

Aqaba Village Profile



Prepared by



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Introduction

This village profile is part of a broader series that aims to document and analyze the socio-economic conditions in the Palestinian Jordan Valley—specifically within the Tubas and Jericho governorates. The series provides a comprehensive overview of population centers, identifies development needs, and outlines future plans to improve residents' living conditions and enhance their resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.

Within this framework, the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ) is implementing the project:

"Identifying and Assessing the Livelihoods of Palestinian Rural Women and Economically Empowering Them in Area C."

This project addresses the socio-economic impacts of Israeli military orders and occupation practices, which directly affect Palestinian rural women—particularly those living in Area C of the West Bank. The initiative seeks to empower these women by raising awareness of their rights, building their capacities to confront challenges such as settler violence and the threat of displacement, and supporting their involvement in development planning to secure a more stable future for themselves and their families.

The project adopts an integrated methodology that includes field data collection, documentation of women's life stories, engagement with media and social media platforms, and collaboration with local and international stakeholders. It also focuses on developing effective advocacy strategies to raise awareness about the hardships faced by rural women and to push for policies that ensure their access to the resources needed to launch and sustain their economic projects—especially in agriculture, which is a main source of income for many.

This profile aims to present a comprehensive picture of the current conditions in Aqaba village, highlight the challenges faced—particularly by women—and showcase opportunities for promoting sustainable rural development. It is intended to serve as a valuable reference to support efforts aimed at improving the socio-economic realities of communities in the Jordan Valley and strengthening their resilience amid increasing political and economic pressures.

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Geographic Location and Natural Characteristics

Aqaba village is one of the villages in the Tubas Governorate, located northeast of Tubas city, approximately 5.5 km from its center. It is bordered by Al-Maleh and the Jordan Valley to the east, Ibziq village to the north, Tayasir and Tubas to the west, and Khirbet Yarza to the south. The total area of the village is 5,770 dunums.

The village sits at an elevation of 288 meters above sea level, with an average annual rainfall of about 340 mm. The average temperature is around 20°C, and the relative humidity averages about 56%. (Source: GIS Unit – ARIJ, 2024)

