

Al-Araqib

Al-Araqib – Palestinian Bedouin Village of the Beersheba District

Al-Araqib is a historic Palestinian Bedouin village in the Beersheba district, located north of Beersheba between Beersheba and Rahat in the Naqab. Its history differs from that of a village that was depopulated in 1948 and then disappeared permanently. Most al-Araqib families were displaced during the Nakba, some returned, the community was removed again in the early 1950s, and families later returned to live on and cultivate the land.

Since 2010, al-Araqib has become one of the best-known Palestinian Bedouin villages classified by Israeli authorities as “unrecognized.” Its residents repeatedly rebuild simple homes and tents after demolitions.

Item	Information
Historic District	Beersheba
Location	North of Beersheba, between Beersheba and Rahat
Type of Community	Historic Bedouin village; today classified as an unrecognized village
Principal Historic Families	al-Uqbi and al-Turi / al-Toura of the Tayaha
Population in 1922	No independently documented village-specific figure established
Population in 1931	No independently documented village-specific figure established
Population in 1944/1945	No independent figure securely separable from the tribal enumeration of Beersheba Bedouins
Population in 1948	No independently documented official village total established

Item	Information
First Displacement	1948; most families were expelled toward al-Dhahiriya
Partial Return	1949
Second Removal	1951; residents were ordered to leave temporarily for military training and were not subsequently allowed to return
Major Land Confiscation	1954, under the 1953 Land Acquisition Law
1948 Military Operation	No named al-Araqib-specific military operation established in the principal sources
1948 Military Unit	No specific brigade or battalion independently documented at village level
Land Area	No single uncontested figure; historic claims include 1,251 dunums in parcels claimed by the al-Uqbi family in al-Araqib and Zhiliqa and more than 1,600 dunums in al-Turi-related claims
Post-1948 Settlement	No particular Israeli settlement is established by the sources used as occupying the entire historic village land; forestation projects are more directly documented
Current Status	Unrecognized village whose remaining residents repeatedly rebuild after demolitions

Location

Al-Araqib lies in the Naqab north of Beersheba, between Beersheba and Rahat.

The landscape is semi-arid, and herding and cultivation historically formed central parts of local economic life. The village also contains an old Muslim cemetery and historic water facilities.

Because al-Araqib developed as a Bedouin community with grazing and agricultural lands rather than only as a compact masonry village, its historic boundaries cannot be reduced to the footprint of the present encampment.

The Al-Araqib Cemetery

Al-Araqib contains a Muslim cemetery documented as dating to at least **1914**.

The cemetery has become one of the principal physical markers connecting al-Araqib families with the site, and surviving residents have increasingly lived in its immediate vicinity as repeated demolitions reduced the village's built structures.

Historic Families

Palestinian documentation identifies two major families living at al-Araqib before 1948:

- the al-Uqbi family;
- the al-Toura / al-Turi family of the Tayaha.

In later decades, renewed residence at the site became especially associated with al-Turi and Abu Mdeigem families, while many al-Uqbi family members resettled near Hura after displacement.

Population before the Nakba

The principal sources reviewed do not provide a separate continuous Mandate census series for al-Araqib.

This is consistent with the wider statistical history of the Beersheba Bedouin population, much of which was enumerated by tribal affiliation rather than by every individual encampment or village location.

No unsupported 1922, 1931, or 1945 village population figure is therefore supplied.

Population in 1948

No independent official al-Araqib population total has been established for the eve

of the Nakba.

Population figures belonging to the Tayaha or to the al-Uqbi and al-Turi families in other localities should not be reassigned to al-Araqib itself.

Land and Ownership Claims

Land ownership at al-Araqib has remained the subject of a long-running legal dispute, so a single number should not be presented as an uncontested historic village area.

PalQuest records claims originally made by Shaykh Sulayman al-Uqbi over parcels in al-Araqib and Zhiliqa totaling approximately **1,251 dunums**.

Members of the al-Turi family have also pursued claims concerning more than **1,600 dunums**.

These figures concern particular land claims and do not establish one definitive total for all historic al-Araqib lands.

