



This guide was prepared within the project ***“Towards Social Inclusion in Community Development by Providing Platforms for Planning and Advocacy”*** which is implemented in partnership between the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), The Union of the Charitable Societies - Jerusalem (UCS), Hasso-Plattner-Institut für Digital Engineering GGmbH (Hasso-Plattner-Institute for Digital Engineering), Digital Engineering Faculty of the University Potsdam and CESVI Fondazione Onlus, funded by the European Union.

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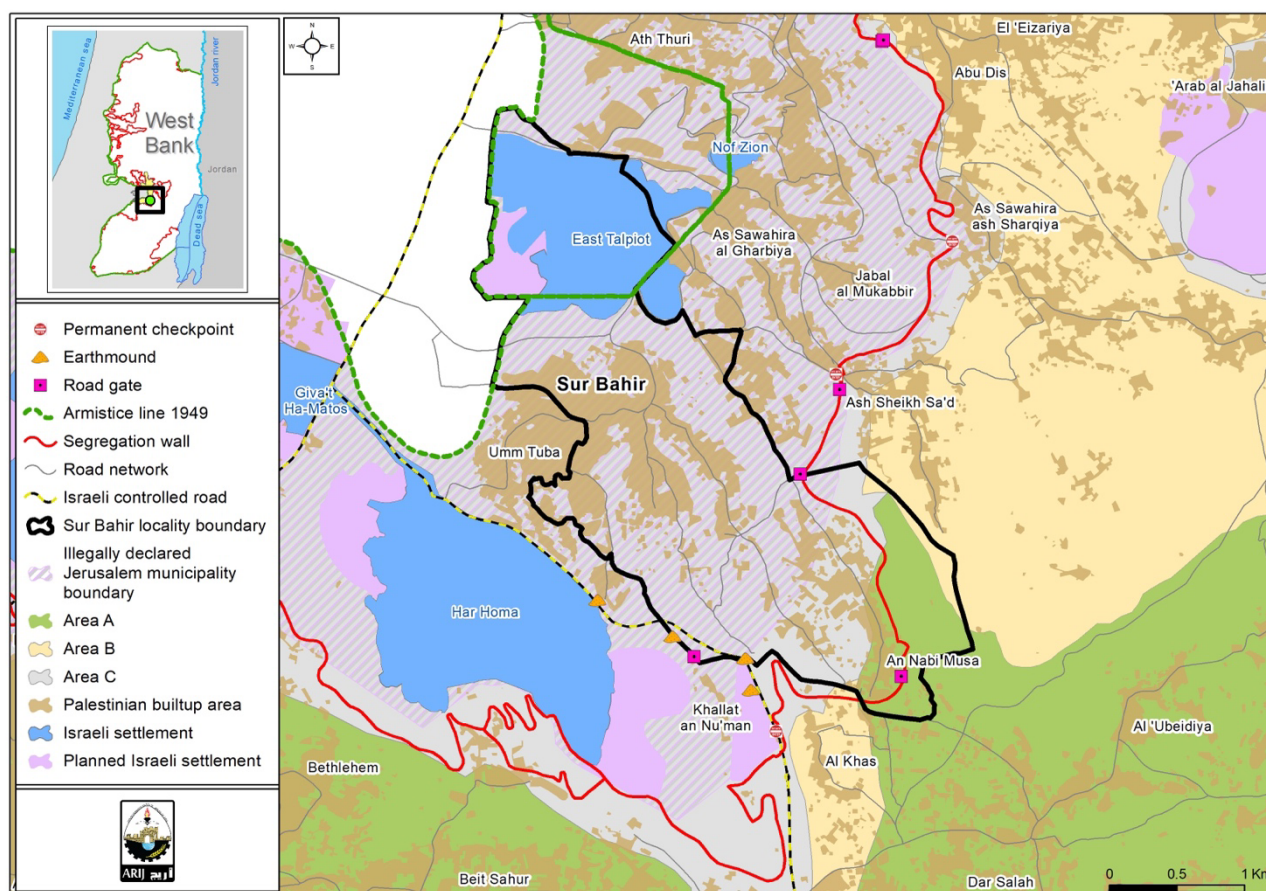
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Sur Baher Town Profile

Geographical location and physical characteristics

The town of Sur Baher is one of the towns in Jerusalem Governorate, located south of Jerusalem as it lies about 4.62 km from the city of Jerusalem (the horizontal distance between the centre of the town and the centre of Jerusalem). In general terms, Sur Baher is bounded from the east by Al Sawahira Al Gharbiya and Al Sheikh Sa'd, from the north by Al Thuri lands and Jabal Al Mukaber, from the west by West Jerusalem and from the south by the territories of Al Khas and Al Nu'man (Geographic Information System Unit - ARIJ, 2019) (See map 1).

Map 1: Sur Baher location and borders



Source: ARIJ Geographic Information Systems Unit, 2020

The town of Sur Baher is located at an altitude of 742 meters above sea level with an average annual precipitation of 407.7 mm. The average temperature is 17 degrees Celsius, while the average humidity is approximately 60% (GIS Unit - ARIJ, 2020). As for services provided for the cluster, they are all provided by the Israeli Jerusalem municipality.

Brief history

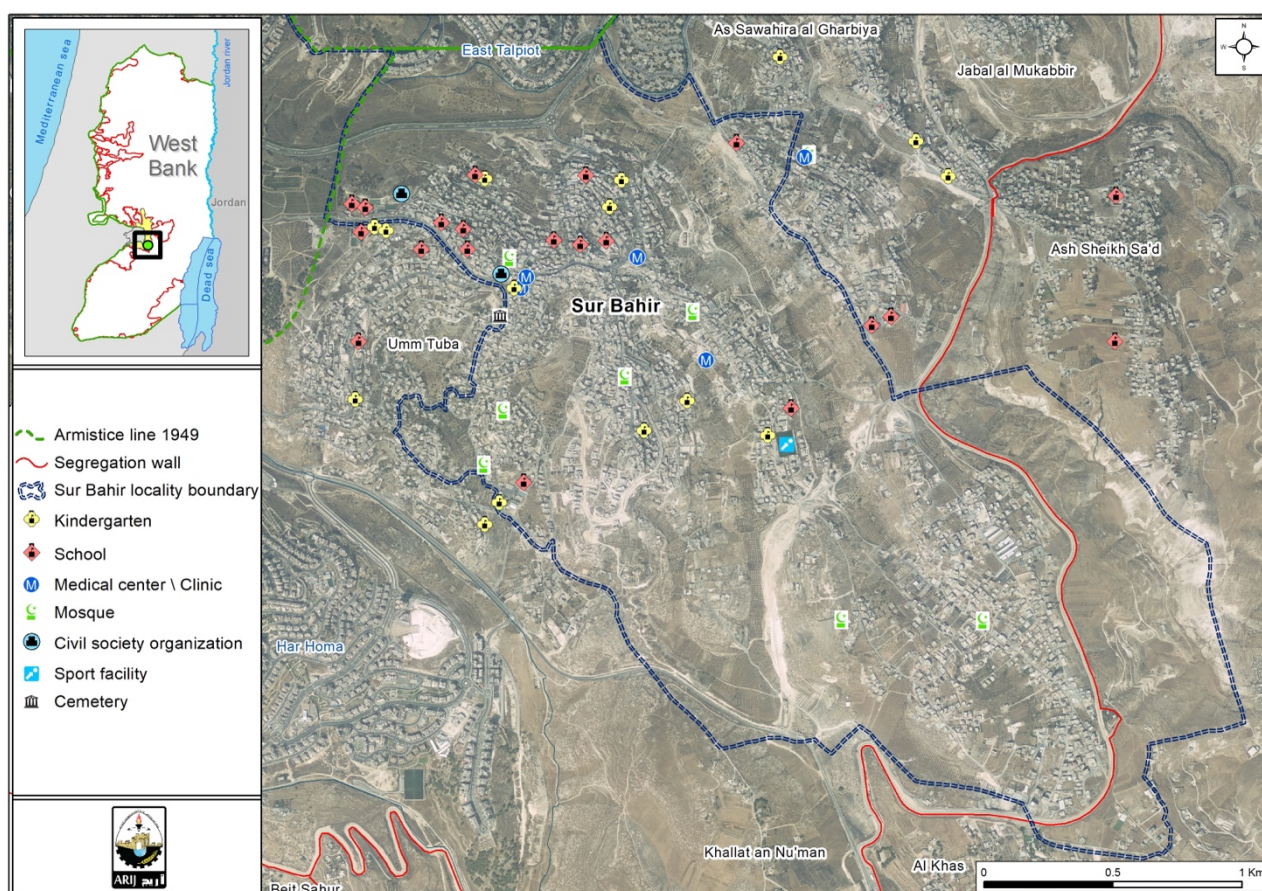
The town of Sur Baher was named in relation to a story that circulated among generations, which claims that Omar Ben al Khattab held a secret meeting in that area with his leaders before entering

Jerusalem, and the town was therefore originally named ‘Al Sir Al Baher’ (the impressive secret), which later became Sur Baher. The town was established over 1000 years ago, and its residents are descended from the Arabian Peninsula and Yemen .

Religious and archaeological Sites

There are 8 mosques in the town of Sur Baher and are Al Muhajireen, Al Murabiteen , Al ‘Omari, Al-daawa (In Wadi Hummus), Al-Ansar, Al-Kholafa, Ibn Hanbal, and Al-Rahma mosques. There are no sites of archaeological interest in the town (see map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Sur Baher town



Source: ARIJ Geographic Information Systems Unit, 2020

Population

The population of Sur Baher reached 18,650 in 2018 according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2020).

Families

The residents of Sur Baher town consist of three main families, the Dwaiyat family from (Dabash, Nimr, Amas, Alyan, Abd Rabbo, Qassem and Awad) the Omaira family from (Abu Kaf, Hamada, Abu Kaf, Bakirat, Jabour, Hamed Afana, Hammad, Basit, Jadallah and Atoun) The Fawaqa family from (Al-Atrash, Al-Masry, Jabr, Abu Hamed Daoud and Shehadat).

Standard of living

The household survey was used as a tool to collect necessary data to evaluate the socio-economic conditions at a neighborhood level, and to gather the necessary data to conduct a comprehensive assessment of East Jerusalem residents' needs, their preferences and perceptions concerning the availability and quality of education, health, transportation, infrastructure, housing and environmental services.

The Geographic Sample Distribution of Household was designed using a stratified sampling approach. Unfortunately, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) does not publish estimates of the number of residents in Palestinian neighborhoods within East Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research publishes population numbers, demographic and socio-economic indicators in its annual statistical book. However, the boundaries of the statistical enumeration areas differ from the borders used by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and this project. In order to solve the problem, samples were taken where partners compared the number of buildings from the GIS database with the population numbers mentioned in the Statistical Work Manual. As it became clear that the number of buildings, according to statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics is approximately 80% of the population. The distribution of the number of buildings and the number of samples for each cluster in the following table:

Cluster	Number of buildings	Sample number
Al Sawahira al Gharbiya	1,699	231
Al Thuri	2,099	325
Beir Owana	126	86
Beit Safafa	2,025	238
Beit Hanina	3,534	248
Isawiya and Sheikh Jarrah	2,605	242
Jabel Mukaber	3,259	247
Bayt al-Maqdis	10,623	371
Kafr 'Aqab	2,710	243
Old City	4,101	250
Sharafat	410	162
Shu'afat	1,895	234
Silwan	2,288	239
Sur Baher	2,771	243
Umm Tuba	874	204

As for the survey, it was completed by designing a questionnaire called “The Socio-Economic Survey for Families in East Jerusalem Districts 2019”. The Union of the Charitable Societies - Jerusalem (UCS), in cooperation with the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), conducted this survey, and the survey was divided into the following sections:

- Data on family members.
- Domicile and living conditions (water, sanitation/sewerage, waste, communications, internet and mail).
- Movement and mobility.
- Education.
- The standard of living.
- Violence and personal security.

