Aqbat Jabr camp, located southwest of Jericho in the Jordan valley, is the largest camp in the West Bank by surface area. Prior to the 1967 hostilities, it was also one of the most populated camps, with approximately 30,000 refugees. During the 1967 hostilities, around 25,000 residents fled. Currently, the camp shelters 10,306 refugees, making it one of the least densely populated camps in the West Bank. Despite this, the camp’s large surface area and the climate of the Jordan Valley pose several challenges, including insufficient waste removal and flooding during winter. In the absence of a sewerage network, residents use percolation pits that cause a wide range of problems and hazardous living conditions, especially during floods. In addition, residents struggle with high unemployment rate and poor shelter conditions. Unemployment rates remain a challenge inside all camps with 17% recorded by PCBS’s Labour Taskforce Report, Q4 2022.

The camp has several active NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) that target different groups in the camp, especially women and youth. While boys have the chance to play sport in a football stadium, there are limited areas where young women and girls can be active and socialize.

Most of the camp is under full Palestinian control (Area A), with only a small part under Israeli control (Area C), the majority of which is agricultural land. Raising animals is an important source of income for many Bedouin families living in the camp.

10,306 Registered population

4,297 Children 0-18 year (2,118 female 2,179 male)

education

Aqbat Jabr camp has two UNRWA schools, serving approximately 1,666 students from first to ninth grade - based on 2021/22 scholastic year data. The UNRWA Aqbat Jabr Girls’ School was constructed in 2007 and UNRWA Aqbat Jabr Boys’ School was built through the Programme Budget in 2012. The schools in Aqbat Jabr have a number of facilities, including a library and computer and science laboratories. Additional classrooms in the two schools were constructed in the fall of 2016 through the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD). UNRWA psychosocial counsellors are present in the camp’s schools to support students’ needs.

2 Schools

1,666 Students

57 Education staff: teachers, school principals, deputy school principals and school counselors

health

Aqbat Jabr camp has one health centre, which was reconstructed in 2016 through the SFD. The centre provides primary health services including reproductive health, infant and child care, immunizations, screening and medical check-ups, psychosocial counselling and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases. The centre implements the Family Health Team approach which focuses on the family with the aim of providing comprehensive, continuous care. This approach has improved patient flow and reduced the number of consultations per doctor. An electronic health information system for patient files is also implemented which increases the accuracy of data and health information, as well as health service efficiency in the centre.

A common health risk specific to the Jericho area is leishmaniasis, a disease caused by the bite of sand flies. UNRWA cooperates with the Ministry of Health each year to eradicate these flies.

*all data presented is unrwa annual data for 2022 unless stated otherwise
camp profile: aqbat jabr camp

relief & social services

Through the Social Safety Net Programme, UNRWA provides cash assistance to approximately 692 impoverished refugees each year, which is equivalent to 6.7 per cent of the registered population in the camp. Moreover, through the Emergency Appeal (EA), an additional 202 individuals received emergency cash assistance (ECA).

Social workers conduct home visits to identify cases which require additional support. In addition, UNRWA Crisis Intervention Unit provides financial assistance to residents whose shelters have been damaged after incursions to repair broken doors, windows, etc. It also refers the victims to services such as mental health counselling and legal assistance.

716 Identified poor households* (3,495 individuals)

112 Female-headed household identified poor

19% of the identified poor households benefit from the e-card (Social Safety Net Programme and Emergency Cash Assistance)

138 Households

894 Individuals

29 Female-headed household

infrastructure & camp improvement

The UNRWA Sanitation Foreman conducts daily water examinations and manages a team of ten sanitation labourers (5 temporary staff through various sources of funds). The sanitation labourers collect the solid waste from streets and shelters and transport it to containers spread around the camp. However, due to the camp’s large surface area, they are not able to reach all the camp areas on a daily basis. Waste is transferred to a dumpsite by trucks from Jericho Municipality every five days. An UNRWA tractor also removes waste, although the tractor suffers from frequent breakdowns. Due to the warm climate, uncollected solid waste quickly begins to decompose and smell. As a result, residents often resort to burning the solid waste, producing toxic smoke that is dangerous for residents’ health and can lead to respiratory diseases.

Aqbat Jabr camp is the only camp in the West Bank with an UNRWA water treatment plant. This plant filters water from a nearby spring. Water availability improved after a new water network was completed in 2013; however, residents complain about the high salinity of the water. The camp also houses an UNRWA water testing laboratory that tests the water quality of all central West Bank camps on a monthly basis.

Since there is no sewerage network in Aqbat Jabr camp, all shelters use percolation pits that are often poorly constructed and not properly covered. The percolation pits are also expensive to maintain and are often not emptied regularly. This creates a dangerous and undignified living environment.

Improvement of water and electricity supply to mitigate the frequent power and water outages in the camp.

Improvement of the solid waste collection process and refurbishment of solid waste containers.

Shelter rehabilitation for the most vulnerable.

Maintenance of the streets in Aqbat Jabr.

protection & neutrality

Similar to all refugee camps in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, camp residents in Aqbat Jabr experience a coercive environment that impacts all aspects of daily life. ISF is more likely to use live ammunition during incursions into refugee camps than elsewhere in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and this often results in serious injuries and fatalities. Conflict-related violence has a particularly traumatizing effect on children and the psychological impact can be quite severe on their development. In 2022, ISF conducted 29 operations in the camp, which resulted in 35 injuries, five of which were caused by live ammunition.

5 Injuries caused by live ammunition

27 Detainees

21 Confrontations

14 Teargas incidents

Camp needs

- Improvement of water and electricity supply to mitigate the frequent power and water outages in the camp.
- Improvement of the solid waste collection process and refurbishment of solid waste containers.
- Shelter rehabilitation for the most vulnerable.
- Maintenance of the streets in Aqbat Jabr.

* Poor Households are identified using UNRWA’s standard criteria, the Proxy Means Testing Formula (PMTF).