

# 'Awarta Village Profile



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## Background

This report is part of a series of booklets which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in the Nablus Governorate. These booklets were published as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in the Nablus Governorate, and aim to depict the overall living conditions in the governorate and present developmental plans to assist in improving the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" project which was funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

The "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" project was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions of the villages and the programs and activities needed to mitigate the impact of the current insecure political, economic and social conditions in the Nablus 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 Nablus Governorate. In addition, the project aims to prepare strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability, with a focus on the agricultural sector.

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

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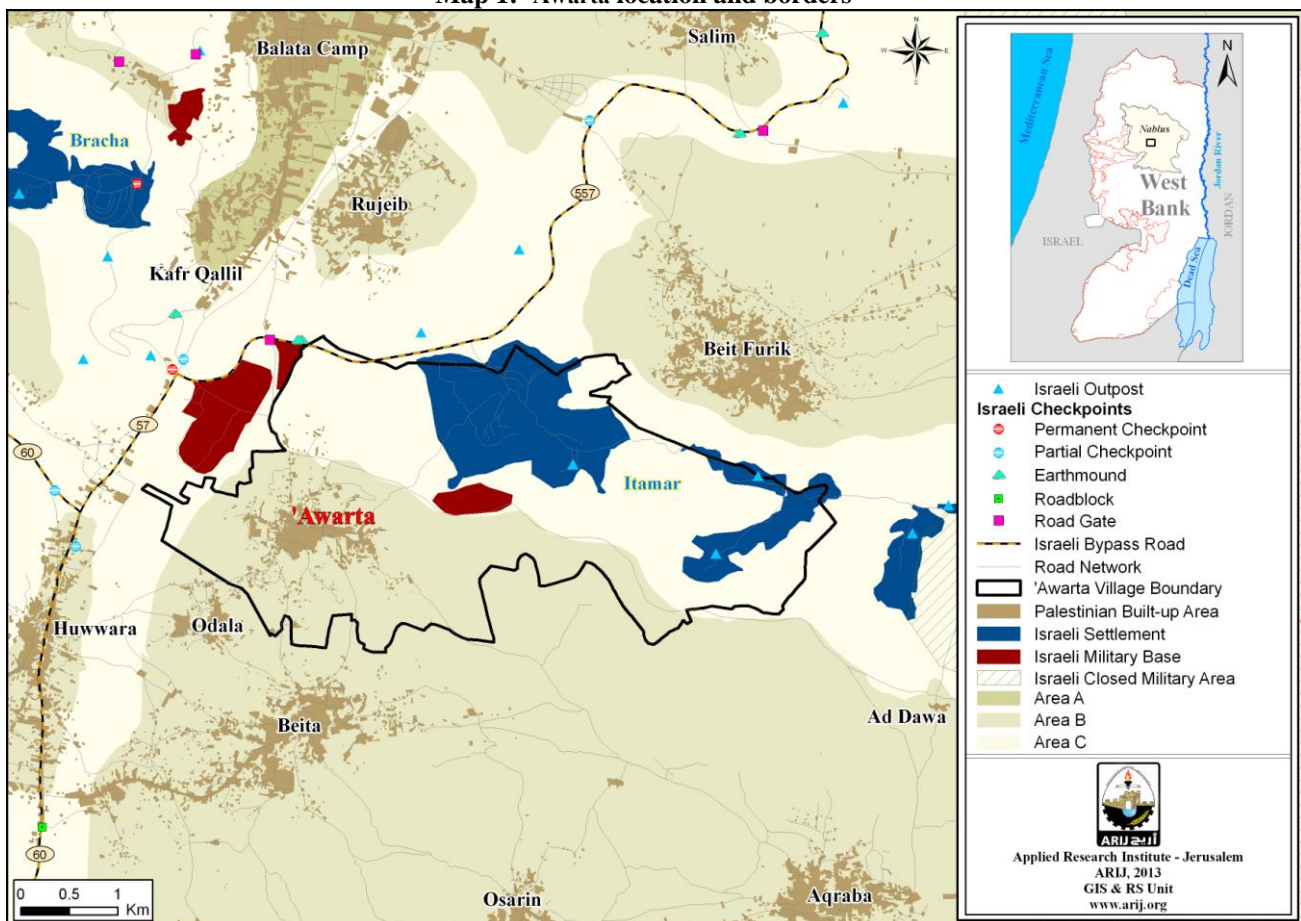
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# ‘Awarta Village Profile

## Location and physical characteristics

‘Awarta is a Palestinian village in the Nablus Governorate, located 6.87km south of Nablus City. It is bordered by Yanun and Beit Furik to the east, Rujeib to the north, Burin, Huwwara, and Odala to the west, and Beita and Aqraba to the south (ARIJ-GIS, 2014) (see map 1).

Map 1: ‘Awarta location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2014

‘Awarta is located at an altitude of 578m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 522.9mm. The average annual temperature is 18°C whilst the average annual humidity is approximately 60% (ARIJ-GIS, 2014).

