

Beit Safafa & Sharafat Town Profile



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Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, village, and town in the Jerusalem Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all villages in Jerusalem Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment," the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

The "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in the Jerusalem Governorate.

The project's objectives are to survey, analyze, and document the available natural, human, socioeconomic and environmental resources, and the existing limitations and needs assessment for the development of the rural and marginalized areas in the Jerusalem Governorate. In addition, the project aims at preparing strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability with the focus on the agricultural sector.

All village profiles in Arabic and English are available online at <http://vprofile.arij.org>.

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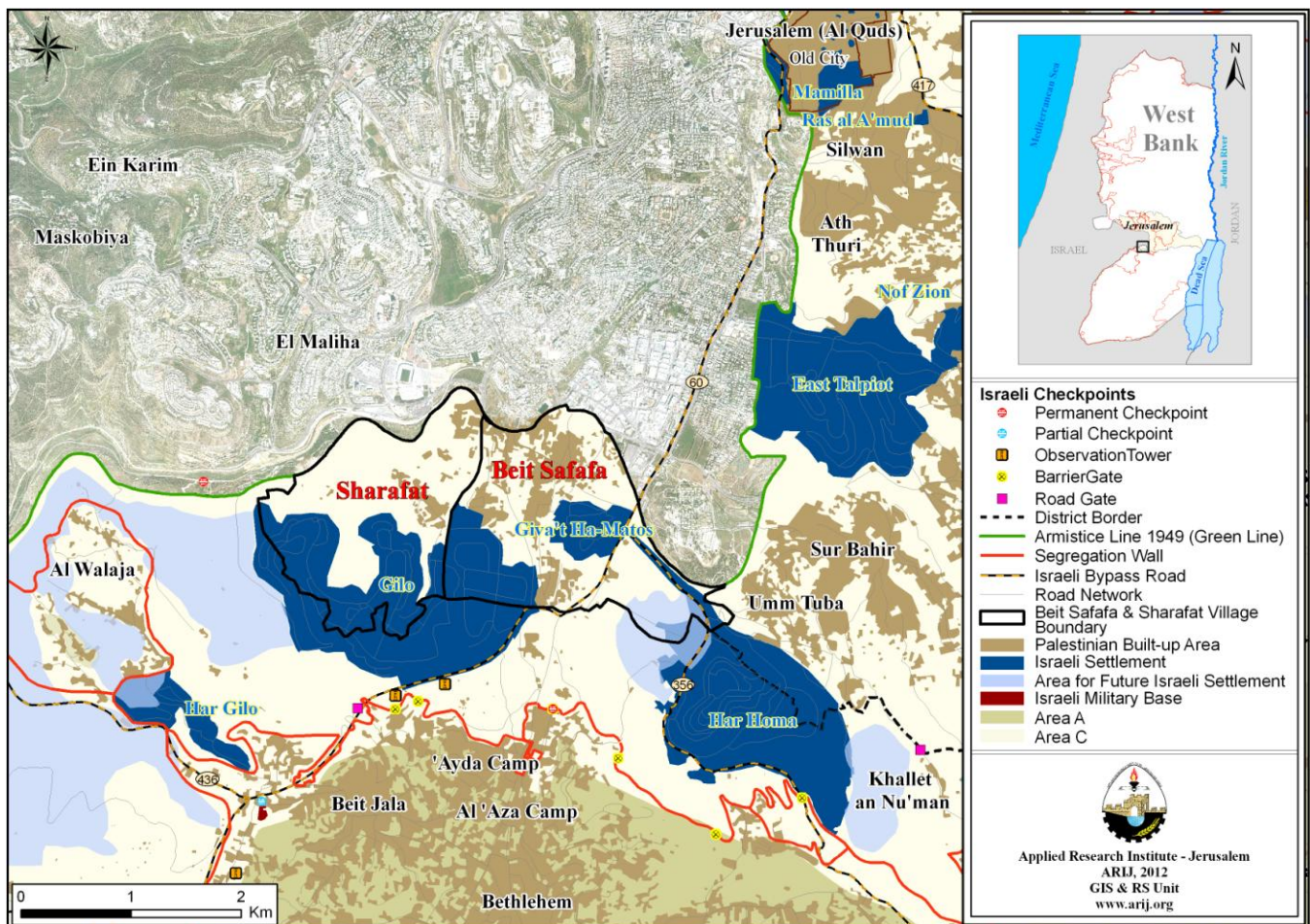
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Beit Safafa & Sharafat Town Profile

Location and physical characteristics

Beit Safafa & Sharafat are Palestinian towns in Jerusalem Governorate located, where Beit Safafa is located 4.55km from Jerusalem City and Sharafat 5.59km from Jerusalem City 4; southwest of Jerusalem City. It is bordered by Umm Tuba & Sur Bahir to the east, Western Jerusalem to the north, Al Walaja (in Bethlehem Governorate) to the west, and Bethlehem and Beit Jala territories to the south (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012) (see map 1).

Map 1: Beit Safafa & Sharafat location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

Beit Safafa is located at an altitude of 732m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 488.3mm. The average annual temperature is 16.4°C and the average annual humidity is approximately 60.4% (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012).

Sharafat is located at an altitude of 752m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 528mm. The average annual temperature is 16.3°C and the average annual humidity is approximately 61% (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012).

Concerning services provided to the town residents, all services are provided by the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

History

There are three stories behind the name of Beit Safafa & Sharafat town. The first claims that when the Jews heard that Alexander the Great was coming with his army from the Gaza Strip, they ran to welcome him outside Jerusalem city, dressed in white and asking for peace; he accepted and excused them from paying tribute. In 333 BC, clarity and purity ('safa') existed between them, and the town was therefore named 'Beit as Safa', or 'house of purity'. The second story suggests that a Roman emperor had a lonely daughter called Safa' and as a young girl she became ill. Doctors were not able to cure her and his relative advised him to take her to a place with fresh and pure air, so he chose Beit Safafa. Finally, the third story claims that the name Beit Safafa was converted from the word 'Safifa' which in Syriac means 'house of the thirsty'; this story is probably true since the town has no springs or natural water sources (Othman, 2006).

