

# An Nabi Musa Locality Profile



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## *Acknowledgments*

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## Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, locality, and town in the Jericho Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Jericho 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 Needs Assessment;" the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

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 the Jericho 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 special emphasize on agriculture, environment and water.

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

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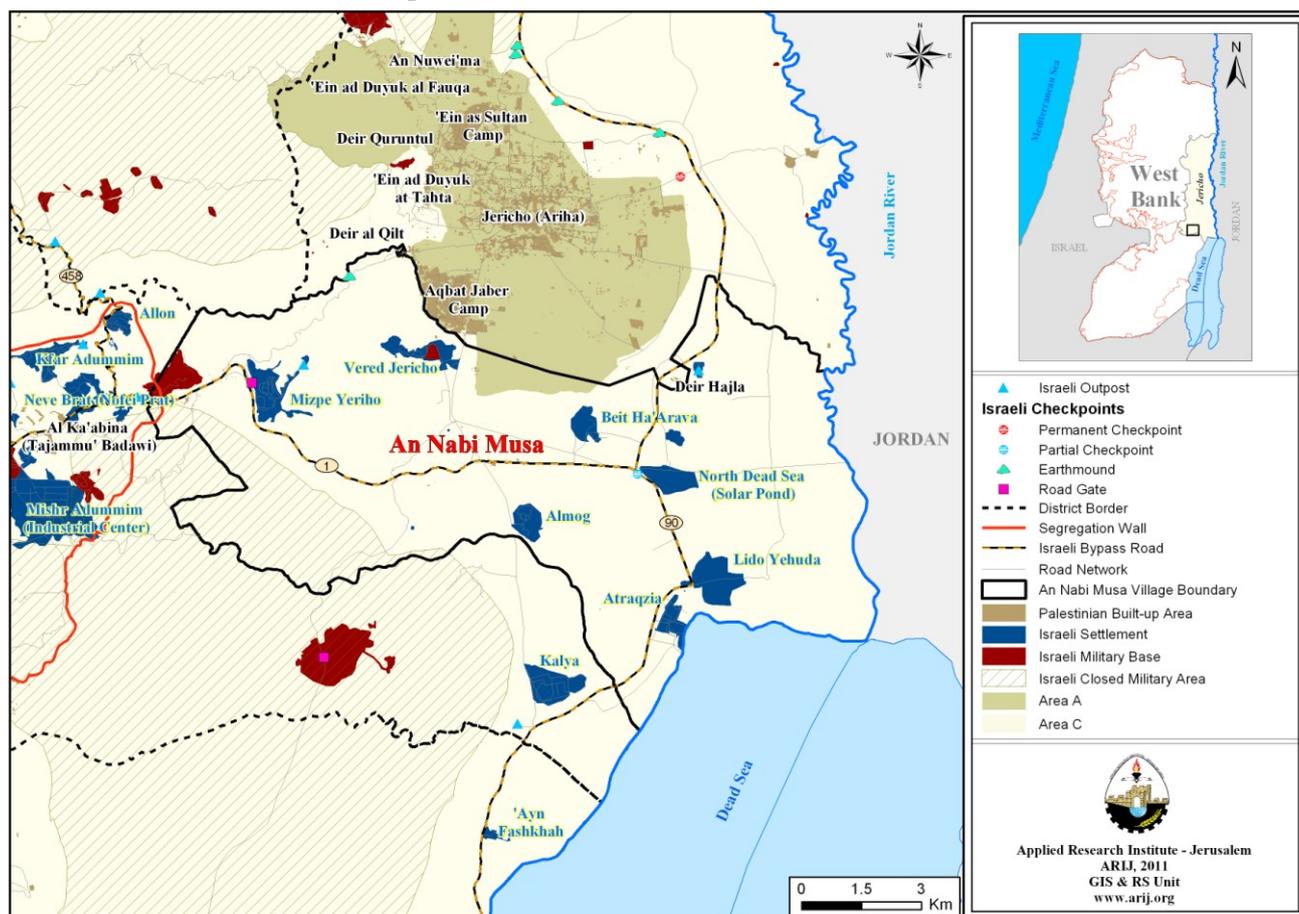
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# An Nabi Musa

## Location and Physical Characteristics

An Nabi Musa is a Palestinian locality in Jericho Governorate located (horizontally) 8.5km south of Jericho City. An Nabi Musa is bordered by the Jordan River to the east, the Dead Sea to the south, Jericho city and Aqbat Jaber camp to the north, and As Sawahra ash Sharqiya town's lands (from Jerusalem Governorate) to the west (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2010) (See map 1).