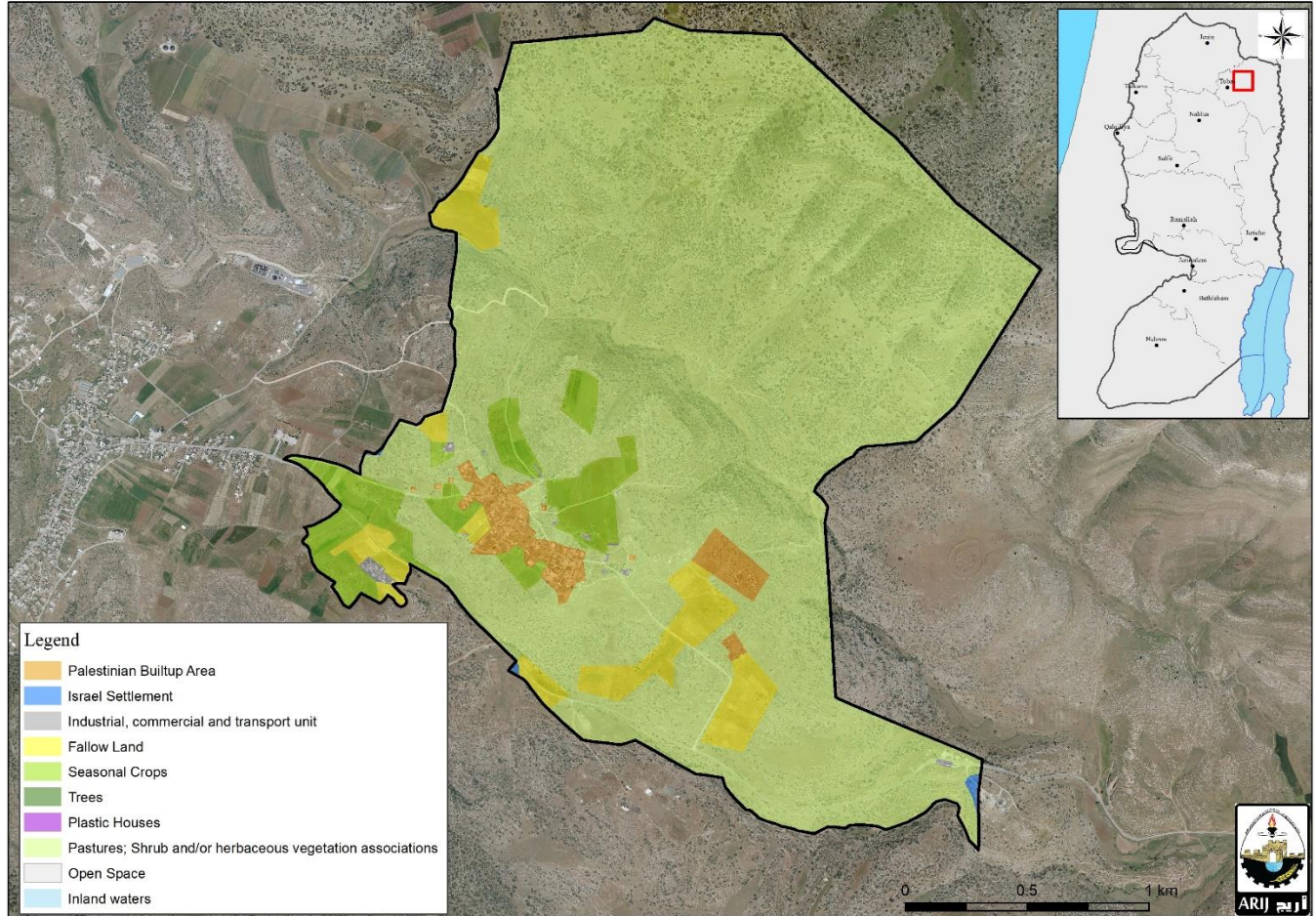
Land Use and Land Cover Analysis: Aqaba Village

The **land use and land cover analysis for Aqaba village using Arial photographs for year 2021** highlights a diverse distribution of land across a total area of **5,770 dunums** (see the map below the table). **Pastures and shrubs** make up the largest portion, covering approximately **4,922 dunums**, reflecting the community’s reliance on natural grazing areas. **Seasonal crops** occupy **358 dunums**, indicating the presence of agricultural activities, while **uncultivated lands** cover **314 dunums**.

The **built-up area**, including residential zones and infrastructure, extends over **160 dunums**. Additionally, **industrial, commercial, and transportation units** occupy **15 dunums**. This distribution reflects a balance in the village between agricultural, residential, and natural land uses.

Table 1: Land Use and Land Cover in Aqaba Village, 2024	
Land Use Type	Area (in dunums)
Uncultivated Lands	314
Built-up Areas	160
Seasonal Crops	358
Industrial, Commercial, and Transport Units	15
Pastures and Shrubs	4,922
Total Area	5,770

Source: Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), GIS and Remote Sensing Unit, 2024



Map: Land Use and Land Cover in Aqaba Village, 2021

Aqaba Village Council

The village council of Aqaba was established in 1998. The current council comprises six members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority. It has two staff members and operates from a permanent building. Administratively, the council is part of the Joint Services Council for Solid Waste Management in Tubas (Planning and Development).

The council currently does not own any equipment.

