

Rafat Village Profile



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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>.

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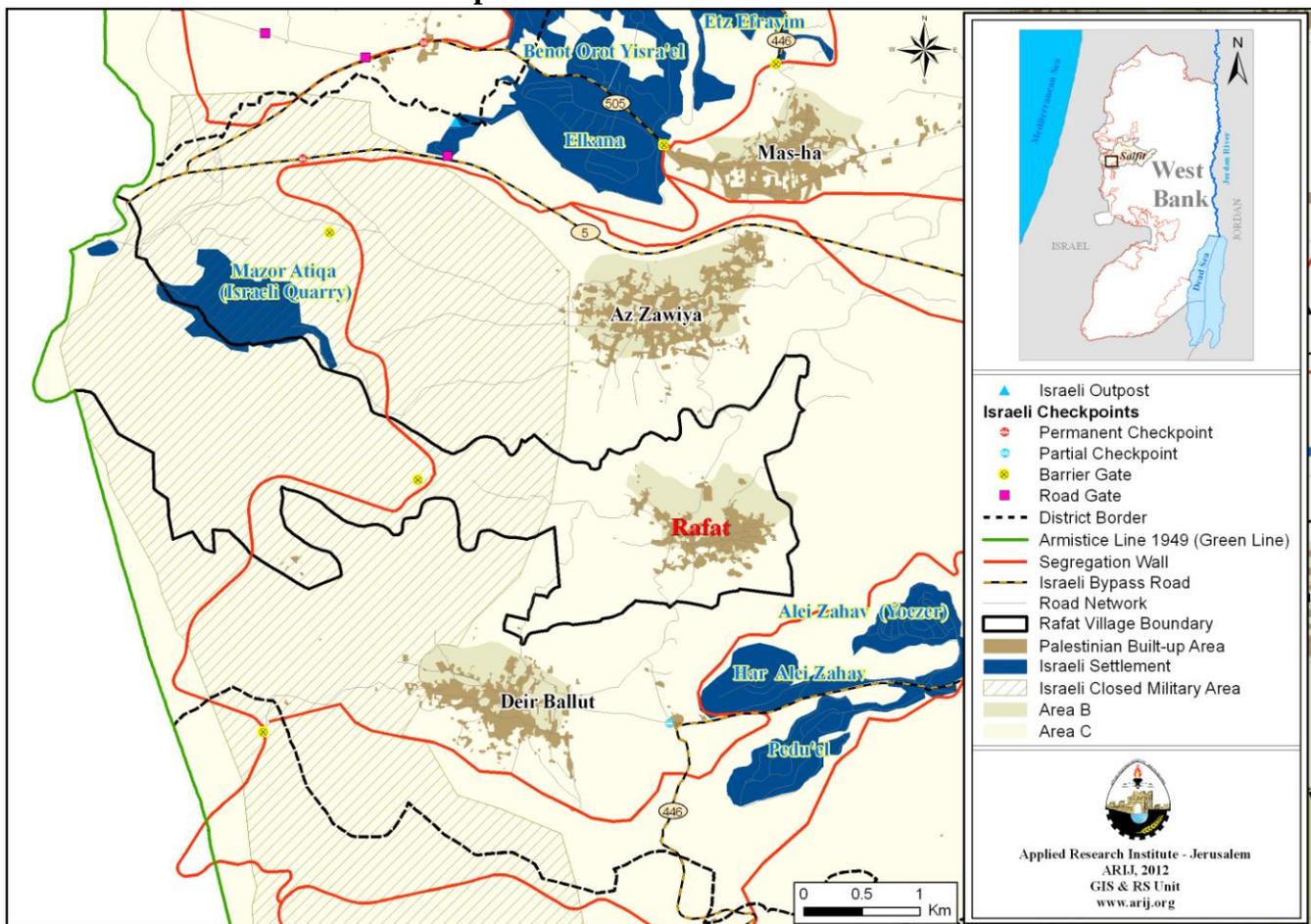
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Rafat Village Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Rafat is a Palestinian village in the Salbit Governorate located 13 km west of Salbit City. It is bordered by Kafr ad Dik village to the east, Deir Ballut to the south, Kafr Qasem (of 1948 lands) to the west, and Az Zawiya town to the north (ARIJ-GIS, 2013) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Rafat location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Rafat is located at an altitude of 293 m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 580.5 mm. The average annual temperature is 19 C° whilst the average humidity is approximately 62% (ARIJ-GIS, 2013).