**Map 1: An Nabi Musa location and borders**



Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2011

An Nabi Musa is located at an altitude of 121m below sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 124mm. The average annual temperature is 23.5 °C, and the average annual humidity is approximately 51.5% (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2010).

An Nabi Musa locality has no local authority; as the residents of the locality are nomads who keep moving from one area to another.

## History

The Shrine of prophet Moses is located in the town where it is considered to be a holy place; given that it contains the tomb of Prophet Moses, peace be upon him (See Photo below for An Nabi Musa locality).

**Photo 1: An Nabi Musa Shrine**



The current construction of the shrine, composed of the mosque, lighthouse and different rooms, was completed in 1269 AD during the reign of the Mamluki Sultan Al Zahir Baybars, ruling during the period 1260 - 1277. This Sultan has handed down many of the agricultural lands and villages as Islamic ownership lands "Waqf" in order to maintain the shrine. Of these lands were Turmus'ayya, Al Mazra'a, Khirbet abu Falah and Sur Baher lands; in addition to Wadi al Qilt territories.

The lighthouse which is located outside the mosque gives an inclusive impressive view of the shrine, the Jordan Valley and the deserted hills located in the back. On a clear day, one can see Moab hills on the east bank of the Jordan River, as well as Mount Nebo, which, according to the Holy Bible, is related to the ministry of Prophet Moses.

The large cemetery outside the shrine walls was allocated for Muslims who died during the celebrations of "Al Mawasem" Festival that take place in the area each year by pilgrims, or who have requested to be buried in it due to the religious status of the site (Wafa, 2011).

## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of An Nabi Musa in 2007 was 309; of whom 167 were male and 142, female. There were additionally registered to be 66 households living in 65 housing units.

## Agricultural Sector

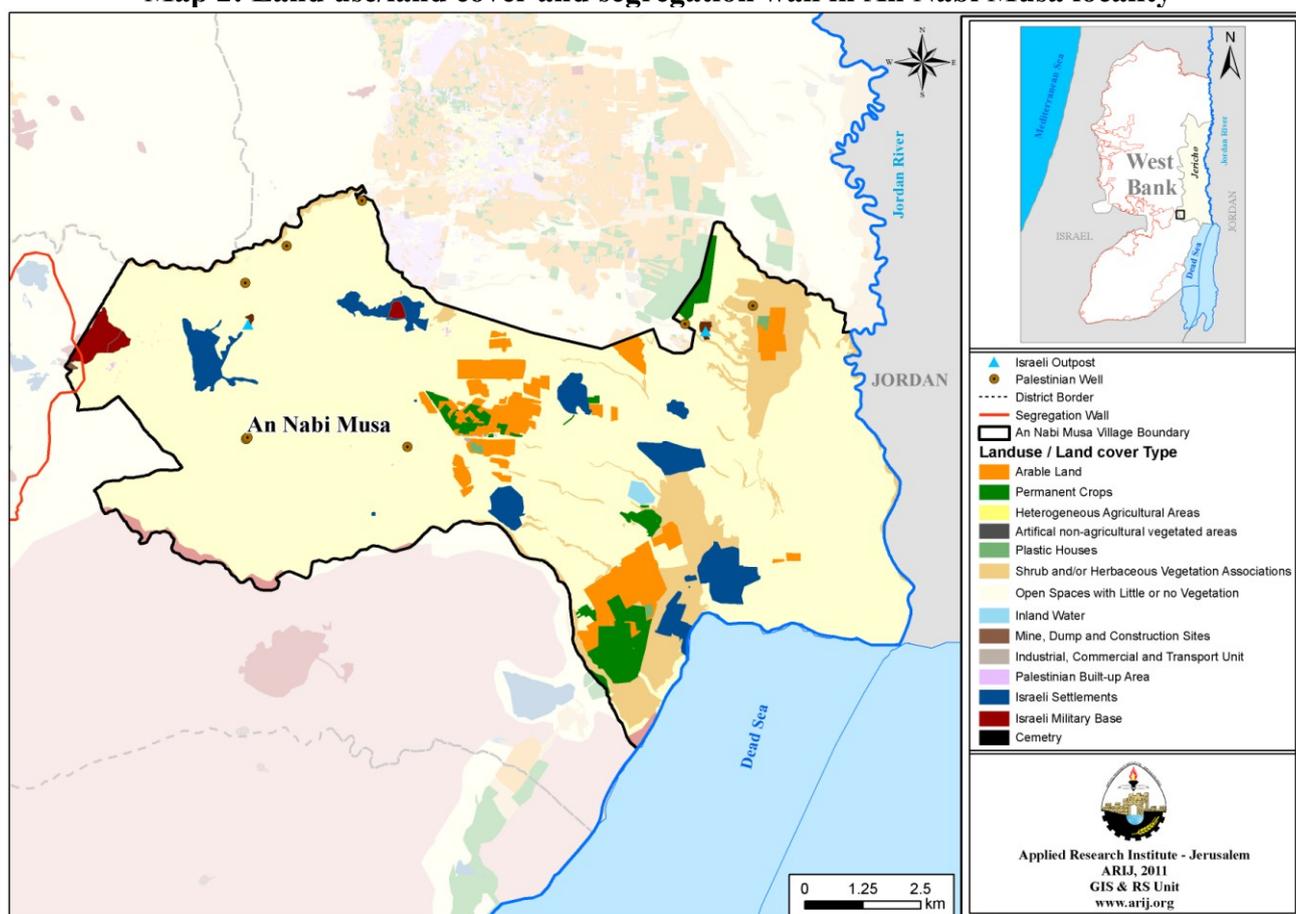
An Nabi Musa lies on a total area of about 112,795 dunums of which 19,471 dunums are considered ‘arable’ lands, and 81 dunums are registered as ‘residential’ (See table 1 and map 2).

