

Al Aqaba village profile

Produced by



The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem

In cooperation with



Funded by

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

February, 2006

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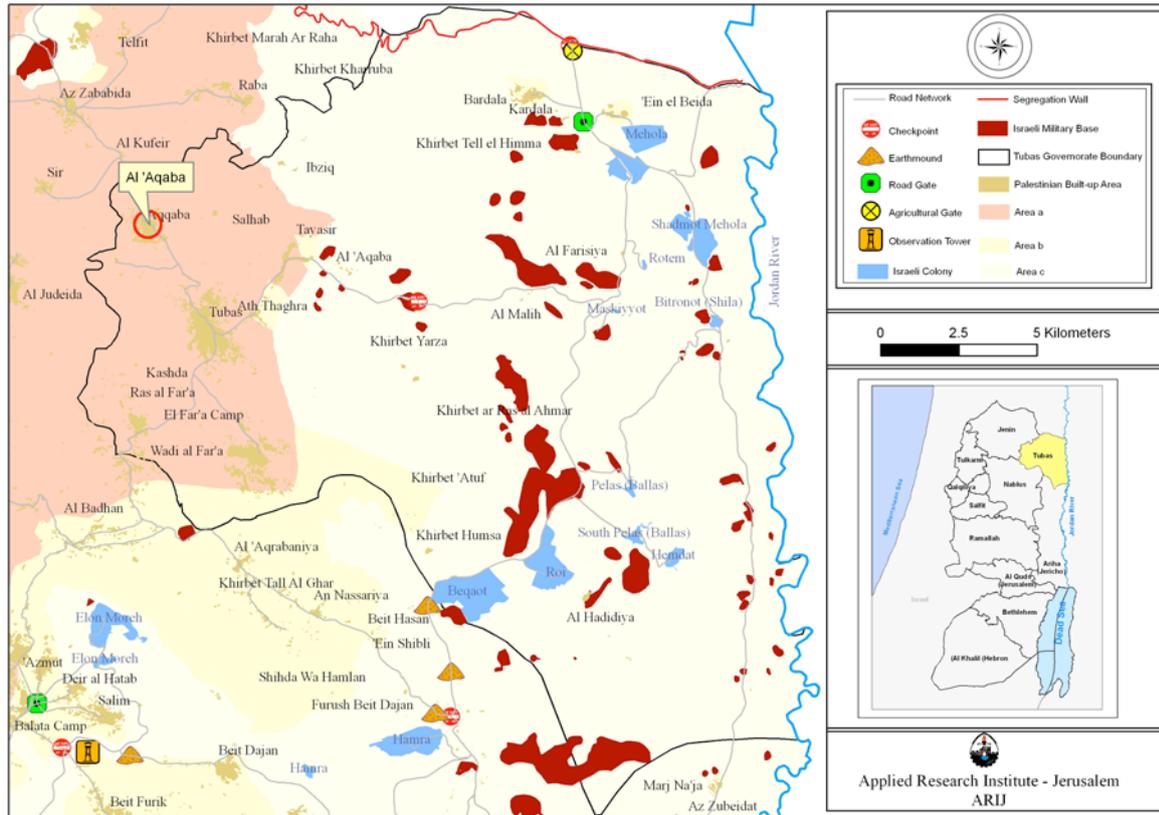
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Al Aqaba village profile

Location and Physical characteristics

AL AQABA is a Palestinian village in Tubas Governorate which is located 5 km north east of Tubas city, in the north eastern part of the West Bank. It is bordered by Khirbet Yarza and an Israeli military base (Kopra) to the east, Tayasir villages to the west, Ein el Beida and Bardala to the north and Tammun village to the south.

Map 1: Al Aqaba village location and borders



The total area of Al Aqaba village is 2600 dunums, which represents approximately 0.5 % of the Tubas Governorate's land area. 100 dunums are classified as built up area, whilst 2500 dunums are agricultural area cultivated with different crops; 2000 dunums have been confiscated by Israeli forces.

