

Le condanne israeliane suonano vuote dopo il pogrom dei coloni a Jit

www-972mag-com.translate.google/jit-settler-pogrom

I palestinesi descrivono l'ultima ondata di furia dei coloni in Cisgiordania e chiedono giustizia per Rashid Sidda mentre i suoi assassini vagano liberi.

Di Oren Ziv 19 agosto 2024



Ibrahim Sidda, 16 agosto 2024. (Oren Ziv)

Al calare della notte, i coloni scesero nel villaggio. “Erano più di un centinaio, mascherati e armati di pistole e mazze. Hanno sfondato i finestrini delle mie due auto e hanno gettato dentro della benzina, incendiando loro insieme all'ingresso di casa mia. Ci siamo precipitati fuori con l'acqua per cercare di domare le fiamme. Non avevamo nulla con cui proteggerci tranne le pietre.

Questa è stata la scena del 15 agosto, come descritta da Ibrahim Sidda, nella città palestinese di Jit – l'ultima nella Cisgiordania occupata a subire un pogrom per mano dei coloni israeliani. Sidda era a casa e stava pranzando con la sua famiglia, quando arrivarono

gli invasori. “Siamo persone amanti della pace”, ha detto a +972 dopo l’attacco, ancora incredulo per ciò che era accaduto a lui e alla sua comunità.

In tutto, i coloni hanno bruciato tre auto e quattro case, ma la loro violenza non si è fermata ai danni materiali: hanno attaccato ogni palestinese che ha osato uscire allo scoperto e cercare di difendere se stessi e le proprie famiglie, uccidendo a colpi di arma da fuoco un tecnico informatico di 23 anni. Rashid Sidda e ferendone altri cinque. Secondo Ibrahim Sidda, i soldati israeliani hanno impiegato circa un'ora per arrivare e porre fine al pogrom; un'altra [testimonianza pubblicata su Haaretz](#) affermava che i soldati erano presenti in città durante l'attacco e non hanno fatto nulla per fermarlo.

La mattina seguente, i residenti hanno camminato tra le strutture carbonizzate delle loro auto e gli ingressi anneriti delle loro case, in una scena che è diventata stranamente familiare in tutta la Cisgiordania negli ultimi mesi. Tali attacchi sono aumentati nel corso della guerra a Gaza, con i coloni [che hanno ucciso sei palestinesi](#) nella prima settimana successiva al 7 ottobre. Ad aprile, [i coloni hanno imperversato in](#) più di una dozzina di città e villaggi palestinesi in un fine settimana, uccidendo almeno tre persone e bruciando centinaia di case. case, automobili e aziende.



L'interno di una casa bruciata dai coloni nella città palestinese di Jit, 16 agosto 2024. (Oren Ziv)

C'era già stato un marcato [aumento dei pogrom dei coloni](#) a partire dall'elezione del governo israeliano di estrema destra alla fine del 2022 – da [Huwara](#) [Al-Lubban ash-Sharqiya](#) a [Turmus Ayya](#) . In Cisgiordania, i palestinesi subiscono quotidianamente vessazioni da parte

dei coloni israeliani, spesso con il sostegno dell'esercito, e almeno 18 comunità sono state sfollate con la forza dall'inizio della guerra.

Ciò che è stato diverso questa volta, però, sono state le immediate condanne dell'attacco da parte dei politici israeliani. Evidentemente spaventati dalla recente ondata di sanzioni statunitensi e internazionali contro i coloni violenti e le loro organizzazioni – e dall'incombente minaccia che queste potrebbero presto essere rivolte a figure governative di alto livello e organismi finanziati dallo stato – i leader israeliani si sono affrettati a denunciare l'ultimo pogrom.

Il primo ministro Benjamin Netanyahu, il ministro delle Finanze Bezalel Smotrich e il parlamentare Zvi Sukkot – lui stesso ex membro della “gioventù della collina” recentemente sanzionata – sono stati tra i primi a esprimere le loro condanne. Yossi Dagan, capo del Consiglio regionale di Shomron, ha dichiarato: “Siamo già qui contro il terrorismo, affrontando difficoltà politiche in patria e all'estero, e non abbiamo bisogno dei vostri atti di violenza”.

Nonostante questa valanga di condanne ufficiali, le autorità non sembrano avere alcuna fretta di consegnare i responsabili alla giustizia; solo una persona è stata arrestata in seguito all'attacco e successivamente rilasciata. L'impunità dei coloni è da tempo la norma: secondo i dati del gruppo israeliano per i diritti umani Yesh Din, il 97% dei fascicoli di polizia aperti su casi di violenza da parte dei coloni dal 2005 sono stati chiusi senza condanne.



Persone in lutto partecipano al funerale di Rashid Sidra, ucciso dai coloni israeliani nella città palestinese di Jit, il 16 agosto 2024. (Oren Ziv)

Nella sua dichiarazione, Dagan ha anche affermato che l'attacco è stato compiuto da "giovani che provengono da fuori [della Cisgiordania] e creano violenza". Ma le testimonianze dei residenti palestinesi di Jit sono chiare: gli aggressori provenivano dall'adiacente avamposto illegale di Havat Gilad.