The standard of living in Sur Baher

The number of Sur Baher families that were sampled was 243, and when asked about their families living conditions, 97% reported they are living in middle to upper levels. As for the monthly income, 95.6% of the families that were surveyed earned 5,000 shekels and above monthly, while almost 5% of the families earned less than 5,000 shekels a month. As for the primary source of income, 93% were salaries earned while 15% were from self-employment.

Education sector

Regarding primary and secondary educational institutions in Sur Baher in the academic year 2015/2016, there are 7 public schools in town which are managed by the Awqaf. In addition to a school supervised by Jerusalem municipality (see table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of schools in Sur Baher by type of school and supervising authority for academic year 2015/2016

School Name	Supervising Authority	School Type
Omar bin Abd al Aziz Girls' School	Awqaf	Mixed
Ali ben Abi Taleb Boys' School	Awqaf	Male
Abu Bakr al Siddiq Girls' School	Awqaf	Female
Othman ben 'Affan Girls' School	Awqaf	Female
Omar ben al Khattab Boys' School	Awqaf	Male
Abu Ubaidah Boys' School	Awqaf	Male
Riyadh Al-Saleheen School	Awqaf	Mixed
Ibn Rushd Comprehensive School	Jerusalem Municipality	Male

Source: ARIJ database, 2016.

The number of classrooms in the town of Sur Baher that are supervised by the Directorate of Education is only 123 classes, while the number of students is 2,790 students both male and female. The number of teachers is 157 teachers including both genders (ARIJ database, 2016). It should be

noted here that the average number of students per teacher in Sur Baher schools is 18 students, and the classroom density is 23 students per class (ARIJ database, 2016).

If the required levels of education are not available in the town, students go to Al Rashidiya Boys' School in the city of Jerusalem in Bab al-Sahira neighborhood, the Orphans Islamic Boys' High School in the old city, Al Fatat al Laji'a High School in East Jerusalem in Bab al-Sahira neighborhood, and Al Ma'muniya Girls' School in East Jerusalem in Wad al Jozz neighborhood. Each of these schools is approximately 4-6 km away from the town. To complete their vocational and technical studies, students can also go to Sakhneen 'Atarot College and the Lutheran School in Beit Hanina.

There are some problems and obstacles facing the educational sector in Sur Baher, the most important are:

- The lack of means of transportation.
- The weak educational level of students.
- The distortion of curriculums by the Israeli government.

Health Sector

Sur Baher has some health care facilities and include 3 health care centers, all of which are affiliated with Israeli insurance companies (such as Maccabi, Clalit, and Meuhedet). These centers include general physicians and specialized physicians in most fields, a motherhood and childcare center, a medical laboratory, a radiology center and a physiotherapy center. There are also 5 private dental clinics in the town, 2 plastic surgery centers and 3 pharmacies. If the required health services are not available in the town, patients go to the main hospitals in east and west Jerusalem, including Hadassah (Al 'Isawiya and Ein Karem), Augusta Victoria (Al Mutla'), Al Dajani, Red Crescent, Al Makassed, and Saint Joseph hospitals. These hospitals are between 8 and 22 km away from the town (The Union of the Charitable Societies - Jerusalem (UCS) and ARIJ database, 2019).

There are some problems and obstacles facing the health sector in Sur Baher town, the most important are:

- The lack of an ambulance.
- The lack of a nearby hospitals.
- The existence of flying/partial checkpoints.

Agriculture and Land Use Sector

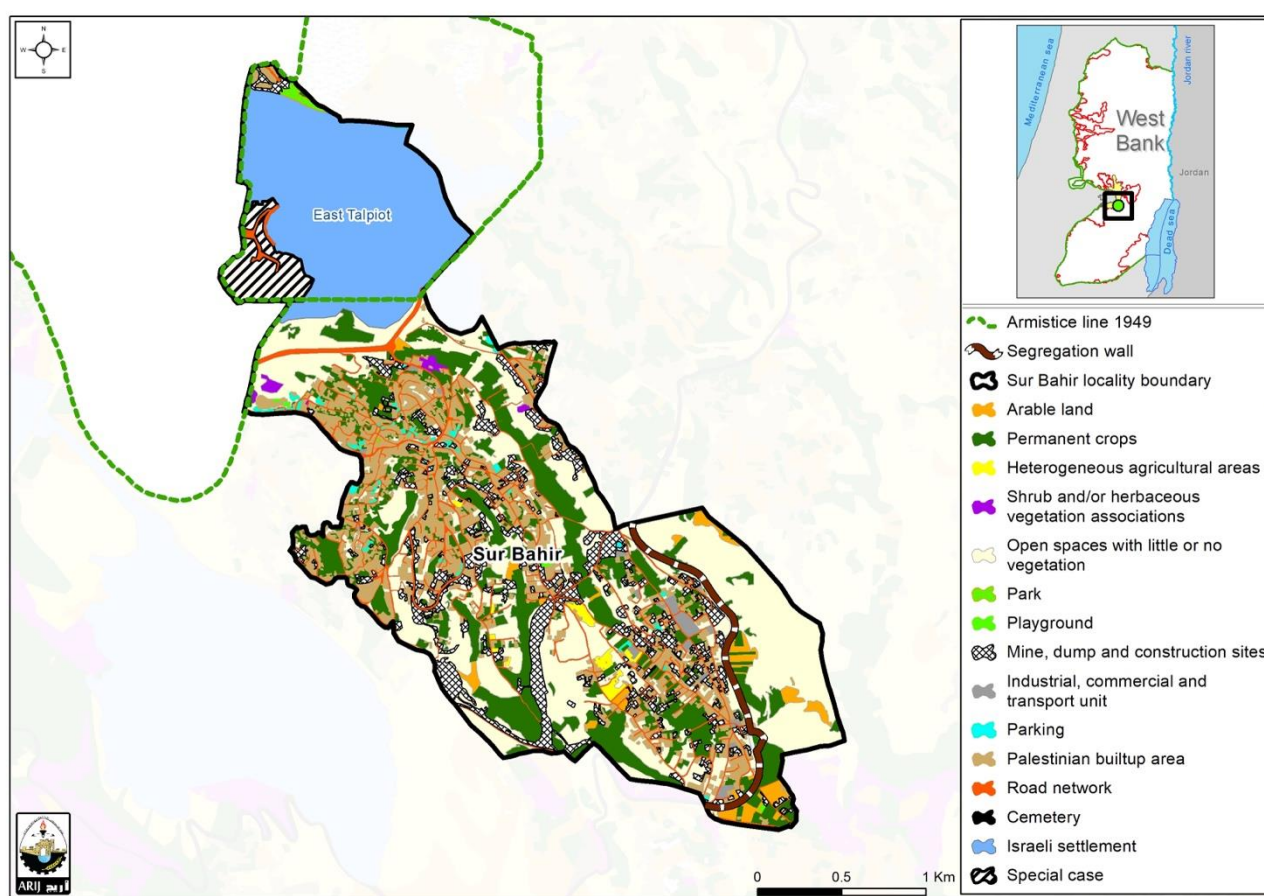
The area of Sur Baher is approximately 6,947 dunums, of which 1,411 dunums are arable lands and 1,038 dunums are residential lands (see table 2 and map 3).

Table 2: Land use in the town of Sur Baher for the year 2019 (area in dunums)

Total area	Residential land area	Agricultural area (737)				Inland water	Forests	Open Spaces	Industrial and commercial area	Area of settlements, military bases and wall zone	Private Area
		Permanent crops	Green - houses	Range -land	Arable lands						
6,947	1,038	1,225	0	57	129	0	0	2,012	1,154	884	447

Source: Geographical Information Systems Unit - ARIJ, 2019

Map 3: Land use and the route of the Apartheid Wall in Sur Baher



Source: Geographical Information Systems Unit - ARIJ, 2019

Institutions and Services Sector

There are few public institutions in Sur Baher, including a branch post office. However, there are several local institutions and associations that provide services to the various groups of the society and in several cultural, sports and other fields. These institutions include:

- **Sur Baher Youth Club:** A sports center founded through support and contributions from town residents. The club provides cultural, sports, and artistic activities.

- The Islamic Club: A sports center founded through support and contributions from town residents. The club provides cultural, sports, and artistic activities.
- Endowments Zakat Fund Committee: Provides religious services, consultancies and cultural services.

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

1. Water and Waste water

The Gihon Company Ltd is the company that deals with the distribution of drinking water and the sewerage system in all Jerusalem. As these communities extend beyond the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, they are cut from the rest of the West Bank from a Separation Barrier and Gihon is responsible also for them. The Israeli company manages network maintenance and extension, water pipes setting up.

Despite all communities within the Israeli-defined municipal boundaries are entitled to access full and equal services provided by the Jerusalem Municipality, in East Jerusalem the difficulty in obtaining housing permits has at times resulted in the illegal construction of buildings for which services such as access to public networks of drinking water and sewerage has not always been possible. The problems with the water and wastewater infrastructure create an unhealthy environment and expose the residents to infections and illness.

Gihon Company has made significant efforts over recent years to develop water and sewage network in several East Jerusalem communities.

Due to the lack of accessible information, it was not possible to fully collect data on water and waste water system in Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba. However, the status of water and waste water service will be described on the basis of the most accurate and up-to-date information available.

1.1 Water

In Israel water sources are managed by the Israeli Mekorot Company. Mekorot has recently completed the largest water tunnel in Israel – almost 14 kilometres – from Sorek to Jerusalem that brings desalinated drinking water to the municipality of Jerusalem¹. As it has been already mentioned above, Gihon Company is in charge of the drinking water distribution in Jerusalem and accordingly it is also responsible for providing these services to the community of Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba.

In 2015 in East Jerusalem, only 64% of the household were officially connected to the water network².

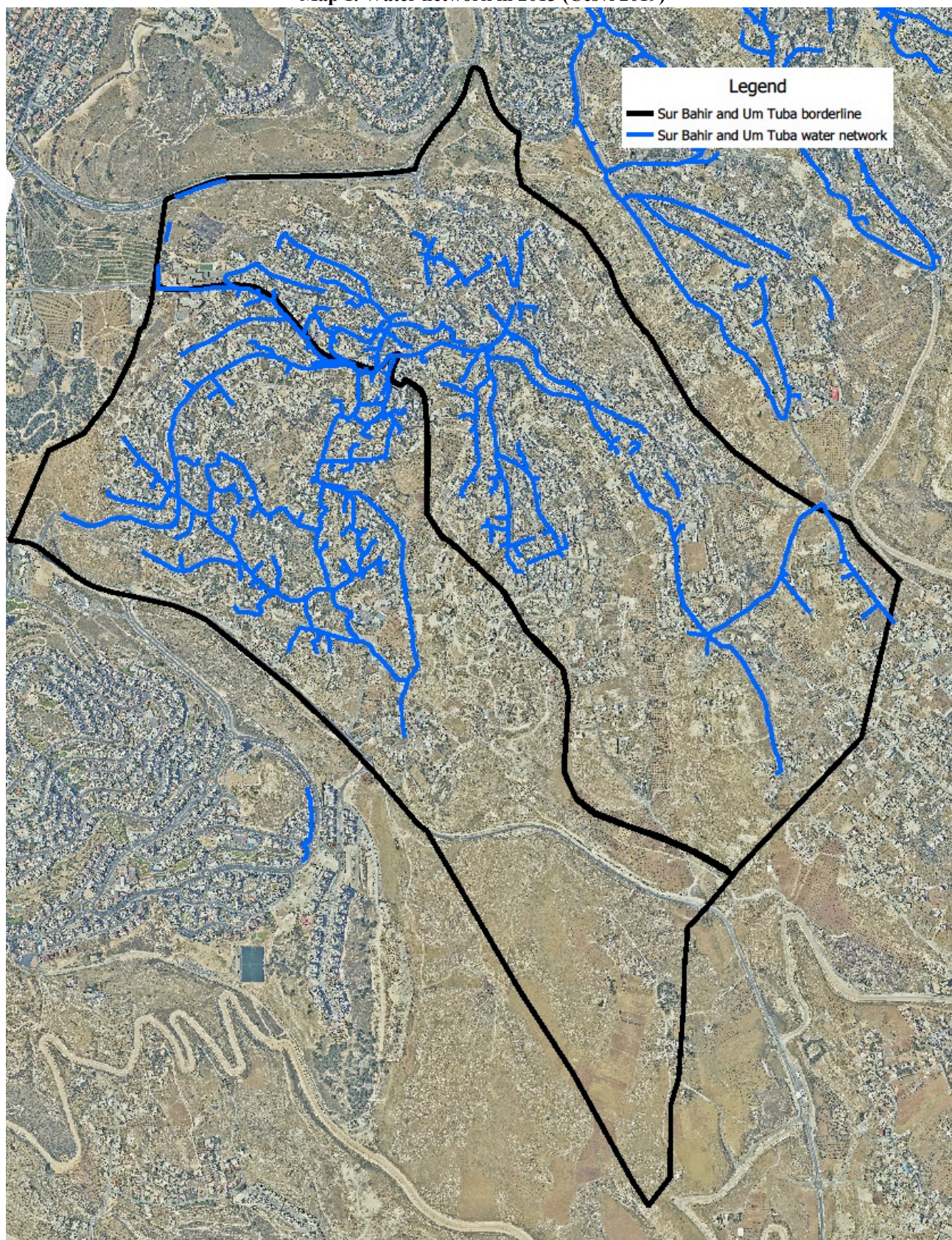
The water distribution network in 2013 covered approximately 2/3 of the target area and it was mostly extended in the north. It extends along the areas with more housing units and therefore more

¹ The Jerusalem Post, , <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/using-israeli-technology-to-live-in-a-water-stressed-world-627227> , May 2020

² Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), <https://www.english.acri.org.il/east-jerusalem-2019>, May 2015

populated. Currently, according to the information provided by the Community Centre, responsible for both communities, 95% of the HHs is officially connected to the water network (**Map 1.**).

