



NORTHEASTERN SYRIA

Return and Reintegration Area Profiles Central and Eastern Deir-ez-Zor Cantons

November 2021

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	03
1. KEY FINDINGS	04
2. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS	06
2.1. BACKGROUND	06
2.2. METHODOLOGY	06
2.3. LIMITATIONS	06
3. AREA BACKGROUND	07
3.1. GEOGRAPHY	07
3.2. DEMOGRAPHY	09
4. DISPLACEMENT AND SETTLEMENT DYNAMICS	11
4.1. CONFLICT AND PAST DISPLACEMENT DYNAMICS	11
4.2. IDP SETTLEMENT DYNAMICS	13
4.3. ONGOING DISPLACEMENT	14
5. GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY DYNAMICS	15
5.1. GOVERNANCE	15
5.2. SECURITY	18
6. SERVICES AND LIVELIHOODS DYNAMICS	22
6.1. ELECTRICITY	22
6.2. WATER	22
6.3. FOOD AND FUEL SUPPORT	23
6.4. HEALTH	24
6.5. EDUCATION	24
6.6. HOUSING	25
6.7. CIVIL DOCUMENTATION AND REGISTRATION	26
6.8. ECONOMY AND LIVELIHOODS	27
7. RETURN AND DISPLACEMENT PROSPECTS	29
ANNEX 1: COMMUNITY PROFILES	30

GLOSSARY

DCC	Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council
DSP	Durable Solutions Platform
DZMC	Deir-ez-Zor Military Council
EU	European Union
GoS	Government of Syria
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISF	Internal Security Forces
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
JAN	Jabhat al Nusra
NES	Northeast Syria
PYD	Democratic Union Party
RCM	Returns Context Monitoring program
SANES	Self Administration of North and East Syria
SDC	Syrian Democratic Council
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SLP	Self Learning Program
SPF	Self Protection Forces
SYP	Syrian Pound
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
WoS	Whole of Syria
YPG	People's Protection Units

1. KEY FINDINGS

- The Self Administration¹ Deir-ez-Zor region comprises nearly all areas of the Deir-ez-Zor governorate east of the Euphrates River. Within the Deir-ez-Zor region, the Self Administration central Deir-ez-Zor canton² comprises the Basira subdistrict within the Deir-ez-Zor district/Deir-ez-Zor governorate and the Thiban subdistrict within the Al Mayadin district/Deir-ez-Zor governorate.
- As of August 2021, the population of the central canton was approximately 92,000 people, including 79,000 residents and 13,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), while the population of the eastern canton was approximately 137,000, including 97,000 residents and 40,000 IDPs.
- The vast majority of the 53,000 IDPs living in the central and eastern cantons are from Government of Syria (GoS) held areas of Deir-ez-Zor and arrived during the GoS campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in late 2017.
- Although there have been tensions between IDPs and residents, IDP-resident relations have generally been positive over the past several years.
- The majority of IDPs in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons have settled in communities located directly across the Euphrates River from their home communities, with those from GoS-held areas of the Al Mayadin district settling in the adjacent central canton, and those from GoS-held areas of the Deir-ez-Zor district settling in the eastern canton.
- Nearly all IDPs in the central and eastern canton live in homes in host communities, and despite difficult circumstances in both cantons, integration has been relatively good.
- In many communities IDPs exhibit strong tribal and familial ties to host populations and are not viewed as outsiders. Meanwhile, IDPs without direct tribal and familial ties to host populations have most often settled alongside other displaced members of their tribe, which has provided such IDPs a degree of security and bargaining power and ensured a continued sense of community.
- While the central and eastern cantons have become hubs for IDPs from GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor, population figures indicate they have collectively lost at least 73,000 residents due to displacement and conflict related violence over the past 11 years.
- Outside the return of several thousand local women and children released from the Al Hol IDP camp between 2019 and 2021, returns to either canton have been extremely limited.

¹ The report uses the term Self Administration to collectively refer to the PYD, YPG, and the set of military, political, and governance bodies established by the PYD and YPG between 2015 and 2018, including the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), and Self Administration for North and East Syria (SANES).

² Cantons are a unique Self Administration administrative unit which falls below the Self Administration region. In addition to the Deir-ez-Zor region, cantons are also found in the Jazeera region, which aligns with the Al-Hasakeh governorate, and Al-Furat region, which includes parts of the Aleppo and Ar-Raqqqa governorates.

- Due to several factors, the cantons are not only unlikely to witness any notable returns over the near to mid-term but are likely to witness increased outward migration during this period.
- Security concerns remain a key issue preventing returns. Despite a multitude of local security forces, the central canton suffers from near weekly attacks by ISIS and GoS cells. While such attacks are less common in the eastern canton, there are concerns instability in the central canton will spread to the eastern canton.
- Over the longer term, there are also serious safety and security concerns related to the future status of Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons. Most of the current resident and IDP population, as well as residents from the area displaced elsewhere in Syria and abroad, oppose the GoS. The prospect of a potential GoS return to both cantons not only generates significant concern amongst the current population, but also discourages returns.
- The poor economic situation in both cantons is also a major factor preventing returns and encouraging current residents and IDPs to leave.
- Alongside the general economic downturn across Syria and the devaluation of the Syrian Pound (SYP), the main economic drivers in both cantons, namely agriculture and public sector employment, have been severely undermined by the conflict and show no signs of improvement in the near to mid-term.
- Both cantons also continue to suffer from an acute lack of reliable services and failed governance bodies. Thus, as residents and IDPs struggle to cope with poor security and growing economic challenges, they continue to lack adequate access to electricity, water, health, education, and social support, such as subsidized bread and fuel.
- While these concerns have not led to significant outward migration, following the Self Administration's imposition of mandatory conscription in late 2020, they have combined to push hundreds of local men to flee the area over the past year.
- So long as the current status quo persists, the humanitarian situation in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons is likely to decline and outward migration to other areas of northeast Syria (NES) and Syria, as well as Turkey, Iraq, the Gulf, and the European Union (EU) is likely to accelerate.
- While stemming push factors may require an external political push and years of consistent stabilization support, this should not preclude discussions and planning for such an effort.
- Furthermore, due to the severity of needs throughout both cantons, significantly increased early recovery and first line support is needed immediately in both cantons to stem the deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation.

2. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

2.1. BACKGROUND

The Return Context Monitoring (RCM) project was established at iMMAP in June 2020 to fill qualitative information gaps around experiences of and conditions for IDPs and refugee returnees inside Syria. RCM operates through two main deliverable streams, return and reintegration area profiles which cover specific geographic areas, and thematic reports on topics relevant to return dynamics at the regional or whole of Syria (WoS) level. RCM works with a variety of stakeholders to identify key information gaps and develop research aims, including durable solutions working groups, sector working groups, and bilateral partner and donor consultations.

This report includes the 14th and 15th RCM area profiles, covering what are today considered the central and eastern cantons of Self Administration-held Deir-ez-Zor. In addition to exploring the current situation and conditions for returns in both areas, which are currently unfavorable, the report explores the distribution and status of IDPs in both areas, the drivers of outward migration, and prospects for returns and further displacement.

2.2. METHODOLOGY

The information and findings in this report are based on desk research and primary research. Desk research consisted of two components: 1) a review of relevant local and international news reports, social media content, and humanitarian reporting; and 2) a review of population data from operational partners and the GoS.

Building on initial desk research findings, the core RCM analysis team developed two semi-structured questionnaires for qualitative primary research, including: 1) a questionnaire on the demographic, governance, services, and security dynamics of the central and eastern cantons, with a focus on return and displacement trends; and 2) a questionnaire on several specific issues related to IDPs and displacement in both areas. Following discussions around each questionnaire with the core RCM analysis team, four Syrian research consultants completed the questionnaires through discussions with dozens of local stakeholders, including community leaders, residents, current IDPs, returnees, and Self Administration and opposition officials. Both the core RCM analysis team and research consultants also carried out ad hoc follow-up with relevant stakeholders to address outstanding information gaps and to support triangulation efforts.

2.3. LIMITATIONS

The RCM analysis team faced two limitations throughout data collection for this report, namely the lack of detailed and historic population data and security concerns. Assessing population and movement data in both cantons was challenging due to the frequency and scope of displacement over the past 11 years. While information on displacement has improved over the past four years, providing the RCM analysis team with reliable figures about general population movement, the team relied on triangulated field reporting to determine the nature of displacement and movement at the local level.

Poor security conditions in both cantons and increased scrutiny of journalists and local media in Self Administration areas of NES also presented a distinct limitation. The RCM analysis team consequently chose to limit the amount of field data collection and, where possible, relied on two experienced Syrian researcher consultants with deep knowledge of both cantons to carry out qualitative primary research remotely via extensive networks inside Deir-ez-Zor.

3. AREA BACKGROUND

3.1. GEOGRAPHY

Map 1. Central and Eastern Deir-ez-Zor Cantons



AREA BACKGROUND

The Self Administration Deir-ez-Zor region comprises nearly all areas of the Deir-ez-Zor governorate east of the Euphrates River. Within the Deir-ez-Zor region, the Self Administration central Deir-ez-Zor canton comprises the Basira subdistrict within the Deir-ez-Zor district/Deir-ez-Zor governorate and the Thiban subdistrict within the Al Mayadin district/Deir-ez-Zor governorate. The central Deir-ez-Zor canton is made up of 26 communities, which form an uninterrupted stretch of settlement straddling the Euphrates River to the west and enclosed by the desert, known as the Al-Badiyah desert, to east. Prior to the conflict, the Basira and Thiban subdistricts were considered peri-urban areas with strong links to nearby Deir-ez-Zor city and Al Mayadin city on the western bank of the Euphrates River.

Prior to the Syrian conflict, the population of the central Deir-ez-Zor canton reached approximately 105,000 people according to GoS Central Bureau of Statistics. As of August 2021, the population has dropped to approximately 92,000 people. As the current population consists of 79,000 residents and 13,000 IDPs, population figures indicate the area has lost at least 26,000 residents due to displacement and conflict related violence over the past 11 years. As links and access to Deir-ez-Zor city and Al Mayadin city have declined as a result of the conflict, Basira town currently represents the area's major urban population center, while the Thiban subdistrict contains approximately 55% of the canton's population.

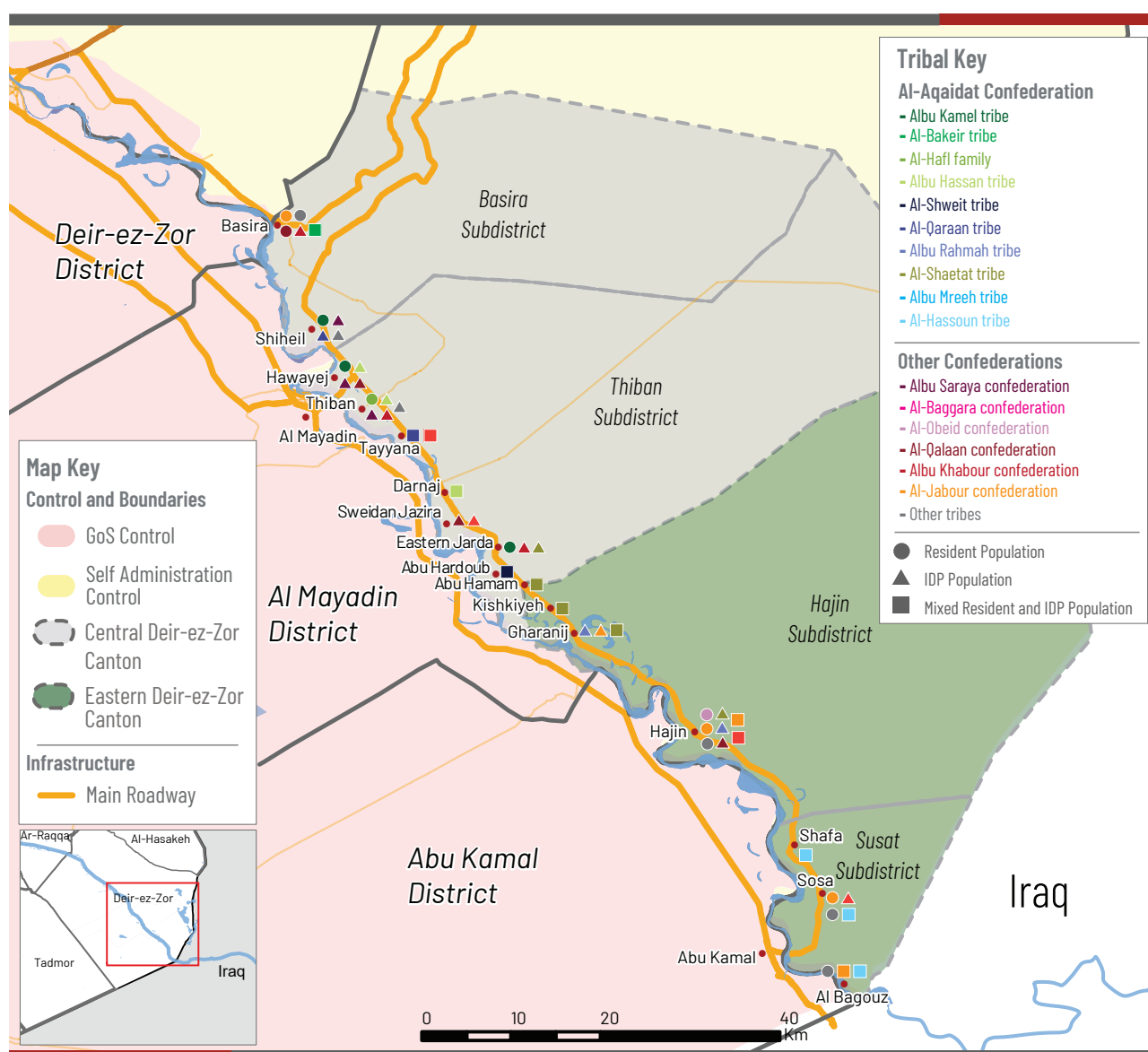
According to GoS administrative lines, what the Self Administration designates as the eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton comprises the Hajin and Susat subdistricts within the Abu Kamal district/Deir-ez-Zor governorate. The eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton is made up of 18 communities, which like in the central canton, form an uninterrupted stretch of settlement along the Euphrates River. Considered a suburb of Abu Kamal city prior to the conflict, the Hajin subdistrict has remained the most urbanized and populated area of Deir-ez-Zor east of the Euphrates River.

Prior to the Syrian conflict, the population of the eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton reached approximately 144,000 people according to the GoS Central Bureau of Statistics. As of August 2021, the population stood at approximately 137,000 people, making it the most populous of the four Self Administration cantons in Deir-ez-Zor. As the current population consists of 97,000 residents and 40,000 IDPs, population figures indicate the area has lost at least 47,000 residents due to displacement and conflict related violence over the past 11 years.

3.2. DEMOGRAPHY

Like the rest of Deir-ez-Zor, the population of the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons is nearly entirely Sunni Arab and has continued to be heavily tribal. While tribes should not be viewed as monolithic bodies with unified leadership, the influence of tribes and tribalism, the latter referring to tribal identity and tribal norms, cannot be understated in Deir-ez-Zor. This is especially true at the community level, where tribal figures continue to employ claims of traditional authority, familial ties, access to authorities, and/or economic resources to maintain influence over significant segments of the population. Authorities, from the GoS to ISIS and the Self Administration, have all found tribal figures and tribes to be useful tools for extending and cementing their influence. Thus, even as authorities often manipulate tribal networks and dynamics to their own advantage, at each stage they have worked to reenforce the role of tribes and tribalism in Deir-ez-Zor.

Map 2. Local Tribes



AREA BACKGROUND

Tribes in both cantons follow the standard Arab tribal structure, with the tribal confederation made up of several tribes, the tribe made up of several clans, and the clan made up of several families. The central Deir-ez-Zor canton is considered an Al-Aqaidat tribal confederation stronghold, and tribes of the Al-Aqaidat tribal confederation have the greatest and most influential presence locally. The most notable tribes in the area, all of which are members of the Al-Aqaidat confederation, are: 1) the Al-Bakeir tribe, found in Basira town and several adjacent communities in the western and northern cantons; 2) the Albu Kamel tribe, based in Shiheil town and with a presence in the northern canton along the Khabour River; and 3) the Al-Hafl family³, based in Thiban town.