**Table 1: Land use and land cover in An Nabi Musa locality in 2010 (areas in dunum)**

Total Area	Built-up Area	Agricultural area (19,471 dunums)				Inland water	Forests	Open Space	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements & Military Bases
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
112,795	81	2,944	157	10,361	6,009	206	0	87,003	54	5,980

Source: ARIJ – GIS unit, 2011

**Map 2: Land use/land cover and segregation wall in An Nabi Musa locality**



Source: ARIJ – GIS unit, 2011

## Geopolitical status in An Nabi Musa Locality

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, An Nabi Musa locality was divided into areas “A” and “C”. Approximately 1,955 dunums (1.7% of the total locality area) were assigned as area “A”, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has complete control over administration and security matters. On the other hand, approximately 110,847 dunums (98.3% of the total locality area) are classified as area “C”, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory. In area “C” Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through a permit given by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within area “C” are agricultural and open spaces (table 2).

**Table2 : The geopolitical divisions of An Nabi Musa according to the Oslo II interim agreement in 1995**

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of total locality area
Area A	1,955	1.7
Area B	0	0
Area C	110,847	98.3
Nature Reserve	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,802</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2011

## An Nabi Musa Locality and the Israeli Occupation

Thousands of dunums have been lost in the locality through Israeli confiscations of lands for different Israeli benefits, starting with the building of Israeli settlements and outposts on locality lands then constructing Israeli bypass roads in order to connect settlements with their neighboring ones, in addition to the establishment of military bases.

The Israeli government confiscated 2,749 dunums of the locality’s lands (4.4% of the total locality area) for the construction of 7 Israeli settlements, which nowadays are inhabited by more than 2000 Israeli settlers (table 3).

**Table 3: Israeli Settlements constructed over An Nabi Musa locality’s lands**

Settlement Name	Year of construction	Area confiscated	Population of settlers
Almog	1977	524	153
Irtaqziya	Not available	472	Touristic site
North the Dead Sea	Not available	692	Touristic site
Vered Jericho	1980	618	194
Lido Yehuda	Not available	1,147	172
Beit HaArava	1980	506	1,400
Mitzpe Yericho	1978	968	127
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,927</b>	<b>2,046</b>

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2011

Land confiscations in An Nabi Musa extended to seize more areas during the years of Israeli occupation for the establishment of an Israeli military base over an area of 937 dunums to protect the settlements both existing on locality lands and their neighboring settlements.

The Government of Israel additionally confiscated additional lands of the locality to construct Israeli bypass roads no. 90 and 1 in order to connect Israeli settlements. It is worth mentioning that the real threat of bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) along these roads, extending to approximately 75 m on both sides of the road.

