

# Al 'Aza Camp 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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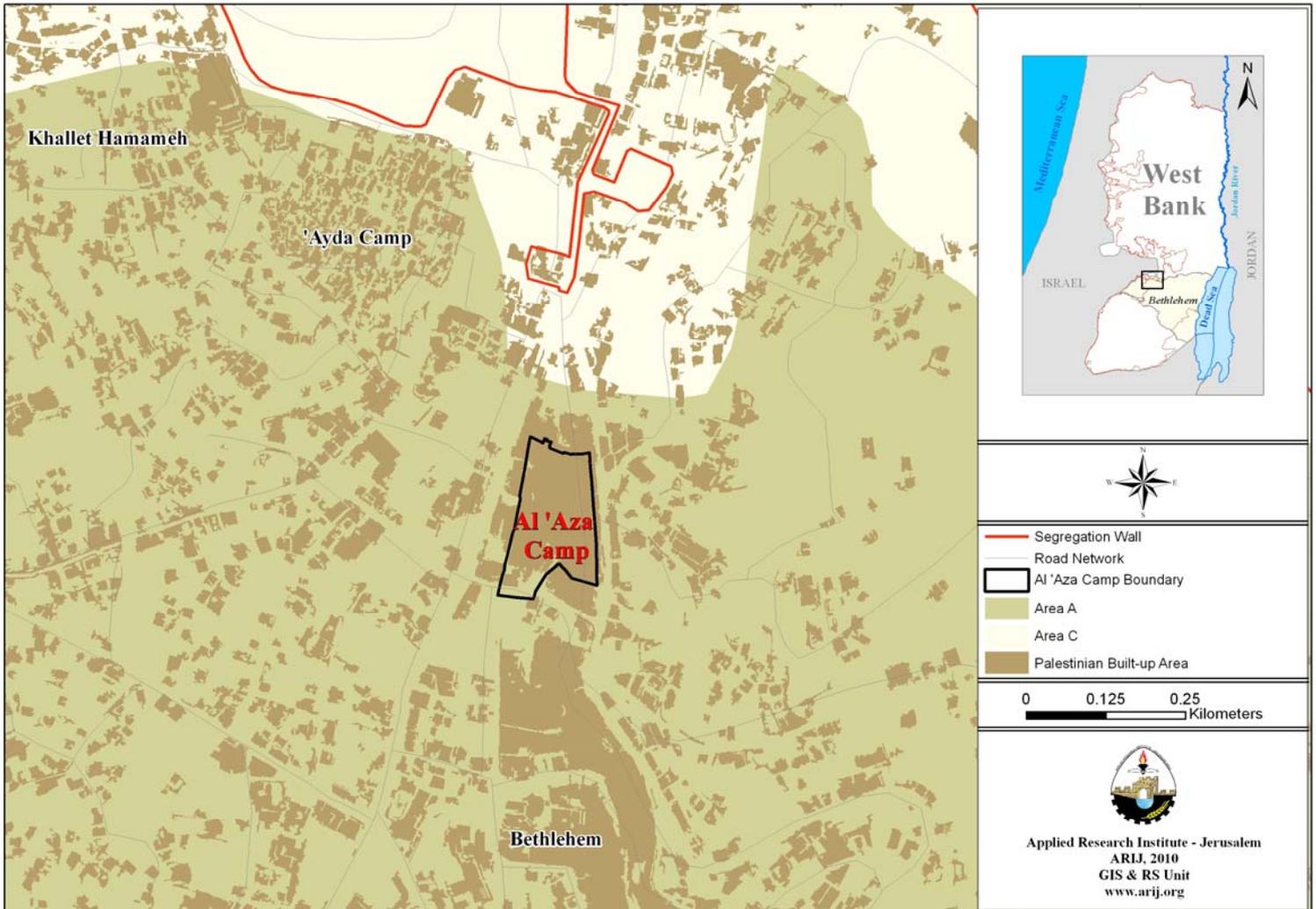
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# Al ‘Aza Camp Profile

## Location and Physical Characteristics

Al ‘Aza camp is a Palestinian camp in Bethlehem Governorate located 1km (horizontal distance) north of Bethlehem City. Al ‘Aza camp is bordered by Bethlehem city to its east, south, and north sides, and by Beit Jala city to its west (See map 1).