Al Aqaba village is located in a mountainous area. It is surrounded by plains, at the moderate elevation of 298 m above sea level.

Al Aqaba village is characterized by a moderate climate. The mean annual rainfall in the village is 340 mm; the average annual temperature is 19-20 °C, and the average annual humidity is 56 % (ARIJ GIS).

Since 1997 Al-Aqaba village has been governed by a village council which was appointed by the Ministry of Local Authority, currently however the council comprises of 6 members (5 males and one female) who were elected during the 2005 local authorities' elections. The council has no paid employees or workers. Its operations and responsibilities include:

1. Administration, planning and development;
2. Social development services;
3. Infrastructure maintenance, electricity, rehabilitation of roads schools and kindergarten.

History

The village has been inhabited by its current residents since the 1930s, when a few of people from Al Salt (Jordan) came to the area due to the abundance of water wells and grazing lands so that they could cultivate the fertile land and take advantage of the moderate climate. In the 1940s another group of people arrived in the area for the same reason and lived together with the original residents.

Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Al Aqaba village has been exposed to aggression and many other difficulties created by the occupation. The area has been declared a closed military zone by Israeli forces. Military training exercises are continuously organized in the area surrounding the village. A military base and check point have been constructed behind the village. It is forbidden for the residents of Al Aqaba to get licenses to build houses and use their lands. For this reason people have been forced to migrate from the village to other nearby localities like Tayasir, Tubas and Nablus. These migrants constitute about 700 people since that time.

Demography and Population

In 1997, the total population of Al Aqaba village was 85 people, of which 46 were males and 39 were females. There were 13 households resident in 14 housing units (1997 census).

The population of Al Aqaba village constitutes about 0.2 % of the total population of the Tubas Governorate and which considered resident in a rural area.

Age groups and gender

The population of Al Aqaba village has been classified by age groups and sex as indicated by 1997 census. The census revealed that 43.5 % are less than 15 years, 50.6 % are in the age group 15-64 years and 5.9 % are 65 years and above (See table 1)

Sex	Age				percentage
	0 -14	15 -64	65 +	Total	
Male	18	26	2	46	54.1
Female	19	17	3	39	45.9
Total	37	43	5	85	100

Source: PCBS, May 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final Results

In 2005, the estimated population of Al Aqaba village was about 300 people. The population of Al Aqaba village grew by 252.9 % between 1997 and 2005 (locality questionnaire)

