

Qira Village Profile



Prepared by



The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem

Funded by



Spanish Cooperation

2013

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, village 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, town, and village in the Salfit Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Salfit 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 "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in Salfit Governorate.

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 Salfit Governorate. In addition, the project aims at preparing strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability with the focus on the agricultural sector.

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

Table of Contents

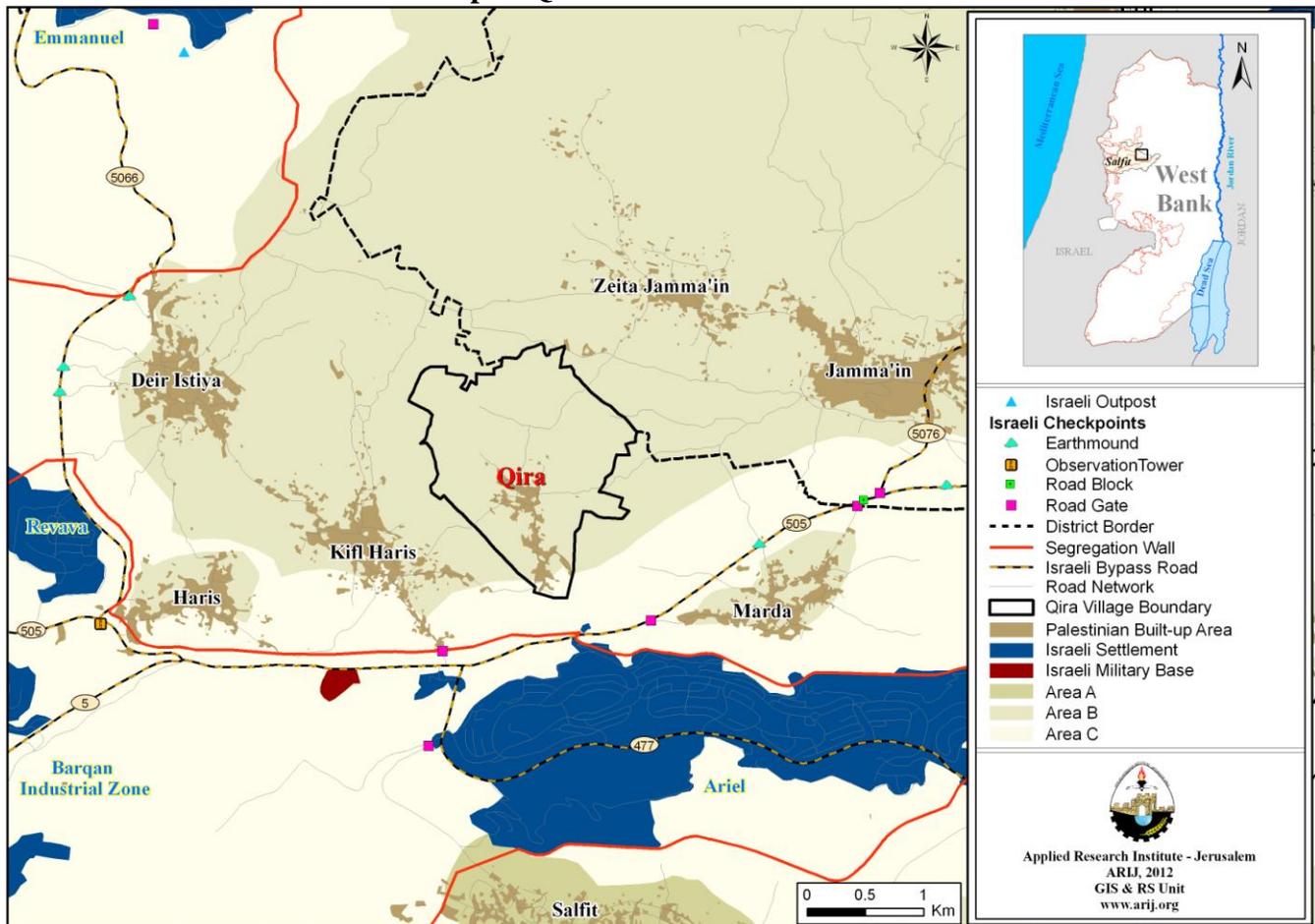
<i>Location and Physical Characteristics</i>	4
<i>History</i>	5
<i>Religious and Archaeological Sites</i>	6
<i>Population</i>	6
<i>Education</i>	7
<i>Health Status</i>	8
<i>Economic Activities</i>	8
<i>Agricultural Sector</i>	10
<i>Institutions and Services</i>	12
<i>Infrastructure and Natural Resources</i>	12
<i>Environmental Conditions</i>	14
<i>Impact of the Israeli Occupation</i>	15
<i>Development Plans and Projects</i>	16
<i>Implemented Projects</i>	16
<i>Proposed Projects</i>	17
<i>Locality Development Priorities and Needs</i>	18
<i>References:</i>	19