"Questa è la prima volta che si verifica un attacco di questa portata", ha detto Muhannad Sidda, che ha raccontato di aver visto dalle 20 alle 30 auto arrivare in città attraverso la strada principale. "Siamo circondati da coloni".

"Sono venuti per bruciare e non c'era nessuno che li aiutasse"

"Avevano un piano, lavoravano come se fossero nell'esercito", ha ricordato Samer Arman, residente a Jit, degli aggressori. "Sono venuti a piedi e hanno agito rapidamente in modo che non potessimo difenderci", aggiungendo che "alcuni di loro avevano armi lunghe". Rashid Sidda, ha proseguito, "è stato colpito da un solo proiettile, ma hanno sparato sui giovani con il fuoco automatico".

Arman ha confermato che il pogrom non è stato preceduto da nessun altro incidente, cosa che hanno riconosciuto anche i funzionari israeliani. "Non ci sono problemi qui, non c'era niente", ha detto. "[I coloni] sono venuti in passato, ma i giovani [della città] sono usciti [per affrontarli] e se ne sono andati". Questa volta, però, «sono venuti per bruciare e non c'era nessuno che li aiutasse».



Uno striscione annuncia la morte di Rashid Sidda nella città palestinese di Jit, il 16 agosto 2024. (Oren Ziv)

“Come possiamo resistere ai coloni armati? Cosa possiamo fare? Anche se l'intero villaggio uscisse e si mettesse di fronte a loro, non aiuterebbe. Vogliono spaventare la gente per farci lasciare il villaggio, questa è la loro strategia”.

Muawiya Sidra vive in una casa alla periferia della città più vicina a Havat Gilad. I suoi figli stavano giocando nel cortile quando è iniziato il pogrom. "Quando li abbiamo visti arrivare mascherati e armati, ho preso i bambini, li ho messi in macchina e siamo partiti velocemente", ha detto mentre si trovava tra i resti carbonizzati del suo soggiorno. "Se non li avessi presi, li avrebbero uccisi tutti."

"Ce n'erano dozzine, alcuni con armi, altri con gas [lacrimogeni] e materiali infiammabili", ha continuato. Come ha testimoniato a +972, i coloni hanno prima bruciato la casa del suo vicino e un'auto parcheggiata fuori, e poi sono andati a prendere la sua casa, rompendo le finestre, versando benzina all'interno e dandole fuoco.

“Fanno quello che vogliono”, ha detto. “L’esercito è rimasto tutto il tempo all’ingresso del villaggio, impedendo l’arrivo dei vigili del fuoco e di un’ambulanza. [I servizi di emergenza] sono arrivati solo dopo che noi stessi avevamo spento l’incendio. L’esercito ha sparato in aria e i coloni se ne sono andati”.



Un veicolo dato alle fiamme dai coloni israeliani nella città palestinese di Jit, il 16 agosto 2024.
(Oren Ziv)

Anche Muhannad Sidda, zio della vittima Rashid, ha descritto un attacco ben organizzato. "Eravamo a casa quando i coloni sono arrivati dalla direzione di Havat Gilad. I residenti chiedevano aiuto, quindi siamo usciti. Erano circa un centinaio [coloni], pronti con benzina e armi, altri anche con mazze. Avevano tutto. Quando i giovani [di Jit] si sono avvicinati, [i coloni] hanno sparato contro di loro a bruciapelo, uccidendone uno e ferendone un altro. Non avevano paura."

Gli abitanti di Jit sono rimasti indifferenti alle condanne dei leader di destra israeliani e sono scettici sul fatto che i pubblici ministeri saranno assicurati alla giustizia. "Netanyahu è tutto chiacchiere, non farà nulla", ha detto Leila Rashid mentre sedeva con la madre della vittima. "Guarda cosa stanno facendo ai palestinesi a Gaza, e nessuno al mondo sta facendo nulla. [Le autorità israeliane] vogliono farci uscire di qui. Non arresteranno nessuno."

"Abbiamo bisogno di azioni, non di parole", ha detto Ibrahim Sidda, 55 anni, la cui casa è stata attaccata durante il pogrom. "L'esercito dice di essere contrario a questa violenza, quindi fai qualcosa. Qui nell'Area C siamo sotto la giurisdizione e la responsabilità di sicurezza di Israele. Lascia che vengano e ci proteggano. Fermate i coloni. Non siamo venuti da loro; sono venuti qui."

I più letti su +972



I rubinetti si sono seccati nel più grande quartiere palestinese di Gerusalemme



"Lavanda": la macchina IA che dirige i bombardamenti israeliani a Gaza



Minacciato da un presidente iraniano moderato, Israele lo sta trascinando in una rissa

Per Iman Sidda, madre di Rashid, “sono tutti bugiardi, non faranno nulla”, ha detto in risposta alle condanne dei politici israeliani. “Chi gli ha sparato è scappato. I coloni sono sempre protetti dall’esercito. Non era solo mio figlio, ma anche un amico – e ora se n’è andato”.

