








Demographic change in Deir Ezzor

Changing the population and doctrinal map
is an Iranian long-term strategy

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No doubt that Iran's presence in Syria has been a must by the conditions of the conflict in the country after Assad chose to use force against Syrian communities. The Iranian presence saved Assad as it was not mere a response by an ally because Iran could be one of the winners of this war. Iran is so, as long as there is war and chaos, because Iran prefers such an atmosphere that offers powers which could be significantly trimmed and subject to protocols if during stability.

Since Iran wants to gain in the short and long term together, it has tried and is trying to intervene on several levels. It is trying to legitimize its presence ideologically, and this is manifested in an attempt to imbue the character of Shiism in Damascus, Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, Latakia and other areas, and make the matter acceptable among the people, In addition to attempts to convert society to Shiism.

One of these strategies is to change the population map in Syrian areas, including Deir ez-Zor, where it deliberately purchases real estate and restricts its owners to sell them at low prices, taking advantage of the inability of many of them to settle their security matters.

Demographic change and real estate purchase:

Iran has 131 military outposts in Syria, including 13 bases and a point in Deir ez-Zor. It also has in the ranks of its militias about 20,000 Syrians in various militias. Iran is active in border areas such as Daraa and Deir ez-Zor as well as sites as vital as Damascus and the coast. Iran's presence in the border areas is to complement the Shiite crescent that starts from Iran and passes from Baghdad, Damascus and Beirut, and enters Syria from Deir ez-Zor, so its presence in Deir ez-Zor is geo-strategic as it is a transit point for weapons and equipment that pass from Syria towards Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel launched several raids on Iranian warehouses and bases in the area

Because this presence is strategic and important, and given the large number of mercenaries associated with it, the most prominent militias affiliated with Iran in the Deir Ezzor governorate are: “Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps”, Iraqi Shiite militias (Hezbollah battalions, Badr battalions, and Al-Nujaba Movement), Lebanese Hezbollah”, Afghan Fatimiyoun Brigade”, the Pakistani “Zainabiyoun Brigade”, the “National Defense Forces” (the Al-Baqir Brigade, the Mahdi Army, and the Imam Al-Mahdi Brigade), for this reason the Iranians are trying to tempt these militias using different ways, the most prominent of which is to give them property and housing, especially in al-Mayadeen, al-Bukamal, and Deir ez-Zor city. Through its agents, Iran buys houses from their owners with cheap money, taking advantage of their inability to return and settle their legal affairs.

The Syrian lawyer residing in France, Zaid al-Azm, said in a statement to Enab Baladi that the militias affiliated with Iran seized 73 houses in one month in their areas of control in the cities of al-Bukamal and al-Mayadeen, after expropriating them from their Syrian owners residing in Europe and the Arabian Gulf, and transferring them to members of the Iranian militias.

Iran is purchasing real estate three or four times less than its real price, especially by figures such as Abdul Majid al-Kawakibi, who was the governor of Deir ez-Zor between 2018 and 2020 and is the former official of the Lebanese Hezbollah coordination office in Aleppo, who benefited by manipulating law enforcement (3), whose 2 and 4 articles state that the governor is the one who determines the real estate areas and damaged buildings in the administrative unit, and he who forms the committee to describe the damaged buildings, verify their ownership, and the ownership of private holdings and ruins. This facilitates adopting some decisions and speeds up issuing documents of sellings and purchasing for the benefit of project.Iran’s

There are almost entire neighborhoods of Shiites, especially those coming from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakista .The names of some vital streets in the city of Deir Ezzor have been changed. One street was named Khomeini, another was Qassem and others like changing the name of Al-Omari Mosque to Al-Radwan .Soleimani, Mosque

Assad helps Iran in this strategy through legal coverage. On April 2, 2018, the Assad regime issued Law No. 10, which allows it to confiscate Syrians' property in areas that have been displaced (the law requires real estate owners to submit proof of their ownership within only 30 days, otherwise they will lose ownership of these real estate to the state – the grace period was extended to a year after the global uproar caused by the law, which simply means Assad confiscates all real estate in the anti-regime areas).

Recently, al-Assad has issued or leaked the names of people wanted by his many branches, with the aim of intimidating the "opponents" and ensuring that they do not return, because their return is linked to the reconciliation process, which is fake. Therefore, real estate owners are forced to sell them at the lowest price through Iranian agents, and sometimes tribesmen buy them because they are cheap. Thus, strife occurs between the sons of the same clan.

From demographic change to ideological one:

In order to build a long-term strategy, Iran is trying to tempt the residents of various areas of Syria to convert to Shiism, especially those areas with a strategic dimension for the Iranians, such as Deir Ezzor. The Iranians are seeking a foothold so they exploit people's need and poverty and tempt them with money and peace in a step before converting to Shiism.

Iran resorts to opening Husseiniyas (Shiite mosques), cultural centers and scouts, all of which have one goal, which is to form a Shiite community structure, or at least one that accepts the Iranians, in order to remain stable in the future. The political process is in some way converging Iraq and Lebanon. Iran desires that those Shiite people play a role in the future policy in Syria, so they form parties and become a part of the political process if Iraq and Lebanon converge.

One of the goals of the demographic change is to build a Shiite population bloc that will defend Iran's interests later. The Syrian 20,000 militias' fighters are the seed of the "Shiite community" in the area, this is in the west of the Euphrates with attempts to penetrate to the east of the Euphrates, where videos have stirred incitement against the International Coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces, amid accusations from those to Iran of involvement in the assassinations of tribal dignitaries and members of the local council in the east of the Euphrates.

Iran is using several strategies in Syria, one of which is political by supporting Assad's keeping power and supporting and legitimizing his elections, military one by engaging Assad's militias in the war without stopping, a sectarian and social by linking Syrian groups to Assad economically through aid and others, as well as by granting salaries to fighters in Assad forces' ranks as mercenaries and ideological by spreading Shiism and the Iranian culture associated with it, and working on demographic change and buying real estate is only one of these tools.

Some referrals:

Iran is expanding in the real estate sector in Deir Ezzor. People are losing their property, Enab Baladi website: [LINK](#)

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Suburb on the banks of the Euphrates, documentary film, Al-Arabiya: [LINK](#)

Iran continues the demographic change in Syria, the Federation:1 [LINK](#)

A detailed study of Shiism in Deir ez-Zor from its beginnings to the present, Deir ez-Zor 24: [LINK](#)