

Beit Hanina 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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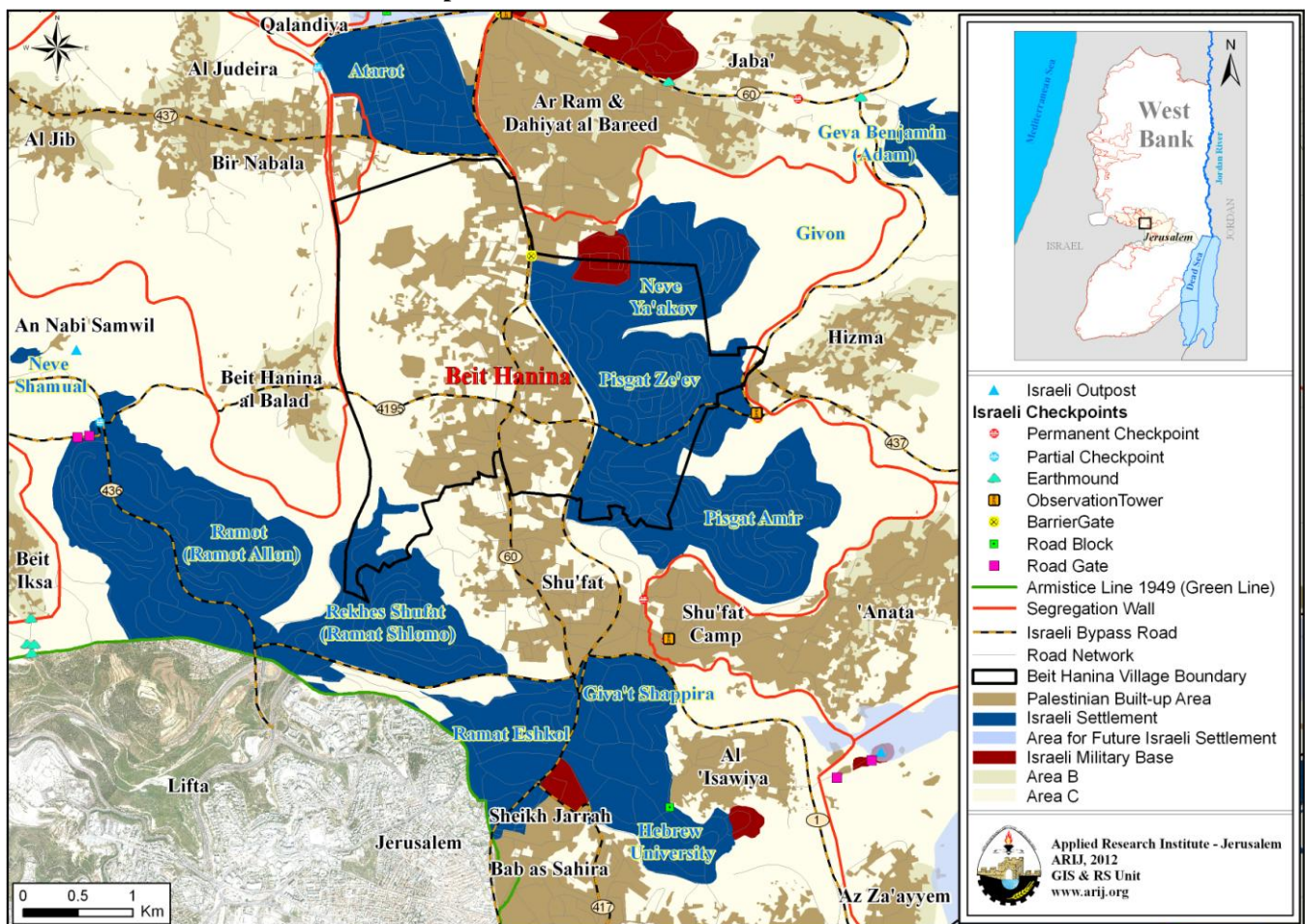
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Beit Hanina Town Profile

Location and physical characteristics

Beit Hanina is a Palestinian town in Jerusalem Governorate located 5.53km north of Jerusalem. It is bordered by Hizma to the east, Bir Nabala and Ar Ram to the north, Beit Hanina al Balad to the west, and Shu'fat to the south (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012) (see map 1).

Map 1: Beit Hanina location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

Beit Hanina is located at an altitude of 769m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 449.1mm. The average annual temperature is 17°C and the average annual humidity is approximately 61% (ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012).

In 1994 Beit Hanina Community Center was established, composing of 11 members and 10 employees. The Center has a permanent headquarters owned by the Municipality of Jerusalem and provides

numerous services including cultural, religious, social and legal counseling. It also includes a kindergarten (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012). As for infrastructural services, they are provided by the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

History

Beit Hanina means the home of Hanina, a female saint (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012). The town was established over 500 years ago, and its residents are descended from the Arabian Peninsula (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012) (see photo below of Beit Hanina town).