Since 1997, Rafat has been governed by a Village Council which is currently administrated by 8 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). There are also 4 employees working

in the council, which owns a permanent headquarters that is included within the ‘Joint Services Council of West Salfit.’ The Council owns water and electricity maintenance devices, however, it does not possess a vehicle for the collection of solid waste (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

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

- The establishment and maintenance of the drinking water and electricity networks.
- Protection of village historical and archeological sites.
- Protection of governmental properties.

History

Rafat village’s name derives from the words “Raha” and “Rafah,” meaning comfort and well-being. This is due to the fact that the village was a place for recreation. Another story regarding the village’s name claims that the name Rafat, literally means the remains of the dead and was called so due to the large number of bones remaining in it.

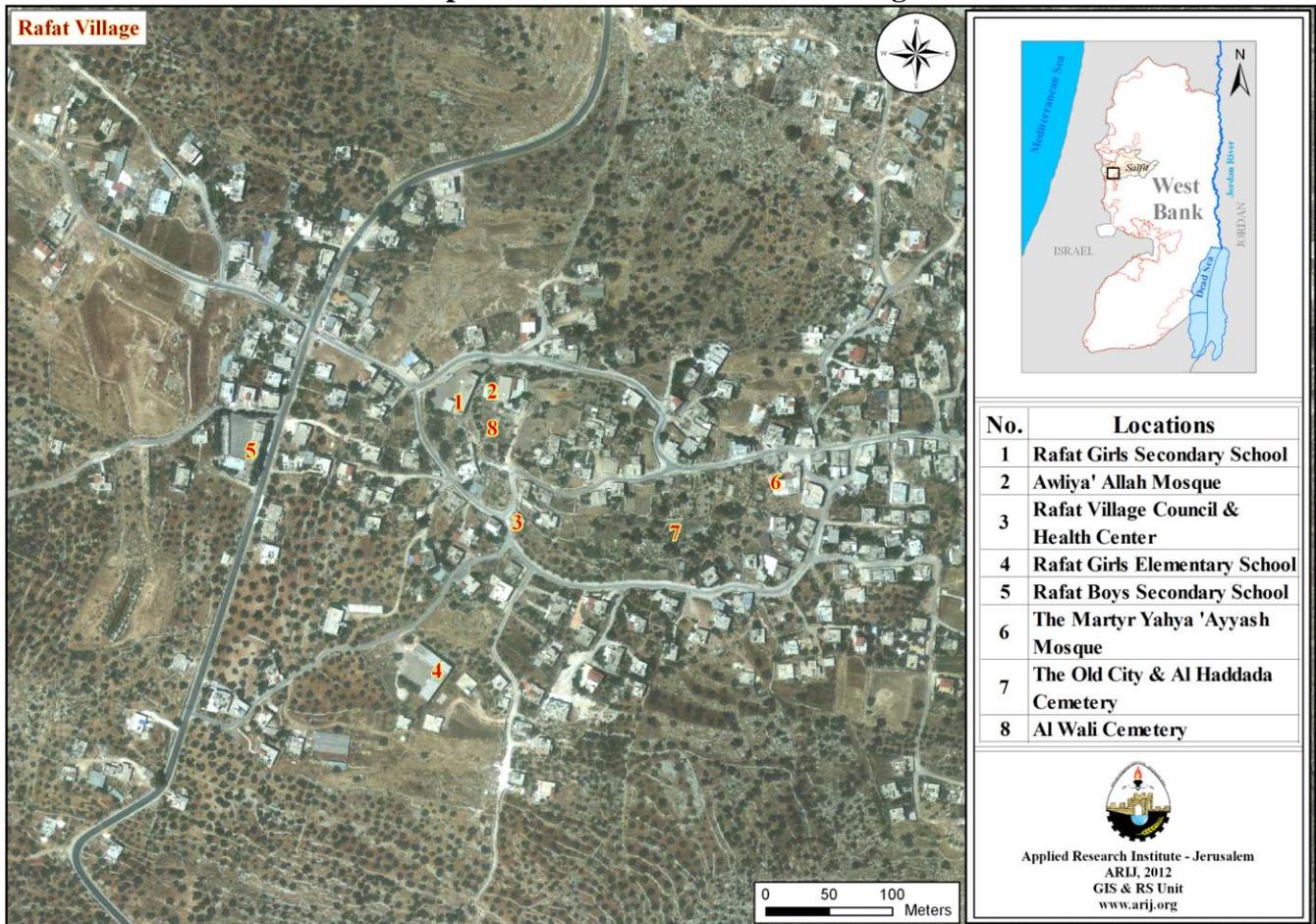
The village was established more than 1500 years ago. Recent studies discovered from ruins, all indicate that Rafat village was inhabited during the Canaanite, Phoenician, Greek, Roman and Islamic periods. Its residents however descend from several regions. Examples include the Jadallah family originating from Hijazi tribes as descendants of Omar Ben al Khattab, the ‘Ayyash family originate from Yemen, the Shihada family from Susa ancient village destroyed more than 300 years ago, while the Nawwas, Abu Zreiq and Abu Zirr families descend from the occupied territories of 1948 (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