A figure of approximately 1,050 dunums appears in some contemporary media descriptions of the village area, but it should not replace a comprehensive cadastral total that the available Mandate sources do not provide.

1945 Land Statistics

No independent 1945 Village Statistics ownership table has been established for al-Araqib that would permit a reliable division into:

- Palestinian ownership;
- Transferred to Zionists;
- Communal/Public land.

No such numerical table is therefore reconstructed without an official village-level source.

Economic Life

Historically, al-Araqib families relied on livestock raising, grazing, and cultivation.

Sources concerning the later land dispute also describe villagers continuing to cultivate fields and graze animals despite restrictions on permanent residence.

Desert agriculture and livestock raising have remained important sources of livelihood for families who returned to the site.

Water and Public Services

Water storage and local water resources formed part of the historic village landscape.

In its present unrecognized status, however, al-Araqib lacks the level of public infrastructure and services available to recognized localities.

Education

The principal sources reviewed do not establish an independent pre-1948 school at al-Araqib.

In the modern period, residents of unrecognized Naqab villages have often had to travel to recognized neighboring localities for schooling and other public services.

Al-Araqib during the Nakba

As military control of the Beersheba district changed in 1948, al-Araqib was occupied and most of its families were expelled.

PalQuest records that most were displaced toward **al-Dhahiriya in the southern West Bank**.

The source does not identify a specific named military operation, exact day of occupation, or village-specific brigade responsible for the expulsion.

Operation Yoav

Operation Yoav in October 1948 was a major military campaign that resulted in the occupation of Beersheba and transformed control of the Naqab.

The principal al-Araqib sources, however, do not specifically identify Operation Yoav as the operation that occupied the village.

It is therefore not assigned as the village's military operation without direct locality-specific evidence.

Partial Return in 1949

Following the 1948 displacement, some al-Araqib residents were permitted to return in **1949**.

The Nakba therefore did not mark the complete end of Palestinian residence at the site, but the beginning of a longer cycle of removal, return, and renewed displacement.

The 1951 Removal

In **1951**, Israeli authorities ordered al-Araqib residents to leave their homes and land for six months, citing military training in the area.

The residents were subsequently not permitted to return.

Most al-Turi family members eventually lived near Rahat, while many al-Uqbi family members settled near Hura.

Land Confiscation in 1954

Most al-Araqib lands were confiscated in **1954** under Israel's 1953 Land Acquisition (Validation of Acts and Compensation) Law.

The sequence of prior removal followed by legal confiscation became central to

Palestinian accounts of the al-Araqib land dispute.

Land Claims in the 1970s

During the 1970s, al-Uqbi and al-Turi family members submitted claims seeking registration of lands they said they had historically possessed and cultivated.

These claims formed part of thousands of land claims filed by Naqab Bedouins.

The legal status remains contested: Israeli courts rejected the al-Uqbi suits concerning particular parcels, while other al-Turi-related claims continued through legal procedures.

The Return of Families in 1998

In **1998**, approximately fifty Bedouin families decided to return to al-Araqib and live on the land again.

The return occurred as plans emerged for Jewish National Fund forestation in the area.

Conflict over residence, cultivation, land claims, and forestation intensified in the years that followed.

Crop Destruction and Forestation

Before the beginning of the modern large-scale demolition cycle, crops cultivated by al-Araqib residents were repeatedly destroyed or ploughed under amid the land dispute.

Jewish National Fund forestation plans became one of the most clearly documented proposed changes in land use.

No particular Israeli settlement is therefore listed here as established on the entire historic village land without cadastral evidence.

The First Large-Scale Demolition in 2010

On **27 July 2010**, Israeli authorities demolished al-Araqib in what became the first major demolition in the modern recurring series.

According to PalQuest, immediately before that demolition the village contained approximately **46 structures**, including **30 homes**, and about **300 residents**.

Other human-rights reporting has given higher estimates, including at least 400 residents, so these figures are best treated as source-specific estimates rather than an official census.

