

Britannia Park – Burial and Treachery

Salman Abu-Sitta

This paper demonstrates the treachery of the Jewish National Fund, in particular the UK branch that funded the planting of Britannia Park (or British Park) over the ruins of seven Palestinian villages. Salman Abu-Sitta presents the JNF's treachery from three perspectives – stealing the land, burying villages and falsifying history.

As is now commonly known, the JNF (KKL in Hebrew) was established in 1901 by the 5th Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, its aim to acquire land in Palestine and neighboring countries for the purpose of establishing a Zionist colony, with the intention for the colony to become a state for the sole benefit of world Jewry. The means to acquire land was first by offering large sums of money collected from European Jews to landowners. Then, by collusion with the British Mandate of Palestine, to facilitate means for landowners to dispose or forfeit their land. Next, with al Nakba of 1948 and the destruction and depopulation of Palestine in which the JNF was wholly complicit, the acquisition of land was achieved by military force. In the years post-48, the JNF robbed the Palestinian refugees of their land in 372 villages and posed around the world as a charity protected by domestic laws. Yet its actions, past and present, remain in violation of international conventions, such as the Geneva Conventions or the Rome Statute of 1998 and such law that is customary and ratified, that is written into domestic legislation and to which local laws must conform.

In December 1948, the UN passed the famous resolution 194 calling for the return of the refugees. David Ben-Gurion, often credited as the founder of the Israeli (Jewish) state and its first prime minister, wanted to make this return impracticable by 'selling' refugee land to the JNF – an international organization (otherwise referred to as a para-statal or supra-national organization) that was difficult to trace. The land that was selected for the fictitious sale was chosen to block the return of the refugees who had been displaced to Gaza, east Jerusalem, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and the Lebanon (see Figure 1 relating to land stolen by/sold to the JNF). The area subject to the fictitious sale, dubbed the 'two-million-deal', was actually 2,380,142 dunams (1 metric donum = 1,000 m² ≈ 0.25 imperial acre). Thus, in one stroke, the JNF significantly increased its land holdings to more than 2.5 times the area which it had acquired during the previous 47 years.

A JNF booklet of 1949 described the ruse as follows:

"[Jewish or JNF land ownership in Palestine] is under two million dunams ... Almost all the rest [18,000,000 dunams] belongs at law to Arab [Palestinian] owners, many of whom left the country [actually expelled, now living in refugee camps close by] ... Whatever the ultimate fate of the Arabs concerned, it is manifest that their legal right to their land and property in Israel, or the monetary value of them, will not be waived, nor do the Jews wish to ignore them ... The JNF will therefore pay for the lands it takes over, at a fixed and fair price. The Government [of Israel] will receive the money and in due time will pay compensation to the Arabs."

In a nutshell, two thieves steal a property; the owner is not in the room, he does not know about the deal, nor has he agreed to forfeiting his holdings. One thief 'sells' it to the other at an arbitrary sale price. The 'seller'

(Israel, the original thief) keeps the money until an unknown date in the future. The 'buyer' (JNF, the second thief) says he paid the 'seller' with no proof found. The 'buyer' plants trees on the ill-gotten land. The purpose is to camouflage war crimes and to claim it as a virtue of environmentalism.

The deception goes further, to name a place after the country that helped the Jewish colony to commit its crimes. Britannia Park was named after Great Britain and built upon the ruins of seven Palestinian villages in the Hebron district, that were destroyed by Israel during al Nakba. Its establishment on Palestinian land constitute a war crime, with no statute of limitations. It is a clear violation of customary international law, it is plain-and-simple robbery. First, the land upon which the park is built is stolen from its holders, who are now refugees. Second, the JNF has destroyed the homes of the holders and the historical structures of their villages, some of which have existed since Jesus Christ. Third, it has forged a false history of the land and concealed the presence of pre-existing villages, now destroyed. It planted trees on the ruins of the villages to hide the debris of destruction. It fabricated history in its representation of events, and distorted its archaeology to justify ongoing robbery. Fourth, the place is named after the empire that enabled Zionists to colonize Palestine, and honors notable personalities who support(ed) the JNF's unlawful deeds or as honorary patrons of the charity.