Qira Village Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Qira is a Palestinian village in Salfit Governorate located 4.2 km north of Salfit City. It is bordered by Jamma'in village (in Nablus Governorate) and Marda village to the east, Kifl Haris and Marda villages to the south, Kifl Haris village to the west, and Zeita Jamma'in village (in Nablus Governorate) to the north (ARIJ-GIS, 2013) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Qira location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Qira is located at an altitude of 470 m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 643.9 mm. The average annual temperature is 18 C° whilst the average annual humidity is approximately 61% (ARIJ-GIS, 2013).

Since 1996, Qira has been governed by a Village Council which is currently administrated by 9 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The Council owns a permanent headquarters that is included within the ‘Joint Services Council of East Salfit.’ The Council does not own a much needed vehicle for the collection of solid waste (Qira Village Council, 2012).

It is the responsibility of the Village Council to provide a number of services to the residents of Qira, including (Qira Village Council, 2012):

- The establishment and maintenance of the drinking water and electricity networks.
- Waste collection, road construction and restoration, streets cleaning and social development services.
- The organization of construction and licensing processes.
- Implementation of projects and studies for the village.
- Protection of historical and archeological sites.
- Protection of governmental properties.
- Provision of educational kindergartens.

History

The word Qira derives from the Greek language, literally meaning ‘the beautiful lady.’ In Syriac, the meaning is ‘the lady who gives birth.’ One legend states that the village’s name comes in relation to a woman of “Qahtani” origin named “Qrise” who lived in the village. An additional story claims that the village’s name came from the original word “Qera” which means good hospitality, indicating the generosity and respect villagers showed to guests. Additionally, it is said the name derives from the word “Qir” which is the substance used to paint camels with when they get scabies.

The village was established in 1600AD. Most of its residents are originally Arabs of Asia, while some have descended from Egypt (Qira Village Council, 2012).