Map 1. Water network in 2013 (Cesvi 2019)



Despite officially the average water consumption per capita per day in Jerusalem seems to be 0.21 m³, not less than the “minimum water required sustaining a healthy life per capita per day” established by the World Health Organization, corresponding to 0.1 m³, in East Jerusalem the water supply per capita appeared to be 55% of the WHO minimum standard⁴. Unfortunately, exhaustive data concerning water availability and consumption in Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba community are not available in this regard.

As regards municipal water service fees, Gihon Corporation considers as a standard value the consumption of 3.5 m³ of water per person per month, considering a minimum of 2 people per housing unit. In applying this principle, it sets the lowest rate for drinking water and sewerage network connection service at 7.385 NIS/m³. For any amount exceeding 3.5 m³/per person per month, the rate is up to 13.461 NIS/m³. With regard to different consumption (trade, industry, craft, business, institutions, hospitals and other services), Gihon set a rate range which may differ according to water quantity consumed (water and sewer), from 10.998 to 13.461 NIS/m³. If drinking water and sewerage connection services are provided separately by Gihon, the basic rate for each of them varies between 1.170 and 9.368 NIS/m³ for the first and between 2.832 and 3.184 NIS/m³ for the second, according to the cadastral category of the property and the water consumption. The cost of connecting to the network is particularly expensive and partly depends on the dwelling meters squares. The average size of the dwellings in the target communities ranges from 90 to 120 m² and the connection unit cost per m³ corresponds to 165 NIS. To this cost must also be added the cost of installing and supplying the water meter which corresponds to 3700 NIS (Sur Bahir Community Centre, 2020).

1.2 Waste water

In most of the Palestinian neighbourhoods, people use septic tanks, which are impermissible under the regulations of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Health. Installation of main sewage lines, to which dwellings can connect, is a service that the authorities’ most generally provides to residents. This is not the case of East Jerusalem, where residents, in the last years, were responsible for the installation of water and sewage lines. The high costs and the bureaucratic hardships have proven an obstacle for people to take advantage of the potential of building on their property⁵.

In the past decades, as concerns the sewerage in the communities of Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba, the municipal system operated only at the top of the hill. Most of the residents of Sur Bahir had to drain their sewerage into cesspits in the courtyards of their houses and they were exposed to health hazard as well as a danger to groundwater. Further, households not connected to the public network used to face high costs for digging and maintaining cesspits. Since 2009, Gihon Company began to work to extend the sewerage so that it would be possible to connect it to a new water purification facility. A

³ Jerusalem Institute for Policy research, 2016.

⁴ According to the WHO, the Minimum water required sustaining a healthy life per capita per day is 0.1 m³.

⁵ Bimkom, 2010

problem that emerged from the beginning of the work by Gihon Company concerned the large bills the residents started receiving even if most of the main lines have not been connected but just laid⁶.

Recently, the 2018 Gihon plan predicted to develop the sewer system through a line extension of about 11 km, with a diameter greater than 200 mm up to 300 mm. In 2019, the same company set out to extend about 15 km of lines with a diameter of more than 200 mm up to 300 mm⁷.

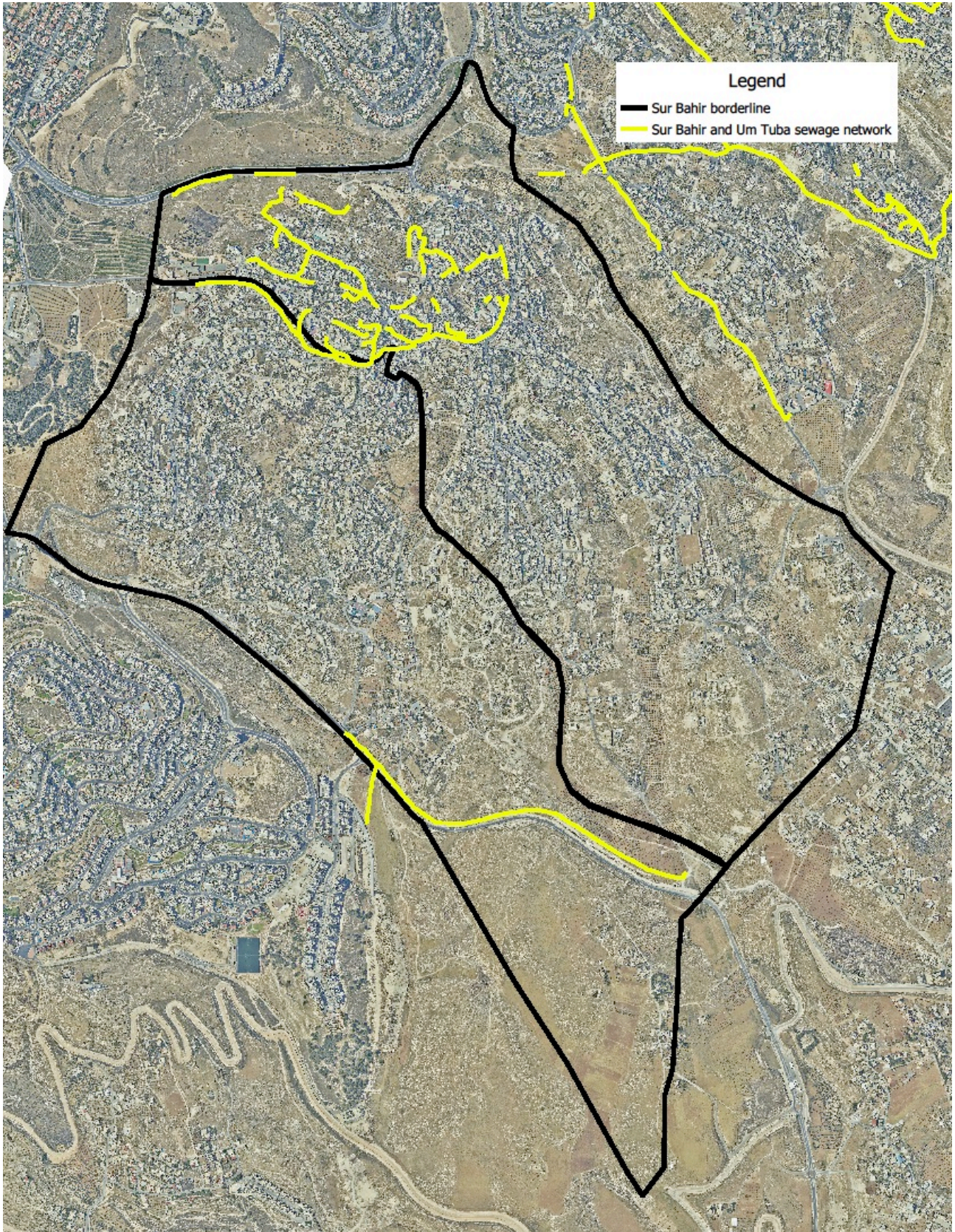
The data concerning the sewerage updated to 2013⁸ show a service almost non-existent, if not for the northern part of the community of Umm Tuba (**Map 2.**). Currently, 75% of the HHs is officially connected to the sewer network and it is expected to reach 100% shortly. It is assumed that the remaining 25% of the population still uses cesspits, even if no information regards cesspit emptying frequency and costs have been traced (Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba Community Centre, 2020).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Gihon Company, 2020.

⁸ ACRI, 2019

Map 2. Sewerage and network in 2013 (Cesvi 2019)



Further, no data were detected regarding the drainage line but a critical point was identified in the north of Umm Tuba through a field visit in the target area in 2019. The state of the point suggests that the poor presence of the street sweeping service may affect the proper functioning of the existing drainage network.

Picture 1. Drainage critical point



Regarding Gihon service fees, where the sewerage connection service is included in the drinking water supply service, the unit costs applied shall be those shown above. If drinking water and sewerage connection services are provided separately, the basic rate for the sewerage service varies between 2,832 and 3,184 NIS/cu.m, calculated based on the cadastral category of the property and the water consumption. The cost of connecting to the network is particularly expensive and it depends on the dwelling meters squares. According to average size of the dwellings in the target communities, the cost per dwelling is between 40000 and 60000 NIS (Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba Community Centre, 2020).

As far as waste water generation is concerned, no data has been found. However, it is well known that the waste water confers in the Waste Water Treatment Plan (WWTP) of Homat Shmuel, south of Jerusalem, capable of treating approximately an amount of 5,600 m³ of waste water per day. (**Map 3**)