The following maps and tables provide the broad details of Britannia Park:

- Figure 1 shows the 1948 depopulated villages across Palestine. It also shows the areas of land that were stolen by/sold to the JNF, to block the return of the refugees. The area on which the JNF planted Britannia Park with funds from the UK is highlighted in red.
- Figure 2 shows the Britannia Park boundaries as given on the JNF website (this is not necessarily accurate; the park area may expand to seize more land or occasionally shrink to allow more Jewish settlement housing). It is overlaid with the land boundaries of the seven destroyed villages (Zakariyya, Ajjur, Dayr ad Dubban, Ra'na, Kidna, Bayt Jibrin, and Dayr Nakh-khas). The open circles are Jewish settlements established after 1948 (Agur, Luzit, Beit Nir, and Bet Guvrin).
- Figure 3 again shows the park boundaries (blue line) superimposed on the destroyed Palestinian landscape. It shows the location of each village, the boundary of each village's land, and important historical or natural features such as shrines of holy men (sheikhs), cemeteries, springs, or cisterns. The map also shows the present (Israeli) road system that will enable the villagers to find and return home.
- Figure 4 shows a satellite image of the park to corroborate the area of vegetation in relation to the boundaries of Britannia Park (blue line) and the locations of the destroyed villages (red dots).
- Table 1 shows the area of land seized by Britannia Park from the land of each village. These are underestimates as the total seizure amounts to ~ 30,000 donums, as measured, whereas the JNF website declares the area to be 40,000 donums. This throws doubts on the accuracy of the published park boundaries.
- Table 2 provides a few examples of the landowners whose land has been robbed. It lists only the names of the heads of the largest families, their village of origin, and the present-day refugee camp in which they reside.

The above case is just one sample of dozens of parks administered by the JNF, or by the National Parks Authority, or both, on lands seized from its Palestinian owners. In each case, the JNF presents a false picture of

the virtue of its “environmental improvement” in order to collect tax-exempt donations from Jews, Israel-supporters, and uninformed environmentalists in the UK, the USA, Canada, France, Australia etc. In reality, it conceals the dispossession and colonization of Palestinian land and hides the war crimes of al Nakba (population transfer and destruction of property) in which the JNF participated. The refugees of this dispossession live in camps that are frequently a few kilometers away from their homes, separated by barbed wire and machine gun turrets. The refugee camps in the West Bank and Jordan alone hold 170,000 Palestinians (as of 2022) whose land was seized by the JNF to create Britannia Park.

The JNF website¹ describes Britannia Park (alternatively named British Park or Great Britain Park) as if it was established on the moon, skipping the reality of its place in Palestine and the history of the villages that were decimated. As stated, Britannia Park is located on the lands of seven villages, west and south of Jerusalem. Zakariyya, Ajjur, Dayr ad Dubban, Ra’na, Kidna, Bayt Jibrin and Dayr Nakh-khas were attacked and depopulated by the Haganah in 1948 (the first two in July and the other five in October 1948) in a military operation named Yoav. The Israeli invasion was in violation of Israel’s self-proclaimed ‘Declaration of Independence’, which stipulates adherence to UN Resolution 181 – Partition Plan for Palestine. The seven villages were in the territory designated by the resolution for the Arab (Palestinian) state. This fact is not mentioned, even hinted at, in JNF literature about the park. The bloody record of crimes is silenced, against all the evidence. No less denied is the mere presence of people from these villages, now refugees in the West Bank and Jordan camps.

The myth that Palestine was a land without a people has been carried to meteoric flights of fantasy and sold to willing constituencies. That such a feat is possible is testimony to the power of Zionist propaganda in the West. In two thousand years of Palestinian history since Jesus Christ and earlier, the archaeological evidence that Palestinians lived in over 1,200 towns and villages for over 4,000 years, is completely deleted in the information provided by JNF outlets. It crafts an alternative story, for example fabricating names and historical references to ancient sites. Names in JNF booklets, aka ‘Sites of Interest’, such as *Tel Azeka*, *Hurvot Shikalon*, *Mitzpe Masua*, *Hurvot Tzura*, *Tel Goded*, *Luzit Caves*, *Iyye Kidon* and *Ramat Avishur*, are all contrived and give no inkling about the actual Palestinian people who lived the history. Ironically, the JNF uses the word *Hurvot* to indicate ancient sites. The Hebrew word *Hurvot* is a corruption of the Arabic word *Khirbet*, meaning an old site rebuilt or re-inhabited after a catastrophe of war or plague. In our Atlas of Palestine², we list 3,000 khirbets, all of them with Palestinian names originating from former habitation to present. This is out of a total of 30,000 place names given by Palestinians in the course of millennia of history.

