

Al 'Auja Town Profile



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Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, village, 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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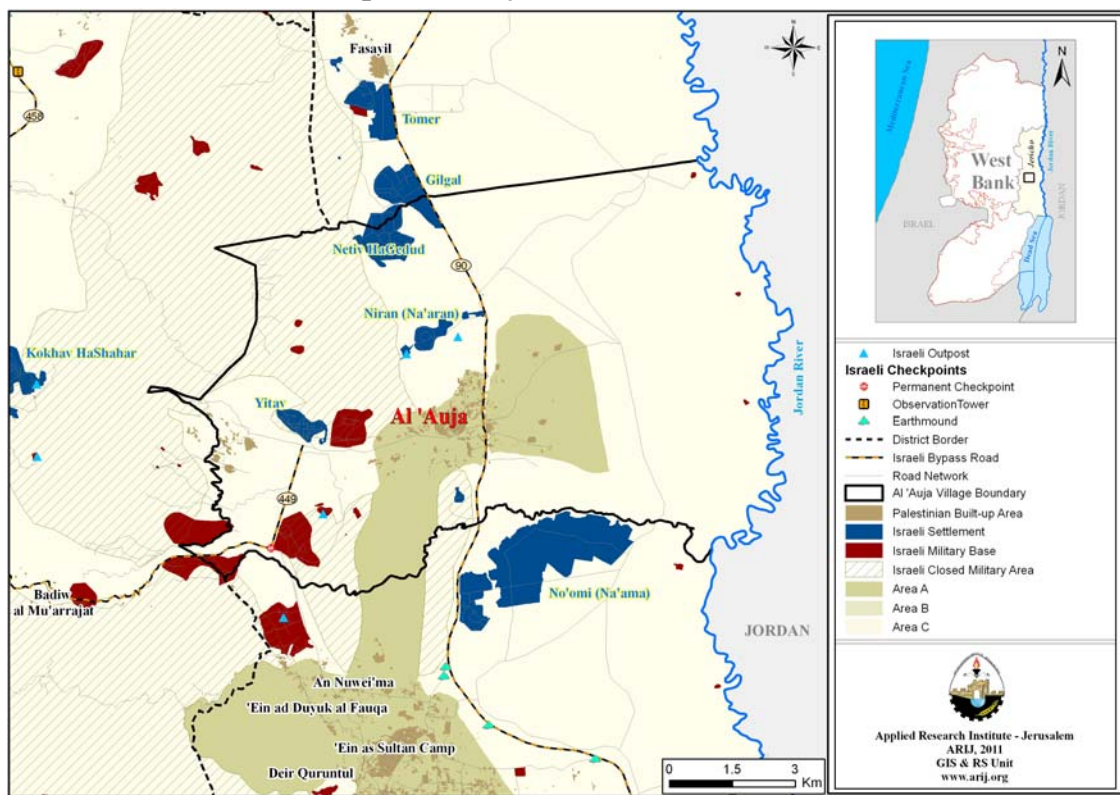
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Al 'Auja Town Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Al 'Auja is a Palestinian town in the middle of Jericho Governorate located (horizontally) 9.8 km north of Jericho City. Al 'Auja is bordered by the Jordan River to the east, Fasayil village to the north, Kafr Malik and Deir Jarir villages' lands (in Ramallah Governorate) to the west, and An Nuwei'ma town to the south (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2010) (See map 1).

Map 1: Al 'Auja location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2011.

Al 'Auja is located at an altitude of 242 m below sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 166 mm. The average annual temperature is 23 °C, and the average annual humidity is approximately 48% (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2010).

Since 1995, Al 'Auja has been governed by a local council, which is currently administrated by 8 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), in addition to 5 permanent employees. The Local Council owns a permanent headquarters, but does not own a vehicle for the collection of solid waste. However, it does possess a

pick-up car and a tractor to serve a number of the community's needs (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

It is the responsibility of the local council to provide a number of services to the residents of Al 'Auja, including (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011):

1. Establishing and maintaining the water network.
2. Solid waste collection, road construction, pavement and rehabilitation, street cleaning and social development services.
3. Organizing the construction and licensing processes.
4. Constructing and supervising kindergartens.

History

Al 'Auja town's name comes in relation to Al 'Auja Spring which is located in the town (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

The establishment of the town dates back 200 years with its residents descending from indigenous Bedouin populations who lived in the area a long time ago (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011) (See photo below for Al 'Auja town).

