

Qarawat Bani Hassan Village Profile



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

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

In 1967 it had a population of around 750 people but now there are 3,000 inhabitants and an additional 1,000 in Jordan and other countries.

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. About 40% of these worked in Israel and 10% in other work. Now of the working-age population around 20% are completely unemployed, 10% work in agriculture, 10% in the settlements, and 10% as traders and store merchants. Not all of this work is full-time work, work in settlements is casual work and in trading only 2 to 3 days per week.

Any traditional industries apart from farming?

None.



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

Olives, oil, wheat, almonds, figs. 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. They have goats, sheep, chickens, some donkeys and some

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 5 mosques each of which has its own Imam and a further one will soon be finished. There is a men's club but no women's club, a cultural club and a children's club.

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.

2 Kindergartens – both private, 3 schools – the girls' school goes from 1-12th grades, the elementary school for boys is from 1st to 6th grades and the secondary school for boys is from 7th to 12th grade. 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 Nablus, which is very difficult because of the frequent closures and curfews in Nablus and the state of the roads to get there.

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 were both provided for the village in 1982. Water costs 3.5 NIS pcm. Before piped water they used to collect rainwater in tanks under their houses, plus they had wells and springs. Now some of

their springs are 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 because of the roadblock at the entrance to their village. Only private taxis operate and they have to change taxis at the roadblock. 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.

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 and they do have problems here.

One house was demolished in 1991

for not having the required (Israeli) permit.

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. They have now lost around 20% of their lands and a further large percentage is unusable because of

settler violence. One of the villagers told IWPS that there is barbed wire fencing round the settlements to show where the boundaries of the settlement are, but the settlers are controlling much more land than that by threatening the villagers with violence if they approach too close.

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

Revava, Netafim, Nofim and a new settlement near Nofim, Ma'ale Israel, (built around 2 years ago) have all taken land from Qarawat Bani Hassan.

There are major problems with settlers. For instance, one of the villagers interviewed said that when he was out grazing his sheep on his own land he was captured by a soldier, asked for his ID and then imprisoned in a trailer in a settlement for a day where he was told that his sheep and goats would be shot if he ever took them to that spot again. He has never gone back – he is too scared. He has around 250 sheep and cannot go closer than 1km from Nofim without the settlers throwing stones at him and a loudspeaker shouting out at him that he will be shot if he comes nearer. Another villager says he prefers not to go out of the village because of fears of violence.

There was also plenty of evidence from the villagers that their agricultural work is interfered with – they simply cannot plough their land nor harvest their olives in many places because of the settler presence and their violence and intimidation. The threat of violence is not just from armed settlers but also from soldiers who patrol the roads and go in and out of the settlements and are seen to be working with the settlers.

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

1 collaborator has been killed in the village – no-one knows who killed him.

Around 10 people have been arrested and only 1 has been released. No serious injuries and only the 1 house demolition for not having a permit.

The main violations are thus the 'usual' ones of lack of freedom of movement and settler violence.

Recent developments:

Wall:

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, leaving them around 4,000 dunams.

When did the villages receive notices of confiscation?

None received yet.

If so, how was this information conveyed to them?

n/a

Status once the wall is built:

Do not know.

Issues with permits, gates because of the wall:

n/a yet.

What will be the loss of income from the wall in shekels?

Difficult to calculate but is probably in the millions of shekels as they will lose almost all of their grazing land and the vast majority of their olive trees.

Name of person doing the survey: Angie and Barbara

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Date of Survey: 8th May 2004