There is one name in JNF fantasy that relates to real geography. *Tel Azeka* is presumed to be the ancient site of the depopulated village of Zakariyya. Nature took revenge upon the concealment of the destroyed Palestinian landscape. In August 2021, wildfire erupted in several parks west of Jerusalem (south of the main highway linking Jerusalem with Jaffa), notably in the ‘Forest of the Martyrs’ near the new settlement of Shores. The blaze extended to Britannia Park (12 km or so southwest) consuming the non-indigenous trees, imported by the JNF, that are not fit for the climate of Palestine. The fire revealed the ***concealed terraces built by Palestinian farmers over centuries to allow cultivation on mountain slopes*** – see Figure 5. Here then was a grave for the trees imported from a foreign environment and a stony testament to the concealed labors of Palestinian farmers. The fire dealt a double blow, to the fake narrative of the colonial settlers and to the environmental credentials

¹ www.kkl-jnf.org/tourism-and-recreation/forests-and-parks/great-britain-park/

² www.plands.org/en/maps-atlases/atlases/atlas-of-palestine-1917-1966/

of the JNF.

The JNF website mentions that Britannia Park was ‘restored’ and developed thanks to donations from ‘Friends of KKL-JNF in the United Kingdom’. The meaning of the word “restored” is a mystery. Does this mean there was always a park in the area and that the seven villages never existed? An aerial survey carried out by the Royal Air Force in 1945 shows otherwise, the village houses and extensive fields of Ra’na (see Figure 6) that existed for centuries.

Who are the British donors? Jews, Israel-supporters, and uninformed environmentalists who should be paying taxes towards public services in the UK. But because of the tax-exempt charitable status of the JNF, those taxes are given away as ‘Gift Aid’ by His Majesty’s Revenue & Customs to commit war crimes against another people, and for the purpose of many of those same donors to colonize a foreign land.

The JNF admits on its website, “The activities of KKL-JNF in the first decades of Israel's existence have set the borders of the Israeli state”. The JNF’s income in the UK alone is phenomenal. According to accounts filed with the Charity Commission of England and Wales around 20 million GBP/year, double that of just a decade ago. With 48 offices around the world, primarily in Western imperialist or settler-colonial states of Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia etc., the JNF’s global revenue may be around 200 million USD/year. The JNF has powerful friends indeed. Table 3 lists a few of its wealthy British Jewish patrons, as well as the political and religious figures who provide standing as honorary patrons, and two examples are given of those who have a piece of Palestinian soil named after them.

About the author

Salman Abu-Sitta is president of the Palestine Land Society and author of the *Atlas of Palestine, 1917-1966*.

