

# Al Bireh Village Profile



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## Acknowledgments

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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 Hebron Governorate. These booklets come as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Hebron 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'; a 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 Hebron 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 Hebron 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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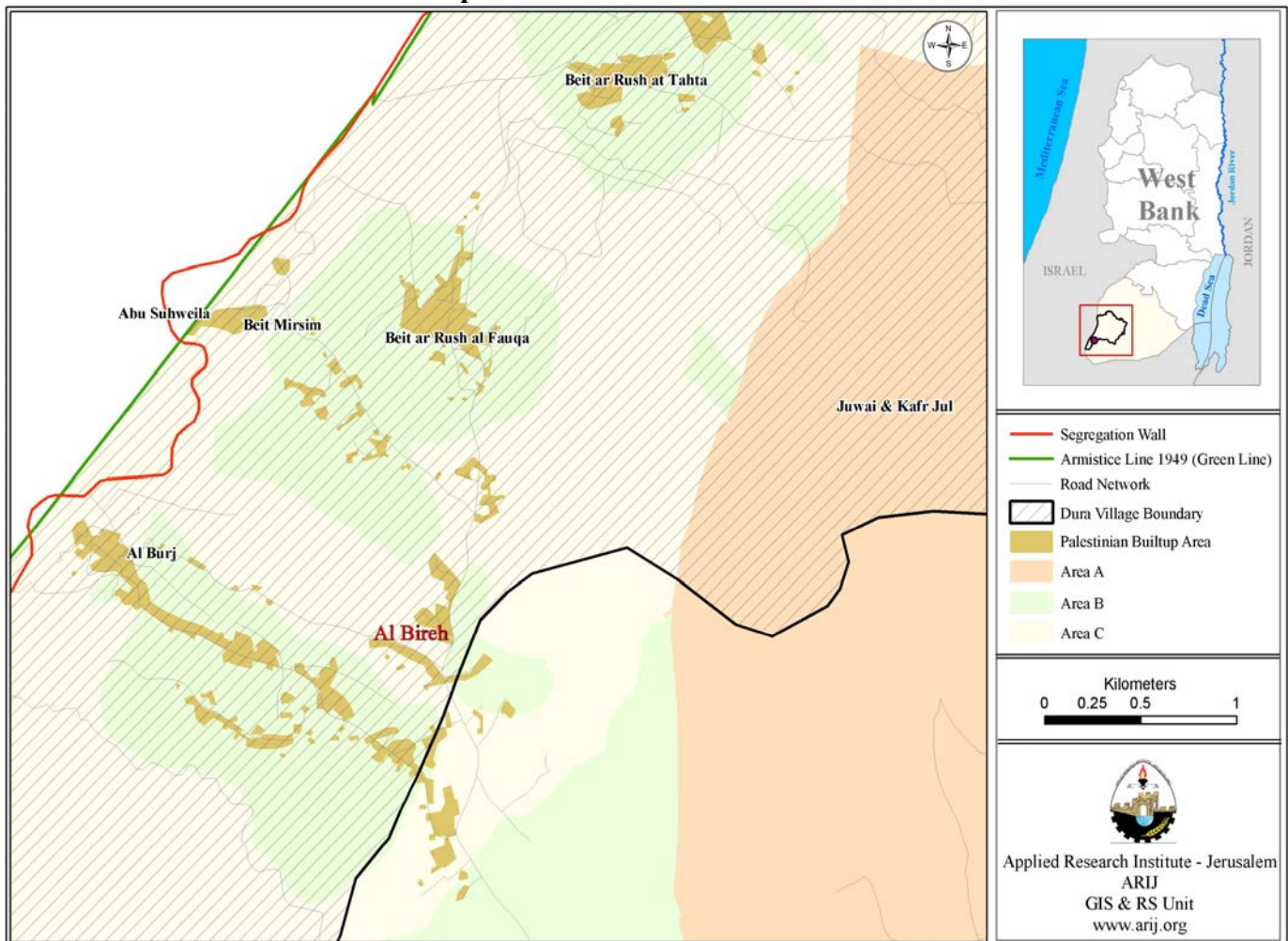
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## Al Bireh Village Profile

### Location and Physical Characteristics

Al Bireh is a village located in Dura area. It is located 19 km south-west of the city of Hebron in the southern part of the West Bank. It is bordered by Adh Dhahiriya (Somara village) to the east, Beit ar Rush al Fauqa to the north, Al Burj to the south and Adh Dhahiriya to the west, (See map 1).

