

# Abu Dis Town Profile



Prepared by



**The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem**

Funded by



**Spanish Cooperation**

**2012**

## *Acknowledgments*

*ARIJ hereby expresses its deep gratitude to the Spanish agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) for their funding of this project.*

*ARIJ is grateful to the Palestinian officials in the ministries, municipalities, joint services councils, town committees and councils, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) for their assistance and cooperation with the project team members during the data collection process.*

*ARIJ also thanks all the staff who worked throughout the past couple of years towards the accomplishment of this work.*

## Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, village, and town in the Jerusalem Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Jerusalem 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 Jerusalem 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>.

## Table of Content

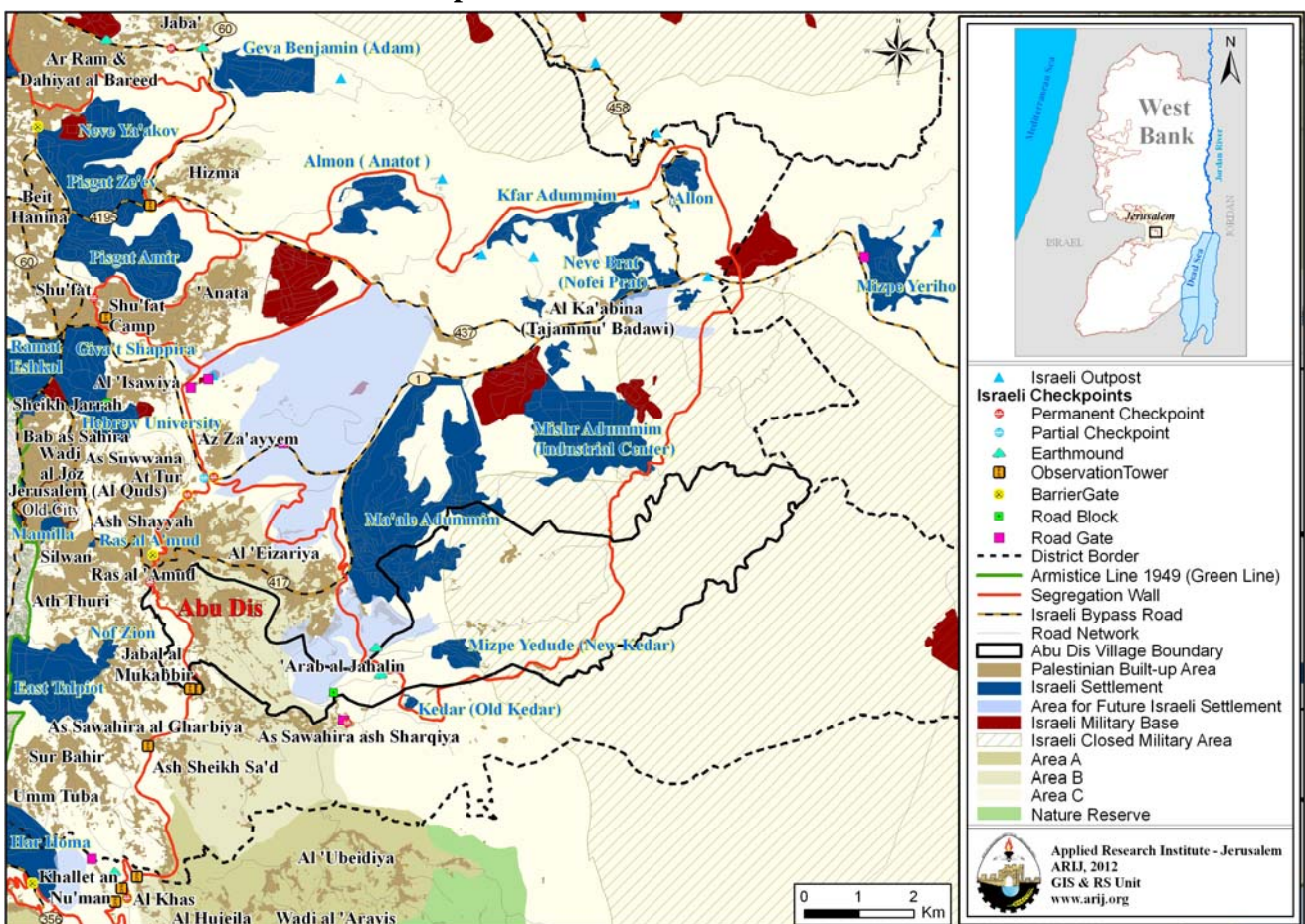
<b>Location and Physical Characteristics .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>History .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Religious and Archaeological Sites .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Population.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Education .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Health Status .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Economic Activities .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Agricultural Sector .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Institutions and Services.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Infrastructure and Natural Resources.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Impact of the Israeli Occupation.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Development Plans and Projects.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Locality Development Priorities and Needs .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>27</b>

# Abu Dis Town Profile

## Location and Physical Characteristics

Abu Dis is a Palestinian town in Jerusalem Governorate located (horizontally) 3.8km south-east of Jerusalem City. Abu Dis is bordered by As Sawahira ash Sharqiya to the east and south, El 'Eizariya to the north, and Jabal al Mukabbir to the west (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012) (See map 1).

Map 1: Abu Dis location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012.

Abu Dis is located at an altitude of 628m below sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 306.1mm. The average annual temperature is 18 °C and the average annual humidity is approximately 60% (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012).

Since 1995 Abu Dis has been governed by a local council, which is currently administrated by 4 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), in addition to 20 permanent employees. The local council owns a permanent headquarters, and a vehicle for the collection of solid



waste. It also owns a pick-up and a truck for serving the community residents (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

It is the responsibility of the Local Council to provide a number of services to the residents of Abu Dis, including (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011):

- Establishing an electricity network or providing generators.
- Solid waste collection, road construction, pavement, and rehabilitation, street cleaning and social development services.
- Organizing the processes of construction and license issuing.
- Implementing projects and case studies for the town.
- Providing headquarters for governmental services.
- Providing a firefighter car.
- Establishing and managing kindergartens.

## History

Abu Dis town was named after the Roman-era 'Beta Budison' village, on the territory of which the current town was established. Some have claimed that 'Abu Dis' is an adaptation of the Latin 'boddens' ('shy', 'modest') (Al Dabbagh, 1991). However, others have argued that the name is derived from the Greek 'deca' to mean 'mother of ten villages'. Finally, some believe that the town was named in relation to the word 'ad dissa', referring to the dense trees cut down in Palestine during the British mandate period (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The town was established before 1187AD; its residents are descendents from immigrant Arab tribes and nomads (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011) (See photo below for Abu Dis town).