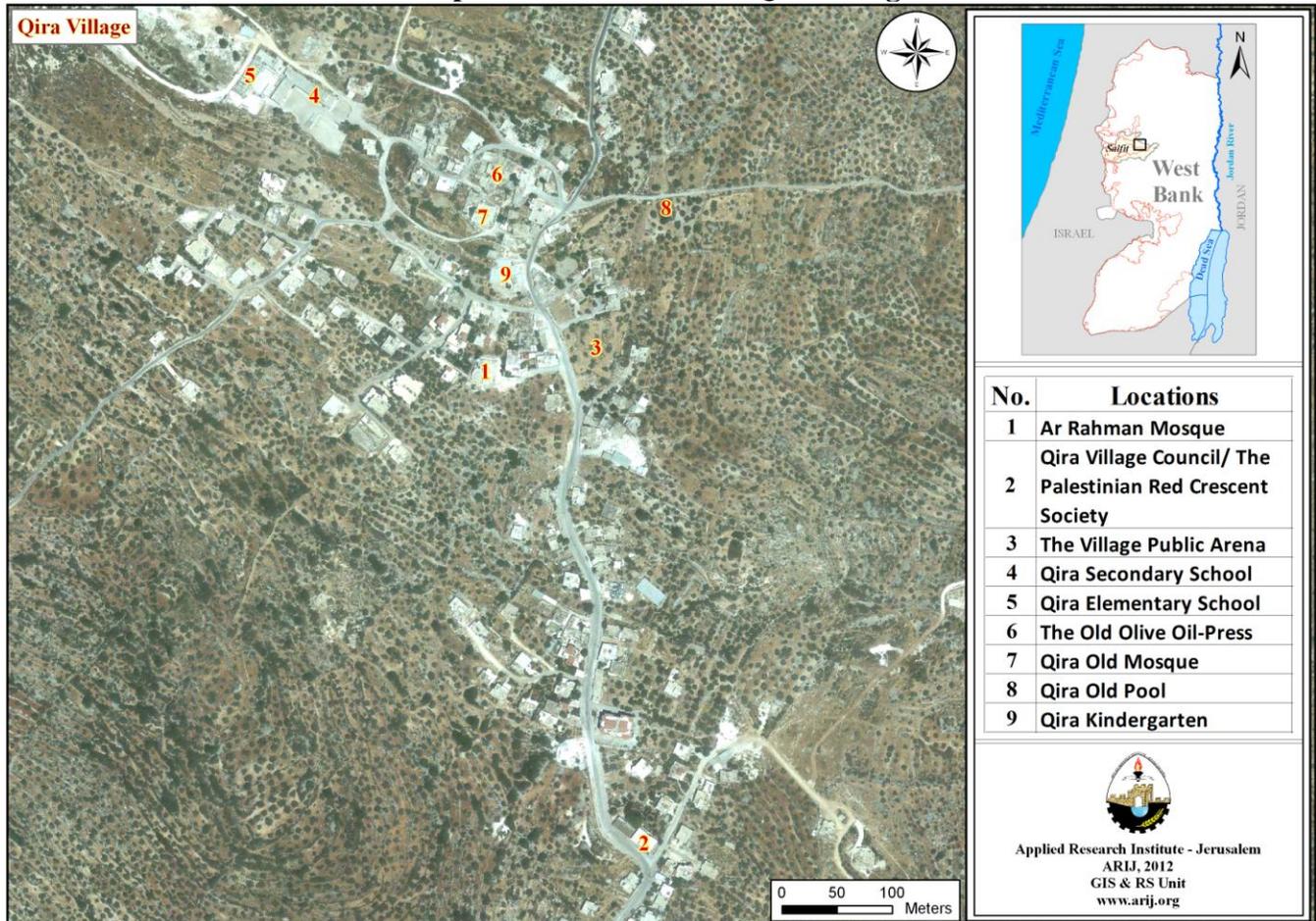
Photo of Qira



Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are two mosques in the village; Ar Rahman and Qira Old Mosques. Until the present day however, no archaeological sites have been discovered. (Qira Village Council, 2012) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Qira Village



Population Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Qira in 2007 was 1,128, of whom 568 were male and 560 female. There were 176 households registered as living in 206 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 Qira is as follows: 48% were less than 15 years of age, 48.7% were between 15 and 64 years of age, and 3.1% were 65 years of age or older. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to

females in the village is 101.4:100, meaning that males and females constitute 50.4% and 49.6% of the population, respectively.

Families

Qira residents are from several families, including Ta'm Allah (Awwad), 'Arbasi, Ziyada, 'Abdah, Kleib and Bakr (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate amongst Qira population was approximately 5.8%, of whom 80.9% are females. Of the literate population, 13.1% could only read and write, with no formal education, 25.1% had elementary education, 34.1% had preparatory education, 14.8% had secondary education, and 7.2% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of Qira by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

Table 1: Qira population (10 years and above) by sex and educational attainment

Sex	Illite- rate	Can read & write	Element- ary	Preparat- ory	Second- ary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Un- known	Total
M	8	36	98	140	54	7	13	0	3	0	0	359
F	34	59	84	107	53	12	17	0	0	0	0	366
T	42	95	182	247	107	19	30	0	3	0	0	725

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are two public schools in the village all of which are run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (MoEHE) (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Schools in Qira by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority (2011/2012)

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Qira Co-educated Secondary School	Government	Mixed
Qira Co-educated Elementary School	Government	Mixed

Source: Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012

In the village there are 383 students, 27 teachers, and 17 classes. The average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 14, whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 23 (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012).

