

# Mas-ha Village Profile



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## ***Acknowledgments***

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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 Salfit Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Salfit Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment;" the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

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

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

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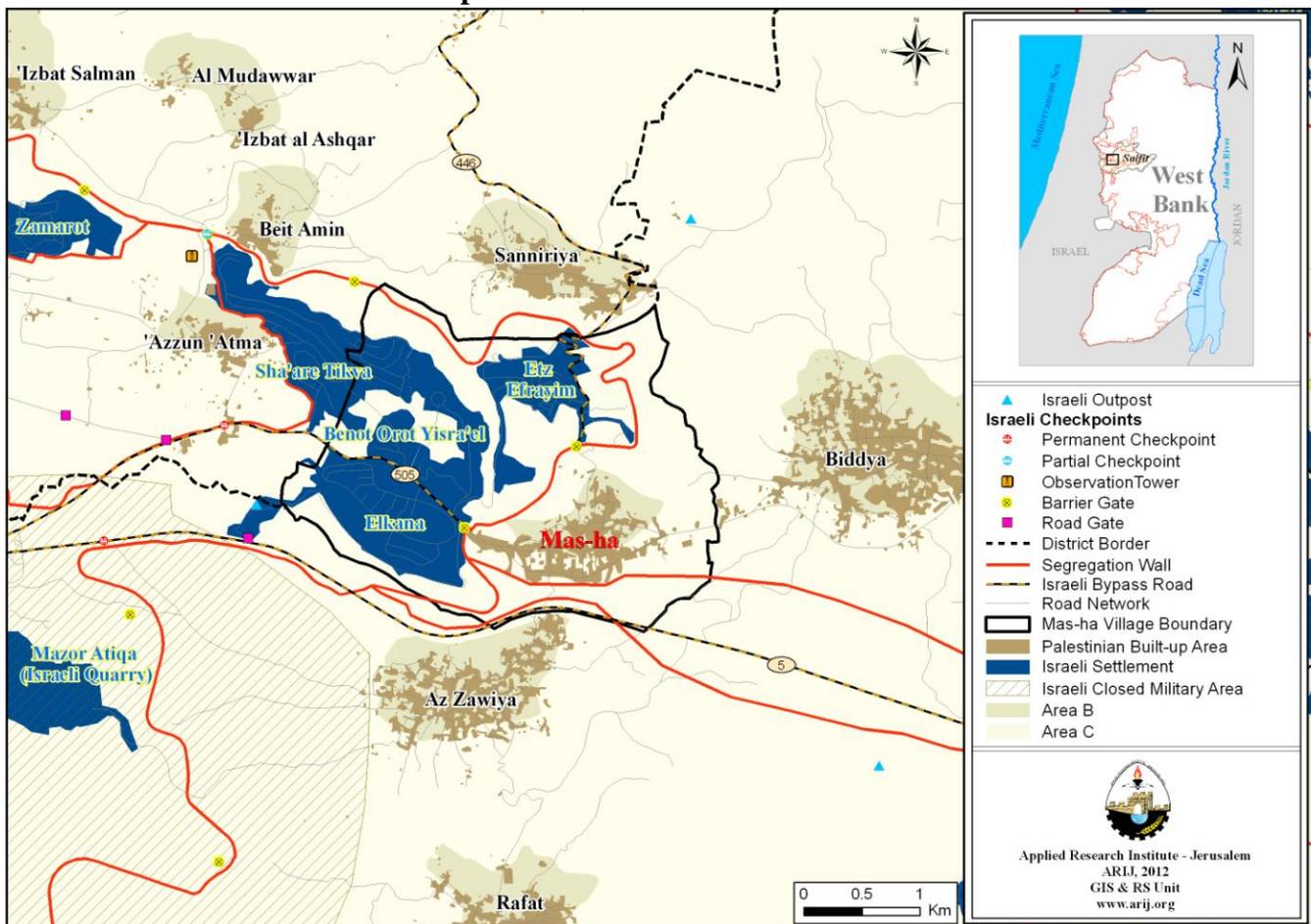
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# Mas-ha Village Profile

## Location and Physical Characteristics

Mas-ha is a Palestinian village in the Salfit Governorate located 12.5 km north-west of Salfit City. It is bordered by Bidhya town to the east, Az Zawiya to the south, ‘Azzun ‘Atma village (in Qalqiliya Governorate) to the west, and Sanniriya and Beit Amin villages (in Qalqiliya Governorate) to the north (ARIJ-GIS, 2013) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Mas-ha location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Mas-ha is located at an altitude of 281 m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 598.5 mm. The average annual temperature is 19 C° and the average annual humidity is approximately 62% (ARIJ-GIS, 2013).

Since 1994, Mas-ha has been governed by a Village Council which is currently administrated by 9 members, appointed by the Palestinian National Authority. Furthermore there are 6 staff members working in the permanent headquarter of the council, which is included within the 'Joint Services Council of West Salfit` (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

The Village Council owns an electricity crane joined with two neighboring villages; however, it does not possess a vehicle for the collection of solid waste. Also, it is the responsibility of the Council to provide a number of services to the residents of Mas-ha, including (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012):

- The establishment and maintenance of the drinking water and electricity networks.
- Waste collection, road construction and restoration, streets cleaning and social development services.
- Implementation of projects and studies for the village.
- Provision of transportation.
- Provision of educational kindergartens.