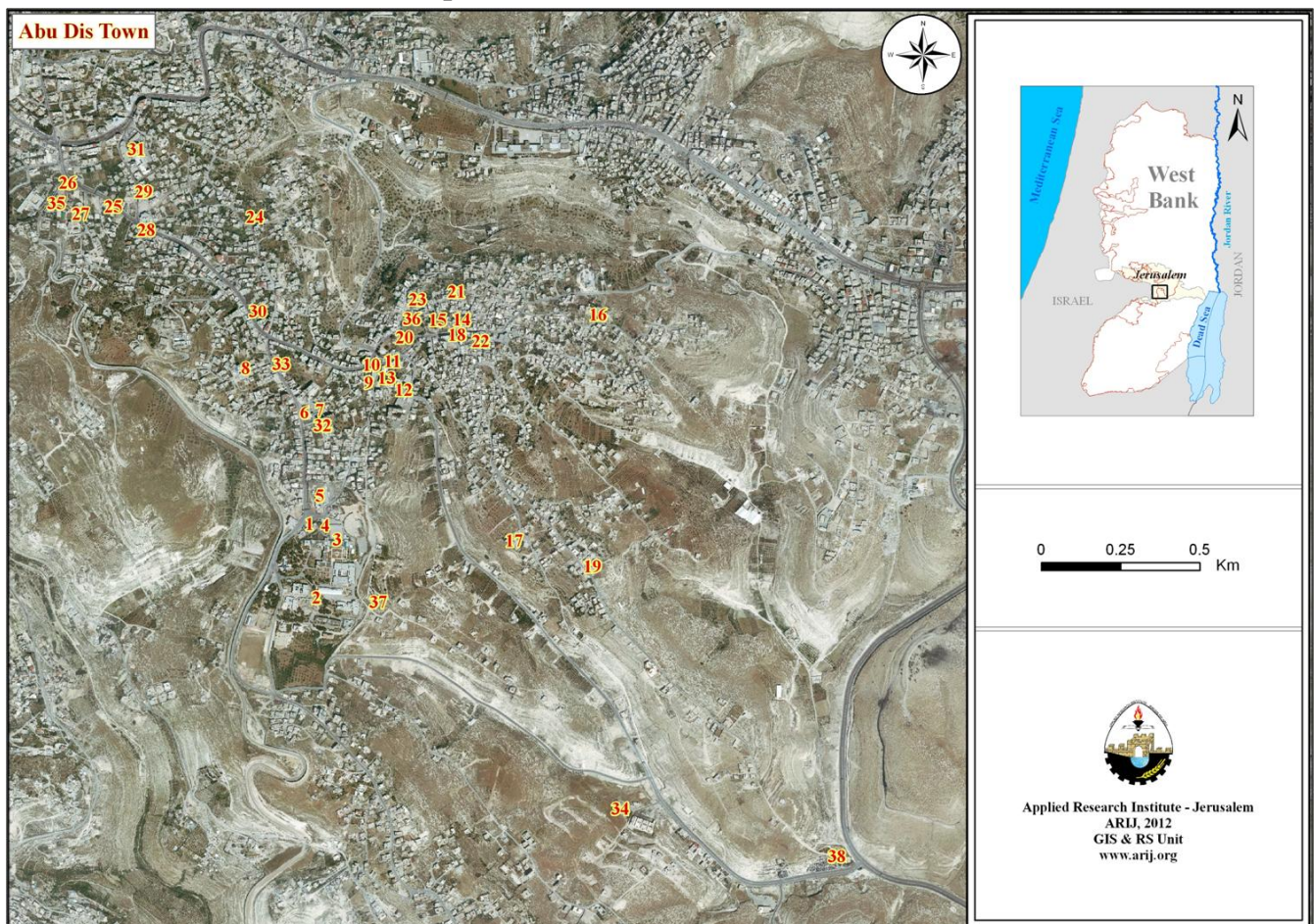
**Photo 1: General Landscape of Abu Dis**



## Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are 7 mosques in the town, Al Farooq, Taybah, Al Jami'a, Al 'Abrar, Salah ad Din al 'Ayyubi, Othman ben 'Affan and 'Ahhbab Allah Mosques. There are several ancient ruins "Khirab" of archaeological interest in the town: Abu Sa'd, Umm al Jamal, Al Kharayeb, Abu ath Thiran, Abu Hweilan, Umm Obeid, Abu as Suwwan, Al Murasras, Suwanet Salah, Ar Raghabin, Al Kharayib and Az Za'rura (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Abu Dis Town



No.	Locations	No.	Locations	No.	Locations	No.	Locations
1	Abu Dis Local Council	11	Abu Dis Water Society	21	Revive the Village Society/ Swedish Society	31	Cigarettes Factory
2	Al Quds University/ Abu Dis	12	Abu Dis Girls High School	22	An Nahda Society	32	Faysal al Huseini Center (Educational Courses for Women)
3	The Arab Institute	13	Al Jil al Jadeed School	23	Cam Den Activities Center	33	Family Protection Society
4	Al Jami'a Mosque	14	Salah ad Din Mosque	24	Al 'Abrar Mosque	34	Groundwater Well
5	Abu Dis Boys School	15	Al Maqasid Charitable Society's Clinic/ Abu Dis Clinic	25	Bunat al Mustakbal Society	35	Al Quds University/ Quran & Sharia College
6	Governmental Departments (Traffics, DCO, Interior)	16	Othman ben 'Affan Mosque	26	Al Farooq Mosque	36	Old Cemetery
7	Civil Defense	17	UNRWA School	27	Legislature	37	New Cemetery
8	Tayba Mosque	18	Dam'et al Quds Center	28	Police Station	38	Public Park
9	Abu Dis Elementary School	19	'Ahhbab Allah Mosque	29	Samed Association		
10	Abu Dis Youth Club	20	Al Amal Society	30	Families of Prisoners & Martyrs Center		

Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Abu Dis in 2007 was 9,721, of whom 5,030 were male and 4,691 female. There were 2,215 households living in 2,878 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 Abu Dis as follows: 31.2% were less than 15 years old, 50.7% between 15 - 64 years of age, and 3.2% aged 65 or older. Data additionally showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the town was 107.2:100, meaning that males and females constituted 51.7% and 48.3% of the population respectively.

## Families

Abu Dis residents are from several families, mainly the Al Khanafsah, El Halabiyah and El 'Eriqat families (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census (2007), the illiteracy rate among Abu Dis population was approximately 4.9%, of whom 74.7% were females. Of the literate population, 9.6% could only read and write with no formal education, 19.9% had elementary education, 30.3% had preparatory education, 17.8% had secondary education, and 17.4% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the town by sex and educational attainment (2007).

**Table 1: Abu Dis population (10 years of age and above) by sex and educational attainment, 2007**

Sex	Illite- rate	Can read & write	Elem- entary	Prepa- ratory	Second- ary	Associate Diploma	Bach- elor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Un- known	Total
M	76	296	671	1,005	549	124	305	16	81	24	2	<b>3,149</b>
F	224	294	552	855	547	130	342	6	38	4	-	<b>2,992</b>
T	300	590	1,223	1,860	1,096	254	647	22	119	28	2	<b>6,141</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are 3 public schools in the town run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), in addition to 4 schools run by private bodies and one school run by UNRWA (Directorate of Education in Jerusalem, 2011).