There is additionally one kindergarten in Qira village run by a private organization. It is called Palestine Kindergarten and has two classrooms supervised by 3 teachers (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012).

The educational sector in Qira village faces a number of obstacles, mainly (Qira Village Council, 2012):

- The lack of classrooms (the secondary school is in need of 6 additional classrooms).

- The poor infrastructure of the secondary school and its need for rehabilitation.
- The lack of a library in any of the schools.

Health Status

Qira has one governmental health center (Qira Health Clinic) and a health center coordinated by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. In the absence of required health services or in emergencies, patients are transferred to Yasir Arafat Governmental Hospital in Salfit city (11 km away) or to the health center in Kifl Haris (3 km away) (Qira Village Council, 2012). Of the main obstacles faced by the village's health is the lack of an ambulance for transportation and emergency cases (Qira Village Council, 2012).

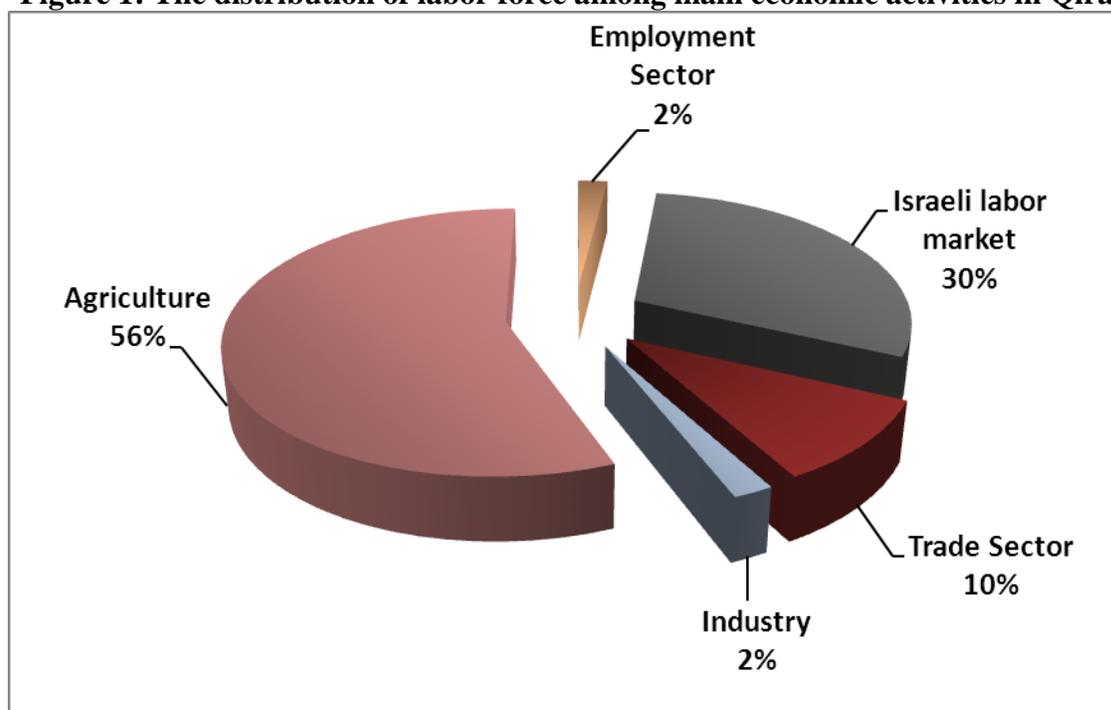
Economic Activities

The economy in Qira is mainly dependent on the agricultural sector which absorbs approximately 56% of the village's workforce (Qira Village Council, 2012) (See Figure 1).

The results of a field survey conducted by ARIJ in 2012 for the 'distribution of labor by economic activity' in Qira, are as follows:

- Agriculture sector (56%)
- Israeli labor market (30%)
- Trade sector (10%)
- Government or other employees sector (2%)
- Industry (2%)

Figure 1: The distribution of labor force among main economic activities in Qira



Source: Qira Village Council, 2012

Qira has 10 groceries, 3 service stores, 1 professional workshop, 1 olive oil-press and 2 stone quarries (Qira Village Council, 2012).