## History

Mas-ha name came from the word "Masaha"; literally meaning "swept". The nomination was made in reference of the Islamic Army, led by Omar Ben al Khattab, who swept the village from its enemies and conquered Jerusalem (Beit al Maqdis), after which some prophets and righteous people came and resided in the village, where there tombs are still existing. However, another story says that a shepherd, named "Amer" from "Khalayel 'Amer" area, killed the head of a gang of thieves who tried to steal his sheep. Hence, the thieves disappeared from the village, it was said that "Amer swept (masaha) the gang" from the area.

Mas-ha was established more than 600 year ago. Its residents are descendent from Marj ben 'Amer area, the origin of 'Amer family which is divided into 5 sub families: 'Aqla, 'Awad, Zeidan, Mu'ammar and Abu Sa'da. Another part or family of the village; Shalabi family is originally from the Arabian Peninsula whom are said to be the descendants of Omar Ben al Khattab (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

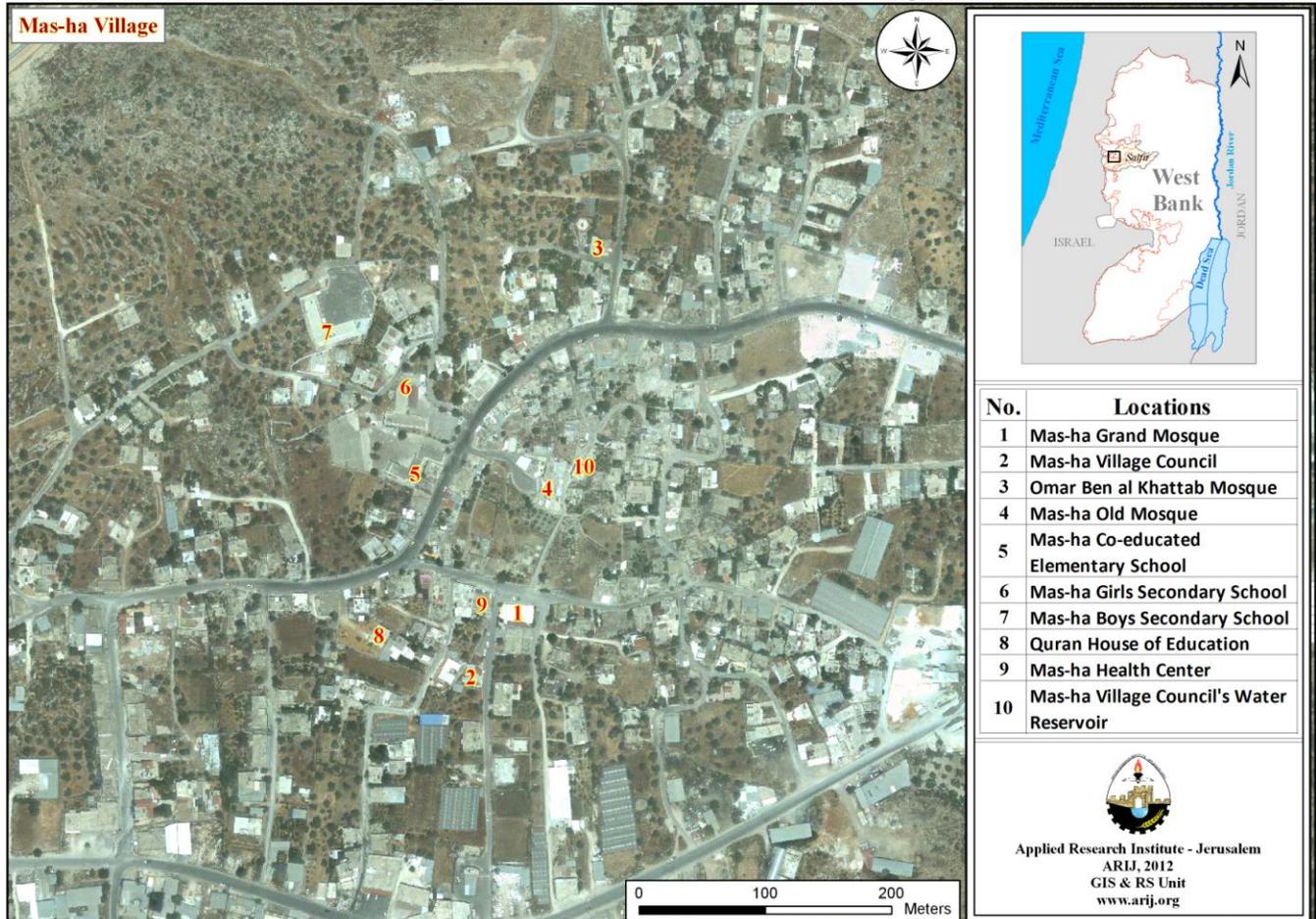
**Photo of Mas-ha**



## Religious and Archaeological Sites

There are three mosques in the village (Omar Ben al Khattab, Mas-ha Old and Mas-ha Grand Mosque). Furthermore it has several sites of archaeological interest, including: The Old Mosque, the prophets tombs and Al Maghfir Area (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012) (See Map 2).

