

Beit Sahour City Profile



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Background

This booklet is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in Bethlehem Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Bethlehem Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Azahar Needs Assessment;" the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) and the Azahar Program.

The "Village Profiles and Azahar Needs Assessment" was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in Bethlehem Governorate with particular focus on the Azahar program objectives and activities concerning water, environment, and agriculture.

The project's objectives are to survey, analyze, and document the available natural, human, socioeconomic and environmental resources, and the existing limitations and needs assessment for the development of the rural and marginalized areas in Bethlehem Governorate. In addition, the project aims at preparing strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability with the focus on the agricultural sector.

All locality profiles in Arabic and English are available online at <http://proxy.arij.org/vprofile>.

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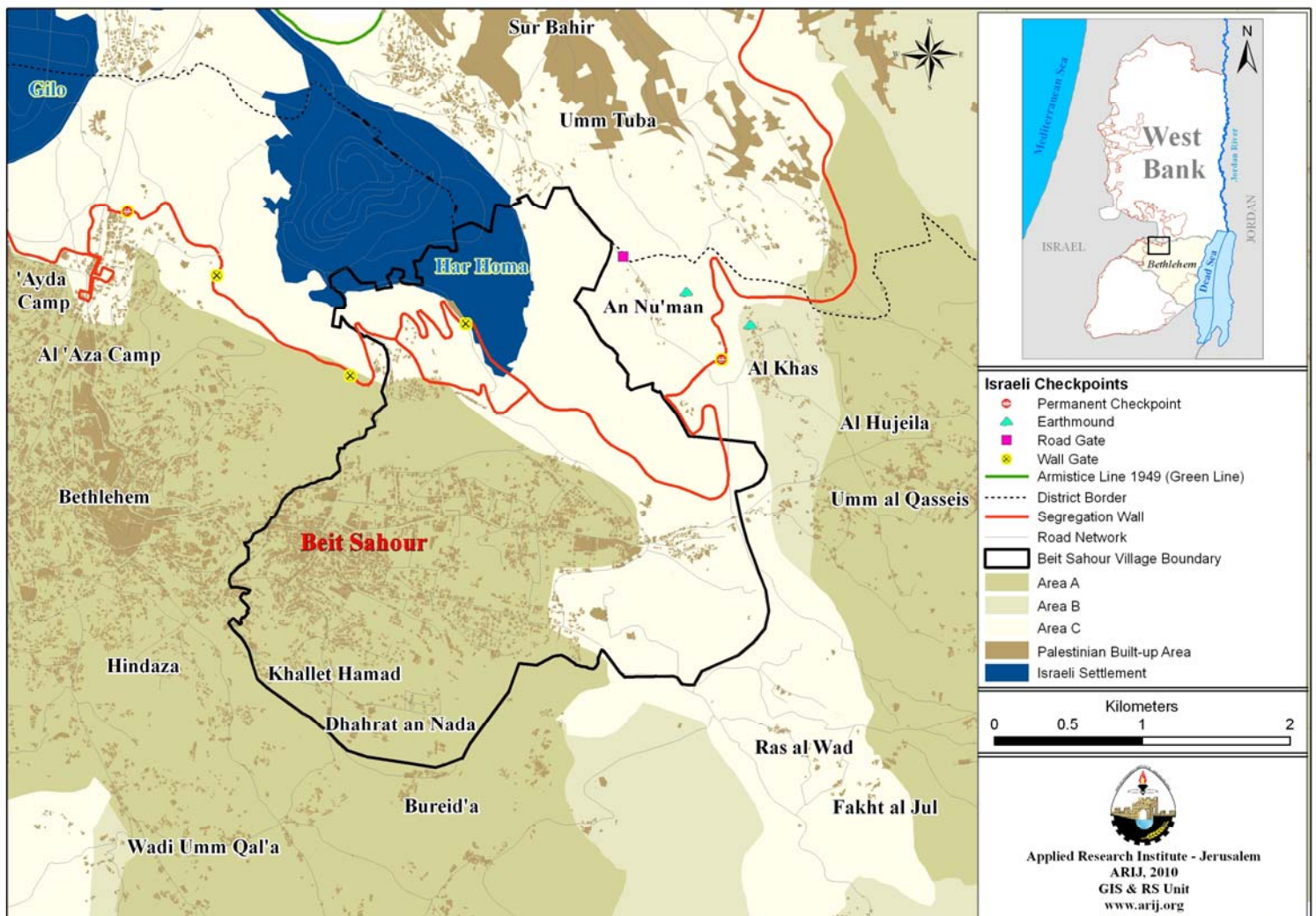
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Beit Sahour City Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Beit Sahour is a Palestinian city in Bethlehem Governorate located at 1.5km (horizontal distance) east of Bethlehem City. Beit Sahour is bordered by Ash Shawawra and Dar Salah villages to the east, Al Khas and An Nu'man village and Abu Ghneim settlement to the north, Bethlehem city to the west, and Hindaza village to the south (See map 1).

Map 1: Beit Sahour location and borders



Beit Sahour is located at an altitude of 649m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 454mm. The average annual temperature is 16.6 °C, and the average annual humidity is about 60.3 percent (ARIJ GIS, 2009).

Beit Sahour was among the first cities in Palestine to have an organized local council. The first elections for the city council were held in 1925. In 1952, when the population was just over 5000, the village council was given the status of a municipality.

However, the Municipal Council elections were held every 4 years until 1976, when Israel froze all municipal elections as a means to prevent PLO supporters from running and winning the elections, accordingly, from 1976 up to 2000, no elections were held. Moreover, the Israel Military Administration literally controls master plans of the city, urban planning, infrastructure development, and employment.

In August 2000, the Palestinian Authority in corporation with the political/social associations of the city agreed on appointing a new municipal council that will serve a transitional period until logistical and legislative issues are in place for conducting municipal elections.

The present municipal council took office on May, 2005, consisting of 13 members, including four women. The Municipality has twenty-five employees in five major departments: Administration, Finance, Health and Environment, Engineering, and projects/development departments, in addition to another thirty-two workers (Beit Sahour Municipality (2010) – Beit Sahour Municipality Website, 2010):

<http://www.beitsahourmunicipality.com/arabic/history.htm>).

The municipality owns a permanent headquarters, two vehicles to collect solid waste, two private cars, and a small Hummer for excavation works.

It is the responsibility of the Municipality to provide a number of services to the residents of Beit Sahour, including:

1. Infrastructure services such as water and electricity.
2. Solid waste collection, road construction and restoration, street cleaning, and social development services.
3. Headquarters for the public government institutions: post mail and security.
4. Protection of the government properties.
5. Public markets.
6. Sewage network service.
7. Organization of the construction and licensing process.
8. Implementation of projects and case studies for the city.

History

The origin of the name Beit Sahour (the house of vigilance) reputedly stems from the Canaanite words "Beit" meaning place, and "Sahour" meaning night watch, which

reflected the importance of the area for shepherds. The land provided the flocks with good grazing during the day and safety in its numerous caves at night.

The city dates back to 1925, and its residents originate from several Arab countries including: Jordan, Egypt, and Syria.