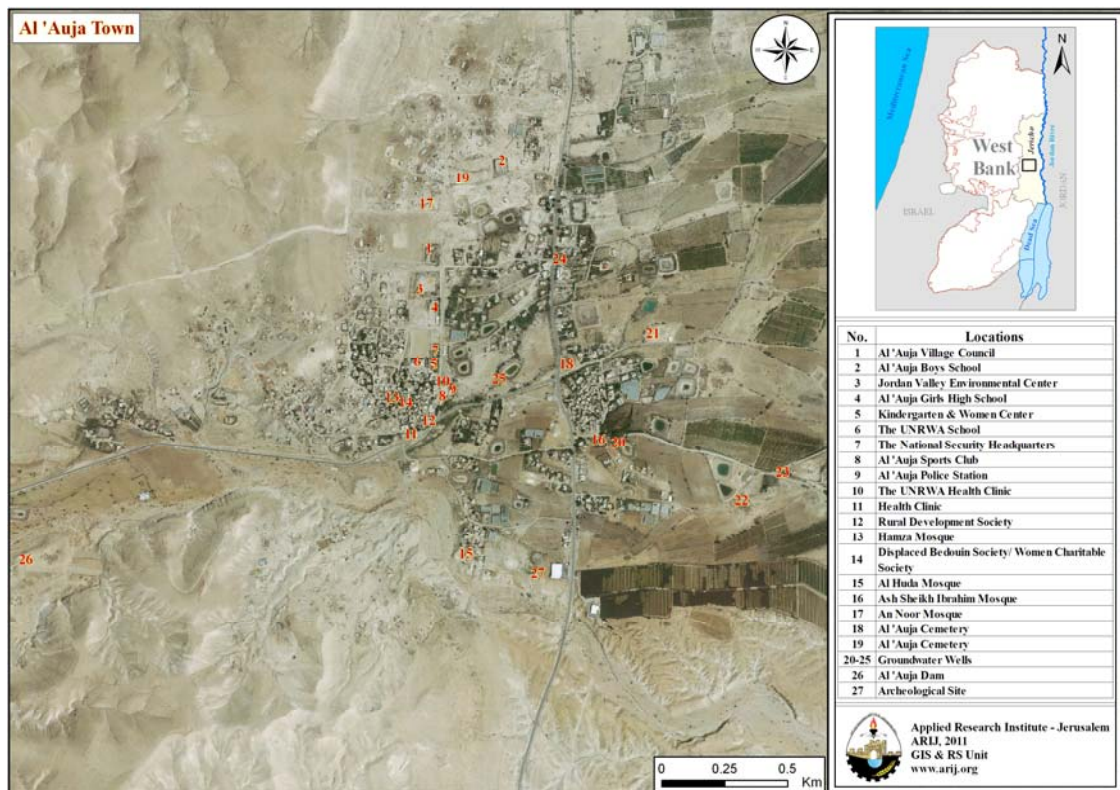
Photo 1: General Landscape of Al 'Auja



Religious and Archaeological Sites

In terms of religious establishments, there are four mosques in the town; Ash Sheikh Ibrahim, Hamza, An Noor and Al Huda Mosques. As for archaeological sites, there are just a few, mainly: a site of Byzantine remains, Umm Zaqumah remains, Haider Well remains, and waterfall and historic mill areas. It is noted however that these sites are not qualified for tourism (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Al 'Auja Town



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2011.

Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Al 'Auja in 2007 was 3,934; of whom 1,965 were male and 1,969, female. There were additionally registered 674 households to be living in 721 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 'Auja as follows: 44.2% were less than 15 years, 51% between 15 - 64 years, whilst 2.5% fell in the 65 years and older category. Data

additionally showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the town was 99.8:100, meaning that males and females constituted 49.9% and 50.1% of the population, respectively.

Families

Al 'Auja residents are composed of several families, mainly: An Nujoum, Ka'abnah, 'Atiyat, Sa'ayidah, 'Ereinat, 'E'shibat, Jama'at, Freijat, 'Etifat and Romaneen (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Al 'Auja population was approximately 10.2%, of whom 76% were females. Of the literate population, 17.7% could only read and write, with no formal education 28% had elementary education, 28.2% had preparatory education, 9.9% had secondary education, and 5.4% completed higher education. Table 1, shows the educational level in the town, by sex, and educational attainment (2007).

Table 1: Al 'Auja population (10 years and above) by sex and educational attainment, 2007

S E x	Illite- rate	Can read & write	Elem- entary	Prepa- ratory	Second- ary	Associate Diploma	Bach- elor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Un- known	Total
M	65	232	396	387	125	28	45	-	7	-	6	1,291
F	202	232	340	352	135	27	43	-	-	-	3	1,334
T	267	464	736	739	260	55	88	-	7	-	9	2,625

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

With regards to the basic and secondary education institutions and schools in Al 'Auja in the academic year 2010/2011, there are three public schools in the town run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), in addition to a private school run by UNRWA (Directorate of Education in Jericho, 2011).

