



Area Security Risk Assessment

Beit Furik Village, Nablus Governorate, Occupied Palestine

31 December 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Security Risk Assessment evaluates the safety and security conditions in Beit Furik Village, Nablus Governorate, to understand the threat environment, inform decision making and guide successful humanitarian and development operations. The assessment focuses on geographic, access, and security aspects, highlighting threats/risks and vulnerabilities while providing actionable recommendations for mitigation and preparedness.

OVERVIEW

Beit Furik is a Palestinian village located southeast of Nablus in the northern West Bank. Nestled on hilly terrain at an elevation of approximately 620 meters above sea level, the village is home to around 5,000 residents. Surrounded by agricultural lands and olive groves, it embodies the agrarian traditions of the region. The village spans Areas B and C, as defined by the Oslo Accords, with governance and service delivery in Area C under full Israeli civil and military control. This administrative division creates distinct challenges, particularly in terms of access to resources, freedom of movement, and infrastructure development.

Strategic Location and Geopolitical Challenges

Beit Furik's proximity to the Jordan Valley positions it advantageously in terms of access to fertile agricultural lands. This geographic feature holds significant economic potential, particularly for farming and olive cultivation, which are central to the village's economy. However, its strategic location also places it at the epicentre of geopolitical tensions. The village lies close to Israeli settlements and military zones, making it highly susceptible to hostilities and security incidents.

The hilly terrain that defines Beit Furik not only shapes its physical landscape but also complicates its logistical environment. Steep hills and narrow valleys hinder the development of efficient transportation networks, isolating the community during periods of conflict or adverse weather conditions. This isolation amplifies the impact of external disruptions, restricting access to essential services and limiting opportunities for economic engagement. Furthermore, the village's location along key flashpoints intensify its exposure to settler violence, military activities, and movement restrictions.

Economic and Social Dynamics

Beit Furik has historically been an agricultural hub, celebrated for its high-quality olive oil production and traditional farming practices. These agricultural activities are more than just an economic foundation—they are deeply intertwined with the village's cultural identity. The social fabric of Beit Furik reflects this agrarian heritage, with extended families residing in clustered housing units that foster strong community ties. This cohesion provides a critical buffer against external stressors, enabling residents to collectively address challenges.

Despite its agricultural strengths, the village's economy is highly vulnerable to external disruptions. Settler violence, including crop destruction, livestock theft, and arson, is a recurring threat, undermining the livelihoods of farmers and perpetuating economic instability. The reliance on small-scale agriculture and commerce leaves the community particularly exposed to market fluctuations and movement restrictions. These vulnerabilities are further compounded by the lack of diversification in income sources, making the economy less resilient to shocks.

Infrastructure and Service Delivery

The infrastructure in Beit Furik is sufficient to meet basic needs but falls short in providing advanced healthcare, education, and emergency services. Residents often face significant barriers in accessing specialized medical care and higher education, as such facilities are located outside the village and are difficult to reach due to movement restrictions. The Beit Furik checkpoint, a key access point to and from the village, represents a major impediment to mobility. It restricts residents' access to employment opportunities, medical services, and marketplaces, exacerbating social and economic vulnerabilities.

In addition to mobility constraints, the presence of Israeli Armed Forces patrols and frequent military operations further disrupt daily life. These activities not only create an atmosphere of fear and instability but also impose additional logistical and psychological burdens on the community. Night raids, search and arrest operations, and other military actions have a profound impact.

Security Environment

The security environment in Beit Furik is shaped by its proximity to Israeli settlements, military checkpoints, and other flashpoints. Residents frequently face settler-related violence, including harassment, physical assaults, and damage to agricultural assets. These security incidents not only endanger lives but also disrupt economic activities, such as harvesting and transporting agricultural produce. This ongoing violence perpetuates a cycle of economic fragility and psychological stress, eroding community resilience over time.

Military checkpoints and regular patrols by the Israeli Armed Forces impose additional challenges. Movement restrictions are often intensified during periods of heightened tension or security operations, further isolating the community and limiting access to essential services. The presence of non-state armed actors in the vicinity occasionally exacerbates tensions, increasing the likelihood of violent confrontations and collateral damage during counteroperations. These dynamics contribute to a volatile security environment, where sudden and unpredictable restrictions on movement can disrupt all aspects of life.

Environmental and Logistical Factors

Beit Furik experiences a Mediterranean climate, characterized by hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Rainfall is concentrated between November and March, with minimal precipitation during the summer months. This seasonal variability has direct implications for the village's agricultural productivity, as crops and livestock are highly dependent on consistent weather patterns. Unpredictable rainfall or prolonged droughts can disrupt farming cycles, reducing yields and straining the local economy.