Its responsibilities include: (Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

1. Developing infrastructure services (water, electricity, and sewage networks)
2. Waste collection, road paving and maintenance, street cleaning, and social service provision
3. Implementing projects and preparing studies for the village
4. Providing kindergartens
5. Regulating construction and issuing building permits
6. Providing transportation services

Historical Background

Aqaba was named for being a natural obstacle to the Turkish army and later the British occupation, as it served as a hideout and refuge for fighters due to its rugged terrain and high rocky hills. The village's origin dates back over two thousand years. The residents of Aqaba originate from Tayasir and Tubas. (Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

Religious and Historical Sites

There is one mosque in Aqaba, Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi Mosque, distinguished by its two-pronged minaret symbolizing victory.

There are no documented archaeological sites in the village.



Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' 2017 Population and Housing Census, the population of Aqaba was 166 individuals (83 males and 83 females), comprising 40 households and 56 housing units.

According to the village council, the current population is approximately 350 people—140 males and 210 females—with a gender ratio of 120:80 (40% male, 60% female). There are 75 households and 65 housing units.

(Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

Age Groups and Gender

The 2017 census data shows the following age group distribution in Aqaba:

- 41% under the age of 14
- 54.8% between ages 15–64
- 4.2% aged 65 and above

The gender distribution was 50% male and 50% female.

Families

The village is home to several families, including Subaih, Abu Mohsen, Dabbak, Taleb, Jaber, and Abdel Karim.

(Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

Migration

Field surveys indicate that around 700 individuals migrated from the village after the year 2000, primarily from the Taleb and Abdel Karim families.

Groups of Bedouin families, approximately 50 people from the Nawaj’a and Al-Faqeer families, has settled east of the village and receive public services from Aqaba.

Education Sector

In 2017, the illiteracy rate in Aqaba was approximately 7.4%, with females making up 78% of that rate. Among the educated population:

- 12.3% could read and write
- 30% completed primary education
- 31.4% completed intermediate education
- 12.3% completed secondary education
- 6.6% attained higher education

Table 2: Educational Attainment in Aqaba (10 years and older), 2017

Gender	Illiterate	Literate	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Diploma	Bachelor	Postgraduate	Total
Males	2	30	35	15	10	0	10	0	60
Females	7	30	20	20	15	0	15	0	61
Total	9	60	55	35	25	0	25	0	121

(Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019)

In the 2024/2025 school year, the village has one public school: Aqaba Co-educational Basic School, offering grades 1 through 10. For secondary education, students attend schools in Tayasir, 2 km away. The school is administered by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and serves students from the nearby Bedouin community. (Table 3)

- Number of classrooms: 10
 - Number of students: 85 (40 males, 45 females)
 - Number of teachers: 12
 - Student-to-teacher ratio: 7:1
 - Classroom density: 8–9 students per classroom
- (Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

School Name	Supervising Body	Type
Aqaba Co-educational Basic School	Government	Co-educational

There is one kindergarten in Aqaba, **Al-Haq Kindergarten**, managed by a local charitable association.

Challenges Facing the Education Sector:

1. The school building is rented; Israeli authorities prohibit constructing a new school.
2. Lack of proper educational facilities such as playgrounds.
3. No science labs or modern teaching aids.
4. No secondary education within the village.
5. Harassment and intimidation by Israeli forces and settlers.
6. Difficulty accessing schools outside the village due to checkpoints.

Health Sector

Aqaba has one health center, **Al-Amal Clinic**, operated by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. The clinic does not meet all health needs, and residents often rely on **Tayasir Clinic**, 2 km away. There is no ambulance service in the village. In emergencies, residents travel to health facilities in Tubas (7 km), Nablus (33 km), or Jenin (35 km).

Key Challenges in the Health Sector:

1. Lack of specialist doctors
2. Irregular clinic hours
3. Shortages of medications
4. Limited lab supplies
(Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

Economic Activities

The village economy primarily depends on agriculture, which employs **92%** of the labor force.

