Bayt Jiz Massacre 1948: 13 Killed, a Woman and an Infant Among Them

The village of Bayt Jiz in the Ramla district resisted two Zionist assaults near Latrun before Zionist forces occupied it in late May 1948 and expelled its people. Palestinian lists record a massacre in which the Zionist gangs killed 13 of the villagers, among them a woman and an infant. [1] [2] [3]

Bayt Jiz is one of the villages of the Ramla district erased in the Nakba, and the massacre is one of the Zionist massacres against the Palestinian people.

Contents

1. The Bayt Jiz massacre at a glance
2. Bayt Jiz before the Nakba
3. Between the Latrun assaults: resistance and occupation
4. The massacre
5. The question of the date
6. Bayt Jiz today
7. Frequently asked questions
8. Sources and references

The Bayt Jiz massacre at a glance

Item	Details
Village	Bayt Jiz, Ramla district, about 15 km from Ramla [3]
Population in 1945	550; 638 in 1948 [3] [4]

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Occupation	Between 28 and 30 May 1948, in Operation Ben-Nun, by the Seventh Brigade [3] [4]
Massacre	13 villagers killed, including a woman and an infant [1] [2]
Date of massacre	31 December 1948 according to Palestinian lists; the date is uncertain [1] [2]
Fate of the village	Its people were expelled, and the settlements of Har’el, Tzelafon and Gizo were built on its land [3] [4]

Bayt Jiz before the Nakba

Bayt Jiz stood on undulating land in the western foothills of the Jerusalem mountains, at about 200 metres, some 15 kilometres from Ramla. [3] Its population was 550 in 1945 and about 638 in 1948. [3] [4]

Its lands covered 8,357 dunums, of which 6,565 were cultivable, mostly planted with grain. [3] In 1947 its people built a joint school with the neighbouring village of Bayt Susin, and the village had a mosque. [4]

Between the Latrun assaults: resistance and occupation

Bayt Jiz lay near Latrun, on the route that Zionist forces wanted to open to Jerusalem. In the assault of 22–23 May 1948 those forces failed to take the village, thanks to the resistance of its people and the people of neighbouring villages, [1] [4] [3]

The attack was then repeated in Operation Ben-Nun, and the Seventh Brigade occupied the village. The occupation army announced its fall on 28 May, while al-Aref dates it to 30 May, together with neighbouring Bayt Susin. [3] [4] Its occupation opened a supply route to Jerusalem bypassing Latrun. [3]

The massacre

WAFA records that the Zionist gangs took full control of the village and carried out a massacre there, killing thirteen of its people, among them a woman and an infant. [1] The Arabi21 list records the same massacre: the Zionist gangs entered the village of Jiz in the Ramla district and killed 13 people. [2]

The available sources give neither the victims' names nor further details of how they were killed.

The question of the date

Both lists place the massacre on 31 December 1948. [1] [2] But the village had been fully occupied and its people expelled in late May 1948. [3] [4] In the Arabi21 list, Jiz comes at the very end, alongside two other massacres dated 30 December, [2] which suggests the date is an estimate. The exact day of the massacre therefore cannot be determined; what is certain is that it took place in 1948, after the assault on the village.

Bayt Jiz today

The people of Bayt Jiz were expelled; their refugees were estimated at about 3,918 in 1998. [4] The settlements of Har'el (1948), Tzelafon (1950) and Gizo (1968) were built on its lands. [3] [4]

Today the village site is an overgrown recreation area. The school building still stands, with a fire observation tower added to it, and a few houses remain, deserted or used for storage. [3] [4]

Conclusion

Bayt Jiz held out against the first assault but fell in the second; its people were expelled, 13 of them were killed, a woman and an infant among them, and three settlements rose on its land. Among the towns of the Ramla district, read also

about the Ramla massacre.

Frequently asked questions about the Bayt Jiz massacre

Where is Bayt Jiz?

In the Ramla district, about 15 km from Ramla, near Latrun.

When was Bayt Jiz occupied?

Between 28 and 30 May 1948, in Operation Ben-Nun.

How many people were killed in the Bayt Jiz massacre?

13, among them a woman and an infant.

When did the massacre take place?

Palestinian lists place it on 31 December 1948, but the date is uncertain, since the village was occupied in May.

What was built on the land of Bayt Jiz?

The settlements of Har'el, Tzelafon and Gizo.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

1. "Israeli Massacres," Palestinian National Information Centre (WAFA).
2. Hana al-Kahlout, "The Assassination of a Homeland: 37 Israeli Massacres in the Year of the Nakba," Arabi21, 15 May 2014.
3. "Bayt Jiz," Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question, Institute for Palestine Studies.
4. "Bayt Jiz," Palestine Remembered.