

The depopulation of 560 Palestinian towns and villages in 1948 by Zionist militia and Israeli army could not have happened without an organized campaign of massacres and atrocities of which 156 were recorded. The campaign which led to the depopulation of 220 towns and villages, before the state of Israel was declared and under the British watchful eye before any regular Arab force could intervene, showing that *massacres were a weapon of ethnic cleansing*, is described here:

<https://mondoweiss.net/2020/06/massacres-as-a-weapon-of-ethnic-cleansing-during-the-nakba/>

The massacres have common features:

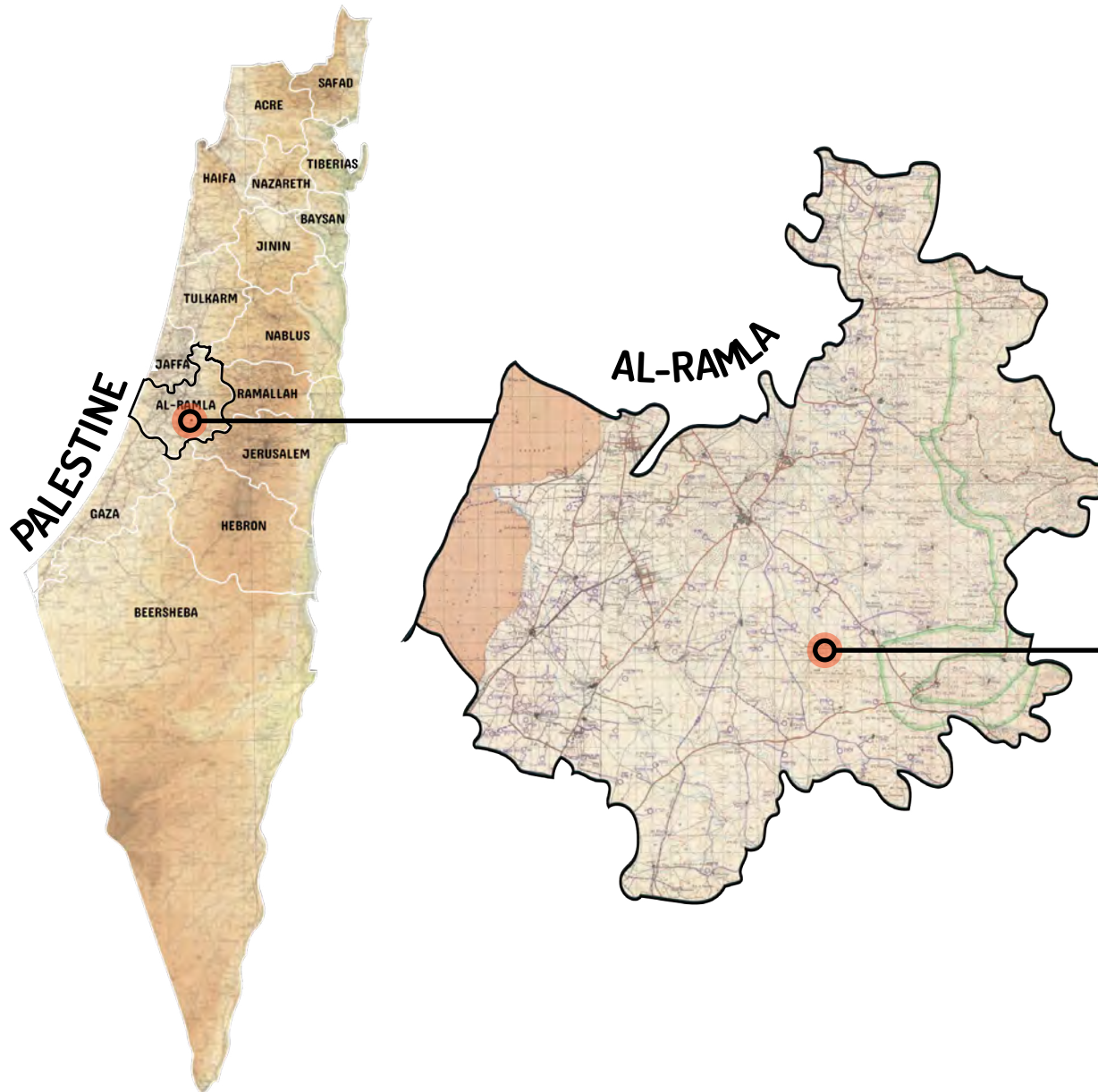
1. Attacking a village even though a peace agreement was in place.
2. Attacking the village before a state was declared while Palestine was under the protection of the British Mandate, thus causing the depopulation of 220 towns and villages, which comprise half the total refugees today.
3. Attacking the village in a military formation and in far superior numbers to defenders, (a battalion of two to three hundred soldiers with superior arms against a dozen farmers with old rifles).
4. Attacking the village from 3 directions to allow expulsion towards the fourth direction.
5. AFTER the village was taken, men, women, children were killed for no military reason. Random, brutal killing. Going from house to house killing people. Killing passers by in the street or the road.
6. Deliberate terror. Grabbing a child and splitting his head with an axe. Telling his mother go and tell others. (Repeated: Abu Shusha, Dawayma).
7. Finding women huddled in a cave or a hiding place and terrorizing them. Taking men away, killing them and throwing bodies in a well (Dawayma, Safsaf).
8. Killing men in groups and forcing them to dig trenches and bury them there. (Bi'na, Majd el Kuroum, Eilaboun).
9. The key action, Expulsion: Forced march of the survivors towards another village, against two rows of Zionist soldiers, shooting at their feet and over their heads. (Abu Shusha, Lydda). Looting women Jewelry during the march.

