

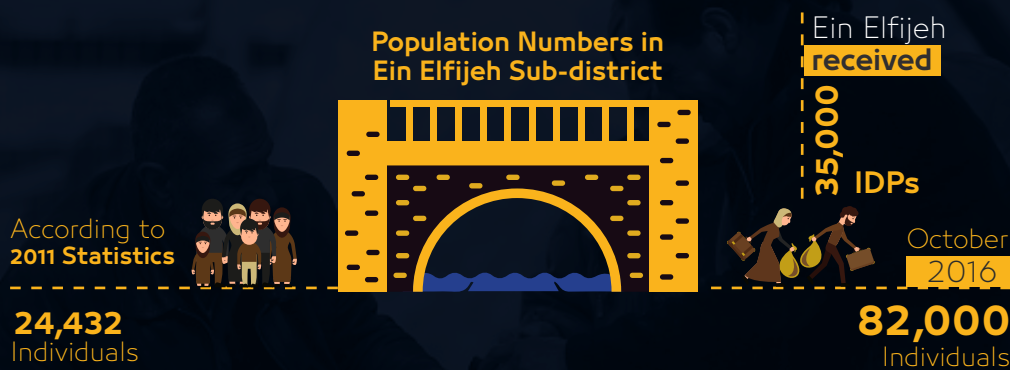
Ein Elfijeh Sub-district

Flash Report

January 2017

Ein Elfijeh Sub-district is located in the west of Damascus City and administratively belongs to Az- Zabdani District in Rural Damascus Governorate. Ein Elfijeh consists of six towns and contains Ein Elfijeh water spring that feeds all Damascus neighborhoods with water. According to estimate statistics of 2011, the population in Ein Elfijeh was 24,432 individuals.

Ein Elfijeh Sub-district is surrounded with mountains and includes planted gardens with fruit trees. The surrounding mountains contain several springs that all end close to the historical Ein Elfijeh building. One part of the spring water pours into Barada river, and the other part is pumped through two tunnels of 16 km long that reach to Damascus City.



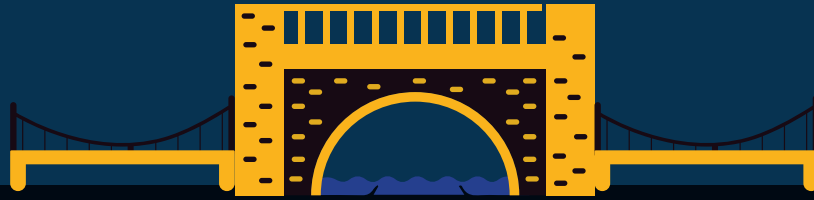
After the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Ein Elfijeh Sub-district was a resort for many civilians who had fled from Syrian Regime bombardment of Rural Damascus areas. Ein Elfijeh had received about 35,000 IDPs from those targeted areas. According to latest IMU statistics, the population of Ein Elfijeh Sub-district was 82,000 individuals to the month of October 2016. However, the besieged areas of Wadi Burda contain around 130,000 individuals, as other villages are included in Ein Elfijeh Sub-district that belong to another sub-districts.

After Ein Elfijeh Sub-district had gone out of the Syrian Regime control, NSAG forces had continued pumping the spring's water to Syrian Regime-held Damascus City, in return the Syrian Regime forces allowed the employees and students of Ein Elfijeh to go back and forth to the sub-district and the entry of food items. Syrian Regime supported by ICRC and according to WASH project implemented by SARC, had started digging a large number of wells inside Damascus City and its surroundings within the areas under his control, as a compensation plan for the lack of Ein Elfijeh water in case the NSAG cuts the water supply. However, the scarcity of ground water prevented the accomplishment of this plan.

List of Acronyms

ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross	SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
IMU	Information Management Unit	UNICEF	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
IRC	International Red Cross	WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups		

Ein Elfijeh Sub-district



January 2016

The Syrian Regime has launched a wide series of arrests for a big number of women and men who were heading out of the sub-district, which had led to an escalation of clashes between the Syrian Regime and NSAG. Afterward, the Syrian Regime and NSAG reached a compromise that includes pumping the spring water to Damascus city in exchange for allowing the city traders to enter the basic food items to the sub-district. However, the Syrian Regime had allowed the entrance of only small quantities and with high prices that do not match the purchasing power of the civilians who had become totally besieged.

18 December 2016

The Syrian Regime, supported with Hezbollah troops, has launched a major offensive to control Wadi Burda. Health facilities, bakeries, civil defense and Ein Elfijeh buildings were targeted with dozens of aerial airstrikes, artillery shelling, and rockets on a daily basis.