**Map 2: Main locations in Mas-ha Village**



Population Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Mas-ha in 2007 was 1,977, of whom 992 were male and 985 female. A total of 384 households are distributed to 544 housing units.

### Age Groups and Gender

The general population and housing census carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics PCBS in 2007 showed the distribution of age groups in Mas-ha as follows: 43.9% of the population are less than 15 years of age, 51.1% are between 15 and 64 years of age, and 3.2% are 65 years of age or

older. The Data also showed, that the sex ratio of males and females in the village is 100.7:100, meaning that the gender distribution in the village is 50.2% to 49.8%.

## Families

Mas-ha residents are from several families, including ‘Amer, Shalabi, Badeer, Raslan, Taha, Sarsoor and Bahrawi families (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

## Immigration

The field survey conducted by ARIJ staff showed that around 20 persons (from different families) have left the village since Al Aqsa Intifada in 2000 (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS, the Population, Housing and Establishment Census 2007, the illiteracy rate among Mas-ha population is approximately 6.5%, of whom 79.3% are females. Of the literate population, only 15% with no formal education can read or write 23.8% had elementary education, 27.3% had preparatory education, 16.2% had secondary education, and 11.2% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of Mas-ha by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

**Table 1: Mas-ha population (10 years and above) by sex and educational attainment**

Sex	Illiterate	Can read & write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Unknown	Total
M	18	97	165	187	123	27	49	3	8	1	0	<b>678</b>
F	69	105	155	180	95	18	41	0	2	1	0	<b>666</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,344</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are three public schools in the village all of which are run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012) (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Schools in Mas-ha by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority (2011/2012)**

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Mas-ha Co-educated Elementary School	Government	Mixed
Mas-ha Girls' Secondary School	Government	Female
Mas-ha Boys' Secondary School	Government	Male

Source: Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012

In the village there are 627 students, 41 teachers, and 24 classes. The average number of students per teacher is nearly 15, whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 26 (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012).

Furthermore there are two kindergartens in Mas-ha village run by a private organization (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012) (See table 3 below).

**Table 3: Kindergartens in Mas-ha village by name and supervising authority**

Name of Kindergarten	No. of Classes	No. of Teachers	Supervising Authority
Al Amal (Hope) Kindergarten	2	2	Private
Al Hannoor Islamic Kindergarten	1	1	Private
<b>Source:</b> Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012			

Due to the lack of scientific and commercial levels of education in the village's schools, which is considered to be a main problem concerning the educational sector in the village, students are forced to go to Biddya Boys' Secondary School in Biddya town (for scientific education) (approx. 3 km away) or to Az Zawiyah Boys Elementary School in Az Zawiyah town (for commercial education) which is also approx. 3 km from Mas-ha (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

## Health Status

Mas-ha has a health center coordinated by UNRWA, a governmental mother and child care center, two private general physician clinics, a private dental clinic and a private pharmacy. Due to the absence of sufficient health services in case of emergencies, patients are transferred to Biddya Scientific Medical Society or the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, both located, 3km from Mas ha, in Biddya town (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

An overview of the main obstacles and problems in the village's health sector, gives the following list: (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012):

- The lack of a resident physician in the health center to work all days through the week; the available physician works only one day.
- The lack of physicians with different specialties; available is only one general physician.
- The lack of a radiology center.
- The lack of a medical laboratory.
- The lack of an ambulance.