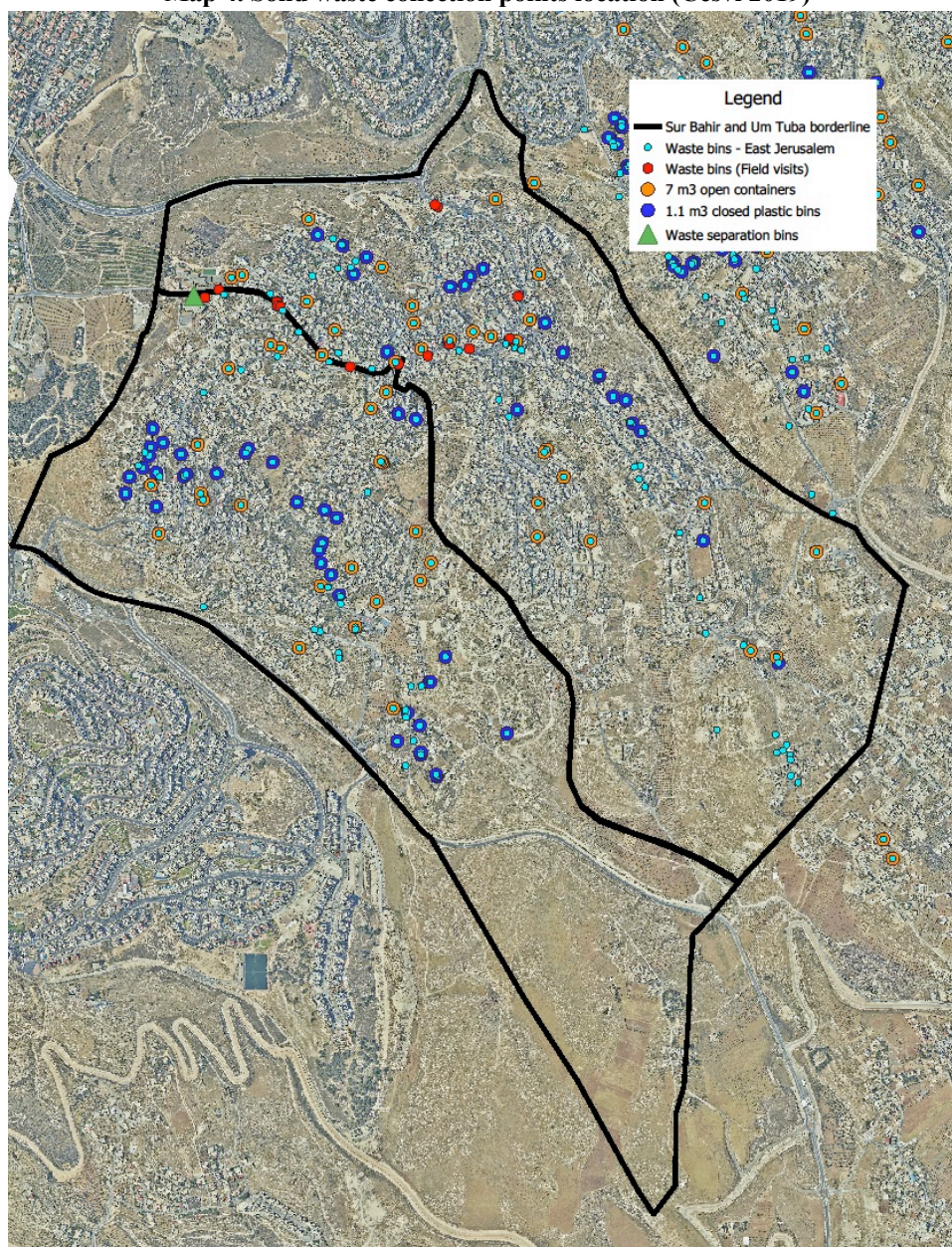
Map 3. WWTP location



2. Solid Waste

The Solid waste⁹ value chain in Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba is managed by the Jerusalem Municipality. Concerning the solid waste collection service coverage, solid waste bins and containers are distributed in various areas in a not equitable manner (**Map 4**). The distance between one and the other appear different depending on the zone and the service appears rather poor for the lack of containers and bins for long stretches along the lateral boundaries of the northern part. Through the information published by Jerusalem Municipality and filed visits, it was possible to trace the location of the solid waste collection points and the types of bins and containers. 120 collection points and 172 bins and containers have been identified.

Map 4. Solid waste collection points location (Cesvi 2019)



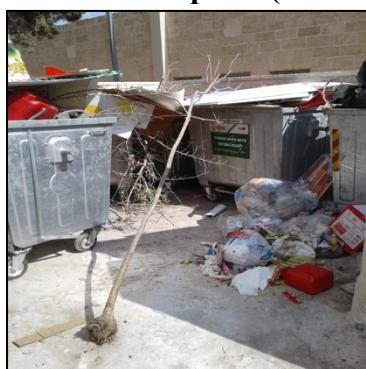
⁹ Waste that is not lost through illegal burning, burying or dumping in unofficial areas but delivered to an official treatment/disposal facility or to a recycling factory.

Table 3. Solid waste bins and containers

N. Collection points	Bin/container type	N. bins/containers	N.bins/containers for which NO collection frequency is detected	N.bins/containers for which collection frequency is detected	Waste density per bin/container (Kg)	Waste density per total bins/containers for which collection frequency is detected (Tons)
120	All types	172	34	138		153,500
60	1,1 m3 closed bins	100	26	74	275	27,500
60	7 m3 open containers	72	8	64	1750	126,000

Comparing the total number of bins and containers collection capacity (153.4 tons) with the amount of waste generated per day (44 tons)¹⁰, we can consider the system discretely efficient. On a scale of 0 to 1, which measures the total collection capacity based on the total number of bins and containers located in the community, we can measure the saturation level of the system based on the amount of waste daily generated by the community population. The system in the target communities presents a very low saturation level corresponding to 0,29 (**Figure 1.**). It can therefore be deduced that the system is capable of collecting a quantity of waste three times higher than that generated daily by the community. Consequently, a daily collection does not appear necessary. It is assumed that an emptying frequency of three times a week may be sufficient.

Picture 2. Collection point (1.1 m3 closed bins)



Picture 3. 7 m3 open containers



¹⁰ The average waste generation per day per capita in East Jerusalem is considered as 1.9 kg for 2018, according to the Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection.

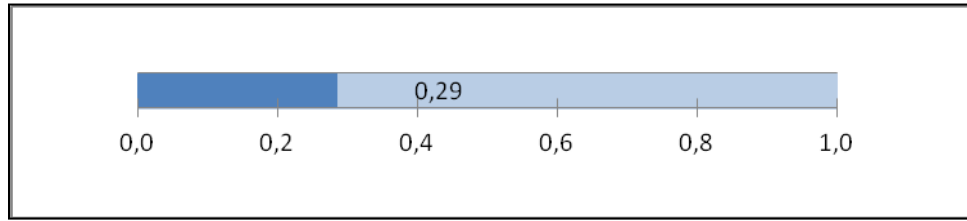
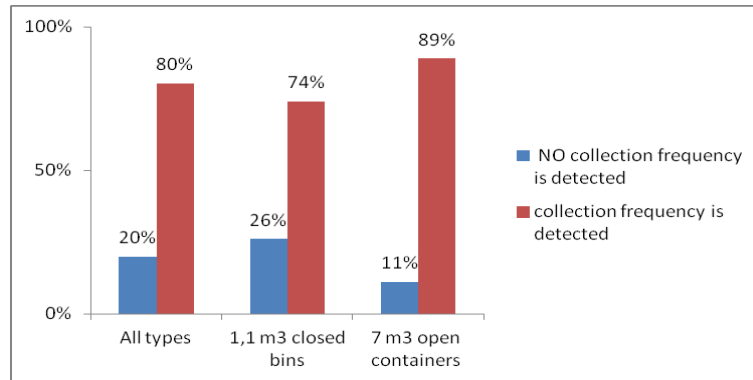


Figure 1. Saturation level of the solid waste system

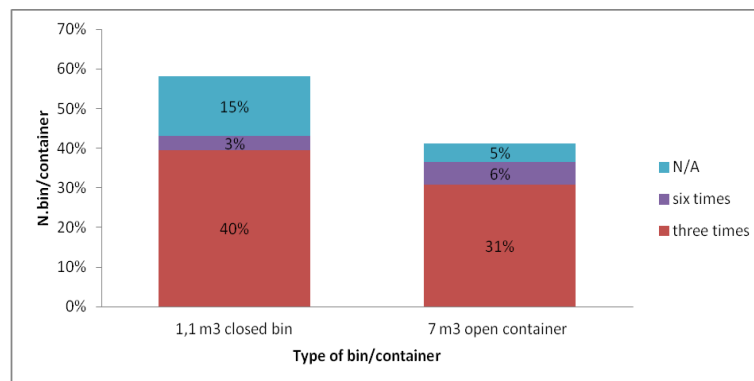
For most of the bins and containers, it was not possible to gather the data on the weekly emptying frequency (**Figure 2.**). Four compactors are used for the solid waste collection, shared with the communities of Al Sawahreh Al Gharbia and Jabal Al Mukabbir. For every collection day, each compactor collects the solid waste minimum twice and for each trip it is capable to collect between 10-12 tons (Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba Centre, 2020).

Figure 2. Detection of the weekly emptying frequency of bins and containers



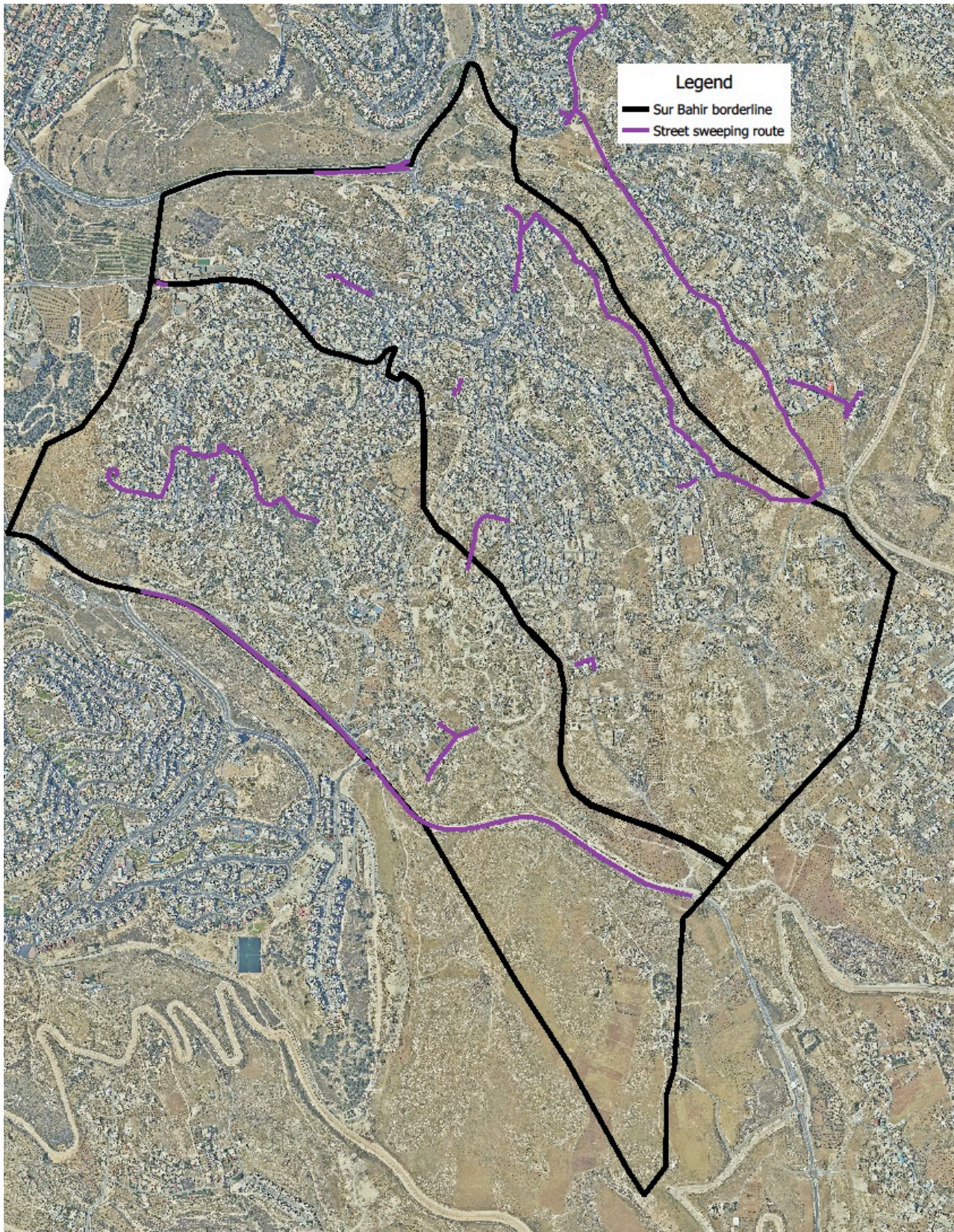
According to the data collected, it emerges that both bins and containers are mainly emptied daily while mainly three times a week (**Figure 3.**).

Figure 3. Weekly emptying frequency of bins and containers



The street sweeping service in the target area seems quite inefficient, according to the data of 2013, despite the population commitment to paying their taxes to the Municipality (**Map 5**). Definitely, the service is not guaranteed to all the areas where solid waste collection points are located (**Map 4**). Street cleaning and garbage removal generally took place only in some very few roads of the communities.

Map 5. Street sweeping service (Cesvi 2019)



The field visit, carried out in 2019, did not detect particularly critical solid waste collection points.

