

Al Bikai'a Villages Profile

(Kh Atuf, Al Hadidiya and Humsa)

Produced by



The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem

In cooperation with



Funded by

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

February, 2006

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Al Bikai'a Villages Profile

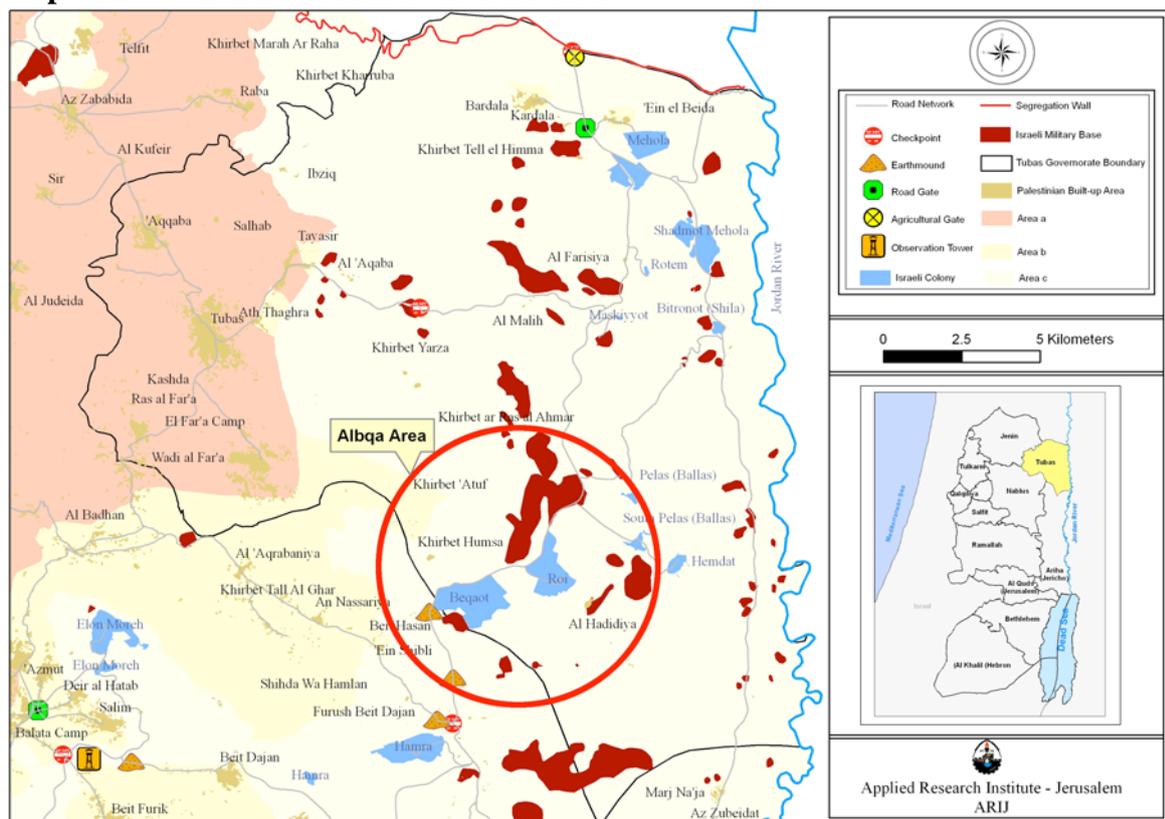
Location and Physical characteristics

Al Bikai'a (which is also known as Bikai'a of Tammun) is a Palestinian territory in Tubas Governorate, located 25 km southeast of Tubas city, in the north eastern part of the West Bank. It comprises of three main areas which are: Khirbat 'Atuf, Al Hadidiya, Humsa.

The total area of Al Bikai'a is 29,250 dunums, distributed over the three localities that form Al Bikai'a as follows: 23,614 dunums for 'Atuf, 5,236 dunums for Alhadidiya, and 400 dunums for Humsa.

Al Bikai'a area is located on a wide plain surrounded by mountains. The area is at the moderate elevation of 50 above sea level.

Map 1: Al Bikai'a area location and borders



The area is characterized by a moderate climate; the summer is hot and dry, whilst the winter sees a lot of rainfall. The mean annual rainfall in Al Bikai'a area is 250 mm; the average annual temperature is 22 °C, and the average annual humidity is 50 % (ARIJ GIS).