The village's steep terrain and narrow roads exacerbate its logistical challenges, particularly during the rainy season when road conditions deteriorate. These factors hinder the delivery of goods and services, limit mobility, and complicate emergency response efforts. Residents face significant difficulties in maintaining reliable transportation networks, further isolating the community during periods of conflict or adverse weather.

Area in General



KEY STAKEHOLDERS OPERATING IN AND NEAR BEIT FURIK VILLAGE

Stakeholder	Roles/Activities	Impact on Dynamics	Challenges/Constraints	Perception by Local Population
Settlers from nearby Israeli settlements	Engage in search and arrest operations, vandalism, harassment; promote expansionist agendas.	Escalate tensions, disrupt agricultural activities, and provoke friction.	Limited accountability; freedom of movement and law enforcement favour settlers.	Viewed as aggressors and a threat to safety and livelihoods.
Israeli Armed Forces	Conduct patrols, night raids, checkpoint operations; enforce security measures.	Restrict movement, disrupt economy, and lead to armed clashes with residents.	Criticism over excessive force; balancing security with civil freedom.	Seen as occupiers responsible for restrictions and economic hardships.
Palestinian Authority	Provide administrative and civil governance; coordinate with Israeli authorities.	Limited enforcement capacity, viewed sceptically due to coordination with Israel.	Restricted capacity due to Israeli control; mistrust among local population.	Mixed perceptions: some view as necessary, others as collaborators.
Non-State Armed groups (e.g., Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades)	Organize protests, demonstrations, and armed resistance.	Increase tensions, provoke military escalation, and heighten security risks.	Risk of military counteroperations; loss of local support in escalation scenarios.	Mixed support: some view as resistance, others fear escalation.
NGOs and International Organizations	Provide food assistance, medical aid, and psychosocial support.	Support community resilience but face operational challenges due to restrictions.	Access restrictions, security concerns, and reliance on donor funding.	Generally positive but hindered by operational limitations.
Local leaders and village committees	Mediate disputes, coordinate aid distribution, maintain external communication.	Strengthen community cohesion and ensure resource distribution.	Limited resources; dependence on external support for larger needs.	Trusted and respected as key community mediators.
Diplomatic missions, UN agencies, and other international actors	Advocate for human rights, provide oversight, deter violence.	Provide oversight and advocacy, deter violence, but attract scrutiny from stakeholders.	Limited presence on the ground; constrained by political dynamics.	Viewed as necessary advocates but limited in local impact.

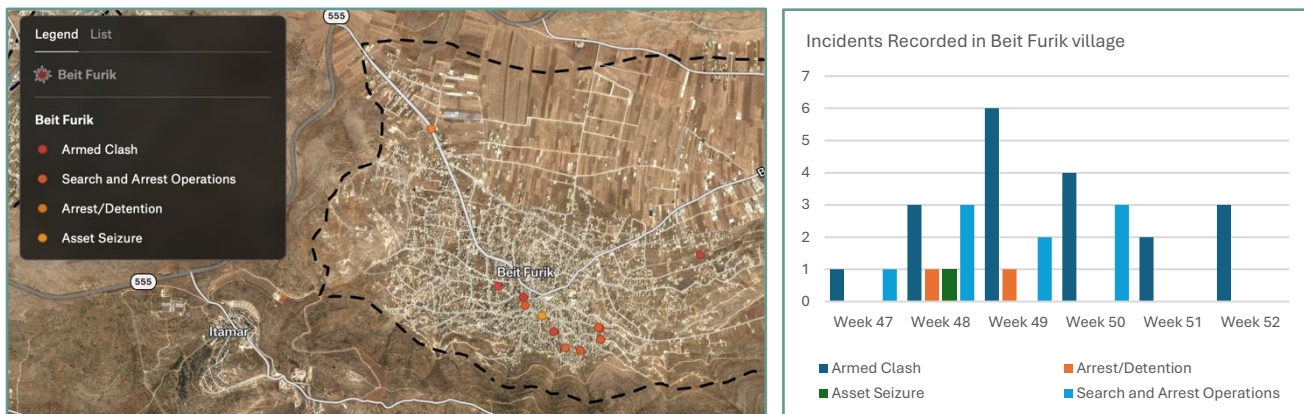
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CHALLENGES IN BEIT FURIK

Humanitarian access in Beit Furik is obstructed by a combination of legal, security, and logistical barriers enabled primarily by the Israeli Civil Administration, Israeli Armed Forces, and settlers. Additionally, natural terrain challenges and activities by armed groups compound the difficulties faced by aid organizations. Addressing these access restrictions requires coordinated advocacy, improved infrastructure, and adherence to international humanitarian principles.