Photos of Beit Sahour



Religious and Archaeological Sites

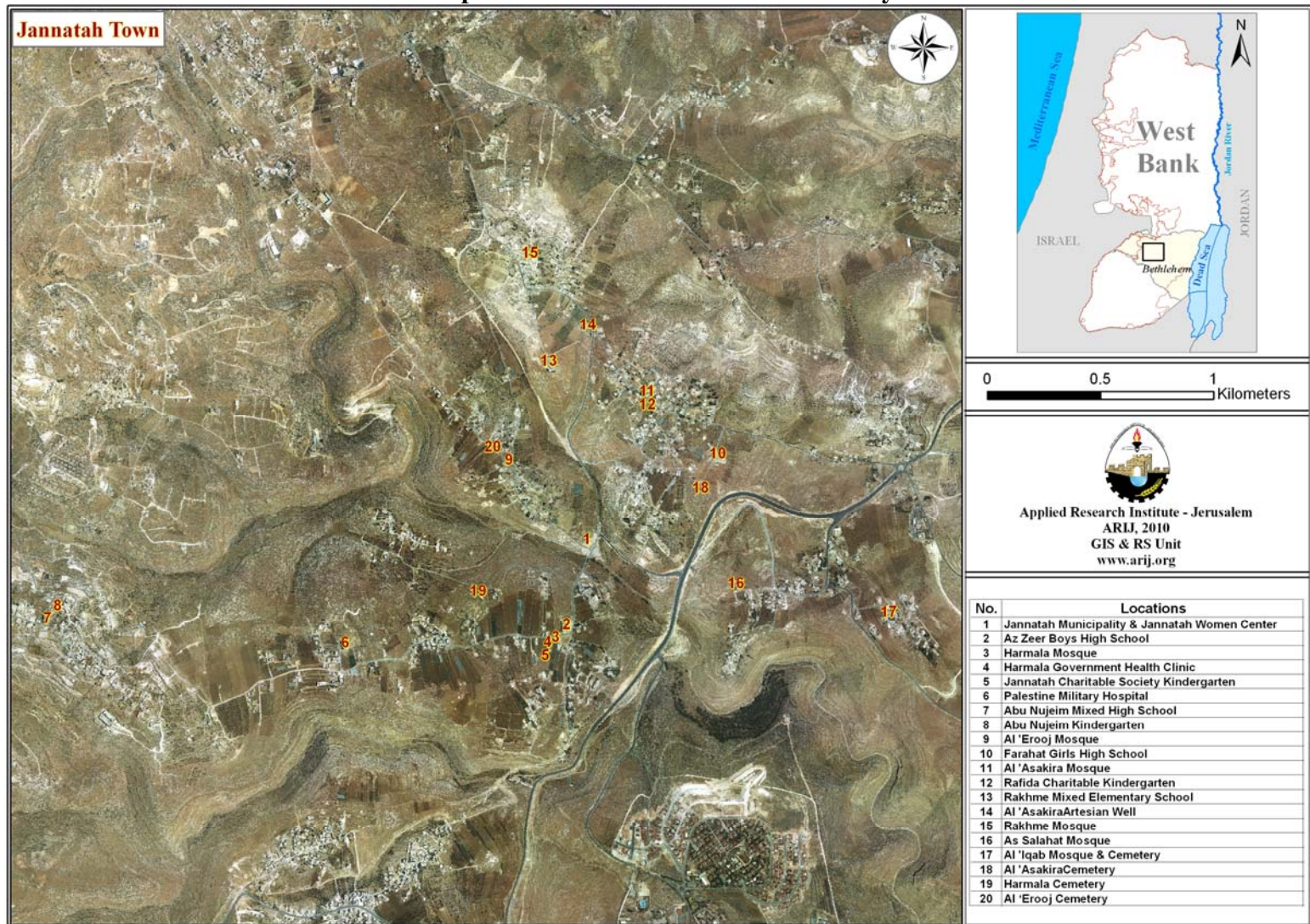
In terms of religious establishments, there are four churches in Beit Sahour: the Greek Orthodox Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the Latin Patriarch Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and two mosques: ‘Omar Ben Al Khattab Mosque, and Harasa Mosque (See Map 2).

As for the archaeological sites, Beit Sahour city is full of significant historical and biblical sites. Ruins from Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Crusader times can be found throughout the area. In addition, there are many sites of special importance to the followers of the three monotheistic religions, to whom this land is sacred, including: (Beit Sahour Municipality (2010) – Beit Sahour Municipality Website, 2010):

<http://www.beitsahourmunicipality.com/arabic/history.htm>.

1. **Bir as-Sayidah - The Well of Mary:** One of the deepest and most important wells that is located in the centre of city. Jacob the son of Isaac (who was the son of Abraham) is believed to have dug this well. It is said that Virgin Mary, while traveling to Egypt, passed by it and since she was thirsty, she asked a woman if she would draw water for her. However, the woman refused and the water in the well miraculously overflowed by itself. This cistern is famous for the scene of many miracles, in addition to the site of a visitation by the Virgin Mary.
2. **The Orthodox Shepherd's Fields:** Located in a small valley filled with olive trees, some of which date back to 2,000 years ago, is a subterranean church dedicated to the Mother of God. Local Christians call the site Der Er-Ra'wat, meaning the Convent of the Shepherds. The site is revered as the spot where an angel, surrounded by a supernatural light, appeared to the bewildered shepherds and spoke: "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace among Men." Three of the shepherds to whom the angel announced the birth of Christ were buried in the west side of the Cave Church; their tombs are still visible.
3. **The Catholic Shepherd's Field:** The Franciscan site (The Catholic Shepherd's Field), known as Der Es-Siar, located 1km north-west of the Orthodox Shepherd Field. According to archaeological evidence in the field, an early church dating from the fifth century was enlarged in the sixth century and stones from the octagonal structure of the Basilica of the Nativity were used in the construction of its apse. The present sanctuary, erected in 1953-54, stands over a cave in which the shepherds are believed to have lived. It is built in the shape of a tent, permitting natural light to enter the church in beautiful rays.

Map 2: Main locations in Beit Sahour city



Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Beit Sahour in 2007 was 12,367; of whom 6,202 are males and 6,165 are females. There are 2,775 households living in 3,517 housing units.

Age Groups and Gender

The General Census of Population and Housing carried out by PCBS in 2007 showed that the distribution of age groups in Beit Sahour is as follows: 30.4 percent are less than 15 years, 60.2 percent are between 15 - 64 years, 6.7 percent are 65 years and older, and 2.6 percent are unknown. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the city is 100.6:100, meaning that males constitute 50.1 percent of the population, and females constitute 49.9 percent of the population.

Families

The inhabitants of Beit Sahour city are composed of several families, mainly: Abu Aita, Qumsiyah, Bannourah, Muslih, Kheir, Rishmawi, and Al Qassis, which includes Isaac, Issa, Al Haiek, Hannonah, and Khoury families, in addition to Al Atrash family, Sha'lan, Ghattas, Jubran, Sajdiyah, She'ibat, Al Hurani, Al Yateem, Abu Farha, Badra, Awwad, and Hilal.

Immigration

The field survey showed that 110 families, composed of 400 members, have left the city.

Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Beit Sahour population is about 2.5 percent, of whom 68 percent are females. Of the literate population, 11.4 percent can read and write, 20.3 percent had elementary education, 21.2 percent had preparatory education, 22.3 percent had secondary education, and 24.7 percent completed higher education. Table 1, shows the educational level in the city of Beit Sahour, by sex, and educational attainment in 2007.

Sex	Illiterate	Can read & write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Total
M	74	530	1002	977	1009	313	557	39	99	46	4647
F	157	502	835	947	1013	446	660	24	46	5	4639
T	231	1032	1837	1924	2022	759	1217	63	145	51	9286

Source: PCBS, 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results

In regards to the basic and secondary educational institutions and schools in Beit Sahour in the academic year 2008/2009, there are five public schools in the city, run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education, and five private schools that are run by religious institutions in the city (Table 2).

There is a total number of 3865 students, 213 teachers, and 139 classes. It should be noted here that the average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 18, while the average number of students per class is approximately 28 (Directorate of Education in Bethlehem, 2009).

There is also Al Farah School (the School of Joy) in Beit Sahour city, which was established in 1998 for special education, as it provides services for the development of slow learning children. In addition to Beit al Farah (House of Joy) which was opened in 1996 for both genders with special needs and slow learners. The House seeks to support the needs of the individual systematically, physically, psychologically and spiritually (Beit Sahour Municipality (2010) - The Municipality Website):

<http://www.beitsahourmunicipality.com/arabic/education.htm>

In regards to the university education institutions, there is a branch of Al Quds Open University in Beit Sahour city, which was opened in February 2003. The University works upon the principle of open and self-education study, which gives an opportunity for each individual who wishes to attend higher education and universities. According to 2009/2010 data, the university has a total of 1,737 students (Al Quds Open University - Beit Sahour Study Center - the University Website, 2010):

<Http://www.qou.edu/homePage/arabic/index.jsp?pageId=246>

Also, located in Beit Sahour is the Fashion and Textile Institute, which is the first of its kind in Palestine. The Institute was founded in 1994 and it provides training programs in the industry of textile (Municipality of Beit Sahour, 2010).

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
At Tasamoh Boys Elementary School	Government	Male
At Ta'akhi Boys Elementary School		
Beit Sahour Boys High School		
Beit Sahour Girls High School	Government	Female
An Nasira Girls Elementary School	Private	Mixed
The Greek Catholic Patriarch School		
The Evangelical Lutheran School		
The Greek Orthodox High School (Ar Ru'at)		
The Latin Patriarch School		
The Islamic Charitable Society School		

Source: Directorate of Education in Bethlehem, 2009

Furthermore, there are four kindergartens in Beit Sahour; run by charitable societies in the city. Table 3 shows the kindergartens according to their names and supervising authority.