**Map 1: Al Bireh location and borders**



Al Bireh village is located on a mountainous area to the west of Dura, with an elevation of 604 m above sea level. The mean annual rainfall in Al Bireh village is 336 mm, the average annual temperature is 19 °C, and the average annual humidity is 59 % (ARIJ GIS).

In 2000, Al Bireh was governed by a project committee appointed by the Palestinian Authority, which comprises of only three members. The project committee's operations and responsibilities include:

1. Administration, planning, development and issuing building licenses;
2. Social and Development services;
3. Infrastructural maintenance; including water, electricity, solid waste collection, construction and maintenance of roads, and sewage waste collection.

## **History**

The Al Bireh village dates back to the Ottoman period. The name of the village, Al Bireh, was written on a board hanged at the entrance of the village. The residents of Al Bireh are originally from Dura city and from other villages destroyed by the Israeli Army.

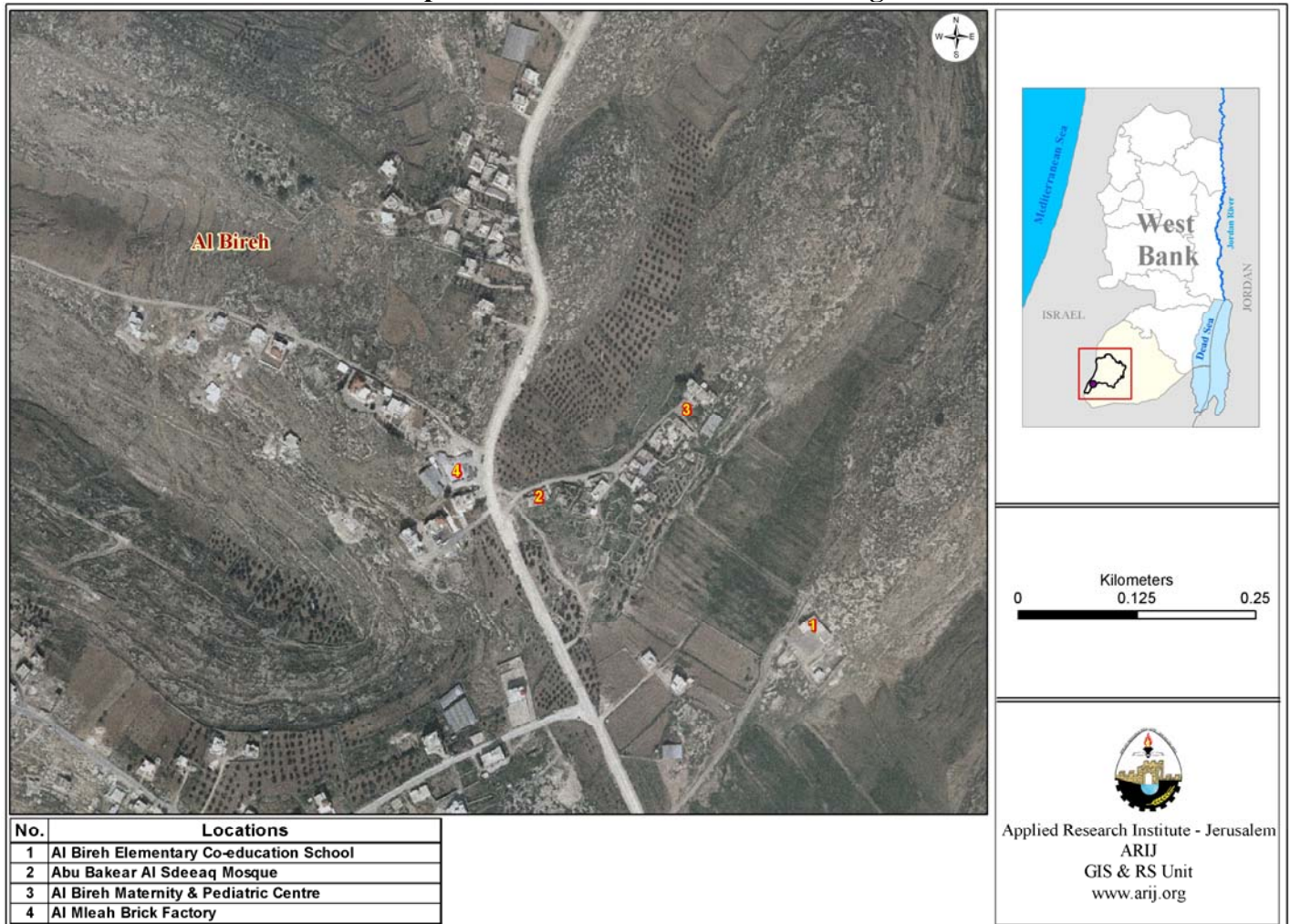
### **Photos of Al Bireh**



## **Religious and Archeological Sites**

There is one mosque in the village, called Al Bireh Mosque. There are also a few historical and archeological sites in the village such as Al Jroam Roman site.

Map 2: Main locations in Al Bireh village



## Population

The total population of Al Bireh, in 2007, is estimated to be 289. This is an estimate number based on the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Census of 1997, of which 166 were males and 123 were females.

## Families

The population of Al Bireh is comprised of three main families: the Doudin family, the Al 'Awdah family, and the Masharqa family.

## Migration

The data collected from Al Bireh indicated that there were 55 cases of emigration from the village. This was mainly due to the political and economic situation after the second Intifada.

