

Qarawat Bani Zeid Village Profile



[\(visit the Qarawat Bani Zeid activism page here\)](#)

Location of village, and population:

Qarawat Bani Zeid (QBZ) is in the north of the Ramallah Governorate around 6 km away and only 15 minutes by car from Salfit (if no problems are encountered on the way) which is just to the north east. The nearest villages to it are:-



Farkha and then Salfit to the North East; azari'an Nubani and Arura to the East; Deir as Sudan to the South East; An Nabi Salih to the South; Kafr `Ein and then Bani Zeid to the West; Bruqin and Kafr ad Dik to the North West

The population of QBZ is around 3,000.

Previous population. How many villagers

are living outside Palestine?

The population was smaller in the past, but is now increasing. There are probably around 500 people belonging to the village who are in other parts of the West Bank and maybe 2,800 or so in other parts of the world, especially in Jordan.

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

The name of Qarawat comes from the word Qaran which means a central point – this is because roads used to run to many of the major towns in Palestine –Nablus, Jericho to the East, Ramallah and Jaffa but also from the word Qira which means a place that respects guests. The name Bani Zeid is the name of the founding family of over a thousand years ago and which has now spread into many villages. The descendants of the original Bani Zeid family are now in around 14 villages that stretch between Jilijliya to the East and Abud to the West.

There are ancient caves (one large and many small) and around 6 fresh-water springs plus the remains of a Roman pool, which is about 60 metres underground and is situated near the new mosque. There are also examples of ancient vaulted houses. Some of the houses are unusually shaped like a cross. There is also an old graveyard where lie the remains of a family that came from Egypt more than 300 years ago.

Any traditional industries apart from farming?

Leather-making, basket weaving (from olive leaves), wool and weaving, food manufacturing like cheeses. These are very much reduced at present due to the closures but remnants of the industries remain.

Main forms of employment, currently and before intifada.

Only 40% of the population have work these days (ie. 60% unemployment). Most people are employed on the land as farmers. Some people are employed in Ramallah in the Government offices, and then there are teachers and drivers and other service providers.



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

Crops grown at present are:- wheat, barley, lentils, chick peas, sesame, beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, thyme, parsley and sage as well as olives, figs, grapes. All grown by rain-fed traditional methods not irrigated

Animals kept are: goats, sheep, cows, chickens, bees. They also collect natural honey.

Since the Intifada, as more and more of the men have lost their jobs in Israel, more people have turned back to farming to try to become self-sufficient in food and to be able to feed their families. Some produce is sold to neighbouring villages and towns and that provides a small income – wheat, beans, zatar and sage.

Form of government e.g. village council, municipality. When elected.

A Village Council with representatives from each of the families who then choose a Mayor. No elections.

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

About 70% of the village are People's Party (PP – Communist Party), the rest is Fatah, Hamas or PFLP. A lot work for PARC or UPMRC. 1 teenagers/sports

club, a Village Society established in the late 1970's that provides many services, a men's cultural/physical and social club, 2 libraries (1 for children) with around 15,000 books, 2 mosques (1 old and 1 new). There is a large women's club that meets every Tuesday morning.

Services: when did they get electricity, running water. Any schools or clinics? How many shops? Nearest hospital, university.

1952 the boys school was opened and this now provides education from the 5th-12th grades. Girls were provided with a formal education from 1957. The girls school now provides for 1st – 12th grades. Students can go on to Bir Zeit University if they afford it. Or they can go to the Open University of Al Quds in Salfit, which is much cheaper and more accessible. Around 50 women go to this Open University in Salfit

A Government Clinic is open 3 days a week and there are around 5-6 doctors and a dentist who live in the town. Salfit is their nearest hospital and it provides very basic treatment, with serious cases going to Ramallah. There is an ambulance in Beit Rima (Beit Rima along with Deir Ghassin have now merged to form the municipality of Bani Zeid) where there are more than 5,000 people.

Piped water arrived in the village in 1975 and electricity in 1980

Water sources. Any restrictions on their use?

There is a major issue of water restrictions, which have occurred since the Israelis, appropriated their water. Their water comes from the Abud/Shuqba/Shebtin area and the Israelis control it now and close the water off whenever they wish without warning. For instance, at the beginning of April this year it was closed for one week. During the months between April and October it is often closed and they have to truck in water from other areas. They have springs that they use that never run dry but do get low and many people also collect their rain water which they store in tanks under their houses.

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

Transport is a problem. The bus service to Ramallah stopped in 1988 because of the Israeli military road closures and problems. There is now a checkpoint on the road to Ramallah at Khamish, 6 km away, where is a metal gate that can be locked – this was built a year ago and the gate is closed randomly by the military. These lock-outs occur for 1 or 2 days a week.

There are no roadblocks on the road to Salfit but this road is in very bad condition and there is often a flying checkpoint set up on this road.

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

Before the Oslo Peace Process the village had to get permission from the Israeli authorities to build, but now as they are in area A they can build easily. 14 years ago, 2 houses and a farm were demolished by the Israeli army but since then there have been no demolitions. Housing and building in the village was not seen as a problem.

Land: total original area, previous confiscations with areas and dates and purpose, current confiscations, current built up area, agricultural area remaining (best to map this).

The land of the village is still intact and is around 8,000 dunams, 30% of which is built up, 30% of which is under crops, 10% of which is roads and other public uses, and 30% of which is rocky, grazing ground.

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

The nearest settlement is Khalamish about 6 kms away, which started as a military outpost in 1978 and then became a settlement that is now inhabited by around 200 people. There are also the settlements of Eli, Ofarim, and Beit Arye further away. They have no settlement very near and have no settler violence problem. The major problem is the roadblock at Khalamish.



Past human rights violations: killings, serious injuries, house demolitions, admin detention, settler violence.

The village has no problems with settlers. One incident was reported only – around 15 years ago a passing settler shot dead a villager.

The main problem is with the Israeli army:- Villagers are continually harassed by the military at the Khalamish checkpoint and threatened with unimaginable attacks on the village, young boys are often taken and beaten by soldiers and then thrown

out of the jeeps far away. Soldiers come in and out of the village, shooting at houses and water tanks and solar and water tanks on the roofs, and the young kids in the village are responding to the frequent provocation by throwing stones at the jeeps as they enter the village. This stone throwing is met by more beatings, detentions, searches and also by woundings and killings by soldiers firing into the village and into the school. In the last 10 months 9 people have been killed.

The following IWPS Human Rights Reports have been written about QBZ (up to April 18th 2004 – see website for more recent reports):-
Human Rights Report Nos. 40,43,44,45,59,82, and 89.

There are at least 10 people from the village in prison at the present time.

Recent developments: Wall? Will any land be confiscated? If so, how was this information conveyed to them? Issues with permits, gates because of the wall?

There is no indication that a wall will be built in the immediate vicinity, at least not yet.

Any other relevant information.

At present IWPS provides an occasional school watch service by sitting outside the school on the roadside so that any army jeeps approaching the school will be aware that there are internationals monitoring in the area. IWPS is also helping to facilitate a process whereby many of the villagers can attend nonviolence workshops to enable the emergence of nonviolent strategies against army violence.