While all three tribes are part of the Al-Aqaidat confederation, this does not translate into any notable unity. Rather, due to the large size of each tribe, atomization of the Al-Aqaidat confederation generally, and proximity to key oil resources, the central canton has been the site of significant competition between all three tribes around tribal, economic, and political authority.

For more than a century, the Al-Hafl family have remained the accepted leadership family of the entire Al-Aqaidat confederation. The Al-Hafl family has adopted a neutral political stance throughout conflict which has undermined its authority within the Al-Aqaidat confederation over the past 11 years, but crucially allowed it to both retain control of Thiban and maintain positive relations with the GoS and various authorities that have controlled the area. Conversely, figures from the Al-Bakeir tribe, which is the largest of the three tribes, have actively aligned themselves with the predominant authority in the area in order to expand their influence and maintain access to nearby oil fields, namely the Conico and Al-Omar fields. This has led to repeated tensions with the Albu Kamel tribe, which have also sought to secure access to the Al-Omar oil field. While relations between the Al-Hafl family and Albu Kamel tribe in Shiheil have been mixed, key tribal figures from both have increasingly sought to coordinate politically and economically to check the Al-Bakeir tribe's expanding influence in the central canton.

In addition to the three aforementioned tribes, the central canton is also home to four smaller, less influential Al-Aqaidat confederation tribes, including: 1) the Al-Qaraan tribe, based in Tayyana; 2) the Albu Hassoun tribe, based in Darnaj; 3) Albu Rahmah tribe, based in Eastern Jarda; and 4) Albu Ez Al-Din Tribe based in Zir. The first three tribes are collectively known as the Al-Thuluth tribes and have historically maintained an alliance against their larger, more influential Al-Aqaidat neighbors. Meanwhile, Basira is the only community in central Deir-ez-Zor not predominated by the Al-Aqaidat confederation and is primarily made up of members of the Al-Qalaan confederation and Albu Shalhoun tribe (Al-Aniza confederation) based in Al Mayadin city and Ashara city respectively.

The two largest tribes in the eastern canton are the Al-Shaetat tribe of the Al-Aqaidat tribal confederation and the Albu Hardan tribe of the Al-Obeid confederation. Members of the Al-Shaetat tribe are split across three clans, the Al-Jaduaa, Al-Khanfour, and Al-Alyan clans based in Gharanij, Abu Hamam, and Kishkiyeh towns respectively. As all three towns are adjacent and overwhelmingly made up of members of the Al-Shaetat, they are often collectively referred to as the Al-Shaetat area. Due to the large size of the Al-Shaetat tribe, political circumstances of the time, and persistent internal competition and division, prior to the Syrian conflict, clan identities overshadowed any unified Al-Shaetat identity. While clan identities remain important today, and reflect continued competition and division, dynamics throughout the Syrian conflict have led to the emergence of a strong Al-Shaetat identity and a belief amongst members that the tribe is distinct from the Al-Aqaidat confederation.

In contrast to the central Deir-ez-Zor canton, tribal competition in the eastern canton has been relatively low. While the Al-Shaetat tribe continues to suffer from internal competition and disputes, relations between the Al-Shaetat tribe, Albu Hardan tribe, and other Al-Aqaidat tribes are reportedly positive. This dynamic appears to be driven by a shared sense of grievance amongst local tribal leaders and elites. According to local sources, local tribal figures and elites in the eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton believe the area has been negatively impacted by dynamics in the western and central Deir-ez-Zor cantons over the course of the conflict. Even as tribal figures sought to avoid direct involvement in the conflict and shield the area from the level of infighting and hostilities witnessed elsewhere in Deir-ez-Zor, the eastern canton ultimately became the site of the Al-Shaetat massacre and ISIS's last stand in NES and has been at times neglected by the Self Administration since then.

³ While a member of the Albu Kamel tribe, the Al-Hafl family practically acts as a distinct tribe.

4. DISPLACEMENT AND SETTLEMENT DYNAMICS

4.1. CONFLICT AND PAST DISPLACEMENT DYNAMICS

Opposition, Jabhat Al-Nusra (JAN), and ISIS Control

Over the past ten years, conflict and displacement dynamics have been similar across the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons. As protest gave way to armed resistance between 2011 and 2012, the GoS first withdrew from the central canton in mid-2012 and the eastern canton in late 2012, after which local armed factions took control. In the central canton, the Al-Bakeir and Abu Kamal tribes, as well as the Al-Thuluth tribes, were quickly drawn into the conflict and used as recruitment networks for various armed factions. Conversely, the Al-Hafl family sought to avoid direct involvement in the conflict and shielded Thiban from much of the infighting and hostilities seen elsewhere in the area. In the eastern canton a similar dynamic emerged, with numerous armed factions emerging within the Al-Shaetat tribe, while Abu Hardan tribal figures sought relative neutrality to shield Hajin from hostilities seen elsewhere in the area. During this period, thousands of residents fled the central and eastern cantons due to the unstable security situation, deteriorating services, and general uncertainty about the future. While a small number of GoS-loyalists and tribal figures fled to GoS-held Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama or the Gulf, most residents sought refuge in Turkey.

Due to the proximity of the Al-Omar oil field and previous local ties, Al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate-JAN established itself in Shiheil in 2012 and recruited heavily from the Abu Kamel tribe. JAN would gain control of the Al-Omar oil field in 2013 and use oil sales to fund its short lived control of the central canton and expansion to the eastern canton and other parts of Deir-ez-Zor. While local opposition factions formed within the Al-Shaetat tribe had enjoyed control of the Al-Tanak oil field in the eastern canton, competition within the Al-Shaetat tribe allowed JAN to gradually gain control of the field by mid-2013.

Although JAN was the most powerful faction in both the central and eastern cantons by late 2013, it quickly began to splinter in early 2014 with the emergence of ISIS. After exploiting local tribal disputes, especially between the Abu Kamel and Al-Bakeir tribes, and employing extreme violence to encourage mass defections from JAN and various opposition factions, ISIS eventually gained control of the Al-Omar field and besieged the JAN stronghold of Shiheil in mid-2014. After JAN surrendered, thousands of residents with ties to JAN and the opposition fled the central canton. While the majority went to opposition-held Idleb and Aleppo and Turkey, a small number went to Al-Hasakeh.

After gaining control of the central Deir-ez-Zor canton, ISIS continued to push south into Gharanij, Abu Hamam, and Kishkiyeh and in August 2014, brutally put down resistance by local factions and members of the Al-Shaetat tribe. During the incident ISIS forces not only murdered up to 750 local men from the Al-Shaetat tribe, but forcibly displaced nearly 75,000 residents and IDPs from the three predominantly Al-Shaetat towns. Prevented from returning for four months to Gharanij and Kishkiyeh and a year to Abu Hamam, most residents either sought temporary shelter in Hajin and neighboring communities or fled to various parts of Syria and Turkey.

GoS Advances

By mid-2017 the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) began to turn its attention towards Deir-ez-Zor after expelling ISIS forces from Ar-Raqqa. As the GoS feared it would lose the opportunity to regain control of Deir-ez-Zor, in September 2017 the GoS, with Iranian and Russian support, launched a campaign to expel ISIS from the governorate. While the GoS was able to retake areas west of the Euphrates River over the course of its five-month campaign, parallel SDF advances prevented GoS forces from advancing east of the river, save for one narrow strip of territory directly east of Deir-ez-Zor city. As a result of the GoS's advances, thousands of residents and IDPs fled east across the river, either into areas recently taken by the SDF or areas still under ISIS control. A review of population data from operational partners and reports from local sources indicate there are likely more than 100,000 IDPs from GoS-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor living in Self Administration areas, including 55,000 in host communities in the central and eastern cantons and 30,000 in IDP camps elsewhere in NES.

SDF Advances and Al Hol IDP Camp

In parallel to the GoS campaign to the west, the SDF quickly advanced through northern Deir-ez-Zor towards the central canton. After gaining control of the Al-Omar oil field in October 2017, the SDF encircled Basira and Shiheil forcing ISIS to quickly withdraw from both communities. Over the next two months the SDF continued to push south along the Euphrates River until ISIS forces eventually dug in at Hajin in December 2017. Throughout this period, the majority of residents and IDPs sought to avoid hostilities by fleeing into the nearby desert, where they would often remain for several weeks until tribal figures negotiated returns with the SDF. Meanwhile thousands of residents and IDPs, who either had ties to ISIS or held concerns about the Self Administration, continued to flee south deeper into ISIS-held areas.

While the SDF suspended further advances at Hajin in December 2017, in part to allow for civilians to leave remaining ISIS-held areas, Hajin and towns to the south would be decimated by months of airstrikes and constant shelling meant to weaken ISIS. In October 2018, the SDF began its final push against ISIS and enforced a mandatory detention policy for anyone leaving the area, including residents of Hajin and the remaining communities to the south, IDPs from elsewhere in Deir-ez-Zor or Syria, and third-country nationals. Local sources report this policy led many civilians to remain in the area until ISIS was defeated in Al-Bagouz in March 2019. Consequently, the SDF detained approximately 63,000 women, children, and elderly during the final two months of fighting in Al-Bagouz, and transferred all of them to the Al Hol IDP camp. Of the 63,000 women, children, and elderly, local sources report approximately 14,000 were from Deir-ez-Zor, and of those, nearly half were from communities in the eastern canton south of Hajin.

As holding women and children proved to be an extremely sensitive issue, the Self Administration worked with tribal figures in Deir-ez-Zor to develop a release process in mid-2019. According to the process, relatives of the women and children could request their release through local tribal guarantors who were to submit names of those seeking release to Self Administration security officials at the Al Hol IDP camp. As part of the submission, tribal guarantors were also meant to confirm the identity of those seeking release and affirm they would not be involved in illegal activity following their release. While residents and IDPs submitted thousands of release requests, corruption amongst tribal guarantors, confusion about who qualified as a tribal guarantor, and inadequate staffing for processing the requests led to significant delays. Consequently, the process was reformed to remove tribal guarantors in December 2019, and the Self Administration accelerated releases.

Local sources report the Self Administration had released most women, children, and elderly from Deir-ez-Zor from the Al Hol IDP camp by 2021. While the small number of women and children held in Al Hol IDP camp from the central canton have all returned to their communities, several thousand women, children, and elderly from the eastern canton, as well as GoS-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor, have been released as well. Meanwhile, there are several hundred women, children, and elderly from communities south of Hajin in the eastern canton, as well as GoS-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor, who remain in the camp, either due to security concerns or a lack of housing outside of the camp. Although there have not been any notable security issues or trends of discrimination against women and children released to Deir-ez-Zor, the Self Administration has not provided them with any specific support to facilitate reintegration into their home communities, and all responsibility for their wellbeing is placed on their families.

4.2. IDP SETTLEMENT DYNAMICS

Although population data from operational partners and reports from local sources demonstrate there have been no significant returns to the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons over the past several years, the same sources indicate there are approximately 55,000 IDPs living across both cantons. While a detailed breakdown of IDP populations by community is found in Annex 1: Community Profiles, there are several common IDP settlement patterns in both cantons. The overwhelming majority of IDPs in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons arrived during the GoS's advance against ISIS in Deir-ez-Zor in late 2017, and generally settled in communities located directly across the Euphrates River from their home communities. Thus, in the central Deir-ez-Zor canton, the majority of IDPs are from adjacent GoS-held areas of the Al Mayadin district, while in the eastern canton, the majority of IDPs are from adjacent GoS-held areas Abu Kamal district. In both cantons, there are also a considerable number of IDPs from GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor district, alongside a small number of IDPs from other parts of GoS-held Syria, namely Hama and Homs.

Local sources report that nearly all IDPs in the central and eastern canton live in homes in host communities. Due to recurrent waves of conflict and significant outward migration between 2012 and 2017, there was an abundance of vacant, affordable housing in the many parts of the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton when most IDPs arrived in late 2017. Only a small number of IDPs in the central and eastern canton live in informal settlements, which are most often located to the west of communities in areas bordering the Al-Badiyah desert. Local sources report the majority of IDPs living in informal settlements are bedouins involved in the sheep trade, who choose to live in informal settlements for financial and cultural reasons.

Due to several factors, IDPs have reportedly been able to integrate relatively easily in both the central and eastern cantons. In many communities IDPs exhibit strong tribal and familial ties to host populations. Consequently, host communities do not view such IDPs as outsiders and have often provided them with social support. Meanwhile, IDPs without direct tribal and familial ties to host populations have most often settled alongside other displaced members of their tribe. As tribes and tribalism still play a role in organizing society and maintaining order in both the central and eastern cantons, settlement along tribal lines has not only provided such IDPs a degree of security and bargaining power but has also ensured a continued sense of community. Finally, the Self Administration does not withhold services from IDPs, nor has it established unwieldy requirements for IDPs to gain access to services. Thus, even as Self Administration governance and administration is extremely poor in Deir-ez-Zor, IDPs generally enjoy the same access to services as residents.

While the factors previously discussed have ensured positive IDP-resident relations in both cantons, there have also been tensions between IDPs and host communities over the past several years. Economic competition has proven to be the most common issue, as laborers, business owners, and investors compete over economic opportunities in a weak, shrinking market. Security concerns have also been an issue, and on several occasions local figures and residents have accused IDPs of harboring ISIS members. Finally, as conditions are poor and support limited in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons, residents have pushed back against programming specifically targeting IDPs. Due to efforts by tribal figures, local activists, and Self Administration figures, tensions around economic, security, and support issues have generally been short lived and have not led to significant violence or further displacement.

4.3. ONGOING DISPLACEMENT

Even as the central and eastern cantons no longer suffer from active conflict, IDPs and residents alike have continued to endure poor security, limited and unreliable services, and a failing economy. This, along with the uncertain future of the area more broadly, has not only discouraged returns, but has also led to continued outward migration across both cantons.

According to local sources, several developments over the past year have led to a notable uptick in such population outflows. Like all of NES, the central and eastern cantons have suffered from the devaluation of SYP and the general decline of the Syrian economy due to the Lebanese financial crisis, sanctions, and the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, key sectors in the local economy have continued to falter over the past year, exacerbating economic challenges for a significant proportion of the population. The agriculture sector, which is the primary source of livelihoods in both cantons, has suffered from insufficient support from the Self Administration and external actors, as well as a year of poor rainfall. Meanwhile, the closure of informal river crossings has negatively impacted the informal fuel trade and smuggling and trade generally, all of which are important sources of employment and income in the central Deir-ez-Zor canton.

Alongside increased economic difficulties, declining employment prospects, and insufficient wages, the Self Administration also began to impose mandatory conscription in both cantons in late 2020. The decision was extremely controversial due to the near- and long-term security implications for thousands of local men. In the near term, local men fulfilling mandatory conscription in Deir-ez-Zor serve locally, thus placing them at significant risk of being targeted by ISIS and GoS cells operating in the area. Over the long term, serving in the Self Administration in any capacity can put men at risk if the GoS returns to the area. While local men can attempt to avoid for mandatory service, they face arrest and forced conscription if they are identified at a checkpoint in Self Administration areas.

As a result of the aforementioned factors, local sources report thousands of local men, both residents and IDPs, have left the central and eastern cantons to Turkish and opposition-held areas of northern Aleppo and northwest Syria over the past year. While the departure of women, children, and entire families has remained relatively limited, if circumstances continue to deteriorate over the coming period, it is likely outward migration will accelerate.

5. GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY DYNAMICS

5.1. GOVERNANCE

Since entering Deir-ez-Zor in 2017, Kurdish advisors from the People's Protection Units (YPG) and Democratic Union Party (PYD), known as kadros, have worked with amenable local tribal figures and elites to establish several governance and services bodies at the regional, sub-regional, and local levels. While these bodies, detailed in Table 1: Governance/Services Bodies in Self Administration-held Areas of Deir-ez-Zor are ostensibly meant to manage governance and service provision across the region, they have failed to effectively and reliably fulfill this role. There are several reasons for this.