The only locality that has an official representative in the area is 'Atuf, which has been governed by a project committee since 1999, which today comprises of 4 elected members and one paid employee. The project committee's responsibilities include:

1. Purchase and distribute water for residents.
2. Opening new internal and external roads.
3. Distribution of humanitarian aids.
4. Provide electricity for 'Atuf residents.

History

Al Bikai'a is an old and historic area, various narratives and other evidences indicate that it has been settled since Turkish era, where there are many villages remains in the area, very old remains for what they called Al sakaif, and many caves and abandoned wells. Many families from Tammun and Tubas settled in the area in poles a part times due to its location and abundant of agricultural potential. The plentiful supply of grazing area and water availability at that time were the main reasons for the people to live there. Not along ago, people started to name the area their settling in according to their origin like 'Atuf where residents believe that their village where named after a guy who was killed during the crusade wars (Al shaheed 'Atif), and Alhadidiya for its black solid soil.

Demography and Population

In 1997 the total population of Al Bikai'a area was 227 people, of which 130 were males and 97 were females.

The total population of Al Bikai'a area is distributed over the three localities as follows: total population of Khirbat 'Atuf was 76, of which 43 were males and 33 were females. There were 16 households resident in 16 housing units/tents (1997 census). As for Al Humsa, the total population was 17, of which 11 were males and 6 were females, and there were 3 households resident in 3 housing units/tents.

The total population of Khirbat Alhadidiya was 134, of which 76 were males and 58 were females. There were 28 households resident in 28 housing units/tents (1997 census).

The population of Al Bikai'a area constitutes about (0.6 %) % of the total population of the Tubas Governorate which is considered the governorate rural population.

Age groups and gender

The population of Al Bikai'a area is classified by age groups. The data of the 1997 census reveals that 28.6 % are less than 15 years old, 69.6 % are in the age group 15-64 years and 1.8 % are 65 year and above (See table 1)

Sex	Age				percentage
	0 -14	15 -64	65 +	Total	
Male	41	85	4	130	57.3
Female	24	73	-	97	42.7

Total	65	158	4	227	100
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Source: PCBS, May 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final Results

The sex ratio in the area was 105 males for every 100 females. Males constitute 57.3 % of the population and females constitute 42.7 %.

In 2005 (according to the survey data) the total population of Al Bikai'a area was (1850) people, of which (1130) were males and (730) were females.

The total population of Al Bikai'a area is distributed over the three localities as follows: total population of Khirbat 'Atuf was (1260), of which (780) were males and (480) were females. As for Khirbat Alhadidiya the total population was (90), of which (50) were males and (40) were females.

Regards Humsa, It has been totally evacuated since 2002 by the Israeli occupation for security purposes as they consider the area to be a heavy military training area.

Families:

The population of Al Bikai'a area comprises of two main families: Bisharat and Bani Odeh.

In Alhadidiya, Bisharat family forms 75% of the population, and 25% for Bani Odeh family.

In 'Atuf, The two families are equally divided, means each family form 50% of the population.

Religious and Archeological Sites

There is only one mosque in Al Bikai'a area, which is located in 'Atuf and calles Abu Baker Alsedek mosque, residents of other localities have to go to 'Atuf or other nearby localities to Pray. There are many old caves in the area, in which some of them are being used by residents as animal shelters, or as a house for them if it is in good condition.

The Economy

Al Bikai'a area is an agricultural area 28,650 dunums of its area are arable land. 95 % of the residents depend upon agriculture for living, mainly farming and keeping livestock. As a result of the Israeli daily closures and restrictions, farmer's access to their lands and marketing their products became more and more difficult. Also most of the land in Al Ras Alahmar and Alhadidiya are isolated and not allowed for the owners (farmers) to reach or work in it by Israeli occupation since they use it as their military training camps.

The second main source of income is labor inside Israel, which has also been severely affected as fewer permits are issued.

There are no shops or markets in the area, where residents have to get their food supply and other services from other localities such as Tammun village, Tubas city, and some times Jenin city.

Labor Force Construction

In 1997, the percentage of participants in labor force in Al Bikai'a was 78.0 % of the total population of the area. The participation of women was assessed to be 34.8 % (79) women in total). The labor force in Al Bikai'a is 177 people in total.