Kindergarten Name	No. of Children	Supervising Authority
The Shepherds Field Kindergarten	100	Charitable Society
The Women Union Kindergarten	105	Charitable Society
Al Bishara for the Holy Land Kindergarten	20	Charitable Society
Al Baraka Kindergarten	--	Charitable Society
Source: Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010		

Health Status

Medical services in Beit Sahour city are considered rather good, as the Ministry of Health and non-governmental and private institutions, which work in the health sector, supervise this sector in the city, providing their services through hospitals, clinics, and primary health care centers. There is also one non-governmental hospital in Beit Sahour city; the Shepherds Field hospital, which contains 18 beds and is subordinated by Beit Sahour's Cooperative Society for Health Insurance, in addition to the Greek Catholic Medical Center which is subordinated by the Health Work Committees. The center has many different specialty clinics, medical laboratories, and a pharmacy, in addition to a radiology center. Both of the center and the clinic provide health care services to the city residents and other neighboring cities. Moreover, located in the city are many dental clinics and pharmacies. Recently, Ash Shifa' Hospital Complex, which is a private medical complex that contains specialized clinics and medical laboratories, was opened.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health also provides the citizens with primary health care services, such as medical examination and treatment, through its government health clinic in the city, in addition to Bethlehem Health Directorate, which provides the city and surrounding towns and villages with these services.

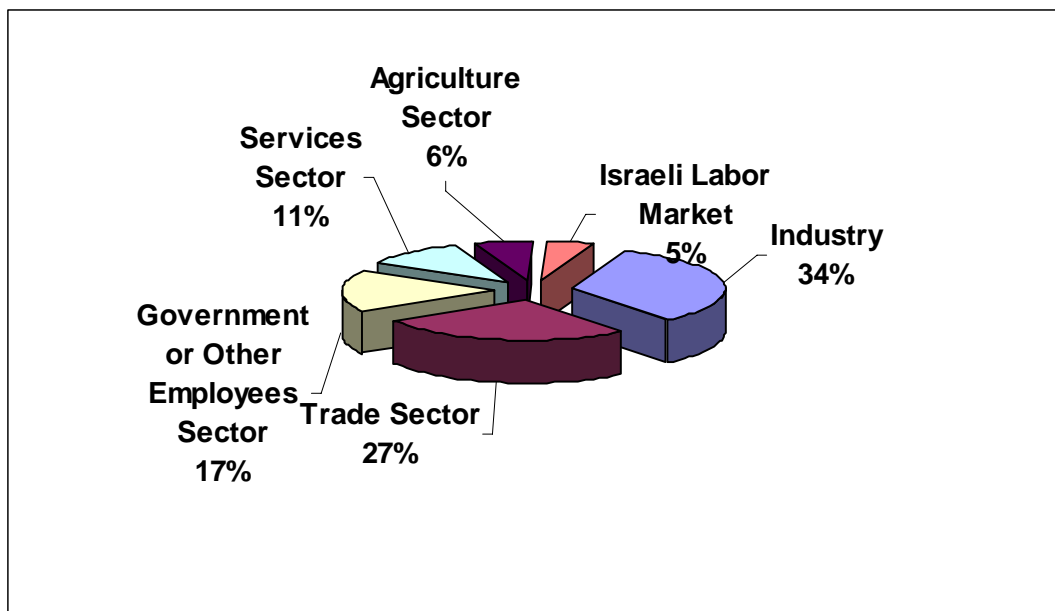
Economic Activities

The economy in Beit Sahour is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly: industry, which absorbs 34 percent of the city workforce (See Figure1).

The results of a field survey for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Beit Sahour are the following:

- Industry (34%)
- Trade Sector (27%)
- Government or Private Employees Sector (17%)
- Services Sector (11%)
- Agriculture sector (6%)
- Israeli Labor Market (5%)

Figure 1: Economic Activity in Beit Sahour City



There are many economic and industrial activities in Beit Sahour, mainly; religious artifacts industry, as there are more than 150 workshops, in addition to textile industry, cosmetics industry, a cardboard factory, a noodles factory, 90 different workshops (blacksmith, carpentry, and aluminum), four butcheries, five bakeries, 90 different services stores, and 40 grocery stores.

As a result of the Israeli occupation and restrictions, the economic status of the population has severely declined, as many citizens have lost their jobs and have become unemployed, thus forcing them to work in the service sector.

The unemployment rate in Beit Sahour has reached about 17 percent, and the economical groups most affected by the Israeli restrictions were:

1. Workers in food industry.
2. Workers in cosmetics industry.

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 41.7 percent of Beit Sahour labor force was economically active, of whom 91.6 percent were employed, 58.1 percent were not economically active, 53.3 percent were students, and 29.3 percent were housekeepers (See table 4).

SEX	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (Never worked)	Total	Students	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & Not looking for work	Other	Total	
M	2,476	133	93	2,702	1,433	7	345	121	27	1,933	4,647
F	1,071	40	59	1,170	1,445	1,574	353	68	26	3,466	4,639
T	3,547	173	152	3,872	2,878	1,581	698	189	53	5,399	9,286

Source: PCBS, March 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results

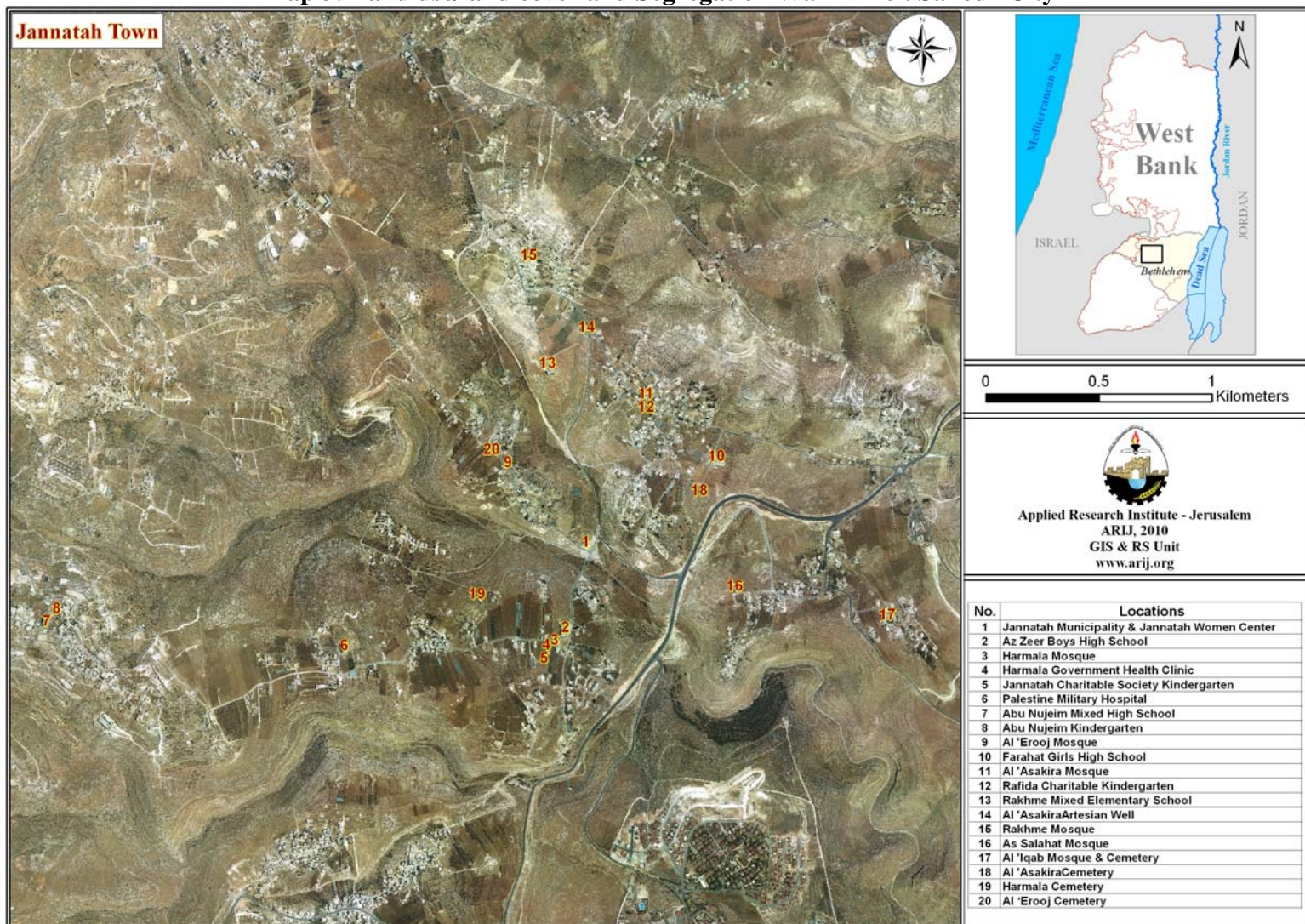
Agricultural Sector

Beit Sahour lies on a total area of about 8,306 dunums of which 6,195 dunums are considered arable land, and 826 dunums are residential land (See table 5 and map 3).