In 2012, the unemployment rate in Qira reached 35% and the group most affected economically by the Israeli restrictions has been workers in the agricultural sector (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 33.2% of Qira labor force was economically active, of whom 83.4% were employed, 66.8% were not economically active, 50.6% were students, and 36.4% were housekeepers (See Table 3).

Table 3: Qira population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status

Sex	Economically active				Non-economically active						Not stated	Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (never worked)	Total	Student	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & not looking for work	Others	Total		
M	178	30	4	212	115	0	22	3	7	147	0	359
F	23	1	5	29	130	176	28	0	3	337	0	366
T	201	31	9	241	245	176	50	3	10	484	0	725

M: Male; F: Female; T: Total.

Source: PCBS, 2009.

Agricultural Sector

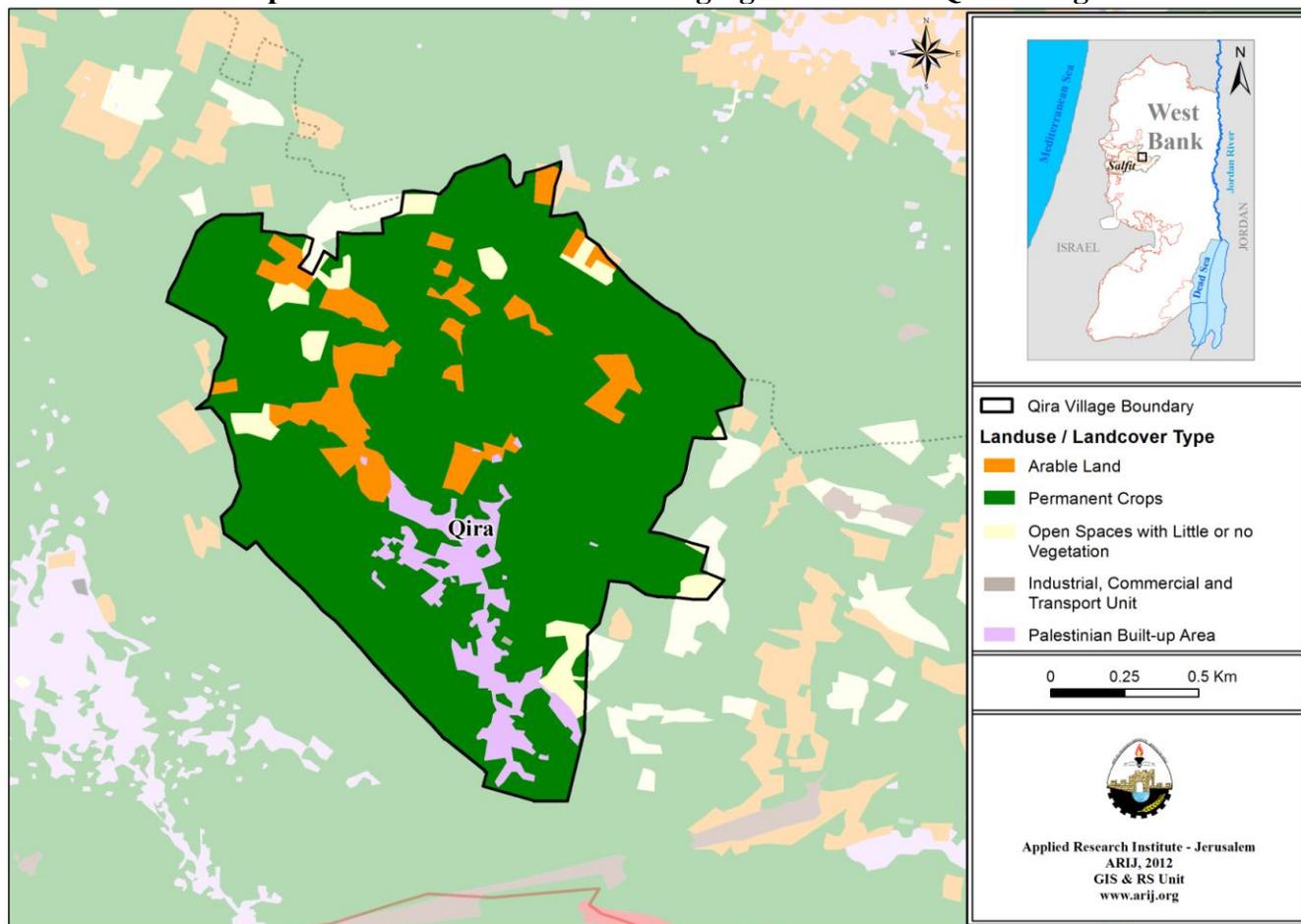
Qira has a total area of approximately 2,451 dunums of which 2,189 are ‘arable’ land and 156 dunums are registered as ‘residential’ (See Table 4 and Map 3).