**Table 2: The Schools in Abu Dis by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority**

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Abu Dis Boys High School	Government	Male
Abu Dis Girls High School	Government	Female
Abu Dis Boys Elementary School	Government	Mixed
The Arabic Institute School	Private	Male
Al Jeel al Jadeed Elementary School	Private	Mixed
Atfal al Quds School	Private	Mixed
Ar Ri'ayah Elementary School	Private	Mixed
Abu Dis Co-educated Elementary School	UNRWA	Mixed

**Source:** Directorate of Education in Jerusalem, 2011

In the town there are 2,905 students, 170 teachers, and 102 classes. The average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 17, and the average number of students per class is approximately 28 (Directorate of Education in Jerusalem, 2011).

There are 4 local kindergartens run by different bodies, attended by 208 children in total in 2011. Table 3 shows these kindergartens according to their names and supervising authority.

**Table 3: The Kindergartens in Abu Dis by name and supervising authority**

Kindergarten Name	No. of Children	Supervising Authority
Atfal al Quds Kindergarten	11	Private
Al Jeel al Jadeed Kindergarten	106	Private
Al Amal Charitable Society Kindergarten	75	Islamic Civil
Karameesh Kindergarten	16	Private

**Source:** Directorate of Education in Jerusalem, 2011

The students must deal with various difficulties due to the Israeli occupation, represented mainly in difficulties accessing the Arab Institute School, in addition to the existence of permanent and partial checkpoints on the road leading to Abu Dis Boys High School (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The educational sector in the town faces some obstacles, primarily (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011):

- The lack of buildings and the insufficient number of classrooms.
- The lack of teaching staff in some educational specialties.
- The lack of some educational supplies, including computer devices and laboratories, in addition to the need for new schools in the town.

## Health Status

There is one health center, run by Al Maqasid Charitable Society, and 4 private pharmacies in Abu Dis. In the absence of any required health services or in emergencies, patients are sent to health centers in

neighboring localities, including: Ramallah Governmental Hospital in Ramallah city, Beit Jala Governmental Hospital in Bethlehem Governorate or Jericho Governmental Hospital in Jericho Governorate, 40km, 30km and 30km in distance from the town respectively (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The health sector in the town faces various obstacles, principally (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011):

1. The lack of an ambulance.
2. The lack of hospitals close to the town.
3. The existence of the Segregation Wall, which hinders the residents' movement and ability to access healthcare facilities.
4. The lack of specialized medical staff.

## Economic Activities

The economy in Abu Dis is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly the employees sector which absorbs approximately 80% of the town’s workforce (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011) (See Figure 1).

A field survey conducted by ARIJ in 2011 showed that the distribution of labor by economic activity in Abu Dis is as follows:

- Government or Private Employees Sector (80%)
- Services Sector (19%)
- Israeli labor market (1%)

**Figure 1: Economic Activity in Abu Dis town**



Source: Abu Dis Local Council, 2011

In terms of commercial, economic and industrial activities in Abu Dis town, there are a cigarette factory, a concrete factory, a brick factory and a gas station, in addition to 80 grocery stores, 5 bakeries, 14 butcheries (4 for meat and 10 for chicken), 10 fruit and vegetable stores, 10 different professional workshops (carpentry, aluminum, blacksmith, etc.) and 30 different services stores (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The unemployment rate in Abu Dis in 2011 reached around 60%, and it was found that the social groups most affected in the town as a result of the Israeli restrictions and procedures are (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011):

- Former workers in Israel.
- Workers in the services sector.

## Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census (2007), 37.6% of the Abu Dis labor force were economically active, of whom 85% were employed, and 61.9% were not economically active, of whom 51.2% were students and 38% were housekeepers (See table 4).

**Table 4: Abu Dis population (10 years of age 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	1,563	201	96	<b>1,860</b>	1,005	2	173	62	25	<b>1,267</b>	22	<b>3,149</b>
F	399	20	28	<b>447</b>	944	1,444	135	9	4	<b>2,536</b>	9	<b>2,992</b>
T	1,962	221	124	<b>2,307</b>	1,949	1,446	308	71	29	<b>3,803</b>	31	<b>6,141</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009.

## Agricultural Sector

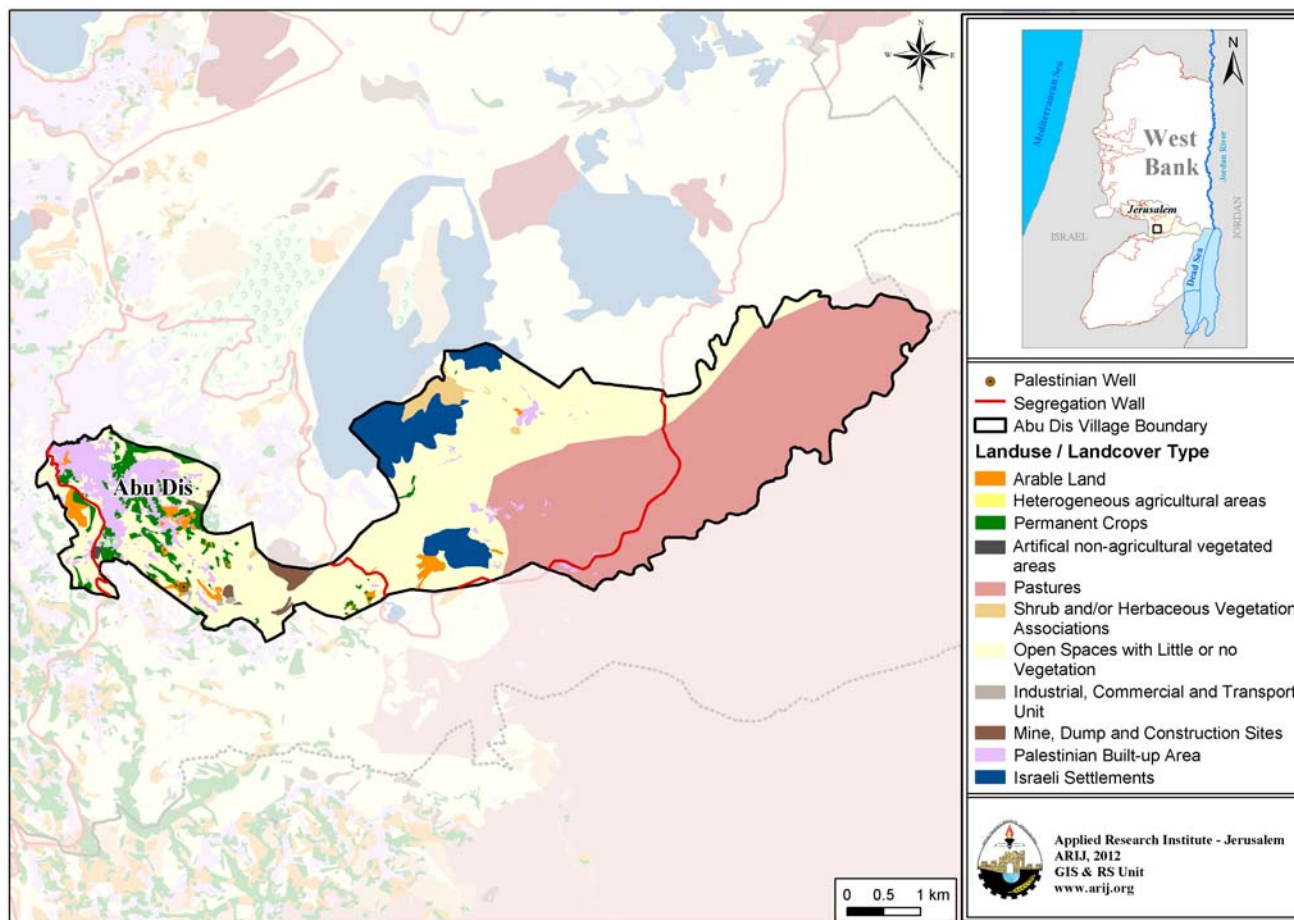
Abu Dis has a total area of around 23,642 dunums, of which 11,269 dunums are considered 'arable' land and 1,411 are registered as 'residential' (See Table 5 and Map 3).