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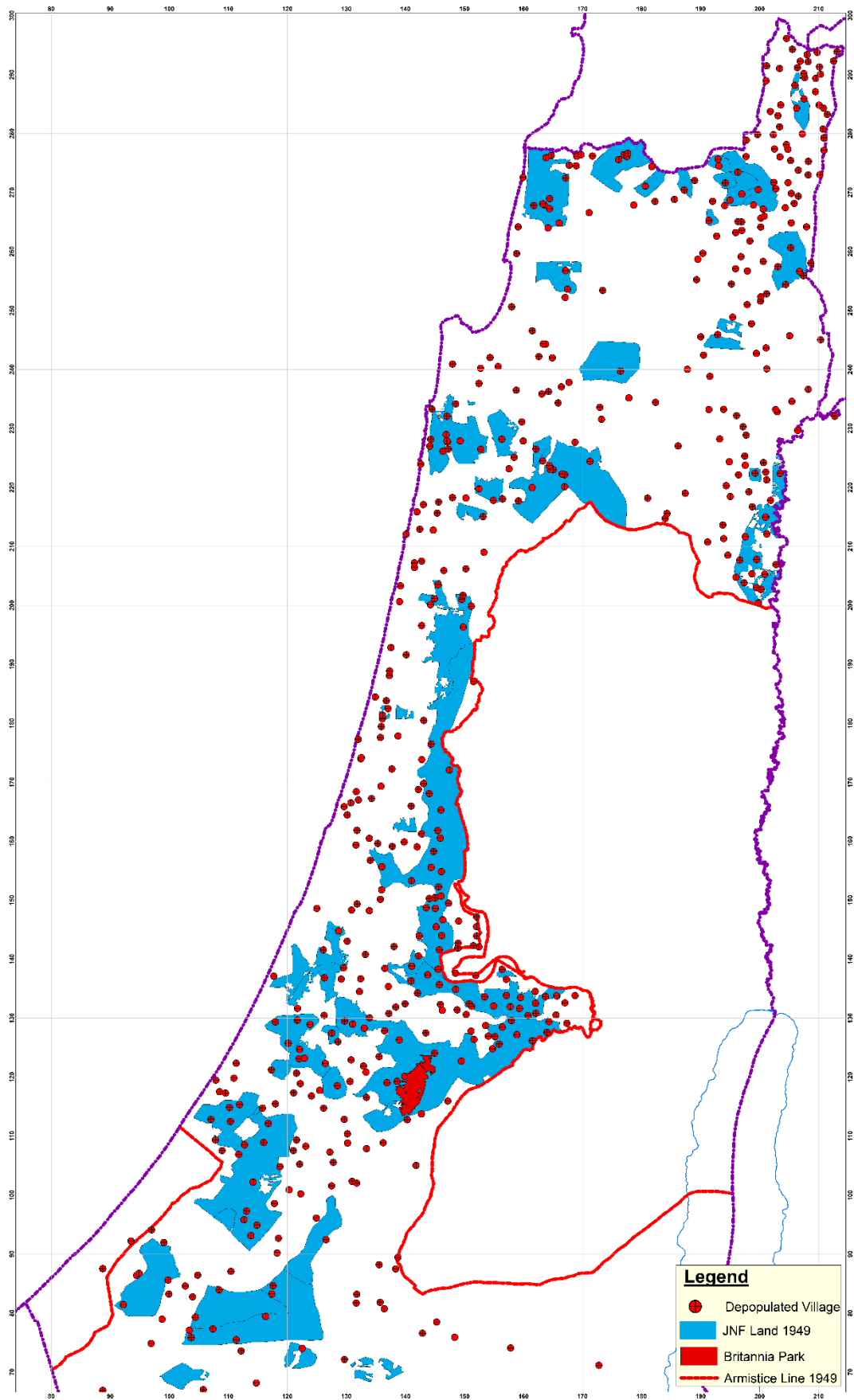