Thereafter, preventing return of the expelled refugees, killing them, poisoning wells, looting then demolishing houses, burning crops. We shall show the detailed anatomy of several massacres.

Here is one: Abu Shusha village in the District of Ramle on 13 May 1948.

أبوشوشة
ABU SHUSHA
1948 MASSACRE

ABU SHUSHA HISTORY



Abu Shusha was a village located in the Ramla district of Palestine until 1948.

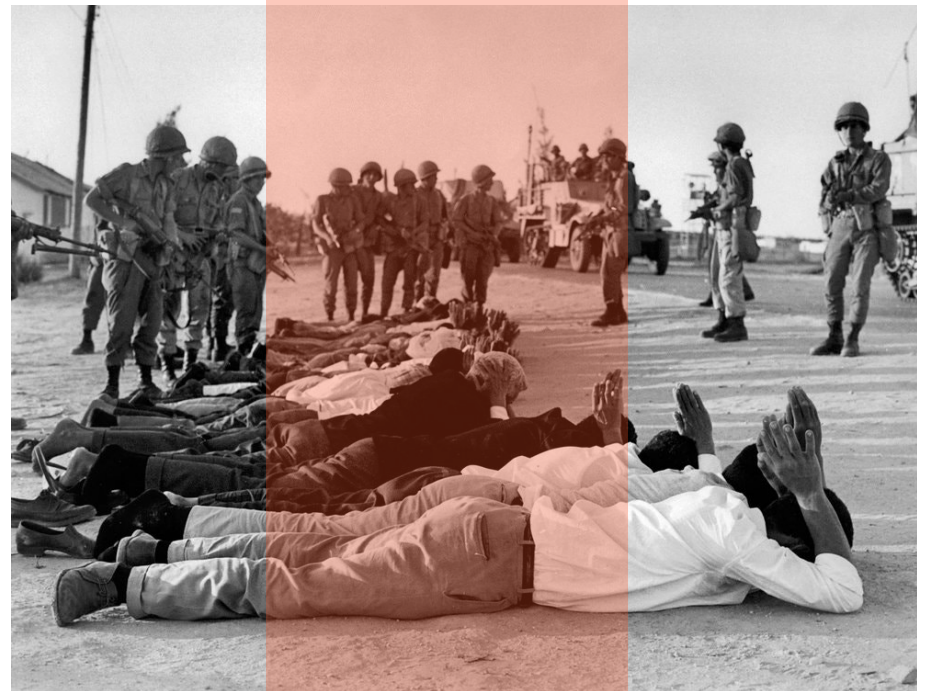
In 1948, Abu Shusha had a population of approx. 1,009 people, all Muslim. The village had a land area of 9,425 dunums, a majority of which were allocated for cereals or irrigated and used as orchards. 24 dunams were built-upon: featuring houses built close together from mud and stone, one mosque, a number of shops, and an elementary school founded in 1947 with an initial enrollment of 33 children.



ZIONISM

Following the infamous Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917 and the onset of the British Mandate on Palestine in 1922, to secure the establishment of a free independent Palestine, Palestine witnessed a flood of Jewish European settlers, carrying with them the Zionist ideology of colonial settlement in Palestine. Zionism is a settler-colonial ideology that advocates for an exclusively Jewish ethnostate built on Palestinian land and the total removal of the people of the land, the Palestinians, by any and all means. Zionism is inherently racist in its exclusivity and anti-Palestinian because it is only feasible through the ethnic cleansing and constant uprooting of the Palestinian people, which is seen throughout massacres in over 500 Palestinian villages in and around 1948 and continued into today with Israeli state-led violence on the Palestinian people and illegal annexation of Palestinian lands.