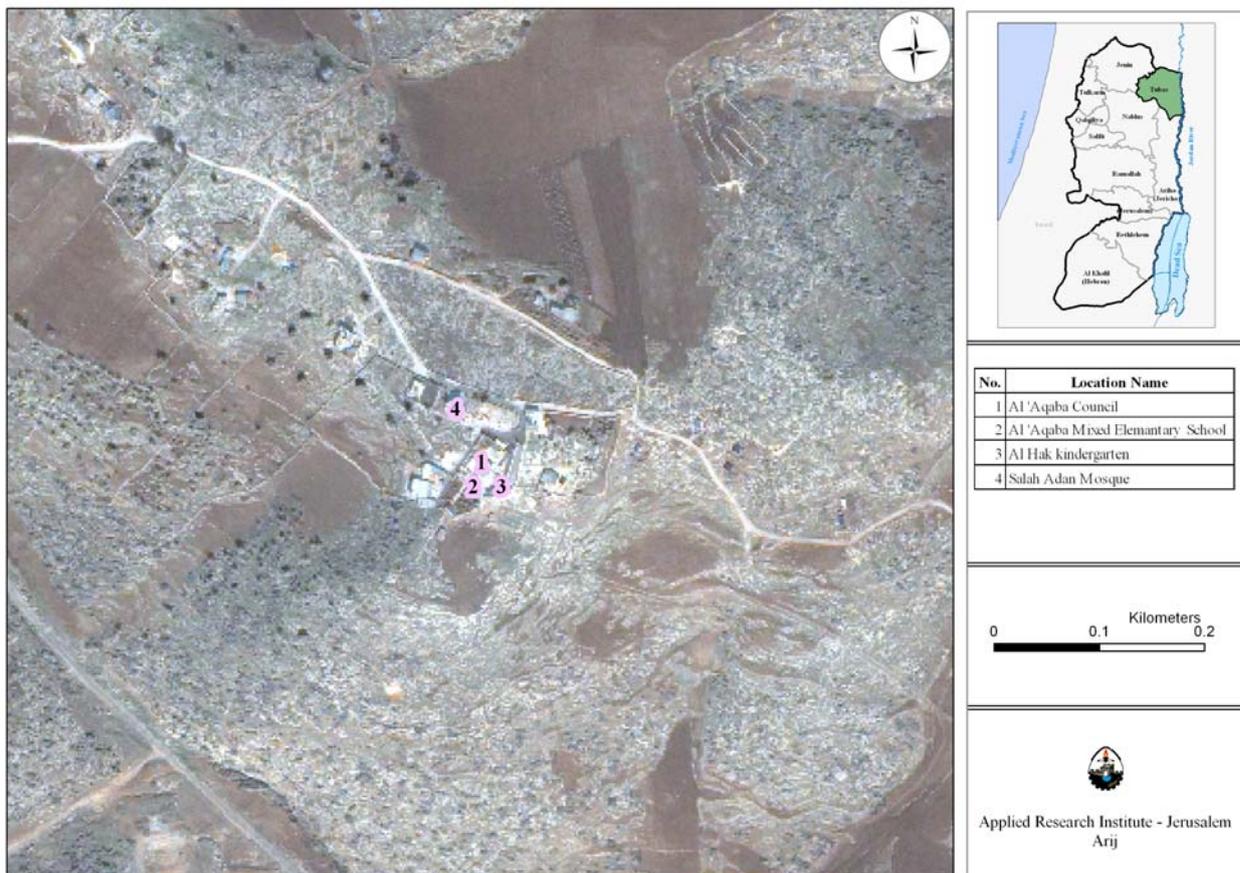
Families:

The population of Al Aqaba village comprises of five main families: Sbah 50 %, Abu Mehsen 20 %, Jaber 20 %, Taleb 5 % and Debick 5 %.

Religious and Archeological Sites

There is one mosque in the village and there is no evidence of archeological or historical places.

Map 2: Main locations in Al Aqaba village



The Economy

Al Aqaba is an agricultural village; the residents came to the area due to the abundance of agriculture resources. Most of the residents depend on agricultural production for their livelihood, as 80 % of residents engaged in agriculture activities.

Currently, beside depending entirely on agriculture, the people in Al Aqaba obtain their livelihood from working in services, the Israeli labor market and the public sector.

Al Aqaba village has very limited economic establishments; there is only one shop in the village and several household industries like dairy produce.

Labor Force Construction

In 1997, the percentage of participants in labor force in Al Aqaba village was 69.4 % of the total population of the village. The participation of women was assessed to be 34.1 % (29 women in total). The labor force in Al Aqaba village was 59 people in total, of which 49.2 % are 'economically active' people and 50.8 % were non-economically active people. Of the economically active people 96.6 % were employed people. The largest groups of non-economically active people were the students and housewives, who constitute 46.7 % and 36.7 % respectively. Table 2 shows the labor force in Al Aqaba village.