Total Area	Built up Area	Arable Land (6,195)					Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements and Military Bases
		Seasonal Crops	Permanent Crops	Greenhouses	Forests	Open Spaces and Rangelands		
8,306	826	1,349	2,087	0	21	2,738	616	669

Source: GIS unit – ARIJ, 2008

Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Beit Sahour City



Agriculture production in Beit Sahour depends mostly on rainwater. As for irrigated fields, they depend on domestic harvesting cisterns.

Table 6 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Beit Sahour. The most common crop cultivated within this area is tomato.

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetable		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total area	
RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.
39	20	0	7	1	5	0	0	0	4	40	36

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

Table 7 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area.

Olives		Citrus		Stone-fruits		Pome fruits		Nuts		Other fruits		Total area	
Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.
1,150	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	1,171	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

As for the field crops and forage in Beit Sahour, cereals, in particular, wheat and barley are the most cultivated covering an area of about 220 dunums, while forage crops, such as bitter vetch and common vetch are the second most cultivated crops (See table 8).

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Oil crops		Forage crops		Stimulating crops		Other crops		Total area	
Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr
220	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	265	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

The field survey shows that most of the residents in Beit Sahour are rearing and keeping domestic animals such as sheep, cows, goats, broiler and layer chicken, and bees (See Table 9).

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
13	1,046	599	0	3	8	5	2,000	6,000	30

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2007

Institutions and Services

Beit Sahour has a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various segments of society: children, youth, and women. The services are in the areas of culture, sports and others, including (Beit Sahour Municipality (2010). The Municipality Website: <http://www.beitsahourmunicipality.com/arabic/ngo.htm>) & (Directory of NGOs in the West Bank, 2006):

- **Arab Catholic Society:** Established in 2004 by 24 people of different intellectual backgrounds and represents the Christian Latin families of Beit Sahour. The society has grown since then and currently includes 300 registered members. The main driving force behind establishing the Society was the desire to meet the local needs of the community and to play an active role in society, in addition to joining other local Christian societies and organizations in order to enhance their role in the societal and national arenas.
- **Islamic Charitable Society:** Established in 1931, the Islamic Charitable Society is a local non-profit NGO that provide services to Muslim residents of Bethlehem, through the provision of material support and assistance to needy families as well as social and educational services, and leisure and sports services for the youth. The Society also plays a role in settling social disputes. Moreover, the Society has a kindergarten for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, a primary school, a computer center, a karate center, a lectures center and a hall for different meetings and events.
- **Arab Orthodox Cultural Club (AOC):** Established in 1963 with a general assembly of 180 members. The club is located in downtown Beit Sahour. Currently, there are more than 1,800 members ranging in age from 18 to 75; of whom 30 percent are women. Membership includes both Christians and Muslims. The AOC, as a non-profit, local, community organization, is the largest in Beit Sahour. Its objectives are: providing social, cultural, and recreational opportunities to the general population of Beit Sahour, providing local youth with opportunities for constructive use of free time, offering leadership training for youth, and providing opportunities for intercultural experiences through participation in international camps and events.
- **The Cultural Youth Club:** Established in 1963 to introduce youths to different aspects of life such as sports, culture, society and art. The club is an active and permanent member in the Union of Football, Basketball, Marathon and Chess. It maintains good relations with Ipoli Club in Italy, and Report Depok in France. The club also has cooperative relationships with most of the clubs in the West Bank. The Club offers the following sport teams and activities:
 - The Football team: Internationally, two of the Club's players will represent Palestine; one in Qatar and the other in Germany.
 - The Basketball team.
 - The Marathon; the Club usually holds an annual marathon, which is well known locally and internationally. The Club also participated in both the Annual International Race and the Peace Race Conference held in Sweden.
 - Chess.
 - Cultural activities and social activities.
- **Ar Ruwwad Art Center:** Established in 1989 as a local non-profit NGO that seeks to promote Palestinian national heritage, in particular dabka (traditional dance) and traditional songs. The Center has formed two dabka groups that often participate at local events.
- **Arab Women Union Society:** Established in 1956 as a local NGO. The Union's aim at the time was to provide a kindergarten and nursery for the town's needy

children, in addition to providing classes for women on topics such as cooking, childcare, and women's health. In 1987, Beit Sahour Special Education Center for Children began offering its services to the community. The Centre helps to prepare the handicapped to adapt to the mainstream environment by providing help in special education, self-help skills, daily living activities, behavioral difficulties and speech therapy. Moreover, The Arab Women Union also runs a hostel which provides a wonderful place for guests to stay when visiting Beit Sahour. Income generated from the hostel is used to help support various Union run projects.

- **Beit Sahour Elderly Club:** Established in 1984 by a group of local women with the purpose of providing care for the elderly in Beit Sahour. In 2001, with the assistance of many institutions, the Club was able to open a new branch with more services. The center's mission is to help the elderly in this war-torn area to get in touch with life again, and to enjoy some happy moments in their final years. The center works everyday to fulfill this mission through its objectives and activities. The following resources are provided to its approximately 140 members: a shared breakfast program, a hot lunch program, social activities, health and cultural lectures, health care (both on-site and physician referral), physical fitness and twice-monthly recreational and cultural outings. The Club also provides laundry service to health care facilities in the area, which employs some of its elderly members and provides them with an income.
- **Beit Sahour Women's Club:** The Beit Sahour women's club was founded in 1992 by an active group of women from the town. Currently, the general assembly consists of 154 women and a nine member board of directors. The center mission is identified as a medium of expansion in service of women and creating a space where they can get together, discuss their needs and plan and execute activities and programs that serve their issues.
- **Cultural Center for the Palestinian Child (CCPC):** Established in 1992 by a group of women affiliated with the Women's Committees for Social Work (WCSW) and a group of professional men from Beit-Sahour. *CCPC* was founded with the following objectives:
 - To cultivate the reading skills that has not received enough attention due to the lack of public libraries.
 - To create a healthy environment for the children to interact and exchange ideas in a safe place.
 - To develop a community network with families, schools, institutions and other concerned people.
 - To provide children with modern educational facilities unavailable in most schools and homes such as; computers and audio-visual materials.
 - To encourage the children to learn about children issues and conditions all over the world.

The CCPC contains a children's library, playroom and recreational section, audio-visual room, and music room. Within its facilities, the CCPC offers children with educational courses in Arabic, English, Mathematics and Computer training. In addition to summer activities such as: summer camps, sports, trips, music, contests, arts, painting, etc.

- **Alternative Information Center:** Established in 1984 by the initiative of a group of Palestinians and Israelis. AIC's efforts focus on resisting colonization, supporting citizens' right of return and establishing the independent state. The AIC defends citizens' rights against Israeli racist policies. AIC also has a branch in Jerusalem. The AIC has many programs and activities including: youth program which helps to raise awareness and skills through training courses, women's program which helps to raise women's awareness of reality through meetings and lectures, the settlement program which provides reports on the attacks of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the media project which aims at providing media and institutions with alternative information on official Occupation media.
- **YMCA:** The Young Men Christian Association is a non-profit NGO established in 1965 in a tent in Aqabat Jaber Refugee Camp near Jericho in order to work with all sectors of Palestinian society without discrimination. It aims to achieve comprehensive youth development and promote principles of justice, peace and tolerance within the local community. Its main programs include rehabilitation services offered by teams that aim to improve social resources development within the Palestinian community. Its programs include: the Departments Program, the Vocational Training Center, the Rehabilitation Program, and the Women Training Program (WTP). Moreover, Beit Sahour branch of the East Jerusalem YMCA offers the following activities: the Rehabilitation Program for injured of the intifada and victims of torture, initiatives supports, and Youth Sport Center, which includes indoor and outdoor activities, activities for people with special needs, and camps.
- **The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement among People (PCR):** Established in 1988 as a local non-profit NGO that aims to defend the Palestinian cause locally and internationally. It relies on volunteers to make-up 70% of the human resources needed in community projects. The Center works with lobbying groups to familiarizes youth with the political atmosphere. The following are PCR's main areas of interest:
 - Community service: serving the local Palestinian community to remain strong during the hardships of occupation policies and sharing in the development the community. The PCR also focuses on activating the youth in community service and development.
 - Peace and Reconciliation: PCR has a genuine commitment and a long history of working for peace. Dialogues aimed at developing mutual understanding and activating participants to work for peace and justice are high on its agenda. The PCR facilitates education and training for peace and reconciliation.
 - The International Middle East Media Center: PCR has established a media center that aims to provide alternative news reports and features to replace the existing reporting controlled by the corporate media.
- **ANAT Folk and Cultural Center:** Established in 1993 as a local women's NGO that works in the fields of training, development and education. Women, children, youth, and ex-prisoners are the center's target group. The Center seeks to