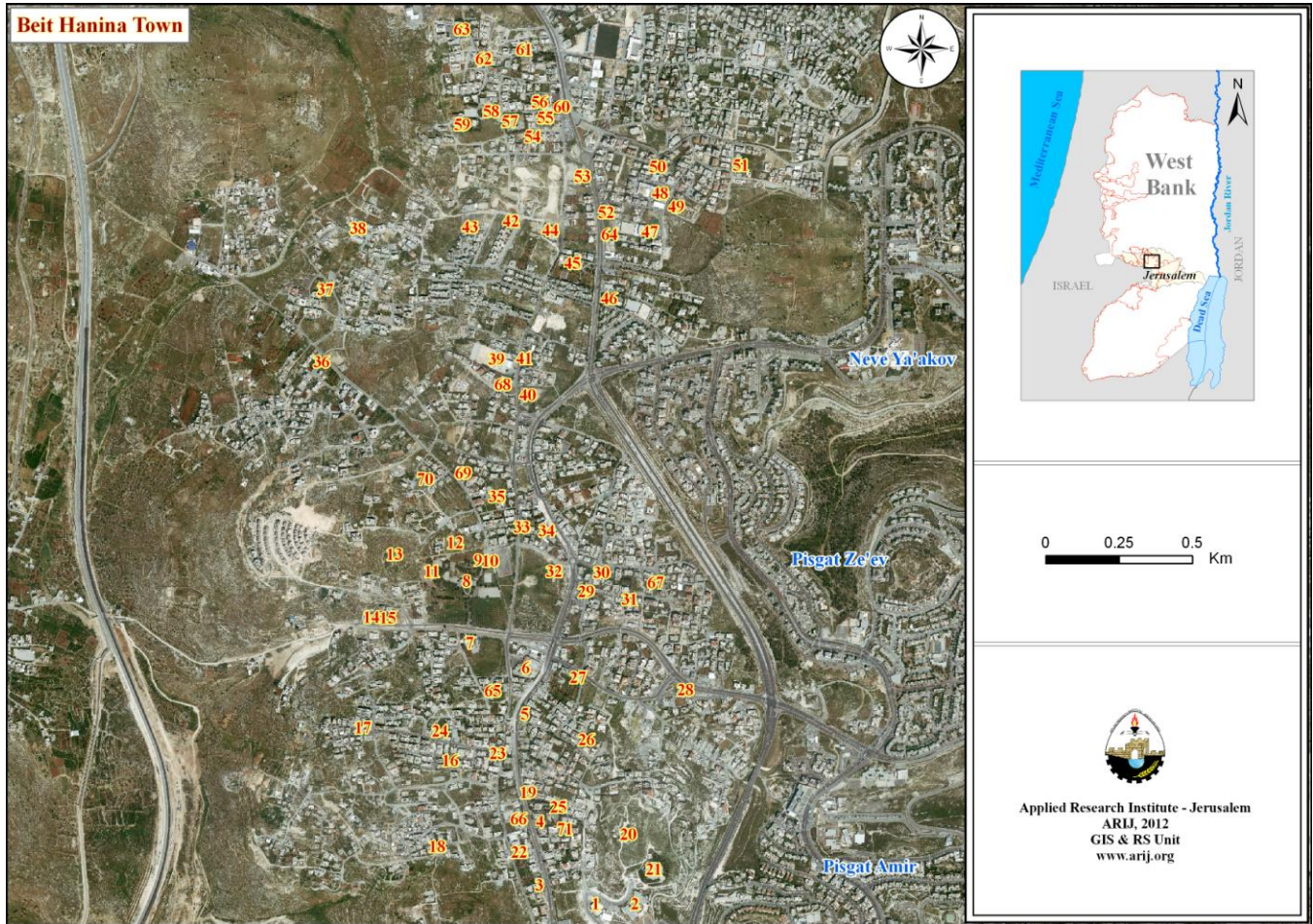
Photo 1: Beit Hanina town



Religious and archaeological sites

There are 8 mosques in the town; Old Beit Hanina, Shuman, Ahbab Allah, Muhammad Al Fateh, Bader, Al Aqaba, Al Dahiya, and Al Hijra mosques. There is also a convent for Rosary nuns and two Catholic churches. In terms of archaeological sites, there are ruins of an old church under the main street of Beit Hanina, and the King Husain Palace (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012) (see map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Beit Hanina town



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

Population

Unfortunately, no census has been conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) to ascertain the population and housing figures in Beit Hanina, however according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the population of Beit Hanina reached 33,617 in 2011 (Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2012).

Families

Beit Hanina residents are from several families, mainly Najjar, Abu Zahriya, Suleiman, Ibdah, Hasan, Silmi, Salim, and Salman (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Education

During the academic year 2010/2011, there was a governmental school in the town and another 15 private schools, all administered by the Palestinian Ministry of Education (Ministry of education – Jerusalem, 2011) (see table 1). In addition there were 7 schools administered by the Municipality of Jerusalem, and 5 schools administered by the private sector.

Table 1: Schools in Beit Hanina by name, stage, sex and supervising authority

School name	Supervising authority	Sex
Al Nizamiya Secondary School	Governmental	Females
Al Iman Secondary Boys' School	Private	Males
Al Iman Elementary Girls' School	Private	Females
Al Hasad School	Private	Mixed
Jerusalem American School	Private	Mixed
Bridge International School	Private	Mixed
Al Mustaqbal Girls' School	Private	Mixed
Rosary Nuns School	Private	Females
Al Yatim Al Arabi/ Industrial Secondary School	Private	Males
Shatha Al Ward School	Private	Mixed
Al Sunnah Al Islamiya Boys' School	Private	Males
Dar Al Hikma School	Private	Mixed
Al Sunna Al Islamiya Girls' School	Private	Females
Al Fursan Secondary School	Private	Mixed
Al Tefil Academy School	Private	Mixed
Al Nourain School	Private	Mixed
Beit Hanina Elementary Boys' School	Jerusalem Municipality	Males
Beit Hanina Elementary Girls' School	Jerusalem Municipality	Females
Al Basma School for private education	Jerusalem Municipality	Mixed
Ibn Khaldon Boys' School	Jerusalem Municipality	Males
Beit Hanina Preparatory Boys' School	Jerusalem Municipality	Males
Al Shuruq School for special needs	Jerusalem Municipality	Mixed
Maha Haldaj Elementary Girls' School	Jerusalem Municipality	Females
Al Haya Al Asasiya Boys' School	Private sector	Males
Reinassance Secondary Boys' School	Private sector	Males
Al Haya Al Asasiya Beit Hanina Girls' School	Private sector	Females
Al Haya Al Asasiya Beit Hanina Boys' School	Private sector	Males
Al Mustaqbal Al Asasiya Girls' School	Private sector	Females
Beit Hanina Branch School for Girls	NA	Females
Al Haya Sikhnin Boys' School	NA	Males
Collège des Frères	NA	Mixed
Jerusalem School	NA	Mixed
Rou'a Elementary Boys' School	Private	Males
Al Nourein Al Tarbaweya School	Private	N/A
Al Iman Secondary Girls' School	Private	Females

Source: Ministry of Education, 2011; Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012

The Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education supervises only 266 classes of 6,629 students and 44 teachers (Ministry of Education, 2011). The average number of students per teacher in Beit Hanina Schools is 15 students, and the class density is 25 students per class (Ministry of Education, 2011).