## Education

Al Bireh village was not counted as a single locality during the 2007 PCBS Census. Based upon the PCBS divisions, Al Bireh village was counted as part of Al Burj village. Therefore, the labor force data for Al Bireh village is not available. Table 2 shows the education status in Al Burj and Al Bireh.

Sex	Illiterate	Can read & write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Total
M	49	118	201	250	167	30	85	1	5	-	906
F	126	133	180	243	142	18	52	-	3	-	897
<b>T</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,803</b>

Source: PCBS, May 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final Results  
*This data includes population figures from the villages of Al Burij and Al Bireh*

The field survey data indicated that there is only one school in Al Bireh village: Al Bireh Elementary Co-education School. The data from Al Bireh School reveals that at the end of the 2005/2006 scholastic year there were 125 students, 7 classes and 10 teachers at Al Bireh School.

In 2006, there was one kindergarten in Al Bireh, which provided pre-school education services to 20 children and was supervised by the private sector.

The main problem facing the education sector in Al Bireh is transportation to and from the school. Most of the students live a considerable distance away from the school, making it very hard to access on a daily basis.

## Health Status

There is one governmental clinic in Al Bireh village that provides health services for women and children. This clinic provides services three days a week. The village is in severe need of a pharmacy and an ambulance. Al Bireh villagers go to the neighboring villages of Dura and Hebron to get health services when it is not available in the village.

The obstacles and problems facing the health sector in Al Bireh are:

1. Shortage of a modern health center providing health services to the residents.
2. Lack of an x-ray clinic, a medical lab and a maternity & pediatric center.
3. No pharmacy. .
4. No ambulance.



