Farahin / al-Azazmeh

Farahin / al-Azazmeh – Palestinian Bedouin Clan of the Beersheba Subdistrict

The Farahin were a Palestinian Bedouin clan belonging to the al-Azazmeh tribe of the Beersheba Subdistrict. They did not form a single nucleated village with one fixed built-up center; their dwellings and encampments were distributed across several locations in the central and southern Beersheba region.

'Arif al-'Arif locates Farahin dwellings at al-Hayadiya, 'Asluj, al-'Awsaji, and al-Sharif. Like other al-Azazmeh clans, the Farahin depended primarily on pastoralism and livestock raising, together with seasonal agriculture where environmental conditions allowed.

Item	Information
District	Beersheba
Tribe	al-Azazmeh
Type of Community	Dispersed Bedouin clan rather than a single nucleated village
Historic Dwelling Areas	al-Hayadiya, 'Asluj, al-'Awsaji, and al-Sharif
Population in 1922	1,150 – official Mandate estimate within the 1922 Census of Palestine
Population in 1931	500 – official Census of Palestine
Estimated Population in 1948	1,017 according to Salman Abu Sitta's Register; some later sources round it to 1,020
Displacement Date	No independent date is recorded in Abu Sitta's table; 27 August 1948 appears in a later Palestinian database but is not independently substantiated

Item	Information
Military Context	Progressive military transformation of the Naqab in 1948, followed by Operation Yoav and the occupation of Beersheba; no single clan-specific operation is established
Military Unit	No specific brigade or battalion is independently documented at the Farahin clan level
Land Area	No independent Farahin land total is documented in the 1945 Village Statistics
Settlements on Clan Land	No specific post-1948 settlement can be assigned to Farahin land without a clan-level cadastral map

The Farahin within al-Azazmeh

The Farahin were one of ten principal clans forming the al-Azazmeh of the Beersheba Subdistrict, alongside the Muhammadiyin, Subhiyin, Subayhat, Zaraba, Mas'udiyin, 'Usiyat, Sawakhneh, Mri'at, and Sarahin.

The broader al-Azazmeh tribal domain extended through central and southern Beersheba Subdistrict, from the vicinity of Beersheba and Wadi al-Khalil toward Wadi al-'Araba and the Sinai frontier.

Tribal genealogical traditions differ regarding the more distant origin of al-Azazmeh. 'Arif al-'Arif associates them with Quda'a, while other traditions give different lineages. No single distant genealogy is therefore presented as conclusively established historical fact.

Leadership and Subdivisions

Later Palestinian tribal documentation identifies **'Ali bin Muslim bin Salama bin Khudayra** as the shaykh of the Farahin during the Mandate period.

'Arif al-'Arif and 'Umar Rida Kahhala list the Farahin subdivisions as:

- 'Ayal 'Abd.
- 'Ayal 'Ayyad.

- Jlayqat.
- al-Farran.

Some later Palestinian accounts give "'Ayal 'Id" rather than "'Ayal 'Abd." The earlier source form is retained here while noting the variation.

Historic Dwelling Areas

'Arif al-'Arif identifies four principal Farahin dwelling areas:

- al-Hayadiya.
- 'Asluj.
- al-'Awsaji.
- al-Sharif.

This dispersed settlement pattern means that the Farahin cannot accurately be assigned a single village coordinate, elevation, or distance from Beersheba.

The presence of some Farahin around 'Asluj should also not be confused with the locality of 'Asluj as if the entire clan lived there. Other Farahin encampments existed elsewhere.

Population in 1922

The 1922 Census of Palestine listed the Farahin under the al-Azazmeh tribal section.

Total	**1,150**
Category	**Number**
Males	585
Females	565

An important methodological qualification applies. The superintendent of the 1922 census explained that Beersheba Bedouin tribes did not participate in conventional

individual enumeration. Their populations were estimated from tithe-payer lists, information provided by leading shaykhs, and the experience of district officials.