- encourage women to be self-reliant and financially independent. The Center helps to provide local and international markets with Palestinian embroidery products.
- **Jadal Center for Culture and Development:** Established in 2001, Jadal Center for Culture and Development was formed to improve the social awareness of local society. In this regard, the Center offers a variety of activities including workshops, literature evenings, summer camps, films and training courses.
 - **Palestine Wildlife Society:** an active non-profit organization that researches nature conservation in Palestine and works to raise awareness in the Palestinian community. Its mission is the “*conservation and enhancement of Palestine biodiversity & wildlife.*” The Palestine Wildlife Society was established in 1999 as the first of its kind in the area. The wildlife society has achieved international recognition through organizations such as **Birdlife International, United Nation of Convention to Combat Desertification- UNCCD, Euronature (Germany), Ornithological Society for the Middle East -OSME-UK and OISCA- Japan International.** The society’s mission is attained through the following objectives:
 - Conservation and management of Species and Habitats.
 - Education and promotion of Wildlife and Nature.
 - Active participation and involvement of local communities in Conservation Movement and sustainable development of resources.
 - **Palestinian Center for Public Opinion:** Established in 1994 by a group of Palestinian academics and intellectuals. Its principle aims are to strengthen democracy and build a constructive Palestinian civil society. The Center focuses on several social, economic and political issues of great importance in the Palestinian society. During the current Palestinian uprising, the centre has conducted a variety of polls, the results of which have been distributed both locally and internationally. All survey results and reports are translated into different languages, such as English, German, French and Hebrew. The Center’s objectives are:
 - Promoting and disseminating freely expressed views of the Palestinian people on economic, social, political and cultural issues by applying scientific and empirical methods.
 - Carrying out studies and issuing publications which contribute to the welfare of society.
 - Holding seminars and workshops on topics of interest to the public in order to enhance their awareness of human rights.
 - Enhancing the publics’ consciousness and level of dialogue in the realms of economic policies, elections, democracy and women’s issues.
 - **The Holy Land Handicrafts Cooperative Society:** Established in 1981 and comprised of 36 member workshops in Bethlehem area. The Society’s Main activities are: a qualified active export department, direct sale exhibitions and Christmas markets in Europe, and training courses for cooperative members and associations. It also owns and operates a retail souvenir shop at the Shepherd’s Field. The Society’s Memberships are: IFAT, International Fair Trade Association (member since 1991), Fair Trade Organization, Paltrade (Palestine Trade Center), and the European Palestinian Chamber of Commerce.

- **Alternative Tourism Group:** Established in 1995 to increase international awareness of the Palestinians issues. This NGO also offers tours in Palestine that promote and identify Palestinian heritage.
- **Palestinian-Greek Friendship Society:** Established in 1992 in Jerusalem, and since then it's working on expanding its activities to include a number of Palestinian cities, it succeeded in establishing three branches in 1995 in the cities of Ramallah, Bethlehem and Gaza. Over the past ten years it was involved in many activities and events on different occasions; receiving delegations, a cultural and artistic performances, social and recreational activities, exhibitions, symposia and courses in the education of the Greek and Arabic languages. One of the most important aims of the society is the mutual understanding of the Palestinian and Greek civilizations, culture and traditions, in addition to promoting cooperation and exchanges in the cultural, technical, economic and social spheres in order to preserve the distinctive historical relations that bind the two friendly countries and develop to the highest levels.
- **Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue (PCRD):** Established in 2003 by a group of Palestinian academics in the West Bank, as a non-profit NGO whose mission is to promote cultural and religious dialogue, trusting that this is an ideal way to bridge gaps between nations. PCRD works on four major tracks: dialogue, education, research, and voluntary work. Women, children, and youth are the target group of PCRD's goals in order to create a fertile ground for mutual understanding. PCRD exerts its utmost effort to contribute to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. The Board of Directors is comprised of seven people who are elected every three years.
- **Mihwar Center for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families:** A Palestinian community center designed to support and strengthen family relations by reducing the phenomenon of domestic violence and assist women and children through defending the rights and dignity of women. The Center is non-profit and receives cases from the community without any compensation for the services it provides. The Center has a qualified specialist professional staff, which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Centre, so-called the Safe Home, offers a range of services for women and girls who are victims of violence in the community after they return to it, as it provides these women and girls with social support as well as health guidance, and it also appoints a private lawyer for cases that require one. After the rehabilitation of these women and girls, the Center offers vocational training to help them get a career in which they will succeed in the future. The Centre also works on strengthening women through strengthening their social skills. The Center has a sports and fitness hall, in addition to another hall for the various social and cultural activities. The Centre also provides services to children; it has a kindergarten equipped with a specialized staff. There is also a section for social and psychological counseling that deals with the problems of parents and their children. All in addition to few recreational and cultural activities for children.
- **Women Society for Social Action**
- **The Rehabilitation Center for Special Education (Basma Center)**
- **Track Companion for People with Special Needs (Rafeeq ad Darb)**

- **Family Development Charitable Society**
- **The Return Center (Al 'Awda)**
- **The New Morning Center (Al Ghad Al Jadeed)**
- **Arab Orthodox Charitable Society**
- **Agricultural Cooperative Society**
- **Traditional Industries Union**
- **Siraj Center for the Study of the Holy Lands**
- **Joint Advocacy Initiative**
- **Palestinian Women's Development Society**
- **The Greek Orthodox Church Agents' Society**
- **Beit Sahour Sons Charitable Society**
- **Shepherds Field Sons Arab Charitable Society**
- **Beit Sahour Churches' Council**
- **Greek Catholic Housing Society**
- **Ar Ru'at Latin Monastery Housing Society**
- **Engineering Housing Society**
- **Greek Orthodox Housing Society**
- **Cooperative Charitable Housing Society**
- **The Home Housing society**
- **Al Beida Housing Society**
- **Greek Catholic Scouts**
- **Latin Monastery Scouts**
- **Arab Orthodox Club Scouts**
- **Ar Ru'at Scout**

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Beit Sahour is connected to a public electricity network; served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the city. Approximately 99.4 percent of the housing units in the city are connected to the network, and 0.1 percent are dependent on private generators, while the source of electricity is unknown for the remaining units (0.4%) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Furthermore, Beit Sahour is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 95 percent of the housing units within the city boundaries are connected to phone lines (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010)

Transportation Services:

Buses and taxis are the two main means of transportation in Beit Sahour, as there is a bus company in the city and a number of taxi offices. As for the road network in the city; there are a total of 57km of paved roads, which occupies an area of 602 dunums, however, a part of these roads are in need of rehabilitation. There are also a total of 10km of main roads and a total of 40km of secondary roads, which are paved but in bad condition, in addition to 3km of unpaved secondary roads (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010 & ARIJ, 2009).

Water Resources:

Beit Sahour is provided with water by Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), through the public water network established in 1960, about 98.6 percent of the housing units are connected to the water network, and 1 percent are dependent on purchase of water tanks, while the source of water supply is unknown for the remaining units (0.4%). Based on the PWA estimations, the rate of water supply per capita in the communities provided with water is about 100 liters per day, but this rate varies from one community to another. The quantity of water supplied to Beit Sahour in 2009 was about 468,000 cubic meters/year therefore the estimated rate of water supply per capita is about 105 liters/day (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010).

Here it should be noted that many Beit Sahour citizens do not in fact consume this amount of water due to water losses, which are about 43 percent. The losses usually happen at the main source, major transport lines, distribution network, and at the household level (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010), thus the rate of water consumption per capita in Beit Sahour is 60 liters per day. This is a low rate compared with the minimum quantity proposed by the World Health Organization, which is 100 liters per capita per day.