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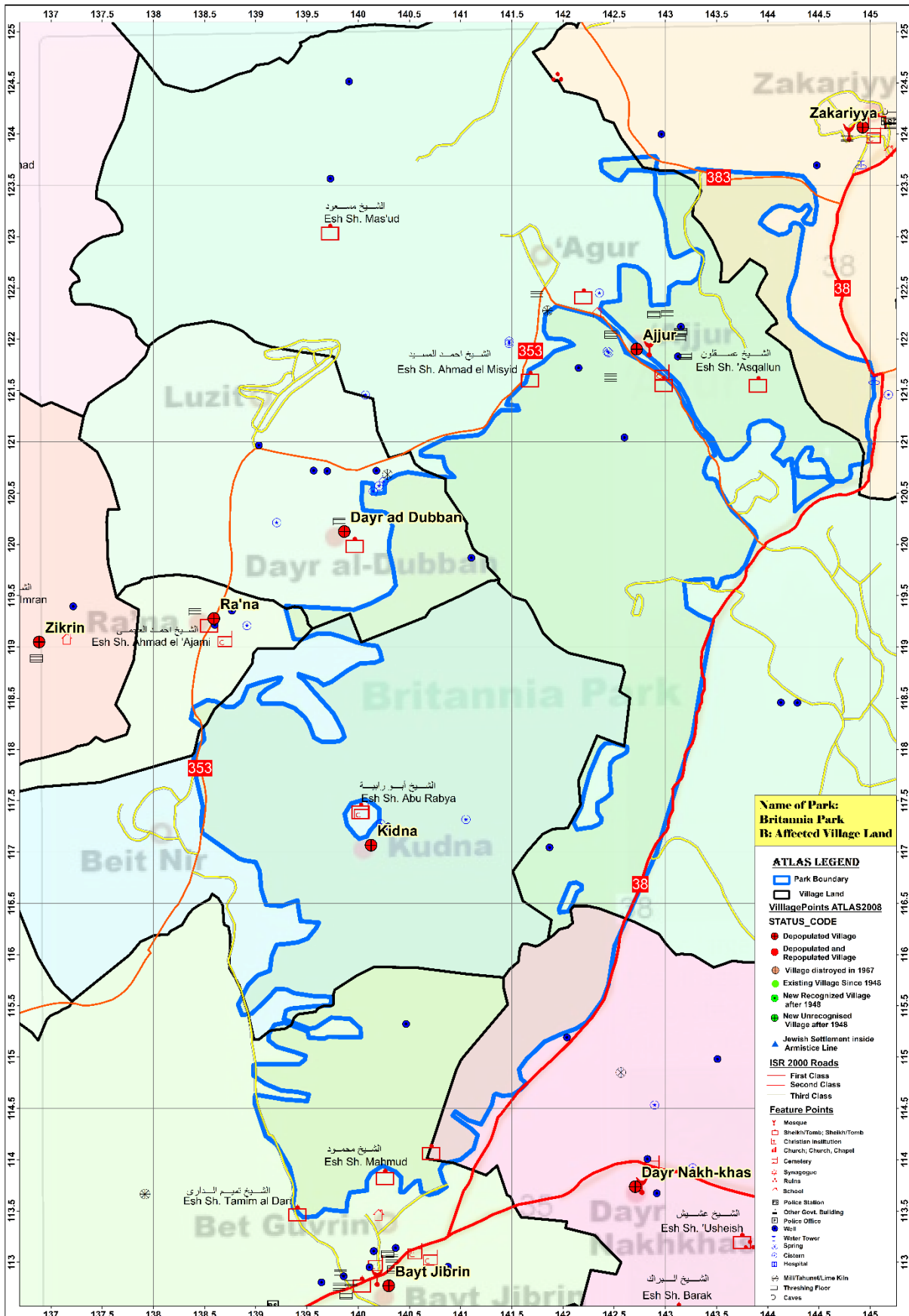