In the town there are 1,279 students, 84 teachers, and 53 classes, and it should be noted here that the average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 15, whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 24 (Directorate of Education in Jericho, 2011).

Table 2: The Schools in Al 'Auja by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Al 'Auja Boys High School	Government	Males
Al 'Auja Girls High School		Females
Badu al Ka'abnah School		Co-educated
Al 'Auja Co-educated Elementary School	UNRWA	Co-educated

Source: Directorate of Education in Jericho, 2011

Moreover, there are two local kindergartens run by private bodies, with the total number of children in between these, reaching (in 2011), 108. Table 3 shows these kindergartens according to their names and supervising authority.

Table 3: The Kindergartens in Al 'Auja by name and supervising authority

Kindergarten Name	No. of Children	Supervising Authority
Al Jeel al Jadeed/ Al 'Auja Kindergarten	15	Private
'Ahab Allah Kindergarten	93	Private

Source: Directorate of Education in Jericho, 2011

Nevertheless, the educational sector in Al 'Auja suffers some obstacles, mainly:

1. The lack of classrooms in comparison to the yearly growing number of students.
2. The instability of permanent teachers due to their movement from one school to another; either because of the long distances between their homes and schools or the lack of transportations.

Health Status

There are few health centers available in Al 'Auja town; a governmental health center, two general clinics (one run by a private body and the other by UNRWA, and a pharmacy. In case of emergency or absence of any required health services, patients are sent to Jericho Governmental hospital in Jericho City which is located approximately 20km away from the locality. In case of the absence of some health specific services, such as X-ray, medical laboratory analysis or mother and childcare facilities, patients of Al 'Auja travel also to Jericho city, or to Aqbat Jaber in physiotherapy cases; 10km and 14km in distance from the locality, respectively (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

However, the health sector in the town suffers numerous obstacles and problems, including:

1. The lack of a physician working on daily basis in the health center.
2. The lack of a permanent and constantly accessible ambulance in the town.
3. The lack of a radiology center and a medical laboratory.
4. The lack of a physiotherapy center for disabled persons.

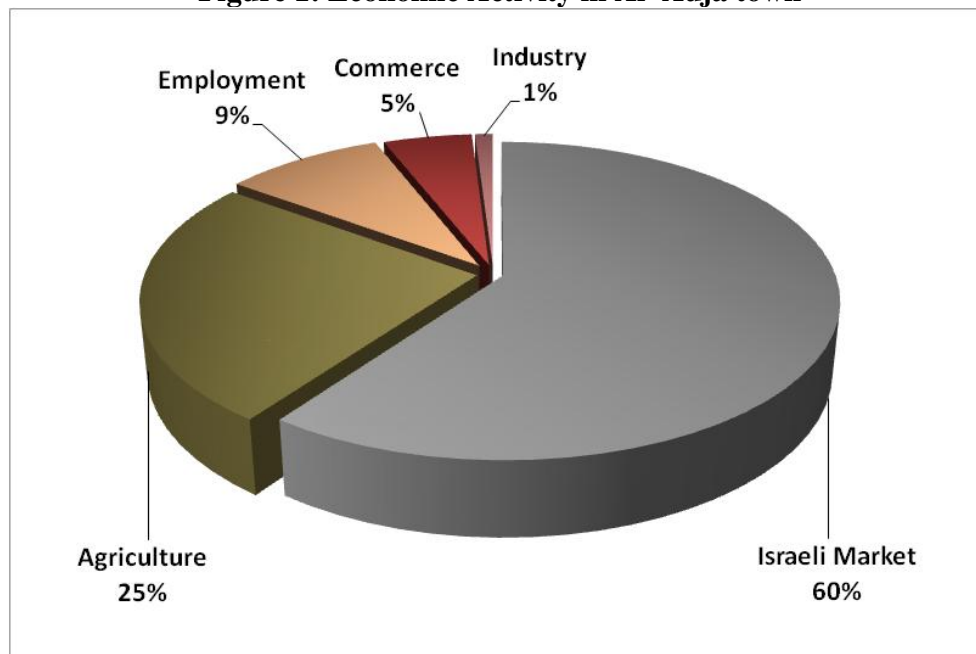
Economic Activities

The economy in Al 'Auja is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly: the Israeli labor market, which absorbs approximately 60% of the town's workforce (See Figure1) (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

The results of a field survey conducted by ARIJ in 2011 to realize this study showed that the distribution of labor by economic activity in Al 'Auja is as follows:

- Israeli labor market (60%)
- Agriculture Sector (25%)
- Government or Private Employees Sector (9%)
- Trade Sector (5%)
- Industry (1%)