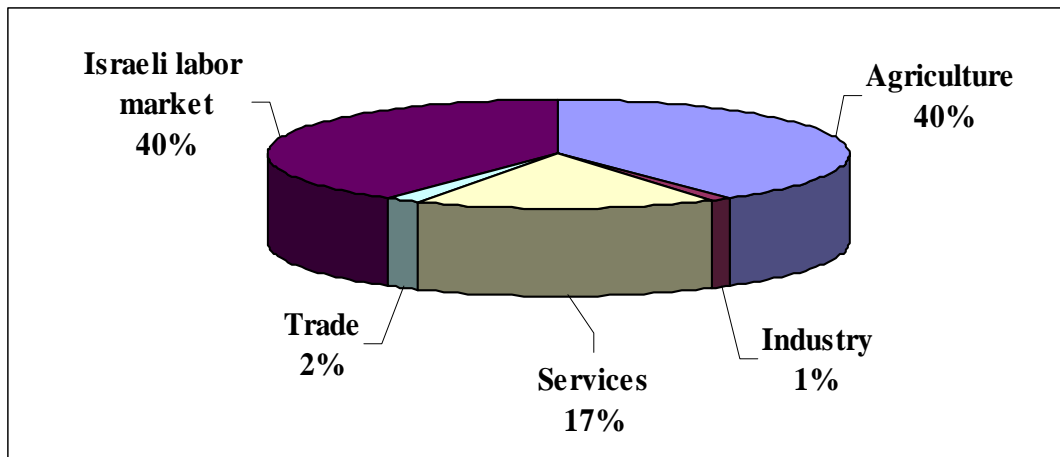
## Economic Activities

Though Al Bireh does have a fertile agricultural area, the majority of its residents work in the Israeli labor market. This is because of the higher wages and its closeness to the village. Nearly 40% of the labor force in the villages works in Israel.

According to field survey, the share of the population working in the various sectors of the economy is listed below by percentage:

- The agriculture sector 40%,
- The service sector 17 %,
- Israeli labor market 40 %.
- The industrial sector 1 %,
- The trade sector 2 %,

**Figure 1: Percentage of economic activity in Al Bireh village**



The main economic institutions available in the village consist of one brick factory, and two local shops.

Based on the 2007 survey conducted in Hebron Governorate by ARIJ, the social groups most affected in the village by the Israeli restrictions during the second Intifada were previous workers in Israeli labor market, and small scale farmers.

## Labor Force

Al Bireh village was not counted as a single locality during the 2007 PCBS Census. Based upon the PCBS divisions, Al Bireh village was counted as part of Al Burj village. Therefore, the labor force data for Al Bireh village is not available. Table 1 shows the labor force status in Al Burj and Al Bireh.

Sex	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (Never work)	Total	Students	House keeping	Unable to work	Not working & Not looking for Work	Others	Total	
<b>M</b>	369	21	43	433	379	-	59	2	33	473	<b>906</b>
<b>F</b>	51	1	11	63	377	412	45	-	-	834	<b>897</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1,307</b>	<b>1,803</b>

Source: PCBS, March 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results  
*This data includes population figures from the villages of Al Burij and Al Bireh*

Since September 2000, Israeli procedures against the local Palestinian villagers have severely affected the economy of Al Bireh. The Israeli forces have imposed numerous restrictions on the residents' movement restrictions have meant that many of the villagers were unable to access their place of work in Israel, or access their lands to cultivate, harvest and market their crops. In addition, in many places, crops and trees have been destroyed and uprooted. As a result, the residents have lost their primary source of income and many have become unemployed.