Table 4: Land use and land cover in Qira village (area in dunum)

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (2,189)				Inland water	Forests	Open Spaces	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements, Military Bases & Wall Zone
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
2,451	156	1,978	0	0	211	0	0	105	1	0

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Qira Village



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Table 5 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Qira. The most commonly cultivated crops within this area are tomatoes, Jew’s melon and cauliflowers.

Table 5: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Qira (area in dunums)

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetables		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
12	27	0	14	0	8	0	2	0	0	12	51

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

Table 6 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Qira is famous for olive cultivation and there are approximately 1,425 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the village.

Table 6: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Qira (area in dunums)

Olives		Citrus		Stone-fruits		Pome fruits		Nuts		Other fruits		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
1,425	0	0	0	36	0	5	0	0	0	51	0	1,517	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

In terms of field crops and forage in Qira, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated, covering an area of around 60 dunums (See Table 7).

Table 7: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Qira (area in dunums)

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Oil crops		Forage crops		Stimulating crops		Other crops		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
60	0	11	0	20	0	1	0	17	0	0	0	11	0	120	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and ARIJ's GIS Unit in sizes of agricultural areas is explained by the difference in each organization's definition of land coverage and ownership. The MoA and the PCBS (2011) 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 and 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. This therefore accounts for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey conducted by ARIJ team shows that just 3% of the residents in Qira rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep and goats (See Table 8).

Table 8: Livestock in Qira

Cows*	Sheep	Camels	Poultry	Bee Hives
-	77	-	-	16

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Salfit, 2010

There are approximately 9 kilometers of agricultural roads in the village, divided as follows (Qira Village Council, 2012):

Table 9: Agricultural Roads in Qira Village and their Lengths

Suitability of Agricultural Roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	2
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	4
For animals only	3
Unsuitable	-

Source: Qira Village Council, 2012

The agricultural sector in the village faces some problems, including (Qira Village Council, 2012):

- The village's rugged lands unsuitable for transport.
- The lack of capital by farmers to invest in their lands.
- Poor accessibility to agricultural lands.
- The lack of water resources.

Institutions and Services

Qira village has a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Qira Village Council, 2012):

- **Qira Village Council:** Founded in 1996 by the Ministry of Local Government, with the aim of taking care of different issues concerning the village and providing various services to its population, in addition to infrastructure services.
- **Qira Children Club:** Founded in 2008 by the Ministry of Youth & Sports, with the goal of providing children with educational and general awareness raising courses in addition to health care.
- **Qira Youth Center:** Founded in 2003 by the Ministry of Youth & Sports, with the goal of providing young people with sports, cultural and social services.
- **Safe Mother Center:** Founded in 2010 by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, aiming to provide women with care and needed services such as vocational training and women empowerment.
- **Olive Oil-Pressing Society:** Founded in 2008 by the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture. The Society aims to guide farmers, support and provide them with technical assistance.

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Qira has been connected to a public electricity network since 1996. It is served by the 'Israeli Qatariya Electricity Company,' which is the main source of electricity in the village, and approximately 100% of the housing units in the village are connected to the network. Qira residents face some problems

concerning electricity, primarily the weak electric power which is insufficient to service the village's industrial sector (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Qira is additionally connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 67% of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Transportation Services:

There are 6 taxis in addition to 2 illegal/unlicensed cars and 20 private cars in Qira. However, residents suffer from the lack of vehicles in the village to serve them. Residents resort to using public office's taxis and private cars (Qira Village Council, 2012). There are 4 km of main and 7 km of secondary roads in Qira (Qira Village Council, 2012) (See Table 10).