Britain's 1917 Balfour Declaration promised a national home (not a state) for Jews in Palestine with the allusion of a Palestinian state to be established for the national majority. The latter never happened. The following British Mandate granted full political and civil rights in Palestine to the Jewish minority (which constituted 8% of Palestine population and owned 2% of its land) and the Jewish Diaspora, yet failed to recognize the political rights of the indigenous Palestinian Arab majority who comprised 92% of the population. At the end of the British Mandate, which created the problem in the first place, the UN made a non-binding proposal (UN resolution 181 on November 29, 1947) to divide Palestine into two parts: 55% to be ruled by the Jewish minority and 45% to be ruled by the Arab Palestinian majority with Jerusalem to be Corpus Separatum. At the time the Jewish settlers were 30% of the population and controlled only 6% of land in Palestine. Half of the population in the region to be ruled by Jews were Palestinian. No forced displacement of population was allowed. The Partition Plan was only a proposal, not binding and it was dropped by the UN in March 1948. The British, whose obligation in Palestine included protecting the indigenous Palestinian population, were not only responsible for officializing the Zionist land project but also failed to uphold Palestinian rights amidst colonization and to protect them from the depopulation and massacres of Palestinians.



ETHNIC CLEANSING

The UN recommendation to divide Palestine into two states heralded a new period of conflict and suffering in Palestine with an uneven battlefield.

In order to enforce this new Jewish state, Jewish terrorist organizations formed with the intention of removing Palestinian lives from villages desired by this new state: using massacres as a weapon for ethnic cleansing.

These massacres and subsequent intimidations were led by Jewish terrorist groups such as the Haganah, Irgun, and Lehi (Stern Gang) and resulted in the massive expulsion of Palestinians from their homes, businesses and land in both cities and rural areas.

Ethnic cleansing was made possible by the great disparity between the strength of the Jewish forces and the native inhabitants of Palestine. The former had thousands of able-bodied Jewish males aged 16-50, mostly military-trained, and many were veterans of WWII. Jewish armaments were superior to those held by Palestinians. More importantly, the Jewish Zionists had small arms, armored vehicles factories, and an unlimited amount of locally-produced ammunition.

On the Palestinian side, Britain manipulated rations of ammunitions to the armies of Egypt and (particularly) Jordan. The Palestinians had about 2,500 militia men dispersed among a dozen towns and several hundred villages. They had old rifles, few machine guns, no artillery and no tanks. They had no central command and no wireless communications. At best they were only able to mount defensive operations, rushing to a village after hearing cries for help.

The well-armed and seasoned Zionist troops greatly outnumbered the defenders of the Palestinian civilian population who had a poor and scattered defense.

The Zionist militia were well trained and led by veteran European officers of WWII. The Zionists also were able to manufacture ammunition and armored vehicles and, as such, were not harmed by the arms embargo imposed by Britain. On the other hand, the Palestinians were defenseless, without a single command, wireless or armor. The Arab irregular volunteers who came to help were a motley, ineffective group which caused more damage than gave support. This contradicts Israel's claim that, in expelling Palestinians, it was acting in self defense and that the refugees' exodus was an accident of war, not an Israeli plan.

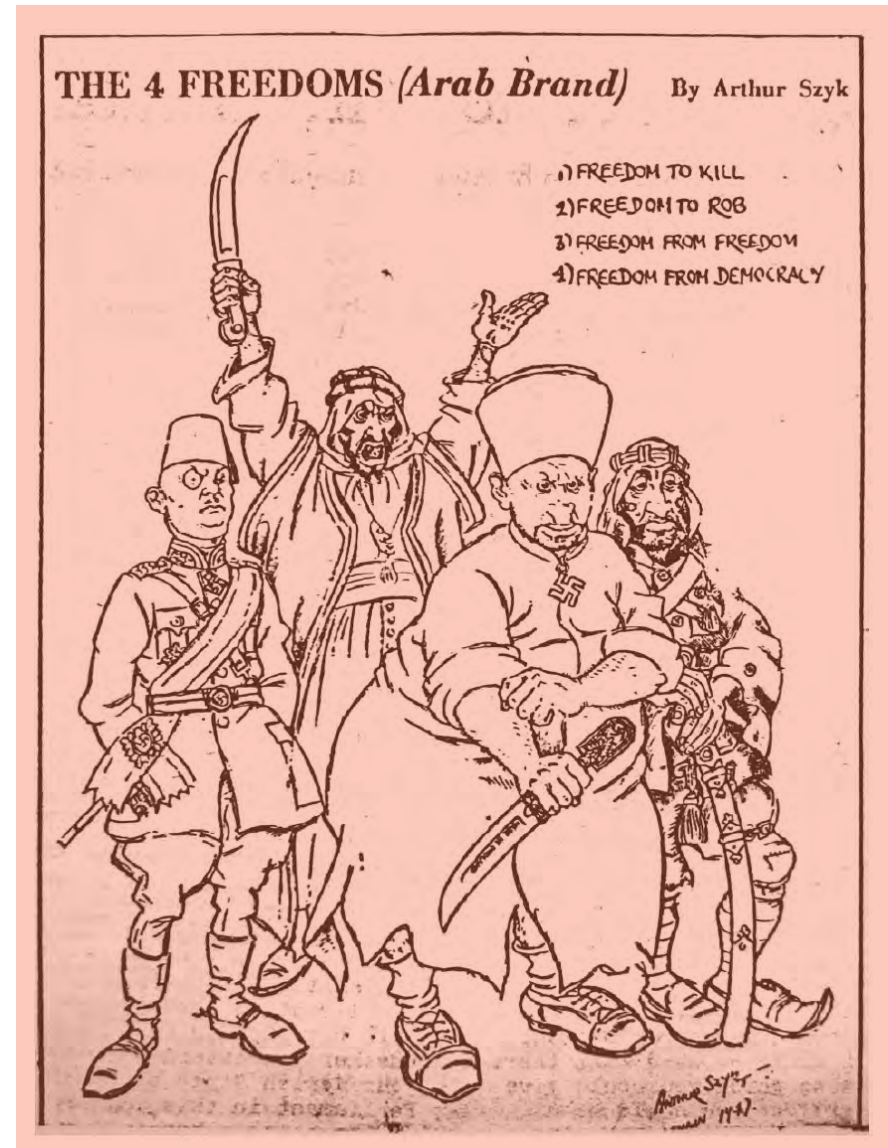
In the first three months of 1948, Jewish terrorists carried out numerous operations, blowing up buses and Palestinian homes. From April 1-May 14, 1948, the Haganah mounted a campaign of occupying Palestine. This Zionist invasion of Palestine depopulated 220 main towns and villages, making up half of all Palestine refugees today. That was before Israel declared itself as a state and before the British left Palestine. In the following 6 months, two-thirds of the Palestinian people were expelled and became refugees.