Figure 1: Economic Activity in Al 'Auja town



Source: Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011

In term of commercial, economic and industrial activities in Al 'Auja town, there are a few, mainly: a factory for filling dates in boxes, a number of chicken farms (for both broiler and layer poultry), vegetables filling factory for exportation (Palestine Gardens Company) and a water filling factory, in addition, there are 20 grocery stores in the town, 2 vegetables and fruits stores, 5 different professional workshops (carpentry, blacksmith, etc.), 10 different services stores, 2 stone quarries, a store for agricultural equipments and 2 agricultural nurseries (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

However, the unemployment rate in Al 'Auja reached around 40% in 2011, and it was found that the social groups most affected in the town as a result of the Israeli restrictions and procedures, were as follows (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011):

1. Workers in the agricultural sector.
2. Workers in the trade sector.
3. Industrial workers

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 33.3% of Al 'Auja labor force were economically active, of whom 96.1% were employed, and 66.1% were not economically active; of whom 46.1% were students and 39.5% were housekeepers (See table 4).

Table 4: Al 'Auja population (10 years and above) by sex and employment status

SEX	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Un-known	Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (Never worked)	Total	Students	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & Not looking for work	Other	Total		
M	758	13	11	782	365	-	97	3	36	501	8	1,291
F	83	6	4	93	436	685	85	1	28	1,235	6	1,334
T	841	19	15	875	801	685	182	4	64	1,736	14	2,625

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

Agricultural Sector

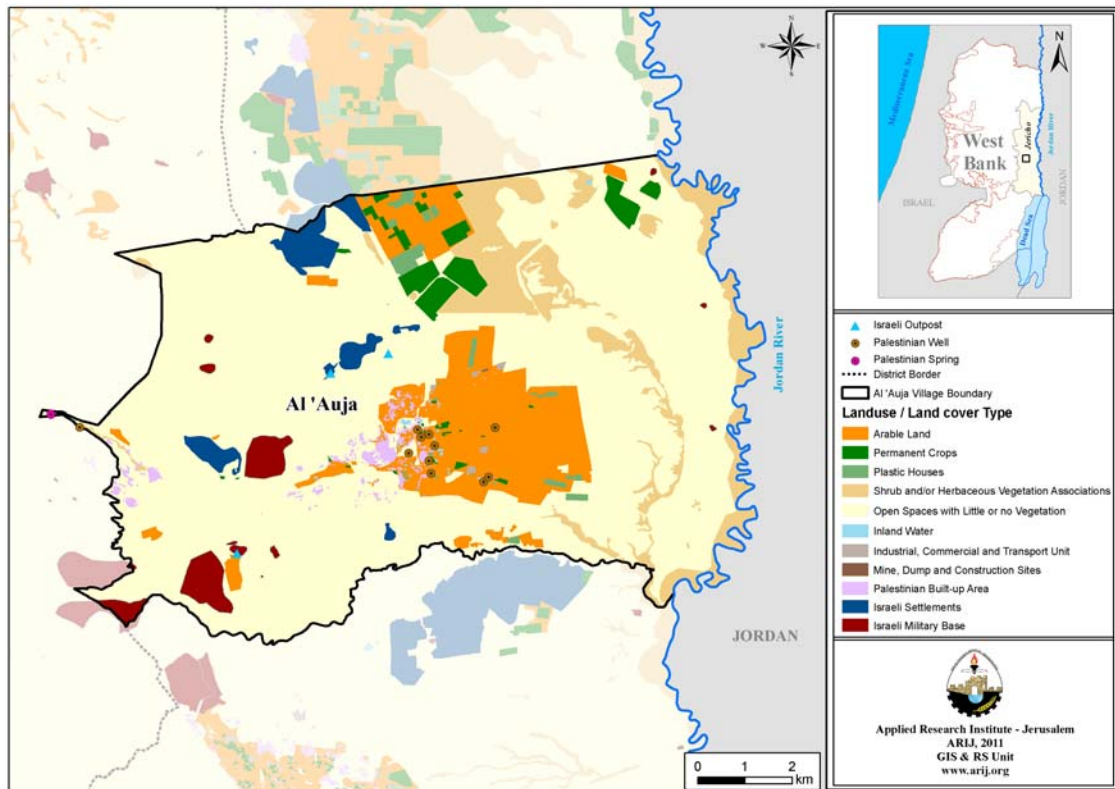
Al 'Auja lies on a total area of around 106,398 dunums, of which 26,032 dunums are considered arable land, and 1,126 are registered as 'residential' (See table 5 and map 3).

Table 5: Land use and land cover in Al 'Auja town in 2010 (area in dunum)

Total Area	Built-up Area	Agricultural area (26,032 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					
106,398	1,126	2,457	846	9,951	12,778	96	0	74,625	109	4,409

Source: ARJ – GIS unit, 2011

Map 3: Land use/land cover in Al 'Auja town



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2011.