Figure 1: Distribution of Economic Activities in Aqaba

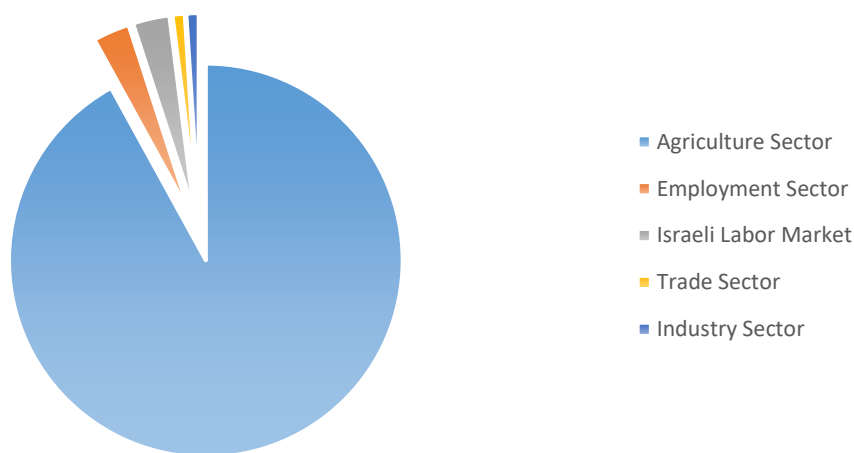
- Agriculture: **92%**
- Industry: **1%**
- Employment (Public/Private jobs): **3%**
- Trade: **1%**
- Israeli labor market: **3%**

Before the October 7, 2023 war, the Israeli labor market accounted for 15% of the village's labor force. The unemployment rate is currently 4%, but it can reach up to 50% seasonally.

Livestock farming accounts for 50% of agricultural activity. Other sectors include small-scale industries and trades (2 workshops).

Israeli measures have negatively impacted the following sectors:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Industry and trade
- Infrastructure (road development)
- Education



Aqaba suffers from weak economic activity due to its small population and lack of geographic access points, which limits its vitality. Additionally, its proximity to Tayasir village and the city of Tubas, coupled with a heavy reliance on agriculture as the main income source, contributes to its limited economic development. (Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

Labor Force

According to the 2017 Population and Housing Census by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 40.8% of Aqaba's population was economically active, of which 95% were employed. Meanwhile, 59.2% were economically inactive, including 29.3% who were students and 58.6% who were homemakers. (See Table 4)

Gender	Employed	Unemployed	Total Economically Active	Students/ Training	Homemakers	Disabled	With Income/Pension	Total Inactive	Total Population
Male	50	0	50	15	0	4	11	30	80
Female	7	2	9	20	50	6	0	76	85
Total	57	2	59	35	50	10	11	106	165

Agriculture Sector

Aqaba's total land area is approximately 5,776 dunums, of which 2,500 dunums are arable, and 641 dunums are currently cultivated. The village is known for livestock farming, with at least 1,500 sheep. Most residents raise livestock such as sheep, goats, broiler and layer chickens, and some keep bees. Around 50 families are involved in livestock farming; two families run poultry farms, and one keeps bees. (See Table 5)

Table 5: Livestock in Aqaba Village (2024)

Beehives	Layer Chickens	Broiler Chickens	Mules	Donkeys	Horses	Camels	Goats	Sheep	Cattle*
20	0	4000	0	2	1	0	300	1200	0

*Includes cows, calves, heifers, and bulls.

Aqaba has approximately 4.5 km of agricultural roads, of which 3.5 km are suitable for tractors and machinery, and 1 km is suitable only for animals.

Challenges Facing the Agricultural Sector:

1. Harassment and assaults by Israeli forces
2. Restrictions on grazing due to settler activities
3. Inaccessibility to farmland due to Israeli military exercises with live ammunition
4. Presence of unexploded ordnance and training leftovers
5. Confiscation and bulldozing of agricultural land
6. Deliberate burning of crops and destruction of agricultural property by Israeli forces
7. Physical attacks on farmers in their homes and fields
8. Ban on road construction and rehabilitation
9. Road closures and restricted access to markets
10. No dedicated water supply line for agriculture
11. High water prices and limited availability
12. Rising costs of fodder and agricultural inputs

Institutions and Services Sector

Aqaba village has a local council with a permanent office, partially shared with the Rural Women's Association. Several community-based organizations serve the population in cultural, social, and sports fields.

