a shrine traditionally associated with the Muslim saint Ali ibn Alim, who died in 1081 and was regarded in local tradition as a descendant of the second caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab.

The shrine was an important religious site. Palestinians from different parts of the country visited it, particularly during the summer, to pray and participate in religious and communal observances.

Boundaries of al-Haram

Al-Haram lay among the following Palestinian villages, towns, and geographical features:

- North: [Khirbat al-Zababida](#).
- West: the Mediterranean Sea.
- South: [Ijlil al-Qibliyya](#).
- Southeast: [Abu Kishk](#).
- East: [Tabsur \(Khirbat Azzun\)](#).



The depopulated Palestinian village of al-Haram (Sayyidna Ali)

Land Ownership in al-Haram

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	2,681
Jewish ownership	4,745
Public land	639
Total	8,065

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in al-Haram, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian-owned land (dunams)*	Jewish-owned land (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Citrus and banana cultivation	136	0	0	136
Irrigated land and orchards	256	45	0	301
Cereal cultivation	2,096	4,057	234	6,387
Built-up area	18	0	0	18
Non-cultivable land	175	643	405	1,223
Total cultivable land	2,488	4,102	234	6,824

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Education in al-Haram

Al-Haram had an elementary school for boys, founded in 1921. By the mid-1940s, it had sixty-eight pupils. Local historical accounts also record two teachers, a school collection of 132 books, and approximately 110 literate men in the village.

Population of al-Haram

The village population was recorded as 172 in the British census of 1922. By 1931, it had risen to 333, living in eighty-three houses. British Mandate statistics for 1945 listed 520 Palestinian residents and separately recorded 360 Jewish residents within the wider statistical land unit, producing an administrative total of 880. The figure of 880 should therefore not be presented as the population of the Palestinian village itself.

The Palestinian population immediately before the Nakba has been estimated at approximately 603. The frequently cited estimate of 3,704 refugees and descendants in 1998 is a retrospective demographic projection rather than a contemporaneous census.

Population Record for al-Haram

Year	Recorded or estimated population	Notes
1904	341	Figure reported in local historical compilations.
1922	172	British Mandate census.
1931	333	British Mandate census.
1945	520 Palestinians	The Mandate statistical unit also listed 360 Jewish residents separately, for an administrative total of 880.
1948	Approximately 603 Palestinians	Retrospective estimate based on population growth.
1998	Approximately 3,704 refugees and descendants	Retrospective demographic estimate, not a census count.

Number of Houses in al-Haram

Year	Number of houses	Nature of figure
1931	83	Recorded in the British Mandate census.
1948	Approximately 150	Retrospective estimate; no contemporaneous 1948 housing census has been identified.

Economic Life in al-Haram

Agriculture formed the basis of the village economy. The entire cadastral area associated with al-Haram amounted to 8,065 dunams, although this total included Palestinian-owned, Jewish-owned, and public land.

During the 1944/45 agricultural year, Palestinians cultivated 2,096 dunams with cereals, 136 dunams with citrus and bananas, and 256 dunams as irrigated land or orchards. Olive trees occupied part of the orchard land; some local statistical compilations place the olive-planted area at 137 dunams. The residents also benefited from the village's coastal location by engaging in fishing.

Historical Background of al-Haram

Approximately 800 metres north of al-Haram stood the remains of Arsuf, an ancient settlement whose history extended from at least the Persian period to the early modern era. During the Hellenistic period, it was known as Apollonia, while Arabic sources referred to it as Arsuf.

The settlement and its harbour acquired considerable strategic importance because of their position on the Palestinian coast. Crusader forces captured Arsuf in 1101 and called it Arsur. Salah al-Din regained control of the area in 1187, but Richard I's forces defeated the Ayyubid army nearby in 1191, after which the Crusaders recovered the fortress. The Mamluk sultan al-Zahir Baybars captured and destroyed the fortified town in 1265 following a siege.

Archaeological excavations at Arsuf uncovered, among other remains, a market dating to the

early Islamic period. Ottoman tax registers continued to mention Arsuf during the sixteenth century. Al-Haram appears to have developed as a permanent village after the older settlement was abandoned, probably during the seventeenth century.

Occupation and Depopulation of al-Haram

The available Palestinian academic sources do not establish 12 April 1948 as a definitive occupation date. Walid Khalidi's village study, reproduced by the Palestinian Museum and Institute for Palestine Studies through PalQuest, concludes that Zionist forces probably occupied al-Haram sometime before the British Mandate ended on 15 May 1948. By then, those forces controlled the coastal corridor between Haifa and Tel Aviv.

Some Palestinian local compilations identify 12 April 1948 as the date of occupation or depopulation. Because the surviving documentation does not conclusively reconcile these accounts, the date should be treated as an estimate rather than an established fact. The village's Palestinian residents were displaced during the Nakba, but the consulted sources do not identify a securely documented military operation or unit specifically responsible for its occupation.

Settlements and Urban Expansion on al-Haram's Lands

Rishpon was established in 1936 along the northern boundary of al-Haram's lands. Kfar Shemaryahu was founded in 1937 southeast of the village site on land traditionally belonging to al-Haram. Herzliya had been established separately in 1924 and should not be described as a post-Nakba settlement founded on the ruins of the village.

Following the occupation and depopulation of al-Haram, Kfar Shemaryahu and Herzliya expanded across additional parts of the village lands. The original statement that Rishpon was established "on the village ruins" has therefore been corrected: Palestinian academic documentation places it on the northern edge of the cadastral lands rather than on the built-up village site itself.

Al-Haram (Sayyidna Ali) Today

The shrine and mosque complex, several houses, the remains of building foundations, and the village cemetery survived the destruction of al-Haram. The shrine is a substantial architectural complex distinguished by its arches, colonnaded porticoes, and minaret. Some surviving village houses were subsequently occupied by Jewish residents.

The cemetery, which overlooks the Mediterranean, was neglected and part of its area was used for visitor parking. The Sayyidna Ali Mosque nevertheless remains standing and is open for worship. Palestinians continue to visit it, particularly for Friday prayers, maintaining the site's Arab Palestinian and Islamic religious connection.

Sources

- [PalQuest: al-Haram — location, population, land, occupation, and present condition.](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies: Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains*.](#)
 - [Palestine Remembered: al-Haram, Jaffa Subdistrict.](#)
- [Sami Hadawi, *Village Statistics of 1945: A Classification of Land and Area Ownership in Palestine*.](#)