Sanitation:

Beit Sahour city has a 44.4km public sewage network, established between 1995 and 1999. The end of the network is connected to the pumping station north of Beit Sahour "Hilwa Tomb Pumping Station", which pumps the waste water into Wadi an Nar. According to the results of Community Survey conducted by the PCBS in 2007 and the data provided from PWA, the majority of Beit Sahour housing units (77.9%) use the sewage network as a major mean for wastewater disposal, 21.4 percent use cesspits, and 0.1 percent lack waste water collection and disposal service, while the means for waste water disposal is unknown for the remaining units (0.6%).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day, is approximately 594 cubic meters, or 217,000 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the city, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 48 liters per day. The estimated quantity of wastewater collected through the sewage network per day, is about 463 cubic meters per

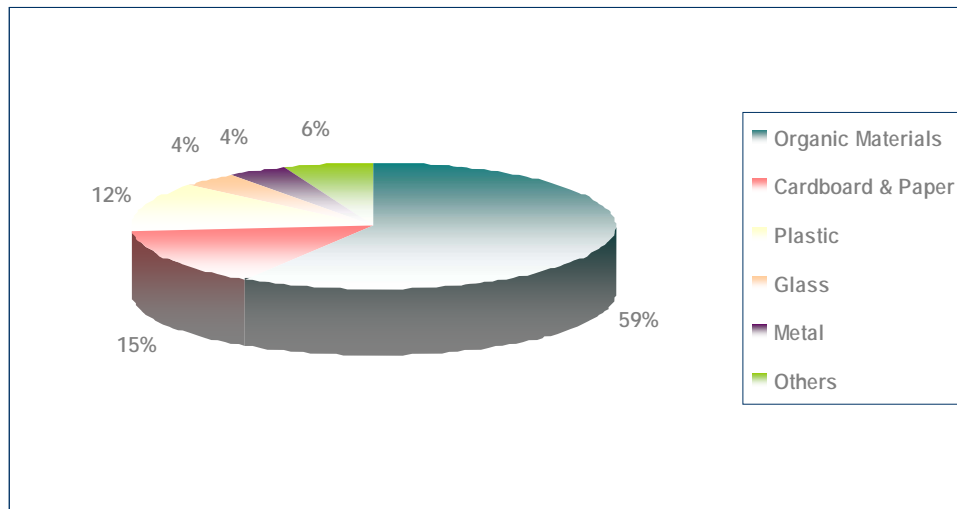
day, or 169,000 cubic meters annually. The wastewater resulting from the cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys (Wadi an Nar) without any regard for the environment. Here it should be noted that there is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites which poses a threat to the environment and the public health.

Solid Waste Management:

Beit Sahour Municipality is considered the official body responsible for managing solid waste, i.e. solid waste collection and disposal, generated from the citizens and establishments in the city, which is currently represented by solid waste collection and disposal. Due to the fact that the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly or yearly fee has been charged on the population serviced by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services which is about 42 JD/year per house and 100 JD/year per commercial store. However, the collected fees are not considered sufficient for a good management of solid waste, as it contributes to only 85 percent of the waste service costs, and the municipality is obliged to cover the rest of costs (15%) from its own budget. Despite this, the municipality is currently covering 44 percent of the costs, due to the fact that most of the residents are not committed to paying their fees, thus, the collected fees do not cover more than 56 percent of the service costs (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010).

Most of the population in Beit Sahour benefits from the solid waste services, where waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to containers with a capacity of 800–1,000 liters and/or 5 - 6 cubic meters each, spread throughout the neighborhoods. The municipality collects the solid waste from the containers daily and transports it in large pressure trucks or unloading trucks to Abu Dees dumping site, 20km from Beit Sahour. The common method for solid waste treatment in Abu Dees dumping site is burial. According to the data provided by Beit Sahour municipality; there are two trucks for solid waste collection and transfer and 120 containers spread throughout the city (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010). In the future, the solid waste will be disposed in Al Maniya landfill that will be established in Bethlehem governorate. It should be mentioned here that household waste, industrial, and medical solid waste are collected together and dumped into the same landfill, with the absence of any special system for separation and/or collection. The largest volume of solid waste is household waste which makes up around 45-50 percent of total capacity of solid waste.

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Beit Sahour is between 0.9 and 1.2kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Beit Sahour residents is nearly 13 tons, or 4740 tons per year. The main component of household solid waste is composed of organic materials, followed by paper and cardboard, and then by plastic, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 2: The components of the household solid waste produced

Environmental Conditions

Like other cities and villages in the governorate, Beit Sahour experiences several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved; these problems can be identified as follows:

Water Crisis:

Water is cut off for long periods of time especially in summer for several reasons:

- (1) Israeli domination over Palestinian water resources; which makes PWA dependent largely on water purchase from the Israeli company Mecerot to supply the Palestinian cities and villages, representing an obstacle in the organization of water pumping and distribution among populations. PWA distributes water to various areas at an interval-basis because the amount of water available is not sufficient for everyone at the same time.
- (2) High rate of water losses despite the fact that the Palestinian Water Authority has rehabilitated and renovated part of the water network, established new reservoirs, and changed the water meters, because of the practices of citizens, like creating illegal connections, water theft, and damaging water meters, increase the proportion of water losses.

Wastewater Management:

- The absence of a public sewage network, thus the use of cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and the discharge of wastewater in the streets, especially in winter, because the citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers, causes environmental and health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the city. Moreover, the use of cesspits pollutes the groundwater due to the fact that most cesspits are built without lining, which allows wastewater to enter into the ground and avoids the need to use sewage tankers from time to time.
- Irresponsible practices by the citizens, such as:
 - 1) Illegal connection to the sewage network, causing an increased flow of wastewater in the network that exceeds its capacity, thus, leading wastewater to flow in the streets and causing environmental and health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the city. Moreover, the poor implementation of the sewage network and manholes contributes to the problem as well.
 - 2) The disposal of solid waste in public manholes and the sewage network causes a poor discharge of wastewater and thus its flow in the streets.
- Lack of treatment for waste water, which is collected by the sewage network, as most of it is discharged into Wadi an Nar area, without taking into consideration any resulted environmental and health damages.
- The absence of wastewater treatment, resulting from industrial facilities at the source, where it is either discharged directly into a public sewage network or collected in cesspits.
- The rainwater drainage system does not cover all parts of the city and is also not effective, thus, increasing the burden on the sewage network.

Solid Waste Management:

The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Beit Sahour and the other communities in the governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions, like granting licenses to establish such a landfill, because the appropriate land is within Area C, under the Israeli control. In addition, the implementation of such projects depends on funding from donor countries. Thus, the lack of a sanitary landfill is a hazard risk for the health, a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste, and it produces odors and distortion of the landscape. It should be noted here that a sanitary landfill is under construction, at the time, in Al Maniya area, south of Bethlehem governorate, to serve Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.

There is an absence of a system in the city and the governorate in general that separates hazardous waste from non-hazardous waste, consequently hazardous solid waste and industrial waste are collected with non-hazardous waste and transported to Abu Dees landfill for disposal by burial.

Other problems:

- The absence of a private industrial zone in the city, where factories and workshops are spread randomly between and within residential areas.
- The lack of healthy and licensed slaughterhouse in the city.
- Growth and urbanization in the city are not directed in a right and sustainable manner; it has become difficult to maintain reserved areas in light of the scarcity of land, constraints, and current determinants, imposed on land use.

Impact of the Israeli Occupation

According to Oslo Interim Agreement, signed in September 28, 1995, between the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli government, Beit Sahour lands were classified into areas A and C; 4389 dunums (52.8%) of which were classified as area A, where the Palestinian sovereignty is absolute. The remaining part of Beit Sahour lands, 3917 dunums (47.2 percent of the total area of the city), were classified as area C, an area that is under full control of the Israeli government. Since Israeli has control of this area, Palestinians are prevented from construction or benefiting from this land in any way possible, unless they get permission, which is extremely difficult, from the Israeli civilian administration in Bethlehem. Furthermore, Area C includes agriculture lands, open spaces, and small parts of the urban areas.

The Israeli occupation in Beit Sahour city

Beit Sahour city, like other cities and villages in Bethlehem governorate, was exposed to Israeli illegal procedures of violation and expansion, where thousands of dunums were confiscated for the benefit of various Israeli purposes. Beginning in 1997, hundreds of dunums were confiscated for the construction of Har Homa (Abu Ghneim) settlement, in addition to the establishment and construction of Israeli bypass roads which link Har Homa to the Israeli settlements in Jerusalem, settlements south of Bethlehem, and to the settlements in the West (Gush Etzion settlement bloc). Also, the racist Segregation Wall scheme came to control more vast territories of the city and to include Har Homa settlement inside Jerusalem borders and to Israel, in a move that would impose tough realities on the Palestinians whose lands were taken. Following, are the Israeli confiscations of Beit Sahour city territories:

Abu Ghneim settlement

Following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip in 1967, Israel enlarged the Jerusalem municipality boundaries in order to include

territories of the Palestinian cities and villages, including the cities of Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, and Beit Jala, thus, increasing the area of Jerusalem from 6.5km² to 71km². Jabal Abu Ghneim location was one of the areas included within Jerusalem municipality boundaries, and was later classified as nature reserves by Jerusalem municipality where no Palestinian construction was allowed. This classification was made in order not to provoke any criticism by the international community towards the issue of taking over Palestinian territories, as the municipality claimed those areas as nature reserves to protect the environment and the nature. However, the municipality, in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Housing, through the years of occupation, manipulated the meaning of the term “nature reserve” as announced by Jerusalem municipality, and later used the land to serve the Israeli interests by constructing the Israeli settlement of Har Homa, as well as other settlements during the years of occupation.