**Map 1: Al ‘Aza camp location and borders**



Al ‘Aza camp is located at an altitude of 734m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 509mm. The average annual temperature is 16° C, and the average annual humidity is about 60.4 percent (ARIJ GIS, 2009).

Since 1997, Al 'Aza camp has been governed by a service committee which is currently administrated by eleven members appointed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization - the Refugee Affairs Department. The camp's committee owns a permanent headquarters, within Al 'Awda center headquarters, in the camp.

The service committee has several responsibilities towards the residents of Al 'Aza camp, including:

1. Political responsibilities; in maintaining the right of return and standing against the plots bargaining over it.
2. Social responsibilities; in maintaining social security within the camp.
3. Service responsibilities; through coordinating with the UNRWA in order to improve the services provided to the camp refugees.

## History

Al 'Aza camp was named after a family, called Al 'Aza family, which came from Beit Jibrin village and lived in this camp.

Al 'Aza camp dates back to 1948 and its residents originate from several villages and cities destroyed by the Israeli occupation forces in the 1948 and 1967 wars, however, almost 50 percent of the camp population are from Beit Jibrin village.

**Photo of Al 'Aza camp**

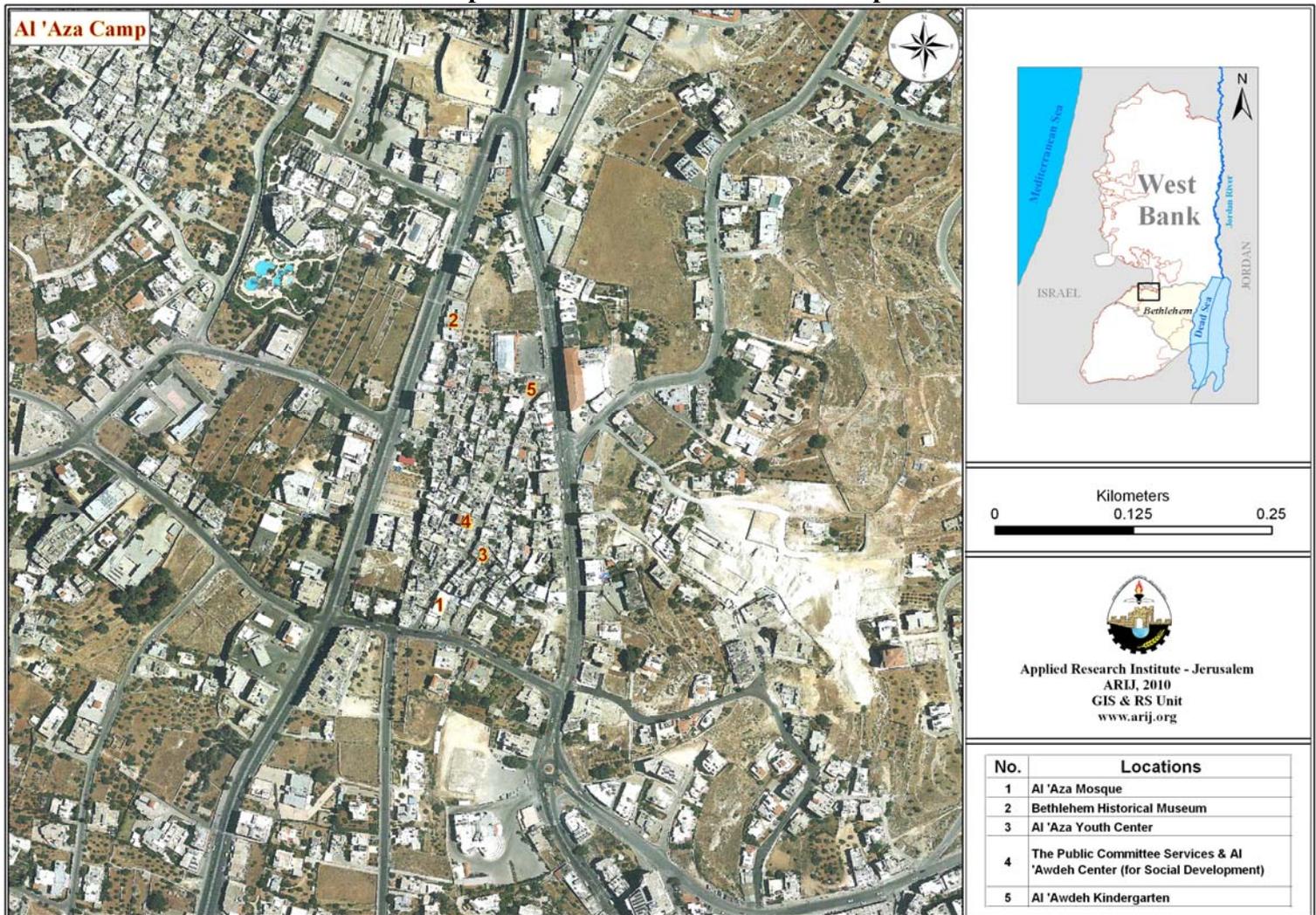


## Religious and Archaeological Sites

In terms of religious establishments, there is only one mosque in Al ‘Aza camp: Salah ad Deen Mosque.

As for the archaeological sites in the camp; there is an ancient Roman channel, which was used to transfer water from Solomon pools to Jerusalem city, in the Roman era (See map 2).

**Map 2: Main locations in Al ‘Aza camp**



## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS); the total population of Al 'Aza camp in 2007 was 1,529; of whom 786 are males and 743 are females. There are 292 households living in 275 housing units.