Photo of Rafat

Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are two mosques in the village; the Eastern Mosque called t Martyr Yahya ‘Ayyash and the Western Mosque called Awliya’ Allah (‘Guardians of God’). The latter was built by the Mamluks in 672 AH. The village has several sites of archaeological interest including: ‘Arara Mountain which contains an old volcano that dates back to the middle ages, the Old City which is more than 150 years old, Al Wali Mosque and Cemetery, and Khirbet Kasfa (Kasfa ruins and remains) which was confiscated by the occupation forces. None of these sites is qualified for tourism as determined by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiques (Rafat Village Council, 2012) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Rafat Village



Population Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Rafat in 2007 was 1,837, of whom 962 were male and 875 female. There were 344 households registered as living in 363 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 Rafat is as follows: 41.3% were less than 15 years of age, 56% were between 15 and 64 years of age, and 2.7% were 65 years of age or older. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the village is 109.9:100, meaning that males and females constitute 52.4% and 47.6% of the population, respectively.

Families

Rafat residents are from several families, including ‘Ayyash, Shihada, Judah, ‘Asba, Abu Zreiq, Al Mashni, Jadallah, Abu Zirr and Nawwas families (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

Immigration

The field survey conducted by ARIJ staff showed that only one person has left the village since Al Aqsa Intifada in 2000 (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Rafat population is approximately 6%, of whom 77.7% are females. Of the literate population, 13.6% could only read and write, with no formal education, 22.3% had elementary education, 26.4% had preparatory education, 18.1% had secondary education, and 13.5% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of Rafat by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

Table 1: Rafat 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	18	94	159	187	138	24	83	3	6	3	0	715
F	63	89	141	169	105	10	53	0	0	0	1	631
T	81	183	300	356	243	34	136	3	6	3	1	1,346

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are three public schools in the village all of which are run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). However, there is no kindergarten supervised by the MoHE (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012) (see Table 2).

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

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Rafat Co-educated Elementary School	Government	Mixed
Rafat Girls' Secondary School	Government	Female
Rafat Boys' Secondary School	Government	Male

Source: Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012

In the village there are 567 students, 40 teachers, and 23 classes. The average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 14, whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 25 (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012).

Due to the lack of secondary level scientific and commercial education in the village schools, male students head to Az Zawiya Boys' Secondary School in Az Zawiya town (3 km from Rafat village) (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

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

- The small size of playgrounds in both the boys' and the girls' secondary schools.
- The lack of secondary levels scientific and commercial education.
- A number of classrooms in the boys' secondary school are in need of renovation.
- The lack of computers and IT facilities in any of the schools.

Health Status

Rafat has one governmental health center, a governmental general physician clinic and a private pharmacy. Furthermore, the village has an ambulance owned by the Scientific Medical Society in Biddya town. In the absence of required health services or in emergencies, patients are transferred to Yasir Arafat Governmental Hospital in Salfit city (18 km away) or to Biddya Health Center in Biddya town (10 km away) (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

The health sector in the village faces a number of obstacles and problems, principally (Rafat Village Council, 2012):

- The small size of the health center and the lack of specialized physicians.
- The lack of sufficient medical devices and equipment.
- The lack of medical laboratories and a radiology center.