The town was established in 450 AD, and its original residents were from Jabaliya (Gaza Strip) and east Jordan (Othman, 2006) (see photo below of Beit Safafa & Sharafat town).

Photo 1: Beit Safafa & Sharafat town



ARIJ photo courtesy

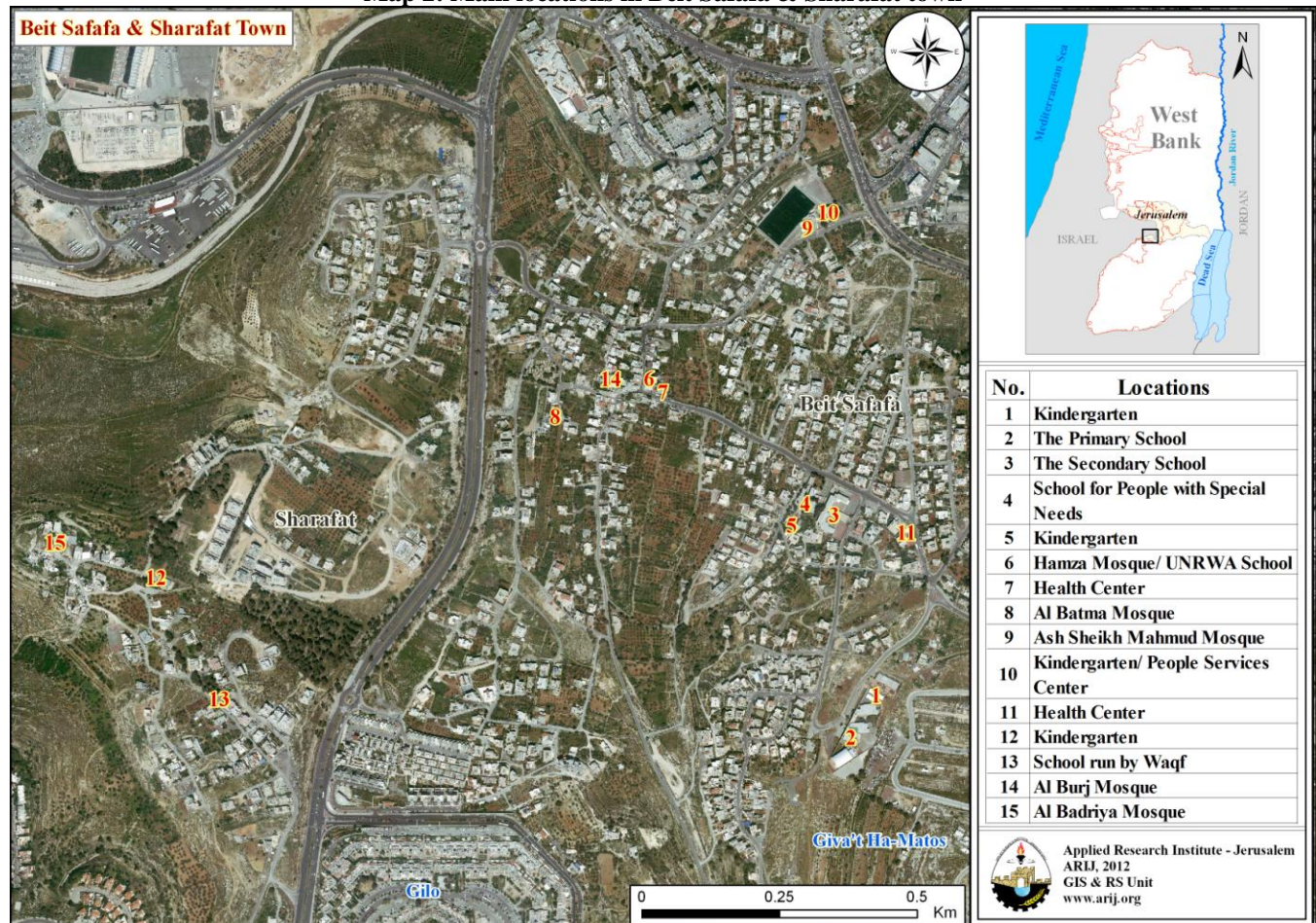
Religious and archaeological sites

There are 4 mosques in the town, Al Batma, Ash Sharqi, Ash Sheikh Mahmud and Al Jadeed mosques. There are also a few sites of archaeological interest, including: (See Map 2)

- The Roman tower: a labyrinthine building of two storeys with a tomb carved into the rock, containing various tunnels and chambers.
- Ad Dirdas (the press): a rocky basin containing a large stone used to press olives manually.
- The Hall: a fertile plain planted with old olive trees which also has a cave carved into the rock and the remains of old cemeteries.
- The Winery where wine was produced.
- The Christian Garden.
- Ath Thuhra: old caves.

(Othman, 2006)

Map 2: Main locations in Beit Safafa & Sharafat town



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

Population

Unfortunately, no census was conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2007 to ascertain the population and housing figures for Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns, however, according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the towns' population had reached 11,200 in 2011 (The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2012).

100 dunums of land have been confiscated for the construction of a road in the region. 70% of Beit Safafa & Sharafat town populations hold Jerusalem IDs, and 30% carry Israeli passports (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Families

Beit Safafa & Sharafat residents are from several families, mainly (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012):

- Dar 'Elayyan: 4 families - Hamid, Awad, Al Hajj and Ahmad Ali.
- Dar Salman: 4 families - Abd Rabbu, Jum'a, Ismail and Al Hajj.
- Dar Hussein: 5 families - Al 'Athamnah, Subhi, Abu Dillu, Muslih and Lafi.

Education

There is one governmental school in the town run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education and one school run by UNRWA, but there are no local kindergartens run by the Ministry of Education (Directorate of Education – Jerusalem, 2011). There are also 2 schools run by Jerusalem Municipality (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012) (see table 1).