### Age Groups and Gender

The General Census of Population and Housing carried out by PCBS in 2007 showed the distribution of age groups in Al 'Aza camp is as follows: 41.1 percent are less than 15 years, 51.9 percent are between 15-64 years, and 4.2 percent are 65 years and older. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the camp is 105.7:100, meaning that males constitute 51.4 percent of the population, and females constitute 48.6 percent of the population.

### Families

Al 'Aza camp population is composed of a number of people displaced from their villages that were destroyed in 1948. These villages are:

1. Beit Jibreen village; from which Al 'Aza, An Najjar, Al Qeisi, Abu Tarboosh, Al Marazeeq, Al 'Adawein, Yahya, Al Hammoz, 'Arar, and Al Barbari families, were displaced.
2. Beit Nteif village, from which Abu Sh'ira and Nassar families were displaced.
3. 'Alar village, from which Zboon, Baraq'a, and Qaraqe' families were displaced.
4. Zakariya village, from which Al 'Eisa and Shamrookh families were displaced.
5. Bir as Sabe' town, from which Al 'Amarein and Al Faragein families were displaced.
6. Al Latina village, from which Jaber family was displaced.
7. Tal as Safi village, from which Qandeel family was displaced.
8. Ein Karem village, from which Bleibla family was displaced.
9. Al Malha village, from which Al Helu family was displaced.
10. Ra'na village, from which Khater family was displaced.
11. Sar'a village, from which Nasr Allah family was displaced.
12. Al Qibab village, from which Al 'Ajooz family was displaced.
13. Beit Dajan village, from which Ad Dajni family was displaced.

Moreover, some of Al 'Aza families are from several towns in Hebron governorate, including: An Nashshash family from Khras village, Ghneimat family from Surif town, and Masalma family from Dura town.