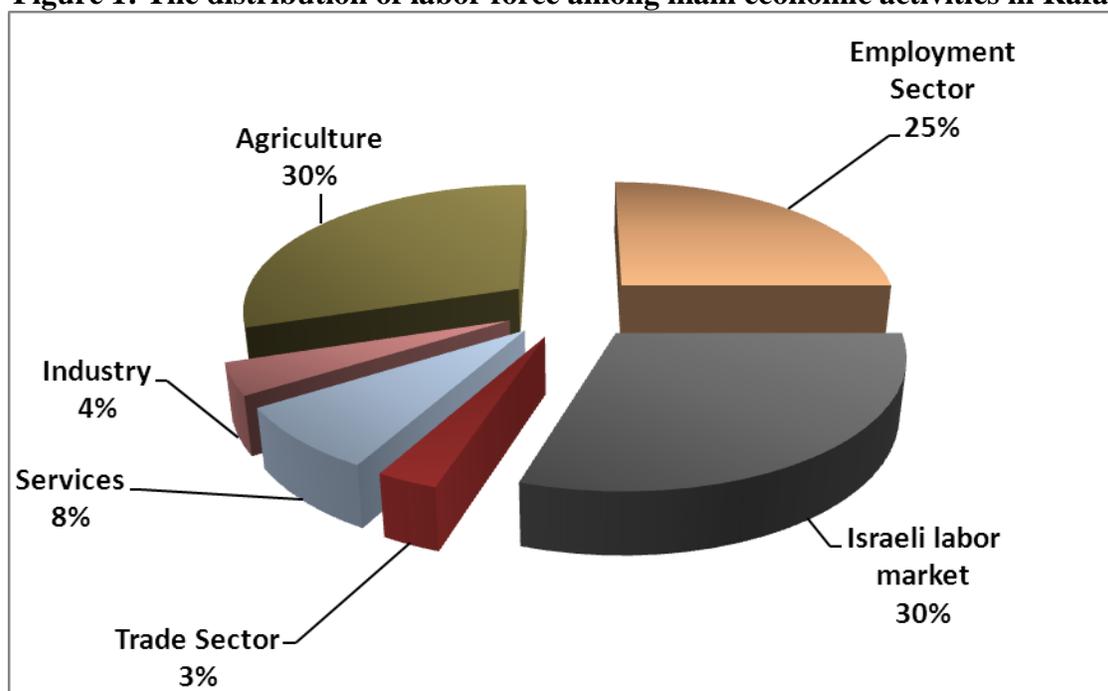
Economic Activities

The economy in Rafat is mainly dependent on the agricultural sector in addition to the Israeli labor market; each of which absorbs 30% of the village's workforce (Rafat 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 Rafat are as follows:

- Agriculture sector (30%)
- Israeli labor market (30%)
- Government or other employees sector (25%)
- Services sector (8%)
- Industry (4%)
- Trade sector (3%)

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



Source: Rafat Village Council, 2012

Rafat has 9 groceries (including fruits and vegetables stores and supermarkets), 3 service stores and 7 different professional workshops, such as blacksmiths, carpentry etc. (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

In 2012, the unemployment rate in Rafat reached 20% and the groups most affected economically by the Israeli restrictions have been (Rafat Village Council, 2012):

- Agriculture workers.
- Labor force workers.

Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 29.9% of Rafat labor force was economically active, of whom 79.8% were employed, 69.7% were not economically active, 60.2% were students, and 30.1% were housekeepers (See Table 3).

Table 3: Rafat 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	280	23	38	341	308	1	41	9	11	370	4	715
F	41	7	13	61	257	281	27	1	2	568	2	631
T	321	30	51	402	565	282	68	10	13	938	6	1,346

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

Source: PCBS, 2009.

