Jaunah Ambush, 1936 | Rebels Strike on the Tiberias–Safad Road



On 12 August 1936 the mujahid **Abdullah al-Sha’ir** and his men ambushed a Zionist transport vehicle travelling from Tiberias to Safad near **al-Jaunah**, the birthplace of the commander **Abdullah al-Asbah**, in the first months of the Great Palestinian Revolt. The mujahideen blocked the road, hid among the rocks and showered the vehicle with bullets from every direction, then withdrew safely before reinforcements arrived. [1][2]

The Palestinian account in circulation holds that the ambush killed eight of the Zionist passengers and a number of British soldiers.

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At a glance

Item	Details
Date	12 August 1936
Place	The Tiberias–Safad road, near al-Jaunah
Ambush leader	The mujahid Abdullah al-Sha’ir
Target	A Zionist transport vehicle travelling from Tiberias to Safad, under a British guard force
Length of the engagement	Two hours
Losses	Eight Zionist passengers and a number of British soldiers, according to the account in circulation
Withdrawal of the mujahideen	Safe, before reinforcements arrived

[1]

al-Jaunah

al-Jaunah is a Palestinian village east of the city of Safad, about 10 kilometres from it, at an altitude of about 450 metres beneath Mount Canaan. It is surrounded by the lands of the villages of Fir’im, Biriya and al-Amuqa. Settlers had seized most of its land in the Ottoman period and founded the colony of “Rosh Pinna” on it, leaving its Arab inhabitants only about 839 dunums. Its population was 799 in 1931

and 1,150 in 1945. [2][1]

The context: ambushes on the Tiberias–Safad road

With the outbreak of the Great Palestinian Revolt in 1936, the road linking Tiberias and Safad became a favoured site for ambushes against Zionist vehicles, which travelled under the guard of British armoured cars. The people of al-Jaunah took part in several battles during the revolt. [1][2]

Abdullah al-Asbah

Abdullah al-Asbah was among the most prominent commanders of the revolt in the Galilee region; during it he attacked British and Jewish convoys, blew up bridges and burned Jewish farms. He was martyred on 27 April 1938 in a clash near Khirbat Khusun between Sammata and Sabalan, and was buried in al-Sasa. [1][2]

The ambush

The mujahideen blocked the road and hid among the rocks, and as the Zionist vehicle approached they poured bullets on it from every direction. The engagement lasted two hours, and the guard force began calling for reinforcements, but the mujahideen managed to withdraw safely from the battlefield before they arrived.

An attack on a British police car on 9 September 1936

About a month later, on 9 September 1936, fighters north of al-Jaunah fired on a British police car and killed those inside it, and the car was burned. British forces came to the village with air support, and the fighters, about 30 of them, withdrew after some were hit by the aircraft’s fire. [1]

The Nakba and the expulsion of the villagers

Most of al-Jaunah’s residents were emptied out in early May 1948, a process likely completed on 9 May, when occupation forces took it in the course of Operation “Yiftach,” with several neighbouring villages. Those who remained were expelled by force on 5 June 1949, when trucks surrounded the village and dumped them near Akbara. The villagers went to Syria and Lebanon, and still live in the diaspora camps. [1][3]

Timeline

Date	Event
1936	The Great Palestinian Revolt begins; ambushes on the Tiberias–Safad road [1]
12 August 1936	Abdullah al-Sha’ir’s ambush near al-Jaunah [1]
9 September 1936	Attack on a British police car north of al-Jaunah [1]
27 April 1938	Abdullah al-Asbah martyred [1]
9 May 1948	Occupation of al-Jaunah [1]
5 June 1949	The remaining villagers expelled by force [3]

Frequently asked questions about the Jaunah ambush

Where is al-Jaunah?

East of Safad, about 10 kilometres away, surrounded by the lands of Fir’im, Biriya and al-Amuqa. [2][1]

Who was Abdullah al-Asbah?

One of the most prominent commanders of the 1936–1939 revolt in the Galilee, martyred on 27 April 1938. [1][2]

When was the ambush set?

On 12 August 1936 according to the account in circulation. [[]]

What happened to the villagers?

The village was occupied in May 1948, those who stayed were expelled in June 1949, and its people went to Syria and Lebanon. [1][3]

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Sources and references

1. Palestine in Memory, “al-Jaunah” (in Arabic).
2. Palestinian Encyclopedia, “al-Jaunah (village)” (in Arabic).
3. Palestinuna, “The depopulated village of al-Jaunah / Safad district” (in Arabic).