Table 2: Al Aqaba Population (10 years and Over) by Sex and Employment Status

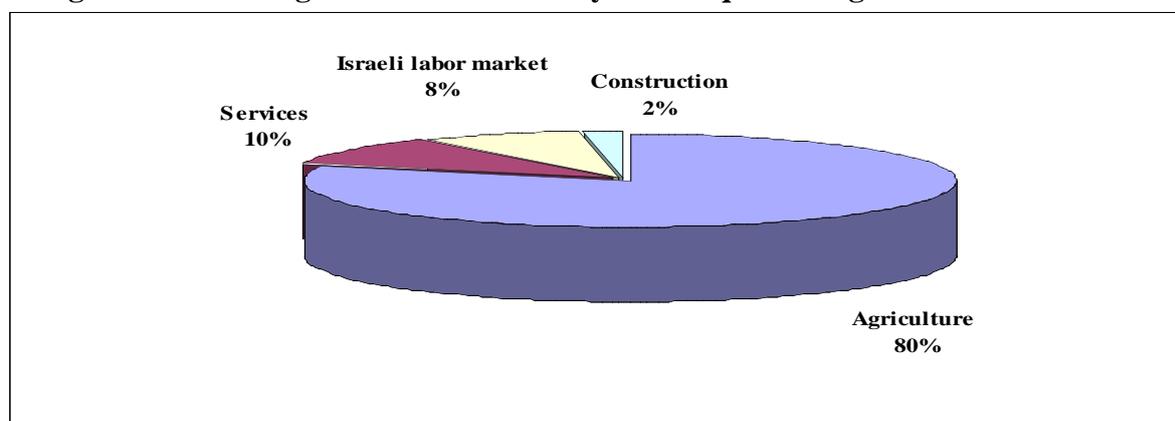
Sex	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Total
	Empl-oyed	Currently Un-Employed	Un-Employed Never Worked	Total	Stud-ents	House -Wife	Unable to work	Not working & Not looking For Work	Other	Total	
M	23	-	-	23	5	-	1	-	1	7	30
F	5	-	1	6	9	11	3	-	-	23	29
T	28	-	1	29	14	11	4	-	1	30	59

Source: PCBS, May 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final Results

Based on the survey conducted by ARIJ and ACH in November 2005, the share of the population working in the various sectors of the economy is listed below by percentage:

- The agricultural sector 80 %,
- Service sector 10 %,
- Israeli labor market 8 %.
- The construction sector 2 %.

Figure 1: Percentage of economic activity in Al Aqaba village



The survey also indicated that the social groups most affected by Israeli measures in the village during the second Intifada are: 1) Small farmers, 2) former migrant workers in the

Israeli labor market, 3) housewives and children, 4) families maintaining 6 individuals and more.

The average household income in Al Aqaba was severely affected by the second Intifada. Prior to this the average income stood at 1800 NIS. Today however it has declined sharply to 400 NIS. The result is that the average household income decreased by 77.8 % in only four years.

Education

In the 1997 census the education status in Al Aqaba village indicated that about 25.4 % of the residents were illiterate, with women (73.3 %) comprising a greater percentage of illiterates than men (26.7 %). Of the literate population, 18.6 % of residents could read and write, 32.2 % completed elementary education, 18.6 % completed preparatory education and 5.1 % completed their secondary and higher education. Table 4 shows the education status in Al Aqaba by sex and education attainment in 1997.

Table 3: Al Aqaba Population (10 years and over) by sex and Educational Attainment

Sex	Illite- rate	Can read & Write	Elemen- tary	Prepa- ratory	Secon- -dary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	M A	P H D	Total
M	4	2	13	8	2	-	1	-	-	-	30
F	11	9	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
T	15	11	19	11	2	-	1	-	-	-	59

Source: PCBS, May 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final Results

At the end of the 2004/2005 scholastic year there was one co-educated school in Al Aqaba village supervised by government. The school has 6 classes and provided elementary education to 79 students.

In the same year there was also one kindergarten in the village supervised by a charitable society which provides pre-education schools for 70 infants.

The education status in Al Aqaba is suffering from many obstacles as a direct result of Israeli procedures. Many pupils have been injured by Israeli forces; there are shortages of classes and a shortage of utilities.

