

# Rafat Village Profile



**Name of person doing the survey:**

Angie and Barbara  
Update: Beth and Nicole

**Date of Survey:**

20<sup>th</sup> April 2004  
Update: January 12, 2009

**Location of village, and population.**

Rafat is a small village of 1,800

people in the Salfit Governorate. Rafat is to the far west of the city of Salfit. To the north is the village of Az Zawiya and to the south the village of Deir Ballut.

**Previous population. How many villagers are living outside Palestine?**

There are a few villagers living outside of Palestine, but not many.

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

Rafat is a name of Greek origin which means a high place. There is an ancient mosque of over 800 years in the centre of the village and many old houses. ("Roman")

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

90% of the villagers used to work in Israel as it is very close to the Green Line but now only about 50 still manage to work in Israel. About 100 are employed as teachers, three as academics (one in Ramallah, two at An-Najah). Five medical doctors. A few also work in security for the PA in towns like Salfit. In total, about 250 residents work for the PA. Around 15% grow their own food and sell some of the surplus (could not be updated).

**Any traditional industries apart from farming?**

Only soap making for internal village consumption.

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

Olive oil is a major crop which used to be sold in Jordan and other Arab countries but are now only for local consumption. Wheat and barley are grown on the fertile flat land and sold in the village. Tractors are now used on the flat land although the traditional horse plough is used on the mountainous land. Figs, lentils, chick peas, beans and potatoes are also grown and there are many vegetable plots near people's houses too. There are probably more sheep and goats in this village than in most of the rest of Salfit and the area is renowned for its meat and cheese, which are still sold outside of the area. There are also horses and donkeys. Young chicks are bought in Israel or Tulkarem and fattened for 40 days and then sold in the West Bank. The agriculture is still traditional, rain-fed and without fertilizers or pesticides.

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

There is a village council that has not been elected but which consists of 7 representatives from the 6 families in the village (the largest family having 2 representatives). There are no women.

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

There are two mosques, one old and one new, and both are used. There are no clubs of any kind in the village.

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

The main families in the villages are in order of the largest: Ayashi, Shehada, Judah, Abu Asbah, Jadullah and also the Abu Zirik family. The last family is one of several '48 refugee families that came from villages near Kafr Kasseem and were given shelter and housing in Rafat

**Services: when did they get schools or clinics? How many shops? Nearest hospital, university. Does the village have electricity, running water?**

Schooling used to be in the Mosque or in nearby villages but in 1964 the first village school was built. Now there are two mixed gender schools providing education up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. One mixed school built in 1964 is from 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades and the other school built in 2000 goes from 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. There are roughly 600 students in the schools. For further education students have to go on to the Open University of Al Quds in Salfit or to Al Quds or Ramallah.

There is one government clinic and one private clinic in the village. The Doctor of the private clinic lives in the village. The Government clinic is open every day from 8-12 with a nurse who comes into the village from

outside. A Doctor visits the clinic twice a week. Patients with more serious problems may have to use the larger clinic in Bidya or go to the hospital in Nablus (difficult transportation there though) or to Ramallah (the easier option). There are too many roadblocks and checks on the way to Salfit.

There are 6 grocery stores and several animal feed stores. There is no electricity in the village but they do have two diesel generators which provide the village with electricity from 10 am to 4 pm and from 6 pm to 12 pm.

Running water was provided to the village only in 1992. Before that they used their own springs and water tanks.

**Water sources.  
Any restrictions  
on their use?**

There are 8 natural springs. Houses have water tanks for the rain water and these are used for the food grown around the houses in the gardens.



A US company came when they were under Jordanian rule and drilled some wells and then covered them up again. After this drilling the natural springs dried up. The Israelis have taken over the drilled wells and control the water which the Palestinians have to pay them for – 3.5 NIS per cubic metre. Water is not cut off but some of the higher houses in the village have very low pressure

**Transportation: what transportation services exist, transportation and road closure problems.** The journey to Salfit was only 20 kms. before the Intifada but now they have to go around checkpoints and the journey is twice as long – around 40 kms. There used to be buses to and from the An Najah University in Nablus but these have stopped. There are taxis but the price of transport has risen considerably and is out of the reach of most of the villagers. For example, just a few years ago it was only 3 NIS to go to Nablus to An Najah University and now it costs 50 NIS with 3 changes of taxis en route, and with the journey time up from 40 minutes to over 2 hours.

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

The village is meant to get building permits from the Israeli authorities

even though it is their own land but the permits cost much too much and even then the Israelis tell them they do not own their houses so they have to build without them. There have been two houses demolished. One in 1992 because it had no building permit and 1 in 1996 because it was the house of a suicide bomber.

**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 (best to include maps if possible).**

The village land of Rafat is in total 40,000 dunums. It used to be 48,000 dunums but 8,000 dunums were sold to Deir Ballut. They have not lost any of their land yet. Olive trees cover 50% of their land and the rest is really rich and fertile flat lands where they grow wheat and barley – they described it as their 'gold'.

Flocks of sheep and goats graze over the whole area at different times. The village is roughly 1.5 by 2 kms but there are gardens around the houses.

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

There are no settlements on their land and they have no problems with settlers. The nearest settlements can be seen on the hills not very far away – Ale Zahav and Pedu'el.

Settlers used to come into the village but this does not happen now that their own special road has been built.

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

3 people from the village were arrested in 2001 after a curfew was called and a flying checkpoint cut off the village. 1 of these men had a court case and was exiled to Gaza – he was from the Ayeshi family and was related to the suicide bomber whose house was demolished. The other 2 men served 6 months in administrative detention and were then released without charge of trial.

There are constant patrols by Israeli army jeeps inside the village – at least once a day. The army units change roughly once a month. The jeeps have taken to moving in a circular manner along the agricultural roads between the three villages of Az Zawiya, Rafat and Deir Ballut where the building of the wall may start.

- IWPS Incident Report No 76 January 20<sup>th</sup> 2004 – Stealing of trees and property by soldiers and police in Deir Ballut (see /incidentreports.php)

## **History of resistance: Prior to first intifada**

There was resistance and people from the village went over to Jordan and Lebanon and some of them were part of a PLO prisoner exchange deal

## **During First intifada**

Yes, there was resistance – it was a popular grass roots resistance and the villagers threw stones and closed the roads to the army. Around 100-150 of the villagers were arrested but not imprisoned for too long compared to now – about 2 or 3 years.

## **During Second intifada**

No resistance – it is not a popular struggle.

## **Wall**

2 or 3 young men were at the Mas-ha camp and 4 carloads went to various marches. Maybe 20-25 went to the Deir Ballut camp, and 30 shebab went to the march in Az Zawiya in March 04

## **Recent developments:**

### **Wall: Will any land be confiscated?**

Yes, they have received confiscation orders and around 50% of their best and most fertile land will be lost – around 10,000 dunums. They usually graze 30% of the land per year and grow crops on the other 70% in a traditional and sustainable rotation. The villagers have calculated that at a minimum the whole village will lose around 3.5 million NIS per year.

### **If so, how was this information conveyed to them**

Soldiers came into the village with military orders and then took them round the land to show them where the Wall would go.

### **Problems (asked for during update):**

No money. We need streets. We need new a medical clinic, and more doctors. We need money. Most people need money.

### **Contact:**

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