### Immigration

The filed survey showed that 3 families, composed of 28 members, have left the camp.

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Al ‘Aza camp population is about 5.2 percent, of whom 70 percent are females. Of the literate population, 12.2 percent can read and write, 24 percent had elementary education, 35 percent had preparatory education, 17.4 percent had secondary education, and 11.4 percent completed higher education. Table 1, shows the educational level in Al ‘Aza camp, by sex, and educational attainment in 2007.

| Sex      | Illiterate | Can read & write | Elementary | Preparatory | Secondary  | Associate Diploma | Bachelor  | Higher Diploma | Master   | PhD      | Total       |
|----------|------------|------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| M        | 16         | 58               | 117        | 178         | 94         | 23                | 24        | -              | 6        | -        | <b>516</b>  |
| F        | 37         | 61               | 117        | 163         | 76         | 23                | 32        | -              | 3        | -        | <b>513</b>  |
| <b>T</b> | <b>53</b>  | <b>119</b>       | <b>234</b> | <b>341</b>  | <b>170</b> | <b>46</b>         | <b>56</b> | <b>-</b>       | <b>9</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>1029</b> |

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

There is no basic and secondary educational institutions and schools in Al ‘Aza camp (Directorate of Education, Bethlehem, 2009), hence the students of the camp join the schools in neighboring localities, such as ‘Ayda and Ad Duheisha camps’ schools (Al ‘Aza Camp Committee, 2010).

Furthermore, there is one kindergarten in Al ‘Aza camp; Al ‘Awda kindergarten, which is privately run. The total number in the kindergarten is 45 children (Al ‘Aza Camp Committee, 2010).

## Health Status

There are no health facilities available in Al ‘Aza camp; there is only one public clinic for the refugees, located in Beit Jala, about 1km from the camp, called Dar Khamashta.

In emergency cases, residents of Al ‘Aza camp use Bethlehem hospitals and health centers, such as: Beit Jala Governmental Hospital (Al Hussein), which is about 1km from the camp.

Despite the existence of a health center for refugees in Beit Jala, the camp is in need of a health center inside the camp.

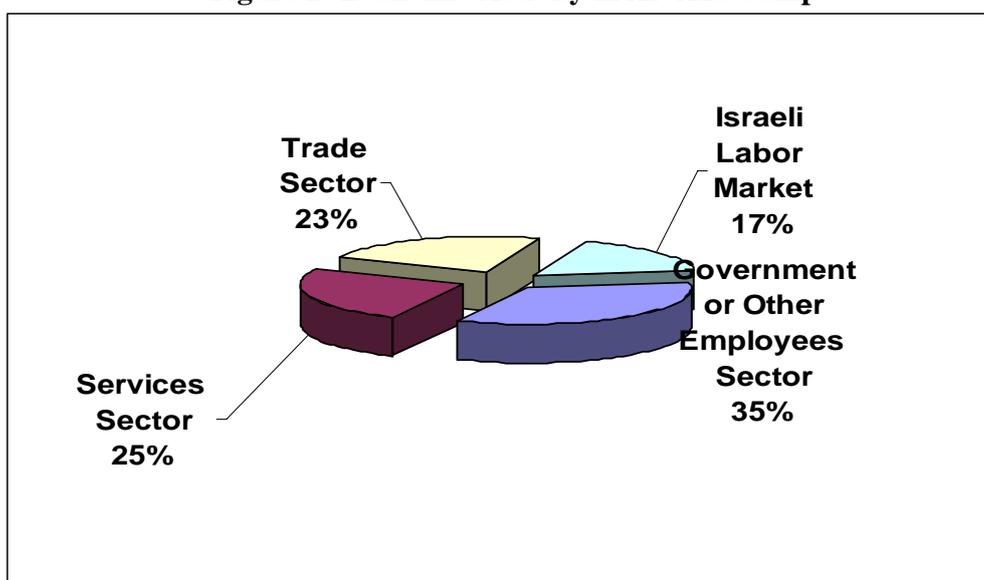
## Economic Activities

The economy in Al ‘Aza camp is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly: government and private employees sector, which absorbs 35 percent of the camp workforce (See Figure1).

