

Al-Zuq at-Tahtani



Subdistrict: Safad

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Safad
Distance from district center	30 km from Safad
Average Elevation	100 m above sea level
Population in 1931	626 – per PalQuest's figures table; Khalidi's text gives 626 Muslims and one Christian
Number of Houses in 1931	137
Population in 1944/1945	1,050

Item	Information
Estimated Population in 1948	About 1,218 – a later demographic estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	11,634 dunams
Attack and Depopulation	An Israeli military report of 1948 claimed that the villagers left their homes on 11 May 1948 under the impact of the fall of Safad the previous day. Morris, who quotes the report as cited by Khalidi, does not indicate whether the village was attacked in the course of Operation Yiftach, nor when Zionist forces actually entered it.
Final Israeli Control	The sources do not state when Zionist or Israeli forces actually entered the village; probably before the end of Operation Yiftach on 25 May 1948, which occupied the whole area, including the Galilee panhandle
Military Operation	Operation Yiftach
Military Unit	The sources do not identify any unit that entered the village; Operation Yiftach was carried out by the Palmach (Yiftach Brigade), with its First Battalion as the spearhead, according to PalQuest
Cause of Depopulation	Fear after the fall of Safad, according to the claim of a 1948 Israeli military report, as cited by Khalidi from Morris
Settlements Documented on Village Lands	Beyt Hillel, established by Zionists south of the village in 1940; its land was administratively combined with the lands of the village of Lazzaza in 1944, but later land survey maps show it on land belonging to al-Zuq al-Tahtani, about 1 km southeast of the village site

Estimated population of al-Zuq al-Tahtani in 1948: approximately 1,218-1,220

Occupation and depopulation: The villagers reportedly left on 11 May 1948; the precise date on which Israeli forces entered the village has not been established.

Military operation: Operation Yiftach

Military unit: Israeli sources associate the area with the Palmach's First Battalion,

although the unit that entered the village has not been conclusively identified.

Israeli settlements established on the village's lands before 1948: Bayt Hillel was founded in 1940. Its land was administratively associated with Lazzaza by 1944, although later land-survey maps place the settlement on land belonging to al-Zuq al-Tahtani.

Israeli development established on or extending into the village's lands after 1948: expansions of Bayt Hillel, an industrial area, and part of Kiryat Shmona.

Al-Zuq al-Tahtani was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict, situated approximately 30 kilometres northeast of Safad and close to the Palestinian–Lebanese boundary.

- Al-Zuq al-Tahtani stood near Wadi al-Baraghith, approximately midway between al-Khalisa and al-Khisas. Lazzaza was among the nearest villages. The village lay slightly south of the principal al-Khalisa–Dan road, which intersected with the Tiberias–al-Matalla road north of al-Khalisa. Graded roads also connected it with al-Khisas and al-Zuq al-Fawqani.
- The village was built on a hill overlooking broad, open expanses on all sides. A secondary road connected it with the main route leading to Safad and Tiberias.
- Al-Zuq al-Tahtani was surrounded by agricultural land and had at least one mill; water-powered mills also operated north of the village.

Boundaries of al-Zuq al-Tahtani

Al-Zuq al-Tahtani lay among the following Palestinian villages and localities:

- North: [al-Zuq al-Fawqani](#).
- West: [al-Khalisa](#).
- South: [al-Na'ima](#).
- Southeast: [Qaytiyya](#).
- Northeast: [al-Khisas](#).

Population of al-Zuq al-Tahtani

- The British Mandate census recorded 626 inhabitants and 137 houses in 1931. A narrative account reproduced by PalQuest describes the population as 626 Muslims and one Christian, creating a minor inconsistency with the published total. By 1945, the village population was estimated at 1,050.
- The inhabitants were predominantly Muslim. They obtained water for domestic use from a nearby wadi and operated water-powered mills north of the village. Agriculture was their principal livelihood, with citrus and other fruit cultivated particularly on the lands south of the village.

Population of al-Zuq al-Tahtani

Year	Population
Late nineteenth century	Approximately 100
1931	626*
1945	1,050
1948	Approximately 1,218–1,220
Estimated registered refugee population, 1998	7,480

* PalQuest's statistical table gives a total of 626 for 1931, while its narrative describes 626 Muslims and one Christian. The published figures therefore contain a minor internal discrepancy.