Ethnic cleansing was the tool. Palestinians were murdered and expelled from their lands for the mere reason of their identity and ownership over coveted land. The UN Council for Human Rights defines ethnic cleansing as a regime's desire to impose ethnic rule on a mixed area with the use of acts of expulsion and other violent means. Ethnic cleansing has come to be considered a crime against humanity, punishable by international law.

ZIONIST PROPOGANDA

The Israeli state has yet to acknowledge the history of ethnic cleansing committed by Jewish terrorist groups who would later form the Israeli army (IDF). Since 1948 and continued today, Zionism and the Israeli state perpetuates propaganda in order to dehumanize Palestinians and deflect accountability over human rights violations; justifying its colonial presence. Zionist propaganda is designed to exploit the fear of antisemitism, perpetuating a narrative that the crimes of Israeli violence onto Palestinians is merely a result of Israel's need to defend itself; casting the perpetual identity of victim-hood necessary in accomplishing settler colonialism within modern times.

Zionism based its claim on the myth that Palestine is a “Land without People,” in order to make it so by expulsion and massacres. Zionism recruits God to support their claim that they were the Chosen People and that God grants them Palestine.



Cartoon reinforcing the dehumanization of the Palestinians as the Zionist forces' ethnic cleansing was underway. By the well-known artist, book illustrator, and political caricaturist Arthur Szyk, in *The Legionaire*, 'Voice of the Hebrew Legion', London, 13 February, 1948.



While Britain occupied Palestine and formed the British Mandate, the Jewish Zionist movement infiltrated Palestinian lands as they planned to enforce a state of Israel.

One Zionist militia was the Haganah, who would become the core of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Between 1920 and 1948, the Haganah was a Jewish terrorist organization that executed raids and massacres over Palestinian villages, resulting in an ethnic cleansing executed through a combination of brute force and intimidation to local villagers.

Since 1945, the Haganah designed and implemented four general military plans, ultimately leading to the creation of Israel and the dispossession of the Palestinians:

THE HAGANAH & THE ZIONIST AGENDA

PLAN A: drawn up in February 1945 to complement the political aim of a unilateral declaration of independence. It was designed to suppress Palestinian Arab resistance to the Zionist take-over of parts of Palestine.

PLAN B: produced in September 1945, emerged in May 1947 and designed to replace Plan A in the context of new developments such as Britain's submission of the problem of Palestine to the United Nations and growing opposition from surrounding Arab states to the Zionist partition plan.

PLAN C: produced in May 1946, emerged in November/December 1947, in the wake of the UN Partition Plan. It was designed to disrupt Arab defensive operations, and occupy Arab lands situated between isolated Jewish colonies. This was accompanied by a psychological campaign to demoralize the Arab population. By the end of March 1947, the Zionist military operations carried out under Plan C resulted in the depopulation of 30 Palestinian villages with a combined population of about 22,000 people.

PLAN D: of March 1948, This plan was guided by a series of specific operational plans, the broad outlines of which were considered as early as 1944, Plan D was drawn up to expand Jewish-held areas beyond those allocated to the proposed Jewish State in the UN Partition Plan. Its overall objective was to seize as much territory as possible in advance of the termination of the British Mandate — when the Zionist leaders planned to declare their state.

HAGANAH'S PLAN D

The new Plan had wide-ranging objectives. It was this Plan that was finally implemented.