Table 1: Schools in Beit Safafa & Sharafat by name, stage, sex and supervising authority, 2010/2011

School name	Supervising authority	Sex
Sharafat Co-educational Elementary School	Government	Mixed
Banat Beit Safafa Elementary School	UNRWA	Mixed
Beit Safafa Co-educational Primary School	Jerusalem Municipality	Mixed
Beit Safafa ash Shamila Co-educational School	Jerusalem Municipality	Mixed

Source: Directorate of Education – Jerusalem, 2011 & Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012

There are 2,462 students and 91 classes in the towns, and the average number of students per class is approximately 27 (Directorate of Education in Jerusalem, 2011).

There is one private school in the towns for students with special needs, the As Salam School, which is run by Jerusalem Municipality (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

The educational sector in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns faces some obstacles, primarily:

1. The lack of classrooms in schools.
2. The lack of schools in the towns.
3. The lack of single sex schools in the towns.

(Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012)

Health status

There are various health centers available in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns: 3 health centers run by the Israeli National Insurance (patients' fund), a radiology center and a medical laboratory also run by Israeli National Insurance, 3 private pharmacies and 5 private clinics. In the absence of required health services or in emergencies, residents of Beit Safafa & Sharafat go to larger hospitals, including Hadasa-Ein Karem and Al Muttala' hospitals (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

The health sector in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns faces some obstacles, primarily:

1. The absence of an ambulance.
2. The absence of a mother and child care center.

(Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012)

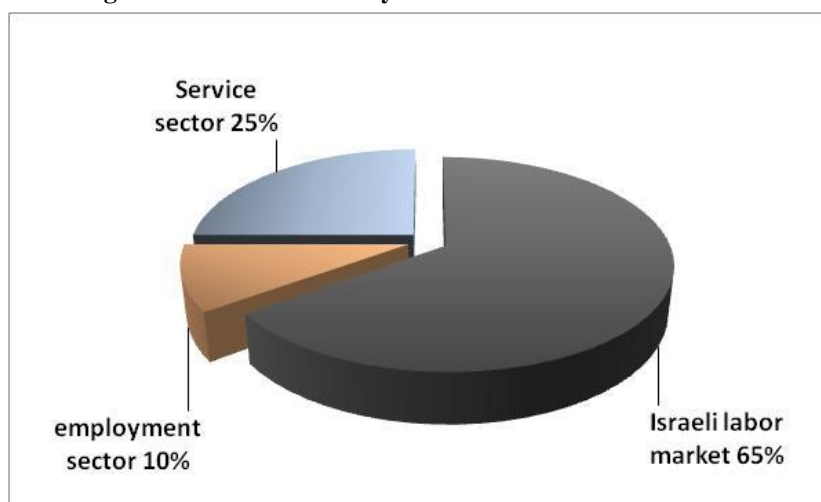
Economic activities

The economy in Beit Safafa & Sharafat is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly the Israeli labor market, which absorbs 65% of the workforce (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012) (see figure 1).

A field survey conducted by ARIJ in 2012 showed that the distribution of labor by economic activity in Beit Safafa & Sharafat is as follows:

- Israeli labor market (65%)
- Services sector (25%)
- Government or private employees sector (10%)

Figure 1: Economic activity in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns



Source: Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors’ Committee, 2012

In terms of commercial and industrial production in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns, there are 20 grocery stores, 3 butchers, 3 fruit and vegetable stores, 10 different service stores and 3 professional workshops (blacksmith, carpenter etc.) (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors’ Committee, 2012).

The unemployment rate in Beit Safafa & Sharafat reached around 10% in 2012, and it was found that the social group most affected in the towns as a result of Israeli restrictions and procedures is workers in the agriculture sector (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors’ Committee, 2012).

Agricultural sector

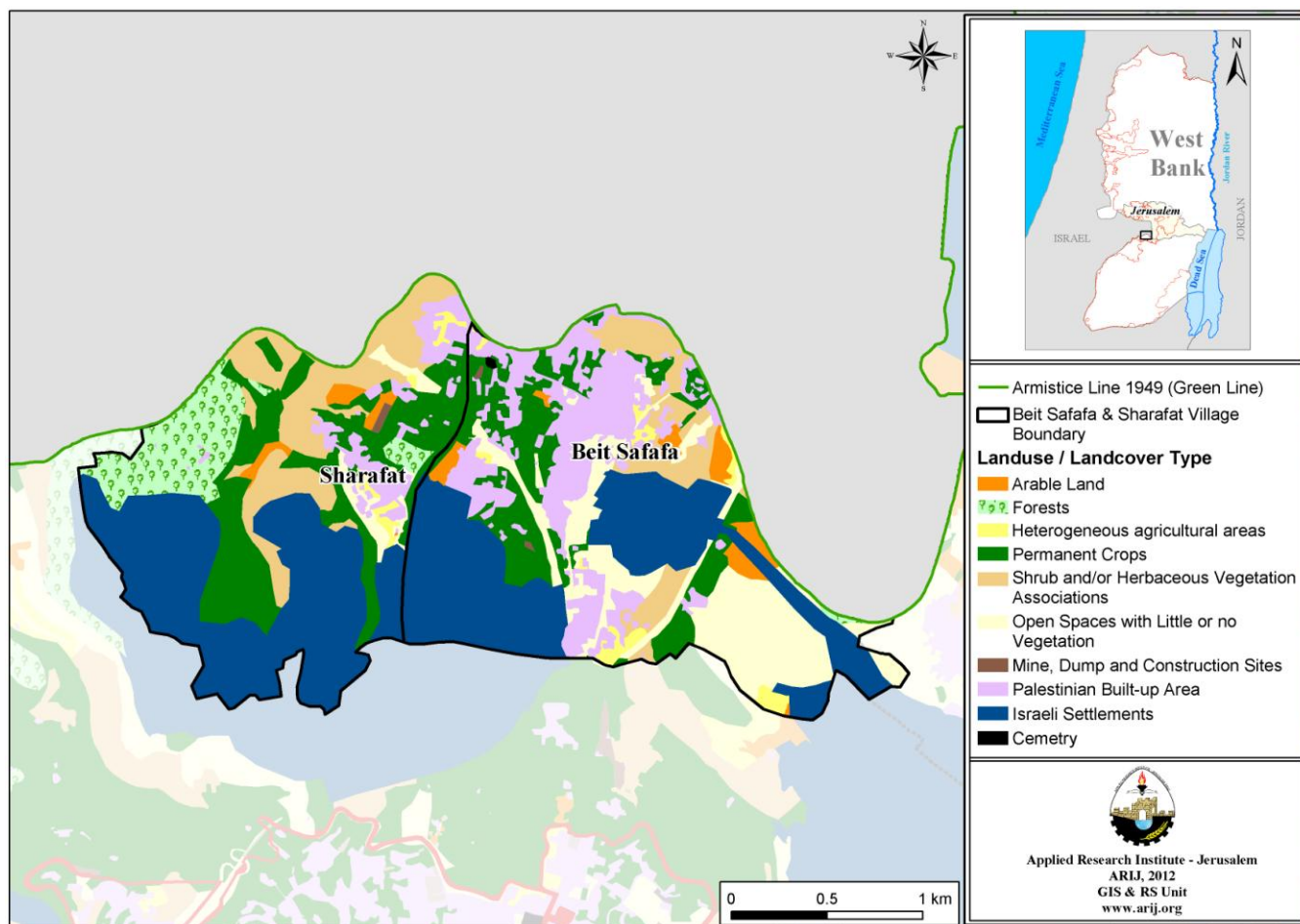
Beit Safafa & Sharafat has a total area of around 5,820 dunums of which 1,995 are ‘arable’ land and 810 dunums are registered as ‘residential’ (see table 2 and map 3).