In 1997, after the re-classification of Abu Ghneim from a nature reserve to a construction area, the cornerstone of Abu Ghneim settlement (known nowadays as Har Homa settlement) was placed. Accordingly, the Israeli bulldozers gradually uprooted about 60,000 trees, as needed, in order to construct the settlement. Today, the total area of the settlement is 2205 dunums and more than 5,000 Israeli settlers reside in it. Har Homa settlement is considered the third largest Israeli settlement, in terms of area, among the nineteen settlements constructed in Bethlehem, after Betar ‘Illit and Gilo settlements. Moreover, Har Homa settlement (Abu Ghneim) had confiscated an area of 548 dunums (6.6 percent of the total area) of Beit Sahour territories.

Plans to construct new settlement units in Har Homa

During the period between 2003 and 2009, the Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing, in cooperation with Jerusalem Municipality, launched several bids and plans for the construction of new settlement units in Har Homa (Abu Ghneim) settlement; the number of housing units has reached 8,099. Such notifications are proof that Israel continues expanding the Abu Ghneim settlement, in addition to many other Israeli settlements in the West Bank. All of this activity is in inspite of the international condemnation of such actions, which considers them a flagrant violation of the agreements signed between Israel and the Palestinians, calls for the ending all types of settlement activities, and takes into consideration the obstacles they pose to the final status negotiations between the two sides.

The Israeli occupation authorities were not content by the vertical construction in the settlement, thus, it quickly expanded the settlement boundaries through land leveling from all sides. This has imposed a painful reality in the region in terms of land confiscation and hindrance to Palestinian freedom of movement.

The construction of two new settlements near Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) settlement

What is more, the structural plan prepared by the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem in 2000, revealed the plan to construct two new settlements in the area near Har Homa settlement (Abu Ghneim) in Bethlehem governorate; the first is located south-east of Har

Homa (Abu Ghneim) settlement and the second is located north-west of the settlement. Both settlements will occupy an additional area of about 1080 dunums of the Palestinian land. Moreover, Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement (Har Homa), in addition to the new settlements, when constructed, will occupy an area of 3284 dunums.

A new settlement bloc in ‘Osh Ghrab area¹, east of Beit Sahour city

On April 8, 2008, a group of Israeli extreme right-wing activists from “Har Homa revivals”, in Jerusalem, and the Regional Council settlers in Gush Etzion settlement, declared their intention to establish a new settlement bloc in ‘Osh Ghrab, east of Beit Sahour city, on the ruins of an Israeli military base that was evacuated east of the city. On April 27, 2006, on a Thursday morning, the Israeli occupation army had completely and suddenly evacuated the Israeli military outpost, locally known as “Osh Ghrab” or “Schedma” as is called by the Israelis, and moved to the Israeli camp located in Al Furdeis area “Herodion,” south-east of the city.

During the past years, the extreme right-wing Jewish groups organized a series of weekly demonstrations starting from the date of the military base evacuation until the date of this report in order to protest against the Israeli Government's decision to vacate this military site. Their goal is to restore and preserve the area so as not to be handed over to the Palestinians. Among those extremist groups were “women in green” and the “Jewish Committee to defend Schedma.” These groups also called for the establishment of a Jewish outpost in the region in order to link the Israeli settlements east of Beit Sahour city (Al David, Tekoa, Nokdim, and Ma'ale Amos settlements) with Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement (Har Homa) north of Beit Sahour city and the Israeli settlements west of the city (Gush Etzion settlements bloc and the settlements inside the Green Line).

On February 10, 2010, the Israeli bulldozers, guarded by the occupation forces, began razing Palestinian lands in ‘Osh Ghrab region for the establishment of an Israeli military tower in order to prevent actions such as throwing stones at army patrols, according to the allegations of Israeli occupation forces located in the area. The Israeli occupation forces have declared ‘Osh Ghrab as “closed military area” and have prevented journalists, photographers, and the city residents from being there so as to facilitate the task of Israeli bulldozers to establish a supervision tower.

¹ ‘Osh Ghrab area is located east of Beit Sahour city, on top of a spacious mountain that is spread out over dozens of dunums of open lands. ‘Osh Ghrab is bordered by Palestinian urban areas belonging to Beit Sahour city and Beit Ta'mir village, to the west, north, and south, and it is bordered by Za'tara bypass road to the east. During the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip in 1967, ‘Osh Ghrab was used as a military headquarters during the British Mandate, and then was used by the Jordanian army, until it was occupied by the Israeli army in 1967, who expanded it at the expense of the city and citizens' territories. Following the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000, the site became the headquarters for heavy military vehicles and a starting point for military operations launched by the Israeli army in the governorate.

The Segregation Wall

After its occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, Israel was able to re-draw the boundaries of Jerusalem Municipality, for the second time, through the construction of the racist Segregation Wall, which is being built around Jerusalem. The path of the racist Segregation Wall around Jerusalem shows the Israeli intentions and plans to control vast areas of Palestinian unpopulated lands and to include Israeli settlements within its new boundaries through the project scheme of 'Greater Jerusalem.' Through this plan Israel is seeking to connect Jerusalem with the Israeli settlements in and around Jerusalem, and at the same time, to separate the Palestinian localities located east of Jerusalem from rest of the West Bank cities, in order to completely isolate them. Moreover, the 'Greater Jerusalem' scheme includes the annexation of four Israeli settlement blocs, out of six, which Israel seeks to annex through its endless plans in the occupied Palestinian territories; which are: Ma'ale Adummim bloc, Giv'at Ze'ev, bloc, Gush Etzion bloc, and Mod'in Illit bloc (Qiryat Sefer), in addition to Gilo, Har Gilo and of Abu Ghneim settlements.

According to the updated Segregation Wall plan published on the web page of the Israeli Ministry of Defense in April 30, 2007; the Segregation Wall will extend for 10.34km on Beit Sahour lands; thus isolating and confiscating 2140 dunums of the city territory (25.8 percent of the total area of the city) west of the wall within the separation area, in addition to including Har Homa settlement (Abu Ghneim) within Jerusalem city boundaries. Table 10 shows the lands isolated behind the wall in Beit Sahour city:

Item	Total Area (in Dunums)
Arable Land	349
Artificial Surfaces	42
Forests & Open Spaces	1085
Wall Area	99
Palestinian Built-up Area	11
Israeli Settlements	554
Total	2140

Source: ARIJ database- GIS, 2008

Israeli Military Orders in Beit Sahour city

The Israeli authorities issued a series of military orders to confiscate land for the construction of the racist segregation wall on Beit Sahour city territories, and to demolish dozens of Palestinian homes in the city. Following are the phases of issued orders: (Urbanization unit – ARIJ, 2009)

- On January 6, 2004, the Israeli Military Order No. (01/02/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 149 dunums of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of a bypass road.

- On May 11, 2004, the Israeli Military Order No. (02/04/H) was issued to confiscate a total area of 380 dunums of Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and Beit Ta'mir lands for the construction of a bypass road.
- On September 16, 2003, the Israeli Military Order No. (03/71/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 47.2 dunums of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of the racist Segregation Wall.
- On September 1, 2006, the Israeli Military Order No. (06/80/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 0.295 dunums of Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of an Israeli army watchtower.
- On August 15, 2007, the Israeli Military Order No. (07/02/S) was issued. The order declares an area in Beit Sahour city as a "closed military" area, into which no access is allowed.
- On August 15, 2007, the Israeli Military Order No. (07/31/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 22 dunums of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour city lands for military purposes; for the construction of Mazmurya Crossing.
- On August 22, 2005, the Israeli Military Order No. (154/05/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 9 dunums of Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of the racist Segregation Wall.
- On August 22, 2005, the Israeli Military Order No. (155/05/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 30 dunums of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of Mazmurya Crossing.
- On August 22, 2005, the Israeli Military Order No. (156/05/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 4 dunums of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of Mazmurya Crossing.
- On March 3, 2003, the Israeli Military Order No. (29/03/T) was issued to confiscate a total area of 19.7 dunums of Beit Sahour city lands for the construction of the racist Segregation Wall.