The results of a field survey for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Al ‘Aza camp are the following:

- Government or Other Employees Sector (35%)
- Service sector (25%).
- Trade Sector (23%)
- Israeli Labor Market (17%)

**Figure 1: Economic Activity in Al ‘Aza Camp**



In regards to the economic and industrial activities in Al ‘Aza camp, they are few and almost non-existing, as there is only one butcher, 2 different services stores, 2 different workshops (blacksmith, carpentry, etc), in addition to 6 grocery stores.

The unemployment rate in Al ‘Aza refugee camp has reached 52 percent. It was found that the most vulnerable social groups in the camp, as a result of Israeli actions, are:

1. Former workers in Israel.
2. Workers in the trade sector.

## Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 34.8 percent of Al 'Aza camp population was economically active, of whom 86.6 percent were employed, 65.2 percent were not economically active, 52.9 percent were students, and 34.4 percent were housekeepers (See table 2).

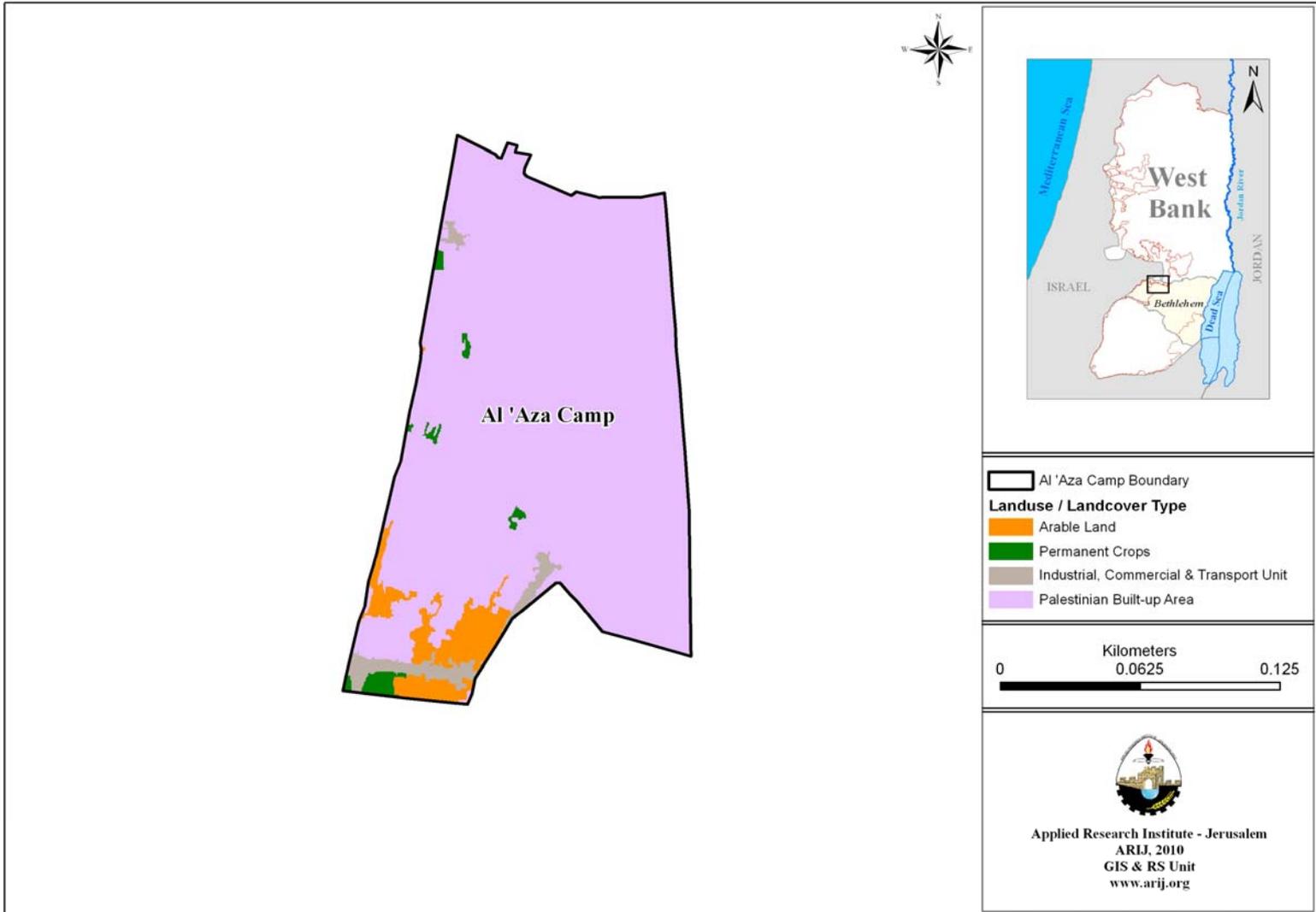
| SEX      | Economically Active |                      |                           |            | Not Economically Active |               |                |                                    |       |            | Total        |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------|
|          | Employed            | Currently Unemployed | Unemployed (Never worked) | Total      | Students                | House-keeping | Unable to work | Not working & Not looking for work | Other | Total      |              |
| M        | 249                 | 18                   | 24                        | <b>291</b> | 183                     | 1             | 13             | 7                                  | 21    | <b>225</b> | <b>516</b>   |
| F        | 61                  | -                    | 6                         | <b>67</b>  | 172                     | 230           | 40             | 3                                  | 1     | <b>446</b> | <b>513</b>   |
| <b>T</b> | 310                 | 18                   | 30                        | <b>358</b> | 355                     | 231           | 53             | 10                                 | 22    | <b>671</b> | <b>1,029</b> |