Health Status

There is one Governmental health clinic in Al Aqaba village, which provides health services to the public; the clinic has a pharmacy that provides drugs and medicines three days a week. The Israeli forces have threatened to destroy the clinic, which has already suffered many times for disregarding Israeli procedures.

The main problems and obstacles facing the health sector in the village are as follows:

1. There is no medical laboratory in the village.
2. There is no specialized clinic.

3. There is no permanent pharmacy.
4. There is no ambulance.
5. There is no maternity clinic.
6. Physicians face difficulties in mobility - especially for those coming from outside the village - due to Israeli closures and barriers.

Infrastructure, Natural resources and Services

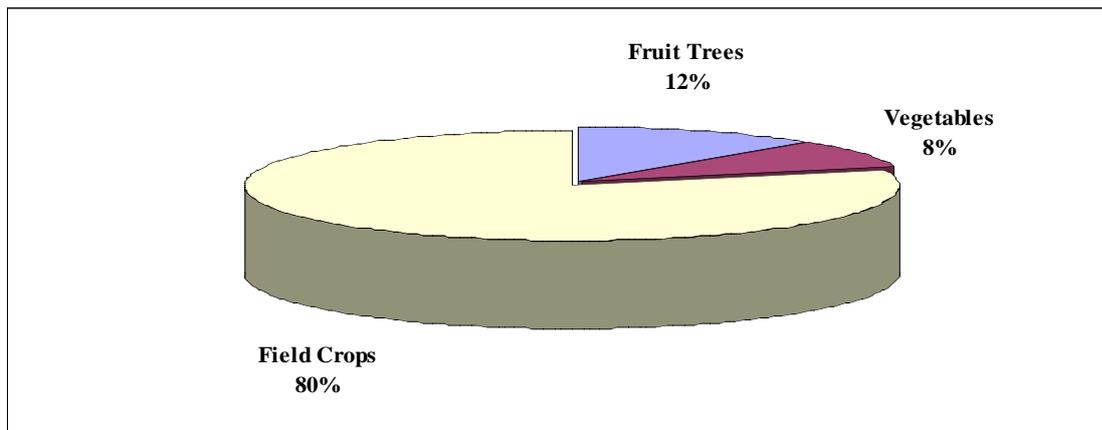
Al Aqaba is a small village; the residents get most of their services from Tubas city as it is the main city in the Governorate. In addition to the school and clinic, there is one charitable society in the village.

- **Telecommunication services:** Al Aqaba village is connected to the telecommunication network yet few households are connected to the network, the total is estimated to be 6 households.
- **Water services:** The field survey conducted by ARIJ and ACH in Tubas Governorate in the end of 2005 indicates that Al Aqaba village has not been connected to the water network. The village has no springs, wells or reservoir as a source or store of water for times of need. The residents depend on water collecting cisterns and water tanks which bring water from the Alfara Spring.
The village faces several severe problems in the water sector:
 1. Unavailability of water network to provide health and safe water continually.
 2. Shortage of water due to lack of water tanks to bring water.
 3. Increasing water cost.
 4. Increasing the case of illness and Amoepa due to deterioration of water tanks.
- **Electricity services:** Until 2004 electricity in Al Aqaba was provided by local generators. In 2004 the village was connected with the main electricity network supplied by Israeli Electric Cooperation. Approximately 80 % of the households in the village are connected to the electricity network.
- **Solid Waste Collection:** There is no solid waste collection system in Al Aqaba village. The solid waste is disposed of randomly in separated dumps on the side of roads and in open areas.
- **Sewage Disposal Facilities:** Al Aqaba village is not connected to the sewage network. All households must therefore dispose their wastewater in cesspits. This is considered to be one of the main sources of pollution to the groundwater.
- **Transportation services:** Al Aqaba village has a simple road network, only 300 m of roads are paved and in good condition and 2km are not paved at all. The means of transportation in Al Aqaba are limited and compromise of one private bus. Military check points and barriers, deterioration of roads and the shortage of vehicles are the problems facing residents who want to travel in or out of the village.