Picture 3. Cleanliness level around few solid waste collection points



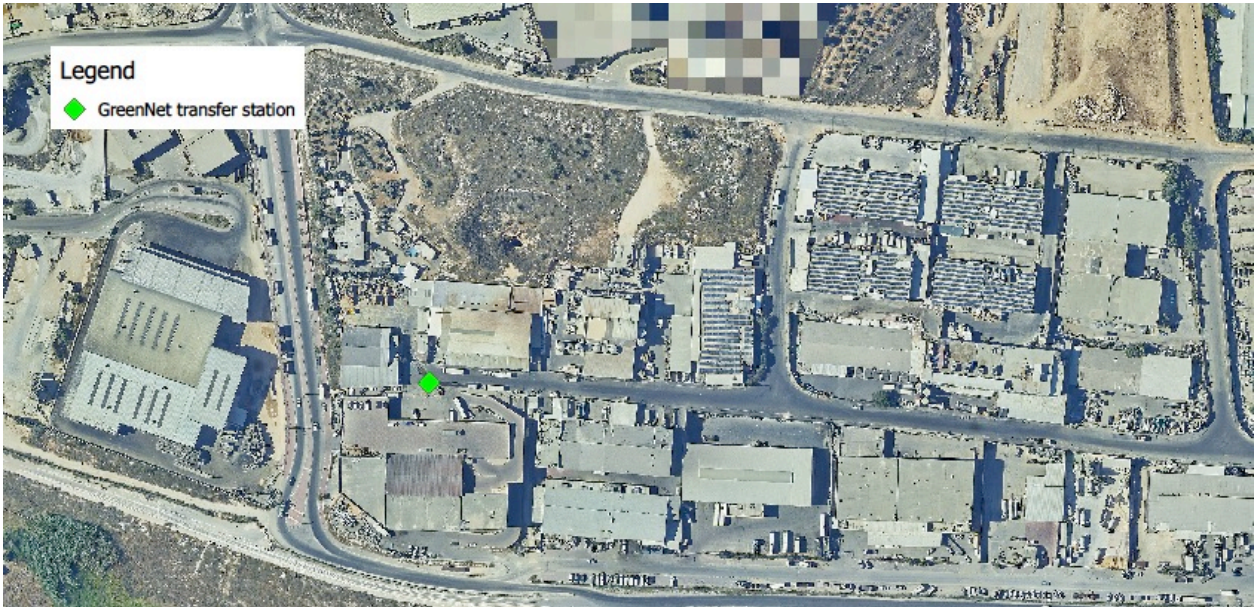
In the target area, a waste separation point was detected, near Ibn Rushd School (**Map 4**). No additional information was detected on this regard. Further, the clearance service of scrap and old furniture is not available as in other Jerusalem neighbourhoods, according to the information published by the Jerusalem Municipality.

The fee for the solid waste service is included in the Arnona, the annual expense that include all municipal services and it can be paid in instalments to Jerusalem Municipality. The Arnona is calculated upon the area where the housing unit is located and it depends on square meters of the accommodation and the category of the living area.

As for the waste disposal methods, no detailed information was found to describe this phase of the waste value chain, but the previous most used methods were burning and landfilling¹¹. Currently, Jerusalem solid waste is collected through Solid waste collection system, performed by the municipality and conveyed to GreenNet sorting facility in Atarot industrial area, north of the city of Jerusalem (Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba Community Centre, 2020). (**Map 6 and Map 6.1**)

¹¹ The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), Locality Profiles and Needs Assessment for Jerusalem Governorate, 2014.

Map 6. GreenNet transfer station



Map 6.1 GreenNet transfer station comparing to Qalandia airport



3. Household Survey

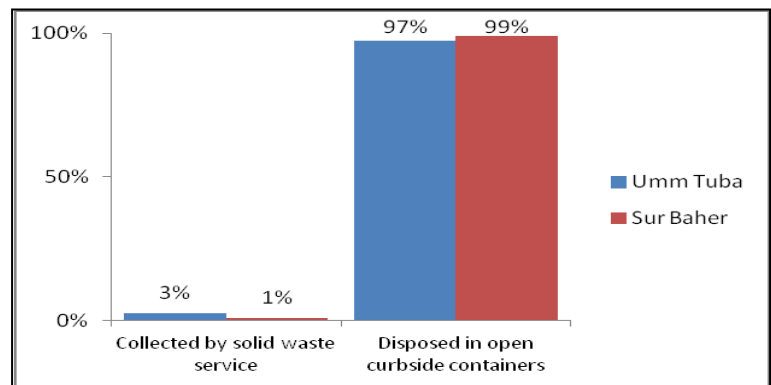
In 2019, the Union of Charitable Societies – Jerusalem, conducted a socio-economic survey that covered 19 residential communities in East Jerusalem, and the survey included 3,767 housing units. The results of the survey in Sur Bahir and Um Tuba, which included 333 housing units out of the total units surveyed in the survey, showed the following:

1. SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Solid waste disposal method

(Q: How do you usually dispose of solid waste?)

More than 95% of the respondents in both communities stated to dispose the solid waste in open curb side containers and just a restricted number declared to dispose the solid waste in closed curb side containers. The total number of the HHs interviewed uses the current collection service for the disposal of the domestic waste. Other methods like random or curbside disposal, burning or burying in small pits were not mentioned.

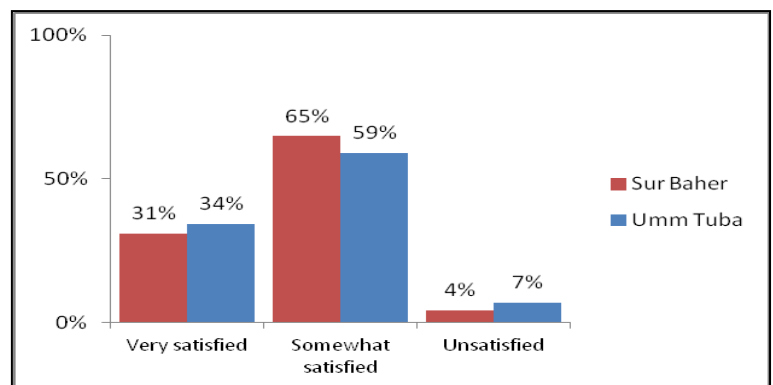


2. STREET SWEEPING

Satisfaction with curb side and streets sweeping

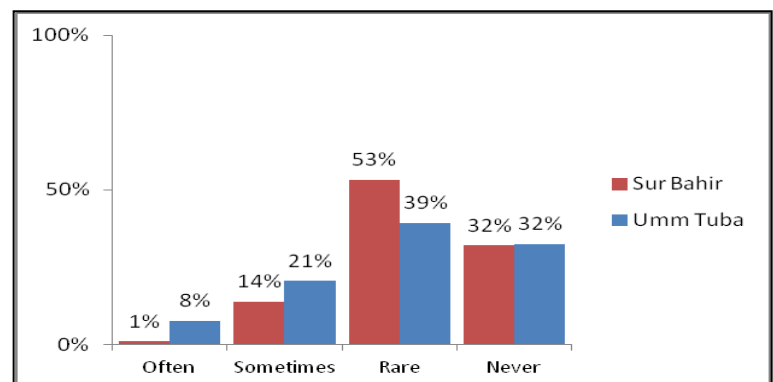
(Q: Are you satisfied with the Municipality efforts to keep the curbside and the neighborhood street clean?)

More than 90% of the people interviewed for both communities declared to be satisfy with the street sweeping service. Compared to information related to the previous years, which described the service as rather inefficient, it can be inferred that improvements have taken place at present.



Street uncleanness

(Q: Do you suffer from unclean street?)

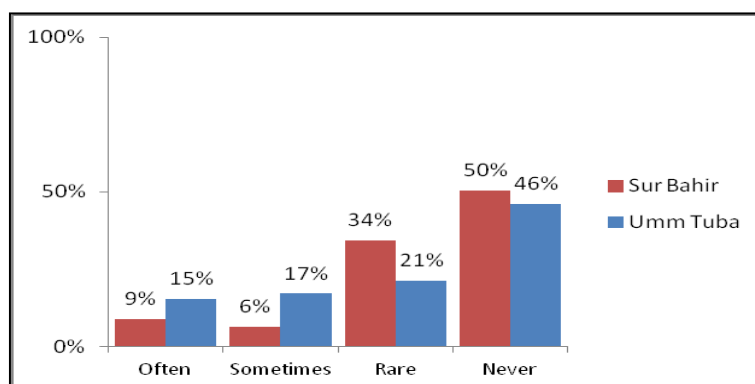


The data confirms the above assumption that street sweeping service seems to be quite efficient in both communities. Most of the respondents stated that they rarely suffer from unclean streets.

Outbreak of rodent population

(Q: Did you notice an outbreak of rodent population?)

As evidence of the above hypothesis, data shows that the communities are rarely or never affected by outbreak of rodent population, even if the community of Umm Tuba is more affected by this phenomenon.

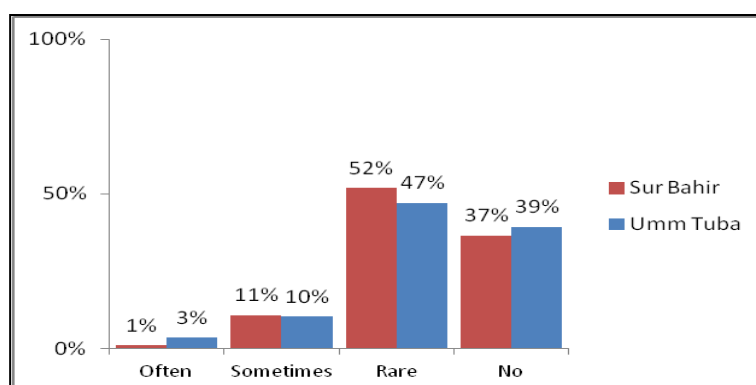


3. AIR POLLUTION

Bad odours emitted from solid waste near the house

(Q: Do you suffer from bad odours emitted from solid waste near your house?)

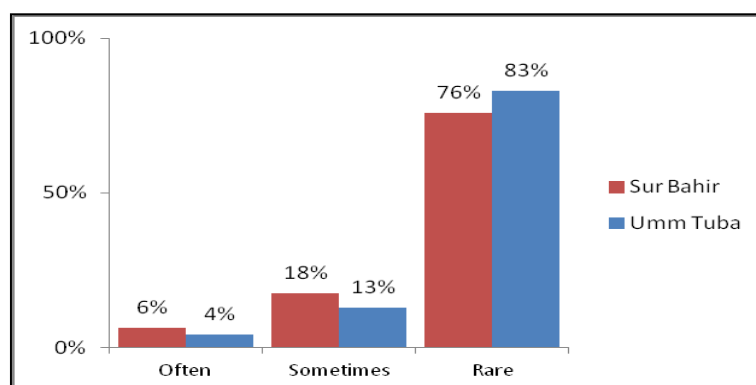
Regarding the emission of odours from solid waste, the two communities seem to have a very similar perception. However, this phenomenon does not seem to affect the community life.



Solid waste burning emissions/gases

(Q: Do you suffer from solid waste burning emissions/gases?)

Also, this figure can be considered as indicative of a good level of efficiency both of the waste collection system and of a related street sweeping service. Approximately 4/3 of the respondents of both communities stated to suffer rarely from solid waste burning emissions/gases.

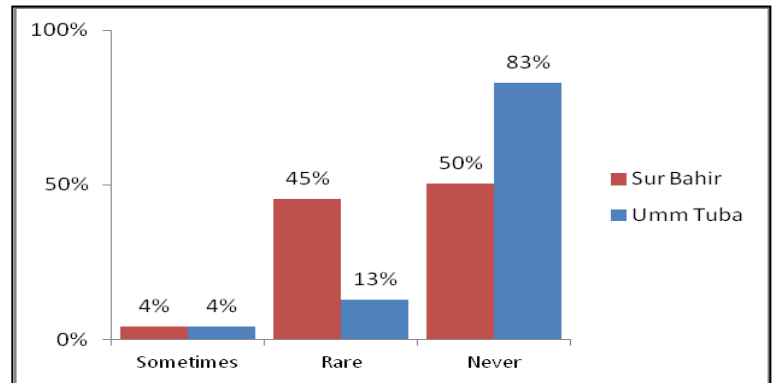


4. WASTE WATER

Wastewater overflowing

(Q: Do you suffer from overflowing wastewater?)