Which of 52.5% are 'economically active' people and 47.5% are 'non-economically' active people. Of the economically active people 80.6% are employed people, 19.4 % are unemployed people. The largest groups of non-economically active people are the housewife's and other, who constitute 54.7 % and 32.2 % respectively. Table 2 shows the labor force in Al Bikai'a village

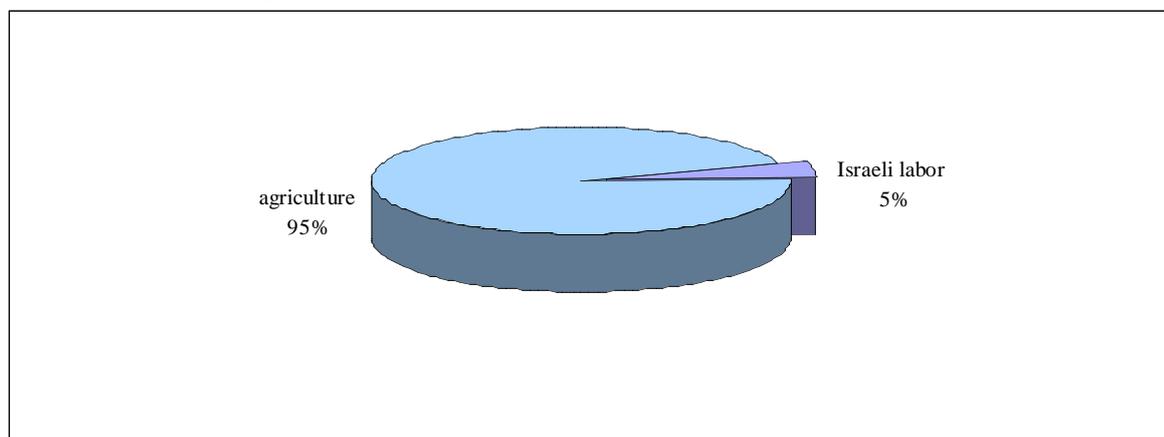
Table 2: Al Bikai'a Population (10 years and Over) by Sex and Employment Status

Sex	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Total
	Empl-oyed	Current ly Un-Employed	Un-Employed Never Worked	Total	Students	House -Wife	Unabl e to work	Not working & Not looking For Work	Other	Total	
M	74	6	10	90	6	-	1	-	1	8	98
F	1	-	2	3	3	46	1	-	26	76	79
T	75	6	12	93	9	46	2	-	27	84	177

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

Since the outbreak of second Intifada in September 2000, most of the Palestinian migrant labor force cannot reach their places of work in Israel and the Israeli settlements. As a result the workers have lost their primary source of income and many have returned to work in their lands.

Figure 1: Percentage of economic activity in Al Bikai'a area



The average household income in Al Bikai'a area has been severely affected by the second Intifada. Prior to this the average income stood at 2500 NIS. Today however it has declined sharply to 1500 NIS. The result is that the average household income has decreased by 60 % over a period of four years.

Education

In the 1997 census the education status in Al Bikai'a indicated that about 27.7 % of the residents were illiterate, with women (67.3%) comprising a greater percentage of illiterates than men (32.7%). Of the literate population, 28.8 % of residents could read and write, 26.5 %

completed elementary education, 11.3 % completed preparatory education and 5.6 % completed their secondary and higher education. Table 3 shows the education status in Al Bikai'a area by sex and education attainment in 1997.

Table 3: Al Bikai'a 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	16	31	32	14	3	2	-	-	-	-	98
F	33	20	15	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	79
T	49	51	47	20	8	2	-	-	-	-	177

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

There is only one school in Khirbat 'Atuf, and one kindergarten. So students in Khirbat Ras Alhmar and Alhadidiya have to go to 'Atuf or Tammun village to get their education in different levels, which put the students in continuous jeopardy and challenge to stay in school with minimum risk and away from Israeli aggression. And some times one of the parents has to stay with their children in relative's house to facilitate and save money and reduce the risk of being stuck on check points or prevented from reaching their schools..

Health Status

The only health clinic that can be found in Al Bikai'a area is in 'Atuf which serve the residents only once a month. There are no other clinics in the area either a private doctor, so residents have to go to nearby localities to get medical attention.

Infrastructure, Natural resources and Services

There are no services what so ever provided to residents in Al Bikai'a area, where it still using the natural resources available in the area, such as food, woods to get fire and many other things. So residents of Al Bikai'a area get most of their services from Tammun village as it's the nearest locality and Tubas city some times as it is the main city in the Governorate.