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

## Agricultural Sector

Al 'Aza camp has no agricultural lands, or any lands suitable for agriculture, due to the fact that all residents of the camp are refugees, and thus they do not own any land within the camp, and do not work in the field of agriculture.

**Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Al 'Aza Camp**



## Institutions and Services

Al 'Aza camp 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 (Al 'Aza Camp Committee, 2010):

- **People's Service Committee:** Founded in 1997 by the Palestine Liberation Organization with the goal of taking care of all the issues in the camp and providing all kinds of services to its population.
- **Youth Center:** Founded in 1995 by the UNRWA, and is interested in sport, cultural, and social activities in the camp.
- **Handala Center:** A cultural center for children founded in 2004.
- **Al 'Awda Center:** Founded in 2009 as a social development center.

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

### Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Al 'Aza camp is connected to a public electricity network; served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the camp. Approximately 97.5 percent of the housing units in the camp are connected to the network, while the source of electricity is unknown for the remaining units (2.5%) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Furthermore, Al 'Aza camp is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 50.7 percent of the housing units within the camp boundaries are connected to phone lines.

### Transportation Services:

Private cars are the main means of transportation in Al 'Aza camp; there is no public transportation available in the camp. The road network in the camp is generally good (Al 'Aza Camp Committee, 2010).

### Water Resources:

Al 'Aza camp is provided with water by the Palestinian Water Authority, in Bethlehem (PWA), through the public water network established in 1967, and about 97.5 percent of the housing units are connected to the water network, while the source of water supply is unknown for the remaining units (2.5%) (PCBS, 2007). Based on the PWA estimations, the rate of water supply per capita in the communities is about 100 liters per day, but this rate varies from one community to another. The quantity of water supplied to Al 'Aza camp in 2008 was about 55,809 cubic meters/year therefore the estimated rate of water supply per capita is about 100 liters/day.