Table 1. Governance/Services Bodies in Self Administration-held Areas of Deir-ez-Zor

Governance/Services Body	Administrative Scope	Established	Ostensible Role
Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council (DCC) Executive Council	Regional	Mid-2017	The DCC Executive Council is meant to manage governance and service provision at the regional level. Composed of a Co-Presidency Office and approximately 18 committees and offices, it coordinates services with PYD-YPG kadros, local SANES bodies, and I/NGOs.
Canton Administrations	Canton	Early 2021	Canton councils are meant to act as consultative and advisory bodies for each canton, and in coordination with people's councils, people's municipalities, service centers, and I/NGOs, report on issues to PYD-YPG kadros and the DCC.
People's Councils	Subdistrict/Community	Between 2017 and 2019	People's councils are meant to act as local consultative and advisory bodies for several communities, and in coordination with local councils, report on local issues to PYD-YPG kadros, municipalities and service centers, and the DCC.

Governance/Services Body	Administrative Scope	Established	Ostensible Role
Local Councils	Community	Between 2017 and 2019	Local councils are meant to act as local consultative and advisory bodies for a community, which report on local issues to PYD-YPG kadros, people's councils, municipalities and service centers, and the DCC, support community members with identification and registration matters, and play a limited role in overseeing communes.
Communes	Neighborhood	Between 2017 and 2019	Communes are meant to report on local issues to PYD-YPG kadros, local councils, and municipalities and service centers, support community members with identification and registration matters, and support the distribution of subsidized fuel, subsidized bread, and aid to residents and IDPs.
People's Municipalities	Subdistrict/Community	Between 2017 and 2019	People's municipalities are meant to oversee and support municipal services such as trash and debris removal, road maintenance and repair, and local businesses registration and regulation across several communities.
Service Centers	Community	2019	Service centers are meant to oversee and support municipal services such as trash and debris removal, road maintenance and repair, bakery operations, and local businesses registration and regulation across a single community.

Reporting indicates the PYD-YPG⁴ command within the SDF was eager to enter Deir-ez-Zor following the successful conclusion of the campaign against ISIS in Ar-Raqqa. While like all Arab-majority areas in NES, Deir-ez-Zor was ancillary to the PYD-YPG political project, the PYD-YPG command was keen to gain control of the area's oil resources and to hold the area as leverage in talks with the GoS and international actors. With no ties to the area, PYD-YPG figures within the SDF and Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) thus began working in early 2017 to establish governance and security bodies made up of locals.

Based on experience in other Arab-majority areas and the circumstances of Deir-ez-Zor, PYD-YPG figures appear to have immediately concluded that Deir-ez-Zor's homogenous Sunni-Arab population would never view their presence as legitimate. Thus, the PYD-YPG adopted an entirely transactional, clientelist approach to establishing and maintaining the Self Administration in Deir-ez-Zor. The PYD-YPG approach has remained the same since. Although this approach has led to dysfunctional, ineffective governance and services bodies, it has allowed the PYD-YPG to maximize control and pursue their interests at relatively low cost, while also provided local tribal figures and elites access to resources to enrich themselves and their networks.

⁴ While the YPG is the armed wing of the PYD and a distinct organization, due to overlapping leadership, policies, and aims, for clarity they are referred to jointly as the PYD-YPG throughout this report.

After establishing the Deir-ez-Zor Military Council (DZMC) from former local opposition factions and tribal networks between 2016 and 2017, PYD-YPG kadros worked through similar tribal networks to establish the DCC to oversee governance and services in areas of Deir-ez-Zor taken from ISIS. As the SDF moved through Deir-ez-Zor over the coming two years, PYD-YPG kadros established a number of local governance bodies that aligned with Self Administration structures elsewhere in NES, namely people's councils, local councils, and communes for local governance, and people's municipalities and service centers for local municipal services. Nevertheless, with the exception of people's municipalities and service centers, these bodies played no discernable role and received little to no support. Consequently, by 2018 tribal competition arose around the DCC, as it was the only body with any resources.

As the PYD-YPG had filled the DCC with members of the Al-Baggara confederation based in western Deir-ez-Zor and a number of displaced civil society figures from Deir-ez-Zor city, Al-Aqaidat confederation tribes in central Deir-ez-Zor and the Al-Shaetat and Albu Hardan tribes in eastern Deir-ez-Zor demanded the DCC be reformed to break the Al-Baggara confederation's hold and provide them seats on the council. While the PYD-YPG undertook several limited DCC reforms between 2019 and 2020, they failed to achieve equitable tribal representation on the DCC. To release pressure, PYD-YPG kadros began exploring the establishment of canton administrations in 2019. Holding discussions with local tribal figures and elites, DCC officials, and DZMC commanders over the next two years, PYD-YPG kadros eventually established four canton administrations in early 2021. Despite two years of discussions, PYD-YPG kadros established the canton administrations without defining their roles and responsibilities or the operational and financial linkages to other bodies in Deir-ez-Zor, specifically the DCC, people's and local councils, municipalities, and service centers.

In parallel to the roll out of canton administrations, beginning in early 2021, a new set of PYD-YPG kadros arrived to Deir-ez-Zor to investigate corruption within the DCC. Over the next several months, PYD-YPG kadros ordered the arrest and dismissal of dozens of DCC officials and employees for their suspected involvement in the rampant diversion and outright theft of fuel, flour, and funds, as well as concluding fraudulent contracts with local contractors. While local sources report kadros previously assigned to the DCC were likely complicit, if not active participants, in the corruption, to date local sources indicate only two low-level kadros have been detained as a result of the investigations.

The corruption investigations, which remain ongoing, have left the DCC with numerous vacancies which PYD-YPG kadros are still unable to fill. Not only are PYD-YPG kadros struggling to achieve equitable representation between the Al-Baggara confederation, Al-Aqaidat confederation tribes in central Deir-ez-Zor and the Al-Shaetat and Albu Hardan tribes in eastern Deir-ez-Zor, but they are also facing significant difficulties in identifying reasonably qualified candidates willing to serve in the DCC. Compensation is extremely low in comparison to NGOs and the private sector, and the risks and nature of the work also discourage qualified candidates from considering positions in the DCC. On risks, serving in the DCC or other Self Administration bodies in Deir-ez-Zor can place individuals and their families in danger of being targeted by ISIS and GoS cells in the near term, while in the long-term association with the Self Administration can complicate their ability to resolve their status with the GoS or Turkish-supported opposition if they are forced to flee upon the GoS's return to the area. Additionally, as kadros retain control over nearly all key decisions, bodies are poorly organized and dysfunctional, and activities are frequently the focus of tribal disputes, the nature of the work is extremely challenging and the ability to have a positive impact is limited.

Although there are an abundance of Self Administration in North and East Syria (SANES) governance and service bodies in Deir-ez-Zor, due to all of the aforementioned factors, the role of these bodies in Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons is extremely limited. Currently, the most active bodies are the DCC Office of the Co-Presidency and the DCC Economy and Local Administration and Municipalities committees. Aside from kadros, the male DCC co-president is the most influential figure in governance and service provision in the region and has continued to be involved in most DCC decisions and efforts.

Meanwhile the DCC Economy and Local Administration and Municipalities committees and their local counterparts are the only SANES bodies involved in regular service provision in Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons. Through various directorates and employees spread across Deir-ez-Zor, the DCC Economy committee is responsible for overseeing the provision of subsidized wheat, flour, bread, and fuel to the public and eligible businesses. The committee is also responsible for overseeing maintenance of the public power grid throughout Self Administration areas of Deir-ez-Zor. Similarly, the DCC Local Administration and Municipalities committee works with people's municipalities and service centers throughout Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons⁵ to manage municipal services across communities. This commonly entails waste and debris collection, road repairs, minor repairs to public water networks, and registering certain local businesses.

Across all other sectors, DCC committees, canton administrations, and local SANES bodies only notable role is to pay local employee salaries, coordinate with I/NGOs, and report on needs to PYD-YPG kadros and the DCC. On coordination, I/NGOs are required to receive approval from SANES bodies to program in Deir-ez-Zor and inform them about implementation. However, as processes, responsibilities, and requirements across all SANES bodies in Deir-ez-Zor remain undocumented, I/NGOs and local sources report coordination around approvals and implementation most often leads to SANES interference. SANES authorities in Deir-ez-Zor, both within the DCC, canton administrations, and local SANES bodies, continue to use their positions to pressure I/NGOs to grant concessions, such as hiring individuals close to them or programming in a particular part of the canton or a community which benefits individuals close to them. In cases where I/NGOs push back against such interference, authorities have forced I/NGOs to forego, delay, or suspend programming. As the establishment of canton administrations has added another layer of ambiguous authority within disorganized SANES governance structures in Deir-ez-Zor, local sources report interference has increased in 2021. Nevertheless, Self Administration officials elsewhere in NES and PYD-YPG kadros have taken no steps to address this issue and it is unlikely to improve in the near term without significant external pressure on the Self Administration and an influx of support for robust reforms.

5.2. SECURITY

Security Actors

Similar to governance, PYD-YPG kadros continue to oversee an array of local military and security forces across the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons. While military and security structures are opaque, all military forces fall under the SDF and Self Protection Forces (SPF) and all security forces fall under the Internal Security Forces, or Asayish. Local sources report a group of central PYD-YPG commanders, with support from United States (US) forces, are responsible for overseeing the overall SDF, SPF, and Internal Security Forces (ISF) presence in Deir-ez-Zor and coordinating military and security activities with a number of PYD-YPG commanders assigned to manage the three security sectors in Deir-ez-Zor, including the 1) Kisreh security sector; 2) Basira security sector; and 3) Hajin security sector. At both levels the PYD-YPG commanders oversee local Arab counterparts. At the central level, PYD-YPG commanders work with the DZMC command and local Arab ISF commanders, while PYD-YPG commanders at the sector level work with DZMC and ISF sector commanders, who in turn oversee local DZMC and ISF units stationed in communities in each sector. Additionally, local sources report central PYD-YPG commanders in Deir-ez-Zor have direct control over a number of SDF anti-terrorism and commando units, which are made up of Kurdish and Arab forces from other parts of NES and locals recruited from DZMC units.

⁵ In the central canton, people's municipalities are currently found in Basira, Shiheil, Thiban, Tayyana, and Jarda, and service centers are found in Hawayej, Darnaj, and Sweidan. In the eastern canton, people's municipalities are found in Hajin, Abu Hamam, Kishkiyyeh, Gharanij, Al-Bagouz, Shafah, and Sosa. There are no service centers in the eastern canton.

The DZMC makes up the largest component of the SDF's presence in Deir-ez-Zor. Stationed in all communities, the primary responsibilities of the DZMC are to carry out security patrols and raids, and intervene in major local disputes. Additionally, DZMC are tasked to oversee checkpoints in communities throughout the central canton where security has remained extremely poor. DZMC units are drawn from the local population. As such, the majority of DZMC forces in the central canton are members of the Al-Bakeir and Albu Kamel tribes who in many cases joined the DZMC as part of similar SDF efforts. In eastern Deir-ez-Zor, the majority of DZMC forces are members of the Al-Shaetat tribe who also joined the DZMC as part of SDF efforts to integrate former opposition faction and/or local tribal networks. Alongside the DZMC, local SPF units are also stationed across Deir-ez-Zor. The SPF is made up of locals fulfilling their mandatory conscription requirement, and SPF units are primarily responsible for carrying out patrols along the banks of the Euphrates River to deter informal river crossings and to monitor GoS positions on the western banks of the river. Finally, SDF anti-terrorism and commando units are used for special operations and raids, as well as overseeing checkpoints and carrying out patrols in communities during periods of acute instability or amidst major upticks in ISIS activity.

The ISF is made up of several components in Deir-ez-Zor, including general security, intelligence, and traffic police. General security is the most visible force within the ISF and tasked with investigating and addressing serious crimes such as murder, theft, kidnapping, forgery and assassination, and overseeing checkpoints to verify IDs, search vehicles, and arrest wanted individuals. Like the DZMC, local ISF general security units are found in all communities and are drawn from the local population. While little is known about ISF intelligence units, local sources report they are responsible for infiltrating local ISIS and GoS cells, and operate extensive informant networks throughout both cantons to support these activities. Finally, the ISF oversees several traffic police units which are centered in densely populated areas such as Basira, Hajin, and Al-Shaetat communities and are in charge of directing traffic and clearing roadways.

Similar to governance, positions within local military and security forces have been the subject of significant tribal competition. The current general commander of the DZMC is a member of the Al-Bakeir tribe who has used his position to consolidate his control over the tribe, provide allied Al-Bakeir clans access to the central Deir-ez-Zor's oil resources, and limit the role of other Al-Aqaidat confederation tribes. While figures from the Albu Kamel tribe have been unable to attain senior command positions within the DZMC, several Al-Shaetat tribe figures have overseen the DZMC presence in the Hajin security sector and have used their authority to establish the Hajin Military Council as a semi-autonomous force within the DZMC.

Security Concerns

Despite the proliferation of security forces in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons, security has remained poor over the past several years. Since the SDF gained control of the central canton in late 2017, ISIS cells have remained extremely active in the area. Continuing to launch deadly attacks against local military and security forces on a near weekly basis, ISIS cells have also regularly targeted DCC and local SANES officials, tribal figures close to the Self Administration, local informants, and civilians with relatives serving in the Self Administration. While the SDF finally increased efforts to crack down on local ISIS cells in the central canton in mid-2021, which has led to a partial improvement in security, attacks remain a persistent concern and local sources report the group continues to engage in widespread extortion efforts of local businesses. Although ISIS is notably less active in the eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton, the need to travel through the central canton to reach the eastern canton has complicated travel to and from the area and there are persistent fears that ISIS will seek to expand its reach into the eastern canton.

In addition to continued ISIS activity, local sources report there are widespread concerns about GoS cells targeting local Self Administration officials and tribal figures in both cantons. While it is difficult to determine how active GoS cells are in the area, as they do not claim responsibility for attacks and investigative capacity is limited in the face of so many attacks, the belief that they are behind several high-profile assassinations have had a further chilling effect on coordination with the Self Administration. Finally, retributive violence tied to previous periods of conflict is also a concern. It is difficult to quantify the extent of such violence as in some cases retributive attacks may be carried out by ISIS or GoS cells. Nevertheless, two factors indicate it is still a serious issue in both cantons. Local sources report individuals may be hesitant to travel to certain areas of the central and

eastern cantons out of fear of retributive violence tied to previous periods of the conflict. Examples of this include, members of the Albu Kamel and Al-Bakeir tribes avoiding travel to Al-Shaetat areas, as well as members of the Albu Ez Al-Din tribe avoiding travel to communities where the Albu Kamel tribe is predominant. Frequent kidnappings and murders of low-level military and security personnel, some of whom may be former opposition and/or ISIS fighters, are also believed to often be the result of retributive violence.

Alongside concerns around conflict related violence, mandatory conscription has become a serious security concern for young men throughout the central and eastern cantons. While many male IDPs in both cantons fled the GoS advance in Deir-ez-Zor in 2017 to avoid mandatory GoS conscription, the Self Administration's decision to impose mandatory conscription in areas of Deir-ez-Zor under its control in late 2020 has caused another wave of displacement. According to the Self Administration conscription policy for Deir-ez-Zor, all men born between 1998 and 2003⁶ are required to serve in the SPF for one year. While the Self Administration originally called up SANES employees in the central and eastern cantons, they have increasingly called up the general public and carried out numerous campaigns to track down and arrest individuals who have failed to report for service. Consequently, local sources report that fears of mandatory Self Administration conscription, amidst a declining economy and an uncertain future for the area generally, have pushed thousands of local men to flee both cantons to the Turkish-held northern Aleppo and northwest Syria over the past year.