The total area of ‘Awarta village consists of approximately 13,449 dunums. The borders of this locality are set according to the new local councils’ borders which were defined by the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government. The new borders of the Palestinian localities were set by the Palestinian National Authority, represented by the Ministry of Local Government, the Central Elections Commission, the Ministry of Planning and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in the year 2011. These governmental institutions reset the borders of the localities for the purpose of

the Palestinian elections that took place in 2011. Accordingly, ARIJ adopted these new borders in this report since it found that the newly adopted borders, to a certain extent, better suit the demographic, environmental and agricultural variables and facts on the ground. Also, ARIJ uses these defined borders only for the sake of this research and study. It is worth noting that these borders do not represent the areas and borders of the private properties at the locality level and are not included in the PNA files of the private land holdings.

Since 1996, 'Awarta has been governed by a Village Council which is currently comprised of 11 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). There are also 5 employees working for the council. The council owns its permanent headquarters and is included within the Southeast Joint Services Council. The Council does not own a vehicle for the collection of solid waste, but it does own electrical maintenance devices and a water tank ('Awarta Village Council, 2013).

It is the responsibility of the Village Council to provide a number of services to the residents of 'Awarta, ('Awarta Village Council, 2013), including:

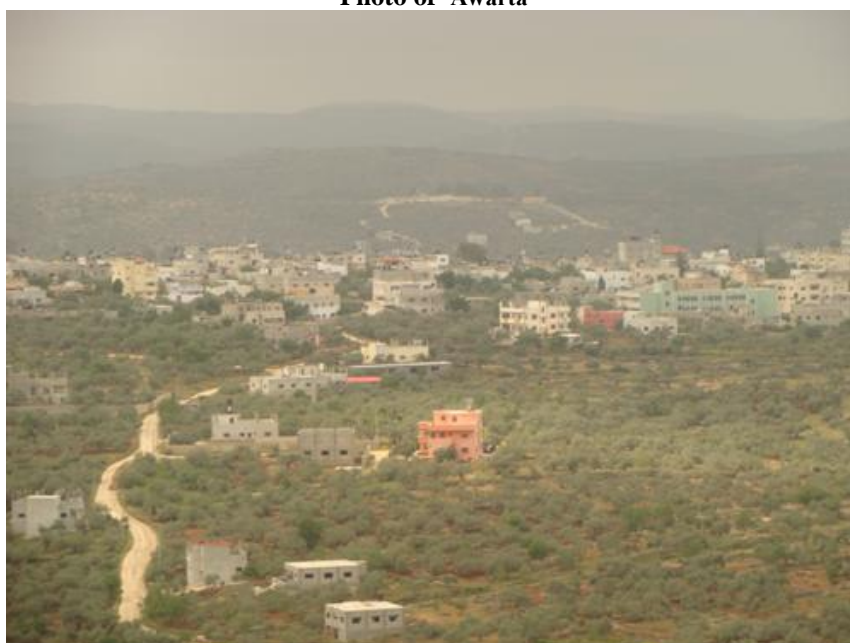
- The establishment and maintenance of the electricity network
- Street cleaning, waste collection, road rehabilitation, construction, paving and social services
- Protection of historical and archeological sites
- Implementation of projects and studies for the village
- Organization of transportation

('Awarta Village Council, 2013)

## History

Awarta is a Syriac word meaning "Al 'Awra'" and it may also mean "windowless" or "hidden" (Dabbagh, 1991). The assembly was created more than 200 years ago. The village residents originally came from Jordan ('Awarta Village Council, 2013).