Agricultural production in Al 'Auja depends mostly on springs and groundwater wells. The town residents cultivate different kinds of vegetables using these methods, mainly; tomatoes and cucumbers (See table 6).

Table 6: Total area of cultivated lands in Al 'Auja town (dunum)

Vegetables	Citrus	Grapes	Palm		Banana	Total area
			area	No. of trees		
2,137	26	72	241	5,943	10	2,486

Source: Jericho & Al Aghwar Directorate of Agriculture – Jericho, 2011

The difference in the two sets of results of agricultural areas, obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and by ARIJ's GIS Unit, is explained by the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture, who in combination with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2011) conducted a survey considering a definition of agricultural areas based on the size of ownership. Thus, the areas included in the survey were those of actual holdings of agricultural areas instead of seasonal ones. The survey did not consider fragmented and small seasonal cultivated areas in residential and agricultural areas which contains some springs. ARIJ's survey however indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. This illustrates the bigger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey shows that only 25% of the residents in Al 'Auja rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep, poultry and bees (See Table 7).

Table 7: Livestock in Al 'Auja town

Cows*	Sheep	Camels	Poultry	Bee Hives
13	18,704	96	183,000	99

* Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Jericho & Al Aghwar Directorate of Agriculture – Jericho, 2011

There are also around 50 kilometers of agricultural roads in the town (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011), divided as follows:

Table 8: Agricultural roads in Al 'Auja town and their lengths

Suitability of Agricultural Roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	20
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	10
For animals only	10
Unsuitable	10

Source: Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011

However, the agricultural sector in the town suffers some problems and obstacles, mainly (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011):

1. The lack of water for adequate agricultural cultivations and the drought suffered by of Al 'Auja spring.
2. The lack of lands suitable for grazing.
3. The confiscation of agricultural lands by Israeli occupying powers.
4. Israeli settlers' attacks on agricultural lands.

Institutions and Services

Al 'Auja town has a few governmental institutions, including: an office for the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), a police station and a national security center, in addition to a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various segments of society such as: children, youth, and women. The services are in the areas of culture, sports and others, including (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011):

- **Al 'Auja Local Council:** Founded in 1995 by the Ministry of Local Government with the goal of taking care of all the issues in the town and providing various services to its population including infrastructure services.
- **Al 'Auja Youth Club:** Founded in 1985 and was licensed recently by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, with an interest in all sports, cultural and social activities.

- **Al 'Auja Women Center:** Founded in 2007 by Al 'Auja Local Council, in order to follow up with the women's issues in the town and provide them with different workshops and services.
- **Al 'Auja Women Charitable Society:** Founded in 2008 by the town's women, in order to provide cultural, educational and health awareness workshops.
- **The Cooperative Society for Beekeeping:** Founded in 2008, by the town's men and women, in order to raise bees and develop solutions for honey marketing.
- **The Farmers Union:** Founded in 2000 by the Farmers Union in Jericho Governorate, in order to provide assistance and guidance to farmers.
- **The Banana Society:** Founded in 2000 by local banana farmers, with the aim of taking care and developing the cultivation and exportation of locally grown bananas.

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Telecommunication Services

Al 'Auja has been connected to a public electricity network since 1984; served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the town. Approximately 70% of the housing units in the town are connected to this network; however, many town residents suffer some problems concerning electricity, mainly (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011):

- The high costs of electricity.
- The high costs of participation fees and meters.
- The weak electricity current.
- The problem of filling and charging the meters.

Furthermore, Al 'Auja is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 20% of the housing units within the town boundaries are connected to phone lines (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

Transportation Services

There are 10 public taxis, a bus and 20 unlicensed/illegal cars considered to be the main means of transportation in Al 'Auja town (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011). As for the road network in the town; there are a total of 17km of designated 'main' roads and 10km of 'secondary' roads (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011) (See Table 9).

Table 9: Roads in Al 'Auja town

Status of Internal Roads	Road Length (km)	
	Main	Sub
Paved & in good condition	5	3
Paved but in poor condition	2	2
Unpaved	10	5

Source: Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011

Water Resources

Based on the results of the project implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Italian Group of Civil Volunteers (GVC)¹, which aims to promote and support farmers who are suffering from difficult living conditions in the Jordan Valley, the water supply in Al 'Auja town is recorded to be dependent on several geographical areas: Al 'Auja, Badu al 'Auja and Ras 'Ein al 'Auja.