The figure of 1,150 is therefore an official Mandate census figure, but technically an official estimate rather than a complete person-by-person enumeration.

Population in 1931

The official 1931 Census of Palestine recorded the Farahin separately within al-Azazmeh:

Total	**500**
Category	**Number**
Males	289
Females	211

This total closely matches the figure given by 'Arif al-'Arif and later by 'Umar Rida Kahhala.

The large apparent decline from the 1922 estimate should not automatically be interpreted as pure demographic decline. Differences in Bedouin census methodology, seasonal mobility, and clan classification may have materially affected the recorded figures.

Households

The 1931 census does not provide an occupied-house figure for Farahin in the manner used for settled villages.

'Arif al-'Arif, however, describes the Farahin as approximately **120 “houses”** and 500 people.

In the Bedouin context, “house” generally means a household, tent unit, or family unit rather than necessarily a permanent masonry house in a compact village.

The Al-Azazmeh Total in 1931

A recurring error in modern databases is to display the population of al-Azazmeh as a whole on a Farahin page.

Total	**8,661**
Clan	**Population in 1931**
Muhammadiyin	1,986
Subhiyin	1,594
Sawakhneh	1,145
Mas'udiyin	926
Sarahin	795
'Usiyat	684
Farahin	500
Zaraba	429
Mri'at	376
Subayhat	226

The frequently cited figure of 8,678 therefore does not represent the Farahin population and also differs from the arithmetic total of the official branch figures, which is 8,661.

Estimated Population in 1948

Salman Abu Sitta's Register gives an estimated **1,017 Farahin** for 1948.

Some Palestinian databases round this to 1,020. The more precise 1,017 is used here, with the qualification that this is a retrospective estimate and not an official 1948 census.

The same register gives a later estimate of approximately 6,247 refugees and descendants in 1998. This is likewise a demographic estimate, not an official clan

census.

Land and Property

The 1945 Village Statistics do not provide an independent land-ownership table for the Farahin from which a reliable total or ownership breakdown can be constructed.

Sources discussing the extensive al-Azazmeh tribal domain refer to land shared among numerous clans. Such figures should not be reassigned to Farahin alone.

No numerical land-ownership table is therefore supplied, and the frequently repeated 700,000-dunum figure for the wider al-Azazmeh area is not presented as Farahin land.

Economic Life

Livestock raising and pastoralism formed the principal basis of Farahin economic life, as with the broader al-Azazmeh population.

Patterns of movement were closely related to rainfall, grazing conditions, and water availability, and al-Azazmeh groups were known for substantial mobility during periods of drought.

The Farahin also practiced seasonal cultivation, particularly cereals, but no independent crop-area table is available for the clan.

Water, Education, and Services

The Farahin dwelling areas included places such as 'Asluj, al-Hayadiya, al-'Awsaji, and al-Sharif, whose use was linked to water sources and routes across the Naqab.

The reviewed sources do not provide an independent inventory of all Farahin wells or quantities of water.

Nor is there sufficient documentation for a single independent school serving the

entire clan. Institutions located at 'Asluj or in Beersheba should not automatically be described as Farahin institutions merely because part of the clan lived nearby.

The Farahin and the Nakba

The principal sources reviewed do not establish one independent and definitive date for the displacement of all Farahin encampments.

The Encyclopedia of Palestinian Villages displays **27 August 1948** as an occupation date, but Salman Abu Sitta's table leaves the Farahin displacement-date field blank.

This discrepancy matters because 27 August fell during the Second Truce, which lasted from 18 July until 15 October 1948. PalQuest documents continuing expulsions during the Second Truce, but this wider context does not independently establish 27 August as the Farahin clan's displacement date.

The date is therefore reported as a later database entry rather than accepted as a conclusively established clan-specific date.

'Asluj and the Need to Distinguish Place from Clan

'Asluj was one of the places where al-'Arif records Farahin dwellings, but the clan was not confined to 'Asluj.

