

# Surda 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 Ramallah Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Ramallah 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 Ramallah 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 Ramallah 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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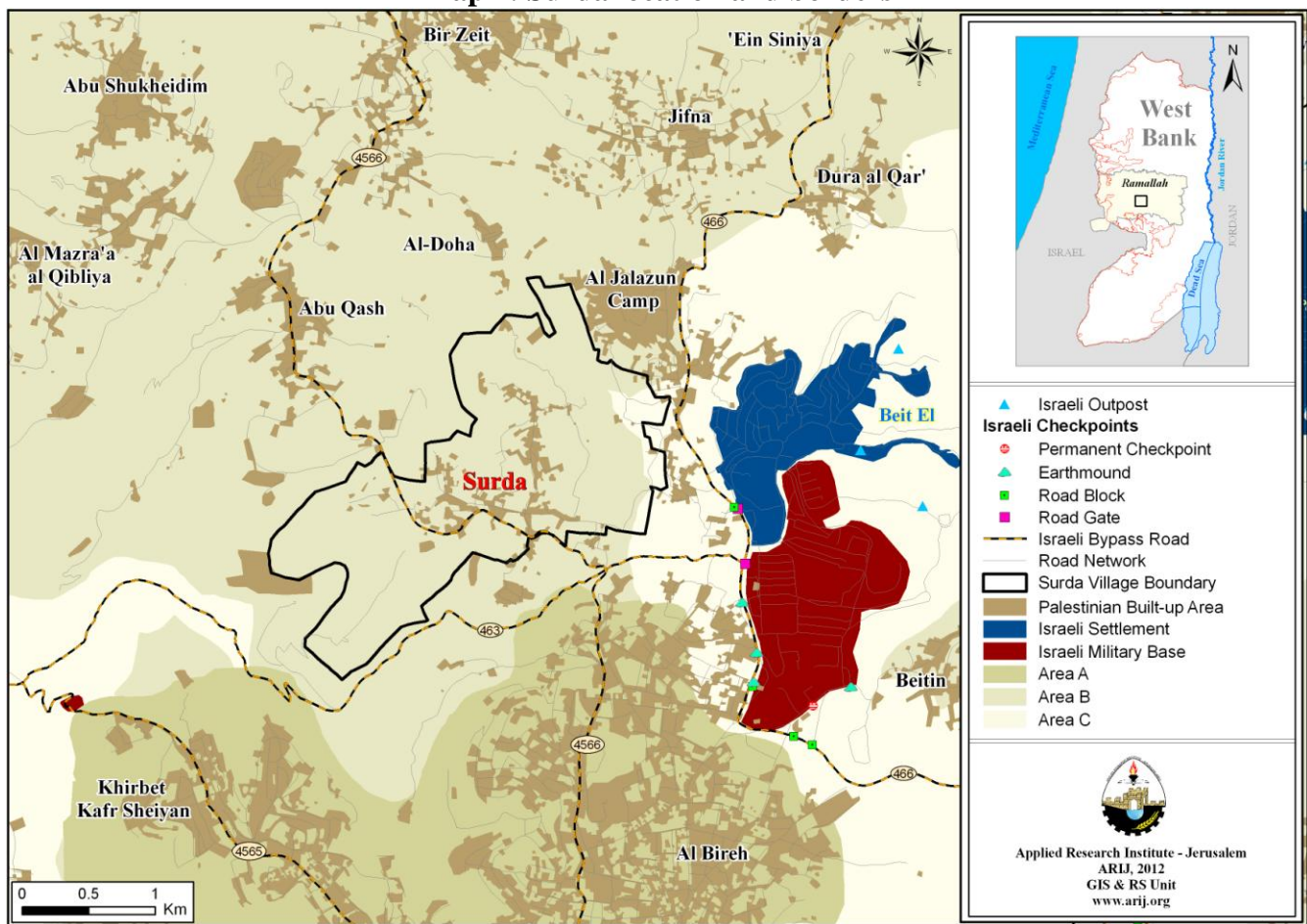
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# Surda Village Profile

## Location and Physical Characteristics

Surda is a Palestinian village in the Ramallah Governorate located 3.7km north of Ramallah City. Surda is bordered by Al Bireh and Dura el Qar' lands to the east, Jifna village to the north, Abu Qash to the west, and Ramallah and Al Bireh to the south (ARIJ GIS, 2012) (See Map 1)

**Map 1: Surda location and borders**



Source: ARIJ GIS, 2012

Surda is located at an altitude of 838m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 634.2mm. The average annual temperature is 16 ° C and the average annual humidity is approximately 61% (ARIJ GIS, 2012).