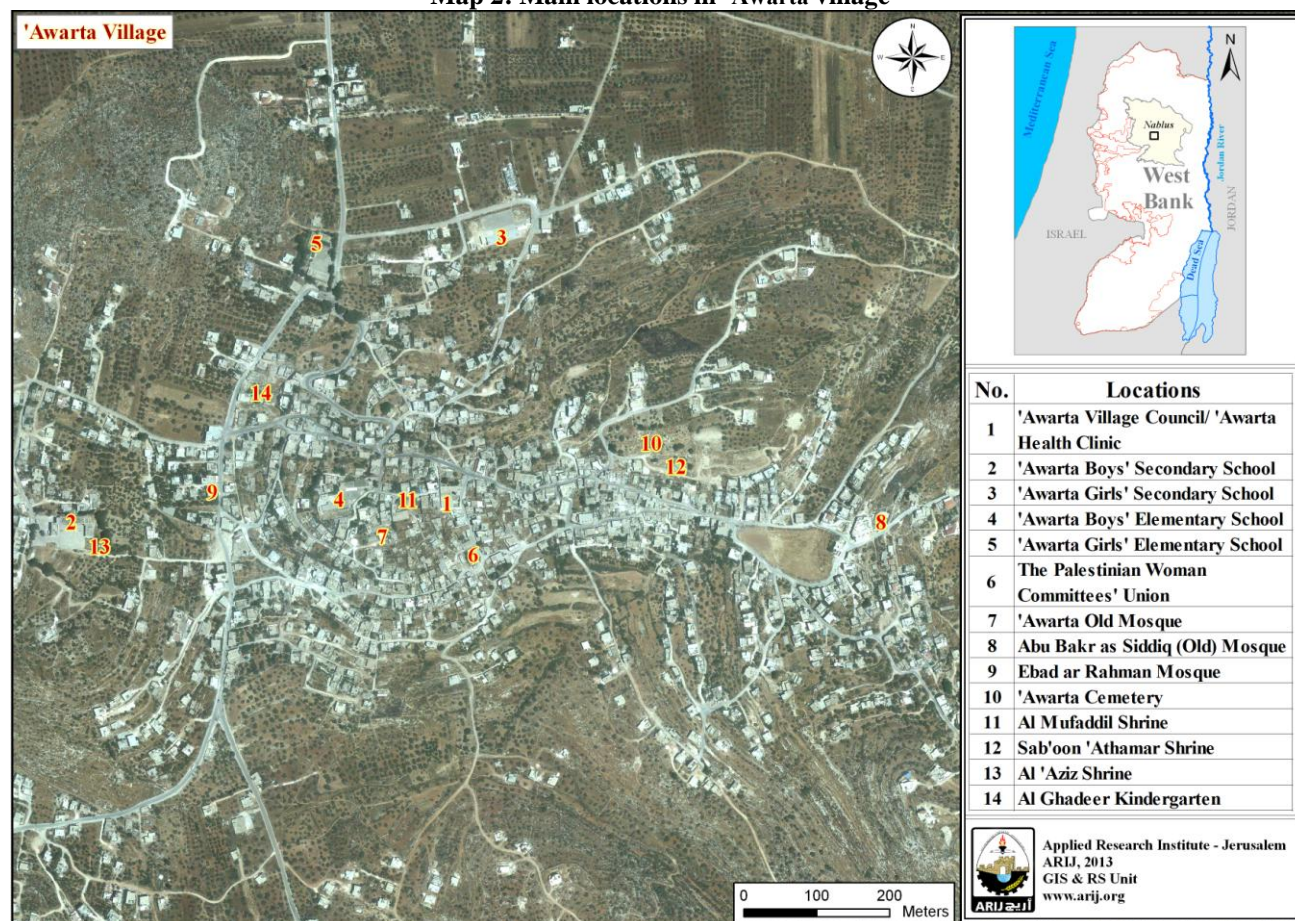
Photo of 'Awarta



## Religious and archaeological sites

There are three mosques in the village: the Old Mosque, Abu Bakr al Siddiq Mosque, and Ibad al Rahman Mosque. The village has several sites of archaeological interest including: Al Khirbet area, the Old Mosque, the tomb of Al Aziz Samra', and the tomb of Al Fadel Samra'. It is worth noting that none of them are currently eligible for designation as a tourism site ('Awarta Village Council, 2013) (see map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in 'Awarta village



source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2014

## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of 'Awarta in 2007 was 5,538, of whom 2,851 were male and 2,687 female. There were 992 households registered as living in 1,118 housing units.

### Age groups and gender

The General Census of Population and Housing carried out by the PCBS in 2007 showed that the distribution of age groups in 'Awarta was as follows: 41% were less than 15 years of age, 55.4% were between 15 and 64 years of age, and 3.2% were 65 years of age or older. Data also showed that the gender ratio of males to females in the village was 100:106.1, meaning that males and females constituted 51.5% and 48.5% of the population, respectively.

## Families

‘Awarta residents are from several families, including Awad, Qwareen, Darawshah, and Eidat families (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census of 2007, the illiteracy rate among the population of ‘Awarta is approximately 5.4%, of whom 87.5% are females. Of the total population, 14.7% could only read and write with no formal education, 31.8% had elementary education, 26.7% had preparatory education, 14% had secondary education, and 7.3% had completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of ‘Awarta by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

**Table 1: ‘Awarta population (10 years and above) by sex and educational attainment**

Sex	Illiterate	Can read & write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Masters	PhD	Unknown	Total
M	27	271	613	578	353	69	133	1	8	0	2	<b>2,055</b>
F	189	315	654	485	204	19	60	0	0	0	1	<b>1,927</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>1267</b>	<b>1063</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3,982</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009

There are four public schools in the village, all of which are run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (see table 2).

**Table 2: Schools in ‘Awarta by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority (2011/2012)**

School name	Supervising authority	Sex
‘Awarta Boys Secondary School	Government	Male
‘Awarta Girls Secondary School	Government	Female
‘Awarta Boys Elementary School	Government	Male
‘Awarta Girls Elementary School	Government	Female

Source: Directorate of Education in Nablus, 2012

There are 1,663 students, 88 teachers, and 56 classes in the village. The average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 19 whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 30 (Directorate of Education in Nablus, 2012).

There are two kindergartens in ‘Awarta village each of which are run by a different private organization (see table 3 below).

**Table 3: Kindergartens in ‘Awarta village by name and supervising authority**

Name of kindergarten	No. of classes	No. of teachers	Supervising authority
Al Gadeer Kindergarten	3	4	Private
Zohor Al Gad Kindergarten	3	3	Private

Source: Directorate of Education in Nablus, 2012

‘Awarta Boys’ Secondary School students face continuous harassment by the Israeli military forces (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).