**Table 5: Land use and land cover in Abu Dis town in 2010 (area in dunum)**

Total Area	Built-up Area	Agricultural area (11,268 dunums)				Inland water	Forests	Open Space	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements, Military Bases & Wall Zone
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
23,640	1,411	755	0	10,153	360	2	20	9,270	224	1,445

Source: ARJ – GIS Unit, 2012

**Map 3: Land use/land cover in Abu Dis town**



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012.

Table 6 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. The town is known for the cultivation of olives; there are 530 dunums in the town cultivated with olive trees.

**Table 6: Total area of fruit and olive trees in Abu Dis town (dunum)**

Fruit trees	Rainfed	Irrigated
Olives	530	0
Citrus	0	0
Stone-fruits	5	0
Pome fruits	0	0
Nuts	1	0
Other fruits	8	0
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010

In terms of field crops and forage in Abu Dis, only cereals, particularly wheat and barley, are being cultivated covering an area of about 70 dunums (Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010).



The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and by ARIJ's GIS Unit in sizes of agricultural areas is explained by the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010) conducted a survey which used a definition of agricultural areas based on land ownership. Therefore, 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. ARIJ's survey, however, indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, thus accounting for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

Table 7 shows the numbers and types of livestock reared and kept in the town, primarily sheep and chickens (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

**Table 7: Livestock in Abu Dis town**

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
108	1,720	250	0	0	0	0	10,000	2,000	40

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

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010

There are 5 kilometers of agricultural roads in the town suitable for vehicles only (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The agricultural sector in the town faces some problems and obstacles, primarily (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011):

- The lack of economic feasibility.
- The lack of water sources.
- The lack of agricultural lands.
- The confiscation of lands by Israeli authorities.
- The lack of interest by citizens in agriculture and rearing livestock.

## Institutions and Services

Abu Dis town has few governmental institutions, including an office for the Ministry of Interior, a police station, a fire station, a traffic department and a DCO. It also has a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011):

- **Abu Dis Local Council:** Founded in 1995 by the Ministry of Local Government with the goal of solving issues in the town and providing various services to its population.
- **Abu Dis Cooperative Water Society:** Founded in 1970 by the Union of Societies.
- **Abu Dis Sports Club:** Founded in 1992, and currently is registered in the Ministry of Sports & Youth. The Club is interested in sports, cultural and educational activities for young people.

- **Camden Center:** A cultural center for young people founded in 2007 by the London Borough of Camden.
- **Dam'et al Quds Center:** A cultural center for young people founded in 2011 by the Ministry of Culture.
- **Agricultural Renaissance Institution:** Founded in 2003 by the Ministry of Interior and concentrating on supplying feed for livestock.

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

### Electricity and Telecommunication Services

Abu Dis has been connected to a public electricity network since 1978. It is served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the town. Approximately 95% of the housing units in the town are connected to this network (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011). However, the town faces some obstacles concerning electricity, mainly that the network does not cover all housing units in the town (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

Abu Dis is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 90% of the housing units within the town boundaries are connected to phone lines (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

### Transportation Services

250 public taxi and 100 unlicensed/illegal cars are the main means of transportation in Abu Dis town (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011). There are 13km of designated 'main' roads and 20km of 'secondary' roads (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011) (See Table 8).

**Table 8: Roads in Abu Dis town**

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

Source: Abu Dis Local Council, 2011

### Water Resources

Abu Dis is provided with water by the West Bank Water Department through owned sources and water purchased from Jihon, an Israeli company, supplied through the public water network established in 1970. Approximately 98% of the housing units are connected to this network (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011). The quantity of water supplied to Abu Dis is approximately 420,000 cubic meters/ year; therefore, the average rate of water supply per capita in Abu Dis is 118 liters per day. However, no Abu Dis citizen consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are recorded at around 33%. These

losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, in the distribution network, and at the household level. Therefore the rate of water consumption per capita in Abu Dis is 79 liters per day. The rate experienced by Abu Dis residents is low compared with the minimum quantity of 100 liters per capita per day proposed by the World Health Organization (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The town also has 200 domestic harvesting cisterns (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

## Sanitation

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

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day is approximately 617 cubic meters, or 225,120 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the town, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is 63 liters per day, depending on the consumption rate. The wastewater collected by cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys without concern for the environment. There is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to both environmental and public health (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

## Solid Waste Management

Abu Dis Local Council is the official body responsible for managing the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by the citizens and establishments in the town. The local council has a department for the management of solid waste, with a staff of 6. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee (15 NIS/month) is charged to the population served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However, only 20% of these fees are collected from town citizens (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

Most of the population in Abu Dis benefit from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to 250 containers<sup>1</sup> spread throughout the locality. The Local Council collects the solid waste from the containers twice a week and transports it using a waste vehicle to El 'Eizariya (Abu Dis) dumping site, 5km from the town center, where it is buried or sometimes burnt (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011). Domestic, medical, and industrial solid waste are being collected together, because there is no system in the town to separate hazardous from non-hazardous waste (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Abu Dis is 1.05kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from Abu Dis residents is nearly 10.2 tons, or 3,726 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

---

<sup>1</sup> Each with a capacity of 1 cup

## Environmental Conditions

Like other towns and villages in the governorate, Abu Dis experiences several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved. These problems can be identified as follows:

### Water Crisis

- Water is cut off by the West Bank Water Department for long periods of time in several neighborhoods of the town for several reasons:
  1. Israeli control over Palestinian water resources causes obstacles in water pumping and distribution. The West Bank Water Department distributes water to various areas on an interval basis because the amount of water available is not sufficient for everyone's needs simultaneously. Consequently, the West Bank Water Department must purchase water from Israeli companies to fulfill residents' needs.
  2. High rate of water losses, because the water network is old and in need of rehabilitation and renovation.
- There is no public water reservoir in the town to cover the residents' water needs during water cut-offs.

### Wastewater Management

- The absence of a public sewage network means that Abu Dis residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits and random ways for the disposal of wastewater, and/or discharge wastewater in the streets. This is particularly common in winter, as citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers during this period. These methods facilitate environmental damage, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the town. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater because most cesspits are built without lining, allowing wastewater to enter into the ground and avoiding the need to use sewage tankers. Moreover, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without concern for the damage it causes to the environment and to residents' health.