There is also a branch campus of al Quds University in the town (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

There are 6 kindergartens in the town, administered by different authorities. Approximately 814 children attend these kindergartens. Table 2 shows the name, supervising authority and number of children attending these kindergartens.

Table 2: Kindergartens in Beit Hanina by name, stage, sex and supervising authority

School name	Number of children	Supervising authority
Al Nourain Model Kindergarten	76	Private
Child's Academy Kindergarten	52	Private
Rosary Nuns Kindergarten	348	Private
Al Iman Kindergarten	191	Private Islamic
Bridge Kindergarten	70	Private
Shatha Al Ward Kindergarten	77	Private

Source: Ministry of Education, 2011

The educational sector in Beit Hanina town faces some problems and obstacles (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012), primarily:

1. Overcrowded classrooms.
2. Lack of means of transportation.
3. Lack of qualified teachers, in particular those trained to teach children with special needs.
4. Classrooms are not healthy and suitable for providing education.
5. Lack of sufficient classrooms.
6. Lack of computers.

Health status

There 5 health centers available in Beit Hanina town; they are Bisan Health Center, Bait Al Ateba', Medical Relief Center, Al Salam, and Ibn Sina. All are run by Israeli insurance companies, such as Maccabi, Clalit and Meuhedet. There is also Issam Al Ju'ba Hospital for the elderly, and Al Dajany Maternity Hospital. There is an ambulance of David Star and many pharmacies. In the case of absence of required health services or in emergencies, residents of Beit Hanina head to Hadasa-Ein Karem Al Maqasid, Al Muttala', the Red Crescent, and Al Faransawi hospitals, or other Health Centers in Sheikh Jarrah (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012). In general, the community of Beit Hanina suffers from

the lack of emergency clinics in addition the difficulty of medical services as they are provided in Hebrew (Medical Relief Committee, 2013).

Agricultural sector

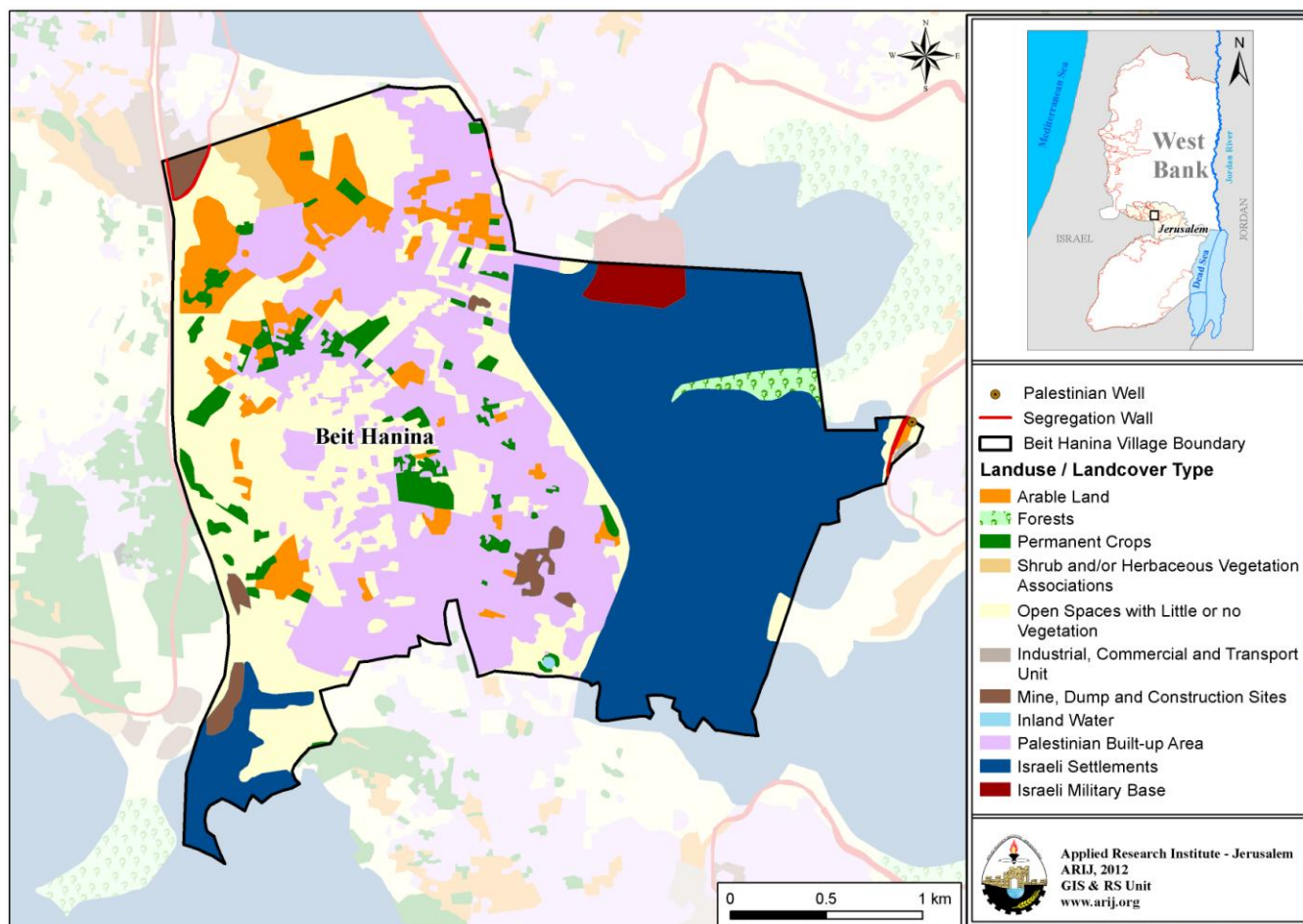
Beit Hanina has a total area of around 8,877 dunums, of which 1,025 are considered ‘arable’ land and 2,369 dunums are registered as ‘residential’ (see table 2 and map 3).