Table 2: Land use and land cover in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns in 2010 (area in dunums)

Total area	Built up area	Agricultural area (1,995)				Inland water	Forests	Open spaces	Area of industrial, commercial & transport unit	Area of settlements, military bases & Wall zone
		Permanent crops	Greenhouses	Rangelands	Arable lands					
5,820	810	1,164	0	696	135	0	340	683	12	1,980

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012

Map 3: Land use/land cover in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

Table 3 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. The town is known for the cultivation of olives; there are 290 dunums in the town cultivated with olive trees.

Table 3: Total area of fruit and olive trees in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns (dunums)

Fruit trees	Rain fed (dunums)	Irrigated (dunums)
Olives	290	0
Citrus	0	0
Stone fruits	17	0
Pome fruits	0	0
Nuts	29	0
Other fruits	8	0
Total area	344	0

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and by ARIJ's GIS Unit in size of agricultural area is explained by the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010) conducted a survey which used a definition of

agricultural areas based on land ownership. Therefore, the areas included in the survey were those of actual holdings of agricultural areas instead of seasonal ones. The survey did not consider fragmented and small seasonal cultivated areas in residential and agricultural areas. ARIJ's survey, however, indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, thus accounting for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

As for field crops and forage in Beit Safafa & Sharafat, cereals, in particular barley, are the only crops cultivated, covering an area of about 10 dunums (Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010).

ARIJ's field survey also shows that residents of Beit Safafa & Sharafat rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep, goats, and bees (Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010) (see table 4).

Table 4: Livestock in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee hives
0	300	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	10

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010

There are no agricultural roads in the town (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Institutions and services

Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns have no governmental institutions; however, there are a few local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include:

- **The Arab Club:** Founded in 1969 with an interest in sporting activities such as football.
- **Beit Safafa Women's Society:** Founded in 1967.
- **An Nama' Society:** Founded in 2008.

(Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012)

Infrastructure and natural resources

Electricity and telecommunication services

Beit Safafa & Sharafat have been connected to a public electricity network since 1967. They are served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the town. Approximately 100% of the housing units in the towns are connected to this network; however, the towns' residents suffer from power cut-offs (particularly in winter) and weak electrical currents (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Beit Safafa & Sharafat are connected to a telecommunication network through Jerusalem Municipality and approximately 100% of the housing units within the towns' boundaries are connected to phone lines (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Transportation services

3 public taxis and 1 bus (Al Muwahhad Company) covering the Beit Safafa & Sharafat-Jerusalem line are the main means of transportation in the towns (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012). There is 1km of designated 'main' roads and 5km of 'secondary' roads (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012) (see table 5).

Table 5: Roads in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

Status of internal roads	Road length (km)	
	Main	Sub
Paved and in good condition	1	-
Paved but in poor condition	-	5
Unpaved	-	-

Source: Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012

Water resources

Beit Safafa & Sharafat are provided with water by Jihon, an Israeli company, through the public water network established in 1967 and approximately 100% of the housing units are connected to this network (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Information about the quantity of water supplied monthly to Beit Safafa & Sharafat could not be provided to us by Jihon. Each cubic meter of water from the network costs from 7 to 15 NIS (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Sanitation

Beit Safafa & Sharafat have a public sewerage network, established in 1967; about 100% of the towns' housing units use the sewage network as the main means of wastewater disposal (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Solid waste management

Jerusalem Municipality is the official body responsible for managing the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by the citizens and establishments in the towns. No specific fees are charged to the population served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services; citizens pay the Arnona tax to Jerusalem Municipality which ranges from 3,000 to 10,000 NIS per year depending on the size of household. This tax covers all services provided by Jerusalem Municipality to the towns' residents, including solid waste services (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Most of the population in Beit Safafa & Sharafat benefits from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to 80 containers, each with a capacity of 1m³, distributed throughout the towns. Jerusalem Municipality collects the solid waste on a tri-weekly basis and then transports it using a waste vehicle to El 'Eizariya dumping site, where it is usually buried and sometimes burnt (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Beit Safafa & Sharafat is 1.05kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from Beit Safafa & Sharafat residents is nearly 9.5 tons, or 3,455 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

The town residents suffer from the poor collection and disposal services of solid waste; it is common for waste to accumulate in the streets for several days (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Geopolitical status of Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

The entirety of Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns, covering an area of 5,821 dunums, are located under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality, which was declared illegally and unilaterally in 1967 after the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, in addition to the Gaza Strip and other Arab lands. Jerusalem Governorate was divided into two main regions. J1 area is located inside the borders and under the control of the Jerusalem Municipality, and includes many Palestinian communities from the Old Town and Jerusalem City (Beit Al Maqdis), in addition to Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns which are located on the southern side of the J1 area. The other region is J2, which is located outside the borders and control of Jerusalem Municipality. The eastern and western parts are under the control of the Palestinian Authority, whilst the central part of the Governorate remains under Israeli Occupation control.