### Solid Waste Management

- El 'Eizariya landfill is located close to Abu Dis town (see Photos 2 & 3). The landfill was established by the Israeli state after the confiscation of lands from residents of Abu Dis. The landfill is a serious public health hazard, due to the emission of odors and volatile gases resulting from combustion and its location close to Palestinian homes in the town. Household, industrial, and medical waste disposed of in this landfill is collected from several areas: Abu Dis, El 'Eizariya, As Sawahira, Ash Sheikh Sa'd, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, At Ta'amirah, Dar Salah, and Ma'ale Adumim settlement. The effective lifespan of the landfill has expired; however, Israeli authorities continue to expand the landfill and employ Israeli contractors to manage it without consideration for the damage it causes to public and environmental health.



**Photo 3: El 'Eizariya landfill**



**Photo 4: Leachate produced from solid waste**



- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Abu Dis and the other neighboring communities in the governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill, because the appropriate land is within Area C and under Israeli control. Additionally, the implementation of such projects depends on funding from donor countries. The lack of a sanitary landfill is a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste, and produces bad odors and distortion of the landscape.
- There is no system in the town and the governorate in general to separate hazardous waste from non-hazardous waste. Consequently hazardous and industrial solid waste are collected with non-hazardous waste and transported to the valley (Al Wadi) landfill for disposal by burning.

## Impact of the Israeli Occupation

### Geopolitical Status of Abu Dis Town

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Abu Dis town was divided into areas 'B' and 'C'. Approximately 3,513 dunums (14.8% of the total town area) were assigned as area 'B', where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. Area 'B' constitutes most of the inhabited Palestinian areas, including municipalities, towns, and some camps. Most of Abu Dis's population resides in area 'B' which constitutes a very small area in comparison to the total area of the town. Approximately 20,127 dunums (85.2% of the total town area) is classified as area 'C', where Israel retains full control over security and administration. 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 the area 'C' are agricultural and open space (Table 9).

**Table 9: The geopolitical divisions of Abu Dis town according to the Oslo II interim agreement in 1995**

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total town area
Area A	0	0
Area B	3,513	14.8
Area C	20,127	85.2
Nature Reserve	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,640</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012

### Abu Dis Town and the Israeli Occupation Practices

Abu Dis town has been subjected to land confiscation for various Israeli purposes, particularly the construction of Israeli settlements on the town's territories and its surrounding land, the construction of the Segregation Wall, and the creation of Israeli bypass roads. Below is a breakdown of the Israeli confiscations of Abu Dis land:

During the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli government has confiscated 1379 dunums in Abu Dis town to establish the settlements of Ma'ale Adummim and Mizpe Yedude (New Kedar).

Ma'ale Adummim settlement is one of the largest in the West Bank in terms of area and it constitutes an important center for settlement outposts in East Jerusalem. Ma'ale Adummim settlement is of great importance to the Israeli government as part of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement bloc, which includes a group of eight Israeli settlements: Allon, Neve Brat (Nofei Prat), Kfar Adummim, Almon (Anatot),

Mizpe Yedude (New Kedar), Kedar, Ma'ale Adummim and Mishr Adummim (an industrial zone within the settlement bloc). This settlement bloc also includes a number of Palestinian Bedouin communities which have existed in the area since before the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967 and have witnessed the creeping expansion of the settlements. These communities face the constant threat of compulsory displacement. Table 10 shows details of the Israeli settlements built illegally on the lands of Abu Dis.

**Table 10: Israeli Settlements constructed over Abu Dis lands**

Settlement Name	Year of construction	Area confiscated from Abu Dis (dunums)	Population of settlers (2009)
Ma'ale Adummim	1975	1,031	39,000
Mizpe Yedude (New Kedar)	1980	348	unavailable
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,379</b>	<b>39,000</b>

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012

### Abu Dis Town and the Israeli Segregation Wall Plan

The construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall has had a negative and destructive impact on Abu Dis town. According to the last amendment of the plan, published on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry (30<sup>th</sup> April 2007), the Wall extends 8km over Abu Dis town. The town is situated between a section of the Wall constructed to the Western side, isolating it from Jerusalem city, and a planned section of the Wall to the east. Following the completion of the Segregation Wall, 11,095 dunums of Abu Dis lands (47%) will be isolated. The isolated lands include Palestinian urban areas, agricultural lands, pastures, open spaces, Israeli settlements, rangelands, and other types of land. Construction of the Wall to the eastern side of Abu Dis is part of planned construction around the Ma'ale Adummim settlement bloc, which Israel seeks to annex and transform into the new boundary of the Israeli Jerusalem municipality within the framework of the 'Greater Jerusalem' plan. Through this plan, Israel aims to impose a new social geography and demographic reality on the West Bank which will cause great suffering and distress to the Palestinian population (Table 11).

The Israeli state began to develop its draft plan for 'Greater Jerusalem' in the early 1970s when the Israeli government launched the first step in its plan to expand the area of Israeli settlements located outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. The plan aimed to create links between those settlements and others located within Jerusalem city boundaries, and to divide and fragment Palestinian communities located east of Jerusalem city, divorcing such communities from Jerusalem and depriving inhabitants of their right to live in the city.

The 'Greater Jerusalem' plan includes the annexation of three Israeli settlements: Ma'ale Adummim bloc, Giv'at Ze'ev settlement bloc, and Gush Etzion settlement bloc. Table 11 shows the lands that will be isolated in Abu Dis through the construction of the Segregation Wall:

**Table 11: Classification of lands to be isolated in Abu Dis town - Jerusalem Governorate**

No.	Land classification	Area (dunums)
1	Agricultural areas	267
2	Open spaces	9222
3	Palestinian residential area	187
4	Israeli settlements	1379
5	Wall zone	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,095</b>

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2011

### The Segregation Wall and the Suffering of Abu Dis Town Residents

When the Segregation Wall plan is completed, the urbanized area of Abu Dis town will become isolated from neighboring Palestinian towns and villages and from Jerusalem city, as the town will be surrounded by the Wall on three sides.

The town is currently situated between a section of the Wall constructed to the Western side that isolates it from Jerusalem city and a planned section of the Wall to the eastern side. If the plan is completed to the latest specifications, Abu Dis town (along with El 'Eizariya) will be surrounded by the Segregation Wall from the eastern, northern and western. The southern side will remain open for the town's residents to connect with the southern West Bank, including Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates. The Wall will separate the northern part of the West Bank from the southern part, and Abu Dis town and the surrounding localities will become part of the southern area. The eastern Wall, currently under construction in Abu Dis town, will isolate the town's urban area from its territories to the east and prevent urbanization and expansion of the town on all sides. Israeli occupation authorities constructed the Wall close to the town's urbanized areas, which has led to an increase in the total area confiscated from the town and minimizes the area available for future urban expansion. This will raise the population density in the town due to the lack of land for construction and expansion, and will lead the population to internal and vertical urban expansion.

The planned Wall construction in Abu Dis will completely segregate Palestinians carrying Palestinian IDs (West Bank Green IDs) from Jerusalem City, and will cut them off from educational, health, social and economic services such as schools, clinics, hospitals, and work places. Access to the holy city will be limited to those holding the Jerusalem identity (Blue IDs) through military checkpoints, where they will go through inspection and be forced to show their Jerusalem IDs to prove their right to travel, work, and reside in the City. This will clearly generate further suffering and difficulties in mobility and communication. This step aims at the re-delineation of Jerusalem City borders to support Israeli plans aiming to change the demographic status of the City in favour of the Israelis and to exclude neighborhoods of high Palestinian population density from Jerusalem City.