Table 2: Land use and land cover in Beit Hanina town in 2010 (area in dunums)

Total area	Built up area	Agricultural area (1025)				Inland water	Forests	Open spaces	Area of industrial, commercial & transport unit	Area of settlements, military bases & Wall zone
		Permanent crops	Greenho uses	Rangel ands	Seasonal crops					
8,877	2,369	321	0	77	627	3	75	2,232	128	3,045

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012

Map 3: Land use/land cover in Beit Hanina town



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

Table 4 shows the different types of rain fed and irrigated vegetables and trees planted in the area. The town is known for the cultivation of tomatoes and cauliflower.

Table 4: Total area of irrigated and rain fed vegetables in Beit Hanina town (dunums)

Fruit trees	Rain fed	Irrigated
Fruity vegetables	2	2
Leafy vegetables	0	0
Green legumes	0	0
Bulbs	0	0
Other vegetables	1	2
Total area	3	4

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010

Table 5 shows the fruit trees cultivated in Beit Hanina and the area they cover. Beit Hanina is known for the cultivation of olives as there are approximately 55 dunums of olive trees.

Table 5: Total area of fruit and olive trees in Beit Hanina town (dunums)

Fruit trees	Rain fed	Irrigated
Olives	55	0
Citrus	0	0
Stone fruits	10	0
Pome fruits	0	0
Nuts	0	0
Other fruits	11	0
Total area	76	0

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Jerusalem, 2010

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and from ARIJ's GIS Unit in terms of 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 and not seasonal areas. 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.

ARIJ's field survey also shows that 2% of the residents in Beit Hanina rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep and goats (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012) (see table 6).

Table 6: Livestock in Beit Hanina Town

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee hives
0	200	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2010

There are no agricultural roads in the town (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Agriculture is one of the sectors most affected by the Israeli occupation. All agricultural lands have been confiscated and therefore the commercial agricultural sector has ceased to exist on all but a small area of land. The Israeli authority instantly demolishes any agricultural facilities which are built (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Institutions and services

Beit Hanina has a few governmental institutions, including a post office, police station and a social affairs office. There are also some local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012):

- **Palestinian Counseling Center:** established in 1983 and provides psychological and social services.
- **UNICEF office**
- **Diakonia Institute**
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**
- **Helen Keller Institute for Special Needs**
- **Engineers' Syndicate**
- **Beit Hanina Community Center**
- **Al Bara' Association for Jerusalem Women**
- **Al Masader Center for Childhood**
- **The Palestinian Housing Association in the Holy Land**
- **The Agricultural Development Association (Agricultural Relief)**
- **Beit Hanina Maqdisi Club**
- **Ata'Center**
- **Humat Al Mustaqbal Association**
- **Democracy and Violence Center**
- **Al Quds Institute for Development**
- **Suwar Association**
- **Bariq Charity Association**
- **Save the Children**
- **Action Against Hunger.**

Infrastructure and natural resources

Electricity and telecommunication services

Beit Hanina has been connected to a public electricity network served by Jerusalem Electricity Company since 1960, which is the main source of electricity in the town. It is noted that approximately 95% of the housing units in the town are connected to this network (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012). Furthermore, All Beit Hanina housing units are connected to a telecommunications network (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Transportation services

There are 6 private taxi offices and the United Bus Company in East Jerusalem operating on the Beit Hanina-Jerusalem route (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Water resources

Beit Hanina is provided with water by Gihon, an Israeli company, through the public water network and approximately 99% of the housing units are connected to this network (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Sanitation

There is a public sewerage network in Beit Hanina and about 98% of the town's housing units use the sewage network as the main means of wastewater disposal, whilst the remainder use cesspits (Beit Hanina Community Center, 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 commercial and industrial establishments in the town. The cost of this is included within the tax (Arnona) which they pay to the Municipality of Jerusalem. The Arnona ranges from 3,000 to 10,000 NIS per year depending on the area, and covers all services provided by the Municipality (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Residents of Beit Hanina benefit from solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from houses, institutions, shops and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to containers distributed throughout the town. Jerusalem Municipality collects the solid waste from containers and then transports it using a waste vehicle to El 'Eizariya dumping site, where it is usually buried and sometimes burnt (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Beit Hanina is 1.05kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from Beit Hanina residents is nearly 35.3 tons, or 12,883.7 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 Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Geopolitical status of Beit Hanina Town

Beit Hanina town covers a total area of 8,877 dunums and is under the control of Jerusalem Municipality. This control 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 territories. Jerusalem Governorate was divided into two main regions: J1 and J2. J1 area is located inside the borders and is under the control of the Jerusalem Municipality. It includes many Palestinian Jerusalemite communities such as the communities of the Old Town and Jerusalem City (Beit Al-Maqdis) in addition to Beit Hanina town which is located in the north of the J1 area. The J2 area is located outside the borders and outside the control of the Jerusalem Municipality. This area is under Palestinian Authority control within Jerusalem Governorate and includes its eastern and western parts, whereas the central part of the Governorate remains under Israeli occupied control.

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28th September 1995, which categorized the West Bank into areas “A,” “B” and “C”, Beit Hanina town remained under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality, as it had not been included in this agreement. However the Israeli Occupation Authorities (IOF) have used the separation plan (which is represented by the construction of the Segregation Wall), to illegally and unilaterally redraw the Jerusalem Municipality boundaries. The Segregation Wall separates the whole area of J1 from the Jerusalem Governorate except for Kafr ‘Aqab village, Shu’fat Camp and part of Shu’fat town which are located in the J2 area, as a result of the construction of the Wall which shifted them outside of J1.