The data gathered in this case highlights that the phenomenon of the wastewater overflowing never occurs for most of the respondents in both communities. The most relevant figure is shown for the community of Umm Tuba for which it reaches 80% of the total respondents. The community of Sur Bahir appears more affected by wastewater overflowing, although rarely occurs.



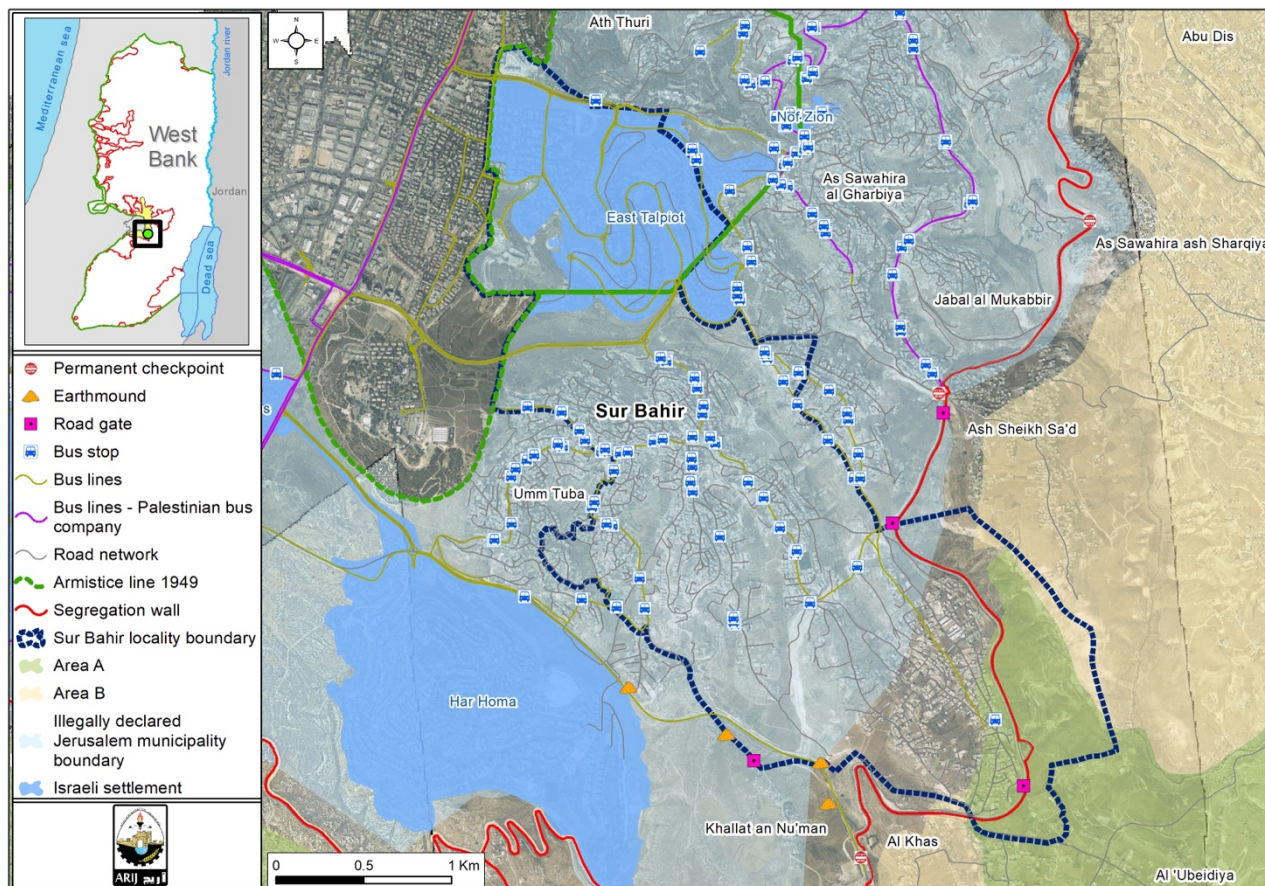
Electricity and Telecommunications

The town of Sur Baher has a public electricity network since 1950, and the Jerusalem District Electricity Company is considered to be the main source of electricity in the town. The percentage of housing units connected to the electricity network reaches 100%. The town also has a telephone network, which operates through an automated switchboard in Jerusalem municipality, and nearly 90% of the housing units are connected to this telephone network.

Transportation

In the town of Sur Baher, there are 55 stops designated for public transport, served by the bus transportation company in east Jerusalem, on Sur Baher - Jerusalem line (ARIJ database, 2019). As for the road network in the town, there are 63.5 km of paved roads. (ARIJ database, 2019).

Map 10: The road and transportation network in the town of Sur Bahir



Source: Geographical Information Systems Unit - ARIJ, 2020

The Geopolitical Status of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town

The majority of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town, which covers an area of 8,244 dunums is located under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality, which was illegally and unilaterally expanded in 1967 after the occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, in addition to Gaza Strip and other Arab lands. Jerusalem Governorate was divided into two main regions; J1 area which is located inside the borders and under the control of Jerusalem Municipality, and includes many Palestinian communities from the Old Town and Jerusalem City (Beit Al Maqdis), in addition to Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town which is located in J1's southern 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 Palestinian National Authority where the central part of the Governorate remains under Israeli Occupation control.

The area under the control of Jerusalem Municipality (inside J1) within Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town covers approximately 6,543 dunums (79% of town's total area), while the area outside the Municipality's control (J2) is nearly 1,701 dunums (21% of town's total area). Three quarters of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town's population is located in J1 area, whilst a small percentage is located outside the Municipality borders, in J2 area.

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 town of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba was not subjected to this classification, but remained as it was before this agreement under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality, except for an estimated area of 1,701 dunums (21% of town’s total area) located near Al Khas village in Bethlehem Governorate, an area known as Wadi Al Hummos area. This area remained outside the borders of Jerusalem Municipality and was subjected to Oslo II Interim Agreement land classification system. This part was divided into areas “A”, “B” and “C”. Approximately 773 dunums (45% of J2 area in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba) were classified as area “A” where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) holds all responsibilities for internal security and Public order. 118 dunums (7% of J2 area in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba) were classified as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority has a complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overridden responsibility for security. An area constituting 810 dunums (48% of J2 area in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba) were classified as area “C”, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory (Table 4). In area “C” Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through the consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. It is worth mentioning that most of lands lying within area “C” in Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba are classified as Palestinian built-up areas, agricultural areas and open spaces.

Table 4: The Geopolitical Divisions of (J2 area) in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town according to Oslo II Agreement 1995 – Jerusalem Governorate

Classification	Area in dunums	Percent from Total town area
Area A	773	45
Area B	118	7
Area C	810	48
Nature Reserve	0	0
Total	1,701	100

Source: ARIJ, 2020

The effect of Israeli Occupation Practices on Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town

Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town has been subjected to a number of Israeli confiscations for the benefit of the various Israeli projects, represented in the construction of Israeli settlements and bypass roads on the town’s land and its surroundings, in addition to the construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall and the building of new settlement projects. That which follows is a breakdown of the Israeli confiscations of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town lands:

During the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli government confiscated 1,160 dunums in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town (14% of the total town’s area) to establish two Israeli settlements: “East Talpiot” and to the north and “Har Homa” to the south-west. Almost 39,000 Israeli settlers live in these two settlements, (ARIJ, 2018). Table 5

Table 5: Israeli Settlements constructed on Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba lands

Settlement Name	Year of construction	Area confiscated from Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba (dunums)	Population of settlers (2009)
East Talpiot	1973	809	14,970
Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa)	1997	351	23,930
Total		1,160	38,900

Source: ARIJ-GIS Unit, 2020

Israeli settlement plans in Sur Baher and Um Tuba community

- Ramat Rachel settlement plan:** In the year 2008, the coalition of pro-Israel organizations in Jerusalem city in cooperation with the Environment Protection Company in occupied Jerusalem city published a new settlement plan, which calls on Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction to sanction a plan to build 4700 new housing units in the vicinity of Ramat Rachel, south of Jerusalem city, beyond the 1949 Green Line (Armistice Line); inside the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The plan aims to create physical and structural contiguity between occupied East Jerusalem settlements and Israeli settlements in West Jerusalem, which undoubtedly would hamper any future separation between the two sides and undermine the possibility of developing Palestinian urban expansion in the city of Jerusalem. In addition, the plan seeks to generate a Jewish majority in the city to alter its future. According to Israeli planners, the development plan of Kibbutz Ramat Rachel does not conflict with the Israeli municipal plan for South-East Jerusalem within the inclusive 'Jerusalem 2020' plan, which sanctions construction in the area of Kibbutz Ramat Rachel. The plan's total area covers 1558 dunums, of which 1,435 Dunums (92%) will incorporate the planned housing units, as for the remaining 317 Dunums; it is the current standing built-up area of Kibbutz Ramat Rachel. The Christian monastery of Mar Elias and the settlement of Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) stand at the proposed development area's south side. At the eastern side sets the Palestinian community of Sur-Baher and Um Tuba. To the north, stands Arnona neighborhood, Armon Hanetzv, and East Talpiot settlements. According to the Israeli planners, most of the targeted location for development (24 %) is a state land, which means that the land has been subject to confiscation from Palestinians under the Israeli **Absentee Property Law of 1950**. Table 6

Table 6: Land ownership of the land threatened due to the construction of the Ramat Rachel settlement

Land Ownership	Area – Dunums	% out of total area
State land	383	24
Jewish National Fund	816	51
Jerusalem Municipality	72	4.5
Jewish National Fund (Confiscated)	7	0.47
Private	137	8.6

Orthodox Patriarchate	96	6
No Data	75	4.7
Total	1588	100

Resource: sustainable-Jerusalem.org

The settlement plan as set by the Israeli planners is set to build 4690 housing units and a commercial center on 717 dunums, in addition to 250 hotel rooms and offices on an area of 31 Dunums. Furthermore, the plan is to include 352 dunums of parks and open space areas, and 56 dunums of roads.

The settlement plan endeavors represent the missing link, which in its turn will close off the gap in the belt of Israeli settlements along the southern side of occupied East Jerusalem. The planned construction of Kibbutz Ramat Rachel will work to connect the settlements of Abu Ghneim (Har Homa), Gilo, and Giv'at Hamatos with East Talpiot settlement. On the other hand, the planned Israeli construction at Kibbutz Ramat Rachel will lead to the separation and isolation of the Arab communities of Sur-Baher and Um-Tuba in East Jerusalem from their natural extension. Effectively, the development plan will form a physical barrier between the southern West Bank and East Jerusalem, which comes as a part of the overall Israeli plan to isolate Jerusalem from the West Bank and break the physical contiguity of the West Bank.

- **A new settlements former Defense Ministry:** In April 2018, Israeli bulldozers escorted by the Israeli occupation Police razed lands and uprooted dozens of olive trees from land farmed by Palestinians in the town of Sur Baher in occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli government claims to have seized the land from Sur Baher and Um Tuba community in the year 1970 for “public use,” but continued to allow land owners to farm the land; in 2012, the Israel Land Authority (ILA) submitted plans to build 180 residential units on the site for former “Defense Ministry employees” (whom the project is meant to serve).