Since 1994, Surda has been governed by a village council which is currently administrated by 9 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority. The Village Council owns a permanent headquarters where two employees work, but does not possess a vehicle for the collection of solid waste (Surda Village Council, 2011).

It is the responsibility of the village council to provide a number of services to the residents of Surda, including (Surda Village Council, 2011):

- Solid waste collection, street cleaning, and road construction and rehabilitation.
- Providing public markets.
- Protecting archaeological and historical sites.
- Protecting governmental properties.
- Providing street lighting.
- Providing offices for governmental services, including security and post office.
- Implementing projects and case studies for the village
- Organizing the processes of construction and issuing licenses.

## History

Surda village's name is from a Syriac word which can be translated to mean 'fear and isolation' (Surda Village Council, 2011) (See photo below for Surda village).

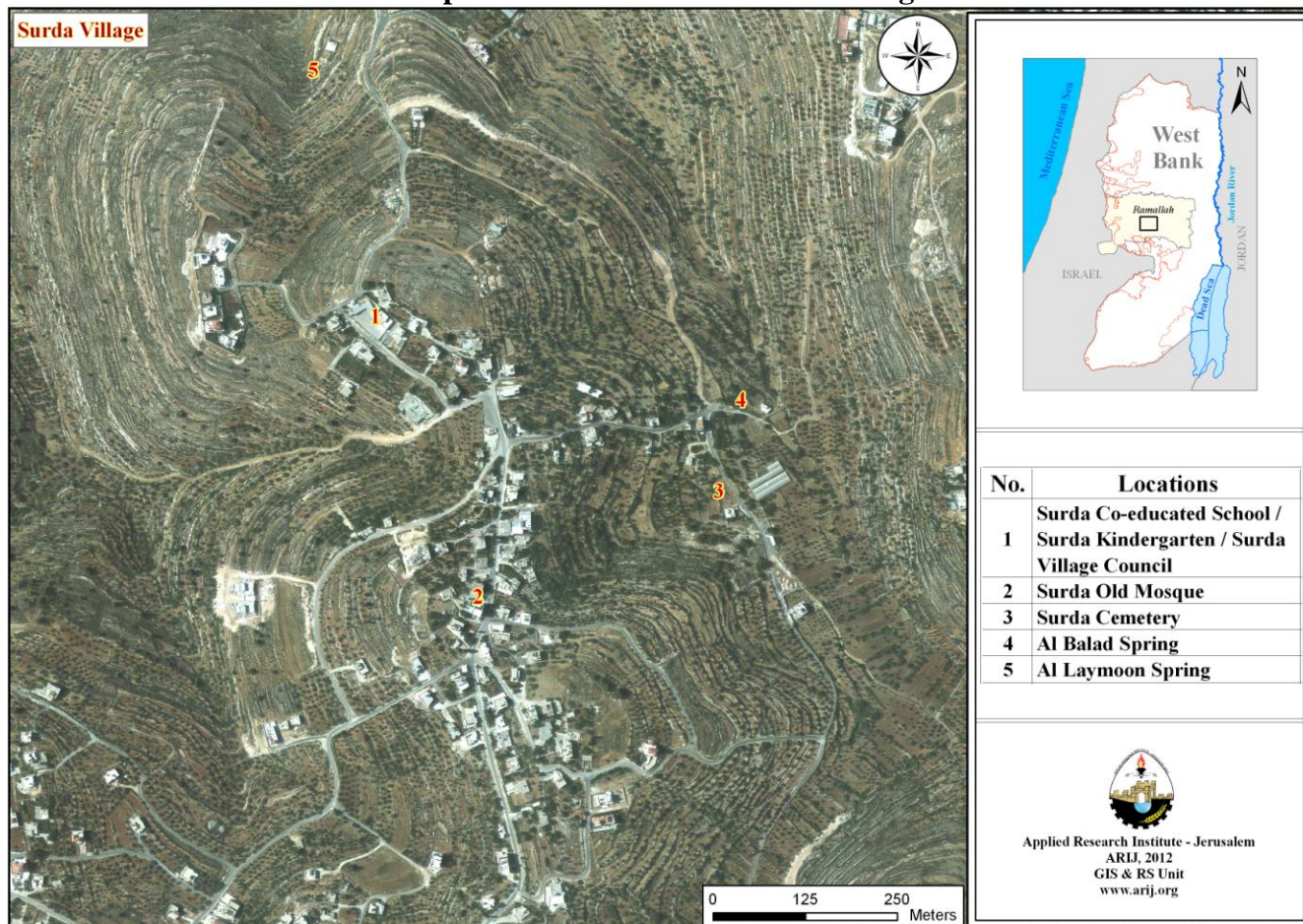
### Photos of Surda



## Religious and Archaeological Sites

There is one mosque in the village, Surda Mosque. There are a few sites of archaeological interest, including the old town, Khirbat al 'Ajala, Khirbat 'Amura, and Khirbat ash Sha'our (Surda Village Council, 2011) (See Map 2).

**Map 2: Main locations in Surda Village**



Source: ARIJ GIS, 2012

## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Surda in 2007 was 970, of whom 477 were male and 493 female. There were 214 households living in 288 housing units.

### Age Groups and Gender

The General Census of Population and Housing carried out by PCBS in 2007 showed the distribution of age groups in Surda was as follows: 33.6% were less than 15 years of age, 58.1% were between 15 and

64 years of age, and 6% were 65 years of age or older. Data additionally showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the village is 96.8: 100, meaning that males and females constituted 49.2% and 50.8% of the population respectively.

## Families

Surda residents are from several families, mainly the Bethar, Taha, Abd al Samad and Ash Shamlah families (Surda Village Council, 2011).

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate amongst the Surda population was approximately 7.1%, of whom 75% were females. Of the literate population, 11.2% could only read and write with no formal education, 18.2% had elementary education, 20.4% had preparatory education, 19.5% had secondary education, and 23.2% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of Surda by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

**Table 1: Surda population (10 years of age 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	13	49	63	73	61	24	49	1	15	2	1	<b>351</b>
F	39	33	70	76	81	29	44	-	5	-	1	<b>378</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>729</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are no schools or kindergartens in the village (Directorate of Education - Ramallah, 2011). Therefore, students attend schools in Bir Zeit or Ramallah, approximately 5km from the village (Surda Village Council, 2011).

In addition to the lack of schools in the village, the educational sector in Surda faces some other problems, primarily the lack of governmental services in the field of education (Surda Village Council, 2011).

## Health Status

There are a few health centers and clinics available in the village, including four private physician's clinics with different specialties, a private pharmacy, and a private center for children with autism. In the absence of required services or in emergencies, patients are sent to healthcare facilities in Ramallah city, 3km from the locality (Surda Village Council, 2011).



The village faces some problems concerning the health sector, primarily the lack of an ambulance in the village (Surda Village Council, 2011).