A series of Israeli demolition orders in Beit Sahour city

Beit Sahour city, like other Palestinian cities, was targeted by the Israeli occupation authorities under the pretext of unauthorized construction, especially in Jabal ad Deek and the Greek Orthodox Housing areas. On January 29, 2007, the Israeli occupation authorities handed over 11 notifications to demolish Palestinian houses and barracks in Jabal ad Deek area, and to stop the construction of three buildings belonging to the Greek housing new project located on the Greek Patriarchate's territories in Beit Sahour, under the pretext of unauthorized construction. However, the building owners were given only three days from the date the notifications were issued to protest against them.

Furthermore, this was not considered the first time that the Israeli occupation authorities handed the people, in the two regions, notifications of demolition and stopping the construction. On May, 2002, the Israel occupation forces handed over military notifications of demolition and stopping the construction, under the pretext of not having a construction license issued by the Israeli Civil Administration in Beit El, as these buildings are located in the area classified as C (an area that is under the Israeli army full control) according to Oslo agreements signed between the Palestinians and the Israelis in

1995. Here it must be noted that these buildings are licensed by the Municipality of Beit Sahour.

Moreover, on September, 2002, the Israeli occupation authorities handed over other military notifications to demolish eight buildings belonging to the Greek housing project which is being implemented in order to help Palestinian families with limited income, and a number of Palestinian homes in Jabal ad Deek area, under the pretext of unauthorized construction. However, the location of these homes and facilities is near the path of the racist Segregation Wall in the region, and this was the main reason for receiving these houses demolition orders.

On May, 2003, Beit Sahour residents were surprised by the occupation authorities who were sticking copies of a military order on the olive trees, to confiscate 300 dunums of agricultural land in order to create a “safe area” in Jabal ad Deek, for purposes of the segregation wall; 30 dunums of which are located in an area of land classified as A (an area that is under the Palestinian National Authority full control) according to Oslo agreements signed between the Palestinians and the Israelis in 1995.

On October 4, 2004, the Israeli occupation authorities handed over new notifications to demolish 16 Palestinian buildings in Jabal ad Deek area, and building no. 9 which belong to the new Greek housing project, under the pretext of unauthorized construction.

On January, 2005 the Israeli occupation authorities came back with military orders that call for the region’s residents to cancel any construction plans and to demolish their homes within 7 days from the date these orders were issued, under the pretext that they are located in area C (which is under Israeli full control) and are unauthorized constructions.

The targeted areas in Beit Sahour city are classified as C, according to Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the PLO and Israel in 1995, are under Israeli full control, in terms of security and administrative issues.

Confiscation of Beit Sahour lands for the delineation of Jerusalem municipal boundaries

Following the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in 1967, Israel has illegally re-delineated Jerusalem municipal boundaries, at the expense of lands belonging to the neighboring Palestinian villages. Beit Sahour city, among other Palestinian localities, lost part of its territory for the purpose of colonization, i.e. enlarging the boundaries of Jerusalem by taking lands with the goal annexation. According to the analysis conducted by the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), Beit Sahour city has lost 1,579 dunums of lands which are to be included within Jerusalem municipal boundaries (Urbanization unit – ARIJ, 2009)

Moreover, the Israeli bypass road no. 356 cuts through Beit Sahour lands as it extends for 4,67km on its territories.

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented Projects

Beit Sahour municipality has implemented several development projects, during the years 2007 to 2009, in addition to some projects that are currently under implementation, as shown in Table 11.

Name of the Project	Estimated Cost	Donor	Year
Construction of Sewage Lines (bids are being prepared)	\$250000	Caritas - Jerusalem	2010
The Holiday Ceremony for Lighting the Christmas Tree	\$35000	USAID-ARD	2009
Restoration of Mary's Well (Bir as Sayidah)	\$104000	ANERA	2007
Delivery of Health Services to Sub Homes	\$104000	ANERA	2007
Renovation of Qumsiyah's House Building	\$140000	Bethlehem 2000	2007
Employment of Labor Force	\$12240	Caritas - Jerusalem	2007
Construction of Ground Floor for the Slaughterhouse	\$53250	The city's residents	2007
Construction of First Floor for An Nasra Girls School	\$85000	PECDAR	2007
Employment of Labor Force	\$20000	PECDAR	2007
Construction of a Public Park	\$92000	USAID	2007
The Motherhood and Childhood Building	\$95011	Japanese Consulate (\$85550) & The Municipal Fund (\$9461)	2008/2009
Furnishing Qumsiyah's House	\$435487	French Consulate	2008
Rehabilitation of 'Osh Ghrab Park (Phase I)	\$62298	USAID	2008
Establishment of Health Units in Beit Sahour Girls High School	\$10000	Pontifical Mission	2008
Rehabilitation of Roads	4047250 NIS	European Union	2008/2009
Rehabilitation of 'Osh Ghrab Park (Phase II)	\$2198735	USAID	2008
Construction of Retaining Walls in the Catholics Housing Street	\$1178222	Arab Bank for Development	2009
Rehabilitation of Internal Streets	€124241	KFW	2009
Finishing the Orthodox Club Building	\$105000	PECDAR	2009
Restoration of At Tasamoh School	\$45503	Pontifical Mission	2009

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Christmas Ceremony for People with Special Needs	\$4000	Pontifical Mission	2009
Maintenance of Streets and Sidewalks	\$39387	The Municipal Fund	2007 - 2009
Retaining Walls	\$72152	The Municipal Fund	2007 - 2009
Rainwater Drainage	\$3827	The Municipal Fund	2007 - 2009
Maintenance of the Lighting Network	\$58684	The Municipal Fund	2007 - 2009
Maintenance of Sewage Lines	\$48847	The Municipal Fund	2007 - 2009
Restoration of the Maintenance Center	\$84175	The Municipal Fund	2007 - 2009
'Osh Ghrab Park Project	\$457659	The Municipal Fund	2008/2009
Emergency Project for the Rehabilitation of Municipal Services	\$61525	The Municipal Fund	2008
Labor Force Project	\$7192	The Municipal Fund	2007
Supplying Fuel	\$37000	The Municipal Fund	2007
Center Project	\$566984	The Municipal Fund	2008
Rehabilitation of Areas of Direct Contact with the Palestine Development Conference's Activities	\$763065	Ministry Of Finance	2008
Rehabilitation of Jabal ad Deek Street	\$2951271	Ministry Of Finance	2009
The Prime Minister's Grant for Christmas	\$50000	Ministry Of Finance	2008
Rehabilitation of 'Osh Ghrab Street (under construction)	\$180000	Ministry Of Finance	2009
Rehabilitation of Al Mashhama and the Greek Orthodox Streets (under construction)	\$6073935	Ministry Of Finance	2009
Construction of the Indoor Sport Hall (bids are under awarding)	\$400000	Ministry Of Finance	2010
Construction of Beit Sahour Commercial Complex (Al Masmaka) (under construction)	5166199 NIS	Ministry Of Finance	2010
Source: Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010			

Proposed Projects

Beit Sahour Municipality, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the city and the city residents, looks forward to the implementation of several projects in the coming years, including:

1. Rehabilitation of the public water network.
2. Construction of rainwater harvesting cisterns.
3. Completion of the sewage network construction project in order to serve the unserved residents, thus, getting rid of cesspits.
4. Reclamation of agricultural lands and the development of additional water resources to be used for irrigation purposes.
5. Rehabilitation and pavement of roads and the establishment of car parking.
6. Establishment of a typical, healthy and licensed, slaughterhouse.
7. Establishment of an industrial zone for handicrafts.
8. Separation of organic household solid waste, treating it at the source, and re-using it as composts through the installation of domestic composts production units
9. Forestation of streets, public places, and barren land.
10. Organization of continuous community awareness campaigns.
11. Restoration of archaeological and historical buildings and preparing it to be a tourist, intellectual and social activities center.
12. Restoration and rehabilitation of the old market.
13. Supporting crafts and heritage industries.
14. Rehabilitation of the city's sport stadium.
15. Establishment of recreational centers and clubs.
16. Establishment of a public library and a theater.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Beit Sahour suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 12 shows the development priorities and needs in the city, according to the municipality's point of view (Beit Sahour Municipality, 2010):

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*			98.5km*
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks	*			25km
3	Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas	*			5km
4	Construction of New Water Networks	*			20km
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs			*	
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs	*			
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network	*			5km
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network			*	
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection	*			100 container
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste		*		1
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill	*			
Health Needs					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres		*		
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres		*		
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools	*			
Educational Needs					
1	Building of New Schools			*	
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools			*	
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools			*	
Agriculture Needs					
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands			*	
2	Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns			*	
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock	*			
4	Veterinary Services	*			
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals	*			
6	Construction of New Greenhouses	*			
7	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses			*	
8	Field Crops Seeds	*			
9	Plants and Agricultural Supplies	*			

*92.5km is a main road and 6km internal road

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