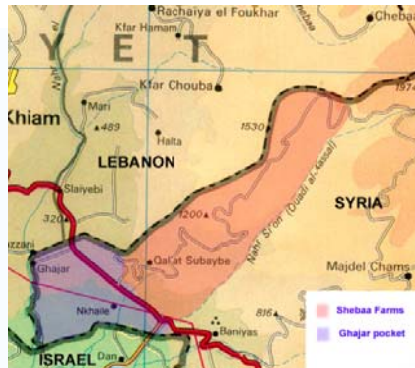


Fact Sheet**Ghajar**

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Ghajar is a Syrian Alawite village which came under Israeli control following the 1967 Six-Day War. Initially, the village's status was the same as that of all the territories captured in 1967. In 1981, the Golan Heights Annexation Law was passed which introduced Israeli jurisdiction, law and administration over the Golan Heights, including Ghajar. Unlike the Druze residents of the Golan, the residents of Ghajar largely accepted Israeli citizenship.

Most of the 2,210 residents of the village hold dual Syrian and Israeli citizenship. From a geographic perspective, about 1,550 of the residents live north of the 'Blue Line' while the rest live south of it.

In May 2000, the Government of Israel decided to unilaterally withdraw its troops from the security zone in southern Lebanon, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425. In order to verify the Israeli withdrawal, the UN decided that it needed to demarcate a Line of Withdrawal, which became known as the 'Blue Line'.

The UN decided that the 'Blue Line' runs through the middle of the village, though there is in fact no physical divide between its two halves. Following Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, including from the northern section of Ghajar, the UN recognized Israel's withdrawal as complete in accordance with Resolution 425.

This was the status quo until 2006 when the Second Lebanon War broke out following the attack on an IDF patrol on the Lebanese border in the Zar'it sector. Five Israeli soldiers were killed and another two were abducted in the attack. Fearing Hezbollah would use Ghajar as a base for attacks, Israel retook the northern part of the village.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which was meant to end the hostilities in Lebanon, determined, inter alia, that Israel must withdraw all of its troops to south of the 'Blue Line'. Israel has since withdrawn from all Lebanese territory with the exception of north Ghajar.

Resolution 1701 imposes significant demands on the Lebanese government. These include:

1. To deploy its army, along with UNIFIL, throughout southern Lebanon.
2. To be the sole exerciser of sovereignty and control over all of Lebanon, and to prevent organizations other than the Lebanese army from possessing arms without government authorization.
3. To support a permanent ceasefire and a long-term agreement based on the following principles:

- i. Fully respecting the 'Blue Line'.
- ii. Implementing security arrangements to prevent further hostile activities, and establishing a designated area between the 'Blue Line' and the Litani River which will be free of armed personnel, assets or equipment belonging to any body other than the Lebanese government or UNIFIL.
- iii. Preventing the presence of weapons and the existence of any authoritative body outside the framework of the Lebanese state.
- iv. That no foreign forces be present in Lebanon without the approval of its government.
- v. That no weapons or military equipment be supplied in Lebanon unless authorized by the government.

4. To secure the Lebanese borders and border crossings in order to prevent weapons or military equipment from entering the country without its approval.

5. To prevent any person or body in Lebanon from training or assisting in the supply, manufacture, possession or use of weapons unless approved by the Lebanese government or UNIFIL.

In June 2008, UNIFIL proposed a temporary arrangement that would enable the IDF to withdraw from the northern section of the village, to be replaced by UNIFIL troops. On September 2, 2010, the commander of UNIFIL, General Alberto Asarta, presented a new proposal. This proposal constitutes the proposed solution for the completion of the withdrawal of Israeli forces south of the Blue Line, in accordance with Resolution 1701.

The Ministerial Committee on National Security (the Security Cabinet) decided in November 2010 to accept in principle the proposal of the UN and the UNIFIL Commander, which is based upon an IDF withdrawal from the northern part of Ghajar and its redeployment south of the 'Blue Line'.

The Security Cabinet authorized the Foreign Ministry to complete the details of the temporary arrangement in coordination with the UN and UNIFIL Commander General Alberto Asarta as soon as possible. Both the security of Israel's citizens and the normal life of the residents of Ghajar, which remains undivided, will continue to be maintained while the new arrangements are being put in place. The final agreement will be brought to the Security Cabinet for approval before it is implemented.

In December of 2010 Israel's security cabinet decides to accept, in principle, the proposal of the UN and the UNIFIL Commander, which is based upon an IDF withdrawal from the northern part of Ghajar and its redeployment south of the 'Blue Line'

Sources: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2010/Security_Cabinet_decision_on_Ghajar_17_Nov_2010.htm

For more information:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/18/world/middleeast/18mideast.html>

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/300501>

This information is current as of 2014.