Al 'Auja is currently being provided with water by the privately owned Israeli 'Mekerot' Company, through the public water network established in 1986. It is noted that approximately, 100% of the housing units are connected to the water network (GVC & FAO, 2011). The average rate of water supply per capita in Al 'Auja town is around 174 liters per day, with the quantity of water supplied to Al 'Auja in 2011 being estimated at approximately 18,250 cubic meters/ month. Here it should be noted that no Al 'Auja citizen in fact consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are about 30%. These losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, distribution network, and at the household level, making the rate of water consumption per capita in Al 'Auja an estimated 120 liters per day (GVC & FAO, 2011).

However, residents of Badu al 'Auja and Ras 'Ein al 'Auja areas depend on Al 'Auja spring as a main source for water to supply their domestic and agricultural needs. The rate of water consumption per capita in Badu al 'Auja and Ras 'Ein al 'Auja is 32 liters per day, and the average rate of water consumption in Badu al 'Auja and Ras 'Ein al 'Auja is 973 and 292 cubic meters/ month, respectively (GVC & FAO, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that Al 'Auja town has been suffering from a severe shortage of water for many years, mainly in Badu al 'Auja and Ras 'Ein al 'Auja areas, which are located within area C, where there exists severe restrictions on citizens' access to water. This occurs simultaneous to illegal Israeli settlers draining of water resources on lands built in West Bank. In addition, the water quality in these areas is considered a source of growing concern for the local Palestinian citizens.

Table 10 shows the waters quantities consumed for agricultural, livestock and domestic purposes in Al 'Auja town for the year 2011.

¹ The project was implemented in cooperation with the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG) and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), with the support of the Palestinian Water Authority and the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, and funded by the Italian Cooperation.

Table 10: Amount of water used for livestock, domestic and agricultural purposes in Al 'Auja, 2011

Area	Amount of Water Consumption (cubic meter/year)			Source
	Domestic	Agriculture	Livestock	
Al 'Auja	153,300	1,032,815	30,295	Private agricultural wells & the water network
Ras 'Ein al 'Auja	3,504	0	43,800	Al 'Auja spring
Badu al 'Auja	11,680	0	39,055	Al 'Auja spring

Source: GVC & FAO, 2011

It is worth noting here that Al 'Auja spring is one of the main springs in Palestine; the quantity of water discharged from the spring having reached more than 2,000 cubic meters per hour in some years, with the estimated rate of discharge being considered more than 10 million cubic meters per year. It is noted that in 2005, the spring's annual discharge reached around 14 million cubic meters (PWA, 2007). The spring's discharge predominantly depends on the quantity of rainwater, meaning the discharge declines if the amount of rains decreases. The spring is also susceptible to 'drying out', which although this only used to happen infrequently, has in recent years become a more frequent phenomenon, with the spring becoming repeatedly dry for long periods of time. In 2012, the flow of the spring began earlier than last year, starting on Feb 1st and lasting for just 20 days. The spring then dried up as a result of 'Mekorot' Company withdrawing the water from the aquifer once the spring water started flowing (See Picture 2).

Photo 2: Flow of Al' Auja water spring

Source: Maan News Agency, 2012

It is worth mentioning here that the spring's dryness is a direct result of Israel's control over the groundwater and the groundwater wells. Israeli occupation forces have constructed huge sized wells over Al 'Auja's hot water basins which has caused serious and direct harm to the quantity of water flowing from the spring, therefore resulting in its dryness, and also leading to the destruction of thousands of dunums of agricultural areas which were being fed by the water spring. In addition, the region adjacent to the spring

has become a closed military zone because of the military exercises carried out by the Israeli occupation army.

Moreover, there are 7 artesian wells located in the town, on which agricultural projects are carried out, including the cultivation of vegetables, mussels and corn. The amount of water extracted from the wells in 2009 was around 912,365 cubic meters/ year (GVC & FAO, 2011).

Sanitation

Al 'Auja lacks a public sewerage network with most of the town residents using cesspits as their main means of waste -water disposal (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day, is approximately 325 cubic meters, equating to 118 thousand cubic meters annually. At the individual level, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is between 25 to 80 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits, is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys 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 and this poses a serious threat to both environment and public health (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

Solid Waste Management

The Joint Services Council for Development and Planning for the Management of Solid Waste in Jericho & Al Aghwar 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 town, 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 fee (approx. 15 NIS/month) has been charged on the population serviced by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However, the collected fees are not considered sufficient for a good management of solid waste; as only 20% of these fees are collected from town citizens (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

Most of the population in Al 'Auja benefit from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to 60 containers², spread throughout the locality. The Council collects the solid waste from the containers twice a week and transports it through a waste vehicle owned by the Joint Council to a random dumping site³, located 0.5km in distance from the town center. The common method for solid waste treatment in this dumping site is through the burial of waste. It should be mentioned here that household waste, industrial, and medical solid waste are collected together and dumped into the same landfill, with