Local Council:

- Established in 1998 by the Ministry of Local Government

Religious Institutions:

- Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi Mosque

Community Organizations:

- Rural Women’s Association (2001) – focuses on women’s affairs, education, and kindergarten management
- Aqaba Agricultural Cooperative (2007) – provides agricultural services
- Housing Association for the Displaced (2009) – supports displaced families
- Aqaba Unity and Hope Youth Club (2010) – offers sports activities

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

Electricity and Communications

A public electricity network was established in 2000, supplied by the Tubas Electricity Company. All housing units (100%) are connected to the network.

Challenges:

1. Need for a higher-capacity transformer
2. Outdated and inefficient grid
3. Electricity losses due to degraded infrastructure
4. Continued use of old meter systems
5. High electricity costs

Telephone services reach about 80% of housing units.

Transportation

Public transportation is available via taxis, buses, or on foot. In the absence of public options, private vehicles are used. The village has 11 km of paved roads in good condition (4 km main, 7 km secondary) and 4 km of unpaved roads. See Table 6

Road Type	Main Roads	Secondary Roads	Agricultural Roads
Good & Paved	4 km	7 km	500 m
Poor & Paved	0 km	0 km	0 km
Unpaved	0 km	4 km	4 km

Water

A public water network and storage tank were established in 2017, supplied by the Tubas Water Utility. 85% of housing units are connected. Monthly water supply is 1,000 cubic meters, but actual consumption reaches 1,500 cubic meters, while needs are estimated at 3,000. Thus, there is a 50% deficit. Water loss is about 2%, with per capita supply at 3 liters/day versus a demand of 10 liters/day. Water costs 5 NIS/m³ for drinking and 3 NIS/m³ for agriculture. Residents also rely on rainwater harvesting and expensive water tankers (250 NIS for 3 m³).

The village has one public water tank (250 m³) and 45 household rainwater collection wells.

Challenges:

1. High water prices
2. Incomplete water network coverage
3. Low pressure, limiting tank filling
4. High cost of water tankers
5. Outdated water infrastructure
6. Insufficient agricultural water lines

Sanitation

A partial sewage network was installed in 2022, serving 40% of homes. Others use cesspits. Solid waste is managed by the Joint Services Council in Tubas, which collects waste weekly from 60 containers (1.2 m³ each) and transports it to the Zahret Al-Finjan landfill (30 km away). Waste is incinerated, and future plans include converting waste to energy. A monthly fee of 18 NIS is charged, with 100% collection rate.

Impact of Israeli Occupation

Under the Oslo Accords (1995), 100% of Aqaba's land (5,776 dunums) is classified as Area C, under full Israeli control. Palestinians are prohibited from building or using the land without Israeli permits. (See Table 7)

Classification	Area (dunums)	% of Village Area
Area A	0	0%
Area B	0	0%
Area C	5,776	100%
Nature Reserve	0	0%

Source: ARIJ GIS Unit Database – 2025

After 1967, Israel declared much of Aqaba's land as "closed military zones" using Military Order 378. Under Article 90, any military commander may declare land as closed. Although land ownership remains with residents, usage is prohibited. These lands are later reclassified as "state land" or "nature reserves" to consolidate Israeli control. About 4,732 dunums (82%) of Aqaba's land is classified as military zones, including populated areas subjected to eviction and demolition. See Table 8

Classification	Area (dunums)	% of Village Area	Notes
Closed Military Zones	4,732	82%	
Reclassified as "State Land"	2,944	51%	Overlaps with military zones
Reclassified as "Nature Reserves"	2,488	43%	Overlaps with military zones
Military Bases	89	1.5%	Overlapping zones
Total Area	5,776	100%	

Source: ARIJ GIS Unit Database – 2025

Negative impacts of military presence:

1. Environmental pollution from military explosions
2. Sewage discharge from military bases
3. Insect infestations due to wastewater
4. Frequent attacks on residents and property theft in farming areas

Development Projects in Aqaba

Implemented Projects (Last 5 Years), Table 9.