Number of Houses in al-Zuq al-Tahtani

Year	Number of houses
1931	137
1948 estimate	266

Village Lands

The lands associated with al-Zuq al-Tahtani covered 11,634 dunams, including 358 dunams recorded for roads and wadis. Fruit and citrus orchards extended south of the village, and agriculture formed the principal basis of its economy. The village lands bordered those of al-Khalisa, al-Khisas, al-Zuq al-Fawqani, al-Na'ima, Lazzaza, and al-Sanbaryya.

Land Ownership in al-Zuq al-Tahtani, 1944/45

Ownership category	Area in dunams
Palestinian ownership	9,368
Jewish ownership	1,630
Public land	636
Total	11,634

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in al-Zuq al-Tahtani, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)	Jewish ownership (dunams)	Public land (dunams)	Total (dunams)
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Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)	Jewish ownership (dunams)	Public land (dunams)	Total (dunams)
Irrigated land and orchards	5,547	1,386	0	6,933
Cereal cultivation	2,145	223	0	2,368
Built-up area	39	0	0	39
Cultivable land	7,692	1,609	0	9,301
Uncultivated land, excluding the built-up area	1,637	21	636	2,294

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The published British Mandate statistics classify 636 dunams as public land; this amount has been shown separately rather than included under Palestinian uncultivated land.

Economic Life in al-Zuq al-Tahtani

The villagers obtained water for domestic use from a nearby wadi and operated water-powered mills north of the village. Agriculture was their principal occupation. Citrus and other fruit were cultivated, particularly on the land extending south of the village. In 1944/45, 2,145 dunams under Palestinian ownership were allocated to cereal cultivation, while 5,547 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards.

Architectural Character of al-Zuq al-Tahtani

In the late nineteenth century, al-Zuq al-Tahtani was described as a village of stone-and-mud houses surrounded by cultivable land. Its population at the time was approximately 100. Older ruined Arab houses and a mill stood on the northern side of the village, and a large watercourse ran nearby.

Archaeological Remains in al-Zuq al-Tahtani

Al-Zuq al-Tahtani was regarded as an archaeological site built upon an artificial mound. Foundations of earlier structures were visible at the surface, together with the remains of dry-stone enclosures and fragments of pottery.

Occupation and Depopulation of al-Zuq al-Tahtani

An Israeli military report from 1948 claimed that the inhabitants left al-Zuq al-Tahtani on 11 May 1948, following the fall of Safad on 10 May. These events occurred during Operation Yiftach. However, the available account does not establish whether Israeli forces directly attacked the village or identify the precise date on which they entered it. The frequently cited date of 1 May 1948 is therefore not sufficiently documented and should not be presented as certain.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of the military operation	15 April 1948	Operation Yiftach, launched by the Palmach under Yigal Allon to seize eastern Galilee before the end of the British Mandate on 15 May 1948, began; PalQuest lists al-Zuq al-Tahtani among the villages it affected.
Depopulation of the village	11 May 1948	An Israeli military report of 1948 claimed that the villagers left their homes on this day under the impact of the fall of Safad the previous day, according to Morris as cited by Khalidi. PalQuest's Operation Yiftach page dates the final assault on Safad to 10–11 May 1948.

Stage	Date	Details
Final occupation	Not documented (probably before 25 May 1948)	Morris, as cited by Khalidi, does not state when Zionist or Israeli forces actually entered the village, nor whether they attacked it. Operation Yiftach ended on 25 May 1948, having occupied the whole area, including the Galilee panhandle, according to PalQuest.

Israeli Settlements and Development on the Village's Lands

Bayt Hillel was founded south of al-Zuq al-Tahtani in 1940. By 1944, the land occupied by the settlement had been administratively combined with that of the neighbouring Palestinian village of Lazzaza. Later land-survey maps, however, locate Bayt Hillel on land belonging to al-Zuq al-Tahtani, approximately one kilometre southeast of the village site. After the Nakba, Bayt Hillel expanded, while an industrial area and part of Kiryat Shmona were developed on or across lands associated with the village.

Al-Zuq al-Tahtani Today

According to the survey published in Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*, only one stone house remained at the village site and was being used as an office for an airstrip. Grass and wild vegetation covered the site and were periodically mown. Archaeological excavations were taking place at Tall al-Wawiyyat on its southern edge. West of the tell was a fenced area containing numerous cactus plants and tall eucalyptus trees. The survey also recorded that a new airstrip was under construction northeast of the former village site.

Sources

- [PalQuest, "al-Zuq al-Tahtani"](#).
- [Palestine Remembered, "al-Zuq al-Tahtani—Safad"](#).

- Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
- [Pal48, "Al-Zuq at-Tahtani"](#).