Table 10: Roads in Qira Village

Status of Internal Roads	Road Length (km)	
	Main	Sub
Paved & in good condition	4	4
Paved & in poor condition	-	3
Unpaved	-	-

Source: Qira Village Council, 2012

Water Resources:

Qira is provided with water by the 'West Bank Water Department' through the public water network established in 1996. All housing units are connected to the network (Qira Village Council, 2012)

The quantity of water supplied to Qira village in 2010 was recorded at approximately 24,000 cubic meters/year (Qira Village Council, 2012). Therefore, the estimated rate of water supply per capita is approximately 53 liters/day. However, no Qira citizen consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are estimated at 22% (PWA, 2010). 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 Qira is 41 liters per day (Qira Village Council, 2012). The average water consumption of Qira residents is very low compared with the minimum quantity of 100 liters per capita per day proposed by the World Health Organization. Each cubic meter of water from the public network costs 3.5 NIS (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Furthermore, within the village is a public water reservoir with a capacity of 200 cubic meters in addition to 180 individual household rainwater harvesting cisterns (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Sanitation:

Qira lacks a public sewerage network and most of the population use cesspits and septic tanks, as a main means for wastewater disposal (Qira Village Council, 2012).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the approximated quantity of wastewater generated per day is 41 cubic meters, or 14,976 cubic meters annually. At the individual level, it is

estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 33 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits and septic tanks is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys with little regard for the environment. Here it is noted that there is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to the environment in addition to public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

Solid Waste Management:

The 'Joint Services Council of East Salfit' is responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by citizens and establishments in the village. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee amounting to 20 NIS/ month per household is charged to the population and facilities served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. It is noted that all of fees are collected from citizens (Qira Village Council, 2012)

Most of the population in Qira benefits from solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags, and placed in 19 containers (of 1m³ capacity), located at various points in the village. The Joint Council collects the solid waste twice weekly and transports it using the Joint Council's waste vehicle to the village's dumping site, 2 km from the village, where it is subsequently burnt. This represents an extremely environmental and hazardous method of waste disposal and should be eradicated in favor of more sanitary and environmentally sound methods. (Qira Village Council, 2012)

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Qira is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Qira residents is nearly 0.9 ton, or 317 tons, yearly (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

Environmental Conditions

Like other towns and villages in the Governorate, Qira 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 during summer in several village neighborhoods, for numerous reasons:
 1. Israeli control over Palestinian water resources causes problems in the organization of water pumping and its distribution among populations. The West Bank Water Department distributes water to various areas on an interval basis because the quantity of water available is not sufficient to simultaneously supply everyone's needs. In addition, the West Bank Water Department purchases water from Israeli Companies in order to meet the citizens' water needs.
 2. High rate of water losses, due to the water network's aged condition, in need of rehabilitation.

Wastewater Management

- The absence of a public sewage network in the village means that residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and/or to discharge wastewater into 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 village. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater because most cesspits are built without lining, to avoid the need to use sewage tankers and allow wastewater to enter into the ground. 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:

- Zahrat al Finjan landfill in Jenin Governorate (approximately 32 km in distance from the center of Salfit Governorate), is considered the central sanitary landfill which is supposed to serve Salfit Governorate. However, the Municipalities and Village Councils in Salfit Governorate do not transfer the solid waste to Zahrat al Finjan landfill, but rather get rid of waste in random dumps scattered throughout Salfit Governorate. This is due to the high costs of transporting and disposing waste in the landfill. As a result, wastes are being disposed randomly in these landfills causing an abomination to health, and leading to the proliferation of harmful flies, insects, and mice, as well as bad odors, toxic gases and black smoke emitted when burned. All of this has harmful effects on human health in addition to the environment.
- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Qira and other neighboring communities in the Governorate is due mainly to obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national Palestinian institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill. The main impediment cited is that the appropriate land for such a landfill is within 'Area C' (Oslo Accords II) and under Israeli administrative and security 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.