Agricultural Sector

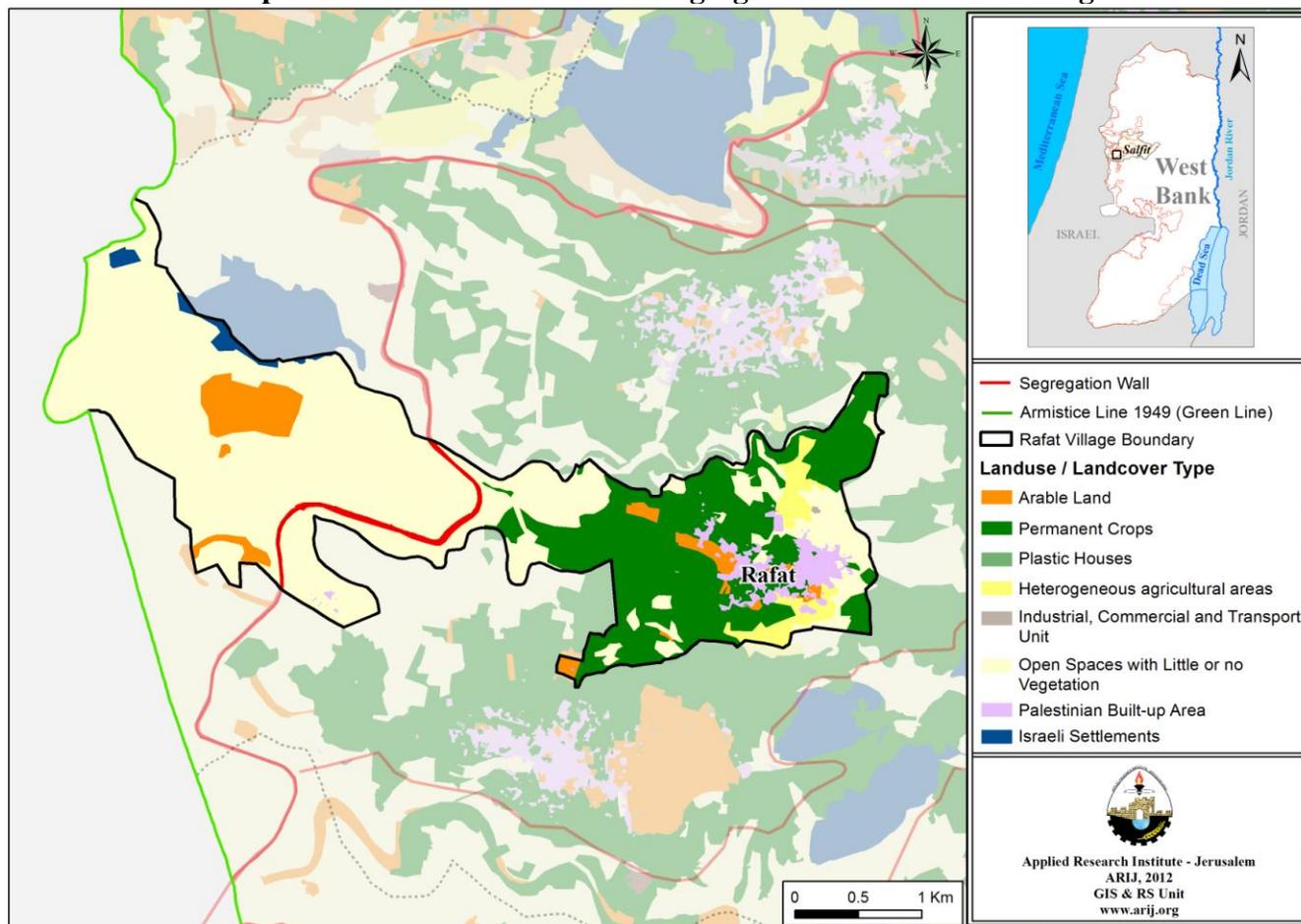
Rafat has a total area of approximately 8,870 dunums of which 2,973 are ‘arable’ land and 308 dunums are registered as ‘residential’ (See Table 4 and Map 3).

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

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (2,973)				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					
8,870	308	2,470	2	0	501	0	0	5,363	4	222

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

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



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Table 5 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Rafat. The most commonly cultivated crops within this area are tomatoes, okra and snakecucumber.

Table 5: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Rafat (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.
38	23	0	12	0	8	0	2	0	0	38	45

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

Table 6 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Rafat is famous for olive cultivation and there are approximately 1,410 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the village.

Table 6: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Rafat (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.
1,410	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1,426	0

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

In terms of field crops and forage in Rafat, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated, covering an area of around 175 dunums (See Table 7).

Table 7: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Rafat (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.
175	0	77	0	58	0	4	0	82	0	0	0	18	0	414	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 not those considered fragmented and/or 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 3% of the residents in Rafat rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep and goats (See Table 8).