Here it should be noted that many Al 'Aza camp citizens do not in fact consume this amount of water due to water losses, which are about 20 percent. The losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, distribution network, and at the household level (Al 'Aza camp committee, 2010), thus the rate of water consumption per capita in Al 'Aza camp is 80 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:**

Al 'Aza camp has a public sewage network that is used as a main means for wastewater disposal. The end of the network is connected to Bethlehem private sewage network, which itself 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 PCBS's Population and Housing Census in 2007 and PWA data the majority of Al 'Aza camp's housing units (97.5%) use the public sewage network for wastewater disposal, while the means for wastewater disposal is unknown for the remaining units (2.5%) (PCBS, 2007).

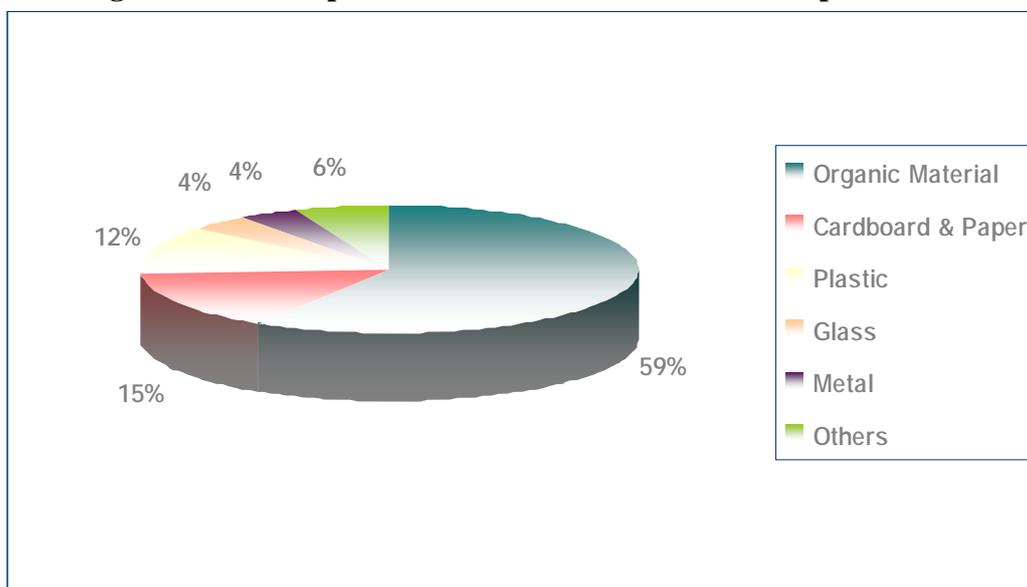
Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day is approximately 98 cubic meters, or 35,770 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the camp it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 64 liters per day.

**Solid Waste Management:**

The United Nations Relief and Work Agency for the Palestinian Refugees-UNRWA is considered the official body responsible for managing solid waste, i.e. solid waste collection and disposal, generated from the citizens and establishments in Al 'Aza camp, which is currently represented by solid waste collection and disposal.

Most of the population in Al 'Aza camp benefits from the solid waste services, where waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to two large-sized containers, spread throughout the camp's neighborhoods. The solid waste is collected from the containers once a day and transported to Yatta's dumping site in Hebron governorate, 33km from the camp. The common method for solid waste treatment in the dumping site is setting waste on fire or sometimes burying it. 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 Al 'Aza camp is 0.7kg, thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Al 'Aza camp residents is nearly 1071kg, or 390 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 Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: The components of the household solid waste produced**

## Environmental Conditions

Like other camps and villages in the governorate, Al ‘Aza camp 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 in summer in several neighborhoods of the camp 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, because the water network is old, and in need of rehabilitation and renovation.

**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 camp. 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: the 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 camp. Moreover, the poor implementation of the sewage network and manholes contributes to the problem as well.