Military events affecting 'Asluj in 1948 therefore cannot automatically serve as the displacement date of the Farahin as a whole, whose encampments also existed at al-Hayadiya, al-'Awsaji, and al-Sharif.

A distinction must be maintained between the military history of one locality and the dispersal of a clan occupying a wider territory.

Displacement Chronology

Stage	Period	Details
Pre-Nakba Encampments	Until 1948	Farahin dwellings were distributed among al-Hayadiya, 'Asluj, al-'Awsaji, and al-Sharif.
War and Military Transformation in the Naqab	Spring–Summer 1948	Military operations affected central Naqab routes and localities, including the 'Asluj sector, but no single date is documented for the departure of all Farahin.
Second Truce	18 July – 15 October 1948	Expulsions continued in several parts of Palestine. A later Palestinian database gives 27 August for Farahin, but Abu Sitta's register does not confirm the date.
Operation Yoav	15 October – 4 November 1948	The operation fundamentally changed military control of the Naqab and resulted in the occupation of Beersheba, forming a major context for the breakdown of the al-Azazmeh tribal domain.
Postwar Period	1949 onward	Naqab Bedouins continued to experience displacement, relocation, and movement restrictions; the detailed trajectory of every Farahin branch requires further clan-specific documentation.

Military Operation and Unit

Military Operation: No single operation is independently documented as “the occupation of the Farahin.” The clan's multiple encampments were affected by different stages of the 1948 war.

Operation Yoav provides the wider autumn military context that culminated in the occupation of Beersheba and transformed control of the Naqab, but it is not automatically assigned as a Farahin-specific operation.

Military Unit: No brigade or battalion is independently documented at clan level. A unit involved in fighting near one Farahin dwelling area should not be reassigned to the entire clan without direct evidence.

Cause of Displacement

The dispersal of the Farahin can be placed within the broader military conquest of the Naqab and the breakdown of the traditional al-Azazmeh territorial system.

Because the available displacement register gives no independent date and no detailed clan-specific assault narrative, it would be inaccurate to portray all Farahin as having left during one attack on a single day.

The most supportable description is a multi-stage process of wartime displacement and dispersal associated with the military transformation of the Naqab and subsequent control measures.

Destruction of Encampments

There was no single built-up Farahin village for which a reliable destruction percentage can be calculated.

The clan occupied several encampment areas, and the sources reviewed do not provide a comprehensive inventory of destroyed tents, houses, wells, or structures at each site.

No unsupported description such as “completely destroyed” or numerical destruction percentage is therefore used.

Settlements on Farahin Land

The principal Palestinian sources reviewed do not provide a separate cadastral map of Farahin tribal boundaries from which a specific Israeli settlement can conclusively be identified as standing on their land alone.

A settlement located within the much wider al-Azazmeh tribal domain cannot automatically be reassigned to the Farahin without documentation of clan-level boundaries or title.

Farahin / al-Azazmeh Today

There is no single former “Farahin village site” to describe today because the Farahin were already a dispersed clan before the Nakba.

The sources reviewed do not provide a complete and independently verified map of the post-1948 locations of all Farahin branches.

The Farahin name continued as a Palestinian tribal and family name in several areas, but connecting every present-day community to a particular pre-1948 Farahin encampment requires separate genealogical and field documentation.

This section therefore summarizes the documented historical record and is not a comprehensive demographic or field survey of all Farahin communities in 2026.

Sources

- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1922: Farahin / Azazmeh and methodology for Beersheba Bedouin estimates
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1931: Farahin / El Azazma
- 'Arif al-'Arif – Tarikh Bir al-Saba' wa-Qaba'iliha
- 'Umar Rida Kahhala – Mu'jam Qaba'il al-'Arab: Farahin
- Encyclopedia of Palestinian Villages – Farahin / al-Azazmeh
- Salman Abu Sitta – The Palestinian Nakba 1948 / Register of Palestinian Localities
- Salman Abu Sitta – Atlas of Palestine 1917–1966
- PalQuest – Overall chronology of the 1948 War, Second Truce, and Operation Yoav