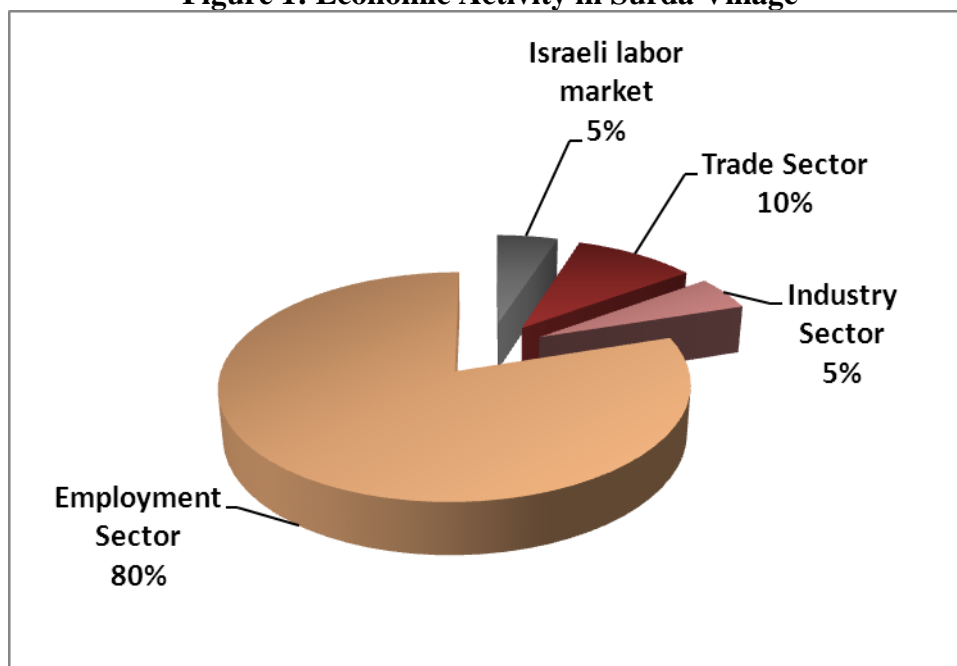
## Economic Activities

The economy in Surda is dependent on several economic sectors, mainly the employees sector, which absorbs 80% of the village workforce (Surda Village Council, 2011) (See Figure 1).

The results of a field survey conducted by ARIJ staff in 2011 for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Surda are as follows:

- Government or Private Employees Sector (80%)
- Trade Sector (10%)
- Israeli Labor Market (5%)
- Industry (5%)

**Figure 1: Economic Activity in Surda Village**



Source: Surda Village Council, 2011

Surda village has 3 grocery stores, 2 carpentry workshops, 2 service stores (car rental agencies), and one exchange bureau (Surda Village Council, 2011).

The unemployment rate in Surda reached approximately 20% in 2011, and it was found that those who previously worked in Israel have been most affected by Israeli restrictions and procedures (Surda Village Council, 2011).

## Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 34.4% of the Surda labor force was economically active, of whom 90.4% were employed, and 65.4% were not economically active, of whom 50.1% were students, and 30.6% were housekeepers (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Surda population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status-2007**

SEX	Economically Active				Not Economically Active						Un-known	Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (Never worked)	Total	Students	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & Not looking for work	Other	Total		
M	173	8	6	<b>187</b>	120	-	26	12	5	<b>163</b>	1	<b>351</b>
F	54	8	2	<b>64</b>	119	146	40	-	9	<b>314</b>	-	<b>378</b>
T	227	16	8	<b>251</b>	239	146	66	12	14	<b>477</b>	1	<b>729</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009.

## Agricultural Sector

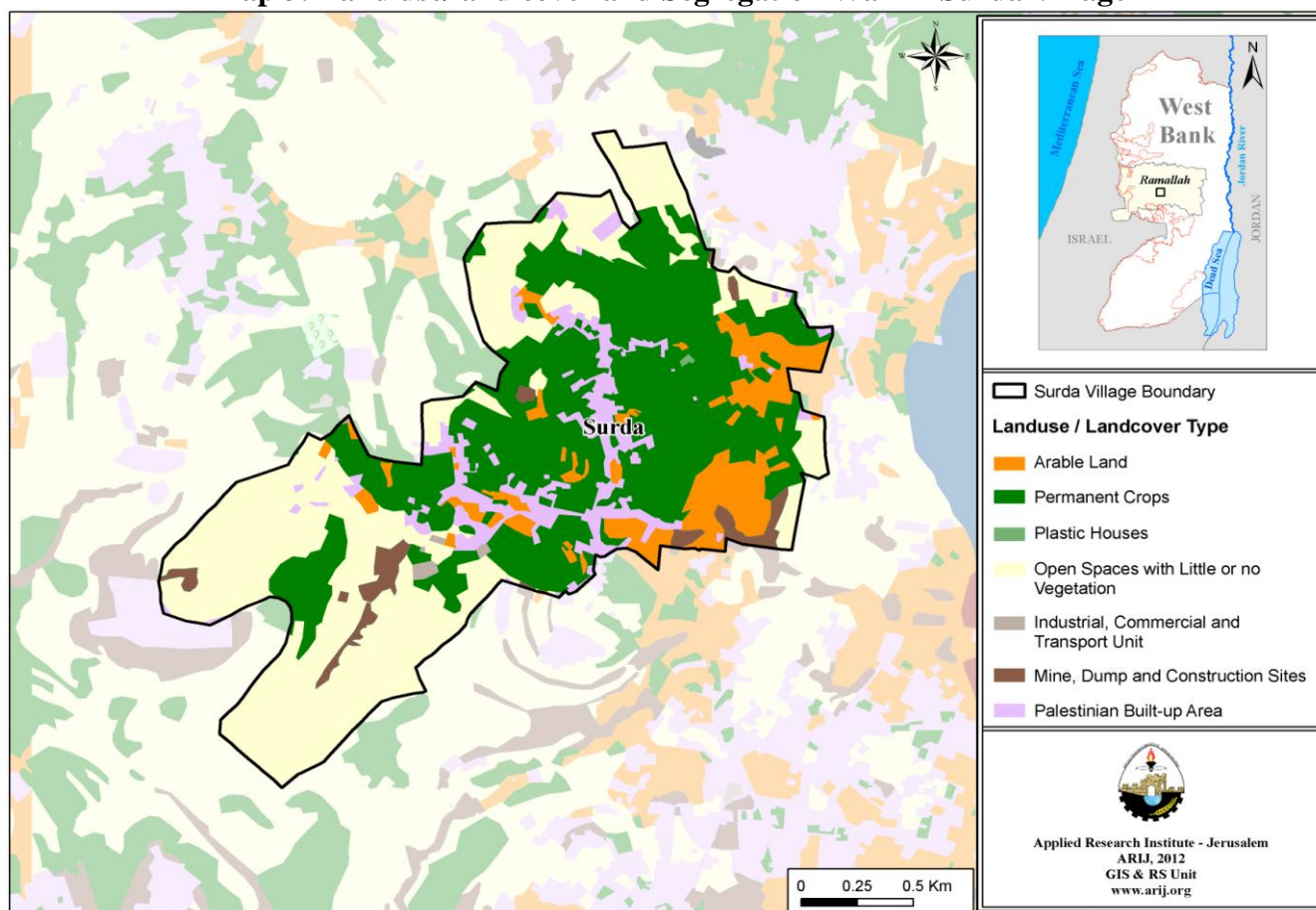
Surda lies on an area of 3,810 dunums, of which 1,916 dunums are arable land and 312 dunums are dedicated to residential services (see Table 3 and Map 3).