Plan D objectives included:

- Seizing and controlling all government services, including post, telephone, police stations, roads, railways, airports and ports, and denying such services to the enemy.
- Launching pre-planned counter-attacks on enemy-bases in the heart of its territory wherever it is, including outside Palestine.
- Occupying [Arab] important high-ground positions within the [Hebrew] state according to the Partition Plan or beyond.
- Occupying [Arab] front line positions within their territories.
- Applying economic pressure on the enemy by besieging 'some' of their cities to force them to abandon his activities - i.e. to leave.
- Occupying and controlling the enemy's bases in rural and urban areas.

Plan D outlined a strategy of total war. The Plan called for the “encirclement of the village and conducting a search inside it. In the event of resistance, the armed force must be wiped out and the population must be expelled outside the borders of the state.”

In cities, the plan called for “occupation and control of all isolated Arab neighborhoods and encirclement of Arab municipal area[s] and termination of its vital services (water, electricity, fuel, etc.).... [I]n case of resistance, the population will be expelled.” Plan D also called for the “destruction of villages (setting fire to, blowing up and planting mines in the debris)” - to prevent the return of refugees.

Plan D was put into action on or around April 2, 1948. By this time, the size of Zionist forces had reached 65,000, several times greater than the number of Arab defenders, whether they were the Palestinian villagers, the Muslim Brothers from Egypt or the motley assortment of Arab Liberation Army (ALA). The lack of serious action by the British to protect civilians encouraged Ben Gurion to ratchet up the scale of offensive operations. In a series of simultaneous offensives, all the spaces and strategic points separating Jewish colonies were occupied by Zionist forces.

What ensued was a series of strategic massacre operations on Palestinian villages in the lead-up to an Israeli State Independence, causing a massive ethnic cleansing under the name of this new Jewish state.



APRIL 1, 1948

» 1ST ATTACK ON ABU SHUSHA

Abu Shusha was first attacked in the early months of the war in what the Haganah called “the model of a studied retaliatory operation.” According to the account given by The History of the Haganah, the hit-and-run attack was in retaliation for the death of a guard from the nearby settlement of Gezer, killed while trespassing on fields owned by the Abu Shusha village.

After midnight on April 1, 1948, two platoons of the Giv’ati Brigade’s Second Battalion, accompanied by other forces, infiltrated into the village, and demolition experts blew up a house and a well.



1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2, 1948

**» PLAN D PUT
INTO ACTION**

APRIL 9, 1948

» DEIR YASSIN MASSACRE

Zionist forces committed one of the most infamous massacres of the war in the village of Deir Yassin on the western outskirts of Jerusalem. This is one of the most notorious massacres, although attacks on several other Palestinian villages also occurred during this time.



1948

APRIL 1

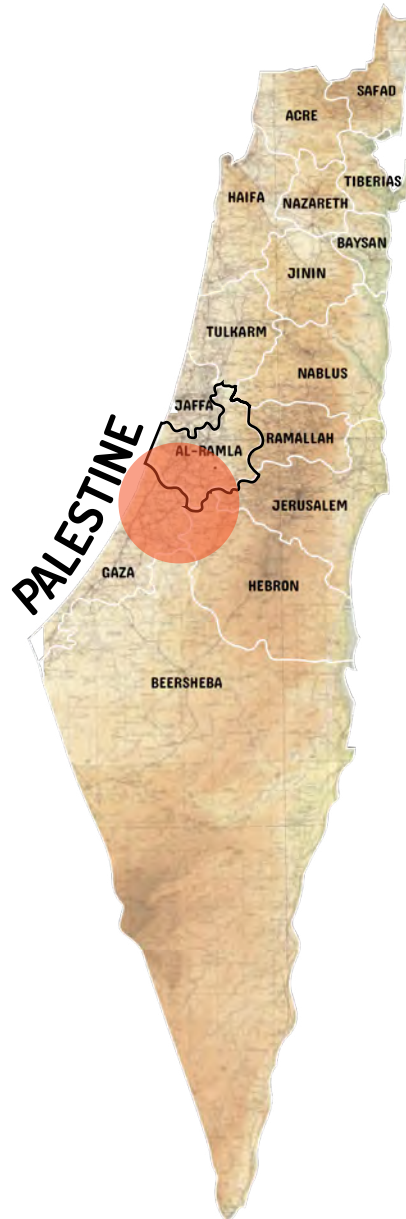
APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 13

MAY 14

MAY 15

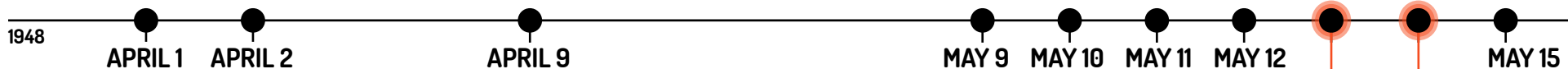


MAY 9-12, 1948

» OPERATION BARAK

Abu Shusha's massacre took place during Haganah's Operation Barak & Maccabi.