It is noted that the Israeli Occupation Authorities have used the segregation plan which is represented by the construction of the Segregation Wall to redraw the boundaries of Jerusalem Municipality illegally and unilaterally, aiming to create a *de facto* situation in favor of the Jewish presence in the city. The Segregation Wall has separated the whole area of J1 from Jerusalem Governorate, except for Kafr 'Aqab and Shu'fat Camp towns.

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28th September 1995, the West Bank was classified into areas "A," "B" and "C." The towns of Beit Safafa & Sharafat were not subjected to this classification, but remained as they were before this agreement, under the control of the Jerusalem Israeli Municipality.

Israeli Occupation practices in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns have been subjected to a number of Israeli confiscations for the benefit of the various Israeli targets, represented by the construction of Israeli settlements and bypass roads on the towns' territories and its surroundings, in addition to the Israeli segregation plan. That which follows is a breakdown of Israeli confiscations in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns' territories:

During the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli government has confiscated 1,980 dunums in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns (34% of the towns' total area) to establish three Israeli settlements. These settlements are Gilo located south of Beit Safafa & Sharafat which separates the town from Bethlehem city, and Har Homa and Giv'at Hamatos settlements located south-east of Beit Safafa & Sharafat (see table 6).

Table 6: Israeli settlements constructed on Beit Safafa & Sharafat lands

Settlement name	Year of construction	Area confiscated from Beit Safafa & Sharafat (dunums)	Population of settlers (2009)
Gilo	1971	1,529	40,000
Jabal Abu Ghneim "Har Homa"	1997	166	20,000
Giv'at Hamatos	1991	285	300
Total		1,980	60,300

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) have also confiscated more lands from Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns to construct two Israeli bypass roads (numbers 60 and 398) in order to link Israeli settlements in the area with Jerusalem city. It is worth mentioning that the real threat of bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the IOF along these roads, extending to approximately 75m on each side.

Israeli colonization plans in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

1. Giv'at Hamatos Israeli settlement:

On October 11th 2011, the Israel Land Authority posted for public review a new plan (no.14295) for Giv'at Hamatos Israeli settlement located on expropriated Palestinian lands from Beit Safafa and Sharafat. According to Israeli Authority procedures for building, once the construction plan is released, there is a 60 day period for public review and objections to the plan, after which the objections are deliberated and then the plan is approved by the Local Planning Committee (POICA, 2008).

The plan issued by the Israeli Land Authority, under the direct supervision of the Israeli government, includes the construction of 2,610 housing units in the area located between the settlement and Beit Safafa town. The Israeli Authorities claim that the plan will include the construction of many housing units for the benefit of Palestinian residents in Beit Safafa. However, this claim is misleading and the real aspirations of the Israeli government are to expand the construction of Israeli settlements on occupied land. When the Israeli Occupation Authorities started to establish Har Homa settlement on the Jabal Abu Ghneim area, they claimed that part of the construction would be for Palestinians in the area, but the reality did not reflect this. Instead, the Authorities established the settlement by confiscating the surrounding lands and building a Separation Wall around the settlement to prevent Palestinians from reaching their confiscated lands. Moreover, the Municipality of Jerusalem is planning to expand Har Homa settlement in the near future, which is clear in the Jerusalem City Master Plan (2004-2020) which reveals the existence of two new settlements near Har Homa. The first is located on the south eastern side, and the second is located on the north western side of Har Homa. According to this plan, the two settlements will occupy an additional area of 1,080 dunums of Palestinian land. These plans are being made with the Israeli intention of manipulating demographic conditions within the city in order to obtain a Jewish majority.

The plan no.14295 is considered as to be complementary to the previously issued plan no.5834, which was issued on the 25th March 2008 to build 2,337 new housing units on an area of 411 dunums of Beit Safafa lands (POICA, 2011). However, this plan was not implemented due to the lack of an official and detailed Master Plan of the area, and consequently, they were unable to submit a plan for public review during the time designated for such a process. Therefore blocks and parcels were re-fragmented in the location designated for building, and new plans were released for public review, with an increase in the number of settlement units that they plan to build in the location from 2,337 settlement units to 2,610 settlement units (POICA, 2011).

Giv'at Hamatos settlement is located in the area that mediates Jabal abu Ghneim Har Homa and Gilo settlements. This location has been chosen in order to create a geographical contiguity between the settlements and those in East Jerusalem and the Gush Etzion bloc in the south. At the same time, this plan will complete the separation of Bethlehem Governorate from Jerusalem city and will destroy any possibility of creating geographical contiguity among Palestinian communities surrounding the planned location (POICA, 2011).

The plan of construction in Giv'at Hamatos is divided into four steps. The first step (no.5834) was approved in March 2008 and includes the construction of 2,337 housing units. The second step of the plan (no.5834B) was issued in January 2010 and includes the construction of 549 housing units. The

third step of the plan (no.5934C) includes the construction of 813 housing units in the location. The objections submitted about the third step of the plan were discussed in February 2010. The fourth step of the plan (no.5934D) includes the construction of 1,100 hotel rooms. However this fourth stage has yet to be approved (POICA, 2011).

2. Giv'at Yael settlement plan:

A private building initiative by the Israeli Givat Yael company plans to build 14,000 residential units to house more than 40,000 Israeli settlers. As of 2010, the plan, which dates back to 2003, had not yet been implemented. This plan will confiscate more than 2,976 dunums of Bethlehem Governorate lands, belonging to Al Walaja, Battir and Beit Jala communities, north-west of Bethlehem Governorate. 1,126 dunums are located within Al Walaja village lands, 1,279 dunums within Battir village lands and 571 dunums within Beit Jala city lands.