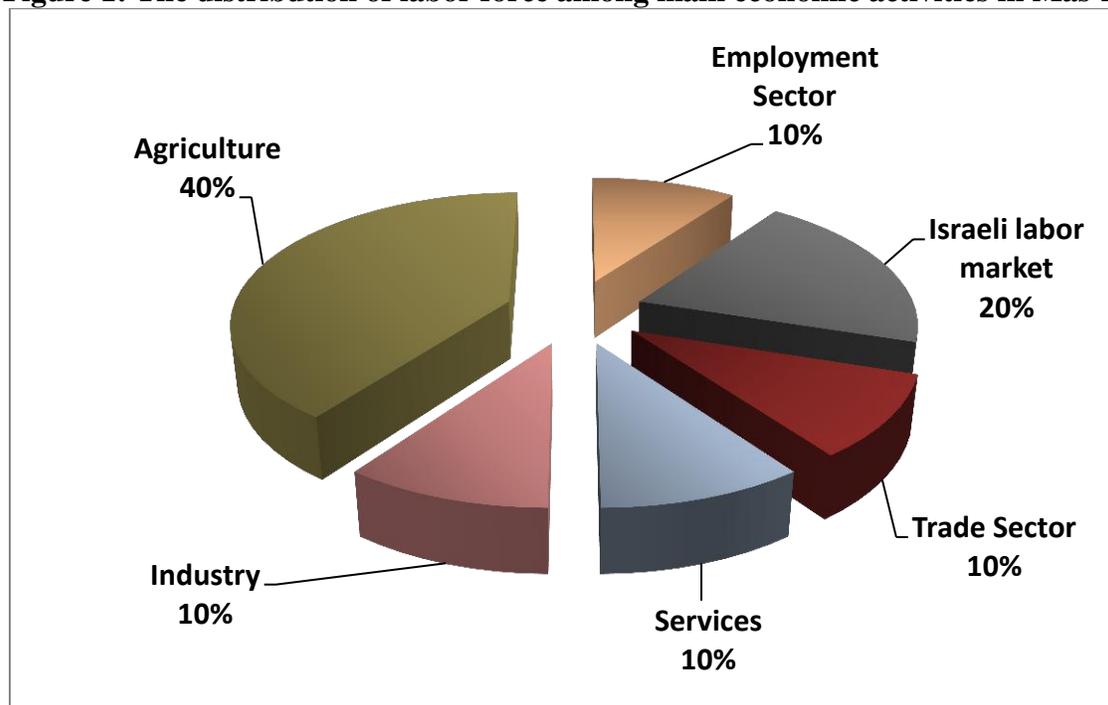
## Economic Activities

The economy in Mas-ha mainly depends on the agricultural sector, which absorbs 40% of the village's workforce (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012) (See Figure 1).

The results of a field survey conducted by the ARIJ team in 2012 for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Mas-ha are as follows:

- Agriculture sector (40%)
- Israeli labor market (20%)
- Trade sector (10%)
- Government or other employees sector (10%)
- Industry (10%)
- Services sector (10%)

**Figure 1: The distribution of labor force among main economic activities in Mas-ha**



Source: Mas-ha Village Council, 2012

Mas-ha has 9 groceries, 2 fruit and vegetable stores, 2 butcheries, 15 service stores, 20 different professional workshops, 2 olive oil-presses, 1 agricultural nursery, 5 stone cutters and two concrete factories (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

In 2012, the unemployment rate in Mas-ha reached 35%. The groups whose economic situation have been especially affected by the Israeli restrictions are: (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012):

- Workers in the agriculture sector.
- Workers in the trade sector.

### Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 34.5% of Mas-ha labor force was economically active, of whom 88.3% were employed, 65.5% were not economically active, 55.9% were students, and 32.6% were housekeepers (See Table 4).

**Table 4: Mas-ha population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status**

Sex	Economically active				Non-economically active						Not stated	Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (never worked)	Total	Student	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & not looking for work	Others	Total		
M	336	23	23	<b>382</b>	245	0	46	4	1	<b>296</b>	0	<b>678</b>
F	74	1	7	<b>82</b>	247	287	46	2	2	<b>584</b>	0	<b>666</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,344</b>

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

Source: PCBS, 2009.

## Agricultural Sector

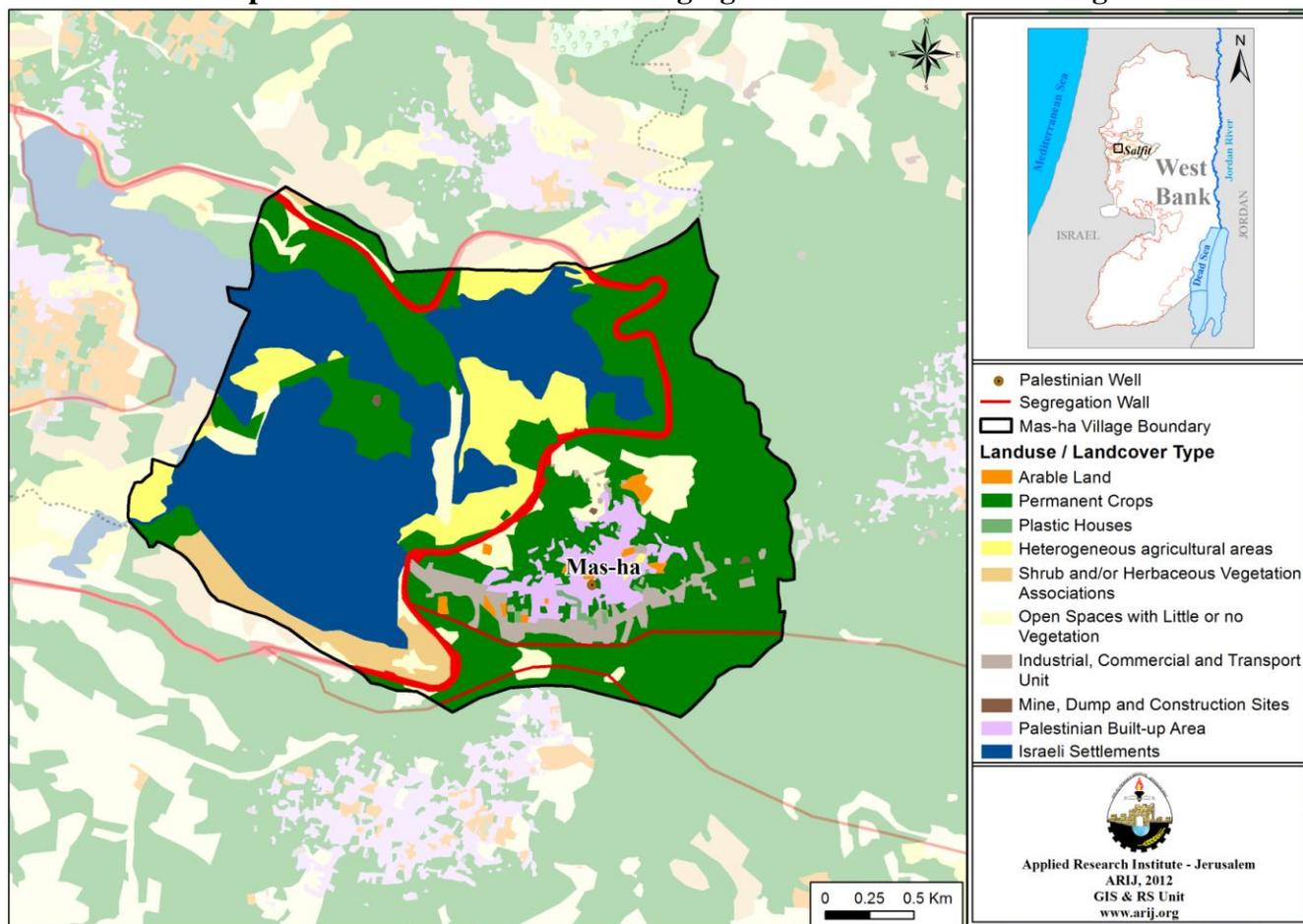
Mas-ha has a total area of approximately 7,560 dunums of which 4,034 dunums are 'arable' land and 267 dunums are registered as 'residential' area (See Table 5 and Map 3).