- **Telecommunication services:** Al Bikai'a area has no telecommunications network; instead residents use mobile phone to stay connected with others.
- **Water services:** Al Bikai'a residents depend upon cisterns and water tanks to satisfy their needs for water. The water brought by tanks is detrimental and not suitable for domestic consumption, due to bad conditions of tanks, where there is no regular maintenance or repairs because of bad economical situation. In addition residents store their water in plastic tanks which form a suitable environment for insects and other life form that pollute the water and jeopardize the lives.
- **Electricity services:** Al Bikai'a area in general has no electricity network, except for 'Atuf where the committee provided generators in year 2000, but a few houses/tents are connected to the generators. Households, who do not have electricity, use manual lights and fire instead.

- **Solid Waste Collection:** There is no managed solid waste collection in the area; therefore residents dispose of their solid waste randomly in different areas. Burning is the main method used to dispose the solid waste.
- **Sewage Disposal Facilities:** There is no sewage network in Al Bikai'a area. All households must therefore dispose of their wastewater in cesspits, except for Khirbat Al Ras Alahmar where the out doors is their only way. This is considered one of the main sources of pollution to the environment and groundwater as well.
- **Transportation services:** There are no private transportation services in Al Bikai'a area, where the roads leading to the area are in bad condition and not easy to use. The only ways to get to localities are by tractors, illegal vehicles, or ask for private Taxi from Tammun area and that put an extra cost on residents.

Agriculture Sector

Al Bikai'a area has been subjected to several forms of Israeli aggression, area's residents mainly depend on agriculture, but they were unable to reach their lands and cultivate their crops.

Israeli forces prevent farmers' access to their lands by placing checkpoints, barriers, or by declaring areas as military training zones. As for Khirbat 'Atuf and Al Ras Alahmar, many agricultural land have been confiscated and isolated from localities for security reasons for the segregation wall construction.

The total area of Al Bikai'a area is 29,250 dunums, of which 28,650 dunums are agricultural area, 7,845 dunums is cultivated. Out of 7,845 dunums which are cultivated, 300 dunums are for the cultivation of vegetables and 30,940 dunums are for the cultivation of field crops. (Ministry of Agriculture 2004)

Approximately 95 % of Al Bikai'a population is dependent on the agricultural sector in their economic activities in addition to breeding local livestock. According to the survey conducted by ARIJ and ACH, there are 56 heads of cattle, 800 goats, and 22520 sheep.

Based on the same survey, Al Bikai'a area produces 60 tons of olives, 5 tons of vegetables and 42 tons of field crops per annum.

Impact of Occupation Practices

Since 1967 the Israeli occupation confiscated 14,000 dunums, 10,000 of those were confiscated since the break of the second Intifada for the purposes of construction of segregation wall.

In the east and west side of Al Bikai'a, Israel has constructed two settlements, Roe'i and Bakao'ot. To the north and east side of Al Bikai'a, it constructed another two training camps (Samra and Tayasir) and one settlement (Hamadan settlement). On the other hand, the planned segregation wall will isolate the area from other localities and will restrict resident's movement and affect their economical situation.

In second Intifada, the Israeli occupation migrate at least 20 families and destroyed their properties, and they constantly invade the area threatening to destroy it and migrate all residents to other areas, in the excuse of considering the area as a heavy military training and separation borders. AS mentioned before, there is one locality out of the four localities that form Al Bikai'a area that has been totally destroyed and evacuated, where residents are denied their right to return to their land and forced to migrate to other localities.

The Israeli procedures to prevent the production of crops have also continued where there is continuous destruction for the planted areas with army vehicles and tanks while training.

Plans and Development Projects

Al Bikai'a area is suffering from a shortage of decent infrastructural services and vital projects such as water, medical services, schools and roads. The strategic plan for Al Bikai'a area includes implementing a lot of projects to develop and promote the area infrastructure and services, the shortage of funds and constant Israeli aggression toward them (isolating area, land confiscation, planned segregation wall, migrate and demolish properties, and consider area as closed military zone) are the main obstructions facing the village.

Khirbat 'Atuf as an example is setting up a development plan for the area for the fact that it's the only locality in Al Bikai'a area that has a project committee. The development projects set up in the plan are listed in table 4.

Table 4: Development plans and projects in Al Bikai'a area

Project	Type	Budget
Open and pave new internal and external roads (4 km long)	Infrastructure	180,000
Buy water tanks (number 2)	Water	180,000
Build school and kindergarten for children	Education	400,000
Install an Electricity network	Infrastructure	280,000

References

1. ARIJ, 2005. Socio-economic field survey- Tubas Governorate, co-operation with Tammun Municipality.
2. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic, 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final result-Tubas district, first part Ramallah – Palestine.
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Tubas Office.