# Baysamun



موقع القرية كما يبدو للناظر إليه من طرفه الجنوبي (أيار/مايو ١٩٩٠) [بيسمون]

## Baysamun – Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Safad District

Baysamun was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Safad District. It stood on level ground along the western side of the al-Hula Plain, approximately 16.5 kilometers northeast of Safad, at an average elevation of about 75 meters above sea level.

Baysamun was one of the smallest rural communities in the Safad District. During the Mandate it was classified as a hamlet or farm. Its inhabitants depended on cereal cultivation, orchards, and livestock raising and benefited from springs situated to the west and south of the village.

The villagers were displaced on 25 May 1948 as a direct result of a Palmach psychological-warfare or “whispering” campaign conducted in the context of Operation Yiftach. Regional accounts indicate that Baysamun fell under Israeli control at the end of the operation on the same day, without a documented large-scale battle inside the village itself.

## Location and Geography

Baysamun stood on a flat tract of land facing a mountain range to the west and overlooking the al-Hula Plain in the other directions.

It lay approximately 16.5 kilometers northeast of Safad at an average elevation of about 75 meters above sea level.

A short dirt road linked the village to a highway that passed to its west and led toward Safad and Tiberias.

Supporting Palestinian documentation places Jahula to the north, Lake al-Hula to the east, the encampments of 'Arab al-Zubayd to the south, and Dayshum to the west.

## Name

The origin of the name Baysamun is not conclusively established.

Walid Khalidi suggests that the name may derive from “Bayt Ashmun,” Ashmun being a Phoenician deity, giving the possible meaning “Temple of Ashmun.”

Because Khalidi himself presents the derivation as a possibility, it should not be treated as a settled linguistic or historical fact.

## Built Environment

Baysamun was a very small settlement and was classified as a hamlet or farm in the Mandate-era *Palestine Index Gazetteer*.

Its houses were scattered along both sides of the dirt road connecting the village with the main highway, generally extending along an east–west axis, with some dwellings clustering around a spring south of the village.

The official statistical material reviewed does not provide a reliable separate built-up-land figure, so no unsupported built-up acreage is added.

## Population and Houses

The inhabitants of Baysamun during the Mandate period were Muslims.

| Year | Population | Note |
|---|---|---|
| 1922 | 41 | Official Census of Palestine; all inhabitants were Muslims |
| 1931 | 50 | Official census; all inhabitants were Muslims |
| 1945 | 20 | Official statistics |
| 1948 | About 23 | Later demographic estimate, not an official Mandate census |
| 1998 | About 143 refugees and descendants | Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered |

The official 1931 census recorded 11 houses in Baysamun.

The official population fell from 50 in 1931 to 20 in 1945. The principal sources reviewed do not provide a conclusive explanation for this decline, so no specific cause is assigned without documentation.

## Education and Religious Institutions

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest do not document an independent school in Baysamun before the Nakba.

The principal source also does not identify a particular mosque or shrine in this very small settlement.

No specific educational or religious institution is therefore added without stronger village-level Palestinian documentation.

## Water Resources

Several springs were located to the west and south of Baysamun.

Some of the village houses clustered around a spring on the southern side.

These water sources supported domestic needs and limited irrigated agriculture.

## Economic Life and Agriculture

The inhabitants depended on agriculture and livestock raising.

Cereals were the principal crop, while some land was devoted to orchards and irrigated agriculture.

Orange trees were planted north of the village.

The villagers also kept livestock as part of the local rural economy.

## Land Ownership, 1944/45

The total land area of Baysamun was 2,102 dunams.

| Total | 2,102 |
|---|---|
| **Official Ownership Category** | **Area in Dunams** |
| Arab | 2,057 |
| Jewish | 0 |
| Public | 45 |

The figures balance exactly: 2,057 + 45 = 2,102 dunams.

Palestine Remembered presents the same figures using its own terminology: 2,057 dunams “Palestinian,” 0 dunams “Transferred to Zionists,” and 45 dunams “Communal/Public.”

The phrase “Transferred to Zionists” should be preserved when reproducing that source's classification.

## Land Use, 1944/45

| Grand Total | 2,057 | 45 | 2,102 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Land Use** | **Arab** | **Public** | **Total** |
| Cereals | 1,817 | 0 | 1,817 |
| Plantations and irrigable land | 107 | 0 | 107 |
| Total cultivable/cultivated land | 1,924 | 0 | 1,924 |
| Non-cultivable/non-agricultural category | 133 | 45 | 178 |

The table balances exactly: 1,924 dunams of cultivated or cultivable land plus 178 dunams in the non-agricultural category equal the total village area of 2,102 dunams.