Operation Barak took place from May 9-12, when the Haganah attacked the villages of Bash-shit and Beit Daras, Batani al Sharqi, neighboring Batani al Gharbi, Sawafir Shamaliya, Nabi Rubin, Barqa. Villagers were expelled from Ibdis, Julis and Beit Affa.



MAY 13-14, 1948

» OPERATION MACCABI

The second part of Operation Barack was Operation Maccabi, which took place between May 13-14, 1948. It was during this operation where the Haganah conquered Abu Shusha, as well as south east of Ramla, al Qubab, northwest of Latrun and Mughar, southwest of 'Aqir.



1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 14

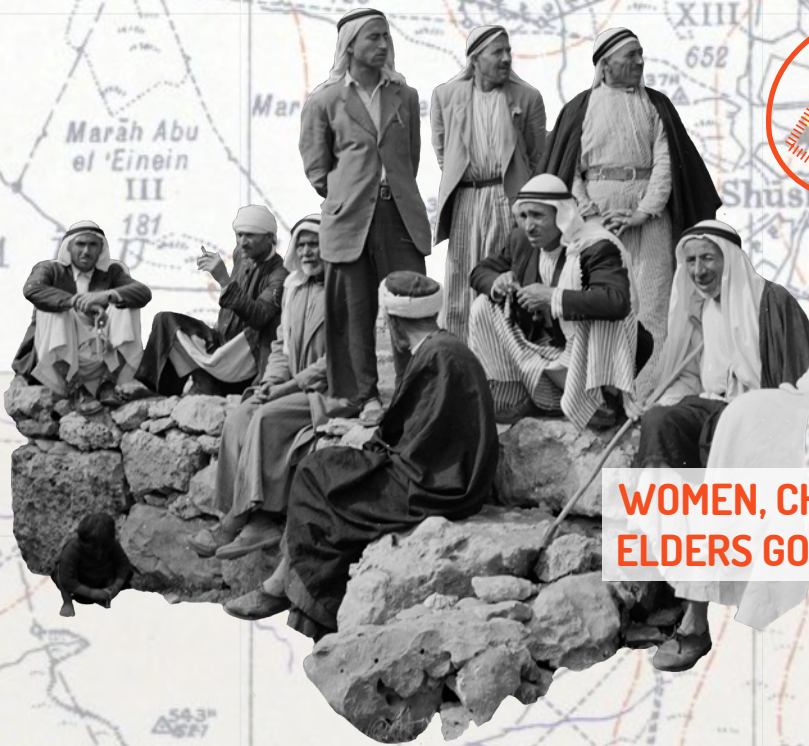
MAY 15

MAY 13, 1948**» ABU SHUSHA PREPARES**

On May 13, 1948, the residents of Abu Shusha witnessed the arrival of Jewish reinforcements at the neighboring settlement of Kibbutz Gezer. Everyone in the village realized with fear that their “midnight hour” was upon them and that the final assault on their village was near.

In an arranged meeting, the villagers held a short but passionate debate between evacuating their village or remaining in the village and protecting it. Deciding to stay, Abu Shusha villagers decided to have the women, children and able elders hide in village caves while the men stayed to fight. Their goal was to stay in the village: defend their homes and lands, and to protect the tombs and burial places of their forefathers.

The villagers then set about organizing themselves for the forthcoming battle. They had 70 rifles, many rusty, one Bren gun (machine gun) and few mines. The defenders spread around the village perimeter. They began their wait filled with fear and trepidation, and some families even attempted to flee under the cover of darkness rather than face the imminent conflict.

**VILLAGE MEN
PROTECT BORDERS****WOMEN
CHILDREN
ELDERS****CAVES****WOMEN, CHILDREN &
ELDERS GO TO CAVES**

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

MAY 14, 1948

» ABU SHUSHA MASSACRE

HAGANAH FROM GEZER COLONY

HAGANAH
CENTER OF
COMMAND

» HAGANAH ARRIVES

At the dawn of 14 May 1948, the units of the Zionist Givati brigade began their final assault on the village of Abu Shusha. The object of the military operation was to occupy the village and deport its Palestinian inhabitants.

The attack came on May 14th from the north, in the direction of the nearby Gezer colony, and also from the west, possibly from Eqron colony several kilometers away. The attack started with heavy mortar shelling on the village houses, killing many people in the streets.

More Haganah troops attacked the village from the west. A Center of Command was established on a strategic hill to the north-east of the village in a house called Dar el Khawajah, which was directing the military operations.

HAGANAH FROM EQRON COLONY

CAVES

MAY 14

VILLAGE
OCCUPATIONETHNIC
CLEANSINGWOMEN IN
CAVES

BURIAL

EXODUS

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

PALESTINIANS DEFENDERS
10
KILLED AT BORDER

HAGANAH FROM GEZER COLONY

HAGANAH FROM EQRON COLONY

HAGANAH
CENTER OF
COMMAND

» VILLAGE OCCUPATION

By 9am, Zionist soldiers advanced on the village. The fighters of Abu Shusha tried to repeal the attack. Their lines, however, were easily broken as their arms were no match for the efficiency of the Zionist forces. Some of the fighters stationed on the village boundary line were disarmed and executed by the Jewish fighters as they took the village. Other unarmed villagers fleeing to the east were captured and killed, unable to defend themselves.