**Table 3: Land use and land cover in Surda village in 2010 (area in dunum)**

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (1,916)				Inland water	Forests	Open Spaces	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlement, Military Bases & Wall Zone
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
3,810	312	1,562	2	0	352	0	0	1,466	117	0

Source: ARIJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

**Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Surda Village**



Source: ARIJ GIS, 2012

Table 4 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Surda. The most commonly cultivated crop within this area is squash.

**Table 4: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Surda village (dunum)**

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetable		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total area	
RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.	RF	Irr.
22	0	0	0	11	0	5	0	2	0	40	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

Table 5 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Surda is famous for olive cultivation; there are 503 dunums of land planted with olive crops in the village.

**Table 5: Total area of fruit and olive trees in Surda village (dunum)**

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.
503	0	0	0	67	0	2	0	16	0	80	0	668	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

In terms of field crops and forage in Surda, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated, covering an area of about 40 dunums, in addition to the cultivation of dry legumes such as beans (See Table 6).

**Table 6: Total area of field crops in Surda village (dunum)**

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
40	0	8	0	17	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	75	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and by ARIJ's GIS Unit in sizes of agricultural areas is explained by the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010) conducted a survey which used a definition of agricultural areas based on land ownership. Therefore, the areas included in the survey were those of actual holdings of agricultural areas instead of seasonal ones. The survey did not consider fragmented and small seasonal cultivated areas in residential and agricultural areas. ARIJ's survey, however, indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, thus accounting for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey conducted by ARIJ staff in 2011 shows that 5% of the residents in Surda rear and keep domestic animals such as cows, sheep, and goats (See Table 7).

**Table 7: Livestock in Surda village**

Cows*	Sheep	Goats	Camels	Horses	Donkeys	Mules	Broilers	Layers	Bee Hives
3	345	529	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, 2009

There are approximately 3.5 kilometers of agricultural roads in the village suitable only for agricultural machinery and tractors (Surda Village Council, 2011).

The agricultural sector in the village faces many obstacles and problems, including (Surda Village Council, 2011):

- Many agricultural workers have left the village and immigrated to the US.
- Most of the village labor force works in the services sector and neglects the agricultural sector.
- The problem of the Palestinian market.

## Institutions and Services

Surda village has a fire brigade center, a post office, and Surda Village Council which aims at taking care of public issues in the village and providing various services to its population (Surda\_Village Council, 2011).