PalQuest's display contains a formatting inconsistency: one summary line shows 113 Arab dunams in the non-cultivable category, while the detailed line shows 133.

The 133-dunam figure is the one that reconciles with the official ownership total, since 1,817 + 107 + 133 = 2,057 Arab dunams.

This article therefore uses 133 and does not invent a separate built-up acreage.

## Operation Yiftach

Operation Yiftach began on 15 April and ended on 25 May 1948.

The Palmach conducted the operation to gain control of eastern Galilee before and immediately after the end of the British Mandate. The operation later became associated with the Yiftach Brigade.

The Palmach's First Battalion served as the spearhead of the operation at the broader operational level.

The campaign targeted Safad and Palestinian villages throughout eastern Galilee and the Galilee panhandle and relied on both direct military attack and

psychological warfare.

## The Whispering Campaign

One of the principal methods used in Operation Yiftach was a psychological-warfare campaign commonly described as the “whispering campaign,” organized under Palmach commander Yigal Allon.

Messages and rumors were passed to Palestinian villagers warning them of major Jewish reinforcements and an impending clearing of villages in the al-Hula region, while supposedly friendly intermediaries advised residents to leave.

The campaign contributed to the depopulation of several communities even where no large direct battle occurred inside the village itself.

## Depopulation of Baysamun

According to an Israeli military intelligence report prepared in June 1948 and cited by Walid Khalidi, the inhabitants of Baysamun left on **25 May 1948** as a direct result of the Palmach whispering campaign.

25 May is therefore first and foremost a securely documented **depopulation date**.

The Baysamun village account does not describe a major direct battle or a detailed ground assault inside the village on that day.

## Final Control of the Village

Khalidi's account of neighboring Harrawi states that Baysamun and Mallaha fell into Israeli hands at the end of Operation Yiftach on **25 May 1948**.

The same date may therefore be used as the best-supported date for final Israeli control of Baysamun, while preserving the distinction between the **documented flight of the villagers caused by psychological warfare** and the **physical**

**military entry into the village site, which is not described in detail in the Baysamun entry itself**.

## Military Unit

The military organization directly associated with Baysamun's depopulation in the principal account is the **Palmach**, through its psychological-warfare campaign within Operation Yiftach.

At the operation-wide level, the **Palmach's First Battalion** spearheaded Operation Yiftach.

Palestine Remembered accordingly lists the First Battalion as the unit associated with Baysamun.

Khalidi's village-specific account, however, does not describe a direct First Battalion assault on Baysamun itself. The distinction between operation-level attribution and a village-level ground attack is therefore retained.

## Occupation Chronology

| Stage | Date | Details |
|---|---|---|
| Beginning of Operation Yiftach | 15 April 1948 | The Palmach began its campaign to gain control of eastern Galilee, Safad, and the al-Hula villages. |
| Psychological warfare in the al-Hula region | May 1948 | The whispering campaign was used to frighten Palestinian villagers and induce them to leave. |
| Depopulation of Baysamun | 25 May 1948 | An Israeli military intelligence report cited by Khalidi states that the villagers left as a direct result of the Palmach whispering campaign. |
| Probable final Israeli control | 25 May 1948 | Regional village accounts place Baysamun and Mallaha in Israeli hands at the end of Operation Yiftach. |

| Stage | Date | Details |
|---|---|---|
| End of Operation Yiftach | 25 May 1948 | Baysamun's depopulation and final fall occurred at the closing stage of the operation. |
| Destruction of the village | After depopulation; exact date not documented | The village houses were later completely removed. |

## Israeli Settlements on Village Lands

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, **no Israeli settlement was established on the village site or on Baysamun's lands**.

Agricultural facilities used by Kibbutz Manara later occupied the village site, but this does not mean that Manara itself was established on Baysamun village land.

## Baysamun Today

According to the field description published in Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*, no traces of the village houses remained.

Warehouses for agricultural implements used by Kibbutz Manara occupied the site.

The surrounding land was cultivated, and fish ponds had been constructed nearby.

Palestinian documentation also preserves a field photograph of the village site from the south dated 1990.

This description should not be treated as a comprehensive field verification of conditions in 2026. Fieldwork for *All That Remains* was conducted between 1987 and 1990 and therefore records the condition of the site during that survey period.

## Sources


- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question:

Baysamun

- PalQuest – Operation Yiftach
- Palestine Remembered – Baysamun, Safad District
- Palestine Remembered – Walid Khalidi's account of Baysamun
- Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Baysamun; supporting Palestinian local documentation
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics – Historical census reports for 1922, 1931, and 1945
- Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains
- PalQuest – All That Remains: Methodology and Fieldwork