² each with a 1m³capacity

³ Al 'Auja dumping site

the absence of any special system for separation and/or collection (Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Al 'Auja is 1.05kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from Al 'Auja residents is nearly 4.1 tons, or 1,508 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

Environmental Conditions

Like other villages and camps in the governorate, Al 'Auja experiences several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved. These problems can be identified as follows:

Water Crisis

- Groundwater sources have been depleted through 'Mekorot' Israeli owned wells, which have been given a monopoly on the excavation, restoration, distribution and selling of water, whilst Palestinians have been forbidden from constructing new wells and/or restoring existing ones. In many cases, as is the case in Al 'Auja town, the local authority relies heavily on the purchase of water from Mekorot Israeli Company to provide the town with water. The Company, through the wells it owns, extracts large quantities of ground water, where it pumps the bulk of this water for the benefit of the illegal Israeli settlements, as settlers, mainly those in the Jordan Valley area, use huge quantities of water (ARIJ, 2011). Moreover, there is one well in Al 'Auja town belonging to the private Israeli owned Mekorot Company, which is; Jericho well no. 1 (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).
- Israeli Occupation forces do not allow Palestinians to construct new agricultural wells or rehabilitate/change the location of the old ones. They also set a limit on the quantity of water permitted to be pumped from these wells.
- The old and worn out condition of the water network currently in place need to be examined and plans made for its future development/rehabilitation.
- The inability to use Al 'Auja spring water or invest in areas surround the spring, either for agricultural or touristic purposes, under the argument that its located within area C, in addition to being considered as closed military zone.

Wastewater Management

The absence of a public sewage network means most town residents use cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and for the discharge of wastewater in the streets, especially in winter, as citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers at this time. All of this causes environmental damages, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the town. The use of cesspits pollutes the groundwater and water collected in domestic cisterns (rainwater harvesting cisterns) as the wastewater mixes with water and contaminates it, thus making it inappropriate for human consumption. This is due to the fact that most cesspits are built without lining, which allows wastewater to enter into the ground and avoids, on a sporadic basis, the need to use sewage tankers. Moreover, the

untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without taking into account the damage it causes to the environment as well as residents' health.

Impact of the Israeli Occupation

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed on 28th September 1995 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Al 'Auja lands were divided into areas "A" and "C". Approximately 16,519 dunums (15.5% of the total area) were assigned as area A, where the PNA has complete control over administrative and security matters. It is worth mentioning that most of the town's population resides in area "A" which constitutes a small proportion of the total area of the town. The rest of the town area, constituting 89,879 dunums (84.5% of the total area), was 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 consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within the area "C" are agricultural areas and open spaces (table 11).

Table 11: The geopolitical divisions of Al 'Auja according to the Oslo II Interim Agreement in 1995

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total town area
Area A	16,519	15.5
Area B	0	0
Area C	89,879	84.5
Nature Reserve	0	0
Total	106,398	100

Source: Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2011

Al 'Auja and Israeli Occupation Practices

Thousands of dunums have been lost in Al 'Auja by Israeli confiscations in order to build settlements on the town's lands, or to construct Israeli bypass roads to connect neighboring settlements to one another.

Israel has confiscated 2,257 dunums (2.1% of the total town's area) since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Lands have been confiscated to build 4 Israeli settlements which are currently inhabited by more than 600 Israeli settlers (table 12).

Table 12: Israeli Settlements constructed over Al 'Auja lands

Settlement Name	Year of construction	Area confiscated (dunums)	Population of settlers
Gilgal	1970	268	172
Niran	1981	497	54
Nativ HaGdud	1975	993	175
Yitav	1970	499	227
Total		2,257	628

Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2011

Israeli confiscations have continued, resulting in the seizure of more lands of Al 'Auja, leading to the loss of many areas for Israeli purposes, including the establishment of an Israeli Military Base over an area of 2,152 dunums in order to protect the Israeli settlements existing over Al 'Auja lands and neighboring regions.

Moreover, 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 lands stolen by the settlers. Outposts are a contiguity of a mother settlement that is near. It is worth mentioning that 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 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unleashed the expansion of outposts which has led to a significant increase in the number of outposts within Palestinian areas. In addition, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) helped the 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. Al 'Auja is one of these Palestinian localities that had, during the past few years, their lands forcibly seized for the establishment of 3 outposts; "Omer Farm", "West Niran" and "East Niran".

The Israeli Government also confiscated more lands in the town to open bypass roads 90 and 449 to connect established Israeli settlements with each other and with the nearby settlements. It is worth mentioning that the real threat of bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the IOF along these roads, extending to approximately 75 m on both sides of the road (ARIJ-Urbanization Monitoring Unit, 2011).