Alongside ongoing, near-term security concerns, local sources report communities throughout the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons also hold long-term safety and security concerns about the future status of the area. Much of the current population of the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons oppose the GoS and fear its return, and the majority of IDPs have already fled the GoS's advance once before. While the population's concerns are similar to those seen in all former opposition-held areas, they also hold specific fears around the area falling under the control of Iranian-backed paramilitary groups aligned with the GoS, a dynamic witnessed in much of GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor. As the continued presence of US forces in Deir-ez-Zor and NES is the primary factor preventing the GoS, and potentially Iranian-backed forces, from gaining control of Deir-ez-Zor, ambiguity around the US's presence and the Self Administration and external actors' seeming reluctance to invest in improving governance and service provision only exacerbate long-term safety and security concerns.

Freedom of Movement

Residents and IDPs currently based in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons face mixed freedom of movement. With some exceptions, Self Administration security policies do not present a major impediment to freedom of movement within, and to and from, the central and eastern cantons. In order to travel between communities and outside of Deir-ez-Zor to other Self Administration areas of NES, Self Administration security forces require residents and IDPs to present some form of government issued ID at checkpoints, generally a GoS national ID or passport. At checkpoints within Deir-ez-Zor, local sources report residents and IDPs may be questioned depending on their demographic profile, as well as prevailing security circumstances and the makeup of forces manning the checkpoint. While this reportedly becomes more intense when individuals based in the central and eastern cantons travel to other Self Administration areas of NES, so long as they do not arouse suspicions or aren't wanted for questioning for previous incidents or having failed to fulfill their mandatory military service with the SPF, Self Administration security forces are meant to permit them to pass without issue.

⁶ The Self Administration previously applied mandatory conscription for men born between 1991 and 2001, but updated the law in September 2021.

While the Self Administration previously allowed individuals to freely travel into the central and eastern cantons from GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor via informal river crossings without any documentation, since the closure of informal crossings in 2021, such individuals are now only permitted to enter Self Administration-held Deir-ez-Zor via the Al-Salihyah crossline crossing in western Deir-ez-Zor. According to this policy, individuals travelling to Self Administration-held Deir-ez-Zor from GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor must have a local guarantor, such as a relative or associate living in the area, register the traveler's arrival and affirm the traveler will not be engaged in illegal activity. Once local security authorities review and sign off on forms provided by the guarantor, the latter must submit the completed forms to Self Administration security forces at the Al-Salihyah crossing. So long as the forms are kept on file at the crossing, the traveler can receive the visitor card at the crossing and travel throughout Self Administration-held areas for up to six months. If the traveler chooses to remain in Self Administration-held areas past the six month period, he or she must register with the local commune wherever they choose to reside. Although local sources report a small number of individuals continue to travel into the central and eastern cantons via ferries and small boats operating irregularly along the Euphrates River, if they are not residing in Self Administration areas they can be apprehended at checkpoints.

Conversely, residents and IDPs in the central and eastern cantons who are not wanted by GoS security services and have valid GoS-issued IDs can travel to GoS-held areas via three main routes. Since the closure of informal river crossings, the Al-Salihyah crossing has become the safest and most reliable local route for travel to GoS-held areas from Deir-ez-Zor. Similar to the formal Al-Salihyah crossing, if residents and IDPs in the central and eastern cantons are travelling to GoS-held areas outside of Deir-ez-Zor they may chose bus routes that travel from Self Administration areas of Deir-ez-Zor to other parts of NES and then on to GoS-held Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Damascus via formal crossings at Tabqah and Menbij. Finally, local sources report residents and IDPs continue to use local ferries and boats to travel to GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor. Unlike the Self Administration, GoS military and security forces have made no attempts to discourage such crossings.

6. SERVICES AND LIVELIHOODS DYNAMICS

6.1. ELECTRICITY

The central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons receive power from two main sources, the national power grid and private generators. Both cantons receive power from national grid via lines extending from Self Administration areas of Ar-Raqqa, while the grid in the central canton also receives power from the Al-Tayem powerplant outside of GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor city as part of an agreement between the Self Administration and GoS. In both cases, power from the national grid is used exclusively for powering service lines which run to water pumping stations, irrigation networks, streetlights, bakeries, hospitals, Self Administration offices, and security posts. Even so, power through service lines is inadequate to provide regular, reliable electricity to such infrastructure and service sites, which has critically undermined key service provision throughout both cantons.

In lieu of power from the national power grid, households and businesses in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons continue to be reliant on power from privately owned generators. To receive power from private generators, households and businesses purchase a monthly subscription for a certain number of amperes per day from local generator owners. To keep power prices down, SANES authorities are meant to support and regulate private generator businesses across the Deir-ez-Zor region. In exchange for subsidized diesel fuel from the SANES Deir-ez-Zor Fuel Administration within the DCC Economy Committee, private generator businesses must register with the committee and price amperes at their set rates.⁷ Currently, rates in central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor stand at approximately 6,000 SYP per ampere, or approximately 1.81 US dollar (USD).⁸ As the minimum monthly subscription is 3 amperes, which is enough to power basic appliances and lighting for five hours a day, households spend at least 18,000 SYP (approximately 5.45 USD) for power. While SANES's efforts generally keep the price of power down and discourage price manipulation and price gouging, generator owners throughout the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons have often faced delayed and/or inadequate subsidized fuel deliveries. When this occurs, some generators owners purchase fuel from the open market and temporarily raise ampere prices, while others reduce operating hours or suspend operations altogether.

6.2. WATER

Communities in central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor receive water from three main sources, the public water network, tanker trucks, and local markets. As the public water network is made up of more than a dozen small pumping stations along the Euphrates River, the status of the network differs from community to community. Nevertheless, access to water via the public network remains poor due to several factors. Inadequate power and regular cuts to the service line is the most significant issue, as it leads to frequent interruptions at pumping stations across all communities in central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor. Damages to local water networks, especially in the eastern canton, is also a major issue. Not only do damages limit the coverage of local water networks, but alongside power cuts, they exacerbate water contamination issues as ground contaminants and pollution seep into networks when pumping stations go offline. Finally, most pumping stations lack of adequate treatment capacity and thus pump untreated water directly from the Euphrates River into the network.

⁷ Prior to changes made in mid-2021, people's municipalities were responsible for registering private generator businesses and managing prices.

⁸ All SYP-USD conversions in the report are based on the prevailing rate in the central and eastern cantons, which was of 3,300 SYP per 1 USD in November 2021.

In areas of the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons not served by public water networks, households and businesses purchase water from tanker trucks. Tanker truck operators draw water directly from the Euphrates River, irrigation pumps, and/or water pumping stations. The average price for untreated water from tanker trucks ranges between 7,000 SYP to 10,000 SYP (approximately 2.33 to 3.33 USD) for each 2,200 liter tank, while treated water ranges from 20 to 25 SYP (approximately 0.67 to 0.83 USD) per liter depending on whether the water is purchased from the treatment station or trucked.

As water from public networks is largely unsuitable for drinking, and water from tanker trucks either untreated or often inadequately treated, residents and IDPs who can afford to do so will purchase drinking water from the local market and use water from the public network or tanker trucks for other household uses. Meanwhile, households who cannot afford to purchase drinking water from the local market have few options to attain clean drinking water. With no affordable at home chemical treatment options, such households will boil water for drinking, or let unfiltered water, either from the network or tanker trucks, sit in their residential water tank for several days to allow some contaminants to evaporate.

6.3. FOOD AND FUEL SUPPORT

Food support in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons consists of subsidized bread provision from the Self Administration and limited food support by I/NGOs and charitable organizations. While local sources report households commonly baked bread at home, due to the rising cost of flour and deteriorating economic conditions, demand for subsidized bread from bakeries has risen significantly over the past several years. According to the current subsidy system, SANES provides free flour and fuel to several public municipal bakeries, and subsidized flour and fuel to private bakeries registered and contracted with the DCC Economy Committee. Such private bakeries are meant to pass on the savings to consumers and sell subsidized bread at rates set by SANES, which currently stand at between 300 and 500 SYP (approximately 0.09 and 0.15 USD) per kilogram.

DCC and local SANES authorities have faced several challenges in meeting demand for subsidized bread. Authorities and bakery owners continue to accuse central SANES authorities of failing to provide Deir-ez-Zor adequate amounts of wheat, flour, and fuel to meet the demand. While allocations for Deir-ez-Zor have continued to decline due to poor wheat harvests, local diversion is also believed to be a leading cause of bread shortages and declining bread quality in Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons. According to local sources and media reports, SANES authorities and bakery owners work with smugglers to transfer flour and fuel to GoS-held areas, where it is then sold at a significant markup on the open market. As bakeries replace the diverted flour with poor quality flour purchased on the open market, the quality of bread has declined across the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons. Although several DCC figures involved in diversion have been arrested as part of ongoing corruption investigations, local sources report diversion continues to be widespread and the DCC and local SANES authorities remain complicit in diversion activities.

Outside of subsidized bread provision, food support has been limited in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons. Local sources report the main providers of food support are local charitable organizations. Such organizations are most often established to support members of specific tribe or community and rely on donations from expats originally from the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons based in the Gulf. In addition to local charities, the GoS-registered Al-Yamamah Organization is the only external NGO providing regular food support to the central and eastern cantons and distributes monthly food baskets to communities. Distributions reportedly reach between just 3% of the population in larger towns such as Basira and Hajin, and 10% in smaller towns such as Eastern Jarda, and Al-Bagouz, and suffer from several issues. The Al-Yamamah Organization requires recipients to possess a GoS-issued family book, which many of the neediest households do not possess and have no ability to acquire. Additionally, local SANES authorities responsible for coordinating the distribution, namely local councils and communes, divert food baskets to relatives and associates and protest any attempts to distribute baskets to households from other tribes and clans.

Like bread, communities across the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons are heavily reliant on subsidized fuel. According to requirements set by the DCC, households register with communes to receive Self Administration subsidized diesel fuel in the winter and gas canisters throughout the year, with the former distributed via local gas stations and the latter delivered by communes. Despite recurrent public outcry over the past several years, subsidized fuel distributions have remained rife with issues. While the Self Administration has repeatedly failed to allocate sufficient fuel for Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons, DCC and local SANES officials, kadros, and gas station owners have continued to divert and steal substantial amounts of fuel for smuggling to GoS-held areas and/or sale on the open market. In many cases, officials, kadros, and gas station owners will replace the fuel with low quality fuel purchased on the open market to conceal the theft and diversion of subsidized fuel. Consequently, complaints of subsidized fuel being unusable or even dangerous have become commonplace over the past two years. Despite several arrests related to fuel diversion and theft, local sources report there is no indication that the Self Administration has taken any meaningful steps to improve distribution of subsidized fuel. Thus, households will continue to be forced to purchase fuel on the open market for 750–800 SYP (approximately 0.23 to 0.28 USD) per liter, significantly higher than the current subsidized rate of 80 SYP (approximately 0.03 USD) per liter.

6.4. HEALTH

The health sector remains underdeveloped in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons. With just 17 operational public primary care centers and small hospitals across both cantons, several challenges have further undermined the availability and quality of health care in the area. SANES lacks the resources to adequately fund public health facilities, which has made the public health care sector almost entirely reliant on support from I/NGOs for operating and capital expenses. Although such support has been key to sustaining operations in public facilities, on several occasions funding cuts have forced facilities to reduce staff, operating hours, and services. Additionally, the lack of qualified doctors and nurses, as well as of necessary medical equipment and supplies, have impacted the quality of healthcare and limited the number of services provided in both public and private facilities. Consequently, even as there are more than 20 private clinics and hospitals in both cantons, those who can afford to do so are often required, or choose, to travel to other Self Administration-held areas of NES, GoS-held areas, or Iraq for care.

Both cantons have suffered significantly from the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year and a half. In addition to lacking facilities equipped to address COVID-19 cases, the Self Administration and the DCC's failure to effectively coordinate with I/NGOs greatly undermined the COVID-19 response in both the central and eastern cantons. Although the response has been aided by the vaccination of local healthcare workers in mid-2021, irregular, insufficient support for the response and the public's poor adherence to lockdowns and precautionary measures meant to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have continued to place the cantons at risk. While public disregard for lockdowns was the result of economic considerations and the need to continue working, local sources report disregard of precautionary measures has largely been due to widespread individual negligence and, in some cases, the added cost of basic personal protective equipment. .

6.5. EDUCATION

According to local sources, there are approximately 250 public schools present in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons. More than 75% of schools in the cantons are primary-stage 1 (grades 1 to 6) schools, while most remaining schools are primary-stage 2 (grades 7 to 9) schools. Both primary-stage 1 and stage 2 schools teach the UNICEF Self Learning Program (SLP). Local sources report widespread school rehabilitation efforts over the past several years, supported by several external actors and organizations, has been key to bringing primary-stage 1 and stage-2 schools back online and primary education accessible to most of the population. Despite this notable improvement, the lack of teacher training, alongside overcrowding in some communities, has led to poor education quality, which remains a persistent concern amongst local families.

In addition to challenges related to local infrastructure and capacity, political issues have also complicated students' ability to pursue an education past the primary-stage. Like students throughout GoS-held areas, students in the central and eastern cantons wishing to advance to the secondary stage and those wishing to attend university or technical school must pass national GoS exams. As the GoS does not operate exam centers in Self Administration areas, students seeking to advance past the primary stage must travel to testing centers in GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor city to sit for the national 9th grade exam. Similarly, students who complete the secondary stage and wish to attend a GoS university or technical school must also travel to GoS-held Deir-ez-Zor, first to take a preliminary qualifying exam for students who completed their secondary stage education in areas outside of GoS control and then to sit for the national 12th grade, or baccalaureate, exam. Due to the limited number of secondary stage schools in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons, students often pursue their secondary stage education through self-learning courses at home or at small private institutes established by local teachers.

In addition to the financial costs and logistical challenges related to pursuing a secondary education in Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons, there are also persistent concerns about the Self Administration imposing the SANES curriculum in local schools. Not only do DCC officials, teachers, and families believe the SANES curriculum exhibits an anti-Arab, pro-Kurdish bias and is culturally inappropriate for Deir-ez-Zor, but they also assert it will place local students seeking to pursue a post-secondary education at a significant disadvantage as it does not prepare them for national GoS exams. While the Self Administration suspended efforts to impose the curriculum after protests against the move in mid-2020, so long as the Self Administration retains control of Deir-ez-Zor, it is likely to make further attempts to introduce the curriculum, or parts of it, over the coming years.

6.6. HOUSING

According to local sources, housing is plentiful and affordable in the central Deir-ez-Zor canton, which has been a strong factor in some residents and IDPs decision to remain in the area. In addition to vacancies because of residents leaving over the course of the conflict, communities incurred significantly less damage than the eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton due to ISIS's rapid withdrawal from the area in 2017. While there are also vacancies in the eastern Deir-ez-Zor canton, local sources report housing is relatively scarce in the area due to the high number of IDPs and extensive damage incurred during the campaign against ISIS.

Due to fluctuations in the SYP, property owners price rental properties in USD. As of late 2021, monthly rent for a typical 2-to-3-bedroom rental home ranged between 25 and 75 USD. While the higher end of the range is found in more populous communities such as Basira, Hajin, and the Al-Shaetat area, the price of rentals fluctuates according to the location of home and the availability of services. Local sources report it is also common for residents to provide IDPs from the same tribe or clan homes for free as part of tribal custom. Additionally, it is common for residents who have fled the area to allow individuals to live in the home rent free so long as they agree to tend to the property.

Local sources report both cantons witnessed a significant rise in construction of new homes and home repair following the territorial defeat of ISIS. While this continued until early 2020, construction has gradually slowed in both cantons due to the deteriorating economy, unstable political and security situation, and rising price of building materials.

6.7. CIVIL DOCUMENTATION AND REGISTRATION

To date, the Self Administration has not established a civil documentation and registration system or courts in Deir-ez-Zor. Consequently, communities in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons continue to rely on GoS civil registries, courts, and offices for civil documentation and registration services, including family books, identification cards, driving licenses, and passports, and birth, death, marriage, divorce, and property registration.