**Table 5: Land use and land cover in Mas-ha village (area in dunum)**

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (4,034)				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					
7,560	267	3,715	17	258	44	0	0	431	226	2,602

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

**Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Mas-ha Village**



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Table 6 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Mas-ha. The most commonly cultivated crops within this area are tomatoes, jew’s melon and cabbages.

**Table 6: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Mas-ha (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.
11	30.5	0	17	0	8	0	3	0	0	11	58.5

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

Table 7 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Mas-ha is famous for olive cultivation and there are approximately 1,345 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the village.

**Table 7: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Mas-ha (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.
1,345	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	53	0	1,413	0

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

In terms of field crops and forage, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated in Mas ha, covering an area of around 45 dunums (See Table 8).

**Table 8: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Mas-ha (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.
45	0	13	0	19	0	2	0	16	0	0	0	10	0	105	0

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

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and ARIJ's GIS Unit in sizes of agricultural areas 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 not considered to be fragmented and small seasonal cultivated areas in residential and agricultural areas. ARIJ's survey, however indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. This accounts therefore for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey conducted by ARIJ team shows that 4.7% of the residents in Mas-ha rear and keep domestic animals such as sheep and goats (See Table 9).

**Table 9: Livestock in Mas-ha**

Cows*	Sheep	Camels	Poultry	Bee Hives
13	483	-	38,000	77

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

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Salfit, 2010

There are approximately 6 kilometers of agricultural roads in the village, divided as follows (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012):

**Table 10: Agricultural Roads in Mas-ha Village and their Lengths**

Suitability of Agricultural Roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	-
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	4
For animals only	2
Unsuitable	-

Source: Mas-ha Village Council, 2012

The agricultural sector in the village faces some problems, including (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012):

- The confiscation; of agricultural lands.
- The lack of water resources and its high costs.
- The lack of capital for agricultural projects.
- The lack of access by farmers to their agricultural lands due to the Segregation Wall.
- The spread of wild and harmful animals, mainly pigs.

## Institutions and Services

Mas-ha village has a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012):

- **Mas-ha Village Council:** Founded in 1994 by the Ministry of Local Government, with the aim to take care of different issues concerning the village and to provide various services to its population, in addition to infrastructure services.
- **Mas-ha Sports Club:** Founded in 2003 by the Ministry of Youth & Sports, with the goal of supporting young people through organizing summer camps, environmental voluntary work, and arts and sports teams.
- **The Women Club Center:** Founded in 2003 by the Ministry of Interior. The Society is interested in women and supporting them through various seminars in the fields of diseases, health education and assisting educational courses. It also provides income generating development projects such as sheep breeding.
- **The Saving & Credit Society:** Founded in 2003 by the Cooperation Organization in Salfit, aiming to provide small loans to its members to implement income generating development projects.
- **The Rural Woman Development Society:** Founded in 2004 by the Ministry of Interior. The Society is interested in women and needy families organizing health educational seminars and distributing small development projects
- with less than 6% of interest.
- **The Women Charitable Society:** Founded in 2004 by the Ministry of Interior. The Society organizes several development activities, such as trainings on bee keeping, food processing and assisting education.
- **Mas-ha Livestock Society:** Founded in 2005 by the Ministry of Interior. The Society is interested in the village farmers as it provides them with technical guidance in the field of agriculture.

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

### Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Mas-ha has been connected to a public electricity network since 1981. It is provided by the 'Israeli Qatariya Electricity Company,' which is the main source of electricity in the village, and approximately 100% of the housing units in the village are connected to the network. The village residents face some problems concerning electricity, primarily because of the aged electrical network, the lack of electricity transformers and the lack of poles and towers (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

Mas-ha is also connected to a telecommunication network, of which approximately 20% of the housing units are connected to (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

### Transportation Services:

There are 5 taxis in addition to 2 illegal/unlicensed cars in Mas-ha. However, residents suffer from the lack of vehicles in the village. Nevertheless, due to the lack of transportation facilities, the residents use private cars (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012). There are 5 km of main roads and 7 km of secondary roads (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012) (See Table 11).

