

The Israeli Occupation

-The residential communities in the buffer zone-

Al Marsad

– Arab Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Golan Heights-

Prepared by:

Dr. Nazeh Brik

Architect and Urban Planning Engineer

Translated (Arabic to English) by:

Mira Arif

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:The buffer zone

The buffer zone lies within the boundaries of the Quneitra Governorate, and it is a demilitarised area that separates the Syrian Army from the Israeli occupation forces. This area spans northward from Mount Jabal El Sheikh (Hermon Mount), up to the point where the Raqad Valley meets the Yarmouk River in the South, covering an area of 235 square kilometres. This isolated area was formally agreed upon in the Disengagement Agreement, which was signed in 1974 between the Syrian state and the State of Occupation (Israel).

On the night of the fall of the ruling family's regime in Syria (December/2024), Israel began carrying out military operations in the depths of Syrian territories, with the aim of destroying the Syrian army's military infrastructure and combat capabilities.

As for the border area, since the collapse of the regime, it has continued to witness daily incursions by the Israeli occupied forces, in hand with the destruction of both military and civilian buildings, as well as the bulldozing of woodlands and agricultural lands. These military activities eventually turned into a permanent occupation on the entirety of the buffer zone, resulting in full control over the livelihoods of the residents in the area.

The buffer zone is home to many population centers (villages). In addition to this, there are villages that lie within its area or are a part of the area. Most of these villages primarily rely on agriculture and livestock farming for their livelihoods.

:Villages of the buffer zone

Hader Village: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located on the lower slopes of Mount Jabal Al Sheikh. On the day that the boundaries of the buffer zone were established in 1974, the village was located outside the buffer zone, adjacent to the border. Today, the larger part of the village lies within the buffer zone.

Jubatha al-Khashab: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of Hader Village.

Tranjah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located northeast of the village of Jubatha Al-Khashab.

Ufanya: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located on the road connecting the villages of Jubatha Al-Khashab and Khan Arnabah.

Al-Hurriyah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located southwest of Ufanya village, along the border strip with the occupied Golan Heights.

Madinat al-Baath (Madinat al-Salam): Serves as the administrative center of the Quneitra Governorate. It is located between the town of Khan Arnabah and the village of Al-Hamidiyah.

Al Hamidiyah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located north of the destroyed city of Quneitra, along the border strip with the occupied Golan Heights.

Al Samdaniyah al-Gharbiyah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located southeast of the village of al-Hamidiyah.

Al Samdaniyah al Sharqiyah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of al-Baath city.

Rasm al-Rawathi (Dawar al-Alam): A small village (farmstead), belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located at the roundabout on the road connecting the city of Quneitra and al-Hamidiyah village.

Quneitra City: Before 1967, it was the administrative capital of the Golan Heights, but the occupation forcibly expelled its residents, who at the time numbered around 30,000 people, and later completely destroyed the city by 1974, before returning it to the Syrian state control.

Al-Madariya (Al-Qahtaniya): Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located to the west of the southern end of Al-Manttara Dam. The village used to be under occupation, but Israel returned it to Syrian sovereignty in 1974, as part of the Disengagement Agreement.

Al-Ajraf: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located east of the northern end of al-Manttara Dam, on the road connecting the villages of Um-Batnah and al-Samdaniya al Sharqiyah.

Al-Musherfah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located southwest of the village of Um Batnah, at the junction of the road leading from Umm Batnah to al-Manttara Dam.

Sir Abu Ruqqah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of the village of Al-A'jraf, east of al-Manttara Dam, on the eastern bank of Wadi Al-Raqad al-Saghir.

Bir Ajam: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of the village of Ruwehina, and north of the village of Breqah.

Breqah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of the village of Bir Ajam.

Al-Asbah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of the village of Kudnah.

Al-Asha: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located south of the village of al-Asbah on the road connecting the village of al-Asbah and the town of al-Rafeed. Its residents came from the original village of al-Asha which was occupied by Israel in 1967 and destroyed after expelling its inhabitants. Its residents then settled at the current location, inside the buffer zone, north of their destroyed village, and they built their new village there.

Al-Rafeed: A small town belonging to the Quneitra Governorate. It used to be under occupation, but Israel returned it to Syrian sovereignty in 1974 under the Disengagement Agreement. It includes displaced-person settlements in Hiran, the farms of Al-Za'rura and Al-Mahyoubi, and the hamlets of Rasm Al-Darb, Rasm Al-Mushayda, Rasm A'zrael, Rasm Maz'al, Rasm Latha, and Rasm Al- 'Addad.

Rasm Abu Rujm: A small village (farmstead) belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located on the road connecting the villages of Al-Bassa al-Sharqiyah and Razaniyat Sayda.

Villages, with part of their houses/lands located within the buffer zone:

Ain al-Nooriyah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located north of Khan Arnabah. A part of its land is located within the buffer zone.

Khan Arnabah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate. It is located adjacent to the city of Al-Baath from the east side, with continuous urban expansion connecting the two. The center of Khan Arnabah is located outside of the buffer zone, whereas its southeastern, southwestern, and northwestern neighbourhoods fall within the buffer zone.

Jabbah: A town belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located at the edge of the buffer zone, on the road connecting the towns of Khan Arnabah and Mas'hara. A part of its land falls within the buffer zone.

Umm Batnah: A town belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located east of al-Manttara Dam, directly along the eastern boundary of the buffer zone. Around it there are several displaced population centers; like centers in the Doha village and the Mumtanah village.