Due to the lack of some educational levels, such as an industry track, some students attend Beita Secondary school, which is located 4 km away (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

The educational sector in ‘Awarta village faces a number of obstacles, mainly:

- Overcrowding of schools and classes with students
- The schools need for rehabilitation
- The lack of classrooms and schools
- The lack of transportation to the schools

## Health status

‘Awarta has several health facilities, including ‘Awarta governmental health clinic, a health center and pharmacy administered by the Health Work Committees, a private physician's clinic, a governmental mother and children center and a private pharmacy. In the absence of necessary health services or in emergencies, patients are transferred to Rafidia Governmental Hospital, the National Governmental Hospital, or private clinics in Nablus City (8km away) (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

The health sector in the village faces a number of obstacles and problems, principally:

- The lack of an ambulance
- The lack of certain medicines in the pharmacies
- The lack of a resident physician working on a daily basis in the health center

(‘Awarta Village Council, 2013)

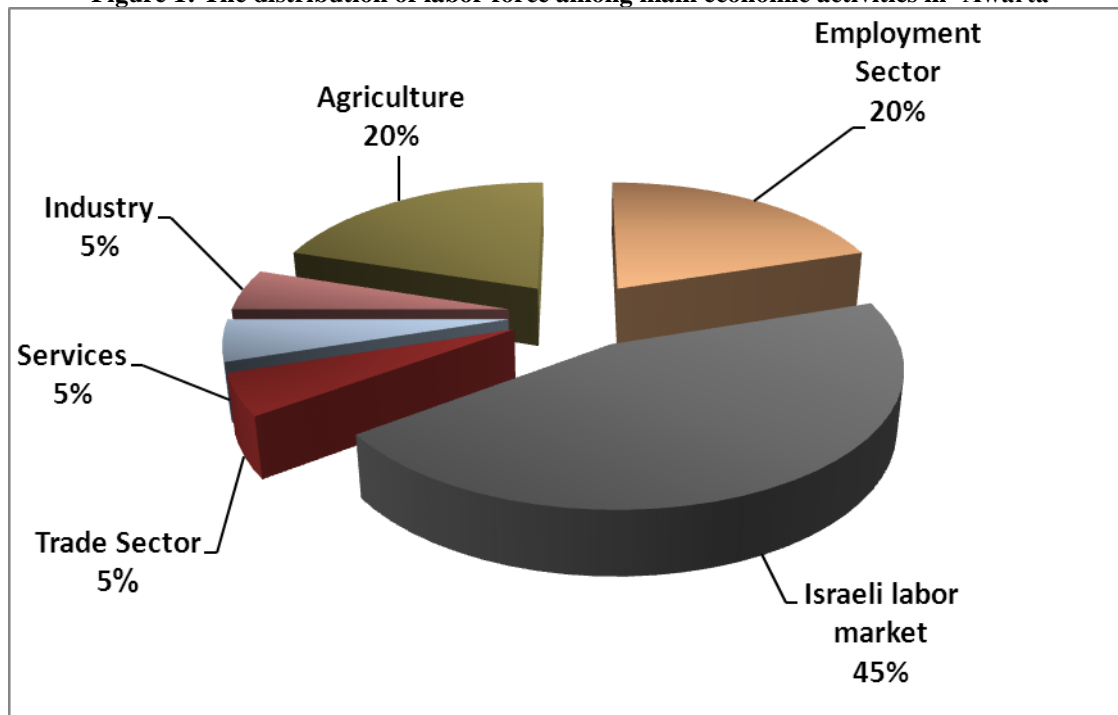
## Economic activities

The economy in ‘Awarta is dependent mainly on the Israeli labor market sector, which absorbs 45% of the village’s workforce (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013) (see figure 1).

The results of a field survey conducted by the ARIJ team in 2013 for the distribution of labor by economic activity in ‘Awarta are as follows:

- Israeli labor market (45%)
- Government or other public employees sector (20%)
- Agriculture sector (20%)
- Trade sector (5%)
- Services sector (5%)
- Industry (5%)

Figure 1: The distribution of labor force among main economic activities in ‘Awarta



Source: ‘Awarta Village Council, 2013

‘Awarta has 90 markets, 1 bakery, 20 fruit and vegetable stores, 12 service providers, and 20 professional workshops (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

In 2013, the unemployment rate in ‘Awarta reached 10%. The groups most economically affected by Israeli restrictions have been: (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

- Workers in the agricultural sector
- Workers in the industry sector
- Workers in the trade sector
- Workers in the government or other public employees sector

### Labor force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census of 2007, 32.4% of ‘Awarta’s labor force was economically active, of whom 82.2% were employed. 67.4% were not economically active, of whom 49.8% were students and 37.5% were housekeepers (see table 4).

Table 4: ‘Awarta population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status

Sex	Economically active				Not economically active						Not stated	Total
	Employed	Currently unemployed	Unemployed (never worked)	Total	Student	Housekeeping	Unable to work	Not working & not looking for work	Others	Total		
M	1004	109	109	1222	674	-	116	8	32	830	3	2,055
F	59	2	9	70	662	1006	139	1	44	1,852	5	1,927
T	1063	111	118	1292	1336	1006	255	9	76	2,682	8	3,982

M: Male; F: Female; T: Total.

