Nasir al-Din Massacre 1948: Golani Kills Women and Children

On the night of 11–12 April 1948 two platoons of the Zionist Golani Brigade attacked the village of Nasir al-Din overlooking Lake Tiberias, killing about 10 to 12 of its people, women and children among them, blowing up its stone houses and burning its mud-brick ones; the survivors were driven out. [1] [2] [3]

The massacre came days after the Deir Yassin massacre and was one of the causes of the terror that preceded the fall of Tiberias a week later. It is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people.

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The Nasir al-Din massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Date	The night of 11–12 April 1948 [1]
Place	The village of Nasir al-Din on a hill overlooking Lake Tiberias and the city of Tiberias [1]

Item	Details
Population	About 90 in 1945, all Muslims working in farming and herding [3] [1]
Perpetrator	Two platoons of the Golani Brigade (Haganah) stationed in the Jewish quarter of Tiberias [1] [3]
Killed	About 10 to 12, women and children among them [1] [2] [3]
Destruction	Stone houses blown up and mud-brick houses burned [1]
Fate	Its people fled to Lubya and Tiberias; buildings of the city of Tiberias were erected on its land [1]

A village above the lake

Nasir al-Din stood on a hilltop overlooking Lake Tiberias and the city of Tiberias. [1] About 90 people lived there in 1945, [3] all Muslims working in farming and herding. Together with neighbouring al-Manara, its lands covered 4,172 dunums, given over to grain. [1]

The massacre: the night of 11–12 April 1948

On 11 or 12 April 1948 two platoons of the Golani Brigade, stationed in the Jewish quarter of Tiberias, set out and attacked the village. [1] WAFA states that the village was chosen for destruction to spread terror in Safad and the surrounding villages. [3]

The attackers killed a number of villagers, women and children among them, and destroyed their homes. The newspaper Filastin reported that the raiders blew up the stone houses and burned the mud-brick ones. [1]

The accounts and the toll

Source	Date	Toll
Historian Aref al-Aref (via Khalidi)	11–12 April 1948	10 killed [1]

Source	Date	Toll
Nafez Nazzal, from eyewitnesses (via Khalidi)	11–12 April 1948	Names seven, including women and children [1]
British communiqué in Filastin (via Khalidi)	April 1948	8 men and a woman, plus an unspecified number of children [1]
Al Jazeera Net list	14 April 1948	12 killed [2]
WAFA (Golani attack)	12–13 April 1948	10 killed, all women and children [3]
WAFA (disguise account)	14 April 1948	About 50 killed; only 40 survived [3]

The WAFA list tells another story: that on 14 April Lehi and the Irgun sent a force dressed in Arab clothing; villagers took them for reinforcements heading from Nazareth to Tiberias and welcomed them, whereupon they opened fire, and only 40 survived. [3] But Walid Khalidi's All That Remains, which gathers the Arab and British accounts of the attack, does not mention this story and identifies the attackers as the Golani Brigade. [1] This article therefore adopts Khalidi's documentation and presents the disguise story as a circulating account.

From Nasir al-Din to the fall of Tiberias

Most of the survivors of Nasir al-Din fled to Lubya and Tiberias, and British soldiers later moved them from Tiberias to Lubya. [1] Days later, on 18 April 1948, Tiberias fell and its Arab people were expelled. Read: Tiberias before the Nakba.

Today only one house remains of Nasir al-Din. Residential buildings of the city of Tiberias were built on part of its land, and the occupation uses the rest as pasture. [1]

Conclusion

Nasir al-Din was a small village of ninety souls, but the Golani Brigade turned it into a message of terror to Tiberias and the villages of the Galilee: it killed its

women and children and blew up and burned its homes. A week later Tiberias itself fell.

Frequently asked questions about the Nasir al-Din massacre

When did the Nasir al-Din massacre take place?

On the night of 11–12 April 1948; some lists give 14 April.

Who carried out the Nasir al-Din massacre?

Two platoons of the Haganah's Golani Brigade, according to All That Remains. Another account attributes it to Lehi and the Irgun.

How many people were killed in the Nasir al-Din massacre?

About 10 to 12, women and children among them; a circulating account raises it to about 50.

What is the story of the disguise in Arab clothing?

An account recorded by WAFA says the attackers posed as Arab reinforcements heading to Tiberias. Khalidi's book does not mention it, so it is unconfirmed.

What remains of Nasir al-Din?

One house; buildings of the city of Tiberias were built on part of its land.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. "Historical Profile of Nasir al-Din from All That Remains" (Walid Khalidi), Palestine Remembered.
2. "Israeli Massacres Against the Palestinian People," Al Jazeera Net, 3

October 2004.

3. “Israeli Massacres,” Palestinian National Information Centre (WAFA).