**Table 11: Roads in Mas-ha Village**

Status of Internal Roads	Road Length (km)	
	Main	Sub
<b>1. Paved &amp; in good condition</b>	2	-
<b>2. Paved but in poor condition</b>	3	5
<b>3. Unpaved</b>	-	2

Source: Mas-ha Village Council, 2012

### Water Resources:

Mas-ha is provided with water by the ‘West Bank Water Department’ through the public water network, established in 1981. All housing units are connected to the network (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012)

The quantity of water supplied to Mas-ha village in 2010 was recorded at approximately 120,000 cubic meters/year (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012). Therefore, the rate of water supply per capita can be estimated at approximately 151 liters/day. However, due to the massive water losses of 22% (PWA, 2010), no Mas-ha citizen consumes this amount of water. The main source of the water losses can be found at major transport lines as well as at the household level. Hence, the rate of water consumption per capita in Mas-ha is 118 liters per day (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012). The average water consumption of Mas-ha residents is considered good compared with the minimum quantity of 100 liters per capita per day proposed by the World Health Organization. Moreover, each cubic meter of water from the public network costs a citizen 3.5 NIS (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

The village has a public water reservoir with a capacity of 500 cubic meters in addition to 20 individual household rainwater harvesting cisterns (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

### Sanitation:

Mas-ha lacks a public sewerage network and most of the population use cesspits and septic tanks, as a main means for wastewater disposal (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the approximated quantity of wastewater generated per day, is 205 cubic meters, or 74,880 cubic meters annually. At the individual level, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 94 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits and septic tanks is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys with little regard for the environment. It should be noted that there is no wastewater treatment either at the source nor at the disposal sites which poses a serious threat to the environment and public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

### **Solid Waste Management:**

The Joint Services Council of West Salfit, generated by citizens and establishments in the village, is responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee of 10 NIS per household and 20-40 NIS per commercial store, is charged to the population and facilities served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However due to the insufficient management only 40% of the fees are actually getting collected from the citizens. (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012)

Most of the citizens in Mas-ha benefit from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags, and placed in 50 containers (of 1m<sup>3</sup> capacity), located at various points in the village. The Joint Council collects the solid waste three times a week and transports it using a waste vehicle to the village's dumping site, 5 km from the village, where it is subsequently burnt (Mas-ha Village Council, 2012)

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Mas-ha is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day, from the Mas-ha residents, is nearly 1.5 tons, or 555 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

## **Environmental Conditions**

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

### **Water Crisis**

- Water is cut off by the West Bank Water Department for long periods of time during summer in several village neighborhoods, for numerous reasons:
  1. Israeli control over Palestinian water resources causes problems in the organization of water pumping and its distribution among populations. The West Bank Water Department distributes water to various areas on an interval basis because the quantity of water available is not sufficient to simultaneously supply everyone's needs. In addition, the West Bank Water Department purchases water from Israeli Companies in order to meet the citizens' water needs.
  2. High rate of water losses, due to the water networks- aged condition in need of rehabilitation and renovation.

### **Wastewater Management**

- The absence of a public sewage network in the village means that Mas-ha 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 allow 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 residents' health.

### **Solid Waste Management:**

- Zahrat al Finjan landfill in Jenin Governorate (approximately 32 km in distance from the center of Salfit Governorate) is considered the central sanitary landfill which is supposed to serve Salfit Governorate. However, the Municipalities and Village Councils in Salfit Governorate do not transfer the solid waste to Zahrat al Finjan landfill, but rather get rid of waste in random dumps scattered throughout the Governorate. This is due to the high costs of transporting and disposing waste in the landfill. As a result, wastes are being disposed randomly in these landfills causing an abomination to health, and leading to the proliferation of harmful flies, insects, and mice, as well as the bad odors, toxic gases and black smoke emitted when burned. All of this has harmful effects on human health in addition to the environment.
- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Mas-ha and other neighboring communities in the Governorate is mainly due to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill. The main impediment cited is that the appropriate land is within Area C and under Israeli administrative and security control. Additionally, the implementation of such projects depends on funding from donor countries. The lack of a sanitary landfill is a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste, and produces bad odors and distortion of the landscape.

## **Impact of the Israeli Occupation**

### **Geopolitical status in Mas-ha**

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995, Mas-ha was divided into areas “B” and “C”. Approximately 536 dunums (7% of the village’s total area) were assigned as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has a complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. Area B constitutes most of the inhabited Palestinian areas, including municipalities, villages and some refugee camps. It is worth noting that most of the village’s population resides in area B which constitutes a small part compared to the total area of the village. The rest of the village’s area, constituting 7,024 dunums (93% of the total area), is classified as area C, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory (table 12). In area C Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within area “C” are agricultural areas, Israeli settlements and isolated territories behind the Segregation Wall.

**Table 12: The Geopolitical Divisions of Mas-ha – Salfit Governorate**

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total village area
Area A	0	0
Area B	536	7
Area C	7,024	93
Nature Reserve	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,560</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2013*

## Israeli Occupation Practices in Mas-ha Village

Mas-ha village has been subjected to numerous Israeli confiscations for the benefit of various Israeli objectives, demonstrated by the construction of Israeli settlements, checkpoints, outposts and bypass roads on the village's territories. This is in addition to the 'Segregation Plan' realized through the Segregation Wall. Following is a breakdown of the Israeli confiscations of Mas-ha village territories.