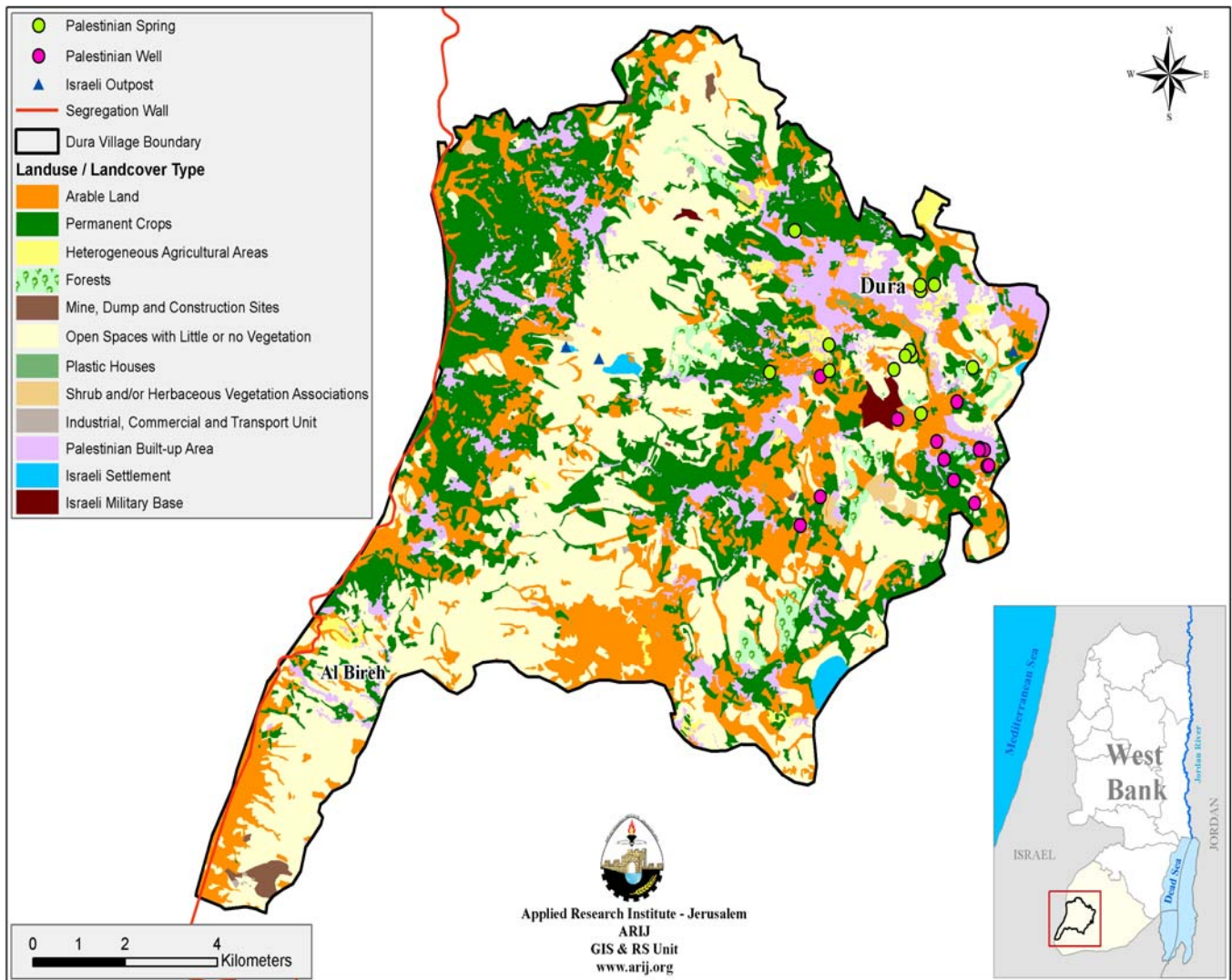
### **Agricultural Sector**

Al Bireh village lies on a total area of 4,000 dunums. 2,650 dunums are considered arable land; however, only 1,326.7 dunums are regularly cultivated.

Total Area	Arable Land		Built up Area	Forests Area	Open Spaces and Rangelands
	Uncultivated Area	Cultivated Area			
4000	1323.3	1326.7	140	12	170

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agricultural (MOA), 2006

**Map 3: Land use/ Land cover and Segregation wall route in Al Bireh village**



There are about 1.2 dunums of greenhouses, but no tunnels in Al Bireh village. About 0.5 dunums of this area is used for growing cucumber and another 0.5 dunums is used for growing tomatoes.

Table 4 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in the village of Al Bireh. The rain-fed fruity vegetables are the most cultivated comprising of an area of about 20 dunums. The most common vegetables cultivated within this area are squash, tomatoes and snack cucumber.

