Abu Jaber / Jabarat

Abu Jaber / Jabarat – Palestinian Bedouin Clan of the Beersheba Subdistrict

Abu Jaber was one of the principal clans of the Palestinian Jabarat tribe in the Beersheba Subdistrict. It was not a single nucleated village with one fixed built-up center, but a Bedouin and semi-settled tribal community occupying encampments and residential areas within the wider Jabarat domain between northwestern Beersheba and northeastern Gaza.

'Arif al-'Arif locates the Abu Jaber dwellings at al-Qunaytira, while the clan was also associated with the area known as Tall Abu Jaber near al-Faluja. The wider Jabarat tribal territory extended along Wadi al-Hasi and toward the areas of Burayr and al-Faluja.

Item	Information
District	Beersheba
Tribe	Jabarat
Type of Locality	Bedouin/semi-settled clan; not a single nucleated village
Recorded Dwelling Areas	Al-Qunaytira and the Tall Abu Jaber area near al-Faluja, within the wider Jabarat tribal domain
Population in 1922	500 – official Census of Palestine
Population in 1931	402 – official Census of Palestine
Estimated Population in 1948	818 according to Salman Abu Sitta's Register – a later estimate, not an official census
Displacement Period	Attacked on 16–17 July 1948; Abu Sitta records final depopulation on 19 October 1948

Item	Information
Military Operation	Final displacement associated with Operation Yoav; the July attack preceded the operation
Military Unit	No specific unit is independently documented at the Abu Jaber clan level
Land Area	No separately documented Abu Jaber total; Abu Sitta gives 379,175 dunums for the Jabarat as a whole
Settlements on Clan Land	No specific settlement can be reliably identified from the reviewed sources without a clan-level land map

Abu Jaber within the Jabarat Tribe

Abu Jaber was one of the major branches of the Jabarat, one of the Palestinian Bedouin tribes associated with the Beersheba and Gaza districts. The Jabarat as a whole lived in the area northeast of Gaza and along both sides of Wadi al-Hasi, extending toward Burayr and al-Faluja and the western approaches to the Hebron hills.

Historical and tribal sources differ over the Jabarat's more distant genealogy. Some writers link them to Judham, while later tribal traditions connect them with Bani Sakhr or with Jabir al-Ansari. These are therefore presented as competing genealogical traditions rather than as one conclusively established lineage.

The Abu Jaber Name and Leadership

'Arif al-'Arif records that members of Abu Jaber were also known as al-'Uraybat and connects this name with an ancestor called 'Arrab.

The clan's shaykhship was held by the Abu Jaber family, and al-'Arif identifies **Hasan bin Salih Abu Jaber** as its shaykh during the Mandate period.

Hasan Abu Jaber was also among the Jabarat representatives involved in the tribal court system organized by the British Mandate authorities in Beersheba during the 1920s.

Subdivisions of Abu Jaber

Palestinian sources identify several families or subdivisions associated with the Abu Jaber clan:

- Abu Jaber.
- Abu Jarrar.
- Al-Makahila.
- Al-Hadabin.
- Awlad Husayn.

Some later accounts also include a group called al-Ghuraba, although this subdivision does not appear identically in all versions of the sources and is therefore treated as a later tribal listing rather than a fixed official classification.

Dwelling Areas

'Arif al-'Arif locates the Abu Jaber dwellings at **al-Qunaytira**. The clan is also historically associated with **Tall Abu Jaber** near al-Faluja, an area that became directly involved in the military fighting of 1948.

Tall Abu Jaber should not, however, be treated as the single residential center of every member of the clan. Bedouin and semi-settled life involved a broader network of dwellings, grazing areas, and seasonal encampments.

Population of Abu Jaber

Both the 1922 and 1931 Mandate censuses listed Abu Jaber separately within the Jabarat, allowing the clan's population to be distinguished from that of the tribe as a whole.

Year	Population	Details
1922	500	254 males and 246 females – official Census of Palestine; all Muslims

Year	Population	Details
1931	402	230 males and 172 females – official Census of Palestine; all Muslims
1948	818	Later estimate in Salman Abu Sitta's Register; not an official census

Some modern village databases round the 1948 estimate to 820, but Abu Sitta's Register gives 818.

Jabarat Tribal Totals versus Abu Jaber

A recurring error in later websites is to present totals for the entire Jabarat tribe as if they were Abu Jaber figures.

The official 1922 census recorded approximately 4,820 Jabarat in total, while Abu Jaber alone numbered 500.

In 1931, Abu Jaber alone numbered 402. The figure 4,452 frequently reproduced online refers to the Jabarat as a whole in those sources, not to Abu Jaber; a reading of the official census table yields a Jabarat total closer to 4,426.

Households and Dwellings

The 1931 census does not provide an independent “occupied houses” figure for Abu Jaber in the same manner used for settled villages. Beersheba Bedouin communities were enumerated primarily by tribe and population rather than by a single built-up settlement.

No housing figure is therefore derived from the population or from wider Jabarat statistics.

Land and Property

No separate 1945 Village Statistics table gives the total land area, ownership categories, or agricultural use of Abu Jaber alone.

Salman Abu Sitta assigns approximately **379,175 dunums** to the Jabarat as a whole. This figure must not be presented as Abu Jaber land.