Beit Hanina Town and Israeli Occupation practices

Due to its strategic location to the north of Jerusalem city, Beit Hanina has been subjected to numerous Israeli confiscations for the benefit of various Israeli motives. These Israeli aims are represented in the construction of Israeli settlements, outposts, military bases, barriers, and bypass roads on the town’s territories and its surroundings, as well as the Israeli segregation plan.

During the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian territory, the government confiscated 2, 927 dunums in Beit Hanina (33.1% of the town’s total area) to establish four Israeli settlements to surround the town on all sides. These settlements are now inhabited by more than 85,000 Israeli settlers. This has had a disastrous impact on the town, as it is now surrounded by settlements and the Segregation wall on all sides. The four settlements are: Ramat Shlomo “Rikhis Shu’fat” south west the town, and Pisgat Ze’ev, Pisgat Amir, and Neveh Ya’akov to the east of the town (see table 7).

7: Israeli settlements constructed on Beit Hanina lands

Settlement name	Year of construction	Area confiscated (dunums)	Population of settlers (2011)
Ramat Shlomo "Rikhis Shu'fat"	1990	232	15,350
Pisgat Ze'ev	1985	1,458	50,000
Pisgat Amir	1985	686	
Neveh Ya'akov	1972	551	20,383
Total		2,927	

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012

Israeli forces have confiscated additional lands from Beit Hanina town to construct Israeli bypass roads numbers 1, 60, 437, 404 and 20 (4197), in order to connect the Israeli settlements in Jerusalem with the surrounding settlements in the West Bank. It should be noted that the real threat of these bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) along these roads, extending to approximately 75m on each side.

Beit Hanina town has also lost land as a result of the construction of two military bases on the town's territory, close to the settlement of Neve Ya'akov. The area of confiscated land is estimated at 101 dunums and this has been carried out under the pretext of protecting settlements in the area.

Bypass road no.20 (4197)

The Israeli Occupation authorities adopted the construction of new bypass roads to re-draw the borders of the governorate and fragment the Palestinian communities, while increasing the connection between the Israeli settlements. Road no.20 is a representative example of this process. The road passes through Beit Hanina to connect Ma'ale Adumim settlement bloc, Pisgat Ze'ev, Pisgat Amir and Neve Ya'akov with the settlement of Ramot, eventually connecting with bypass road no.404. The Israeli authorities started working on road no.20 at the end of 2008, aiming to extend 4km from the starting point at Pisgat Ze'ev (to the east) and connect with bypass road no.433 (to the west).

Bypass road no.21 swallows lands in Beit Hanina and Shu'fat towns

On the 21st January 2013, the Israeli Occupation Forces attacked Shu'fat town to the north of Jerusalem City with bulldozers without prior notice and razed tens of dunums of lands owned by Palestinians living in the town. This attack was based on the Israeli aim to construct a new bypass road connecting the Israeli settlements in the north of Jerusalem City with those on the other side. This will create a network of bypass roads that facilitates the movement of Israeli settlers between settlements in Jerusalem and other governorates. The route of bypass road no.21 (which is still under construction) starts from the settlement of Ramat Shlomo (Rikhis Shu'fat) and connects with bypass road no.9 (named Yegal Yedin Street by the Israelis) which links to the settlement in the south. It then continues to the east and then to the north to break through the Palestinian residential area in Shu'fat town, upto Beit Hanina to intersect with road no.20 which heads towards the industrial Israeli settlement "Atarot". Many Palestinian houses and properties are threatened with demolition, as they lie within the planned route.

According to the map published on the Jerusalem Municipality webpage, bypass road no.21 aims to provide new entrances for the Israeli settlers traveling to and from Ramat Shlomo settlement. In addition, the road will provide new entrances to other settlements and outposts that are planned to be built within the City of Jerusalem. According to the Jerusalem Development Company Muria, the implementing agency, the road will be constructed in phases as follows:

- **First section:** extends from bypass road no.9 at the southern entrance of the Israeli settlement Ramat Shlomo (Rikhis Shu'fat) to the northern entrance. The length of this section is 350m and it provides an additional entrance to the aforementioned settlement.
- **Second section:** extends from the southern entrance of Ramat Shlomo settlement to the northern entrance. The length of this section is 1.2km.
- **Third section:** extends from the northern entrance of Ramat Shlomo to the intersection point with road no.20. The length of this section is 2.7km.
- **Fourth section:** extends from bypass road no.20 to connect with the road of Horon settlement (previously called Bir Nabala road), which in turn connects to Atarot settlement. The length of this section is 3.1km.

The Israeli Ministry of Transport claims that the construction of this bypass road will provide the settlers with a secondary road and will help to reduce the traffic during the rush hours in Jerusalem City.

By constructing bypass road no.21, the Municipality of Jerusalem is working to create a geographic connection between Israeli settlements north of Jerusalem City to facilitate the movement of Israeli settlers between the settlements within and outside its borders. However, this process is harmful for the Palestinians properties in Shu'fat and Beit Hanina towns, as many of the Palestinian houses lying on the planned route will be demolished, and large areas of land will be confiscated. This will fragment the areas of Beit Hanina and Shu'fat which have been always connected geographically and are interdependent in terms of services and infrastructure.

Beit Hanina Town and the Israeli plan for the Segregation Wall

The construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall has had a negative impact on Beit Hanina town. According to the latest amendment to the plan published on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry on 30th April 2007, the Segregation Wall will isolate the majority of Beit Hanina's lands from the surrounding Palestinian communities in the West Bank, in particular from those in the north east and north west of Jerusalem governorate such as Anata, Hizma, Ar Ram, Bir Nabala, and Beit Hanina al Balad,. The area of isolated land is 8,859 dunums, which is almost the whole area of the town. This land includes the Israeli settlements, Palestinian residential areas, open spaces, agricultural lands, forests, etc. (see table 8).