## **The Israeli E1 Plan and Abu Dis's Lands**

The Israeli settlement bloc Ma'ale Adummim is considered one of the most threatening settlement blocs in the West Bank, as it lies within the Jerusalem governorate borders and presents a clear and significant danger to links between northern and southern areas of the West Bank. Additionally, it isolates East Jerusalem from other Palestinian governorates, complicating proposals for an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and threatening the territorial continuity of such a state.

As part of the Israeli project to segregate the West Bank through the Segregation Wall, Ma'ale Adumim bloc has special consideration from the Israeli committee responsible for this project, due to its location near the eastern part of Jerusalem city. The Israeli administration therefore developed the E1 plan, which entails building a new settlement bloc to create a physical link between Ma'ale Adumim and Israeli settlements in Jerusalem city (map 4). The E1 plan affects the Palestinian towns and villages in that area, including Abu Dis, El 'Eizariya, At Tour, 'Isawiya, Az Za'ayyem and 'Anata, and restricts their right to further urban development, in addition to creating an urbanized belt that will physically separate the northern and southern West Bank. The E1 Plan includes the construction of 3,900 housing units to the west and north of Ma'ale Adummim on an area of 13,213 dunums, which was included in the Ma'ale Adummim settlement's Master Plan. This plan is expected to dramatically increase the population of the settlement.

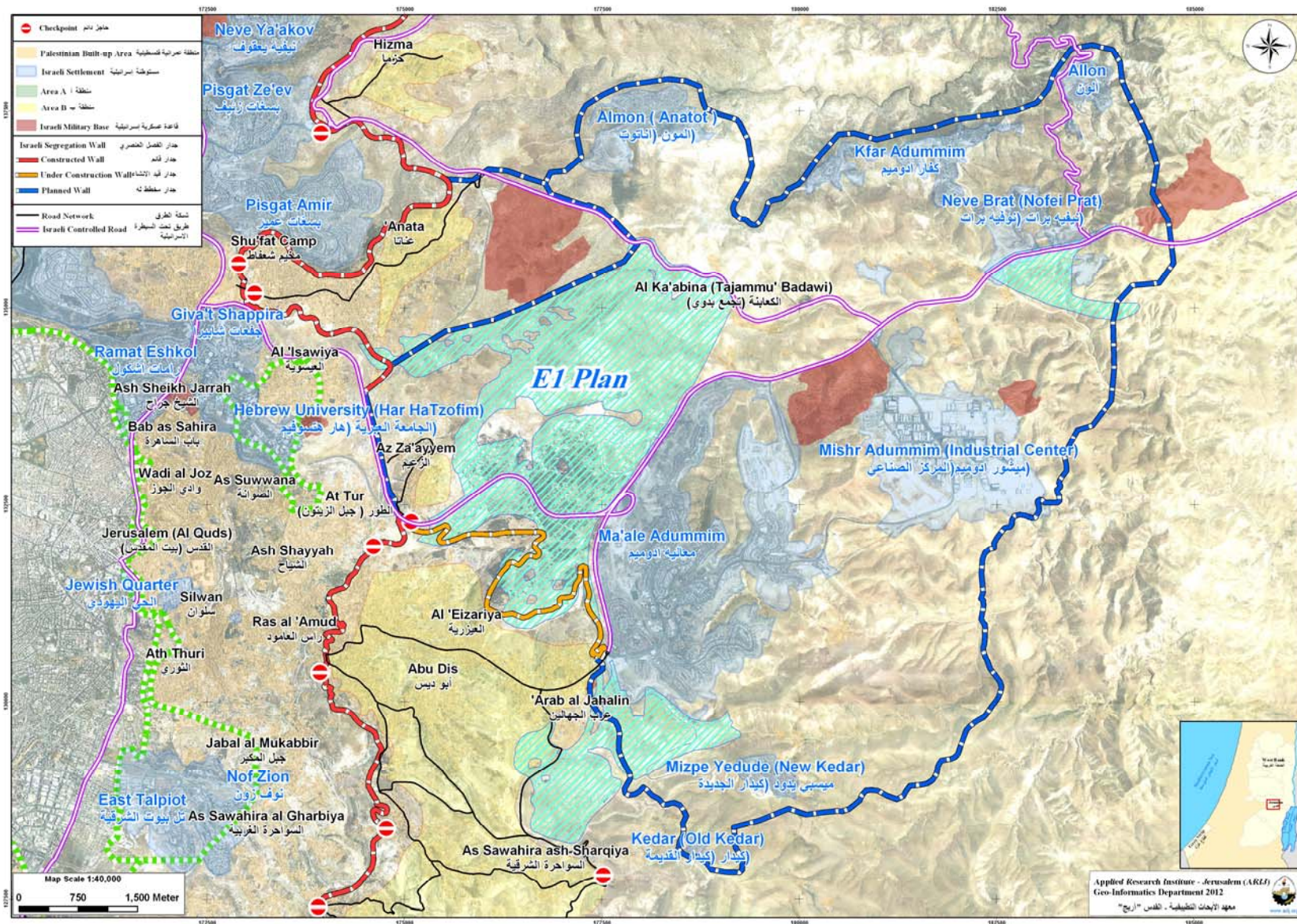
With the completion of the E1 Plan, the Israeli urban belt will be sealed around Jerusalem City. Consequently, Abu Dis town will lose 881 dunums of its lands on the eastern side of the town (including agricultural and open spaces and pastures) for the purpose of implementing the scheme and for the expansion of Israeli settlements purposes. Abu Dis will be left only with its urban area, and will be constricted from the west by the Segregation Wall. This will undermine the future development of the town and isolate it from all directions except the south.

## **The 'Fabric of Life' Road Scheme and the Isolation of Abu Dis**

On 9th October 2007, the IOF issued a military order (07/35/T) that seeks to confiscate 387 dunums of land from Abu Dis, At Tour and El 'Eizariya to complete the Israeli 'Fabric of Life' scheme. This plan aims to build a 17km road announced through military order 07/19/T on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007. The Road will connect the southern part of the West Bank (Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates) with the Jordan Valley and Jericho city in the eastern area of the West Bank.

According to the new Israeli military order (07/35/T), an extension of military order 07/19/T, the other part of the 'Fabric of Life' road will be 4.6 kilometers long and start from the Container checkpoint northeast of Bethlehem city (map 5). It will pass through Abu Dis and El 'Eizariya towns' lands in the west, and finish at the At Tour and Az Za'ayyem localities. The road will then be routed through a tunnel and will continue to 'Anata and Hizma localities, where it will be linked to a new road constructed by Israel near the Israeli military base east of 'Anata. This road will change the course of Palestinian movement away from bypass road 1, which passes near Ma'ale Adummim settlement, as part of plans to begin the process of settlement construction (E1 Plan) opposite Ma'ale Adummim.