Throughout the years of occupation, Israel has confiscated 2,356 dunums of Mas-ha village lands (31.2% of the total village area) for the establishment of four Israeli settlements; "Elkana", "Etz Efrayim", "Sha'are Tikva" and "Benot Orot Yisra'el". All settlements are located on the village's western territories, within the Western Segregation Zone, which Israel seeks to include to its borders upon the completion of the Segregation Wall. All together the settlements are inhabited by approximately 9,000 Israeli settlers (See Table 13).

**Table 13: Israeli settlements established on lands of Mas-ha village**

Settlement Name	Establishment Date	Lands confiscated from Mas-ha village	Population
Elkana	1977	1,626	3,719
Etz Efrayim	1985	546	731
Sha'are Tikva	1982	8	4,493
Benot Orot Yisra'el	1989	176	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,356</b>	<b>8,943</b>

**Source:** The Geo-informatics Department – ARIJ, 2013

## Settlement Expansions in the Vicinity of Elkana Settlement

During April 2011, settlers living in 'Elkana' settlement razed large areas (more than 120 dunums) of Mas-ha village lands within Basin No. 4 (Abu Zreiq Basins), owned by 'Amer and Shalabi families, in order to expand 'Elkana A' settlement from the north-western side. The razing of lands aims to connect the two settlements of 'Elkana A' and 'Elkana B' and to convert them to one single settlement bloc through the addition of dozens of settlement units in the region, in addition to developing the infrastructure of the region. Beside the expansion and razing works, new caravans in the settlement and a road expansion inside and around the settlement were constructed, by settlers.

## **Settlers Attacks on Mas-ha Village Territory**

On October 9<sup>th</sup> 2010, in timing with the beginning of the olive harvest season and the difficulty to obtain permits to enter agricultural lands in the village, through the wall gate no. 1534, a limited number of Palestinian farmers were able to reach their lands isolated west of the wall in the "Wa'rat al 'Adas" area adjacent to Etz Efrayim settlement, and got surprised upon their arrival to their lands when finding that the olives were stolen by settlers from the nearby settlement, whom harvested all olives over an area of 24 dunums of land, and deliberately broke and damaged many olive branches in the area, leaving nothing for the villagers, who consider the olive season their main income source after losing their jobs inside Israel.

## **Israeli Military Checkpoints & Bypass Roads**

Following the construction of the Segregation Wall, the Israeli occupation authorities established two Israeli military checkpoints on Mas-ha village lands, which are represented by wall gates. Established at the Wall route, one of the gates, was established west of the village, separating it from 'Elkana' settlement and the other gate was established north of the village and is used as an agricultural gate that is separating the village from 'Etz Efrayim' settlement.

Moreover, the Israeli Government confiscated thousands of agricultural and non-agricultural dunums of land to open several bypass roads, which stretch thousands of kilometers from the north to south of the West Bank. This was carried out in order to link Israeli settlements, dismember Palestinian lands and enhance security control over it. For the construction of Israeli bypass road No. 5, known as "Samria Crossing", Israel has confiscated land from Mas ha's south and west, intervening 3 km into the village's territory. The real threat of the bypass roads however lies in the buffer zone formed by the IOF along these roads, extending approximately 75 m on each side. These buffer zones dramatically increase the total area of land affected by the construction of the bypass roads.

## **The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan in Mas-ha Village**

The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan has had a negative and destructive impact on Mas-ha residents. The latest route of the Israeli Segregation Wall Plan, published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense's website in 2007, shows that in addition to the planned Wall on Mas-ha northern, southern and western village lands, it will further extend 9 km on the village lands and will confiscate and isolate 4,944 dunums (65.4%) of the village's total area for Israeli settlement activities. The majority of lands, isolated or planned to be isolated by the Wall, include Israeli settlements, agricultural areas and open spaces (See Table 14).

**Table 14: Land Classification of the Isolated lands in Mas-ha Village – Salfit Governorate**

No.	Land Classification	Area (in dunums)
1	Israeli Settlements	2,356
2	Agricultural Areas	1,948
3	Open Spaces	204
4	Shrubs and Herbaceous Vegetation	252
5	Wall Zone	182
6	Construction Sites	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,944</b>

**Source:** The Geo-informatics Department – ARIJ 2013

In accordance with the latest Segregation Wall Plan, the separation barrier will encircle the urban area in Mas-ha from three sides: An existing Wall to the north and west, and a planned Wall south of the village. This will isolate the village from most of its agricultural lands and will also isolate it from neighboring villages to the south, including Az Zawiya, Rafat and Deir Ballut, while it will be connected with these villages through a small tunnel that passes under the Israeli bypass road no. 5 known as “Samria Crossing”.

The Palestinian farmers in Mas-ha village are denied access to their lands by the Israeli occupation authorities. They cannot access their lands without a special permit that is issued from the Israeli Liaison Office to pass through special gates built within the Wall. It should be noted that access to isolated agricultural lands is limited only to those farmers that can prove their land ownership to the Israeli Civil Administration. Permits<sup>1</sup> are issued to lands’ owners, usually old people, which have their names included in the property ownership instruments. In addition, the Israeli Civil Administration issues these permits only seasonable, which makes it difficult for farmers to cultivate their lands themselves, especially because the permits do not allow the labor to use the necessary equipment to plough and cultivate the land.