Al Kram: It is located south of the village of Ruwehina, and a part of its houses and lands fall within the buffer zone.

Al Khalidiya: It is located between the villages of Um-Batnah and Mumtanah, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the buffer zone.

Al Qabu: A village that belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located east of the village Al Kram, at the eastern boundary of the buffer zone. A part of its houses and lands fall within the buffer zone.

Ruwehina: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located at the eastern boundary of the buffer zone, south of the village of Bir Ajam, and follows the administration of Bir Ajam. A part of its lands, and some of its houses fall within the buffer zone.

Zubayda Al Qharbiya: A small village (farmstead) belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located southeast of the village of Ruwehina. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Rasm Al-Shamali: A small village (10 houses) belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located north of the village of Kudnah, close to the buffer zone, and a part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Kudnah: Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located north of Kudnah mount, and south of the village of Bariqa, adjacent to the buffer zone. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Hiran: A small village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located adjacent to the buffer zone, on the road to the town of al-Rafeed from the south.

Al-Buteiha: A small village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located adjacent to the buffer zone, north of the road leading to the village of al-Ma'laqa. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Rasm Masa'ada: A small village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located north of the village of al-Ma'laqa, at the road leading to the village of al-Ma'laqa, close to the buffer zone. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Al-Ma'laqa: A village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located west of the village of Ghadir al-Bustan, near the buffer zone. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Um al-Luqus: A small village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located southwest of the village of al-Ma'laqa, north of the road connecting the villages of al-Ma'laqa and Saida al Jolan, along the edge of the buffer zone. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Al Basa Al Sharqiyah (Ain al-Qadi): Belongs to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located a distance of approximately half a kilometre southwest of the village of Um al-Luqus. Its western neighbourhood, known as Ain al-Qadi, along with part of its land, falls within the buffer zone.

Sayda al Julan: A village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located at the administrative boundary with the Daraa Governorate. It is 2km away from the buffer zone.

Rusm Luwebid: A small village (farmstead) belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located northwest of the village of Saida al Jolan. A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Razzaniyat Sayda: A village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located west of Rasm Luwebid, and northwest of the village of Saida al Jolan. Its western and northwestern houses, and parts of its lands, fall within the buffer zone.

Al Hanoot: A small village belonging to the Quneitra Governorate, and is located southwest of the village of Saida al Jolan, at the northern bank of Wadi Ta'eem (Wadi al-Raqad). A part of its lands fall within the buffer zone.

Population of the villages located within the buffer zone			
Name of the village	Population 2004 (1)	Population 2024 (2)	Comments
Hader Village	4,819	10,559	
Jubatha al-Khashab	3,493	7,654	In an interview with the Village Council administration in 2024, it was reported that the population of the village of Jubatha, and the villages of Tranjah and Ufanya (which are administratively affiliated with it) reached 13,500 people.
Tranjah	1,046	2,292	
Ufanya	845	1,851	
Al-Hurriyah	233	511	
Madinat al-Baath	1,543	3,381	
Al Hamidiyah	1,243	2,724	
Al Samdaniyah al-Gharbiyah	367	804	
Al Samdaniyah al Sharqiyah	635	1,391	
Rusm al-Rawadi (Dawar al-Alam)	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 35 houses.
City of Quneitra	153	335	
Al Madariya (Al Qahtaniya)	663	1,453	
Al-A'jraf	1,000	2,191	
Al-Musherfah	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 95 houses.
Sir Abu Raqqah	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 30 houses.
Beer Ajam	353	773	
Breqah	371	813	
Al-Asbah	380	833	
Al-Ashah	113	248	
Al-Rafid	2,263	4,959	
Rusm Abu Rujm	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 10 houses.
Total:		42,772	
If we add the population of the villages of which population data is not available, the total number of inhabitants for these villages could reach approximately 44,000 people.			
.According to the official population census of 2004 (1)			
(2) Based on the population census of 2004, with an added 4% annual population growth rate			

Population of the villages surrounding the buffer zone - A part of its homes / its lands inside the buffer zone -			
Name of the village	Population 2004 (1)	Population 2024 (2)	Comments
Ain al-Nooriya	-	1,406	Based on what one of the village's administrative branches said in an interview in 2022, the population of the village is 1,300 people.
Khan Arnabah	7,375	16,160	
Jabah	5,281	11,571	
Um Batina	1,605	3,517	
Al-Khalidiya	598	1,310	
Al-Karm	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 60 houses.
Al-Qabuw			According to satellite images, it contains approximately 25 houses.
Ruwehina	1,168	2,559	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 30 houses
Zubayda Al Qharbiya			According to satellite images, it contains approximately 30 houses
Rusm Al Shamali			According to satellite images, it contains approximately 10 houses
Kudna	1,875	4,108	
Hiran	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 20 houses
Rusm Masa'ada	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 40 houses
Al-Butiha	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 15 houses
Al-Ma'laqa	1,900	4,163	
Um Al Luqus	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 40 houses
Al-Basa Al Sharqiyah (Ain Al-Qadi)	521	1,142	
Rusm Al-Luwebid			According to satellite images, it contains approximately 40 houses
Razaniyat Saida	32	70	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 25 houses
Sayda Al Jolan	1,915	4,196	
Al Hanoot	-	-	According to satellite images, it contains approximately 50 houses
Total:		34,042	
(1) According to the official population census of 2004.			
(2) Based on the population census of 2004, with an added 4% annual population growth rate			
If we add the population of the villages of which population data is not available, the total number of inhabitants for these villages could reach approximately 36,000 people.			