Table 8: Livestock in Rafat

Cows*	Sheep	Camels	Poultry	Bee Hives
7	2,987	-	30,000	162

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Salfit, 2010

There are approximately 10 kilometers of agricultural roads in the village, divided as follows (Rafat Village Council, 2012):

Table 9: Agricultural Roads in Rafat Village and their Lengths

Suitability of Agricultural Roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	2
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	7
For animals only	1
Unsuitable	-

Source: Rafat Village Council, 2012

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

- The lack of agricultural roads and difficulty in accessing agricultural lands.
- The lack of water sources for livestock and crops.
- The lack of farmers' capital for agricultural projects.
- The confiscation of lands by occupation forces.
- The lack of economic feasibility of working in both parts of the agricultural sector animal and plant.

Institutions and Services

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

- **Rafat Village Council:** Founded in 1997 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.
- **Rafat Youth Center for Development & Innovation:** Founded in 2010 by the Ministry of Youth & Sports. The Center is interested in young people, as it provides them with various services, including training courses, sports activities and voluntary works.

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Rafat has been connected to a public electricity network since 2006. 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. Village residents face some problems concerning electricity, primarily the poor situation of the prepaid meters and shortages in maintenance devices and equipment (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

Rafat is also connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 65% of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

Transportation Services:

There is only one taxi in Rafat and residents suffer from the lack of vehicles in the village to serve them. Due to the lack of transportation vehicles, residents use private cars (Rafat Village Council, 2012). It is noted that there are 4 km of main roads and 4 km of secondary roads in Rafat (Rafat Village Council, 2012) (See Table 10).

Table 10: Roads in Rafat village

Status of Internal Roads	Road Length (km)	
	Main	Sub
1. Paved & in good condition	2	2
2. Paved & in poor condition	1	1
3. Unpaved	1	1

Source: Rafat Village Council, 2012

Water Resources:

Rafat is provided with water by the 'West Bank Water Department' through the public water network established in 1991. All housing units are connected to the network (Rafat Village Council, 2012)

The quantity of water supplied to Rafat village in 2010 was recorded at approximately 101,580 cubic meters/year (Rafat Village Council, 2012). Therefore, the estimated rate of water supply per capita is approximately 138 liters/day. However, no Rafat 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 Rafat is 108 liters per day (Rafat Village Council, 2012). The average water consumption of Rafat residents is considered good 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 (Rafat Village Council, 2012). The village additionally has 200 individual household rainwater harvesting cisterns (Rafat Village Council, 2012).

Sanitation:

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

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the approximated quantity of wastewater generated per day, is 173 cubic meters, or 63,385 cubic meters annually. At the individual level, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 86 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 West 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 15 NIS/ month per household is charged to the population and facilities served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. All of these fees are collected from the citizens (Rafat Village Council, 2012)

Most of the population in Rafat benefits from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags, and placed in 40 containers (of 1m³ capacity), located at various points in the village. The Joint Council collects the solid waste three times a week and transports it using the council's waste vehicle to the village's dumping site, 2 km from the village, where it is subsequently burnt (Rafat Village Council, 2012)

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Rafat is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Rafat residents is nearly 1.4 tons, or 516 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

Environmental Conditions

Like other towns and villages in the Governorate, Rafat 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 networks- aged condition in need of rehabilitation.

Wastewater Management

- The absence of a public sewage network in the village means that Rafat 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 Rafat and other neighboring communities in the Governorate is due mainly to obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill. The main impediment cited is that the appropriate land 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 Rafat

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28th September 1995, Rafat was divided into areas "B" and "C". Approximately 666 dunums (7.5% of the village's total area) were assigned as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has a 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 which constitutes a small part compared to the village's total land area. The rest of the village's area, constituting 8,204 dunums (92.5% 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. Most of the lands lying within the area C are agricultural areas, open spaces and lands isolated behind the Segregation Wall.