Below is an analysis of these challenges:

Categories	Subject	Description	Enabling Actors
Legal/Bureaucratic Risks	Permit Requirements	Humanitarian organizations face significant delays and denials in obtaining permits to operate in Area C, including construction projects or the transportation of aid.	Israeli Civil Administration
	Checkpoint Regulations	Stringent checkpoint protocols, including documentation and searches, often delay or deny access to essential supplies and personnel.	Israeli Armed Forces
	Land Confiscation and Zoning	Restrictions on land use and frequent land confiscations under zoning regulations prevent access to critical agricultural areas.	Israeli Civil Administration and Settlements
Security Access Risks	Military Operations	Israeli Armed Forces search and arrest operations, night raids, and curfews frequently disrupt planned humanitarian interventions and restrict movement.	Israeli Armed Forces
	Settler Violence	Attacks and intimidation by settlers often target aid workers and agricultural projects, creating a hostile environment.	Settlers from nearby settlements
	Armed Group Activities	Activities by armed groups, including protests or confrontations, escalate tensions and delay humanitarian responses.	Armed groups (e.g., Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades)
Logistical Access Risks	Terrain and Infrastructure	Poor road infrastructure, combined with the village's hilly terrain, complicates the delivery of aid, especially during adverse weather conditions.	Natural barriers and limited local resources
	Checkpoint Delays	Frequent closures or long wait times at the Beit Furik checkpoint disrupt supply chains and the movement of aid workers.	Israeli Armed Forces
	Restricted Access to Services	Limited access to advanced healthcare and educational facilities due to checkpoint restrictions exacerbates vulnerabilities.	Israeli Armed Forces

SUMMARY OF THREATS IN BEIT FURIK VILLAGE AND SURROUNDING AREAS



Beit Furik and its surrounding areas face a multifaceted risk environment driven by a combination of political, security, logistical, and environmental factors.

Below is a summary of the key threats and risks:

Political and Conflict-Related Risks:

- Encroachment by nearby Israeli settlements has led to land confiscation, destruction of crops, and incidents of harassment and violence targeting residents. Settler search and arrest operations often escalate tensions, particularly during the olive harvest season.
- IAF frequently conduct night raids, house searches, and arrest operations in Beit Furik, citing security concerns. These operations often result in armed clashes with local youth and non-state armed actors.
- The Beit Furik checkpoint serves as a critical connection to Nablus but is frequently subject to closures and delays, severely limiting residents' access to healthcare, education, and markets.

Security Risks:

- Armed clashes between residents and Israeli forces are common, often triggered by IAF search and arrest operations and/or settler violence.
- Occasional activities by non-state armed actors, such as protests or direct attacks on Israeli military infrastructure and/or convoys.

Socioeconomic Risks:

- Restrictions on access to agricultural land, combined with high unemployment, have increased reliance on humanitarian aid. Settler violence further undermines livelihoods by targeting crops, livestock, and farming equipment.
- Limited access to water and other resources, exacerbated by Area C restrictions, and creates additional hardships for the host communities.

Environmental and Health Risks:

- Poor road conditions and limited healthcare facilities hinder both emergency responses and routine access.
- Frequent armed clashes result in the use of tear gas and rubber-coated bullets, posing health risks, particularly to children and the elderly.

KEY LOCATIONS

Facility Name	Type/Ownership	Location	Approx. Distance from Beit Furik Center	Key Services
Beit Furik Health Clinic	Primary Health Clinic (MOH)	Within Beit Furik village	Within the village	Basic primary care, vaccinations, maternal/child health, first aid
Beit Dajan Health Clinic	Primary Health Clinic (MOH)	Beit Dajan (west of Beit Furik)	3–4 km	Basic primary care, referrals
Rafidia Governmental Hospital (Rafidia Surgical Hospital)	Governmental Hospital	Rafidia neighborhood, southwestern Nablus	~9–10 km	Surgical and emergency care, inpatient wards
An-Najah National University Hospital	University Hospital	Near the new campus of An-Najah University, Nablus	~8–9 km	Advanced specialties (oncology, cardiology, surgery), emergency services
Al-Watani Government Hospital	Governmental Hospital	Near Rafidia in southwestern Nablus	~9–10 km	Inpatient and outpatient services, general medical care
Nablus Specialist Hospital (Arab Specialist Hospital)	Private Hospital	Central/southwestern Nablus	~9–11 km	Specialized services, diagnostics, elective procedures
Al-Ittihad Hospital	Private Hospital	Central Nablus	~10–12 km	General medical services, outpatient clinics, some specialized care
Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) – Nablus Branch	Emergency/Relief Organization	Various locations in Nablus	Varies	Emergency services, ambulance dispatch, clinic-based care
UNRWA Clinics	UN Agency Clinics	Refugee camps in/near Nablus (e.g., Balata, Askar)	~7–10 km	Primary healthcare for registered refugees, including maternal/child health services, referrals

RECOMMENDATIONS

Operating in Beit Furik requires humanitarian actors to prioritize risk mitigation, enhance community acceptance, and ensure operational continuity in a complex and volatile environment. These strategies are underpinned by adherence to the **humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and humanity**, which are crucial for maintaining access, building trust, and ensuring the safety of staff and communities.