Project Name	Type	Year	Donor Institution
Road Rehabilitation and Paving	Infrastructure	2021	Arab Fund for Economic Development
Water Tank	Infrastructure	2021	Municipal Development and Lending Fund
Public Garden Rehabilitation	Infrastructure	2022	Municipal Development and Lending Fund
Solar Energy System	Electricity Sector	2023	Municipal Development and Lending Fund
Agricultural Water Line	Agriculture	2023	Palestinian Hydrologists Group
Council Hall Renovation	Public Buildings	2023	Ru'ya Foundation
2-inch Drinking Water Pipes	Infrastructure	2024	We World Organization
Sewage Network Connection to Treatment Plant	Infrastructure	2023	ARIJ and Land Foundation

Proposed Projects

Through participatory rapid assessments with ARIJ and local stakeholders, the following priority projects have been identified:

1. Construction of a permanent village council building
2. Expansion and maintenance of the water network and tank
3. Construction of a new basic school building
4. Building a garden for the Rural Women's Association
5. Renovation and shading of the kindergarten
6. Rehabilitation of residential shelters (barracks)
7. Agricultural land reclamation
8. Establishment of a dairy processing facility
9. Temporary housing for displaced families (caravans)
10. Support for livestock farmers (feed and veterinary care)
11. Construction of a sports field
12. Expansion of the sewage network
13. Establishment of a cooperative association complex

Development Priorities and Needs

Table 10 presents the village's development priorities and needs as identified by the Village Council. (Source: Council of Aqaba Village, 2024)

Table 10: The Village's Development Priorities And Needs				
Priority Area	Urgent Need	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructure Needs				
Is there a need to construct or pave roads?	✓			
1. Main Roads (meters)	✓			1,500 m
2. Secondary Roads (meters)	✓			1,000 m
3. Agricultural Roads (meters)	✓			2,000 m
Is there a need to repair/rehabilitate the existing water network?	✓			Length: 1,000 m
Need to expand the old water network to cover new areas?	✓			Length: 1 km
Need to install a new water network?		✓		

Need to rehabilitate/restore springs or groundwater wells?		✓		Type and quantity not specified
Need to build a public water tank?		✓		
Need for a sewage network?		✓		Expansion length: 1.5 km
Need to install a new electricity network?		✓		Expansion & maintenance: 1.5 km
Need for solid waste collection containers?	✓			50 containers
Need for solid waste collection trucks?		✓		1 truck
Need for a sanitary landfill for solid waste?		✓		
Health Needs				
Need to build new health centers/clinics?		✓		1 center
Need to rehabilitate existing health centers/clinics?		✓		1 center
Need to purchase medical equipment?		✓		Yes
Education Needs				
Need to build new schools?	✓			Basic school level
Need to rehabilitate existing schools?	✓			Secondary school level
Need for educational supplies/equipment?	✓			
Agricultural Needs				
Need for agricultural land reclamation?	✓			100 dunums
Need to construct rainwater harvesting cisterns?	✓			20 cisterns

Need to build animal shelters/barns?	✓			30 units (per study)
Need for veterinary services?	✓			Clinic, doctor, and medicines
Need for animal feed and hay?			✓	70 tons/year
Need to establish greenhouses?	✓			50 dunums (per study)
Need to rehabilitate existing greenhouses?	✓			20 dunums (per study)
Need for field crop seeds?	✓			5 tons/year
Need for seedlings and agricultural inputs?	✓			60,000 seedlings and 1 ton of fertilizer
Other Needs				
Construction of an agricultural water transmission line	✓			3 km

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