Impact of the Israeli Occupation

Geopolitical status in Qira

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28th September 1995, Qira was divided into areas "B" and "C". Approximately 2,393 dunums (98% of the village's total 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, villages and some refugee camps. It is worth noting that most of the village's population resides in area B. The rest of the village's area, constituting 58 dunums (2% of the total area), is classified as area C, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory (table 11). In area C Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration.

Table 11: The Geopolitical Divisions of Qira – Salfit Governorate

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total village area
Area A	0	0
Area B	2,393	97.6
Area C	58	2.4
Nature Reserve	0	0
Total	2,451	100

Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2013

Israeli Occupation Practices in Qira Village

Despite the fact that there are no Israeli settlements in Qira, the village is surrounded by Ariel settlement to the south, located just 500 meters away, which is established on lands of Salfit city and the neighboring villages of Marda and Kifl Haris. The settlement was established on a total area of 5,184 dunums and is currently inhabited by 17,559 Israeli settlers. Moreover, the Segregation Wall established around Ariel settlement isolates Qira from Salfit city and a number of neighboring villages, leading Qira residents to take alternative longer routes to reach Salfit city instead of the usual shorter road (of a maximum 10 minute journey time)

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented Projects

Qira Village Council has implemented several development projects in Qira during the past five years (See Table 12).

Table 12: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Qira during the Last Five Years

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Constructing sidewalks for the village streets	Infrastructure	2007	World Vision
Expanding the public water network	Infrastructure	2009	GTZ
Rehabilitating the village entrance	Infrastructure	2011	CHF
Expanding Qira Co-educated Elementary School	Educational	2012	CHF

Source: Qira Village Council, 2012

Proposed Projects

Qira Village Council, in cooperation with the village's residents and civil society organizations, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) workshop conducted by ARIJ staff. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the viewpoints of the workshop participants:

1. Constructing a public services complex to host the meetings and outreach programs of the civil society organizations, and to contain a public library, youth center and a multipurpose hall.
2. Constructing a building for an integrated health center to include a maternity and childhood center and a center for people with special learning and educational. To further provide the center with the necessary medical equipment and an ambulance, in addition to a medical staff working throughout the week.
3. Expanding and rehabilitating Qira kindergarten, and providing a transportation vehicle for students (mainly in the winter).
4. Increasing the capacity of the public electricity network through providing it with additional adapters.
5. Restoring the old city's buildings
6. Restoring Qira swimming pool which has the potential to contain large quantities of water, to be used for agricultural purposes.
7. Rehabilitating (10km) and constructing new (3km) agricultural roads.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Qira suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 13 shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the Village Council's perspective (Multiple choice survey carried out during ARIJ field visits)

Table 13: Development Priorities and Needs in Qira

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and pavement of roads	*			7.8 km [^]
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks			*	
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas			*	
4	Construction of new water networks	*			5 km
5	Rehabilitation/ construction of new wells or springs			*	
6	Construction of water reservoirs			*	
7	Construction of a sewage disposal network	*			3 km
8	Construction of a new electricity network	*			1.5 km
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection			*	
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste		*		1
11	Providing a sanitary landfill		*		
Health Needs					
1	Building new clinics or health care centres		*		1
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres	*			1
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools	*			
Educational Needs					
1	Building new schools	*			expanding the secondary school by adding 6 classrooms
2	Rehabilitation of old schools	*			rehabilitating the secondary school
3	Purchasing new school equipment	*			all schools
Agriculture Needs					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands			*	
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns	*			30 cisterns
3	Construction of livestock barracks			*	
4	Provision of Veterinary Services			*	
5	Provision of seeds and hay for animals			*	
6	Construction of new greenhouses			*	
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses			*	
8	Provision of field crops seeds			*	
9	Provision of plants and agricultural supplies	*			

[^] 1.8 km main roads, 3 km secondary roads and 3 km are agricultural roads

Source: Qira Village Council, 2012

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