Humanitarian Principles and Staff Conduct

Adhering to humanitarian principles is foundational for gaining acceptance and ensuring the success of operations. Humanitarian staff must embody the following principles in their behaviour and decision-making:

- **Neutrality:** Avoid taking sides in hostilities or engaging in political, religious, or ideological controversies.

- **Impartiality:** Deliver assistance based solely on need, without discrimination based on nationality, race, gender, religious belief, or political opinion.
- **Independence:** Maintain operational autonomy from political or military agendas to ensure humanitarian objectives remain the priority.
- **Humanity:** Alleviate human suffering, prioritizing the dignity, rights, and well-being of affected populations.

Staff behaviour and conduct in Beit Furik must reflect these principles in all interactions, whether with local authorities, community members, or armed actors. Transparency, professionalism, and respect for local customs are essential to maintain trust and access.

Visibility

- All staff, vehicles, and equipment must be visibly marked with the organization's logo or other recognized symbols of humanitarian neutrality. This reinforces the impartial and independent nature of operations.
- Emphasize the neutral and humanitarian nature of operations through signage, community meetings, and stakeholder engagement to reduce misperceptions.

Community Engagement to Foster Community Acceptance

- Work closely with village councils, community leaders, and grassroots organizations to align humanitarian efforts with local priorities and foster trust.
- Train staff on cultural and religious practices specific to Beit Furik, emphasizing traditions and customs.
- Regularly update the community on planned activities, available resources, and operational limitations. Transparency helps dispel suspicions and strengthens trust.
- Implement accessible feedback systems to gather community input, address concerns, and adapt programming based on needs.
- Collaborate with local leaders to secure necessary permits for staff and vehicles, ensuring seamless access and reducing delays at checkpoints.

Journey Management

- Assess risks for each journey, considering checkpoints, road conditions, and recent security incidents.
- Ensure all staff carry personal travel permits and letters of authorization issued by the Israeli Civil Administration, particularly for Area C or restricted areas. Vehicles must also have valid permits for passage through military zones and checkpoints.
- Use vehicles with the appropriate plates for the operational context:
 - ⇒ **Yellow plates:** Best for crossing into Israeli-controlled zones.
 - ⇒ **White plates:** Essential for access within Palestinian-controlled areas like Beit Furik.
- Identify primary and alternative routes, avoiding flashpoints and known areas of tension. Communicate routes and estimated times of arrival to security focal points.
- Implement regular check-in procedures during travel to confirm staff safety and operational continuity.

Security Communications and Staff Accountability

- Equip staff with satellite phones, encrypted messaging apps, and two-way radios to ensure reliable communication in remote or high-risk areas.
- Establish clear protocols for reporting security incidents, such as checkpoint delays, settler violence, or military actions. Documentation is essential for advocacy and operational adjustments.
- Monitor security developments using local networks, coordination forums, and real-time alert systems.
- Assign a dedicated security officer to oversee communication protocols, track movements, and respond to emergencies.

Security Briefings

- Provide thorough security briefings to all staff before deployment, emphasizing humanitarian principles, contextual risks, and protocols for interacting with armed actors.
- Issue daily security updates, covering checkpoints, military operations, and other potential disruptions.
- Conduct role-playing exercises to prepare staff for scenarios such as checkpoint delays, harassment, or sudden access restrictions.

Personal Preparedness (Documentation, Equipment, and Conduct)

- Staff must carry valid identification, travel permits, and letters of authorization at all times. Copies of vehicle permits should also be available to avoid delays at checkpoints.
- Provide staff with personal protective gear (e.g., first aid kits), emergency supplies (e.g., water, food, and fuel), and navigation tools.
- Emphasize the importance of professionalism, respect, and adherence to humanitarian principles when interacting with authorities, communities, or armed actors.

Security and Medical Trainings

- Train staff to recognize and respond to security risks, enhancing situational awareness and personal safety.
- Equip staff with advanced medical skills to handle emergencies, particularly in remote areas with limited healthcare access.

Medical and Political/Security Insurance

- Ensure staff are covered for emergency medical evacuation, trauma care, and treatment.
- Secure policies covering high-risk environments, including kidnap and ransom insurance, evacuation services, and repatriation in case of escalating conflict.
- Vehicles must be insured for operations in both Palestinian and Israeli-controlled areas, with coverage adjusted for risks associated with white and yellow plates.

Annex:

- Beit Furik SRA
- Beit Furik STAKE Framework Analysis