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

### Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Surda has been connected to a public electricity network since 1979. It is served by Jerusalem Electricity Company, which is the main source of electricity in the village, and approximately 98% of the housing units in the village are connected to the network. However, the village residents face some problems concerning electricity, principally the need to rehabilitate and maintain the network (Surda Village Council, 2011).

Surda is connected to a telecommunication network and approximately all of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines (Surda Village Council, 2011).

### Transportation Services:

There are 19km of main roads and 15km of secondary roads in the village (See Table 8) (Surda Village Council, 2011).

**Table 8: Roads in Surda village**

Status of Internal Roads	Road Length (km)	
	Main	Sub
<b>1. Paved &amp; in good condition</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. Paved but in poor condition</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>3. Unpaved</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Surda Village Council, 2011

### Water Resources:

Surda is provided with water by the Jerusalem Water Authority through the public water network established in 1974 and approximately 100% of the housing units are connected to the water network (Surda Village Council, 2011).

The quantity of water supplied to Surda in 2010 was about 64,393 cubic meters (Jerusalem Water Authority, 2011). The estimated rate of water supply per capita is therefore about 182 liters/day. However, no Surda citizen consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are about 26.5%. The losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, in the distribution network, and at the household level;

therefore, the rate of water consumption per capita in Surda is 133.7 liters per day (Jerusalem Water Authority, 2011).

The village also has 150 household rainwater harvesting cisterns used as alternative resources of water to the public network; however, these are not sufficient to meet the residents' water needs (Surda Village Council, 2011).

Surda village also has 4 public springs: Al Baldah, Al Lamwah, Al Masamah, and Al Faqeer springs (Surda Village Council, 2011).

To determine water costs, the water authority has adopted an upward rate where the price of water increases with increasing consumption. Table 9 shows the price of water by category of consumption.

**Table 9: Water tariffs of Jerusalem Water Authority adopted since 01.01.2012**

Consumption Category (m <sup>3</sup> )	Domestic (NIS/m <sup>3</sup> )	Industrial (NIS/m <sup>3</sup> )	Tourist (NIS/m <sup>3</sup> )	Commercial (NIS/m <sup>3</sup> )	Public Institutions (NIS/m <sup>3</sup> )
0 – 5	4.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.4
5.1 – 10	4.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	4.5
10.1 – 20	5.6	6.8	6.8	6.8	5.6
20.1 – 30	6.8	8.1	8.1	8.1	6.8
30.1+	9	9.9	10.8	9	9

Source: Jerusalem Water Authority, 2012

### Sanitation:

Surda lacks a public sewerage network with most of the village residents using cesspits as their main means of wastewater disposal (Surda Village Council, 2011).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the estimated amount of wastewater generated per day is approximately 103.7 cubic meters or 37,863 cubic meters annually. At the individual level in the village, it is estimated that per capita wastewater generation is approximately 93.6 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys without concern for the environment. There is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to the environment and to public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

### Solid Waste Management:

Surda Village Council is responsible for managing 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 of approximately 20 NIS is charged to the population served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However, the collected fees are not sufficient for good

management of solid waste; only 30% of these fees are collected from the citizens (Surda Village Council, 2011).

Most of the population in Surda benefit from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags and then transferred to 85 containers with a capacity of 1100 liters spread throughout the locality. The Village Council collects the solid waste from the containers twice a week and transports it using a waste vehicle to Surda dumping site, where it is buried (Surda Village Council, 2011).

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Surda is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Surda residents is nearly 0.7 tons, or 247.8 tons per year (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

## **Environmental Conditions**

Like other villages and towns in the governorate, Surda 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 Jerusalem Water Authority for long periods of time during summer in several neighborhoods of the village for several reasons:
  - (1) Israeli control over Palestinian water resources. Consequently, the Jerusalem Water Authority purchases water from the Israeli company of Mekorot in order to satisfy residents' needs.
  - (2) High rate of water losses, because the water network is old and in need of rehabilitation and renovation.