Moreover, the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem confiscated lands in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town to construct a network of bypass Roads. Usually, building Israeli settlements is compounded by the construction of a series of bypass roads. These are built for the use of Israeli settlers in the first place, to link settlements to each other and with Israel. At the same time these roads "bypass" Palestinian communities, thus creating a physical separation between the Palestinian communities and Israeli settlements. A 75 meters "buffer zone" also cleared on either side of these roads results in the confiscation of vast tracts of Palestinian land. Often Palestinian houses are bulldozed in order to clear the land for the buffer zone. Palestinians are forbidden to use this land for cultivation or any kind of construction activity. Below is a description of the Israeli bypass roads that have been constructed on lands of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town and those planned to be constructed in the future

- **The Israeli bypass Road Number 398 (Existing):** This road branches from the Israeli bypass road No. 60, which connects Jerusalem with Bethlehem. It passes by Sur Baher and Um Tuba community from the south, Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) settlement from the northeast, and continues towards the southeast to connect with Za'tara bypass Road which was constructed on lands of Beit Sahour and Bethlehem communities as well as Za'atra, Ras-El Wad, Tekoa,

Al-Shwawreh and Al-Fureidis communities in the eastern part of Bethlehem city, according to the military order number 02/02/C. The road has been constructed following the establishment of Har Homa settlement to the south of Sur Baher and Um Tuba community in an attempt to ease settler's movement in the area between Jerusalem and the eastern Gush Etzion settlement bloc. and with Israel.

- **The American Road – the construction of a southern section of the "Eastern Ring" road** from the Sheikh Saad junction to the Al Mu'arabat Valley (Wadi Al Mu'arabat) junction in Bethlehem: the Israeli Transportation ministry along with Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Moriah company has completed the planning for a section of the Eastern Ring Road on lands of Sur Baher and Um Tuba community, to its east. Work on constructing the road commenced in May 2019, and is expected to finish by June 2021. This road section will allow the movement of settlers' vehicles and will act as a territorial link between the southern Jerusalem settlements and the Gush Etzion-east settlements with those inside the city of Jerusalem. The length of this section is about 2.5 km with average width of 14 m. The road project also includes the building of a bridge that will divert the movement of Palestinians on this road to a new one separate from that of the settlers despite the fact that the road is being constructed on hundreds of dunums of privately owned lands.
- **The "Asher Wiener" East road** - a complementary road to the northeast of Sur Baher and Um Tuba community - that will connect with the southern section of the Eastern Ring road being constructed on lands Sur Baher and Um Tuba. The Israeli Transportation ministry along with Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Moriah company has commenced the construction of this road section in June 2019 and is expected to finish by December 2021, on lands of Sur Baher and Um Tuba community. This section is a single-lane road that will include a 270-foot bridge and will act as an additional entrance to the community's citizens. Note that the road is set to act as an "alternative route" in the future for Palestinians living Sur Baher and Um Tuba community and communities nearby so that they won't have to use the southern section of the Eastern Ring Road (the under-construction road). The road will also create another territorial discontinuity with the nearby Um Al lison neighborhood (to the northeast of Sur Baher and Um Tuba). The road threatens hundreds of dunums of Palestinian Agricultural lands in the area.

The Segregation Wall's impact on Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town

The construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall has had a negative impact on Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town. According to the last amendment of the plan that was published on the webpage of the Israeli Occupation Ministry (30th April 2007), the Segregation Wall which extends for more than 2.2 km on the community's territory, isolates Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba lands from the remaining Palestinian territory in the West Bank. A total area of 7,407 dunums (90% of town's total area) has been isolated inside Jerusalem city by the Segregation Wall, while the remaining area of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town (837 dunums) is set on the Palestinian side of the wall and disconnected from the center of life in the town. The isolated lands contain Palestinian residential areas in the town (center

of life), agricultural areas, open spaces, illegal settlements constructed on the town's land, and others (Table 7).

Table 7: Land classification of areas isolated west of the segregation wall in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town - Jerusalem Governorate

No.	Land classification	Area (dunums)
1	Agricultural areas	2,532
2	Palestinian built-up area	1,964
3	Israeli settlements	1,160
4	Forests & Open spaces	1,539
5	Wall zone	39
6	Construction Sites	173
Total		7,407

Source: ARIJ, 2020

The Segregation Wall causes Suffering to Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town Residents

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, citizens of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba have lost their association with Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The Segregation Wall was constructed to isolate Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba and many other Jerusalemite neighboring towns from the Palestinian body. However, citizens of Jerusalem who hold the Jerusalemite identity (Blue Identity) can enter the West Bank areas through Israeli terminals. The crossing points often witness huge congestion and inspection from Israeli soldiers manning them, causing restrictions to Palestinian freedom of movement.

On the other hand, Palestinian citizens of the West Bank who hold the Palestinian Identity (Green Identity) are prohibited by the Segregation Wall from entering the city of Jerusalem and its surrounding towns. This cuts off West Bankers totally from Jerusalem and from health, education, social and economic services. In reality, this stops West Bank Palestinians from accessing hospitals, schools and medical centers, in addition to isolating them from their places of work in Jerusalem. Access to the city is only allowed for those with special Israeli permits that are rarely issued and citizens must pass through military checkpoints, where they are inspected on a daily-basis. This causes suffering to Palestinians through restricting their movements and dismantling family bonding and social interaction. This has caused the dispersal of many Palestinian families, especially couples where one partner holds a Palestinian identity (Green), and the other the Jerusalemite identity (Blue). Moreover, the Segregation Wall has prevented Palestinians from reaching places of worship in the Holy City and thus has deprived them from practicing religious rituals in Jerusalem.

Upon the Segregation Wall plan published on the webpage of the Israeli Ministry of Occupation in 2007, lands of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town became isolated from neighboring Palestinian towns and villages. The Segregation Wall, along with the settlement's belt around Jerusalem City has isolated East Jerusalem area from the rest of West Bank. Parallel to the establishment of the Segregation Wall, Israeli Occupation Authorities constructed a settlement belt around Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba, and around Jerusalem City, which aims at founding an isolation area, in addition to preventing urban expansion in Palestinian towns of Jerusalem. Israeli Authorities have constructed

these settlements close to urbanized areas in Jerusalemite towns, which has led to an increase in the total area confiscated in these towns, and has minimized the area available for future urban expansion. This move will create a new reality on the town residents that will be difficult to reverse. These 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 to urban expansion and forced residents to adopt internal and vertical expansion. The city of Jerusalem and its surrounding towns are considered to have one of the highest population densities all over the world. The population density in the Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is approximately 13,517 person/ km² compared to 16,000 person/ km² in settlements of Eastern Jerusalem.

The Dilemma of Lands and Building's Licenses in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town

1. Inside Jerusalem Municipality Boundary

The problems associated with lands and building's license is considered one of the most difficult problems in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town. The reason for this is two-fold; the high prices of lands and the very high cost of licenses for construction in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba due to its strategic proximity to the Old City and Al-Aqsa Mosque. This has made it an important target for Judization and colonization, in addition to restrictions related to buildings' licenses imposed by Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem. According to citizens of Jerusalem, land prices (one dunum) in occupied East Jerusalem, most specifically lands located within the illegally and unilaterally expanded borders of the Jerusalem municipality, -which is rarely available- is relatively higher than land located outside the borders of the municipality, and are even doubled in places closer to the city center.

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem has used the money as an effective instrument to take over Palestinian lands in occupied East Jerusalem for enormous prices and 'Judaize' these lands by implanting Jewish settlers in the city. Israeli settler organizations offer Palestinians unlimited prices for such lands and houses especially in the city center and its neighborhoods. For anyone in Jerusalem who has a land and wants to build a house, or additional land, has to take authorization and permission from the Municipality of Jerusalem which puts obstacles in the way of Palestinians who want to get a license for the building 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 that comes in the way of obtaining a building license is that one has to prove the ownership of the land. The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem requires that Palestinians seeking to build a house/structure, must prove their ownership of the land, which is considered a political problem related to the occupation since 1967. According to a report prepared by Bimkom Organization (Planners for Planning Rights), approximately 50% of the East Jerusalem lands 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 and include 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 town of Sur Baher and Um Tuba town, any Palestinian applying to the Israeli Authorities to get a building license, the licensing procedure is lengthy (sometimes lasting years) and carries a very high cost depending on the land area and type of building, and ranges between NIS 150,000-300,000. Moreover, due to the high cost imposed on Palestinians acquiring building permits and the Israeli lengthy licensing procedures, Palestinians tend to build without waiting for the Municipality's license approval, to meet their housing needs. Because of the political problem of land registration and ownership, the unreasonable prices of licenses, in addition to the lengthy time it takes to secure licenses many citizens because of humanitarian needs and the natural family growth resort to building without licenses. In this case, the Jerusalem Municipality usually demolish the property and force the Palestinian owner to pay for his own demolition and submit for a new building application with new fees and time procedure. On top of this, the majority of Palestinian people 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 the Palestinians, thus preventing them from reaching their work places. These Israeli restrictions and harassments against the Palestinians in occupied east Jerusalem, along with the housing problems, lack of lands for building and increase of unemployment rate, force many Jerusalemites to migrate outside the borders of the Municipality towards the West Bank or even travel abroad to find a better living standard.

Furthermore, the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem often does not prepare the needed Master Plans for the Palestinian communities in occupied East Jerusalem, which are necessary for the urban planning process. In cases when the Municipality prepares master plans for Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem, it usually put restrictions and give limited percentages of areas designated for Palestinian urban expansion, which are below the needed percentages for natural urban growth, which is 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%-120%. In Sur Baher and Um Tuba town for example, the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem determined the urban growth percentage to be 35%-50%, whereas the neighboring settlement of Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) which part of it was illegally constructed on the land of Sur Baher and Um Tuba town, covers a percentage of 90%-120% (CCJ, 2009).

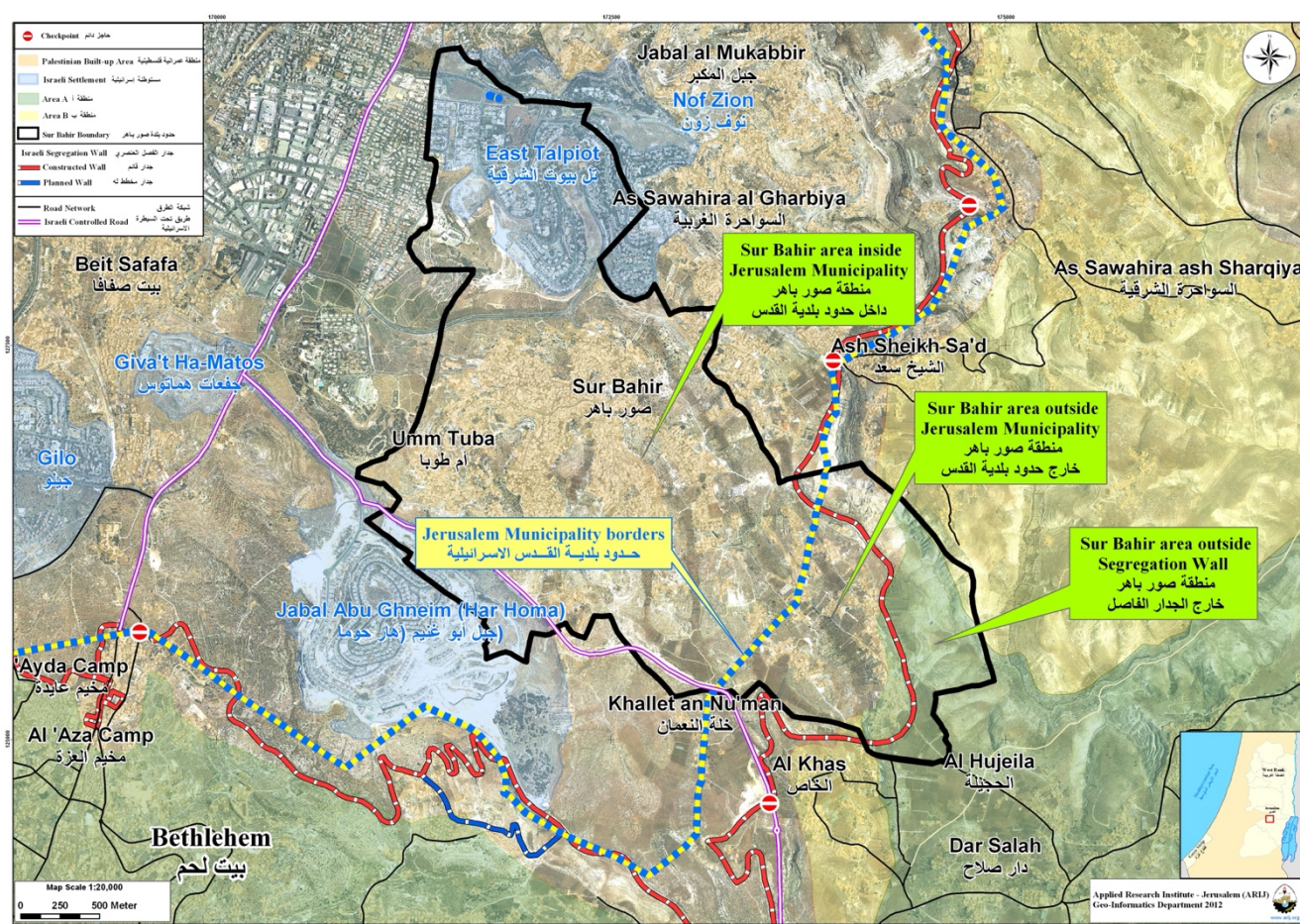
It should be noted that the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality has classified some areas within its boundaries including areas in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba as "Green Areas." The Israeli Occupation Authorities (IOA) have used this classification as a way of controlling and confiscating more Palestinian lands in the town. Moreover, the IOA demolished houses in Jerusalem under the claim that these houses were built on "Green Areas", as seen in the ethnic cleansing process in "Al Bustan Neighborhood" in Silwan. The targeting of Al Bustan came after the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem announced on February 20, 2009 a plan to relocate more than 1,500 Palestinian citizens living in the 88 houses comprising Al Bustan neighborhood to an alternative location. The Municipality plans to demolish the 88 houses to establish the "King David Garden" as part of the "Biblical Gardens" around the Holy City. Also, the Israeli Authorities under the name of "Green Areas" have built many settlements in Jerusalem, such as Reches Shu'fat (Ramat Shlomo) in the no,