Table 11: The Geopolitical Divisions of Rafat – Salfit Governorate

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total village area
Area A	0	0
Area B	666	7.5
Area C	8,204	92.5
Nature Reserve	0	0
Total	8,870	100

Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2013

Israeli Occupation Practices in Rafat Village

Rafat village has been subjected to numerous Israeli confiscations for the benefit of the various Israeli objectives, represented in the construction of Israeli settlements, checkpoints, outposts and bypass roads on the village's territories. This is in addition to the 'Segregation Plan' represented by the Segregation Wall which has affected the lives of Rafat residents. That which follows is a breakdown of the Israeli confiscations to have negatively affected Rafat village territories.

During their occupation of the Palestinian territories, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) confiscated 101 dunums in Rafat to establish the Israeli Quarry "Mazor Atiqa" industrial settlement north west of the village. This was annexed to Israel within the Western Segregation Zone, west of the Segregation Wall. "Mazor Atiqa" was established in 1986 on land owned by residents of the neighboring town of Az Zawiya, with most of the settlement being built on these lands, with some part taking territory from Rafat. Through the establishment of such quarries, the occupation authorities aim to utilize Palestinian natural resources for Israeli gain and control additional lands, annexed permanently as part of the State of Israel. It is worth noting that at the end of 2011, the Israeli Supreme Court issued a decision allowing Israeli quarries to continue working (without establishing new quarries) within the West Bank, in order to meet the economic requirements of the Israeli entity of raw materials. This decision came only after two years of an objection submitted by a number of human rights and humanitarian organizations against these quarries. A report conducted by ARIJ shows that Israel transfers and sells 94% of that which is extracted (essentially stolen) from the occupied Palestinian territories to Israel, which constitutes approximately 25% of the raw materials consumed by Israel. In addition, they exploit other natural resources such as water which is essential for human survival, the health and sanitation of Palestinian population in addition to the thriving of the agricultural sector. The theft and misuse of this resource for Israeli purposes is in clear violation of the international law, which emphasizes the non-eligibility of any civil occupation to exploit natural resources in occupied territories for their economic favor. Such resources may only be used by occupying forces for the benefit of those under occupation or for *temporary* military purposes.

Concerning Israeli military checkpoints, following the construction of the Segregation Wall, the occupation forces established a military checkpoint in Rafat village represented as a walled gate west of the village that allows farmers to access their lands in order to cultivate them. It is noted that farmers may only access the lands in certain seasonal times of agricultural harvest and special permits issued by the Israeli military.

The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan in Rafat Village

The Israeli Segregation Wall plan has had a negative and destructive impact on Rafat residents. The latest route of the Israeli Segregation Wall Plan, published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense's website in 2007, shows that the existing Wall extends for 3km on Rafat's western lands, confiscating 4,310 dunums (49%) of the village's total area and isolating more lands for Israeli settlement activities. The majority of lands isolated by the Wall mainly includes open spaces, agricultural areas and Israeli settlements constructed on village lands (See Table 12).

Table 12: Land Classification of the Isolated lands in Rafat Village – Salfit Governorate

No.	Land Classification	Area (in dunums)
1	Open Spaces	3,782
2	Agricultural Areas	367
3	Israeli Settlements	101
4	Wall Zone	60
Total		4,310
Source: The Geo-informatics Department – ARIJ 2013		

According to the latest version of the Segregation Wall plan the urbanized areas of Rafat will become isolated and surrounded by the Wall from all sides. There is a wall west of the village and a planned wall to the east, north and south, thus it will put Rafat in addition to Az Zawiya and Deir Ballut localities in isolation closed from all sides. Rafat will be linked to the neighboring villages of Az Zawiya and Mas-ha from the north through a small tunnel that will pass under Israeli bypass road number 5 known as "Samria Transit." This will result in further dismembering Palestinian lands, restricting the movement of the local population and confiscating and isolating more lands for Israeli settlement purposes.

The Palestinian farmers of Rafat village are denied access to their lands by the Israel occupation authorities as it is isolated west of the Wall (within the Western Segregation Zone). They cannot access their lands without a special permit that is be issued from the Israeli Liaison Office. This allows them to pass through special gates built within the Wall to access their lands. It should be noted that access to isolated agricultural lands is limited only to those farmers that can prove their land ownership to the Israeli Civil Administration. Permits¹ are issued to lands' owners, usually elderly persons, which have their names included in the property ownership instruments; meaning younger members of the same family cannot assist in cultivating the lands In addition, the Israeli Civil Administration issue these permits from seasonally and they do not allow for a labour force of necessary cultivation equipment to access these lands, thus making the job of Palestinian farmers extremely difficult and negatively effecting crop production.