Source: PCBS, 2009

### Agricultural sector

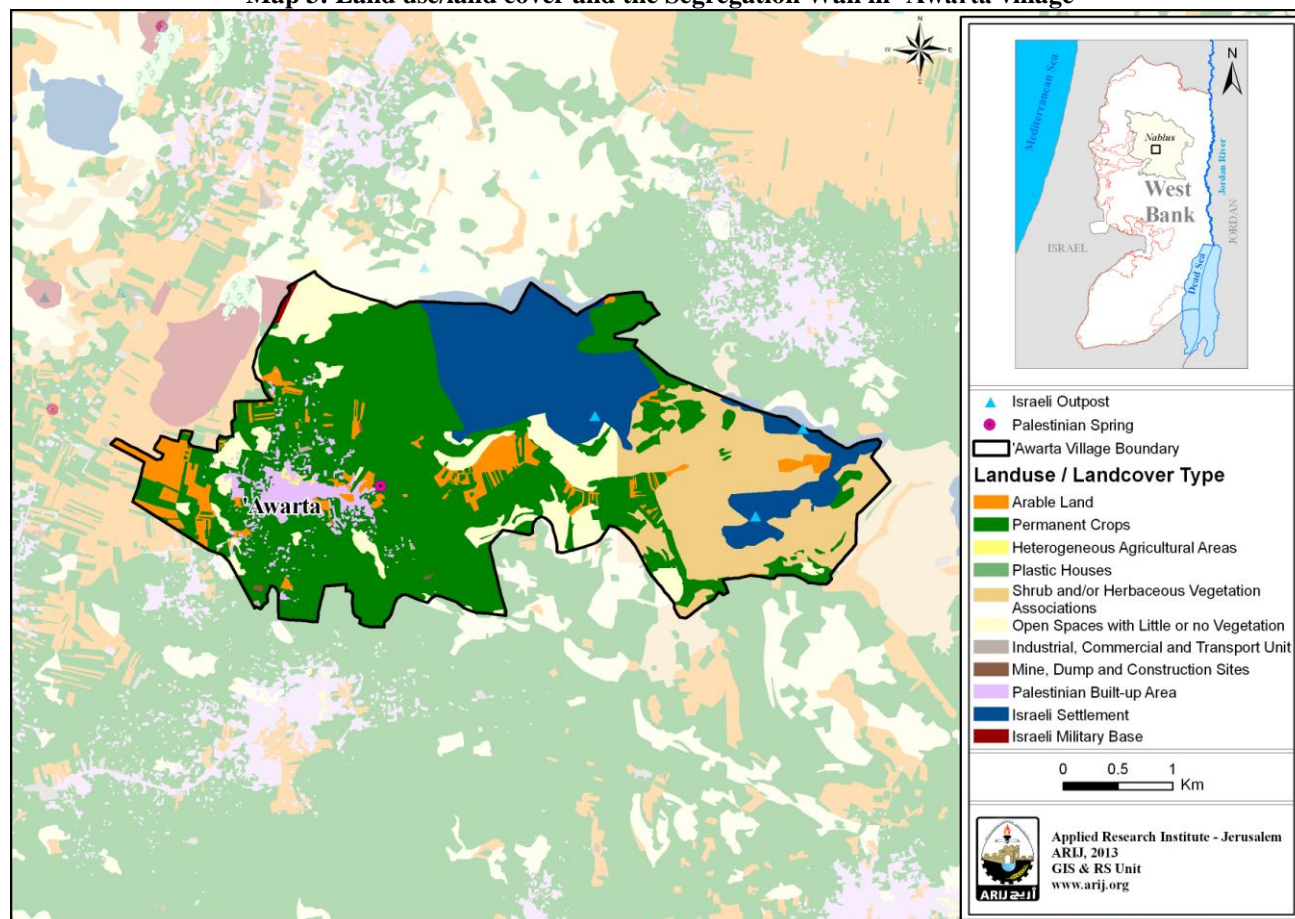
‘Awarta has a total area of approximately 13,449 dunums of which 9,266 is arable land and 467 dunums are registered as residential land (see table 5 and map 3).

**Table 5: Land use and land cover in ‘Awarta village (area in dunums)**

Total area	Built up area	Agricultural area (9,266)				Inland water	Forests	Open spaces	Area of industrial, commercial & transport unit	Area of settlements, military bases & Wall zone
		Permanent crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
13,449	467	6,245	2	2,188	831	0	0	1,227	21	2,470

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2014

**Map 3: Land use/land cover and the Segregation Wall in ‘Awarta village**



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2014

Table 6 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in ‘Awarta. The most commonly cultivated crops in this area are okra and green beans. In addition, there are 7 dunums of greenhouses planted with different crops.

**Table 6: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in 'Awarta (area in dunums)**

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetables		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	6	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture - Nablus, 2010

Table 7 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. 'Awarta is famous for olive cultivation and there are approximately 6,445 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the village.

**Table 7: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in 'Awarta (area in dunums)**

Olives		Citrus		Stone fruits		Pome fruits		Nuts		Other fruits		Total area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
6,445	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	127	0	50	0	6,625	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture - Nablus, 2010

In terms of field crops and forage in 'Awarta, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated, covering an area of approximately 260 dunums (see table 8).

