

Qarawat Bani Hassan Village Profile

Location of village: about 8 km northwest of Salfit, 1 km east of Biddya

Current population, previous population. How many villagers are living outside Palestine?

There currently is a population of 4,000 people living in Qarawani Bani Hassan. Another 2,000 people live in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the US and other countries. Around 50% of the population has decided to leave.

In 1948 around 120 people from Qarawat Bani Hassan were in Kafr Bara where they had land where they grew vegetables. They found themselves cut off from the village of Qarawat Bani Hassan by the green line and now live in Israel.

Origins of the name. Any ancient sites or legends associated with the village?

Qarawat means 'hospitality' and Bani Hassan is the name of a family that lived there and was responsible for the trade between QBH and 'Azzun 'Atma.

The village has an ancient history that goes back to the Canaanites and the village is mentioned in several well-known Arabic history books. The village was also the site of ancient Greek and Roman towns, some quite extensive and there are numerous ruins and graves belonging to various eras. For instance, there are the remains of an old Roman castle, Roman tombs, Byzantium tombs and ancient wells. Omar Ibn Al 'Ass, a commander of the Muslim army around the year 1425 AD, was said to have been injured in the village. A tree was planted on the spot where his blood was spilt. The story was written up in the village history in the year 1919.

There is also a former church, now used as a mosque, for a Christian community in the village, who moved to Nablus.

Main forms of employment, currently and before intifada.

Before the Intifada probably 50% of the people of working age were employed. Now 80% of the population is employed in chair factories, stone manufacturing and olive oil production, in Qarawani Bani Hassan. Around 5% work in the factories in Burqin and another 5% have documents which allows them to work in Israel in the building sector. Currently, 20% of the population is unemployed.

Any traditional industries apart from farming?

None.

Agriculture. What crops do they grow? Any animals? How has this changed over the years?

Olive oil is and was the main crop and they produce on average of 102,000 litres of oil per year. They used to export it to Jordan and other

places but for the last 3 years have not managed to sell much at all. There are a few almond and fig trees but these do not produce enough to be sold. They have goats, sheep, chickens, some donkeys.

Form of government, e.g. village council, municipality. Appointed or elected? If elected, when were the last elections? If appointed, does each family have a representative?

They do not hold elections for the village council, which is made up of 3 representatives from each of the 3 families in the village. These 9 men choose the Mayor.

Political, religious and civic organizations e.g. mosques, women's organizations.

There are 6 mosques each of which has its own Imam. There is a women's club but no children's club and no political or religious organizations.

Names of the families living in the village in order of size.

'Asi, Mar'ai, Rayan

Services: Any schools or clinics? How many shops? Nearest hospital, nearest university.

There are two 2 Kindergardens, both private. There are 4 public schools; two for boys and two for girls. Two schools are from 1st to 6th grade for boys and girls and the other two are from 7th to 12th grade for boys and girls. For further education most students go to Najjar University in Nablus or to the Open University in Salfit.

There is one Government Clinic with a nurse open every day from 8a.m. to 2p.m. and a doctor comes 2 days a week on a Saturday and a Tuesday. For serious cases they have to go to the hospital in Sulfit.

There are probably about 40 shops of various kinds.

Utilities: Does the village have electricity, running water? When did they receive these? Other water sources. Any restrictions on their use?

Electricity and running water are bought from Israel since 1982. Water costs 3.5 NIS pcm. The water they receive from Israel is polluted with chlorine and there are often water shortages. Every house has a well which collects rain water and which is used for washing and irrigation. There is one spring which is polluted by sewage and industrial run-off from the settlements and are unusable.

Also, the spring near the settlement of Nofim has been closed to them now because of settler violence.

Transportation: what transportation services exist, transportation and road closure problems.

There are no buses. There are serviceees which pass from outside the village. To get to Salfit now they have to go all the way around via Yasouf. Whereas they used to go to 'Azzun 'Atma every day to engage in trade (a major market town before the outbreak of the second Intifada and the virtual closing of the border at the Green Line) they can now hardly ever get there. Mas'ha – another major trading and employment centre has similarly been closed down since the beginning of the second Intifada. It was reckoned that the loss in trade caused to the village by closures and the Wall is around 150,000 NIS per day.

There are currently no road closures but on one of the entrances into Qarawat Bani Hassan there is a gate which the army closes frequently. When this gate is closed a journey to Bidya which is 2 kilometers away becomes a journey of 14 kilomteres.

Housing: Village plan, problems with building permits, and history of house demolitions.

Town is in Area B and they need permits from the local municipality for building and there is no problem with these. But the farmland is Area C and they need permits from the Israelis at Kedumim. In Area B there is on space left for building new houses. There are currently 24 houses who have received demolition orders between 2007 and 2008. In 2008 two houses were demolished.

Land: total original area, previous confiscations with areas and dates and purpose, current confiscations and how they heard about confiscations? current built up area, agricultural area remaining.

Before 1948 they had around 10,000 dunams. Area B is now 650 dunams and Area C is 9000 dunams. The village has lost 350 dunams which have been taken by settlements. The land was taken in 1996, 1998 and 2000. A further large percentage of land is unusable because of settler violence. Settlers are controlling much more land than that by threatening the villagers with violence if they approach too close.

It is believed that a wall shall be built cutting through and dividing built-up area from and fields Qarawani Bani Hassan and if this will happen it will take 50% of the land. If the wall is built it will divide famrers from their land.

Settlements: when built, population? Settler roads? Any problems with settlers?

Revava, Netafim, Nofim and a new settlement Ma'ale Israel, have all taken land from Qarawat Bani Hassan.

There are major problems with settlers. Farmers who go close to the settlements to work on their land are threatened by nearby settlers. Many farmers fear for their lives and avoid working on their land. One week ago

a farmer was working on his land and he was shot in his leg by a settler.

The threat of violence is not just from armed settlers but also from soldiers who patrol the roads.

Past human rights violations: killings, serious injuries, house demolitions, admin detention by army and/or settlers.

The army enters every day and sometimes makes arrests. There are currently 15 minors arrested and being kept in Megiddo.

The main violations are ones of lack of freedom of movement and settler violence.

Will any land be confiscated?

Yes – it looks like maybe 50-60% of their land will be lost the other side of the Wall including almost all of their grazing land.

Name of person doing the survey: Monique and Bianca

Date of Survey: 13th April 2009

Further info please refer to Village Profile 2004.