Agriculture Sector

The residents of Al Aqaba village came to the area to work in agriculture due to its fertility land, abundance of water and grazing. Until today they maintain their old occupation and nearly 80 % of the residents are engaged in agriculture activities, they cultivate land and rear local animals for their livelihood. The total arable land in Al Aqaba village is 2500 dunums, whilst the cultivated area has reached 962 dunums. Out of 960 dunums which are cultivated, 102 dunums are primarily planted with fruit trees, 80 dunums are for the cultivation of vegetables and 780 dunums are for the cultivation of field crops. (Ministry of Agriculture 2004)

Figure 2: Percentage of cultivated area of fruit trees, vegetables and field crops in Al Aqaba village.



Based on the survey conducted by ARIJ, Al Aqaba village produces one ton of olives, 20 tons of field crops per annum in addition to a small amount of nut stone and vegetables for household consumption.

The residents of Al Alqaba also raise different kind of livestock. Data from the Ministry of Agriculture indicates that there are 3 heads of cattle, 110 goats, 450 sheep, 25 bee hives and 5000 poultry.

There are a lot of arable land which is not cultivated and not utilized in Al Aqaba village, out of 2500 dunums of arable land only 962 dunums are cultivated, which means that 61.5 % of the arable land is not utilized. The reasons of that are 1) Israeli forces have confiscated a large area of village land, 2) Israeli forces prevent the residents from access to a further large area and some times detain them by with holding their IDs due to the closed military area, 3) lack of infrastructure like agricultural roads, agricultural extension centers, agricultural markets and agricultural machines, and 4) lack of funds and governmental subsidies.

Impact of Occupation Practices

Since the Israel occupied of West Bank in 1967 more than 2000 dunums have been confiscated from Al Aqaba village land. Al Aqaba is surrounded by many Israeli procedures; in the east Israel has constructed a military base (Copra) and placed a check point for which they confiscated 50 dunums. To the south they have constructed another military base (Tsephah) for which they confiscated 150 dunums from the village land. The village is also

affected by Tayasir check point which restricts the movements of people who cross the Wall Gate. This separates Al Aqaba from the rest of Tubas localities. This has placed sever constraints on the movement of residents and their access to services out side the village.

Two years ago the residents of Al Aqaba village won the Israeli High Court decision to remove the road blocks and mud which had closed the main road of the village.

The Israeli occupation frequently construct's flying check points on the main road of Al Aqaba. At the same time they have destroyed six houses, 500 olives and nut trees have been burnt, 200 dunums of agriculture area (vegetables) have been bulldozed and 500 dunums are threatened with confiscation. There are about 30 families have been directly affected by these Israeli procedures.

During the second Intifada there were restrictions placed on access to health services, hospitals and social relations with other relatives. There was water pollution by Israeli settlements which has had harmful environmental effects on water, ear and soil and dangers effects from settlements waste water.

There are other Israeli threats to the village which are presented by the construction of segregation Wall. Until January, 2006 the wall was not constructed, according to the planed route of the Wall, Al Aqaba will be totally isolated. In addition to the military base and the checkpoints to east, the Wall will close the village from the west and south and its length estimated to be four km through the area.

Plans and Development Projects

Last year Al Aqaba village council has implemented a project to construct and rehabilitate the internal roads in the village. The project was funded by UNDP. Since the village is concerned with farming, livestock and suffering from a shortage of water, the strategic plan for Al Aqaba village council includes implementing a lot of projects based on developing infrastructures and promoting the agricultural sector. The developmental projects set up in the plan are listed in table 4.

Table 4: Development plans and projects in Al Aqaba village

Project	Type	Budget
Built a factory for dairy products	Agriculture	60,000 USD
Built water reservoir with 300 m ³	Infrastructure	14,450 USD
Built services building	Infrastructure	89,000 USD

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