**Table 8: Total area of forage and field crops in 'Awarta (area in dunums)**

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Oil crops		Forage crops		Stimulating crops		Other crops		Total area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
260	0	4	0	25	0	6	0	45	0	0	0	20	0	360	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture - Nablus, 2010

The difference in size of agricultural areas between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and ARIJ's GIS Unit is explained by the difference in each organization's definition of land coverage and ownership. The MoA and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2011) 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 did not include fragmented 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. This therefore, accounts for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey conducted by the ARIJ team shows that 5% of the residents in 'Awarta rear domestic animals such as sheep and goats (see table 9).

**Table 9: Livestock in 'Awarta**

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broiler Chickens	Layer Chickens	Beehives
24	540	150	0	0	0	0	100,000	0	0

\*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Nablus, 2010

There are approximately 20km of agricultural roads in the village, categorized as follows:

**Table 10: Agricultural roads in ‘Awarta village and their lengths**

Suitability of agricultural roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	3
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	7
For animals only	10
Unsuitable	-

Source: ‘Awarta Village Council, 2013

The agricultural sector in the village faces various problems, including:

- Confiscation of land
- The lack of access to agricultural land
- The lack of economic feasibility
- The lack of capital
- The lack of water sources
- The lack of support and resources
- The unsuitability of agricultural roads

(‘Awarta Village Council, 2013)

## Institutions and services

‘Awarta village has no national governmental branches, but it has a number of local organizations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include:

- **‘Awarta Village Council:** Founded in 1996 and registered later by the Ministry of Local Government, its aim is addressing different issues concerning the village and providing various services to its population, such as infrastructure services.
- **‘Awarta Sports Club:** Founded in 2000 by the Ministry of Youth & Sports, its aim is providing sports, social and cultural activities.
- **Union of Palestinian Women's Committees:** Founded in 1998, and later registered by the Ministry of the Interior, it is meant to provide social services and small projects.

(‘Awarta Village Council, 2013)

## Infrastructure and natural resources

### Electricity and telecommunication services

‘Awarta has been connected to a public electricity network since 1984. It is served by the Israeli Qatari Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the village, and 100% of the housing units in the village are connected to this network. The village residents face a number of problems concerning electricity, particularly the lack of electrical current and the high cost for a new electrical network (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

‘Awarta is also connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 85% of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

### Transportation services:

There are 3 public buses and 17 taxis in ‘Awarta. The existence of earth mounds or military checkpoints is considered to be the main obstacle faced by the village residents and the neighboring villages, in addition to high prices of fuels (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013). There are 22km of main roads and 27km of secondary roads in ‘Awarta (see table 11).

**Table 11: Roads in ‘Awarta village**

Status of internal roads	Road length (km)	
	Main	Sub
1. Paved and in good condition	12	-
2. Paved and in poor condition	-	10
3. Unpaved	10	17

Source: ‘Awarta Village Council, 2013

### Water resources

‘Awarta is not provided with a public water network, so the citizens buy water via a water tank with high prices ranging around 9 NIS/cubic meter (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013). In addition, ‘Awarta village has 1000 domestic wells to collect rainwater, 2 water springs, and a public water tank with a3,000 cubic meter capacity (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

### Sanitation

‘Awarta lacks a public sewerage network and most of the residents use cesspits and septic tanks as the main means of wastewater disposal (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).The wastewater collected by cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly into open areas or nearby valleys with little regard for the environment. It is noted that there is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to both the environment and public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2013).

### Solid waste management

The Joint Services Council for Solid Waste in Nablus is responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by citizens and establishments in the village. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee amounting to 19 NIS per household is charged to the residents and facilities served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. 100% of these fees are collected from the citizens (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

Most of the population in ‘Awarta benefits from the solid waste services, where waste is collected from households, institutions, shops and public squares in plastic bags and placed in 50 containers (of 0.5m<sup>3</sup> capacity) which are located at various points in the village. The Joint Council collects the solid waste once daily and transports it using a waste collection vehicle to Zahret al Finjan dumping site in Jenin Governorate, 100km from the village, where it is subsequently buried in an environmentally friendly way (‘Awarta Village Council, 2013).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in 'Awarta is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from 'Awarta residents is nearly 4.4 tons, or 1,595 tons per year (ARIJ - WERU, 2013).

## **Environmental conditions**

Like other towns and villages in the Governorate, 'Awarta experiences several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved. These problems can be identified as follows:

### **Water crisis**

The lack of a water supply service in the village because of the lack of a public water network requires the citizens to buy water at high prices.

### **Wastewater management**

The absence of a public sewerage network in the village means that 'Awarta residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and/or to discharge wastewater into the streets. This is particularly common in winter, as citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers during this period. These methods facilitate environmental damage, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the village. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater because most cesspits are built without lining to avoid the need to use sewage tankers and this allows wastewater to enter into the ground. Moreover, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without concern for the damage it causes to the environment and to the residents' health.

### **Solid waste management**

'Awarta village does not suffer any problems concerning the management of solid waste, as the Joint Council for the Management of Solid Waste is responsible for the process of collecting waste from the village and disposing it in Zahret al Finjan landfill in Jenin Governorate. This landfill is the main environmentally friendly landfill serving the village, as well as most of the other localities in the Nablus Governorate.