This settlement will physically complete the ring of settlements separating Jerusalem and encircling Bethlehem. It will start at Har Homa, north-east of Bethlehem city, extending to Gilo and Giv'at Hamatos"north of Bethlehem city, to Har Gilo west of the city, linking with the planned Giv'at Yael and continuing towards Gush Etzion bloc in the southwest. The new initiative intends to create a chain of Israeli settlements between Jerusalem and Gush Etzion settlement bloc (southwest of the Bethlehem Governorate) as part of the 'Jerusalem Envelope' plan (ARIJ, Settlement Unit, 2012). The aims of this plan are two-fold; i) to encompass as much land as possible and ii) to increase the number of Jews within Jerusalem's illegal boundaries in order to alter the demographic status of the city and influence the outcome of future negotiations.

It is noted that the area designated for construction is marked on the Jerusalem 2000 Master Plan as 'green reserves'. This classification was cited as one of the reasons for rejecting a plan from Walaja residents who sought to expand the village's built-up area via retrospective approval of houses built without permits. Changing the classification of this land from 'green reserves' to land for residential use suggests once again that political considerations come before professional considerations when it comes to the decision-making of the planning authorities; with no regard for the wellbeing of local residents.

The Segregation Wall plan in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

The construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall has had a negative impact on Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns. According to the last amendment to the plan that was published on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry (30th April 2007), the Segregation Wall isolates the lands of Beit Safafa & Sharafat from the remaining Palestinian Territory in the West Bank, making it very difficult for the people of Bethlehem Governorate who have historical relations with this towns. The isolated lands include the whole Palestinian residential area of the towns, agricultural lands, open spaces, Israeli settlements built on the towns' territory and other areas (see table 7).

Table 7: Classification of lands isolated west of the Segregation Wall in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns - Jerusalem Governorate

No.	Land classification	Area (dunums)
1	Israeli settlements	1,980
2	Agricultural areas	1,298
3	Palestinian built-up areas	814
4	Open spaces	693
5	Shrub and/or herbaceous vegetation associations	696
6	Forests	340
Total		5,821

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012

The negative impact of the Segregation Walls on Beit Safafa & Sharafat residents

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, the citizens of Beit Safafa & Sharafat south of Jerusalem City have lost their association with Bethlehem city and other Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The city of Jerusalem, along with surrounding towns such as Beit Safafa & Sharafat, were separated from the lands of the West Bank, as the Segregation Wall was constructed to isolate Jerusalemite towns from the Palestinian body. Although the citizens of Jerusalem who hold Jerusalemite identity (the blue identity) can enter the West Bank areas through the Israeli terminals, these checkpoints are often subject to huge congestion and Palestinians suffer from inspections from Israeli soldiers, thus restricting their freedom of movement.

On the other hand, Palestinian citizens of the West Bank who hold a Palestinian identity (green identity card) are prohibited from entering Jerusalem city and its surrounding towns due to the Segregation Wall. As a result, they are isolated them from health, education, social and economic services, such as hospitals, schools and medical centers, in addition to their places of work in Jerusalem. None of those holding the green ID are able to reach the city except if they are granted special Israeli permits, but these are rarely issued to Palestinian citizens. These citizens must also pass through military checkpoints where they are inspected on a daily basis, causing humiliation and suffering to Palestinians in terms of movement and the damage to family and social bonds between West Bank and Jerusalem residents. This distressing scenario occurs for many Palestinian families, especially in the case where one half of a couple holds a Palestinian identity card (green) and the other holds a Jerusalemite identity card (blue). The Segregation Wall has also prevented Palestinians from reaching their places of worship in the Holy City and has deprived them from practicing their religious rituals in Jerusalem.

The Segregation Wall plan, which was published on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry in 2007, showed that lands of Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns are isolated from neighboring Palestinian towns and villages by the Segregation Wall and the Israeli settlement belt around Jerusalem City. The existing Segregation Wall is located south of the town and is currently isolating the town inside Jerusalem city boundaries, which became inaccessible for Palestinians living in the West Bank territory.

Parallel to the establishment of the Segregation Wall, the Israeli Occupation Authorities constructed a settlement belt around Jerusalem city which aims to create an isolation area and prevent urban expansion

in the towns of Jerusalem. The Israeli Occupation Authorities constructed these settlements close to the urbanized areas in Jerusalemite towns, which has led to the increase of the total area confiscated in these towns, and has minimized the area available for future urban expansion. This move creates a new reality for the towns' residents that will be difficult to reverse. Israeli policies and plans, particularly in Jerusalem and the remaining Palestinian Territory, have led to the creation of high population densities as a result of the lack of lands needed for urban expansion, thus forcing people to adopt internal and vertical expansion. This has caused Jerusalem and its surrounding towns to have some of the highest population densities in the world. The population density in Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is approximately 13,500 people per km² compared to 9,000 people per km² in the settlements of East Jerusalem and 8,300 people per km² in West Jerusalem.

The dilemma of land and building licenses in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns

The issue of land and building licenses is considered to be one of the most difficult problems in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns and in the other Jerusalemite towns in East Jerusalem. The reason for this is two-fold; the high prices of lands and the very high cost of licenses for construction in Beit Safafa & Sharafat towns. According to citizens of Beit Safafa and Sharafat, the price of one dunum of land in the town ranges between JOD 100 ,000 and 200,000 thousand, which is equivalent to half a million Israeli shekels. These high prices apply to all towns in the Jerusalem Municipality, and can even double in price in areas near the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Israeli Occupation Authorities have used their economic advantage as an effective tool to buy Palestinian lands in Jerusalem in an attempt to Judaize the area and house Jewish settlers in the city. Individual Jews or Jewish organizations offer Palestinians open cheques for the price of land or property to be set by the property owner himself (Leninology, 2009). Anyone in Jerusalem who has land and wants to build a house has to be granted authorization and permission from the Municipality of Jerusalem, which puts many obstacles in the way of Palestinian Jerusalemites who want to get a construction license in an attempt to expel Palestinians out of Jerusalem city and change the demographic balance for the benefit of the Jews, thus making Palestinians in Jerusalem a minority.