Table 8: Land classification of the isolated areas to the west side of the Segregation Wall in Beit Hanina Town - Jerusalem Governorate

No.	Land classification	Area (dunums)
1	Israeli settlements	2,927
2	Palestinian built up areas	2,368
3	Open spaces	2,224
4	Agricultural areas	943
5	Forests	76
6	Construction sites	128
7	Israeli military bases	101
8	Shrubs and pasture land	77
9	Segregation zone	15
Total		8,859

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2012

The Segregation Wall causes suffering to Beit Hanina Town residents

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, the citizens of Beit Hanina and the neighboring communities have lost their connection with other Palestinian communities in the West Bank due to the construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall around Jerusalem. Citizens of Jerusalem who hold Jerusalemite identity cards (the blue I.D.) can enter West Bank areas through Israeli terminals which often witness huge congestion. They are regularly subjected to thorough inspection at the hands of Israeli soldiers, which in turn causes delays and restricts movement.

Meanwhile, Palestinian citizens who live in the West Bank and hold West Bank Identity cards (the green I.D.) are prohibited from entering the city of Jerusalem and its surrounding towns as the Segregation Wall totally isolates them from the city. As a result, they can no longer benefit from the health, educational and socio-economic services in the city such as hospitals, schools and medical centers. In addition, the Segregation Wall denies access for West Bank I.D. holders to their places of work in Jerusalem. Only those with special Israeli permits issued by the Israeli Civil Administration (which are rarely granted) are able to enter the city through Israeli controlled checkpoints or crossings, through which they are subjected to thorough and lengthy inspections and humiliation at the hands of armed Israeli forces. This practice has also damaged family bonds and has been detrimental to social interaction, as it has caused the dispersion of many Palestinian families. In some families, one half of the couple holds a Palestinian identity card (green card), whilst the other holds the Jerusalemite identity card (blue card). The Segregation Wall has also prevented Palestinians from reaching places of worship in the Holy City, thus depriving them from practicing their religious rituals in Jerusalem.

According to the Segregation Wall plan which was published on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry in 2007, the Wall and a settlement belt around Jerusalem will combine to isolate Beit Hanina area from the rest of the West Bank. Parallel to the establishment of the Segregation Wall, the IOF has also constructed a settlement belt around Beit Hanina and Jerusalem city which aims to create an isolation area and prevent urban expansion of the Palestinian towns of Jerusalem. Urban expansion is restricted by the construction of settlements close to the urbanized areas in Jerusalemite towns, which

also has led to an increase in land confiscations in these towns, minimizing the area available for future urban expansion. Once established, the presence of these settlements creates a new reality for the towns' residents that will be difficult to change. As a result, Jerusalem and its surrounding towns have a very high population density. The population density in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem is recorded as 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 lands and building licenses in Beit Hanina Town

The problem of land and building licenses is considered to be one of the most difficult issues in Beit Hanina town and the other Jerusalemite towns in East Jerusalem. This is due to the high cost of land and the expense of licenses granted for land development.

Beit Hanina town is characterized by its strategic location and proximity to the Old City and Al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem, making it an important target for Israeli colonization and 'Judaization' activities. There is limited land availability in Beit Hanina, thus the area lacks open spaces for urban development and suffers from an extremely high population density. According to citizens of Jerusalem, land prices of one dunum in East Jerusalem, especially land located within the borders of the Jerusalem municipality (which is rarely available), is estimated to cost hundreds of thousands of US dollars. As for areas closer to the city center (such as those in Beit Hanina), the price of land can even reach millions of US dollars.

Israeli Occupation Authorities have used these prices as an effective instrument to buy the Palestinian lands in Jerusalem for very high prices in order to Judaize the land by imbedding Jewish settlers in the city. They offer the Palestinians high prices for these lands and houses, especially those in the city center and its surrounding neighborhoods. Anyone in Jerusalem who owns land and wishes to construct a house on it or purchase additional lands has to obtain authorization and permission from the illegal Municipality of Jerusalem, which creates many obstacles for Palestinians attempting to acquire a license.

One of the main obstacles for obtaining a building license is the requirement to prove ownership of the land. The Israeli Occupation Authorities stipulate that Palestinians seeking to build a house or structure must prove their ownership of the land, which is considered a political problem due to the occupation dating back to 1967. According to a report prepared by the Bimkom Organization (Planners for Planning Rights), approximately 50% of East Jerusalem lands are unregistered in the archive of ownership, particularly in 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 (including Beit Hanina), and only 25% of the lands in East Jerusalem are officially registered. This includes parts of Al Bireh, Qalandiya, Beit Hanina, Hizma and 'Anata, Ash Sheikh Jarrah and Beit Safafa (Bimkom, 2004).

According to the testimonies of Palestinian Jerusalemites, the licensing procedure for construction in Beit Hanina is lengthy (sometimes lasting years) and can be very expensive depending on the land area and type of building (it ranges between 150,000 and 300,000NIS). Due to both the expensive and lengthy licensing procedures, in order to meet their housing needs Palestinians tend to build without waiting for the license approval. In these instances, the Israeli Occupation Authorities usually demolish