## **Impact of the Israeli Occupation**

### **Geopolitical status in Awarta village**

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Awarta was divided into Area B and Area C. Approximately 5,307 dunums (39% of the town's total area) were classified as Area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to retain overriding responsibility for security. The rest of the town's area, constituting 8,142 dunums (61% of the total area), was classified as Area C, where Israel retains full control over security and

administration related to the territory. In Area C, Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. The majority of Awarta's population resides in Area B while most of the land lying within Area C is agricultural land and Israeli settlements. (See Table 12).

**Table 12: The Geopolitical Divisions of Awarta village according to the Oslo Agreement 1995**

Area	Area in dunums	Percentage of Total village area %
Area A	0	0
Area B	5,307	39
Area C	8,142	61
Nature Reserve	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,449</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2014

### Israeli occupation practices in Awarta village

Land belonging to Awarta village has been confiscated by Israel, primarily for the purpose of establishing settlements, military bases and the construction of Israeli settlement roads. The following is a breakdown of the Israeli confiscations of land of the village of Awarta: - Israel has confiscated an area of 2,450 dunums from Awarta village for the establishment of Itamar settlement, which is located to the north eastern side of the village. It separates Awarta village from neighbouring Beit Furik village. Itamar was founded in 1984, has a total area of 3,564 dunums and contains around 1,181 Israeli settlers. Itamar settlement is mainly built on the territory of neighboring Beit Furik and Yanun villages.

Israel has also confiscated an area of 200 dunums from Awarta village lands to set up two military bases. One of them is located on the eastern side of the village, near Itamar settlement. The second is a military site on the northern side of the village near Huwwara camp.

These military bases have been a source of attacks on Palestinian citizens and their land. The occupation forces use these sites for training and they evacuation the east camp, but they still control the area and prevent the Palestinians from accessing it.

Israeli authorities have also isolated approximately 3,000 dunums of lands in Awarta village, Beit Furik, Yanun, Aqraba and Rujeib for the benefits of "Itamar" settlement and the outposts which s following to this settlement, in order to construct a security fence separating these Palestinian villages from Itamar settlement and their adjacent outposts. Most of this isolated land is agricultural land, which is a critical source of income for village residents.

### Israeli checkpoints in Awarta village

After the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, the Israeli authorities established a number of military checkpoints at the northern entrance of Awarta village. A permanent checkpoint made of concrete blocks and an iron gate is situated on the road that connects with Elon Moreh settlement. Israeli authorities removed some of these checkpoints after 2009 and opened the north entrance to the village; however there is still an iron gate that blocks the road linking Awarta to Rujeib village. until today, where this area has been classified as a military zone.



Huwwara checkpoint has had a negative impact upon Awarta village, as well as Nablus City and all of the surrounding villages were affected by “Huwwara” main checkpoint, that is located to the western side of the village. This checkpoint separates the northern governorate from the southern and central governorates. It is used by both pedestrians and cars, but trucks must use another road constructed by Israeli forces at the northern entrance of Awarta village for trucks loaded with goods.

Huwwara checkpoint was partially removed in 2009, when Israeli forces reduced their presence in the area. There are still a number of checkpoints on the road leading to Elon Moreh settlement used by the occupation forces to protect the security of the settlement. But they decreased reduced their control over the movement of Palestinian civilians under calm conditions.

Over the last decade, military checkpoints in the area have continued to have a negative impact on the daily lives of residents. Checkpoints continue to hinder freedom of movement and sever the links between Nablus city and the surrounding villages, as well as the connection between the villages and their agricultural lands. This has resulted in heavy economic losses for residents of Awarta as they are forced to travel further distances which takes more time, in order to reach their agricultural land, especially when checkpoints are closed.

There are still many checkpoints on the road leading to the settlement " Elon Moreh" used by the occupation forces to protect the security of the settlement.

### **Israeli bypass roads in Awarta village**

The Israeli authorities have constructed a number of bypass roads that stretch hundreds of kilometers from the north to the south of the West Bank. These roads have led to the confiscation of hundreds of agricultural and non-agricultural lands in order to link Israeli settlements with each other. It also impedes Palestinian territorial continuity, enabling further Israeli control over Palestinian territory.

Israel has confiscated land from the north side of Awarta village in order to construct an Israeli bypass road that links the area of Huwwara with Elon Moreh settlement. This road extends 1 km along Awarta village territory and separates Awarta from Rujeib, the neighboring village to the north.

It should be noted that the real danger of the bypass roads lies in the confiscated lands that were taken for the benefit of what is known as the buffer zone. The buffer zone is imposed by the Israeli army and usually occupies 75 meters on both sides of the road.

Since 2000, Israeli occupation forces have shut down two roads between Awarta village and the neighboring village; the 8km-long road linking Awarta to Yanun, and the road that links the village with neighboring Rujeib, due to Israeli military use. But it has been closed by the occupation forces for many years and they prevents the Palestinians from using it.

### **Israeli outposts in Awarta village**

Awarta, Beit Furik and Yanun village territory has been taken by force by Israeli settlers to establish five outposts on the eastern hills of Itamar settlement. These outposts are named Hill 782, Hill 836, Hill 777- Hkonat Arnon, Hill 851 - Har Gideon, and Givat Olam. These outposts overlook the above villages, with the aim of extending the territory controlled along the eastern side of the settlement, and

as a result, control more Palestinian land. These outposts are between( 3 km and 6 km ) away from main Itamar settlement and form a barrier which surrounds the Palestinian areas and its population.