### **Wastewater Management**

- The absence of a public sewage network means that in Surda residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and/or to discharge wastewater in 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 and water collected in household cisterns (rainwater harvesting cisterns) because most cesspits are built without lining, allowing wastewater to enter into the ground and avoiding the need to use sewage tankers. 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

- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve in Surda and the other neighboring communities in the governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill, because the appropriate land is within Area C and under Israeli 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 Surda

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed in 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Surda was divided into areas “B” and “C”. Approximately 3,635 dunums (95.4% 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 camps. It is worth mentioning that all of the village’s population resides in area “B” which constitutes the larger area in comparison to the total area of the village. The rest of the village’s area, constituting 175 dunums (4.6% of the total area), is 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 a consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration (table 10).

**Table 10: The Geopolitical Divisions of Surda – Ramallah Governorate**

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total village area
Area A	0	0
Area B	3,635	95.4
Area C	175	4.6
Nature Reserve	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,810</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2011*

There are no Israeli settlements on Surda lands, although some settlement blocs are located east of the village; around 1500 m in distance. These include Beit El settlement bloc and Beit El military base, both of which are built on lands of Al Bireh and Dura al Qar’. Beit El military base was constructed on 1422 dunums of Al Bireh lands and houses the central Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank, a detention center, and an Israeli military camp. Beit El settlement is one of the major Israeli settlements in the Ramallah and Al Bireh Governorate; it was established in 1977 on almost 1056 dunums of land and is currently inhabited by approximately 5,500 Israeli settlers.



## Development Plans and Projects

### Implemented Projects

Surda village council has implemented several development projects in Surda during the past five years (See Table 11).

**Table 11: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Surda During the Last Five Years**

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Construction and pavement of roads	Infrastructure	2011	Ministry of Local Government
Construction of a sports stadium	Public Services	2011	Ministry of Local Government
Rehabilitation of the village roads	Infrastructure	2010	Surda Village Council
Rehabilitation of the cemetery	Infrastructure	2010	Surda Village Council
<b>Source: Surda Village Council, 2011</b>			

### Proposed Projects

Surda Village Council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the village and the village residents, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the PRA workshop conducted by ARIJ staff in the village. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the perspectives of the participants in the workshop (Surda Village Council, 2011):

1. Constructing a cultural, social and sports club with all necessary facilities to serve village youth.
2. Implementing small agricultural development projects to serve needy families and farmers, such as the establishment of household harvesting cisterns, the construction of a factory for packaging and marketing agricultural products, mainly olive oil, and a compost project for the production and exploitation of organic fertilizers.
3. Establishing a public park to serve all age groups in the village.
4. Constructing a services complex in the village to be used for a variety of activities.
5. Constructing a medical clinic building in the village and to be fully equipped to accommodate emergency cases.
6. Rehabilitating about 4 km of the village streets through the construction of sidewalks and providing street lighting in areas where necessary.
7. Rehabilitating the main water spring and rehabilitating the old city buildings to conserve and exploit them for tourism.
8. Renovating the old water network in the village (about 3 km).
9. Establishing wastewater treatment units, mainly in houses located near the main water spring, to preserve the environmental situation in the area.

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Surda suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 12 shows the development priorities and needs in the village according to the village council's feedback.

**Table 12: Development Priorities and Needs in Surda**

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
<b>Infrastructural Needs</b>					
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*			18km*
2	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks	*			3.5km
3	Extending the Water Network to Cover New Built up Areas	*			3km
4	Construction of New Water Networks			*	3.5km
5	Rehabilitation/ Construction of New Wells or Springs	*			3 springs
6	Construction of Water Reservoirs	*			500 cubic meters
7	Construction of a Sewage Disposal Network	*			20km
8	Construction of a New Electricity Network	*			5km
9	Providing Containers for Solid Waste Collection		*		30 containers
10	Providing Vehicles for Collecting Solid Waste	*			1
11	Providing a Sanitary Landfill	*			
<b>Health Needs</b>					
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centres	*			a health center
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres			*	
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipment and Tools			*	
<b>Educational Needs</b>					
1	Building of New Schools	*			
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools			*	
3	Purchasing of New Equipment for Schools	*			
<b>Agriculture Needs</b>					
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural Lands	*			1,500 dunums
2	Building Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns	*			3 cisterns
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock			*	
4	Veterinary Services		*		
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals			*	
6	Construction of New Greenhouses	*			15 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses			*	
8	Field Crops Seeds			*	
9	Plants and Agricultural Supplies			*	

\*8km are main roads, 5km are sub roads and 5km are agricultural.

Source: Surda Village Council, 2011

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