At a loss of ten defenders killed, the invaders took the village and the remaining defenders withdrew.

Here, the atrocities began amid a savage terrorization of the Palestinian population.

CAVES

MAY 14

HAGANAH
ARRIVES

ETHNIC
CLEANSING

WOMEN IN
CAVES

BURIAL

EXODUS

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

MAY 14, 1948**»» ABU SHUSHA MASSACRE****»» ETHNIC CLEANSING**

Once the village had been occupied, the Zionist forces began the process of ethnically cleansing the village of its Palestinian inhabitants. Villagers were murdered on the street or in their homes. Some were axed to death and others were shot. In one house, the Jewish fighters found a group of men and killed them with axes. In front of another house some men were lined up against a wall and executed. This apocalyptic scene was repeated throughout the village and continued until a deathly silence announced the "victory."

In Abu Shusha, 70 civilians were killed by Giv'ati brigade. Report to ICRC said "the Jews have committed barbaric acts" including rape.

A YOUNG
WATCHMAN OF
GEZER FIELD WAS
FOUND AND SHOT
DEAD

FOUR MEN IN
HIDING HAD THEIR
HEADS SMASHED
BY AXES

YOUNG MEN WERE
LINED UP AGAINST A
WALL AND SHOT BY
MACHINE GUNS

MOHAMMED AL
ZAGHMOURY WAS
KIDNAPPED, HIS BODY
WAS FOUND IN WADI
EL MALEH WEST OF
THE VILLAGES

CHILD KHALIL
MOHAMMED
SALAMEH
WAS FOUND
'SLAUGHTERED' IN
THE STREET

FOUR 70-
YEAR OLD
WOMEN WERE
MURDERED

MANY MURDERED
BY AXES, MACHINE
GUNS, & RAPED

DISABLED
ELDERLIES
MOHAMMED EISSA
ABUL-SAUD, AMINA AL
HAQ, & MOHAMMED
EL HAYEK WERE
MURDERED IN THEIR
HOMES

MAY 14

HAGANAH
ARRIVESVILLAGE
OCCUPATIONWOMEN IN
CAVES

BURIAL

EXODUS

70**PALESTINIANS MASSACRED**

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

"MODEL CRIME" IN ABU SHUSHA

DURING THE MASSACRE, 10-YEAR OLD KHALIL AL AZ'AR WAS WITH HIS MOTHER WHEN A HAGANAH SOLDIER GRABBED HIM AWAY FROM HER.

HIS MOTHER PROTESTED, "WHY DID YOU TAKE THE CHILD?" THE SOLDIER REPLIED, "YOU WILL SEE WHY," JUST BEFORE SPLITTING THE CHILD'S HEAD WITH AN AX. HE THEN SAID TO THE MOTHER "GO AND TELL THE OTHER WOMEN."

THIS IS A MODEL CRIME SEEN THROUGHOUT OTHER MASSACRES OF PALESTINIANS BY THE HANDS OF THE HAGANAH.

»» MAY 14, 1948 ABU SHUSHA MASSACRE

»» ETHNIC CLEANSING



MAY 14

HAGANAH
ARRIVES

VILLAGE
OCCUPATION

WOMEN IN
CAVES

BURIAL

EXODUS

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

MAY 14, 1948**»» ABU SHUSHA MASSACRE****»» WOMEN IN CAVES**

Three days after the village attack, the Haganah soldiers saw a woman, Fatima Nimr Al Sawalha, emerging from one of the caves to fetch water. The frightened women led the soldiers to the caves where the inhabitants were subsequently ordered to leave. A few men hid in the far recesses of the cave in order to escape detection, making their escape later. The remaining villagers came out of hiding; a terrible scene greeted them. The bodies of the slain fighters had been left unburied in the hot May sun. The woman saw the bodies of their relatives, their husbands, sons, brothers and uncles.

In this terrible moment, the women faced an uncertain future. The only man among them was too old to help, and soldiers made him raise a white flag of surrender over the village.

CAVES

MAY 14

**HAGANAH
ARRIVES****VILLAGE
OCCUPATION****ETHNIC
CLEANSING****BURIAL EXODUS**

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

MAY 14, 1948**»» ABU SHUSHA MASSACRE****»» BURIAL**

The women spoke to one remaining elderly Palestinian man, Sheikh Salameh, who asked the soldiers for permission to bury the dead.

The women formed a committee and undertook the grisly task with tears in their eyes. They found it impossible to dig in the hard ground, and there was no-one available to conduct the burial service or recite the prayers. Thus the men were buried where they had fallen rather than in the village graveyard. The women threw the bodies in ditches or covered the corpses with soil and stones.