Moreover, the locality has suffered many forcible lands seizures by Israeli settlers for the establishment of two Israeli outposts, including; “Mol Nevo” and “Northeastern Mitzpe Yericho”. During the past two decades Israel has constructed 232 outposts within the West Bank. These outposts are considered the nucleus for the development of new settlements and are composed of mobile caravans on the stolen lands by the settlers. Outposts are essentially a contiguity of a mother settlement that is nearby. The epidemic of Israeli outposts started with a “Sharonian” call for Jewish settlers to take control over Palestinian hilltops to prevent transferring them to Palestinians in negotiations. Although the successive Israeli governments haven’t legalized this phenomenon, they managed to find a security and logistic cover to justify the act and its continuity. After 2001 the then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unleashed the expansion of outposts which has led to a significant increase in their numbers within Palestinian areas. Additionally, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) helped Israeli settlers to move and settle in those outposts, in addition to protecting and providing them with the necessary infrastructure to guarantee their continued existence.

### **The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan in An Nabi Musa Locality**

According to the latest revised route of the Israeli segregation wall plan published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense's website on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007, the wall extends a length of 1 km on lands of An Nabi Musa and causes the isolation and confiscation of 235 dunums. The isolated area is considered mainly an open space and includes an Israeli military base.

### **Issued Military Orders in An Nabi Musa Locality**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007 The IOF revealed a new plan for East Jerusalem through issuing military order 07/19/T. The order included the confiscation of 1,128.9 dunums of Palestinian lands in An Nuba Musa, Abu Dis, Arab as Sawahra and Al Khan al Ahmar. This was done so under the pretext of “military purposes” to establish “the life net”; a road plan to link the Palestinian governorates at the southern part of the West Bank with Jericho City and al Aghwar east of the West Bank. According to the plan, the road will extend from the Israeli checkpoint known as 'Al Container' located at the southeastern part of Abu Dis city east of Jerusalem Governorate, continuing toward the east, then to north to connect with bypass Road No. 1; leading to Jericho city. It is worth mentioning that the road is routed parallel to the Segregation wall route, which will surround Ma’ale Adumim settlement bloc in order to annex it to Jerusalem. In an analysis conducted by the Geo-informatics Department at the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), it was showed that the targeted confiscated lands to build the road total approximately 1722 dunums; 593 more dunums than stated by the Israeli Army’s military order. Of the 1722 dunums taken; approximately 148.5 will be confiscated from An Nuba locality.

On 25<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the IOF handed over a new military order named “Land Law Order, acquisition for public projects - Judea and Samaria (no. 321) 5729-1969” to Palestinian citizens of

Anata, Al 'Isawiya, Al Khan and An Nabi Musa communities. The order is related to the Land Acquisition & Expropriation no. 02/09/H order which stipulates the confiscation of their lands to expand the Israeli-controlled bypass road no. 1. The Israeli military order stated that a total of 584 dunums are to be confiscated from the aforementioned locality, but an analysis conducted by the GIS team in ARIJ showed that the area threatened of confiscation is far greater than that mentioned in the military order and totals 638 dunums; 100 dunums more than the area stated in the military order. Of these, 35 dunums will be confiscated from An Nabi Musa locality to create a buffer zone on both sides of a section (4.7 kilometers) of Israeli bypass road no. 1 which runs through the Ma'ale Adumim settlement bloc (precisely between Neve Brat settlement and the Mishor Adumim Industrial zone).

Moreover, in September 2011 the Israeli government informed the Bedouins living in the area of An Nabi Musa and communities of East Jerusalem (those communities located in the area between Ma'ale Adumim settlement bloc and An Nabi Musa locality) about its plan to displace and move them to an area close to An Nabi Musa to the west of Jericho. The action is justified by the Israeli claims that these Bedouins' communities are illegally established over Israel's lands and any construction is considered contrary to the law because it is built with no permit issued by the relevant Israeli authorities. Israel also claims that this order was issued so as to save the national security of Israeli settlements around Jerusalem city. However, the real reason behind the order of evacuation is seizing and annexing more Palestinian lands to Jerusalem and Israel for future potential expansion of Israeli settlements, and the imposition of the Jewish preponderance in the City. The time scheduled by the Israeli Civil Administration to implement the evacuation and displacement ranges between 3 to 6 years, starting for January 2012. This order will cause the displacement of more than 2,500 Palestinian Bedouins from the area.

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