

Kafr Ein Village Profile

Report taken: 14-16 April

1. Location of Village, population and land:

Kafr Ein is a small village with about 1500 residents, another 1500 villagers live in Jordan. The village has about 25,000 dunums of land none of which have been confiscated since 1931 when someone from the outside tried to buy land and was forcefully run out of the village.

According to previous reports (see IWPS QBZ report of 7 July): In 1982 the IDF attempted to purchase two kilometers of land on the top of the mountain Haraek, which overlooks the village, in order to build a settlement there. The village resisted the construction. The owner of the land, named Abdel Latif Shaar from Fadi Arar was forced out of the area and moved inside the 1948 borders. In 1992 he was reportedly killed. The intended settlement was moved to what is now known as Ariel.

2. Origins of the name and ancient sites or legends:

The name 'Kafr' is an old local term for village and 'Ein' means 'spring' (where water comes from). >There are 10 springs and 10 reservoirs on the mountain, one of which was recently damaged. There is a deserted ancient site on the top of a local mountain known as Haraek. The ancient site is believed to contain a pre-Islamic church and a mosque. According to local legend the site was destroyed during the Crusades and one villager survived the destruction of the village and came down to found Kafr Ein. There was until 14 April a famous oak on the top of Haraek believed to be hundreds or even thousands of years old. The oak is named Sheik Ibrahim as it was located close to the ruins of the Sheik's house. It was believed that commanders had met under the giant oak for many centuries.

3. About the village:

Historically, the villagers were mostly farmers and traders. Before the second intifada about 10% of the villagers worked in Israel. The farmers' main crop is olives. However, they also grow lentils, cereals and vegetables. There are some villagers with no land. They estimate that the village has about 200 sheep and goats, which is less than before the intifada. Now there is no work in Israel and the market is tight so they cannot sell or trade. They are suffering severe economic consequences. Many of the families in the village receive aid from the Red Cross, the UN and other aid organizations.

The Village Council is made up of six members who represent the major families. The Mayor's name is Mohammed Rifa'. He has been the Mayor since

the founding of the council in 1998 and is appointed by the PA. Generally, there are two large families in the village: the Rifa'/Fakirh family and the Barghouti family. The village is considering joining administratively with other villages in the area (QBZ, Beit Rima, Deir Ghassani, An Nabe Saleh, Deir Nidham and Abud) with a total population of about 20,000.

There is a new women's organization in the village as well as the more established young men's club. There are two mosques, one for women's prayers and one for men. The Sheik is named Ahkmed Rifa'.

There are 10 shops in the village and one school in the village and another shared with Qarwat Bani Zeid (QBZ). The schools are overcrowded and there have been several shootings in the schoolyard in QBZ. The village became hooked up to the electricity grid in 1980. The village receives their water and electricity from the PA but now it is controlled by the Israeli government. They experience intermittent interruptions. In the summer the water company often turns off the water creating shortages. The closest university and hospital is in Salfit and some students go to Bir Zeit, however this is difficult as there are no funds for the tuition.

Transportation links are good with 8 services per day from Ramallah stopping in the village. Three years ago, at the beginning of the intifada their village experienced closures. There is a special gate on the road next to the Khamish settlement (6 km away) which is often locked.

In terms of housing the only requirement from the village is that new construction take place further from the street. No permits are issued for new houses so they are not required (i.e. everyone can build because permits are impossible to get). In the first intifada there were 3 house demolitions.

One 14 year old boy was killed during the first intifada. There are currently 8 administrative detentions in the village and 10 villagers serving sentences from 6 months to 30 years.

Recently, 40 Muslim graves have been disturbed by the Israeli army with a bulldozer. The bulldozer also destroyed the tree called Sheik Ibrahim. The villagers were told that the army destroyed the tree because 'Palestinian commanders sat under it'. The tree was bulldozed on 15 April 2004 and when the villagers went to replant the tree on 16 April it was still guarded by an Israeli armored personnel carrier. A water reservoir was also damaged by the army.