Issued Military Orders in Al 'Auja

The Israeli Occupation Army has issued numerous military orders to confiscate lands in Al 'Auja. The following are the issued military orders by phase:

- Israeli Military Order No. (142/05/T): it was issued on the 16th of August 2005 and confiscates an area of 10 dunums of the lands of Al 'Auja for establishing and Israeli military checkpoint.

- Israeli Military Order No. (205/05/T): it was issued on the 22nd of November 2005 and confiscates 3.2 dunums of the lands of Al 'Auja for the construction of an Israeli military tower.
- Order regarding state property 'Judea & Samaria' (No. 59⁴) 5727-1967: it was on 29th of December 2005 and confiscates 1.194 dunums of Al 'Auja considering it as 'State Lands'.

Israeli violations in Al 'Auja Town during the last years

On the 8th of May 2011, the IOF with the Israeli Civil Administration's inspection subcommittee raided Al 'Auja town and presented three Palestinian citizens notices obliging them to cease the construction of residential and industrial establishments with the pretext of unauthorized construction, as they lie in area "C". The owners of these establishments were given a time limit (any time preceding 13th July 2011) to start the licensing procedures and submit them to the Court of Beit El, so the later would consider the status of these establishments. The followings are the names and type of establishments that have been presented notices (ARIJ-Urbanization Monitoring Unit, 2011):

- Jamal Abdul ar Rahman Freihat (a house under construction)
- Abdullah Youssef Ka'abneh (a blacksmithery under construction)
- Mus'if Khalil Abu Awwad (a peopled dwelling)
- Mahmoud Abdullah An Najaydeh (a house under construction).

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented Projects

Al 'Auja local council has implemented several development projects in Al 'Auja, during the last five years (See Table 13).

⁴ **Military Order #59 (1967):** establishes the Israeli Military-appointed position of 'Custodian of Government Property' to take over land owned by the Jordanian Government. Also, allows the 'Custodian of Government Property' to appropriate land from individuals or groups by declaring it 'Public Land' or 'State Land', the latter which it defines as land that was owned or managed by, or had a partner who was an enemy body or citizen of an enemy country during the 1967 war (amended by Military Order 1091).

Table 13: Implemented development plans and projects in Al 'Auja during the last five years

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Construction of a new water network	Infrastructure	2011	USAID
Construction of Al 'Auja boys school	Educational	2008	USAID
Construction of the women center	Public Services	2008	JICA
Construction of a public hall and Al 'Auja library	Public Services	2010	JICA

Source: Al 'Auja Local Council, 2011

Proposed Projects

Al 'Auja Local Council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the town and the town 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 town. The projects are as follows, in order of priority, from the perspectives' of the participants in the workshop:

1. Rehabilitating Al 'Auja spring, providing artesian wells for the irrigation of crops, and using agricultural lands more broadly.
2. Creating income-generating projects for existing civil institutions.
3. Developing the health centers in Al 'Auja and providing an ambulance.
4. Providing a bus for the town.
5. Employing university graduates in Al 'Auja town.
6. Providing a vocational training center to cover multiple fields.
7. Establishing factories to employ the growing number of unemployed workers.
8. Expanding the water and electricity networks.
9. Providing domestic cisterns for residents, mainly in summer.
10. Creating agricultural and development projects for farmers.
11. Establishing a sewage network in order to curb environmental pollution.
12. Using wastewater for the irrigation of palm trees and the cultivation of fodder for sheep.
13. Rehabilitating internal roads in the town.
14. Constructing agricultural roads to serve farmers in accessing to their lands.
15. Establishing a health center for people with special needs.
16. Expanding the structural plan for the town to cover larger areas of structure.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Al 'Auja suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 14 shows the development priorities and needs in the town, according to the local council's feedback (Al 'Auja Local council, 2011).

Table 14: Development Priorities and Needs in Al 'Auja

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*			27km*
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks			*	
3	Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas	*			10km
4	Construction of New Water Networks			*	
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs	*			5 underground wells and 1 spring
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs	*			700 cubic meters
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network	*			25km
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network			*	
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection	*			50 containers
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste		*		1 vehicle
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill		*		
Health Needs					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres	*			one health clinic
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres		*		2 clinics
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools	*			
Educational Needs					
1	Building of New Schools			*	
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools	*			preparatory & elementary levels
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools	*			
Agriculture Needs					
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands	*			1,000 dunums
2	Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns	*			20 cisterns
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock	*			30 barracks
4	Veterinary Services	*			
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals	*			400,000 tons per year
6	Construction of New Greenhouses	*			100 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses	*			80 greenhouses
8	Field Crops Seeds	*			
9	Plants and Agricultural Supplies	*			

*10km are main roads, 5km are sub roads and 12km are agricultural roads.

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