and Jabal abu Ghneim (Har Homa) in the south. One must also note that some areas within Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town and which are classified as “Green Areas,” will remain captive of the Israeli future settlement plans in Jerusalem city and surroundings.

2. “Area C” classifications (Oslo II Agreement)

An estimated 1,701 dunums (21% of town’s total area) of Sur Bahir & Um town is located outside the boundary of Jerusalem Municipality (J2) and is subjected to the Oslo II Agreement classification system. 810 dunums (48% of the town’s total area) have been classified as “Area C” outside the Municipality, which includes most of the town’s citizens who are living outside the Municipality borders. This area faces same problems of obtaining licenses for building from the Israeli Civil Administration, the military unit responsible for implementing **Israel's civilian** policy in the occupied West Bank.

However, the area which is not under the control of Jerusalem Municipality has a lower cost of authorization (license) for building, than Municipality controlled areas within Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba. According to a number of citizens, the cost reaches approximately 10,000 NIS. However, obtaining a license is a complicated procedure, and the Israeli Civil Administration puts restrictions in the way of those wishing to have a license. (Map 1).



3. Areas under Palestinian National Authority Control (A & B):

The Segregation Wall has isolated 7373 (89% of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba lands inside Jerusalem city, leaving an area of 871 dunums (11% of town's total area) outside of the segregated area within the West Bank. This area is near to Al Khas village in Bethlehem Governorate, namely Wadi Al Hummos neighborhood. An estimated 891 dunums of this area is located under Palestinian Authority control (A & B) which includes classified; rugged areas, open spaces, and a small part of agricultural area, with no Palestinian built-up areas because of the difficult topography.

Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba represents a rare case in the Palestinian segregation plan as part of the segregated area is classified as Area A (Oslo Accords II). Israeli Authorities usually annex areas that are under their control or partial control (Areas B and C). This segregated region covers an estimated area of 773 dunums. According to both the Oslo Agreement which was signed between the PLO and Israel, and according to the laws of building's licenses currently in force in West Bank areas, this area is under the Palestinian Authorities' (PA) administrative and security control. Consequently, the PA has the responsibility of authorizing license of building in this area. However, despite this legally binding scenario, Israeli Occupation Authorities do not recognize this authorization, as demonstrated by the demolition orders they have recently issued for some buildings within this area, because of their proximity to the Segregation Wall.

The right of adequate housing is considered one of the most prominent rights asserted in charters and international treaties and in International Humanitarian law, which calls for the respect of human dignity and the right of adequate housing. However, the Israeli state –through their aggression against the Palestinian human rights- classifies itself to be above such laws and standards.

Wadi el-Hummus Another Palestinian Humanitarian Tragedy on Live Camera

At the breaking dawn of July 22, 2019, dozens of Israeli bulldozers escorted by hundreds of Israeli border police and Israeli municipality staff members stormed Wadi el-Hummus, a neighborhood south of Sur Bahir and Um Tuba communities, southeast of Jerusalem, to execute demolition orders of 16 buildings holding 700 apartments that accommodate some 500 Palestinians. The targeted buildings are located within areas "A" (9 buildings) and "B" (7 buildings), which, according to the signed Oslo Accords of 1995 gives the Palestinians total rights to construct and inhabit the areas without any interference from the Israeli side. Today's; (July 22) demolitions included 9 buildings located in the area "A" and 5 buildings in area "B" and 2 buildings in area "C". The Army demolition squad has initiated preparation to demolish 8 buildings of the total 16 targeted for the demolition; yet, they carried out **five** demolitions (52 apartments) today (July 22) including one action using explosives. The Israel High Court of "Justice" confirmed a previous ruling to demolish the targeted buildings last June (22) and dismissed a petition by Palestinian residents requesting the cancellation of the demolition order. The Palestinians refused the Israeli pretext of security concerns (for location within the buffer zone of the denounced and illegally stamped segregation wall); exclaiming that it is only a pretext to push the Palestinians out of Jerusalem in the service of a political agenda aiming to demographically diminish the Palestinians existence in Jerusalem.

Palestinians added that it is nearly impossible to receive construction permits from the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem, which forces many Palestinians to build on their own in order to cope with their population growth, or leave the city, which put their residency at risk as Israel consider Palestinian Jerusalemites living outside the Israeli defined boundary of the city no longer residents of Jerusalem. It's worth mentioning that the Israeli ministry of interior has revoked the residency right of more than 14,800 Palestinians since the year 2000 for living outside the Israeli defined Jerusalem city border.

The Municipal Tax (Arnona) negatively affects the living status and economic situation of Palestinians in Jerusalem

The Municipal tax, is named in Hebrew as “Arnona” is imposed by the Jerusalem Municipality on the holders of buildings and lands in Jerusalem. This tax is considered one of the greatest burdens on Palestinian residents of the city, including the residents of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town. The Israeli Authorities use this tax as an instrument to put pressure on Palestinians to force them to leave the city.

The “Arnona” tax imposed on Jerusalemites, is calculated based on a criteria, which takes in 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 additionally take in 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 for the municipality. For example, the tax tariff in the residential areas varies in the four zones between 35-98 NIS/m² which is equivalent to approximately 10-25 US\$/m². This means that a small house (apartment) with an area of 100-150 m² will cost his owner 3,000-10,000 NIS a year. This is equivalent to approximately 800-3,000 US\$. For commercial shops, the tax imposed by the municipality is folded, which affect the economic activity as these taxes force the merchants to increase prices. The tax tariff for the commercial shops varies between 309-319 NIS/m² depending on the area of the shop which is equivalent to approximately 80 US\$/m². In addition to the taxation on the residential and commercial areas, the Municipality imposes taxes on worship places, agricultural areas, schools, kindergartens, elderly homes and others.

In terms of economic impact, the segregation plan, which 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 particularly, which has suffered from global recession. Much of the trade in Jerusalem is largely dependent on the Palestinian visitors of the Holy City from the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Palestinians from the occupied land in 1948, but Israeli closure of the city has negatively affected residents' economic situation. Despite these difficult situations, the Occupation Authorities impose taxes without taking into consideration the situation of the Jerusalemites, who represent the poorer class in the Holy City.

It is further noted that in the case of Jerusalem, the 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 more than planning for the purposes of prosperity and well-being of its citizens. Furthermore, the Palestinian communities in Jerusalem are deliberately neglected in the different services provision. For instance, the Municipality rarely makes the needed maintenance for the infrastructure of Arab neighborhoods, including; roads, water and waste water networks, solid wastes and others. A notable problem that the people of Jerusalem suffer is the lack of cleaning service and the accumulation of solid wastes despite their commitment in paying the taxes for the Municipality. This can be easily understood if we compare the situation of the Palestinians in Jerusalem with the situation of the settlers living in settlements in the city who get all the facilities and services in order to encourage them to stay in the Holy City, while Palestinians live in poor conditions and lack services and rights that they should receive in return for paying the tax.

Mazmura Terminal near Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba:

On the southern entrance of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba, Israel established Mazmura terminal (previously known as An Nu'man checkpoint) which was constructed on lands of Al Khas and An Nu'man villages in Bethlehem Governorate, nearby to Sur Bahir and Umm Tuba. This terminal completed the Israeli segregation plan to separate Jerusalem towns including Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba from Bethlehem. After the construction of the segregation wall and these barriers, interaction between this town and Bethlehem city became difficult especially for people holding the Palestinian identity (Green Identity Card) who cannot reach the isolated towns within Jerusalem city.

The establishment of this terminal dates back to 2003, when Israeli Occupation Authorities handed residents of Al Khas and An Nu'man a detailed map of a terminal to be established in the area, in addition to a military base to protect the terminal and the Segregation Wall. The terminal occupies an area of 84 dunums of lands isolated behind the wall. The map additionally showed an Israeli bypass road near the wall to connect the terminal and the military base with settlements in Jerusalem and those in the east and north of the city. When Israeli bulldozers attacked the villages and started the implementation of the plan, residents of the two villages submitted their objections regarding these plans to the Israeli Higher Court of Justice, which obstructed the implementation of the project until the first quarter of 2005. On the 3rd September 2005, Israeli Occupation Forces handed residents of Al Khas and An Nu'man four Israeli military orders holding numbers; 156/05/T, 155/05/T, 154/05/T and 52/05. These informed residents that 43 dunums of An Nu'man and Beit Sahour lands in Bethlehem Governorate will be confiscated to construct a trade passage. Later in 2007, Israeli Occupation Forces handed new military orders holding numbers 31/07/T and 02/07/S to confiscate 25 dunums from Beit Sahour and Bethlehem, for military purposes and for the expansion of the terminal.

Israeli Military Orders Issued in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba Town

Israeli Occupation Authorities have issued a set of military orders to confiscate lands in Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba town for different military purposes. The following are some of the main orders issued:

1. Israeli military order no. 22/03/T: Issued on the 12th August 2003 to confiscate 173.4 dunums of lands from Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba, Ash Shayyah and As Sawahira al Gharbiya, for the construction of the Segregation Wall.
2. Israeli military order no. 23/03/T: Issued on the 24th August 2003 to confiscate 19 dunums from lands of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba for the construction of the Segregation Wall.
3. Israeli military order no. 47/03/T: Issued on the 22nd July 2003 to confiscate 1.5 dunums from lands of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba for military purposes.
4. Israeli military order no. 03/47/T (EXTENSION 3): Issued on the 9th of September 2014 for military uses where 66.7 dunums from lands of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba were targeted. The order is an extension to a previously issued military order.
5. Israeli military order no.03/49/T (AMENDMENT 3 & EXTENSION 4): Issued on the 9th of September 2014 for military uses where 104.3 dunums from lands of Sur Bahir & Umm Tuba and Bethlehem Governorate were targeted. The order is an extension to a previously issued military order.

Town Development Priorities and Needs

Sur Bahir suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 8 shows the development priorities and needs in the town according to the Development Committee's feedback

Table 8: Development priorities and needs in Sur Bahir

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
Infrastructural Needs					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads		1		
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks				
3	Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas				
4	Construction of New Water Networks				
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs				
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs				
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network				
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network				
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection				
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste				
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill				
Health Needs					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres		1		

2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres				
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools				
Educational Needs					
1	Building of New Schools	1			
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools	1			
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools	1			
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				

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