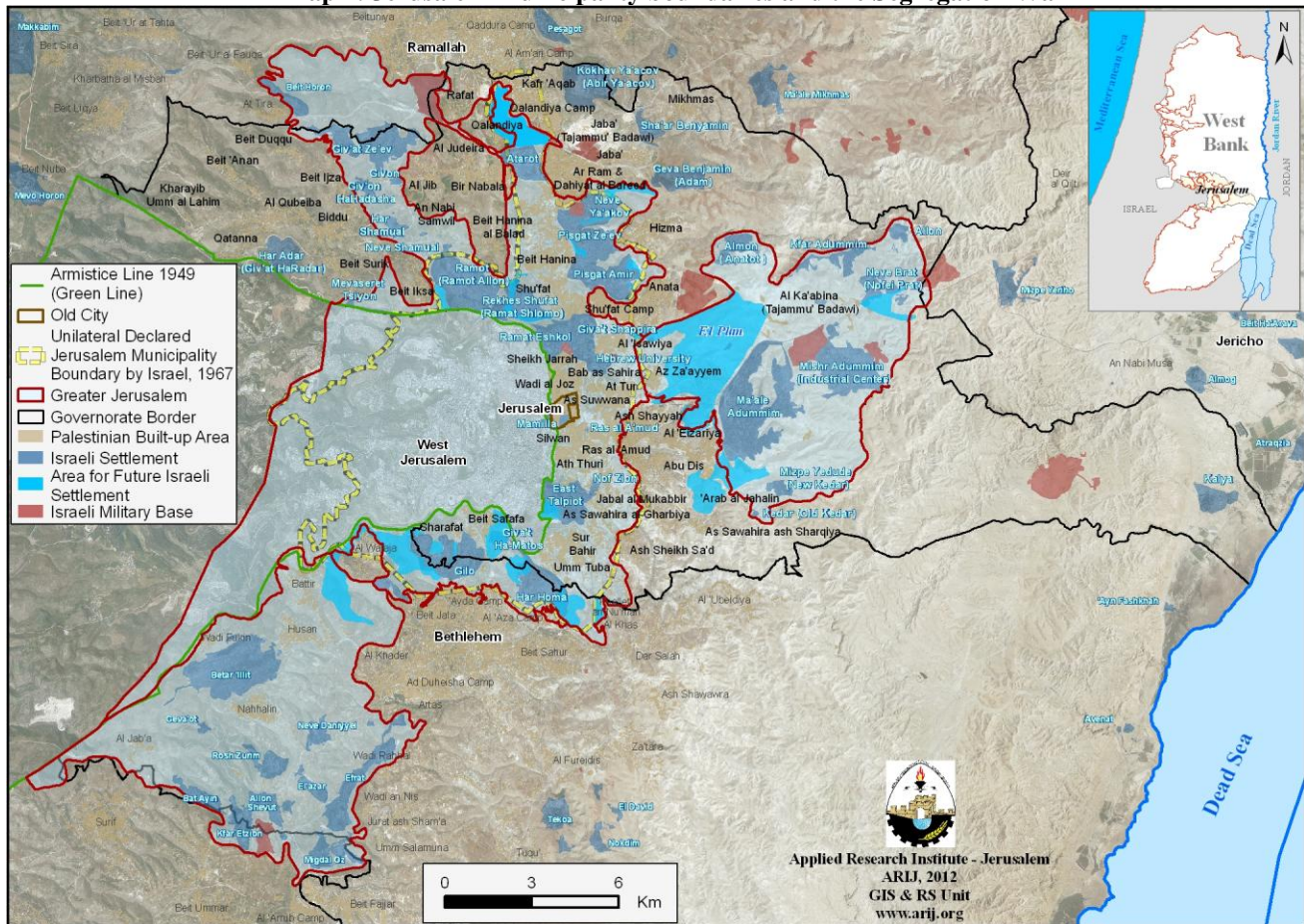
the property and force the Palestinian owner to pay for his own demolition and submit a new building application. On top of that, the majority of Palestinians in Jerusalem are living in difficult conditions because of high poverty rates, which is a consequence of the Israeli Occupation closures which restrict the movement of Palestinians and prevent them from reaching their workplaces. These Israeli restrictions and harassments against the Palestinians in East Jerusalem, along with the housing problems, lack of lands for building and increased unemployment rate, force many Jerusalemites to migrate outside the borders of the Municipality towards the West Bank or even travel abroad to find better living standards.

According to the ‘Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem’, (CCDPRJ, 2009), the Israeli Authorities have adopted many policies that aim to put pressure on Jerusalemites. An example of this is the case of 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; whereas the remaining area (of East Jerusalem and under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality) is classified as Israeli settlements, green areas (which cannot be used for Palestinian urban growth), public buildings, roads and others. 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. In cases when the Israeli Authorities do prepare master plans for Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, they usually place restrictions and limit the percentages of areas designated for Palestinian urban expansion which are below the necessary percentages for natural urban growth (between 25% and 75%). If these percentages are compared with the percentage of lands used for Israeli settlements, it is found that urban growth varies between 75%-120%. In Beit Hanina town, for example, the Israeli Authorities determined the urban development percentage to be 50%-75%, whereas the neighboring settlement of the Pisgat Ze’ev, which was illegally constructed on the land of Beit Hanina town, covers a percentage of 90%-120% (CCJ, 2009).

Area “C” According to the Oslo Agreement (areas of Wadi Al Dam and ‘Adasah)

A small part of Beit Hanina lands, constituting 1,050 dunums (11.8% of the total area of the town), lies outside the borders of Jerusalem Municipality, and is inhabited by citizens from the Wadi Al Dam and Adasah neighborhoods. The number of housing units in this area is estimated to be 35 houses. This area is classified as Area “C” according to the Oslo Interim Agreement, signed in September 1995, between the Palestinian National Authority and the Israeli government which divided the West Bank into Areas “A”, “B”, and “C”. This area has the same difficulties and obstacles in obtaining building permits from the Israeli Civil Administration in the illegal settlement of Beit El in Ramallah Governorate. Because this area is not within Jerusalem boundaries, the cost of licenses is less and is estimated at approximately 2,000 JD (10,000 NIS). These imposed geopolitical and demographic obstacles aim to Judaize Jerusalem and make life more difficult for the Palestinians, forcing them to leave their lands (see map 4).