<b>Table 4: Total area of rain Fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Al Bireh Village (dunum)</b>											
Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetable		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total area	
Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr
20	0	0	0	6	0.5	0	0	0	0	26	0.5

*Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated*

In the village of Al Bireh, there is a total area of 195 dunums of olive tree plantations. Other trees planted in the area include almond trees, fig trees and grape vines.

Olives		Citrus		Stone-fruits		Pome fruits		Nuts		Other fruit		Total area	
Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr
195	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	51	0	45	0	296	3

*Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated*

Table 6 shows the total field crops cultivated in the village of Al Bireh. Cereals, in particular wheat, white corn and barley, are the most cultivated crops - with an area of about 685 dunums. In addition, the cultivation of dry legumes crops, such as lentils, and forage crops such as common vetch, lentil, and bitter vetch is also quite common in the village of Al Bireh.

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Oil crops		Seeds		Forage crops		Stimulating crops		Other crops		Total area	
Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr	Rf	Irr
685	0	6	0	36	0	0	0	1	0	272	0	0	0	0	0	1000	0

*Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated*

The data also indicates that the residents of Al Bireh village are dependent upon rearing livestock; about 10% of the residents breed farm animals such as sheep, goats and chicken. The village also has three beehives.

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
45	410	150	0	1	6	13400	---	3

*\*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls*

## Institutions and Services

Al Bireh village has no national institutions or ministry offices to provide governmental services to the people. The residents get their services from Hebron city or from Dura city. Al Bireh has only one non-governmental institution; Al Bireh Agricultural Society. It was established in 1986 to assist the village in opening agricultural roads, constructing cisterns, and general extensions. The society also provides some smaller services for its members, such as government insurance, private insurance and health care.

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

- **Telecommunication Services:** Al Bireh village is connected to a telecommunication network. Approximately 100 % of the households have a telephone connection.

- **Water Services:** Al Bireh has not been connected to a water network yet. The water tanks and cisterns are the villages only alternative to water networks. The problem which faces the project committee in the water sector is that the water supply is very weak, especially in summer.
- **Electricity Services:** Al Bireh is not connected to any national electricity network. It does however, have its own network. The village council provides electricity throughout the whole village via its own generators. Approximately 90% of households in the village are connected to the local electricity network.
- **Solid Waste Collection:** There is no system for solid waste management in Al Bireh, every household disposes of their solid wastes by burning it.
- **Sewage Disposal Facilities:** Al Bireh is not connected to a sewage network. All households must therefore dispose of their wastewater in cesspits. This is considered one of the main sources of pollution to the groundwater in the village.
- **Transportation Services:** There is about 650 m of roads in Al Bireh, 350 m are paved and in good condition, and 300 m are not paved at all. The village is served by the 'Front Line Company' buses and 20 taxis.

## Impact of the Israeli Occupation

As many other Palestinian localities, Al Bireh suffers from Israeli flying checkpoints. Similarly, since the beginning of the second Intifada, the Israeli forces have demolished ten houses in the village.

## Development Plans and Projects

No.	Project name	Type	Funded by
1.	Building school	Infrastructure	European Society

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Al Bireh Project committee has prepared a study for the development priorities in the village, table 9 shows the ranks of these priorities.

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Moderately Needed	Not Needed	Notes
<b>Infrastructural Needs</b>						
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads		*			600 m
2	Construction of New Water Networks	*				1 km
3	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks				*	
4	Construction of Water Reservoirs			*		500 mm
5	Extending the Water Network to cover New Built up Areas				*	
6	Construction of Sewage Disposal Network			*		
<b>Health Needs</b>						
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centre	*				
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres			*		
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipments and Tools			*		
<b>Educational Needs</b>						
1	Building of New Schools	*				Female school
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools				*	
3	Purchasing of New Equipments for Schools			*		
<b>Agriculture Needs</b>						
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural lands		*			1000 dunum
2	Building Cisterns		*			20
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock		*			10
4	Veterinary Services		*			
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals		*			
6	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses				*	
7	Field Crops Seeds		*			
8	Plants and Agricultural Supplies				*	

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