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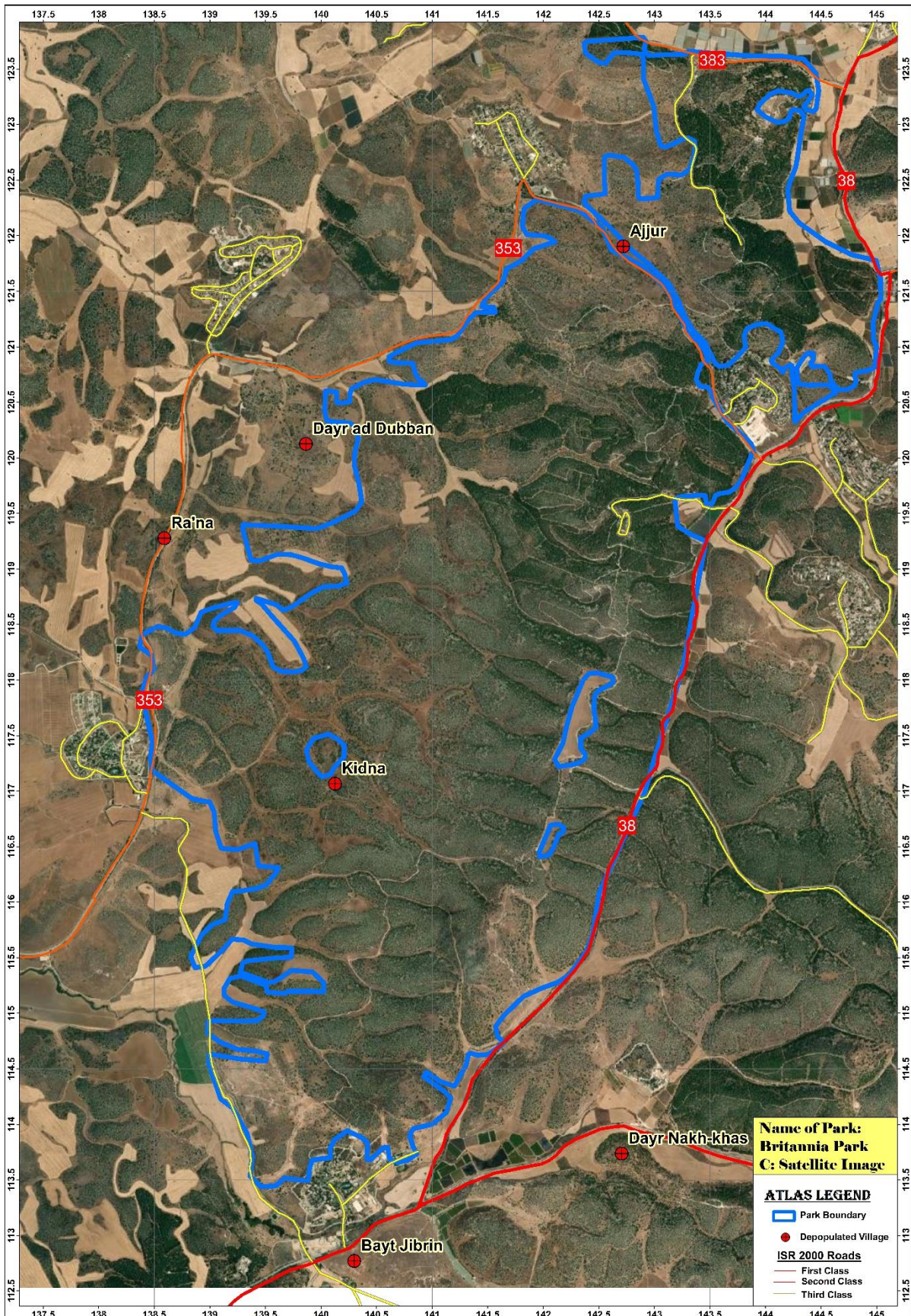


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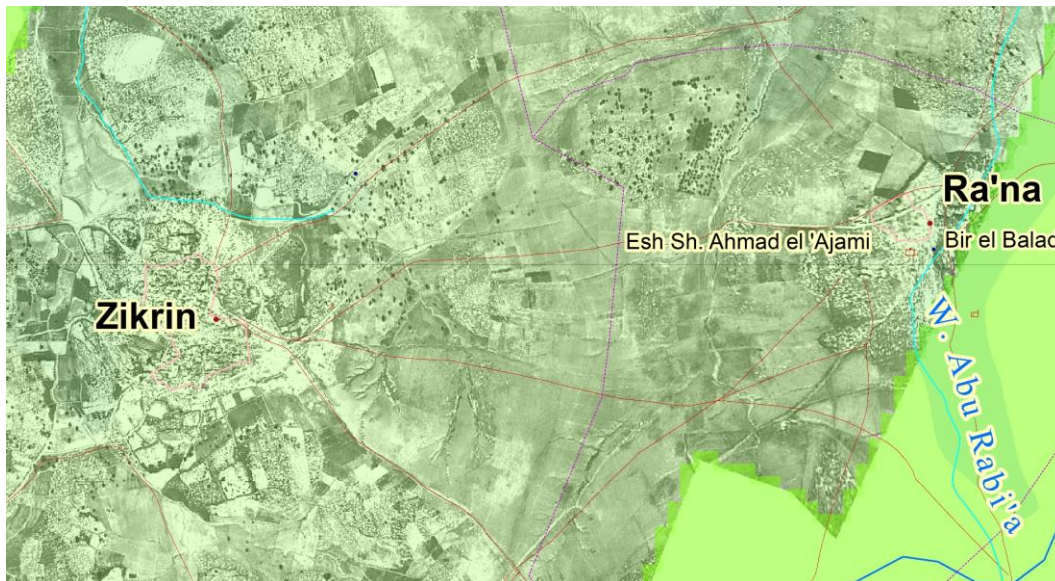


Table 1. Land seized by Britannia Park from the land of each village

Village	Official area	Measured	Seized by park	Remaining
Bayt Jibrin	56,185	56,377	3,615	52,762
Dayr Nakh-khas	14,476	14,589	1,663	12,926
Ajjur	58,074	58,323	11,440	46,883
Zakariyya	15,320	15,351	1,621	13,730
Dayr ad Dubban	7,784	7,734	1,247	6,488
Ra'na	6,925	6,991	95	6,896
Kidna	15,744	15,599	10,539	5,060
Total area	174,508	174,964	30,219	144,745

Notes


1. Areas in donums / 1 donum = 1,000 m²

2. Remaining area is Palestinian village land used for Jewish settlements and other purposes. The land is administered by Israel Land Administration (ILA) and leased to kibbutz, moshav or the Israeli military.