Map 4: Jerusalem Municipality boundaries and the Segregation Wall



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2012

The danger of Israeli escalation in housing demolitions in Jerusalem

During recent years, the Israeli Occupation Authorities have escalated their attacks against the houses of Palestinians living in Jerusalem and targeted them through demolitions under the pretext of “unlicensed construction”. An estimation made by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) suggests that since 1967, the Israeli Occupation Authorities have demolished approximately 2,000 Palestinian houses in Jerusalem in addition to thousands of other structures (OCHA, 2009). According to Al-Maqdese Organization for Society Development, the number of Palestinian houses and structures that were demolished in East Jerusalem during the period of 2000 and 2011 was 1,059, resulting in the displacement of 4,865 Palestinians from Jerusalem, of whom 1,290 were women and 2,537 were children (Al Maqdesi, 2012).

Many houses in Beit Hanina are under threat of demolition under the pretext of “unlicensed construction,” despite the fact that the residents have fulfilled the necessary requirements for the building licenses. However according to the residents, the Municipality of Jerusalem usually rejects their license applications without any justification.

The Municipal tax (Arnona) negatively affects 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 and is considered one of the greatest burdens faced by the Palestinian residents of Beit Hanina. The Israeli Authorities use this tax as an instrument to put pressure on the Palestinians and force them to leave the city.

The “Arnona” tax which is imposed on Jerusalemites is calculated based on 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 size of the 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 size of the building, they 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 and 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 3,000-10,000NIS a year in tax, equivalent to approximately 800-3,000 US\$. For commercial shops, the tax imposed by the municipality is folded, which affects the economic activity as the merchants are forced to increase their prices. The tax tariff for these commercial shops varies between 309 and 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 buildings, the municipality also imposes taxes on places of worship, agricultural areas, schools, kindergartens, homes for the elderly and other building.

The segregation plan, which has focused on the isolation of Jerusalem city from the Palestinian Territory, has had a huge negative impact on the economic situation of the Palestinians living in Jerusalem in general and on the commercial sector in particular, which has also suffered from the global recession. Much of the trade in Jerusalem was previously largely dependent on the Palestinian visitors to the Holy City from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the Palestinians from the occupied land in 1948, but Israeli closure of the city has had a negative impact on this trade. Despite these difficult situations, the Occupation Authorities impose taxes without taking into consideration the situation of the Jerusalemites, who represent the poorest social group in the Holy City. Moreover, at the beginning of last year (2012), the municipality decided to increase the “Arnona” by approximately 3%, which in turn increases the burden on the Palestinians of Jerusalem.

Normally, taxes are imposed on citizens to cover the costs of services provided by the collecting authority. However, in case of Jerusalem, Palestinians are forced to pay these taxes in order to preserve their presence in the city without receiving a decent level of municipal services. 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 the prosperity and well-being of its citizens. The Palestinian neighborhoods and communities in Jerusalem are deliberately neglected in the provision of services. The municipality rarely completes the maintenance needed for the infrastructure of Arab neighborhoods, including roads, water and waste water networks, solid waste and other services. 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 in tax payments to the municipality. This can be easily understood if we compare the situation of the Palestinians in Jerusalem with that of the illegal

settlers living in settlements in the city who are provided with numerous facilities and services in order to encourage them to stay in the Holy City, while the Palestinians live in poor conditions and lack services and rights that they should receive in return for paying the municipal tax.

Israeli military orders issued in Beit Hanina Town

The Israeli Occupation Authorities issued a set of military orders to confiscate lands in Beit Hanina for different purposes. The following is a list of those orders:

1. Military Order 57/05/T: issued on 8th March 2005 to confiscate 26 dunums in Beit Hanina for the construction of the Segregation Wall.
2. Military Order 27/06/T: issued on 20th February 2006 to confiscate 41 dunums in Beit Hanina and Bir Nabala for the construction of the Segregation Wall.
3. Military Order 06/04/T: issued on 21st January 2004 to confiscate 76 dunums in Beit Hanina, Hizma, Ar Ram, and Dahiyat al Barid for the construction of the Segregation Wall.

Development plans and projects in Beit Hanina Town

Implemented projects

Beit Hanina Community Center has not implemented any development plans or projects, as they are usually implemented by the Municipality of Jerusalem (Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012).

Proposed projects

Beit Hanina Community Center, with cooperation from civil society organizations, is looking to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the PRA workshop conducted by ARIJ staff in the town. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the perspectives of the participants in the workshop:

1. Establish three school models.
2. Conduct capacity building training sessions for teachers.
3. Provide additional playgrounds in the schools.
4. Provide a source room in the school for children with special needs.

Town development priorities and needs

Beit Hanina suffers from a significant shortage in infrastructure and services. Table 9 shows the development priorities and needs in the town according to the community center feedback:

Table 9: Development priorities and needs in Beit Hanina

No.	Sector	Strongly needed	Needed	Not a priority	Notes
Infrastructural needs					
1	Construction and paving of roads				N/A
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks				N/A
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas				N/A
4	Construction of new water networks				N/A
5	Rehabilitation/construction of new wells or springs				N/A
6	Construction of water reservoirs				N/A
7	Construction of a sewage disposal network				N/A
8	Construction of a new electricity network				N/A
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection				N/A
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste				N/A
11	Providing a sanitary landfill				N/A
Health needs					
1	Building of new clinics or health care centres	*			Emergency clinic
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres			*	
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools			*	
Educational needs					
1	Building of new schools	*			Build 3 schools
2	Rehabilitation of existing schools	*			Playgrounds
3	Purchasing new equipment for schools	*			Playgrounds, public facilities, a source room for children with special needs
Agriculture needs					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands			*	
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns			*	
3	Construction of barracks for livestock			*	
4	Veterinary services			*	
5	Seeds and hay for animals			*	
6	Construction of new greenhouses			*	
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses			*	
8	Field crops seeds			*	
9	Plants and agricultural supplies			*	

Source: Beit Hanina Community Center, 2012

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