Some Palestinian encyclopedic sources give approximately 38,000 habal, or about 60,000 dunums, for the Jabarat area northeast of Gaza near Burayr and al-Faluja. The large difference between this estimate and Abu Sitta's figure indicates that the sources are measuring different geographical concepts or portions of the tribal domain.

Neither figure is therefore reassigned to Abu Jaber as its exclusive land area.

Economic Life

Abu Jaber, like other Jabarat clans, depended on livestock raising, including sheep, camels, and horses, together with seasonal agriculture and cereal cultivation where rainfall and soil conditions permitted.

Their location near al-Faluja, Burayr, and Wadi al-Hasi placed them in a zone where pastoral Bedouin economic activity overlapped with the settled agriculture of the surrounding villages.

No separate Abu Jaber agricultural table is available, so no unsupported acreage for wheat, barley, olives, or other crops is supplied.

Water, Education, and Public Services

Jabarat life depended on wells, seasonal water resources, and grazing grounds across the area between northern Naqab and Gaza. The sources that distinguish Abu Jaber as a clan do not provide a complete independent inventory of its wells.

No independently documented school specific to Abu Jaber has been identified in the principal sources used here. Schools in al-Faluja, Burayr, or Beersheba should therefore not be reassigned to the clan without direct evidence.

The July 1948 Attack

Salman Abu Sitta's Register shows that the displacement of Abu Jaber unfolded in more than one phase.

The Abu Jaber area was attacked on **16–17 July 1948** during the intense fighting on the southern front between Israeli forces and Egyptian forces and their allies.

This occurred roughly three months before Operation Yoav. The 17 July date found in some later village databases should therefore be treated as an early attack or temporary capture rather than automatically as the final depopulation date for the entire clan.

Final Displacement in October 1948

Abu Sitta records **19 October 1948** as the depopulation date for Abu Jaber / Jabarat and places the final phase within the offensive that culminated in Operation Yoav.

Operation Yoav began on 15 October with the objective of breaking Egyptian lines and connecting Israeli forces in the Naqab with areas farther north. Heavy fighting, aerial bombing, and artillery fire affected the al-Faluja–Iraq al-Manshiyya sector and the routes linking al-Majdal with the Hebron region.

The Abu Jaber dwelling area lay close to this military zone, and its population was directly affected by the fighting and subsequent displacement.

Occupation and Displacement Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Summer Attack	16–17 July 1948	Abu Sitta records an attack on Abu Jaber during this period of southern-front fighting.

Stage	Date	Details
Interim Period	July – October 1948	The existence of a later depopulation date indicates that the July attack did not necessarily result in the final removal of the entire clan.
Beginning of Operation Yoav	15 October 1948	A broad offensive began against Egyptian positions in southern Palestine.
Recorded Final Depopulation	19 October 1948	This is the date given for Abu Jaber / Jabarat in Salman Abu Sitta's Register.
Occupation of Beersheba	21 October 1948	This followed two days after Abu Jaber's recorded depopulation and formed part of the same broader transformation of military control in the Naqab.

Operation Yoav and Military Unit

Military Operation: The final recorded displacement of Abu Jaber is associated with Operation Yoav, which lasted from 15 October to 4 November 1948.

At the wider operational level, the Giv'ati, Yiftach, Negev, and Har'el brigades participated in Operation Yoav.

Military Unit: The Palestinian sources reviewed here do not identify a specific brigade or battalion as the independently documented force responsible for the final displacement of Abu Jaber itself. No operation-wide brigade is therefore converted into a village- or clan-specific attribution without further evidence.

Cause of Displacement

The displacement of Abu Jaber occurred in the context of direct military fighting around al-Faluja and the northern Naqab and unfolded in at least two stages: an attack in July followed by final displacement in October during Operation Yoav.

The most accurate description is therefore military attack and wartime displacement rather than reducing the event to a single date or portraying it as an unrelated voluntary migration.

Destruction of Dwellings

There was no single built-up village called Abu Jaber for which a precise destruction percentage can be calculated. The clan lived in multiple dwellings and encampments associated with al-Qunaytira and Tall Abu Jaber.

Later research records bombing and damage to some Jabarat dwellings during the fighting around al-Faluja, but the Palestinian sources used here do not provide a comprehensive count of destroyed Abu Jaber structures.

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

Settlements on Abu Jaber Land

The sources reviewed do not provide a separate cadastral map of Abu Jaber land from which a specific post-1948 settlement can be conclusively assigned to the clan's property alone.

Palestinian databases likewise report no clear settlement-specific information for Abu Jaber. Because Jabarat lands overlapped a broad tribal zone around al-Faluja, Burayr, and the northern Naqab, settlement attribution requires more precise clan-level land documentation.

Abu Jaber / Jabarat Today

Following the Nakba, members of Abu Jaber and the wider Jabarat tribe were dispersed across several areas. Groups moved toward the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jordan, while some Jabarat remained within Palestine.

There is no single surviving “Abu Jaber village site” comparable to a nucleated depopulated village. The clan's historical landscape consisted of multiple dwellings, grazing areas, and tribal lands.

A precise contemporary description of Abu Jaber land would therefore require a

separate cadastral and field study of the historical clan boundaries and encampment sites. This article does not constitute a comprehensive 2026 field survey of those areas.

Sources

- 'Arif al-'Arif – Tarikh Bir al-Saba' wa-Qaba'iliha, Birzeit University Repository
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- Salman Abu Sitta – The Register of Depopulated Localities in Palestine: Abu Jaber / Jabarat
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