As the GoS does not operate civil registries, courts, or similar offices in Self Administration areas of Deir-ez-Zor, residents and IDPs must either travel to GoS-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor or work with fixers in GoS-held areas for GoS civil documentation and registration services. The choice to travel to GoS-held areas or work with a fixer is based on individual circumstances. Men between the ages of 18 and 40 who have not completed mandatory GoS military service and individuals with close ties to the opposition or Self Administration have no choice but to use a fixer, despite the high costs, as they are likely to be arrested upon arrival to GoS-held areas. As many IDPs currently residing in the central and eastern cantons fled GoS-held areas due to these concerns, they are reportedly far more likely to rely on fixers. Conversely, women, children, and the elderly from local families without close opposition or Self Administration ties do not often face major issues and are thus more likely to travel to GoS-held areas for civil documentation and registration services. Residents of the both the central and eastern canton must travel to GoS civil registries, courts, or similar offices in Deir-ez-Zor City, as do IDPs in originally from GoS-held areas of Dier-ez-Zor, while IDPs from other areas of Syria must travel to GoS offices in their governorate of origin.⁹

Despite the costs and potential security risks related to GoS civil documentation and registration services, local sources report residents and IDPs are generally keen to obtain and renew such documents. Not only do many residents need GoS IDs to maintain access to GoS-held areas for personal, business, medical, and educational purposes, but both residents and IDPs have an interest in maintaining documentation of births, marriages, divorces, and property ownership in case the GoS returns and/or they choose to leave Syria. Additionally, while residents and IDPs in the central and eastern cantons can obtain a paper ID issued by communes and local councils to prove their identity within Self Administration areas, Self Administration security forces do not universally recognize such documents.¹⁰ Consequently, individuals with a Self Administration ID may face challenges travelling to other Self Administration areas of NES, and even locally within the central and eastern cantons.

⁹ While recent amendments to GoS civil status law have included stipulations to allow people to access their civil registration from offices in any governorate these have not yet been significantly implemented.

¹⁰ To receive the so-called commune ID, individuals are required to meet with the head of the commune or local council in the presence of two individuals who can attest to their identity.

6.8. ECONOMY AND LIVELIHOODS

The economy of central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons has traditionally been based on agriculture, and specifically the cultivation of wheat, barley, cotton, and vegetables, as well as fruit trees in certain parts of eastern Deir-ez-Zor. Due to the deterioration of irrigation networks and collapse of state support for farmers, cultivation has dropped significantly over the course of the Syrian conflict. As the GoS estimated more than 70% of the population of the central and eastern cantons were reliant on the agriculture sector prior to the conflict, either as landowners, farmers, or laborers, the sector's decline has led to mass unemployment, increased labor competition, and reduced wages, and has negatively impacted the local economy overall. Like vegetable and fruit cultivation, sheep farming has also declined over the course of the conflict. While some sheep farmers continue to benefit from large swathes of grazing pasture between arable lands along the Euphrates River and the Al-Badiyah area to the east, many have lost or abandoned herds, and suffered from declining local demand, poor security in remote grazing areas, and insufficient state support.

In addition to agriculture, the pre-conflict economy of the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons was heavily reliant on public sector employment. While some local GoS civil servants have continued to receive their salaries from the GoS despite not actively working, most civil servants lost their jobs immediately after the withdrawal of the GoS. Consequently, there has been strong demand for expanded local public sector employment since the Self Administration gained control of the area. Although the Self Administration did hire several hundred residents to serve in local SANES bodies in both cantons, and even more to serve in the DZMC, public sector employment has slowed and such jobs have become increasingly scarce over the past year.

Meanwhile, the number of small workshops and businesses serving the local market has largely remained consistent. In addition to the continuing operation of workshops and small services businesses, investors in Basira, Hajin, and the Al-Shaetat area opened or restored several small factories producing ice, plastics, cement block, and foodstuffs for the local market immediately after ISIS was expelled from the area. Although poor infrastructure and services has also allowed some investors and small businesses to meet local demands for electricity and water, overall, the combined impact of poor services and infrastructure, limited access to markets, and the ongoing economic decline, have worked to slow investment in the services and manufacturing sectors over the past year.

Similarly, outside of the fuel trade and smuggling, which is discussed further below, trade in the central or eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons is relatively limited. With limited access to markets, local traders are reliant on large traders and manufacturers in Quamishli city, Ar-Raqqa, and Menbij for purchasing products for local distribution. Currently, the centers of trade in the central canton are Basira, Thiban, and Shiheil, and in the eastern canton are Hajin and the Al-Shaetat area.

As the conflict has devastated the agriculture sector and public sector employment, it has also provided both cantons unprecedented access to local oil resources, namely the Al-Omar oil field in the central canton and the Al-Tanak oil field in the eastern canton. Due to their proximity to the fields and specific local dynamics throughout the conflict, Basira, Shiheil, and Hawajej have benefitted the most from the Al-Omar field, and the Al-Shaetat area has benefitted the most from the Al-Tanak field. Nevertheless, the number of individuals with continued access has reportedly been on a steady decline since the Self Administration gained control of the area and worked to consolidate control of local fields. Currently, a small number of influential local investors, DZMC commanders, PYD-YPG kadros, and figures within the SANES Jazeera Company¹¹ jointly manage extraction from wells in and around both fields.

¹¹ The SANES Jazeera Company is a Self Administration company responsible for overseeing oil and gas extraction throughout Self Administration areas of NES. While based in the Al-Hasakah governorate, it maintains offices at oil and gas fields in Deir-ez-Zor.

With the Self Administration's increasing control over extraction, the number of smaller actors involved in various parts of the oil supply chain has also decreased. Until early 2021, the central canton was home to more than a dozen active informal river crossings centered in Shiheil, Thiban, and Hawayej. At the crossings, local ferry operators transported goods and people on large river barges capable of carrying cars and trucks. While residents and IDPs used the crossings to quickly cross between Self Administration and GoS-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor, the crossings were also used to smuggle fuel and other key goods from Self Administration-held areas to GoS-held areas. Nevertheless, since early 2021, the Self Administration has worked to close most informal crossings. While this was in part an attempt to stop the diversion of Self Administration subsidized goods to GoS-held areas, local sources report other dynamics were at play.

The US and Russia reportedly wanted to close the crossings for security and political reasons. Local sources report the Self Administration and the US worked together to close the crossings to deprive the GoS of access to Deir-ez-Zor's oil resources and due to concerns that ISIS networks were profiting from smuggling activities. Meanwhile, Russia wanted the crossings closed to expand its influence in Deir-ez-Zor. As Russia worked with the Self Administration to establish the formal crossline crossing at Al-Salihyah between the western Deir-ez-Zor canton and Deir-ez-Zor city in parallel to the crackdown, local sources report the crackdown led to increased use of the formal crossing. This not only bolstered Russia's ability to potentially broker future agreements between the Self Administration and GoS in Deir-ez-Zor, but also undermined GoS actors not aligned with Russia, such as the Fourth Division and Iranian-backed National Defense Forces, who were responsible for managing informal crossings on the GoS-held side. Although local actors profited greatly from the informal crossings, they have also benefitted from the push to close them and have thus been supportive of the effort. For PYD-YPG kadros and the Self Administration, the closure of the informal crossings has allowed them to further consolidate control over the fuel trade as it reduced demand by smaller local traders. At the same time, DZMC figures from the Al-Bakeir tribe and Al-Baggara confederation supported the closures due to the Albu Kamel tribe's control over the crossings and smuggling operations.¹²

As the closure of the crossings has reduced access to the fuel trade in the central and eastern cantons, it has also led to reduced operations in dozens of makeshift oil refineries in the Al-Badiyah area of the central and eastern cantons. While operators still refine oil in exchange for keeping 5% to 30% of the refined oil to sell on the local market, local sources report the amounts of oil refined have dropped by nearly 50% since the closure of the informal crossings.

Finally, amidst the deteriorating economic situation and widespread unemployment, the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons have relied heavily on remittances. Relatives based in Turkey, the EU, and Gulf send money to relatives, often on a monthly basis, through hawalah networks, which local recipients can pick up from dozens of hawalah offices and hundreds of independent hawalah agents located across both cantons.

¹² Since the closure of the largest informal crossings, DZMC figures have established small crossings and makeshift oil pipelines in the western Deir-ez-Zor countryside to smuggle fuel.

7. RETURN AND DISPLACEMENT PROSPECTS

Significant returns to the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons are extremely unlikely in the near to mid-term. When reviewed according to the findings of this report and the eight criteria of the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP), circumstances in both cantons are wholly inadequate for returns. While addressing this requires a combination of first line, early recovery, and stabilization support, to date, the response has largely been stymied by concerns around long-term safety and security and a lack of support for the humanitarian response in NES more broadly.

The continued presence of US forces in NES is the primary factor preventing the GoS, Russia, and potentially Iranian-backed forces, from gaining control of Deir-ez-Zor and both cantons. Although the US is unlikely to withdraw in the near to mid-term, its inability or unwillingness to develop and communicate a productive policy for NES and Deir-ez-Zor will deter IDPs from the central and eastern cantons from considering return. It will also continue to encourage outward migration from both areas. Troublingly, external and local actors also appear to have internalized the ambiguity around the US's intent and presence at the expense of addressing the multitude of acute, urgent needs in Deir-ez-Zor.

External actors have exhibited a hesitance to provide the level of support required to address needs so long as Deir-ez-Zor and NES remain a challenging environment with a precarious future. Thus, not only has first line support for residents and IDPs in both cantons been extremely limited over the past year despite increased needs as a result of economic decline, but meaningful early recovery and stabilization support has also failed to materialize. Syrian actors, from the PYD-YPG to the DCC, local SANES authorities, and tribal figures and elites, have thus had no incentive and been under no pressure to adjust their transactional approach to governance and administration amidst the prevailing circumstances. While cooperation between them is enough to achieve a modicum of stability, their approach and the continued lack of external support will continue to leave the Self Administration presence in Deir-ez-Zor completely incapable of managing resources and improving service provision.

So long as the current status quo persists, the humanitarian situation in the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons is likely to decline and outward migration to other areas of NES and Syria, as well as Turkey, Iraq, the Gulf, and the EU is likely to accelerate. This dynamic will increase further if there are signs of GoS return to the area. Although limited activities by GoS-registered NGOs may be tolerated for the time being, if this modality of support were to increase and is accompanied by Self Administration-GoS negotiations, concerns of a full GoS return would push thousands to leave.

As discussed throughout the report, the central and eastern Deir-ez-Zor cantons host nearly 55,000 IDPs from GoS-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor. While these IDPs are likely to be displaced again if the GoS returns, local sources estimate that between 25% to 50% of the current resident population are also likely to flee the area to Turkish-held areas and Iraq if the GoS returns. Residents not only hold concerns about being targeted by the GoS due to accusations of previous affiliation with the opposition, ISIS, and the Self Administration, but also the imposition of mandatory GoS conscription and the potential role of Iranian-backed paramilitary groups in the area. Since the GoS reasserted full control over Daraa in October 2021, local sources report such fears have only increased.

Annex 1:

Community

Profiles

CENTRAL DEIR-EZ-ZOR

Abu Hardoub Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Ashara sub-district

- Dweir town

Major tribe: Al-Shweir Tribe (Al-Aqaidat confederation)

- Subikhan City

Major tribe: Al-Shweir Tribe (Al-Aqaidat confederation)

Primary IDP Housing

Rented Homes

Free homes

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
8,657

Current
5,732



4,313 Resident



1,419 IDP

Major Movement Events



October to November 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Abu Hardoub
Arrivals from Dweir and Subikhan



November to December 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, causing displacements
Displacement to Aleppo governorate, Idlib governorate, Damascus city, Al-Badiyah desert near Swedan Shamiya, Al Bateen, Turkey and Europe



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

Al-Shaetat branch

- Al-Shweir tribe

- Al Anin tribe

- Al Zubaid tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Abu Hardoub are reportedly extremely positive, as residents and the majority of IDPs are from the Al-Shweir tribe and enjoy close familial relations. As a result of ties, local sources report IDPs in Abu Hardoub commonly don't view themselves as displaced, despite moving from adjacent communities across the Euphrates River.

To date there have been no notable returns to the community.

Al Basira Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city

Major tribe: Al-Qala'in tribe

- Burqus town

Major tribe: Albu Saraya confederation

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city

Major tribe: Al-Jaghayfa tribe (Al-Duleim confederation)

Homs governorate

Unknown communities

Hama governorate

Unknown communities

Primary IDP Housing

Rented homes

Small informal settlements (schools)

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
6,199

Current
14,647



13,944 Resident

694 IDP

Major Movement Events



August 2011

GoS asserts control of the area
Displacement to neighboring towns, Turkey



July 2012

Opposition gains control of central Deir-ez-Zor
Displacement to GoS controlled areas of Deir-ez-Zor, Damascus city, Turkey



June and July 2014

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, and gains control of Basira
Displacement to neighboring towns and villages, (Al-Mayadin city, Salu town, Al-Sour town, Deir Ez-Zor city) Idlib governorate, Turkey



Mid-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo, Idlib governorate, Turkey, some to GoS areas



September 2017

DPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Basira
Arrivals from Mayadin city, Deir-ez-Zor city, Muhasan town, Abu Kamal city, Saalu town



September to November 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement
Displacement to towns in Al-Hasakeh governorate, northern countryside of Aleppo. Many return within months



2020

Ongoing displacement of residents and IDPs leaving the town due to poor economic and security conditions
Displacement to other Deir-ez-Zor towns and Turkey, some IDPs return to Saalu town



2021

Gradual outflow of young men due to deteriorating economic conditions, security raids, and mandatory Self Administration conscription
Displacement to northern Syria, Turkey



Displacement Event | IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Al-Bakeir tribe

Al-Jabour confederation

- Albu Fahd tribe

Al-Aniza confederation

- Albu Shalhoun tribe

Al-Qalaan confederation

- Al-Sinaniyin tribe

- Al Waisat tribe

- Al-Rawaeen tribe

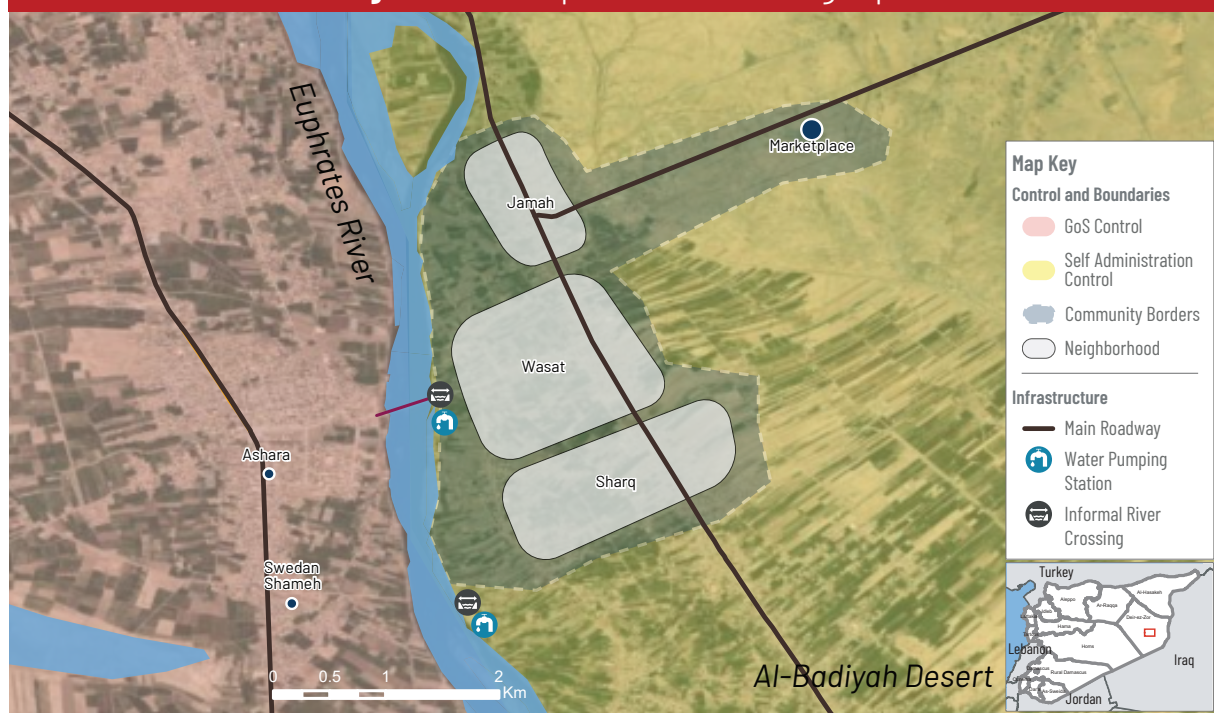
- Al-Rabien tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs have been mixed in Basira. While there is competition between residents and IDPs over employment, the strong local market in Basira has mitigated these tensions to some extent. Additionally, with Basira's historically diverse tribal makeup, residents reportedly exhibit more openness to IDPs from various tribes and elsewhere in Deir-ez-Zor. Nevertheless, the deterioration of the security situation in the community between 2019 and 2021 tested relations, as residents became suspicious that the local IDP population was harboring ISIS cells. Since expanded SDF efforts in the town and surrounding area, and subsequent reduction in ISIS attacks, relations have reportedly improved.