Targeting Ein Elfijeh building with bombardment had resulted in the complete damage of the water gate that was responsible for regulating the spring water distribution among the two tunnels that are connected to Damascus City and Wadi Burda. Additionally, this watergate controls the water rate that is pumped through those tunnels. Additionally, all spring pumps, that increase the water rate within the two tunnels, were destroyed. All those reasons resulted in the suspension of water flow within the tunnels.

12 January 2017

The forces of the Syrian Regime had announced a truce to allow the entry of maintenance groups into Ein Elfijeh sub-district in order to evaluate the size of the damage and pump the water to Damascus City again. This truce blazed a trail to halt all bombardment operations in the sub-district, and provided a complete solution for this crisis. A specific committee accompanied with NSAG members had reached Ein Elfijeh building. However, an issue arose between Syrian Regime forces and his Hezbollah allies, who aim to take control over Wadi Burda and open a supply route towards Qalmun lands in Lebanon. Afterward, Bseimeh town was controlled by some regime factions and Hezbollah forces which led to truce breach and maintenance groups getting out without assessing the damages.

14 January 2017

A new truce was signed with Russian guarantees in a complete cease-fire in Wadi Burda and allow the civilians, who prefer to regularize their security situation, to get out of the sub-district. The retired Major General Ahmed Ghadhban was appointed along with some citizens to protect the spring and allow the entry of maintenance groups, in an attempt to neutralize the spring of the ongoing conflict.

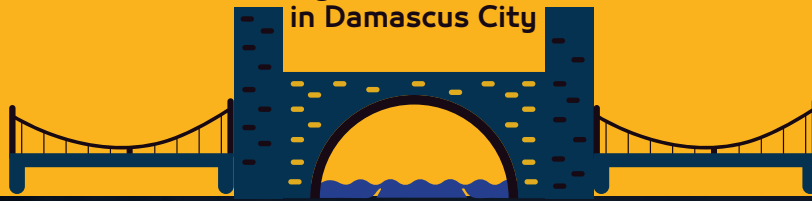
While the Major General was getting out from the Ein Elfijeh building, he was targeted by a sniper, which led to the second breach of truce and resuming the bombardment. The Syrian Regime managed to control Ein Elkhadra as well, and the ongoing clashes had reached to the surroundings of Ein Elfijeh town.

The Humanitarian Situation in Ein Elfijeh Sub-district

Ein Elfijeh sub-district and after six years of the beginning of the Syrian crisis had witnessed the entry of food humanitarian aid only twice. The first aid entry was in November 2014 and the second was in June 2016. After this date, the besieged sub-district did not receive any humanitarian assistance.

During the blockade period, the sub-district contained one functioning bakery and four non-functioning bakeries due to the unavailability of raw materials. Seven medical points were targeted during this month, and the first aid procedures are conducted in basements of homes only, with the scarcity of medical materials and medical equipment. It should be mentioned that amputation was the only possible solution for the injuries that required surgery. The civil defense teams worked without a center, as it was targeted with shelling during December 2016.

Water Situation in Regime-Held Areas in Damascus City



Around

800,000

citizens, who live in the Capital of Damascus

of the Damascus city population

Suffer from the absence of water for 20 continuous days



Regime-held water institution pumps **150,000 m³ of water** on a daily basis that constitutes the need for **30%** of Damascus City population in some neighborhoods only. This water is pumped according to plan to pump for several hours each week.

Some organizations mainly IRC, SARC, and UNICEF distribute water-using trucks to hospitals, schools, and bakeries.

Conclusion

Damascus Governorate and its two parts countryside controlled by the Syrian Regime and NSAG are witnessing a HUMANITARIAN DISASTER. The Syrian Regime sacrifices with his people and allies to satisfy his Hezbollah militias who aim to control Wadi Burda and reach Qalun territory in Lebanese lands.

The International Community goes ahead in his arrangements for the scheduled Istana meeting regardless the Syrian Regime and his allies violations, giving him the green light to take over the situation in Syria to his favor. On the other hand, any opposition faction who breaches the truce will be put on the terrorist lists, in the time of the overlooked violations of the regime and its allies.

The International Community treats the Syrian Regime and his allies as one entity, however, the opposition is treated as factions some of them are excluded, and the others are added to the truce agreement.

So, was one of Istana terms to displace the population in Wadi Burda and then the whole Damascus countryside in order to satisfy the Syrian Regime and his allies?