¹ Obtaining a permit is not an easy process, and it is usually denied for the owners of the isolated lands.

It should also be noted that villages of Salfit Governorate are known for their fertile soil and the abundance of water and large trees, especially olive trees. This makes the region an important target for Israeli settlement activities, and it is the second Governorate after Jerusalem in terms of land confiscation, wall and settlement construction (ARIJ, MUD 2012).

Military Orders Issued in Rafat Village

The Israeli Occupation Army has issued many military orders and notifications to confiscate Rafat village lands:

- Israeli Military Order No. (24/04/T): Issued on 4th March 2004, confiscating a total area of 317 dunums of Deir Ballut, Az Zawiya, Mas-ha and Rafat village lands in order to construct the Israeli Segregation Wall.
- Israeli Military Order No. (89/04/T): Issued on 6th December 2004, confiscating a total area of 389.2 dunums of Rafat village's land in order to construct the Israeli Segregation Wall.

Israeli Demolitions in Rafat Village

On May 18 2011, the Israeli occupation authorities handed four Palestinian families from Rafat notifications of demolition that include giving them a grace period to object on the decision of demolishing their residential and agricultural facilities under the pretext of unauthorized building due to the location of these facilities in the area classified as "C" according to Oslo II Agreement of 1995. These notifications included 13 facilities between residential and agricultural located in "Thaher Suboh" area which is inhabited by 30 Palestinians distributed among four big families. Note that the notified facilities, which are made of burlap and tin, are owned by Aziz Ayyash, Kayed Ayyash, Ma'zouz Ayyash and S'oud Ayyash.

In addition, during the early morning of April 16th 2012, the Israeli bulldozers escorted by the Israeli Occupation Army (IOA) stormed "Thaher Suboh" area in Rafat village west of Salfit Governorate and demolished the 11 residential and agricultural facilities owned by the aforementioned four Palestinian families. The demolition process took place under the pretext of unauthorized building due to the location of the notified facilities in areas classified as "C".

Development Plans and Projects

Implemented Projects

Rafat Village Council has implemented several development projects in Rafat during the past five years (See Table 13).

Table 13: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Rafat during the Last Five Years

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Rehabilitating part of the public water network	Infrastructure	2007	ANERA
Constructing street shoulders and retaining walls	Infrastructure	2010	UNDP

Source: Rafat Village Council, 2012

Proposed Projects

Rafat Village Council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the village and its residents, 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 in the village. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the viewpoints of the participants' in the workshop:

1. Constructing an integrated health center (land for this purpose is available).
2. Constructing and paving secondary and agricultural roads (approx. 3 km).
3. Renewing the public water network (approximately 3.5 km).
4. Constructing an additional floor in each of the village's schools.
5. Adding electrical transformers to the public electricity network to increase the power supply (two transformers).
6. Constructing a joint services complex and a meeting hall.
7. Establishing a sports stadium to serve the youth.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Rafat suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 14 shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the Village Council's perspective.

Table 14: Development Priorities and Needs in Rafat

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and pavement of roads	*			3 km [^]
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks		*		1 km
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas			*	
4	Construction of new water networks			*	
5	Rehabilitation/ construction of new wells or springs			*	
6	Construction of water reservoirs	*			300 m ³
7	Construction of a sewage disposal network	*			5 km
8	Construction of a new electricity network			*	
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection	*			20 containers
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste	*			1
11	Providing a sanitary landfill		*		
Health Needs					
1	Building new clinics or health care centres	*			1 health center
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres			*	
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools	*			
Educational Needs					
1	Building new schools			*	
2	Rehabilitation of old schools	*			the secondary school
3	Purchasing new school equipment	*			all schools
Agriculture Needs					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands	*			500 dunums
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns	*			20 cisterns
3	Construction of livestock barracks	*			10 barracks
4	Provision of Veterinary Services	*			
5	Provision of seeds and hay for animals	*			10 tons per year
6	Construction of new greenhouses	*			5 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses			*	
8	Provision of field crops seeds	*			
9	Provision of plants and agricultural supplies	*			

[^] 2 km secondary roads and 1 km are agricultural roads

Source: Rafat Village Council, 2012

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