Aside from the return of approximately 20 families held in Al Hol IDP camp, there have been no notable returns to the community.

Darnaj Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city
- Ashara city

Major tribe: Albu Hassan tribe
(Al-Aqaidat confederation)

Primary IDP Housing

Free homes
Rented homes
Small informal camp (20 tents)

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
7,847

Current
3,470



2,430 Resident

1,040 IDP

Major Movement Events



June and July 2014

SIS clashes with opposition factions, gaining control of Darnaj
Displacement to neighboring villages of Deir-ez-Zor. Returns begin within days



Mid-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo governorate, Idlib governorate, Turkey



August 2017

IDPs from neighboring villages across the Euphrates flee fearing Russian airstrikes on ISIS positions arriving to Darnaj town
Arrivals from Ashara city



October to November 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Darnaj
Arrivals from Mayadin city, Ashara city



December 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement
Displacement to towns in Al-Hasakah governorate, Ar-Raqqa city, Al-Badiya (desert), Fleitah camp, Sweidan town. Returns begin within weeks.



Displacement Event | IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Albu Hassan tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Darnaj are reportedly extremely positive, as residents and IDPs are both from the Albu Hassoun tribe and enjoy close familial relations. As a result of ties, local sources report IDPs in Darnaj commonly don't view themselves as displaced, despite moving from adjacent communities across the Euphrates River.

Aside from the return of approximately 50 families held in Al Hol IDP camp, there have been no notable returns to the community.

Eastern Jarda | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city

Ashara sub-district

- Dweir town

Major tribe: Al-Shaetat tribe (Al-Aqaidat confederation)

Deir-ez-Zor district

Deir-ez-Zor sub-district

- Deir-ez-Zor city

Muhasan sub-district

- Muhasan town

Major tribe: Albu Khabour confederation

- Qetet Elbuleil town

- Mreiye town

Major tribe: Albu Khabour confederation

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city

Hama governorate

Unknown communities

Primary IDP Housing

Free houses,

Small camp (8 tents)

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
8,261

Current
7,755



6,000 Resident
1,155 IDP

Major Movement Events



August 2011

GoS asserts control of the area
Neighboring villages and desert



2013

GoS-Opinion clashes in other areas lead to the arrival of families from GoS controlled areas
Arrivals from Hama governorate countryside



June and July 2014

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, and gains control of the town
Displacement to Al-Badiya (desert), villages in the eastern countryside of Deir Ez-Zor, towns in Al-Hasakeh governorate



Late-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to Euphrates Shield area, Turkey



September 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Eastern Jarda
Arrivals from Dweir, Muhasan, Al-Marayyah, Al-Mayadin, Deir Ez-Zor city, Albu Kamal



September 2017

SDF battles with ISIS and gains control
Displacements to Al-Badiya (desert), villages in the eastern countryside of Deir Ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa governorate, southern countryside of Al-Hasakeh governorate



June 2021

Gradual outflow of young men due to deteriorating economic conditions, security raids, and mandatory Self Administration conscription
Displacement to Turkey, Europe



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Albu Kamel tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Eastern Jarda have been mixed. Many IDPs who settled in Eastern Jarda owned land in the community. While these landowners had largely ignored the land prior to the conflict and allowed residents to use the land for farming, when they settled in the community in late 2017 disputes over use of the land quickly arose. Most disputes have since been resolved, however, there are still some lingering tensions.

Aside from the return of approximately 20 families held in Al Hol IDP camp, there have been no notable returns to the community.

Hawayej Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city
- Burqus town

Major tribe: Albu Saraya confederation

- Makhan town

Ashara sub-district

- Ashara city

Major tribe: Albu Hassan tribe (Al-Aqaidat confederation) and Al-Qalaan confederation

Primary IDP Housing

Rented homes

Free homes

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
4,137

Current
2,143



1,960 Resident

183 IDP

Major Movement Events



July 2012

Opposition gains control of central Deir-ez-Zor
Displacement to GoS controlled areas of Deir Ez-Zor, Damascus city, Turkey



June 2014 and July

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, gaining control of Hawayej
Displacement to neighboring villages in Deir-ez-Zor. Returns begin within days



Mid-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to northern Aleppo governorate, Idlib governorate, Turkey



September to October 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Hawayej
Arrivals from Bugrus town, Al-Mayadin city, Qatet Albuleil town, Makhan town



October to November 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement
Displacement to Al-Omar Oil field, northern Deir-ez-Zor towns, towns in Al-Hasakeh governorate, Ar-Raqqqa city. Many return within three months



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

Albu Kamel tribe

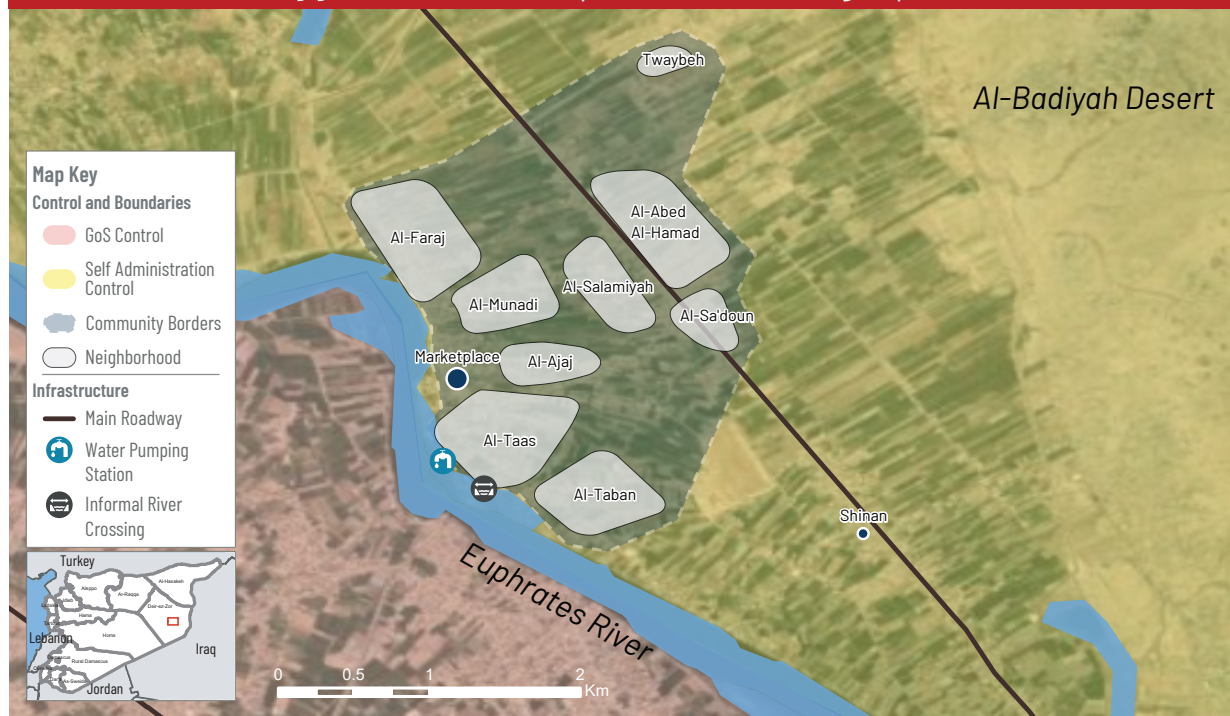
- Salih Al-Zahir clan
- Ahmad Al-Zahir clan
- Suleiman Al-Zahir clan
- Al-Hassan Al-Zahir clan
- Al-Shabbat clan

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Hawayej are reportedly positive, with no major incidents reported between residents and IDPs.

To date there have been no notable returns to the community.

Tayyana Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city
- Al-Quriyah city
- Major tribe: Al-Qaraan tribe (Al-Aqaidat confederation)

Deir-ez-Zor district

Deir-ez-Zor sub-district

- Deir-ez-Zor city

Primary IDP Housing

Rented Homes

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
7,237

Current
5,608



4,495 Resident
1,113 IDP

Major Movement Events



June and July 2014

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, gaining control of Tayyana
Displacement to neighboring villages of Deir-ez-Zor. Returns begin within days



Mid-2014 to Late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions
Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo governorate, Idlib governorate, Turkey



September to November 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Tayyana town
Arrivals from Al-Quriyah city, some arrive from Deir-ez-Zor city and Al-Mayadin city



December 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control of Tayyana, largescale displacement
Displacement to Fleiteh camp (northern Deir-ez-Zor desert), northern countryside of Aleppo governorate, Idlib governorate, Al-Hasakeh towns and city, Ar-Raqqah city. Returns begin within weeks



2020

Hundreds of IDPs leave Tayyana to return to Al-Quriyah city



2021

Gradual outflow of young men due to deteriorating economic conditions, security raids, and mandatory Self Administration conscription
Displacement to Turkey, Germany



Displacement Event | IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Al-Qaraan tribe

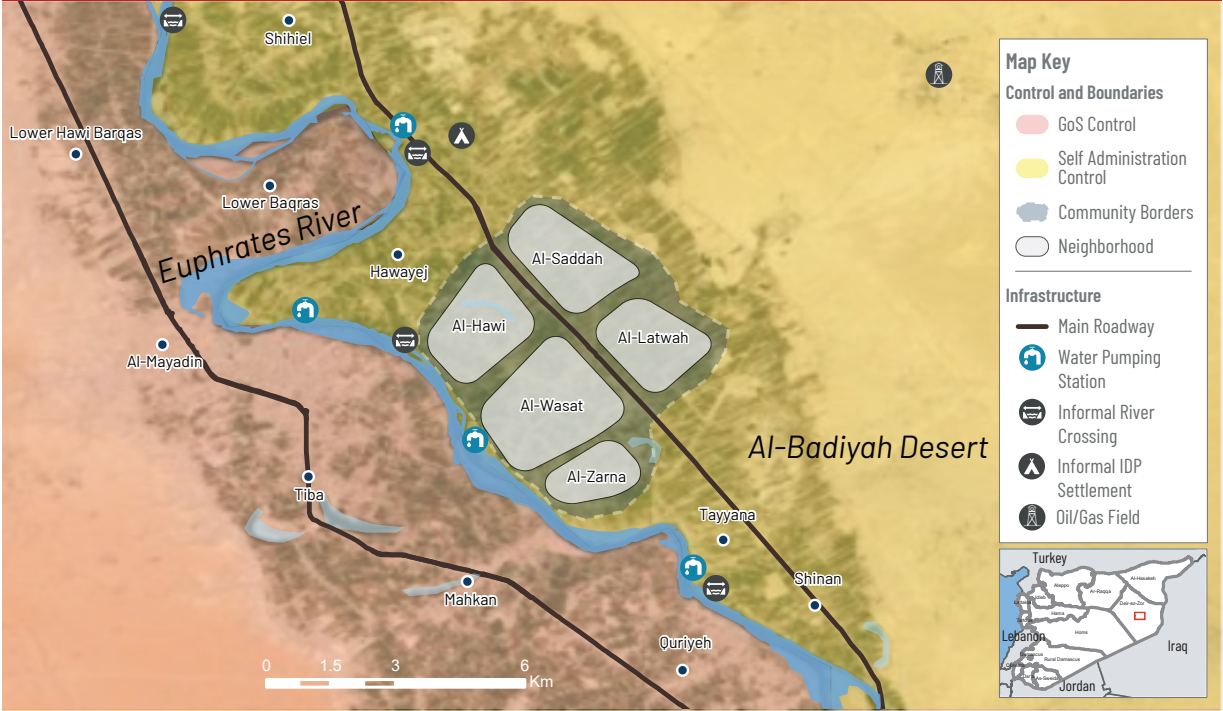
Al-Mashahadeh confederation

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Tayyana are reportedly positive, as residents and the majority of IDPs are from the Al-Qaraan tribe and enjoy close familial relations.

Aside from the return of approximately 50 families held in Al Hol IDP camp, there have been no notable returns to the community.

Thiban Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- **Al-Mayadin city**
Major tribe: Al-Qala'in tribe
 - **Burqus town**
Major tribe: Albu Saraya confederation
 - **Makhan town**
Major tribe: Al-Juhaish confederation
- Ashara sub-district
- **Ashara city**
Major tribe: Albu Hassan tribe
(Al-Aqaidat confederation) and
Al-Qalaan confederation

Deir-ez-Zor district
Muhesib sub-district

Muhasan sub-district

- **Qetet Elbuleil town**
Major tribe: Albu Khabour confederation

Primary IDP Housing

Rented homes

Free homes

Small informal camp (7 tents)

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
9,000


Pre-Conflict
9,000


Current
9,463


6,805 Resident

Pre-Conflict
9,000

Current
9,463

Resident
6,805

IDP
2,690

Major Movement Events

- July 2012**

Opposition gains control of central Deir-ez-Zor
Displacement to GoS controlled areas of Deir Ez-Zor, Damascus city, Turkey

June 2014 and July

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, gaining control of Thiban town
Displacement to neighboring villages. Returns begin within weeks

Mid-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to GoS controlled areas of Deir Ez-Zor, Damascus city

September to October 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Thiban town
Arrivals from Buqrus town, Al-Mayadin city, Qatet Albuleil town, Mahkan town

October to November 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement
Displacement to Al-Omar oil field, towns in northern Deir-ez-Zor, towns in Al-Hasakeh governorate. Many return within three months

Legend:

 - Displacement Event
 - IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

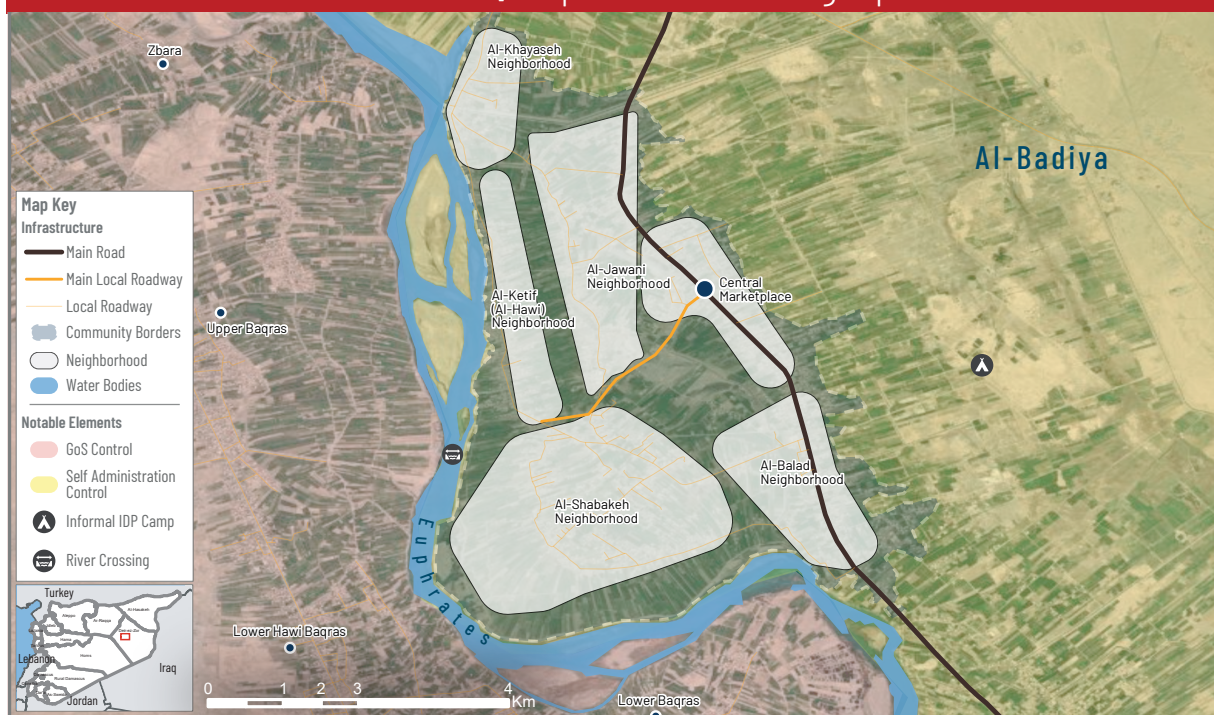
- Al-Hafl family

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Thiban have been mixed. Although there has been competition between residents and IDPs over employment, notably contracting and day labor jobs in harvesting, construction, and services, this has not led to major security incidents or an overall deterioration of relations. Conversely, there have been recurrent disputes between IDPs from Al Mayadin and residents over grazing areas to the east of the community and competition in the sheep trade generally. Although these have led to isolated incidents of violence, prominent figures from the Al-Haff family has been able to quickly resolve these incidents and restore order in the community.