One of the main obstacles to obtaining a building license is that one has to prove the ownership of the land. The Israeli Occupation Authorities require that Palestinians seeking to build a house or structure, must prove their ownership of the land, which is considered a political problem related to the ongoing Occupation since 1967.

According to a report prepared by Bimkom Organization (Planners for Planning Rights), approximately 50% of the lands in East Jerusalem are unregistered in the archive of ownership, such as the town of Kafr 'Aqab and the area extending from Al 'Isawiya town in the north to Sur Bahir in the south. Additionally, 25% of the lands in East Jerusalem are in the process of survey and registration (such as Beit Hanina and Shu'fat towns); and only 25% of the lands in East Jerusalem are officially registered, including parts of Al Bireh, Qalandiya, Beit Hanina, Hizma and 'Anata, Ash Sheikh Jarrah and Beit Safafa (Bimkom, 2004).

According to the testimonies of Palestinians in the towns of Beit Safafa and Sharafat, for Palestinians applying to the Israeli Authorities to get a building license, the procedure is lengthy (sometimes lasting years) and carries a very high cost depending on the land area and type of building, ranging between

NIS 150,000-300,000. Thus, due to the high cost imposed on Palestinians to acquire building permits and the lengthy Israeli licensing procedures, Palestinians often tend to build without waiting for the license approval in order to meet their housing needs. In these instances, the Israeli Occupation Authorities usually demolish the property and force the Palestinian owner to pay for the demolition and submit a new building application, thereby incurring additional fees and time. On top of this, the majority of Palestinians in Jerusalem are living in difficult conditions because of high poverty rates, which is a consequence of the Israeli Occupation closures which restrict their movement, thus preventing them from reaching their work places. These Israeli restrictions and harassments against the Palestinians in East Jerusalem, along with the housing problems, lack of lands for construction and the high unemployment rate, force many Jerusalemites to migrate outside the borders of the Municipality towards the West Bank or even travel abroad in search of better living standards.

According to the 'Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinian Rights' in Jerusalem, (CCDPRJ, 2009), the Israeli Authorities adopted many policies that aim to enact pressure on Jerusalemites; for example, in the case of the demographic status and urban growth in Jerusalem, the area that is allocated for the development of Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and lies under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality is estimated at approximately 9,200 dunums, which represents only 13% of the total area of east Jerusalem. Meanwhile the remaining area) is classified as Israeli settlements, green areas (which cannot be used for Palestinian urban growth), public buildings, roads and other areas.

Furthermore, the Israeli Authorities often do not prepare the necessary Master Plans for the Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem which are required for the urban planning process. When such plans are prepared, the Israeli Authorities usually limit the areas for Palestinian urban expansion to below that which is required for natural urban growth, which varies between 25% and 75%. If one compares these percentages with the percentage of lands used for Israeli settlements, it is found that urban growth varies between 75% and 120%. In Beit Safafa for example, the Israeli Authorities determined the urban growth percentage to be 50%, whereas for the neighboring settlement of Gilo which was illegally constructed on Beit Safafa and Sharafat land,s this percentage was set at 75% (CCJ, 2009)

It is further noted that Jerusalem Municipality has classified some areas within its boundaries, including areas from Beit Safafa & Sharafat, as 'green areas', which the Occupation Authorities have used as a way of controlling and confiscating more lands in Jerusalem. Moreover, the Occupation Authorities have demolished houses in Jerusalem under claims that these houses were built on 'green areas', as seen in the ethnic cleansing process in Al Bustan neighborhood in Silwan, which is very close to the southern side of Al Aqsa mosque. The process of land confiscations in Al Bustan came after the Municipality announced a plan on February 20th 2009 to relocate more than 1,500 Palestinian citizens living in the 88 houses of Al Bustan neighborhood in Silwan town to alternative locations. This is because they are planning to demolish all 88 houses to establish what they call 'King David's garden' as part of the 'Biblical gardens' around the Holy City. Furthermore, under the name of 'green areas', the Israeli Authorities have built many settlements in Jerusalem such as Rekhesh Shu'fat (Ramat Shlomo), and Jabal abu Ghneim (Har Homa)". One should note here that there are some areas within Beit Safafa & Sharafat classified as 'green areas' which will undoubtedly be used in future plans of the Israeli Authorities in Jerusalem.

The right to adequate housing is laid out in international treaties and international humanitarian law, which have called for the respect of human dignity through the universal right to adequate housing.

However, through its aggression against Palestinian housing rights as explained above, Israel considers itself to be above international laws and treaties.

A dangerous escalation in Jerusalem housing demolitions

During recent years, the Israeli Occupation Authorities have escalated their attacks against the houses of Palestinians living in Jerusalem by targeting them through housing and other building demolitions under the pretext of ‘unlicensed construction’. An estimation conducted by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs shows that since 1967, the Israeli Occupation has demolished approximately 2,000 houses in Jerusalem in addition to thousands of other constructions (OCHA, 2009). According to Al Maqdese Organization for Society Development, approximately 1,059 houses and constructions in East Jerusalem were demolished between 2000 and 2011, resulting in the displacement of 4,865 Palestinians from Jerusalem of whom 1,290 were women and 2,537 were children (Al Maqdese, 2012). Regarding the demolitions in Beit Safafa, Al Maqdese Organization reported that during 2011, the town has witnessed a demolition of one construction (Al Maqdese, 2012). These Israeli assaults against Palestinians in Jerusalem aim to force them to leave the city and its surrounding towns.

The Municipal tax (Arnona) has a negative impact on the living status and economic situation of Palestinians in Jerusalem

The Municipal tax, (“Arnona” in Hebrew) is imposed by the Jerusalem Municipality on the owners of buildings and lands in Jerusalem. This tax is considered to be one of the greatest that burdens Palestinian residents of the city, including the residents of Beit Safafa & Sharafat. The Israeli Authorities use this tax as an instrument to put pressure on Palestinians and force them to leave the city.