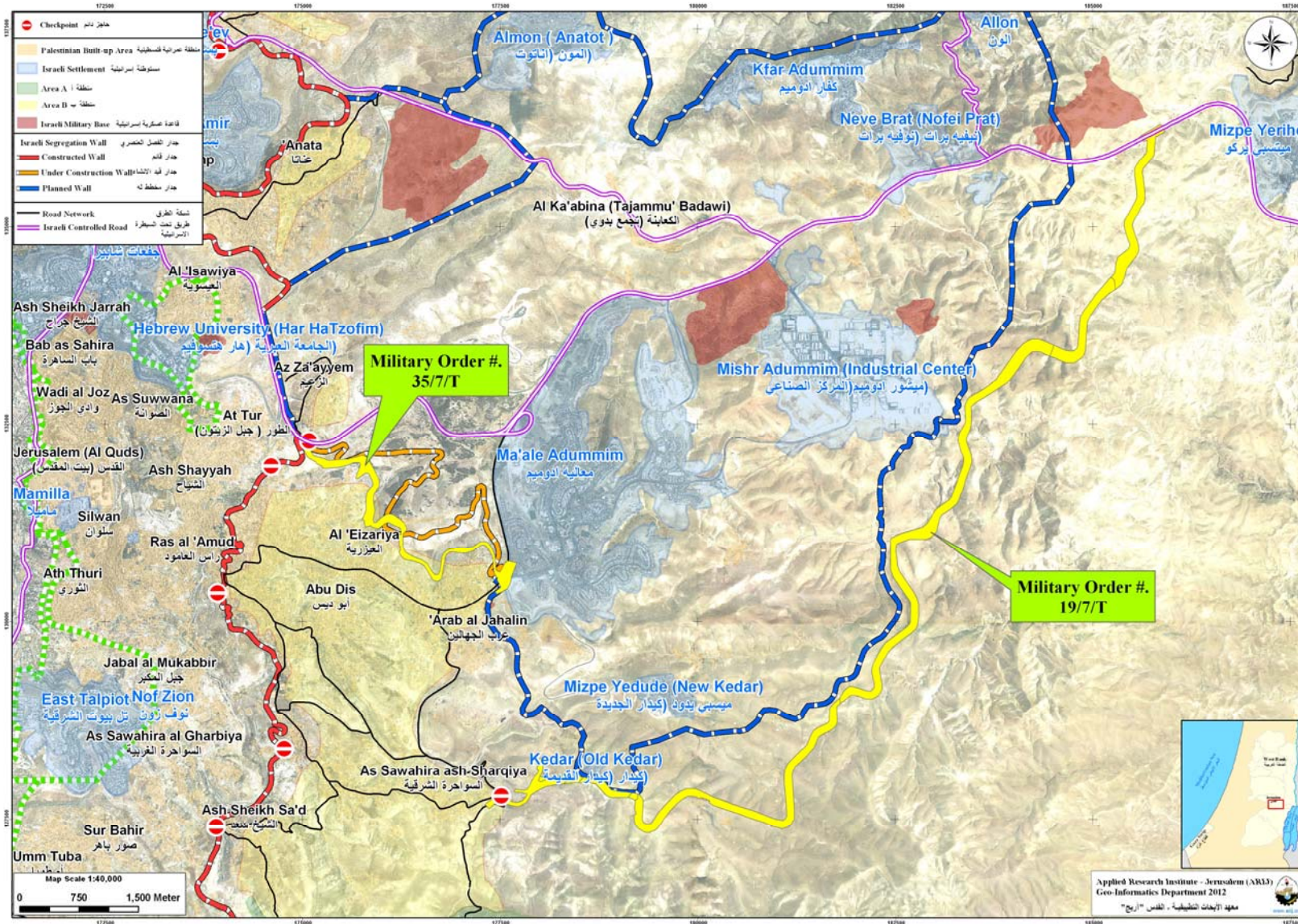
Map 4: Israeli E1 Plan



Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012



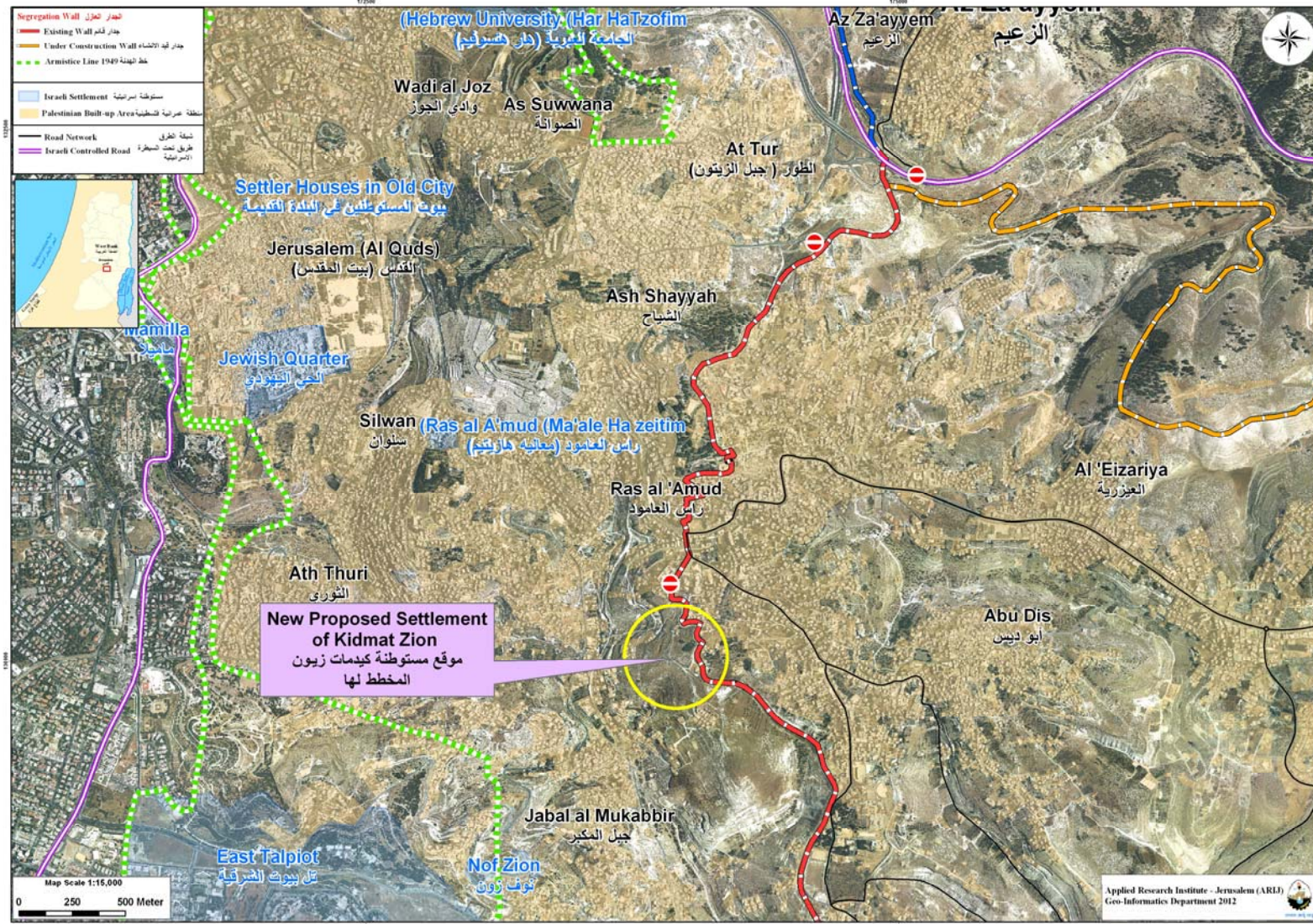
Map 5: Military orders 35/07/T & 19/07/T



Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012



Map 6: Kidmot Zion proposed settlement



Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012

## **A new settlement on Abu Dis lands (Kidmat Zion)**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz unveiled a new Israeli settlement plan in the area of Abu Dis. This plan calls for the construction of a new settlement (Kidmat Zion) on Abu Dis lands (map 6). This settlement will be constructed on a high hill along the western side of the Segregation Wall opposite the Palestinian Legislative Council headquarters in Abu Dis, located a few meters away to the east of the planned settlement site. This plan includes the construction of 200 housing units, aiming to stifle Palestinian communities in Jerusalem and to prevent them from extending and surrounding the Holy City for strategic 'security' and demographic reasons. The history of Kidmat Zion dates back to 7th June 2000, when a group of radical members of the Israeli Knesset and religious Jewish students entered the area and fenced an area of 15 dunums of land. This land was part of 64 dunums of land confiscated in previous years and classified as 'absentee property' belonging to Palestinians from Abu Dis town. This group seized the land (upon which there was a Palestinian-owned building) and planted it with olive trees in preparation for the construction of Kidmat Zion settlement.

## **The Israeli landfill devours more land in Abu Dis, destroying the environment**

In 1981 Israel established a waste landfill in Abu Dis town, after the confiscation of land on which the landfill currently exists through an Israeli military order. This landfill has caused serious health problems and environmental devastation in the town and its surrounding areas through the contamination of soil and the spread of epidemics and diseases. The estimated area of land used for the landfill is 800 dunums. The landfill also serves to impede and restrict urban growth in the eastern region of the town. Despite the fact that this landfill is used by some Palestinian villages in Jerusalem and Bethlehem Governorates, the Israeli settlements in the area (such as Ma'ale Adummim, the industrial Mishr Adummim, old Kedar, and new Kedar) use it to dispose of many hundreds of tons of waste per day. The amount of waste disposed of by settlements is double the amount disposed of by Palestinian communities in the landfill. The Arab al Jahalin Bedouin community is just 300 meters from the landfill and has been deeply and negatively affected by the landfill since its establishment.

## **Israeli Military Orders Issued in Abu Dis Town**

Israeli occupation authorities have issued various military orders to confiscate lands in Abu Dis for different military purposes. These include:

1. Israeli military order 03/03/T: issued on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004 to confiscate 5 dunums of Abu Dis and A Sawahira ash Sharqiya lands for the Segregation Wall construction.
2. Israeli military order 19/07/T: issued on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to confiscate 1129 dunums of Abu Dis, A Sawahira ash Sharqiya and A Sawahira al Gharbiya towns for the establishment of the 'Fabric of Life' Road.
3. Israeli military order 35/07/T: issued on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2007 to confiscate 387 dunums of Abu Dis, At Tour and El 'Eizariya towns for the establishment of the 'Fabric of Life' Road.
4. Israeli military order 152/05/T: issued on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005 to confiscate 809 dunums from Abu Dis town for the Segregation Wall construction.
5. Israeli military order 48/03/T: issued on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2003 to confiscate 43 dunums of Abu Dis town for the Segregation Wall construction.



6. Israeli military order 53/03/T: issued on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2003 to confiscate 105 dunums of Abu Dis and El 'Eizariya towns for the Segregation Wall construction.

## Development Plans and Projects

### Implemented Projects

Abu Dis Local Council has implemented several development projects in Abu Dis during the last five years (See Table 12).

**Table 12: Implemented development plans and projects in Abu Dis during the last five years**

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Rehabilitating and expanding Abu Dis health clinic	Public Services	2009	Norwegian Government
Rehabilitating internal roads	Infrastructure	2009	USAID
Rehabilitating Abu Hasan road	Infrastructure	2009	Municipalities Fund
Rehabilitating internal roads	Infrastructure	2010	USAID
Finishing a floor and half in the departments complex	Public Services	2010	African-Aqsa Fund
Constructing health units in Abu Dis Boys School	Educational	2010	ANERA
Maintaining classrooms in the boys school	Educational	2010	Pontifical Mission

Source: Abu Dis Local Council, 2011

### Proposed Projects

Abu Dis Local Council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the town and the town residents, hopes to implement 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. Establishing a sewage network.
2. Paving and constructing internal roads.
3. Constructing a hospital in the area and providing an ambulance.
4. Constructing new schools and maintaining existing schools.
5. Establishing a sports complex with a swimming pool, creating a center for the disabled, and developing the public park.
6. Expanding the electricity network.
7. Expanding the water network.
8. Establishing and industrial zone.
9. Providing an electric crane for the maintenance of street lighting, in addition to a Bob-Cat and a broom.
10. Finishing the departments' complex.

11. Establishing home gardens and constructing water wells.
12. Providing small projects.

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Abu Dis suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 13 shows the development priorities and needs in the town according to the local council's feedback (Abu Dis Local Council, 2011).

**Table 13: Development Priorities and Needs in Abu Dis**

No	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
<b>Infrastructural Needs</b>					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*			45km*
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks		*		10km
3	Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas		*		20km
4	Construction of New Water Networks			*	
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs			*	
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs	*			1500 cubic meters
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network	*			33km
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network	*			5km
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection	*			150 containers
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste	*			1 vehicle
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill	*			
<b>Health Needs</b>					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres	*			one health center
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres		*		one health center
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools	*			
<b>Educational Needs</b>					
1	Building of New Schools	*			all levels
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools	*			all levels
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools		*		
<b>Agriculture Needs</b>					
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands			*	
2	Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns			*	
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock			*	
4	Veterinary Services			*	
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals			*	
6	Construction of New Greenhouses			*	
7	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses			*	
8	Field Crops Seeds			*	
9	Plants and Agricultural Supplies			*	

\* 30km are main roads and 15km are sub roads.

Source: Abu Dis Local Council, 2011.

## References

- Abu Dis Local Council, 2011.
- Al Dabbagh, M. 1991. Our Country, Palestine; Chapter 8, Part Two. Kafr Qari' – Palestine. Dar al Huda Press.
- Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), 2012. Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing Unit; Land Use Analysis (2010) – Half Meter High Accuracy. Bethlehem - Palestine.
- Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), 2012. Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing unit Database. Bethlehem - Palestine.
- Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ). 2012. Water & Environment Research Unit Database (WERU). Bethlehem - Palestine.
- Ministry of Education & Higher Education (MOHE) - Jerusalem, 2011. Directorate of Education; A database of schools (2010/2011). Jerusalem – Palestine.
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. 2009. Jerusalem, Palestine: General Census of Population and Housing Censuses, 2007.
- Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), 2010. Directorate of Agriculture data (2009/2010). Jerusalem - Palestine.