

Iskaka Village Profile

Name of Village: Iskaka

Name of person doing the survey: Donia and Amy

Date of Survey: June 27th, 2004

Updated by Miriam and Ellen in August 2008

Who gave the information: Mr. Husam Anis Youssef Kharb (member of the village council)
updated information by Samir Lami, mayor; Ahmed Lami, mayor's brother & English speaker

1. Location of village: Iskaka is located In the Salfit area of the West Bank, about 5 km from the city of Salfit.

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

There are 1,500 people in the village currently. (1,000 in 2005)
Before the Second Intifada, the number of residents was at 800 but it has grown since. There are also about 2,300 people from Iskaka living in Jordan, Kuwait and UAE. (2,500 in 2005)

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

Iskaka means "high place." About 1300 years ago, the Soldiers of Islam (mainly from the family `Attiya of Saudi Arabia) came and their leader Omar Khatab fought with Rome and won. Rome gave the key of Jerusalem to Omar. In that period of time, Iskaka was one of the main cities of the Islamic world.

4. Main forms of employment, currently and before intifada.

2005: Few of the villagers work in Israel, about 7 to 8 people – about 20 people work for the Palestinian Authority, and the rest are farmers (60%).
Before the 2nd Intifada, more people worked in Israel and Jordan, while 7 to 8 people worked for the Palestinian Authority.

2008: Unemployment rate at around 45%.

8 villagers have permits to work in Israel; about 30 people work illegally. They frequently get caught; many are still in prison. Some work for the

Palestinian Authority. Many have olives; however, in 2008, the Israeli army has declared that they will open the agricultural gates through which most farmers must move to harvest their olives for only three days this year. Around 8 families own animals.

5. Any traditional industries apart from farming?

None.

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

2008: mainly olives; some chickens; 8 families raise animals.

2005: Olive oil

100 kg of wheat and they are 2 to 3 cows for the entire village.

Before 13 years ago, they used to grow beans and chick peas but not for sale.

7. 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?

2008: The village council was elected. The last elections were in 2005. There are 9 people on the council: 2 women and 7 men. The council members are representatives of families more so than of parties: there are no problems between Fatah and Hamas, both present but weak, in the village.

2005: Village council – members are chosen by the families. Each family has 1 member. The village council has 9 representatives, 4 from the main families and 5 from the political parties.

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

2 mosques (2005 & 8) There is a new women's organization in the old city. There is a boy's club too, and a children's club.

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

Kharb (45 years in village), Lammi, Zahar, Tira (1948 onward), Aka, Haifa and the Lahdjeen (refugees).

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

2008: In Iskaka there is a school up til the 8th grade; after that, students go to Yassouf.

A doctor visits the small clinic once a week. Most cases go to Salfit, 5-10

minutes away.

2005: There is a school up to 6th grade for boys and girls; no medical clinics and 4 shops. They use the hospital in Salfit and the students go to university in Salfit, Nablus (Al Najah) and Bir Zeit.

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

2008: The electricity was connected in 2005. The water was connected in 2004 and is purchased from an Israeli company. Iskaka has access to enough electricity but not to enough water. There are shortages every summer because people are partly relying on rain water.

2005: No electricity but a generator only which is running from 7pm to 2am. The wells are managed by the Israeli water company, Makkorot, since a year.

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

There are cars and buses going from Yasouf to Iskaka and to Salfit. Near the bridge, they sometimes have flying checkpoints.

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

2005: No house demolitions have taken place. There are 140 houses, this village is in Area "B" and they get their building permits from the Palestinian Authority.

14. 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?

2008: Iskaka has lost 2,500 dunams of land to Ari'el and the construction of the wall.

No land was lost to Rechelim, but in 2006 a new outpost was built near Rechelim and 600 dunams of Iskaka's land were lost to the outpost.

90 dunams were lost to a road.

So far 30% of Iskaka's land has been taken.

2005: The original land of Iskaka covered 6000 dunams. In 1978, 1000 dunams was taken for the Ariel settlement, and in 1986, 500 dunams was again taken by Ariel. Iskaka will lose another 2000 dunams of its agricultural land for the wall.

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

2008: There are no more problems from the Ari'el settlers. However, the outpost associated with Rechelim is sometimes causing problems for villagers: settlers harass farmers by shooting and not allowing them to reach their lands. In the past olive trees have been burned as well. the situation has calmed down a bit.

2005: Ariel was built in 1976, Tapu'ach is growing and it was first built in 1983 or so.

Between Ariel and Tapu'ach, there is a settler road.

Settler security does not allow the olive harvest – if they see the villagers, they do not let them get to their lands.

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

2008: Currently, there are 4 Iskaka residents in Israeli jails. The army sometimes comes during the night. Since the first intifada, one person has died; a second was paralyzed because he was shot while in Ramallah.

2005: 170 trees, belonging to Husam, have been burnt.

1 villager was put in AD on the 13th of July 2001 --- many villagers have been in jail.

17. History of resistance

2008: They used to demonstrate peacefully; now, they use court cases. Their current cases are against the gates and land confiscations. Their major concern is about making sure that the gate to the lands inside Ari'el is opened sufficiently. In the past, demonstrations have been against the fence.

2005: The wall is taking all the land. They will demonstrate peacefully and they will use the legal system as well. They have already managed to get a temporary injunction to stop the work on the wall until the 5th of July 2004. See below (20).

18. Recent developments:

Wall:

Will any land be confiscated?

2005: Yes. Almost all the agricultural land, as there will be 2500 dunams left of which 50% are the village houses. Up to now, 80 trees have been cut.

When did the villages receive notices of confiscation?

2005: The village received the work order from the military on the 15th of June and the next day they started the work on the wall.

If so, how was this information conveyed to them?

2005: To the mayor and farmers who called for a meeting.

Issues with permits, gates because of the wall:

As already mentioned above, Iskaka residents do have difficulties accessing their lands through the gates towards Ari'el and a courtcase has been filed in order to claim their rights to their lands.

How many shekels has the village earned from land per year prior to the wall?

2005: 3 years ago, 60,000 liters of olive oil were exported annually, and the liter was worth about 20 NIS before the 2nd Intifada. Now the liter is worth 11 NIS and there is no exportation.

19. Contact numbers for village for the media:

2008: Samir Lami, Mayor
Ahmed Lami, mayor's brother & English speaker
of the municipality: 09.2510.150

2005: Husam: 09 251 0515 // 059 671 977 (English)
Na'im: 059 671 979 (French)
Samir Lammi/ Mayor: 059 675 165

20. Any other relevant information.

2008: Mentioning of problems with wild pigs

2005: They have fighting the settlement through the High Court since 1976, and through the administrative court of Beit El since 1999.

Iskaka resists the Apartheid wall by demonstrations and by going to the Israeli court.

Read Action reports
"No to the wall. Defend the land in Iskaka", January 28th, 2005, and
"Iskaka demonstration on January 25th, 2005".

Read House Article
"The fight for justice. Demonstrating against the Apartheid wall", February 28th, 2005.

