Azazma Bedouin Massacre 1950: Killing and Expulsion in the Naqab

On 3 September 1950 Zionist forces raided the lands of the Azazma Bedouin in the Naqab and brutally killed 13 men and women. [1] [2] **The massacre came amid a campaign to drive the Azazma from their lands into Sinai, which the Mixed Armistice Commission later found had affected six to seven thousand members of the tribe.** [3]

The massacre shows that the Nakba did not end in 1948 but continued in the Naqab after the armistice agreements were signed. It is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people.

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The Azazma massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	3 September 1950 [1] [2]
Place	The lands of the Azazma Bedouin in the Naqab, Beersheba district [1] [4]

Item	Details
Perpetrator	Zionist forces [1] [2]
Killed	13 men and women [1] [2]
Context	A campaign to expel the Azazma Bedouin from the Naqab into Sinai [5] [3]
Scale of expulsion	6,000–7,000 from six Azazma clans, according to the Mixed Armistice Commission [3]

The Azazma

The Azazma are a Palestinian Bedouin tribe whose lands stretch from Beersheba east to Wadi Araba and west to the Sinai desert. [4] They are at the heart of the Beersheba region, and sold the Ottoman authorities 2,000 dunums of their land when the town of Beersheba was founded in 1900. [4]

According to the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission, the tribe's historical home extended over a wide area from Beersheba to al-Auja on the Egyptian border. [5]

The massacre: 3 September 1950

The massacre lists published by the Palestinian National Information Center (WAFA) and Al Jazeera Net record that on 3 September 1950 Zionist forces raided the lands of the Azazma and brutally killed 13 men and women. [1] [2]

We found no names of the victims or the exact location of the massacre in available sources. But its timing coincides with Egypt's complaints to the Mixed Armistice Commission on 2, 5 and 11 September 1950 about the occupation authorities expelling Azazma clans across the border into Egyptian territory. [5] [3]

Expulsion to Sinai

Before the Armistice Commission, the occupation authorities claimed the Azazma had fled into Sinai during military operations and were not in territory under their

control when the armistice was signed; since they were not registered among the Bedouin under their control, those who returned were deemed “infiltrators [who] would be treated as such.” The occupation accepted only two Azazma sub-tribes as citizens. [5]

The Commission’s chairman observed that most of the tribe was now in Sinai and urgently needed land to live on. [5]

The Armistice Commission: return the Azazma

On 30 May 1951 the Egyptian–Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission decided, by the votes of the Egyptian delegation and the chairman, that some 6,000 to 7,000 Bedouin of six Azazma sub-tribes had been expelled from Israeli-controlled areas and the Demilitarized Zone into Egyptian territory, and ordered their immediate return. [3]

The occupation authorities appealed the decision on 4 June 1951, and no date to hear the appeal had been set by the end of that year. [3] The Al Jazeera Net list also records another attack on the Azazma in March 1955. [2]

Conclusion

Two years after the Nakba, the machinery of killing and expulsion in the Naqab had not stopped. In September 1950, 13 Azazma were killed and thousands of the tribe were driven from their lands into Sinai. Although the UN Armistice Commission ordered their return, most remained far from their land.

Frequently asked questions about the Azazma massacre

When did the Azazma massacre take place?

On 3 September 1950, according to the WAFA and Al Jazeera Net lists.

How many people were killed in the Azazma massacre?

Thirteen men and women.

Where are the lands of the Azazma?

In the Naqab, from Beersheba to Wadi Araba in the east and the Sinai desert in the west.

How many Azazma were expelled to Sinai?

Between 6,000 and 7,000 from six clans, according to the Mixed Armistice Commission’s decision of 30 May 1951.

Did the UN order the return of the Azazma?

Yes. The Mixed Armistice Commission ordered their immediate return, but the occupation authorities appealed the decision.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. “Zionist and Israeli Massacres against the Palestinian People,” Palestinian National Information Center – WAFA.
2. “Israeli Massacres against the Palestinian People,” Al Jazeera Net, 3 October 2004.
3. Report of the UNTSO Chief of Staff on decisions of the Mixed Armistice Commissions (17 February – 31 October 1951), document S/2388, 8 November 1951.
4. “Azazma (tribe),” Marefa encyclopedia.
5. Letter from the UNTSO Chief of Staff transmitting the report of the Mixed Armistice Commissions (17 November 1950 – 17 February 1951), document S/2049, 12 March 1951.