While a small number of tribal figures from the Al-Hafi family returned to Thiban from GoS-held areas immediately after the SDF expelled ISIS in late 2017, there have been no notable returns to the community since then.

Shiheil Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city
Major tribe: Al-Qalaan confederation
- Burqus town
Major tribe: Albu Saraya confederation

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city
Major tribe: Al-Jaghayfa tribe (Al-Duleim confederation)

Homs governorate

Unknown communities

Hama governorate

Unknown communities

Primary IDP Housing

Rented homes

Free homes

2-4 Small camps of 15-30 HHs
(Primarily Abu Kamal families)

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
14,005

Current
6,964



1,261 IDP

Major Movement Events

July 2012

Opposition gains control of central Deir-ez-Zor
Displacement to GoS controlled Deir Ez-Zor, Damascus, Turkey

2013 - 2014

Small numbers of IDPs arrive from GoS controlled areas
Arrivals from Homs governorate, Eastern Hama countryside

June and July 2014

ISIS clashes with JAN and opposition factions, gaining control of Shiheil.
Displacement to neighboring communities and communities in Al-Hasakeh governorate. Majority return within months

Mid-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to Idlib, Turkey (Urfa region), GoS controlled areas

September to October 2017

IDPs across the Euphrates Rive flee GoS advances against ISIS and arrive in Shiheil
Arrivals from neighboring Burqus and Al-Mayadin as well as Abu Kamal in the east

September 2017 to October 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, large-scale. Displacement Al-Omar oil field, northern Deir-ez-Zour, Al-Hasakeh governorate

2021

Gradual outflow of young men due to deteriorating economic conditions, security raids, and mandatory Self Administration conscription
Displacement to OPS area, Turkey

Displacement Event | IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation
Albu Kamel tribe

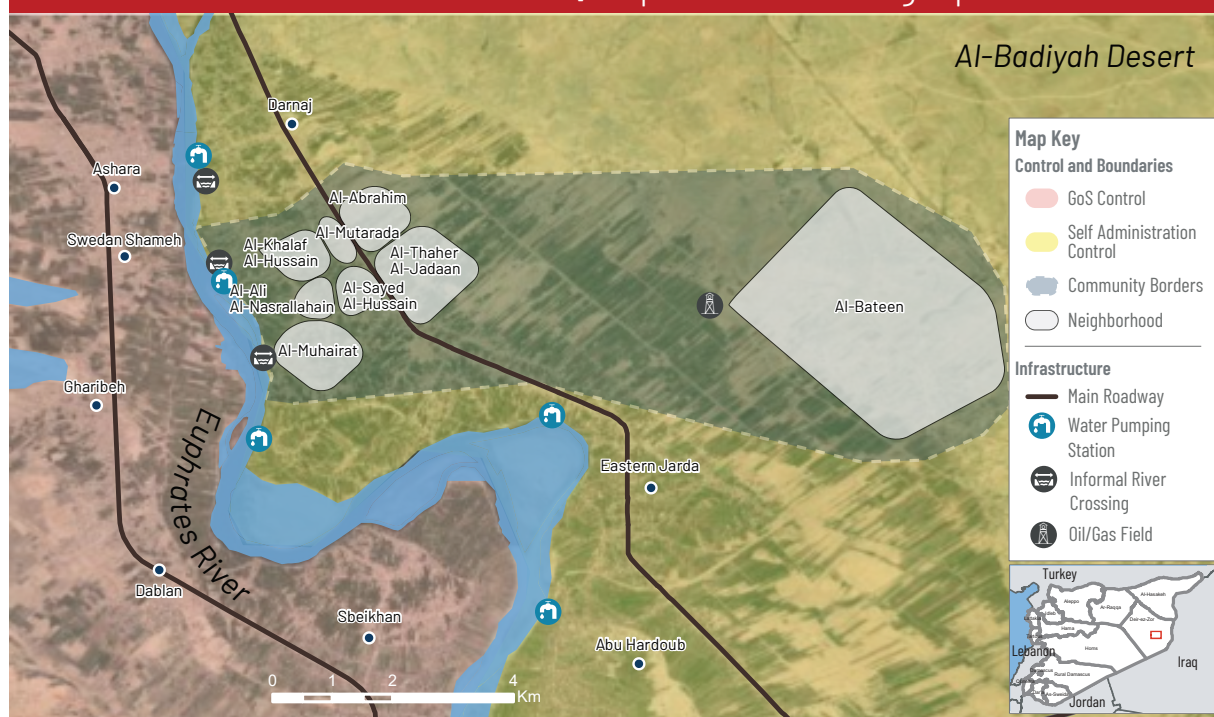
- Al-Salih al-Hamd clan (east)
- Al-Hamd al-Ali clan (west)

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs have been mixed. Although there has been competition between residents and IDPs over employment, notably contracting and day labor jobs in harvesting, construction, and services, this has not led to major security incidents or an overall deterioration of relations. As security conditions have been chronically poor in Shiheil, IDPs have at various times been the focus of suspicion amongst residents. Most recently, in mid-2021, a local SDF commander from the Albu Kamel tribe justified an attempt to expel several IDP families from the community on the basis of security concerns and accusations that they were harboring ISIS members. Although residents pushed back against the accusations and rejected the move, several dozen IDP families left Shiheil as a result of the incident and moved to communities in the eastern canton.

To date there have been no notable returns to the community.

Sweidan Jazira Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

• Al-Mayadin city

Major Tribe: Al-Jughayfah tribe (Al-Duleim confederation), Al-Qalaan confederation and Al Mashahdah confederation

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

• Abu Kamal city

Tribe: Al-Jughayfah tribe (Al-Duleim confederation), Al-Qalaan confederation and Al Mashahdah confederation

Ashara sub-district

• Ashara city

Major tribe: Albu Hassoun clan

Primary IDP Housing

Rented Homes

Free homes

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
5,947

Current
5,760



5,380 Resident

380 IDP

Major Movement Events



September to December 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Sweidan Jazira
Arrivals from Al-Mayadin, Ashara, Abu Kamal cities



December 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, causing displacements
Displacement to Aleppo governorate, Idlib governorate, Damascus city, Al-Badiyah desert near Suwaidan Shamiya, Al Bateen, Turkey and Europe



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

Albu Kamel branch

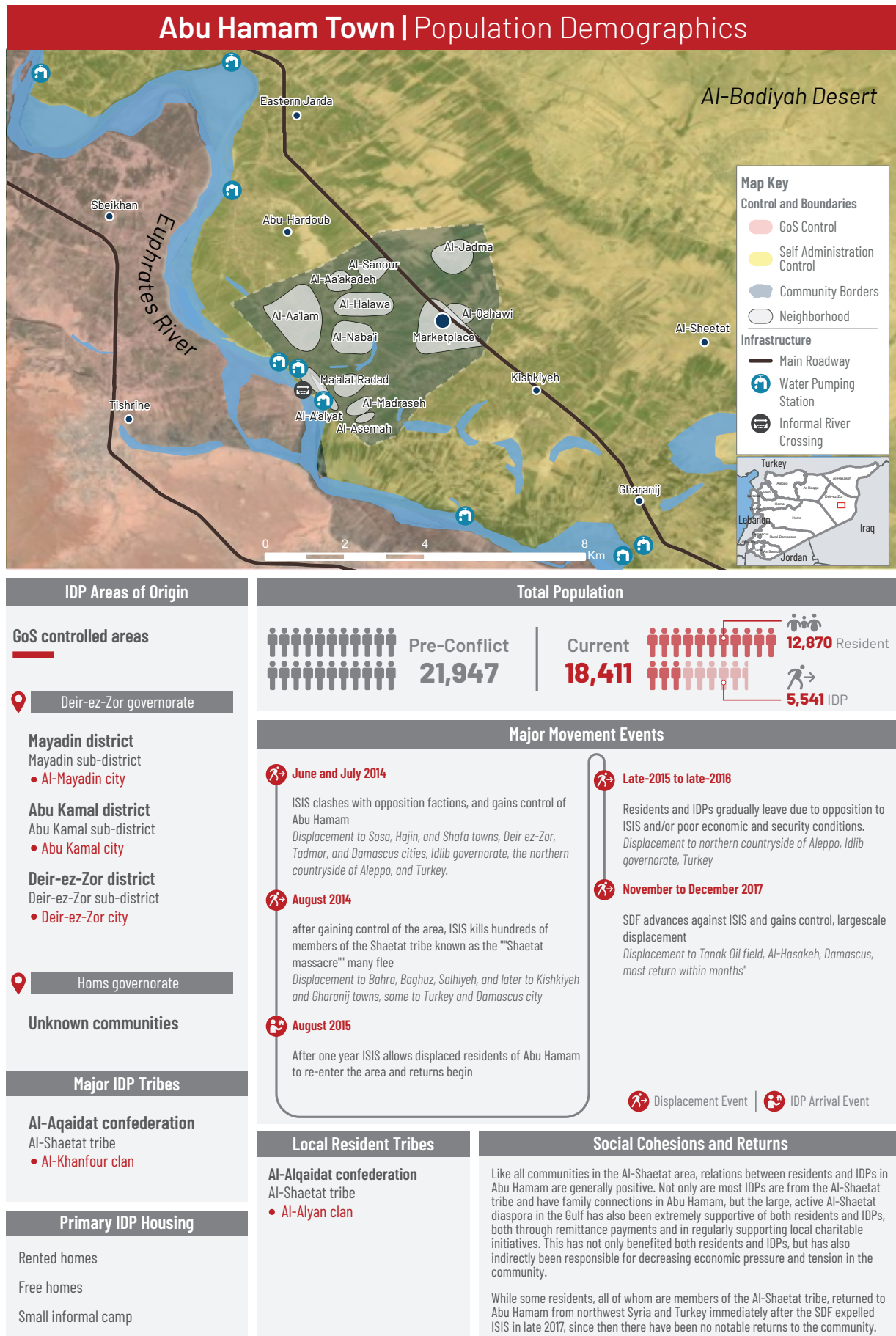
• Albu Hassoun tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

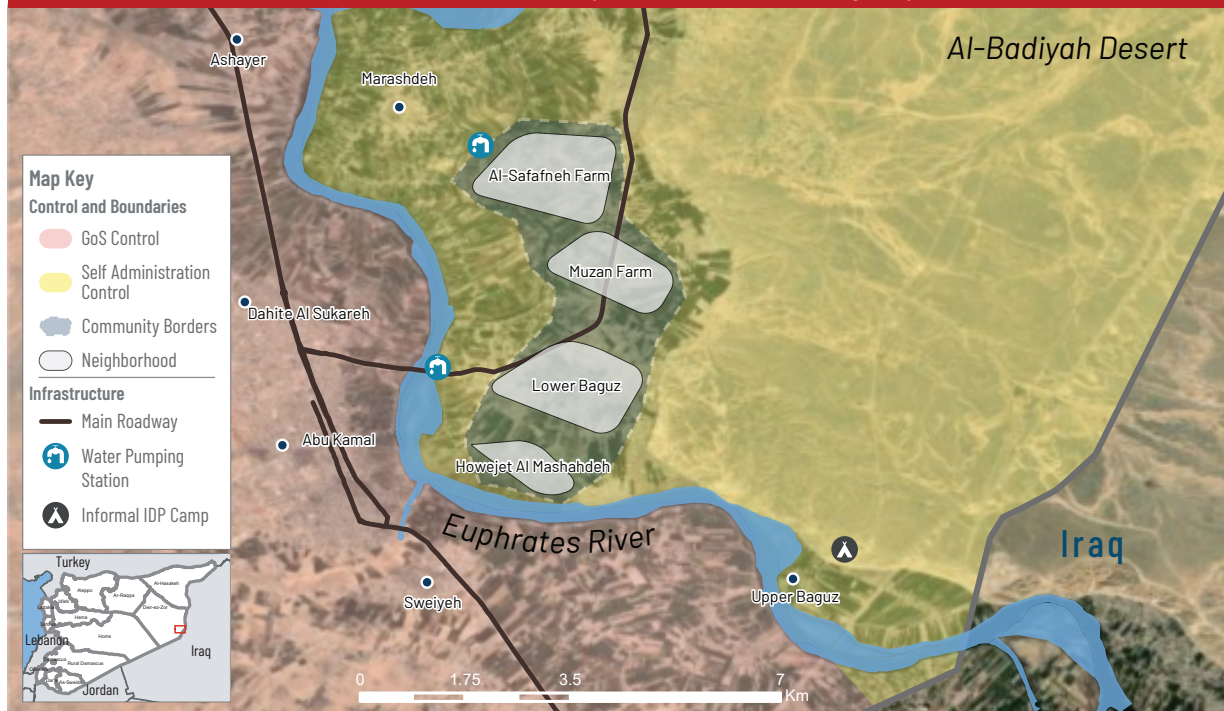
Relations between residents and IDPs in Sweidan Jazeera are reportedly positive, with no major incidents reported between residents and IDPs.

To date there have been no notable returns to the community.