Table 2. Hof names of some of the displaced Palestinian landowners and their current locations

VILLAGE	HOF NAME	EXILE LOCATION
BAYT JIBRIN	KHALED ISA ATIYEH ABU EICHEH	HEBRON TOWN I
	IBRM KHALIL HASAN ZAWAIDEH	BEIT ULA
	CHAFIQ HUSEIN FADALEH MREIZIQ	IDNA
	MAHM HUSEIN AHMAD LIHMUZ	HEBRON TOWN I
	YUSUF MAHM MAHM	BAQAA SQUATTERS
AJJUR	AHMAD MOHD I A ZUHEIRA	BETHLEHEM
	AHMAD HASAN MOHD KHALIL	MARKA CAMP
	MAHM AHMAD M A JAWWAD	MARKA CAMP
	MOHD SALEH KHAWAJA	SOUF SQUATTERS
	HASAN MOHD SAD A EIN	BAQAA CAMP I
ZAKARIYYA	NUMAN MOHD CHAHIN	MARKA CAMP
	SALEM HASAN SALMAN	ZERKA TOWN I
	QASEM ABDULLA UBEID	ZERKA TOWN I
	ALI MOHD AHMAD RAKBAN	UNRWA STAFF
	IBRM A RAHMAN A ADAWI	MARKA CAMP
DAYR AD DUBBAN	A JABBAR HASANEN HUSEIN	MUZDAR III
	AHMAD MAHM ABD MUST	MARKA SUBURBS
	RADI HAJ BADR KH AKHRAS	MARKA SUBURBS
	HICHAM YUSUF MOHD ABU SAFI	BEIT UMMAR
	ALI MOHD KHALIL UBEID	PRINCE HASSAN QURT
RA'NA	MOHD KHALIL ABU RACHTA	RUSAIFEH
	ALI ISA KHATER	JABAL HUSEIN CAMP
	ALI ISA KHATER	JABAL HUSEIN CAMP
	MOHD A HALIM KHATER	RUSAIFEH
	IBRM ALI MOHD KHATER	RUSAIFEH
KIDNA	KHALIL HASAN H SALEH	PRINCE HASSAN QURT
	MOHD JABER A J HARB	FAWWAR CAMP
	MAHM JIBRIN HAS TAFECH	RUSAIFEH
	MOHD ISMAIL MOHD HASANEH	SOUF CAMP
	AHMAD ABDULLA A QADER ABU ARICH	ARROUB CAMP

Table 3. Patrons and honorary patrons of JNF UK and other dignitaries named in JNF parks

<p>Patrons</p> <p>Zak Gertler (British/German property developer) Felix Posen (philanthropist, Posen Foundation) Simon Sterling (fellow Royal Inst Chart Surv, property investor) Sol Zakay (Israeli-born British billionaire, real estate)</p>
<p>Honorary patrons</p> <p>The Rt Hon Sir Tony Blair The Rt Hon Gordon Brown The Rt Hon Lady Cosgrove CBE General Lord Guthrie GCB LVO OBE The Rt Hon Lord Howard QC The Prime Minister of Israel The President of Israel HE The Ambassador of Israel Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy OBE Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis The Marquess of Reading Rev Malcolm Weisman OBE</p>
<p>Other dignitaries</p> <p>Baron Jonathan Sacks (late, former Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks Forest within Aminadav Forest) The Rt Hon Lord Pickles (former MP now House of Lords, honored in Lord Sacks Forest)</p>

<p>[Image: Plaque for Lord Pickles in Lord Sacks Forest appears to indicate a contribution of funds was made by the House of Commons parliamentary group, 'Conservative Friends of Israel']</p>