Repeated Demolition and Rebuilding

After each demolition, al-Araqib residents rebuilt tents and simple structures. Israeli authorities repeatedly demolished them again.

Over time the number and quality of structures declined, and remaining residents increasingly concentrated around the village cemetery.

Occupation and Displacement Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Historic Settlement	Before 1948	The al-Uqbi and al-Turi families lived at al-Araqib; the Muslim cemetery is documented from at least 1914.
Occupation and First Displacement	1948	Most families were expelled toward al-Dhahiriya; the principal source does not establish a village-specific military unit or exact day.
Partial Return	1949	Some residents were permitted to return.
Second Removal	1951	Residents were ordered to leave for six months for military-training purposes and were subsequently prevented from returning.

Stage	Date	Details
Major Land Confiscation	1954	Most land was confiscated under the 1953 Land Acquisition Law.
Land Registration Claims	1970s	Members of al-Uqbi and al-Turi families submitted claims over lands they said they historically owned and cultivated.
Large-Scale Return to the Site	1998	Approximately fifty families returned as the dispute over planned forestation intensified.
First Major Modern Demolition	27 July 2010	Israeli authorities demolished the village, beginning the long cycle of demolition and rebuilding.
Continuing Demolitions	2010–2026	Residents repeatedly rebuilt tents and shelters after recurrent demolitions.

1948 Military Operation and Unit

Military Operation: No al-Araqib-specific named operation is independently documented in the principal sources.

Military Unit: No specific brigade or battalion is independently documented at village level.

Operation Yoav or one of its participating brigades should therefore not be inserted into the al-Araqib data merely because that operation affected the wider Beersheba region.

Cause of Displacement

Al-Araqib experienced several distinct episodes of forced displacement.

Most residents were expelled during the 1948 war. Some returned in 1949, only to be removed again in 1951 under a stated temporary military-training measure.

The subsequent confiscation of most lands and the continued dispute over return and residence extended the process for decades.

The most accurate description is therefore a **multi-stage process of forced displacement, partial return, renewed removal, and land confiscation**.

Extent of Destruction

A fixed destruction percentage such as 50 or 100 percent is not appropriate for al-Araqib.

The contemporary village has repeatedly been demolished and rebuilt. Destruction at al-Araqib is therefore a recurring process rather than one completed historical event in 1948.

Post-1948 Settlements and Land-Use Projects

The principal sources reviewed do not provide sufficient cadastral evidence to identify one particular Israeli settlement as occupying the entirety of historic al-Araqib land.

The most clearly documented post-1948 land-use project is **forestation associated with the Jewish National Fund**, which was one factor prompting dozens of families to return to al-Araqib in 1998 and defend their land claims.

Al-Araqib Today

Al-Araqib is not an abandoned archaeological site. Palestinian Bedouin families continue to reside there, although the village remains unrecognized and their structures are repeatedly demolished.

On 24 December 2025, WAFA reported **22 families comprising approximately 86 people** living at the site, principally relying on livestock and desert agriculture.

Demolitions continued in 2026. The most recent reports located while preparing this article, dated 15 June 2026, establish that the cumulative number had exceeded **245 demolitions** since July 2010. Palestinian reports differ in their numbering of the same period, with another source counting 249, so no higher

single number is presented as universally agreed.

Residents continue to rebuild tents and temporary shelters after demolitions, while the land-ownership and recognition dispute remains unresolved.

This section reflects the latest published material located for the article and is not a direct September 2026 field survey.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: The Village of al-Araqib](#)
- [PalQuest – قرية العراقيب](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Bir Al-Saba' District and Southern Palestine: A Tale of Decades of Sumud and Resistance](#)
- [Ahmad Amara – The Negev Land Question: Between Denial and Recognition, Journal of Palestine Studies](#)
- [Palestine Land Society – Salman Abu Sitta: Al-Araqib Is All of Palestine](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – al-Araqib / Beersheba](#)
- [WAFA – Al-Araqib population and demolitions through December 2025](#)
- [Palestinian Information Center – Continuing demolition of al-Araqib, June 2026](#)