MAY 14

HAGANAH
ARRIVESVILLAGE
OCCUPATIONETHNIC
CLEANSINGWOMEN IN
CAVES

EXODUS

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 15

MAY 14, 1948

» ABU SHUSHA MASSACRE

» EXODUS

After the soldiers axed 10 year-old Khalil al Az'ar to death in front of his mother, they gathered all remaining villagers, mostly women, children, and elderly men. They lined up two lines of soldiers and ordered the villagers to march between them towards Al Qubab village to the east.

The villagers were not allowed to carry anything with them, and were forced to march quickly by shooting at their legs. Many were hit, and a woman miscarried. Following the brutal ethnic cleansing, this march marked the final expulsion of villagers from Abu Shusha.

VILLAGERS FORCED EXODUS TOWARDS AL-QUBAB

MAY 14

HAGANAH
ARRIVESVILLAGE
OCCUPATIONETHNIC
CLEANSINGWOMEN IN
CAVES

BURIAL

1948

APRIL 1

APRIL 2

APRIL 9

MAY 9

MAY 10

MAY 11

MAY 12

MAY 13

MAY 14



MAY 15, 1948

» ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE + ABU SHUSHA AFTERMATH

Many features of the Abu Shusha massacre were repeated exactly in other villages, as a part of the Zionist Invasion of Palestine before the State of Israel was declared.

Four hours after the Abu Shusha massacre, the Jewish People's Council met in Tel Aviv. Those present were there to draft the Declaration of Independence for the new State of Israel. In this declaration, the Arab citizens of the state were promised full and equal citizenship and representation in all state structures.

However, the villagers of Abu Shusha—promised to be equal citizens of the new state—were denied any rights, and their forceful expulsion meant they had no place in the state-in-making. They were forced from lands which legally belonged to them, the land of their patrimony, now seized by Jewish European settlers as these settlers formed the state of Israel.

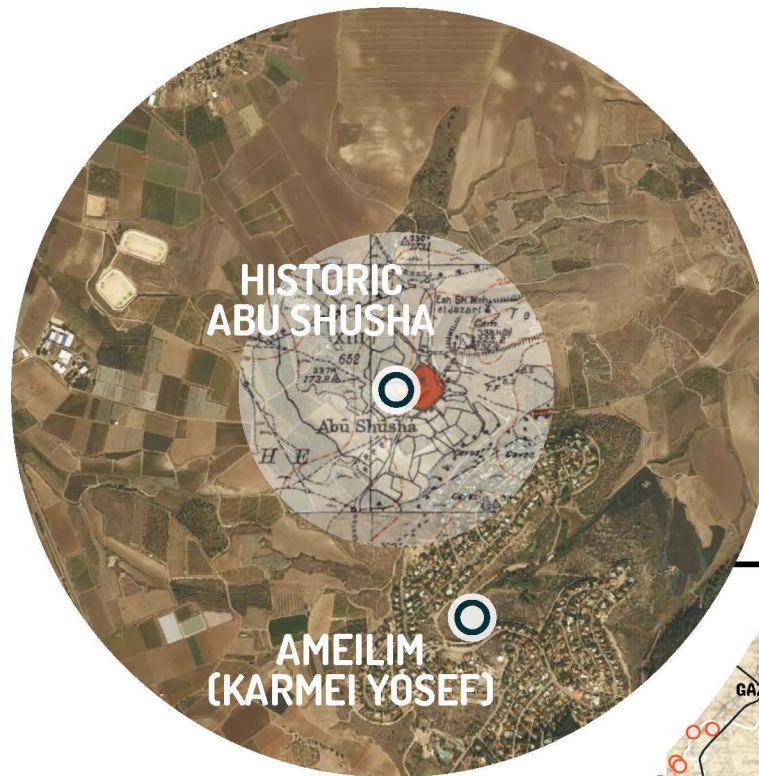
ABU SHUSHA TODAY

Today, the land of Abu Shusha is unrecognizable from its authentic Palestinian identity. All historic structures and civilian infrastructure are gone, leaving a rural field in its place.

Following its massacre in 1948, an Israeli settlement named Ameilim (Karmeil Yosef) was established on the site of the destroyed village. The land of Abu Shusha is now used by the Israeli settlement for growing fig, cypress trees, cacti, and a palm tree.

In 2008, there were 6,208 registered refugees, out of 8,400 total refugees. They are now scattered in refugee camps (shown map right ○) throughout Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon.

Abu Shusha descendants never forgot their Right of Return.



PALESTINIANS MASSACRED
70
IN 1948

LAND STOLEN
1,9425
DUNUMS

EST. ABU SHUSHA REFUGEES
8,379
AS OF 2018

○ Abu Shusha Exile Camps

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Massacres as a weapon of ethnic cleansing during the Nakba

Dr. Salman Abu Sitta

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