During the past two decades, Israel has built 232 outposts in the West Bank. The outposts are foundations for new settlements, and tend to be extended branches of a mother settlement a few miles away. The process usually begins with the establishment of mobile caravans on the land that has been taken by the settlers. Establishing settlement outposts was encouraged by Ariel Sharon; the aim was for Jewish settlers to occupy Palestinians hill tops and create facts on the ground, so that Palestinians could not claim the land if there was ever to be a future solution between the two sides. Consecutive Israeli governments have provided security and logistical support for these outposts.

The Israeli army has also supported illegal Israeli settlers in their relocation to the settlements, in addition to providing security and infrastructure support. Since 2001 when Ariel Sharon became Prime Minister, there has been a significant increase in the number of outposts across the West Bank.

### **Settler attacks on Awarta village**

Attacks and violence perpetrated by settlers living in the settlements near Awarta village has had a profoundly negative impact on village residents and their property. Palestinian land owners are unable to access their lands, as they have been fenced off with barbed wire. Settlers have planted trees in these areas to reinforce their control over the area. The settlers have damaged and burned a number of Palestinian owned trees and plants. Settlers have also attacked the land owners in an attempt to intimidate and deter them from returning to their land.

Israel has confiscated lands from Awarta and the neighboring villages of Beit Furik and Rujeib, in order to establish illegal settlements in the area. Since the establishment of Itamar settlement in 1984, Palestinian residents have been subjected to several violent attacks, for example farmers have been attacked in order to prevent them from reaching their agricultural land. Settlers have also stolen crops, damaged trees and attacked homes, places of worship, cars and other private property.

### **Israeli military orders issued in Awarta village**

The Israeli occupation authorities have issued a series of military orders in order to confiscate land in the village of Awarta.

1. Israeli Military Order No. 13/03/ T issued on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 confiscated an area of 63.4 dunums from Awarta and Rujeib near to Itamar settlement for "security purposes."
2. Israeli Military Order No. 02/60 / T (extension purpose and boundary amendment) issued on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012, confiscated an area of 8.05 dunums from Awarta "for security purposes" on the road that links Awarta with Rujeib village.
3. Israeli Military Order No. 10/21 / T: issued on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2010 confiscated land for the purpose of establishing a military building.

## Development plans and projects

### Implemented projects

‘Awarta Village Council has some implemented development projects in ‘Awarta during the past six years (see table 13).

**Table 13: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in ‘Awarta during the Last Six Years**

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Expansion of water network and tank	Infrastructure	2007-2012	KFW
Rehabilitation of electrical network	Infrastructure	2010	‘Awarta Village Council

Source: ‘Awarta Village Council, 2013

### Proposed projects

‘Awarta village council, in cooperation with the village’s civil society organizations and the village residents, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) workshop conducted in the village by ARIJ staff. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the viewpoints of the workshop participants:

1. The need for paving internal roads and establishing retaining walls, especially in area C
2. The need to build 4 classrooms for ‘Awarta Boys Elementary School, and 4 classrooms for ‘Awarta Girls Elementary School
3. The need to establish a sewerage network and supply the village with 50 containers to collect solid waste
4. The need to establish a public park for children
5. The need to establish a stadium and sports hall
6. Providing the village council with an agricultural tractor, air condition for the hall, and LCD
7. The need to continue construction of the building for the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees
8. The need to organize the public traffic and provide a special park
9. The need to establish a public library
10. The need for small developmental projects to serve the women sector
11. The need to establish a public hall for the village
12. The need to establish a healthy landfill for solid waste and a station for purification of the water

## Locality development priorities and needs

‘Awarta suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 14 shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the Village Council’s perspective:

**Table 14: Development priorities and needs in ‘Awarta**

No.	Sector	Strongly needed	Needed	Not a priority	Notes
<b>Infrastructural needs</b>					
1	Construction and paving of roads	*			35 km <sup>^</sup>
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks			*	
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas			*	
4	Construction of new water networks	*			25km
5	Rehabilitation/construction of new wells or springs	*			Water spring
6	Construction of water reservoirs			*	
7	Construction of a sewage disposal network	*			25 km
8	Construction of a new electricity network			*	
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection	*			42 containers
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste	*			1 vehicle
11	Providing a sanitary landfill	*			
<b>Health needs</b>					
1	Building new clinics or health care centres		*		A health center
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres			*	
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools		*		
<b>Educational needs</b>					
1	Building new schools	*			Elementary schools
2	Rehabilitation of old schools	*			Elementary schools for Boys and Girls
3	Purchasing new school equipment	*			Computers and scientific labs
<b>Agriculture needs</b>					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands	*			2000 dunums
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns		*		50 Cisterns
3	Construction of livestock barracks		*		10 barracks
4	Provision of veterinary services		*		
5	Provision of seeds and hay for animals		*		60-500 tons per year
6	Construction of new greenhouses	*			9 dunums
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses	*			7 greenhouses
8	Provision of field crops seeds	*			
9	Provision of plants and agricultural supplies	*			

<sup>^</sup> 10 km main roads, 15km secondary roads, and 10km agricultural roads

Source: ‘Awarta Village Council, 2013

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