EASTERN DEIR-EZ-ZOR



Al Bagouz Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city
- Hura town

Major IDP Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Al-Hassoun tribe

Al-Jabour confederation

- Al-Marasmeh tribe

Primary IDP Housing

Free homes (some damaged)

Small informal camp

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
10,689

Current
487



487 Resident



0 IDP

Major Movement Events



November 2012

Opposition gains control of the town
Displacement to Shafa town and Al-Mayadin city. Many return within one month



Late-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions
Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh city, Turkey



December 2017 to December 2018

SDF battles with ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement
Displacement to Shafa, Basira, and Shiheil towns, towns in Al-Hasakeh governorate, Al Hol camp, Khashab camp



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Jabour confederation

- Al-Marasmeh tribe
- Al-Mashahrah tribe

Al-Duleim confederation

- Al-Jughayfah tribe

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Albu Hassoun tribe

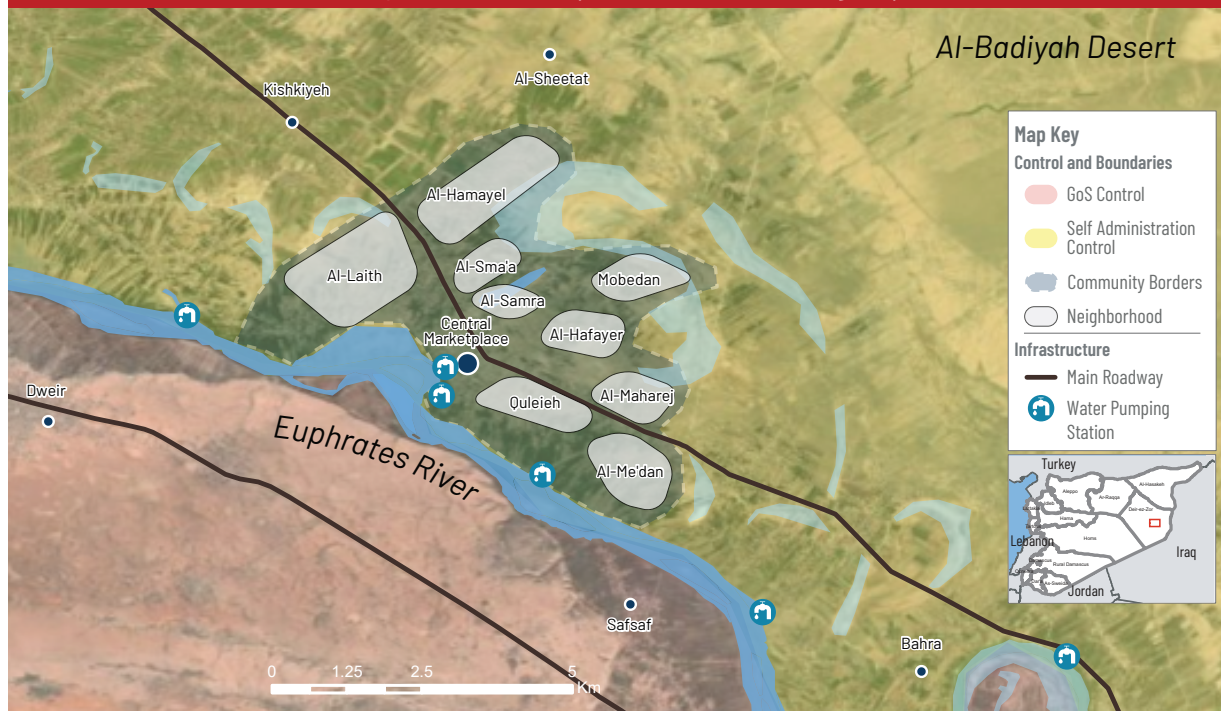
- Al-Rahhabi tribe
- Al-Rawaeen tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Al-Bagouz are reportedly positive, as residents and the majority of IDPs are from the Al-Hassoun and Al-Marasmeh tribes and enjoy close familial relations.

Approximately 200 families held in Al Hol IDP camp returned to Al-Bagouz between 2019 and 2021. There are reportedly no longer any families from Al-Bagouz living in the Al-Hol IDP camp, and there have been no other notable returns to the community.

Gharanij Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city
- Hura town
- Jalaa sub-district
- Salhiyeh town

Major IDP Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Al-Shaetat tribes
- Albu Rahma tribes

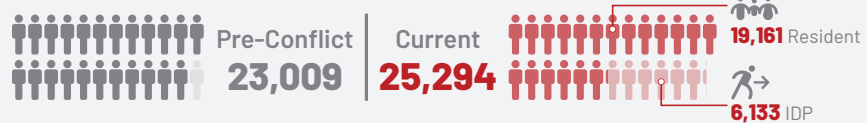
Al-Jabour confederation

- Al-Marasmeh tribe

Primary IDP Housing

- Rented homes
- Free homes
- Small informal camp

Total Population



Major Movement Events

June and July 2014

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, and gains control of Gharanij. Displacement to Sosa, Hajin, and Shafa towns, Deir ez-Zor, Tadmor, and Damascus cities, Idlib governorate, the northern countryside of Aleppo, and Turkey.

August 2014

after gaining control of the area, ISIS kills hundreds of members of the Shaetat tribe known as the "Shaetat massacre" many flee. Displacement to eastern Deir Ez-Zor, Al-Badiya (desert), northern countryside of Aleppo, Abu Kamal, Asharah, and Al-Mayadin cities, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey

December 2014

After 3-4 months, ISIS allows displaced residents to re-enter the area and returns begin

Late-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions. Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo, Idlib governorate, Turkey

November to December 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement. Displacement to Tanak Oil field, Al-Hosakeh, Damascus, most return within months

Displacement Event | IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Alqaidat confederation

Al-Shaetat tribe

- Al-Jadoua clan

Social Cohesions and Returns

Like all communities in the Al-Shaetat area, relations between residents and IDPs in Gharanij are generally positive. Not only are most IDPs from the Al-Shaetat tribe and have family connections in Gharanij, but the large, active Al-Shaetat diaspora in the Gulf has also been extremely supportive of both residents and IDPs, both through remittance payments and in regularly supporting local charitable initiatives. This has not only benefited both residents and IDPs, but has also indirectly been responsible for decreasing economic pressure and tension in the community.

While some residents, all of whom are members of the Al-Shaetat tribe, returned to Gharanij from northwest Syria and Turkey immediately after the SDF expelled ISIS in late 2017, since then there have been no notable returns to the community.

Hajin Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

- Al-Mayadin city
- Ashara sub-district
- Ashara city

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city
- Siyal town

Deir-ez-Zor district

Deir-ez-Zor sub-district

- Deir-ez-Zor city

Homs governorate

Hama governorate

Idlib governorate

Unknown communities

Primary IDP Housing

Rented homes

Major IDP Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Al-Shaetat and Albu Rahma tribes
- Al-Marasmeh tribe

Al-Jabour confederation

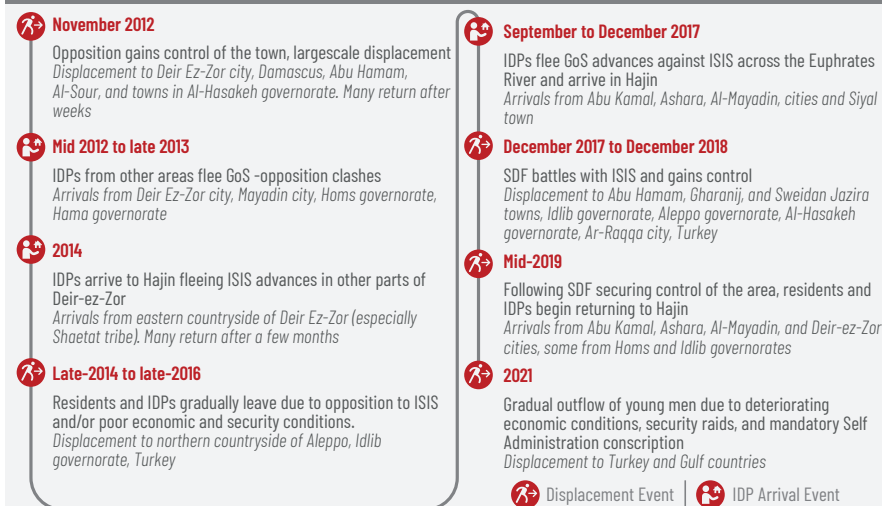
- Al-Qalaan tribe

Al-Mashahadeh confederation

Total Population



Major Movement Events



Local Resident Tribes

Al-Obeid confederation

- Albu Hardan tribe

Al-Jabour confederation

- Al-Marasmeh tribe

Al-Tai confederation

- Albu Khater tribe

Al-Duleim confederation

- Al-Jughayfah tribe

Al-Mashahadeh confederation

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs have been mixed in Hajin. Throughout 2019 there were notable tensions in the community over employment and aid provision. As reconstruction gradually progressed and additional support has been provided to Hajin, relations between residents and IDPs have reportedly improved.

In the months after the SDF expelled ISIS from Hajin, a significant number of residents returned to Hajin from the Al-Shaetat area where many had settled during the nearly long pause in the SDF campaign against ISIS in Hajin. A number of tribal figures from the Albu Hardan tribe also returned from GoS-held areas around the same time. Approximately 40 families held in Al Hol IDP camp also returned to Hajin in 2020, while another 25 families have reportedly remained in the camp due to security reasons. Aside from these two limited instances of return, there have been no notable returns to the community.

Kishkiyeh Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Mayadin district

Mayadin sub-district

• Al-Mayadin city

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

• Abu Kamal city

Major tribe: Al-Alyan clan
(Al-Shaetat tribe, Al-Aqaidat confederation)

Primary IDP Housing

Rented homes

Free homes

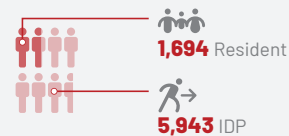
Small informal camp

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
14,979

Current
7,637



Major Movement Events

June and July 2014

ISIS clashes with opposition factions, and gains control of Kishkiyeh
Displacement to Sosa, Hajin, and Shafa towns, Deir ez-Zor, Tadmor, and Damascus cities, Idlib governorate, the northern countryside of Aleppo, and Turkey

August 2014

After gaining control of the area, ISIS kills hundreds of members of the Shaetat tribe known as the "Shaetat massacre" many flee
Displacement to eastern Deir Ez-Zor, Al-Badiya (desert), northern countryside of Aleppo, Abu Kamal, Asharah, and Al-Mayadin cities, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey

December 2014

After 3-4 months, ISIS allows displaced Kishkiyeh residents to re-enter the town and returns begin

Late-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo, Idlib governorate, Turkey

November to December 2017

SDF advances against ISIS and gains control, largescale displacement
Displacement to Tanak Oil field, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, most return within months

Displacement Event | IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Alqaidat confederation

Al-Shaetat tribe

• Al-Alyan clan

Social Cohesions and Returns

Like all communities in the Al-Shaetat area, relations between residents and IDPs in Kishkiyeh are generally positive. Not only are most IDPs from the Al-Shaetat tribe and have family connections in Kishkiyeh, but the large, active Al-Shaetat diaspora in the Gulf has also been extremely supportive of both residents and IDPs, both through remittance payments and in regularly supporting local charitable initiatives. This has not only benefited both residents and IDPs, but has also indirectly been responsible for decreasing economic pressure and tension in the community.

While some residents, all of whom are members of the Al-Shaetat tribe, returned to Kishkiyeh from northwest Syria and Turkey immediately after the SDF expelled ISIS in late 2017, since then there have been no notable returns to the community.

Shafa Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city
- Ghabara town
- Siyal town

Major IDP Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

- Albu Mreeh tribe

Primary IDP Housing

Free homes

Small informal camp

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
18,956

Current
10,659



8,725 Resident
1,839 IDP

Major Movement Events



X Late-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions.
Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh city, Turkey



September to December 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Shafa
Arrivals from Ghabra and Siyal towns, Abu Kamal city



December 2017 to December 2018

SDF battles with ISIS and gains control
Displacement to Dhiban, Basira, Damascus, Turkey, Europe



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Aqaidat confederation

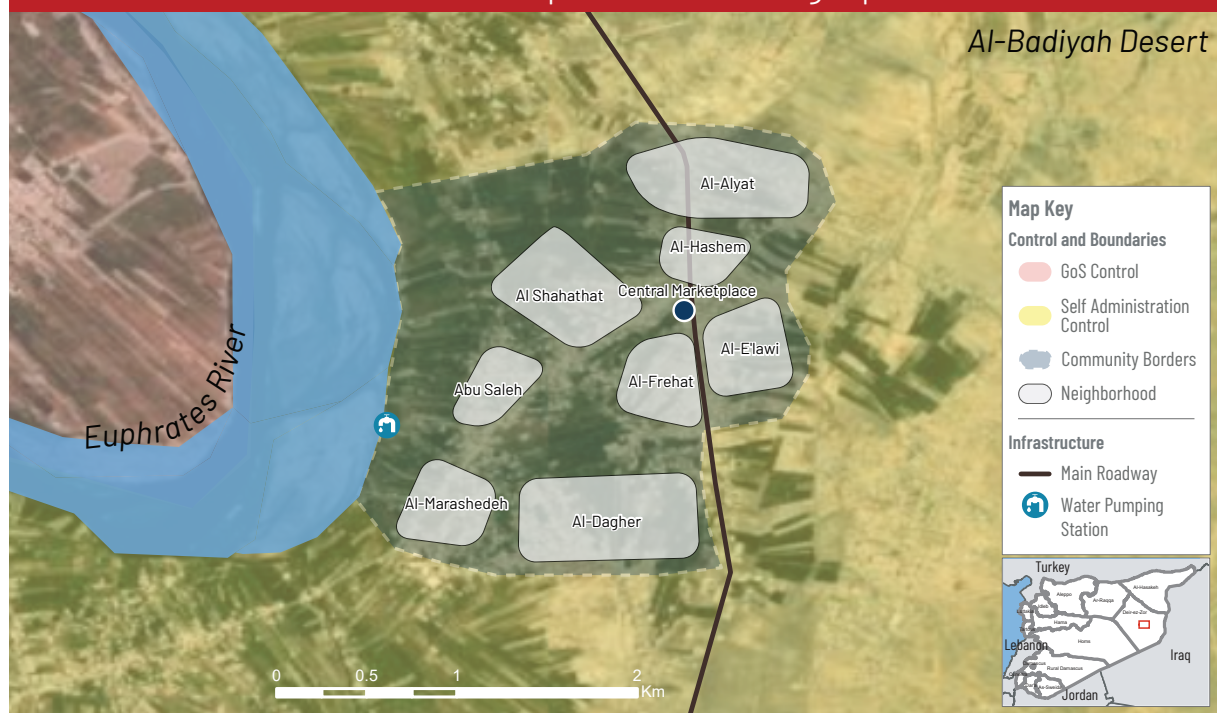
- Albu Mreeh tribe

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Shafa are reportedly positive. IDPs who live within the community enjoy close familial relations with residents, as both are from the Albu Mreeh tribe. Meanwhile IDPs who live in the camp outside the community generally keep to themselves but maintain positive relations with residents.

Approximately 250 families held in Al Hol IDP camp returned to Shafa between 2019 and 2021. There are reportedly no longer any families from Sosa living in the Al-Hol IDP camp, and there have been no other notable returns to the community.

Sosa Town | Population Demographics



IDP Areas of Origin

GoS controlled areas

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

Abu Kamal district

Abu Kamal sub-district

- Abu Kamal city
- Ghabara town
- Hasrat town
- Sweiyeh town

Major tribe

Al-Hassoun tribe
(Al-Aqaidat confederation)

Al-Mashahadeh confederation

Primary IDP Housing

Free homes

Total Population



Pre-Conflict
8,797

Current
10,600



7,853 Resident
2,401 IDP

Major Movement Events



Late-2014 to late-2016

Residents and IDPs gradually leave due to opposition to ISIS and/or poor economic and security conditions. Displacement to northern countryside of Aleppo, Hasakeh city, Turkey



September to December 2017

IDPs flee GoS advances against ISIS across the Euphrates River and arrive in Sosa
Arrivals from Abu Kamal city, Ghabara, Hasrat, and Sweiyeh towns



December 2017 to December 2018

SDF battles with ISIS and gains control
Displacement to western countryside of Deir Ezzor, Tayyana desert, towns in Al-Hasakeh, Damascus city*



Displacement Event



IDP Arrival Event

Local Resident Tribes

Al-Obeid confederation

- Albu Hardan tribe

Al-Jabour confederation

- Al-Marasmeh tribe

Al-Tai confederation

- Albu Khater tribe

Al-Duleim confederation

- Al-Jughayfah tribe

Al-Mashahadeh confederation

Social Cohesions and Returns

Relations between residents and IDPs in Sosa are reportedly positive, as residents and the majority of IDPs are from the Al-Hassoun tribe and enjoy close familial relations.

Approximately 170 families held in Al Hol IDP camp returned to Sosa in 2019 and 2020, while another ten families are believed to remain in the camp due to security reasons or a lack of housing in Sosa. There have been no other notable returns to the community.