Lack of treatment for waste water, which is collected by the sewage network, and is discharged into Wadi an Nar area, without taking into consideration any resulted environmental and health damages.

**Solid Waste Management:**

The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Al 'Aza camp 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 full 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 creates bad 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.

It should be noted that solid waste accumulates outside the containers and in the streets, due to the inefficiency of the solid waste collection service as one vehicle is not enough to collect and transfer all the waste.

There is an absence of a system in the camp and the governorate in general that separates hazardous waste from non-hazardous waste, consequently hazardous solid waste is collected with non-hazardous waste and transported to Yatta's landfill in Hebron governorate for disposal by burning.

**Other problems:**

- The limited role of Al 'Aza camp committee, like other committees, councils and municipalities, in providing only certain services, without considering other various aspects for development.

## **Development Plans and Projects**

### **Implemented Projects**

Since 2004 and until today, Al 'Aza camp committee, in coordination with the UNRWA, has implemented several development projects in Al 'Aza camp, including the construction of the services complex and Al 'Awda headquarters, the maintenance of the camp's streets, and removing the stone chains in the camp.

### **Proposed Projects**

Al 'Aza camp committee, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the camp and the camp residents, looks forward to the implementation of several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the PRA workshop that was conducted by ARIJ staff in the camp. The projects are as follows, in order of priority, from the viewpoint of the participants in the workshop:

1. Resolving the water crisis in summer.
2. Requesting the UNRWA to provide a health clinic during the week, even if not permanently
3. Taking care of youth through vocational and academic support and providing an emergency fund to support public issues.
4. Providing strengthen courses for students at all levels.
5. Establishment of small projects.
6. Giving more attention to people with special needs and the elderly.
7. Conducting quality research on women, children and youth of refugees, and constructing plans, regulations and requirements.
8. Providing a transportation bus for the students.
9. Providing a health insurance for people with limited capacities.
10. Building young leaders in order to develop the right personality in the right place.

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Al 'Aza camp suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 3 shows the development priorities and needs in the camp, according to the camp committee' point of view (Al 'Aza Camp Committee, 2010):

| No.                          | Sector  | Strongly Needed | Needed | Not a Priority | Notes               |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Infrastructural Needs</b> |   |                 |        |                |                     |
| 1                            | Opening and Pavement of Roads                           | *               |        |                | 0.2km*              |
| 2                            | Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks                    | *               |        |                | 5km                 |
| 3                            | Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas | *               |        |                | 1km                 |
| 4                            | Construction of New Water Networks                      | *               |        |                | 4km                 |
| 5                            | Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs    |                 |        | *              |                     |
| 6                            | Construction of Water Reservoirs                        | *               |        |                | 2,000m <sup>3</sup> |
| 7                            | Construction of a Sewage Disposal Networks              |                 |        | *              |                     |
| 8                            | Construction of a New Electricity Network               | *               |        |                | 10km                |
| 9                            | Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection         | *               |        |                | 4 containers        |
| 10                           | Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste           |                 | *      |                | 1                   |
| 11                           | Providing a Sanitary Landfill                           |                 | *      |                |                     |
| <b>Health Needs</b>          |   |                 |        |                |                     |
| 1                            | Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres          | *               |        |                | 1 clinic            |
| 2                            | Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres    |                 |        | *              |                     |
| 3                            | Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools               |                 |        | *              |                     |
| <b>Educational Needs</b>     |   |                 |        |                |                     |
| 1                            | Building of New Schools                                 | *               |        |                | elementary          |
| 2                            | Rehabilitation of Old Schools                           |                 |        | *              |                     |
| 3                            | Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools                 | *               |        |                | elementary schools  |
| <b>Agriculture Needs</b>     |   |                 |        |                |                     |
| 1                            | Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands                    | *               |        |                | 2 dunums            |
| 2                            | Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns                  | *               |        |                | 3 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                        |                 |        | *              |                     |

\*0.2km is a main road

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