The ‘Arnona’ tax is calculated based on certain criteria, which take in to consideration the classification of the area and the land use classification of the Jerusalem master plan (residential areas, commercial, industrial, agricultural, public buildings, parking. etc.). They also take in to consideration the zone type, the type of use and the area of building or land (Jerusalem Municipality, 2012). Regarding the residential areas, they classify these into four categories (A, B, C and D), and based on this zoning, along with the area of building, they determine and calculate the amount of tax that must be paid to the Municipality. For example, the tax tariff in the residential areas varies in the four zones between 35-98 NIS per m² which is equivalent to approximately 10-25 US\$ per m². This means that a small house (or apartment) with an area of 100-150m² will cost the owner 3,000-10,000 NIS a year in tax. This is equivalent to approximately 800-3,000 US\$. For commercial shops, the tax imposed by the Municipality is folded, which affects the economic activity as these taxes force the merchants to increase their prices. The tax rate for the commercial shops varies between 309-319 NIS per m² depending on the area of the shop, which is equivalent to approximately 80 US\$ per m². In addition to the taxation of residential and commercial areas, the Municipality also imposes taxes on places of worship, agricultural areas, schools, kindergartens, elderly homes and other facilities.

The segregation plan has had a significant negative impact on the economic situation of Palestinians living in Jerusalem in general and on the commercial sector in particular, as it has also suffered from the

global recession. Much of the trade in Jerusalem is largely dependent on the Palestinian visitors to the Holy City from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and those from the occupied lands of 1948, but Israeli closure of the city has negatively affected this trade and the economic situation of the city and its residents. Despite these difficulties, the Occupation Authorities continue to impose taxes without taking into consideration the situation of the Jerusalemites, who represent the poorest social group in the Holy City. In fact, just last year (2012), the Municipality decided to increase the 'Arnona' by approximately 3%, increasing still further the burden on the Palestinians of Jerusalem.

It is also important to note that Palestinians are forced to pay these taxes just to maintain their presence in the city, without even receiving a decent level of Municipal services in return. The planning process in the Municipality of Jerusalem focuses on the political-demographic dimension that aims to Judaize the city rather than planning for the purposes of prosperity and well-being of its citizens. Furthermore, the Palestinian neighborhoods and communities in Jerusalem are deliberately neglected in the provision of services. For instance, the Municipality rarely carries out the necessary maintenance for the infrastructure of the Arab neighborhoods, including roads, water and waste water networks, solid waste and others. The most obvious problem that the people of Jerusalem suffer from is the lack of a cleaning service and the accumulation of solid waste, despite their commitment to paying their taxes to the Municipality. This injustice can be clearly seen if we compare the situation of the Palestinians in Jerusalem with that of the illegal settlers living in the city who have all of their facilities and services provided for them in order to encourage them to stay in the Holy City.

Israeli terminal Gilo 300 near Beit Safafa and Sharafat separates the town from Bethlehem City

On the 15th of November 2005, Israeli Occupation Forces established Gilo 300 terminal (Rachel's Terminal) at the southern entrance of Jerusalem city near Beit Safafa. This terminal was established on the path of Segregation Wall which separates Jerusalem from Bethlehem and which contributes to the Israeli isolation plan in the area. Palestinians in Beit Safafa and Sharafat who have been isolated by the Wall and the terminal have historical social relations and economic interests with Bethlehem city. However, after the segregation plan was implemented in the area, the interaction between this town and the city of Bethlehem became difficult, especially for citizens living on the West Bank side of the barrier and holding Palestinian identity cards (green) who cannot reach the areas isolated inside Jerusalem.

This checkpoint allows access to Jerusalem for Palestinians holding special permits issued by the Israeli Civil Administration, in addition to touristic, religious and diplomatic delegations. Everyone crossing through this terminal are subjected to security and personal inspection by Israeli soldiers who are permanently present at the checkpoint.

Development plans and projects

Implemented projects

Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee has not implemented any development projects in Beit Safafa & Sharafat (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Proposed projects

Beit Safafa & Sharafat Development Committee, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the towns and the towns' residents, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the PRA workshop conducted by ARIJ staff in the towns. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the perspectives of the participants in the workshop:

1. Establishing a public library.
2. Establishing a mother and child day care center.
3. Constructing and paving sub roads (5km).
4. Constructing a new school.
5. Rehabilitating playgrounds in schools.

Town development priorities and needs

Beit Safafa & Sharafat suffer from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 8 shows the development priorities and needs in the towns according to the Development Committee's feedback (Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012).

Table 8: Development priorities and needs in Beit Safafa & Sharafat

No.	Sector	Strongly needed	Needed	Not a priority	Notes
Infrastructural needs					
1	Construction and paving of roads	*			5km*
2	Rehabilitating old water networks			*	
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas			*	
4	Constructing new water networks			*	
5	Rehabilitating/constructing new wells or springs			*	
6	Constructing water reservoirs			*	
7	Constructing a sewage disposal network			*	
8	Constructing a new electricity network			*	
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection			*	
10	Providing vehicles for collection of solid waste			*	
11	Providing a sanitary landfill			*	
Health needs					
1	Building new clinics or health care centres	*			Mother and child day care center
2	Rehabilitating old clinics and health care centres			*	
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools			*	
Educational needs					
1	Building new schools	*			Constructing classrooms
2	Rehabilitating old schools	*			Rehabilitating playgrounds
3	Purchasing new equipment for schools			*	
Agriculture needs					
1	Rehabilitating agricultural lands			*	
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns			*	
3	Constructing barracks for livestock			*	
4	Veterinary services			*	
5	Seeds and hay for animals			*	
6	Constructing new greenhouses			*	
7	Rehabilitating greenhouses			*	
8	Field crop seeds			*	
9	Plants and agricultural supplies	*			

*5km are sub roads

Source: Beit Safafa & Sharafat Mayors' Committee, 2012

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