It should also be noted that villages of Salfit Governorate are known for their fertile soil, their beautiful nature and the abundance of water and large trees, especially olive trees. This makes the region an important target for Israeli settlement activities, in addition to being the second Governorate, after Jerusalem, in terms of land confiscations, wall and settlement construction. (ARIJ, UMD 2012)

<sup>1</sup> Obtaining a permit is not an easy process, and it is usually denied for the owners of the isolated lands.

## Military Orders Issued in Mas-ha Village

The Israeli Occupation Army has issued many military orders and notifications to confiscate lands or halt construction in Mas-ha village:

1. Israeli Military Order No. (41/07/T): Issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2007, to confiscate a total area of 9 dunums of land in Mas-ha and Az Zawiya for military purposes to construct an agricultural road.
2. Israeli Military Order No. (24/04/T): Issued on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2004, confiscating a total area of 317 dunums of Mas-ha, Az Zawiya, Deir Ballut and Rafat villages' lands in order to construct the Israeli Segregation Wall.
3. Israeli Military Notification No. (88/04/T): Issued on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, confiscating an area of 78.1 dunums of Mas-ha lands for security purposes, in order to build the Israeli Segregation Wall in the region.
4. Israeli Military Notification No. (88/04/T) (validity extension of No. 2): Issued on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2012, confiscating an area of 40.4 dunums of Az Zawiya and Mas-ha lands for security purposes, in order to build the Israeli Segregation Wall. It should be noted that the occupation authorities extended the military order validation date since it did not complete the construction of a section of the Wall at the planned site as stated in the Military Order. This was due to petitions submitted by Palestinians to the Israeli Supreme Court against the construction of the Wall in the area, questioning the legitimacy of its location, which upon its implementation will deprive Palestinians from their agricultural lands in addition to isolating it from its neighboring villages to the south and west. This in turn prompted the Israeli government to issue a validity extension of the Israeli military order, so that Israel can complete the construction of the Wall in the region and tighten its isolation process.
5. Israeli Military Order No. 107/05/T: Issued on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005, to confiscate a total area of 4.7 dunums of land in Mas-ha village for military purposes; to construct a settlement road.

## Development Plans and Projects

### Implemented Projects

Mas-ha Village Council has implemented several development projects in Mas-ha during the past five years (See Table 15).

**Table 15: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Mas-ha during the Last Five Years**

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Constructing a public water reservoir	Water	2008	Oxfam
Constructing a secondary school	Educational	2010	Kuwaiti Arab Fund & Ministry of Finance
Constructing sidewalks	Infrastructure	2011	Mas-ha Village Council & USAID
Paving roads	Infrastructure	2011	Ministry of Finance & Council of Ministers
Supplying street lightings	Infrastructure	2012	Mas-ha Village Council

Source: Mas-ha Village Council, 2012

## Proposed Projects

Mas-ha Village Council, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years in cooperation with the civil society organizations and the village residents. The project ideas were developed during the Participatory Rapid Appraisal workshop conducted by ARIJ staff in the village. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the viewpoints of the participants' in the workshop:

1. Establishing an integrated health center with a medical laboratory, an ambulance, an emergency center and maternity and childhood care center (land for this purpose is available).
2. Constructing a social, cultural, women and sports center.
3. Establishing a sports stadium (land for this purpose is available).
4. Paving and rehabilitating secondary roads and establishing sidewalks (5 to 6 km).
5. Constructing additional classrooms, health units, halls and sports fields in the village's schools.
6. Constructing and rehabilitating agricultural roads (approx. 6 km).
7. Expanding the water and electricity networks (5 to 6 kilometers) in order to include all buildings of the village.
8. Establishing a public park and garden to serve children and families in the village.
9. Providing a license for the industrial area.
10. Expanding the structural plan of the village.

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Mas-ha suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 16 shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the Village Council's point of view.

**Table 16: Development Priorities and Needs in Mas-ha**

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
<b>Infrastructural Needs</b>					
1	Opening and pavement of roads	*			9 km <sup>^</sup>
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks	*			13 km
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas	*			7 km
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	*			20 km
8	Construction of a new electricity network	*			20 km
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection			*	
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste			*	
11	Providing a sanitary landfill	*			
<b>Health Needs</b>					
1	Building new clinics or health care centres	*			2
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres	*			2
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools	*			2
<b>Educational Needs</b>					
1	Building new schools	*			elementary school for boys
2	Rehabilitation of old schools	*			Mas-ha Co-educated Elementary School
3	Purchasing new school equipment	*			all schools
<b>Agriculture Needs</b>					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands	*			50 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	*			250 tons per year
6	Construction of new greenhouses	*			4 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses	*			1 greenhouse
8	Provision of field crops seeds	*			
9	Provision of plants and agricultural supplies	*			
<b>Other Needs</b>					
1	Sports field	*			1

<sup>^</sup> 3 km main roads, 3 km secondary roads and 3 km are agricultural roads

Source: Mas-ha Village Council, 2012

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