Una versione di questo articolo è stata pubblicata per la prima volta in ebraico su Local Call. [Leggilo qui](#).

- [Cisgiordania](#)
- [Pogrom di coloni](#)
- [pogrom](#)
- [Violenza dei coloni](#)
- [impunità dei coloni](#)
- [Chiamata locale](#)



Oren Ziv è un fotoreporter, reporter di Local Call e membro fondatore del collettivo fotografico Activestills.

La nostra squadra è stata devastata dagli orribili eventi di quest'ultima guerra. Il mondo è scosso dall'assalto senza precedenti di Israele a Gaza, che ha inflitto devastazione e morte di massa ai palestinesi assediati, così come dall'atroce attacco e dai rapimenti di Hamas in Israele il 7 ottobre. I nostri cuori sono con tutte le persone e le comunità che affrontano questa violenza.

Siamo in un'era straordinariamente pericolosa in Israele-Palestina. Lo spargimento di sangue ha raggiunto livelli estremi di brutalità e minaccia di travolgere l'intera regione. I coloni incoraggiati in Cisgiordania, sostenuti dall'esercito, stanno cogliendo l'opportunità per intensificare i loro attacchi contro i palestinesi. Il governo più di estrema destra nella storia di

Israele sta intensificando la sua politica di controllo del dissenso, usando la copertura della guerra per mettere a tacere i cittadini palestinesi e gli ebrei di sinistra che si oppongono alle sue politiche.

Questa escalation ha un contesto molto chiaro, che +972 ha dedicato negli ultimi 14 anni a coprire: il crescente razzismo e militarismo della società israeliana, l'occupazione radicata e l'apartheid, e un assedio normalizzato su Gaza.

Siamo ben posizionati per coprire questo momento pericoloso, ma abbiamo bisogno del tuo aiuto per farlo. Questo periodo terribile metterà alla prova l'umanità di tutti coloro che lavorano per un futuro migliore in questa terra. Palestinesi e israeliani si stanno già organizzando e mettendo a punto strategie per sostenere la battaglia della loro vita.

Possiamo contare sul vostro sostegno ? +972 Magazine è una delle principali voci mediatiche di questo movimento, una piattaforma disperatamente necessaria in cui giornalisti, attivisti e pensatori palestinesi e israeliani possano riferire e analizzare ciò che sta accadendo, guidati dall'umanesimo, dall'uguaglianza e dalla giustizia. Unisciti a noi.

[DIVENTA UN MEMBRO +972 OGGI](#)

[More About West Bank](#)



[In Jenin and Tulkarem, Israel's war on Palestinian armed resistance is failing](#)
[With army incursions and airstrikes deepening Palestinian resentment, Israel's violent campaign in the West Bank is driving recruitment for militant groups.](#)

By [Fatima AbdulKarim](#) August 14, 2024



In Umm al-Khair, the occupation is damning us to multigenerational trauma I saw the first bulldozers arrive in my village 17 years ago. Now, after the most brutal weeks in our history, my son will carry similarly painful memories.

By Awdah Hathaleen July 22, 2024



A settler shot my husband. Then Israel bulldozed my childhood home Zakariyah has suffered immensely since being wounded by an Israeli settler. Yet his attacker roams free, and demolitions continue to devastate our communities in Masafer Yatta.

By Shoug Al Adara June 20, 2024

‘The Golan won’t accept any killing or regional war in our victims’ names’

Israel’s exploitation of a rocket attack in Majdal Shams is the latest chapter of the Syrian Jawlan’s ‘forgotten occupation,’ says activist Wael Tarabieh.

By [Mariam Farah](#) August 16, 2024



Mourners attend the funeral of children killed by an airstrike in Majdal Shams, occupied Golan Heights, July 29, 2024. (Oren Ziv)

On July 27, a missile strike on a soccer field in Majdal Shams, in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, killed 12 children. The explosion left a two-meter-wide crater in the artificial turf, with burned motorcycles, scooters, and children’s remains scattered all around.

Israel blamed the Lebanese militia Hezbollah for the attack, vowing to retaliate forcefully. Hezbollah denied responsibility. Al-Marsad, a human rights group based in Majdal Shams, called for an international investigation into the incident to “hold those responsible accountable.”

The strike, which caused the largest number of civilian deaths in an Israeli-annexed area since October 7, heightened tensions and raised fears of a full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah. But it has also brought the issue of the occupied Golan Heights back into focus, raising questions about the territory’s legal status and political future.

Subscribe to The Landline

+972's weekly newsletter

Israel occupied the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 War, displacing 95.5 percent of the population and demolishing over 300 villages. Since that time, relations between Israel and the remaining residents of the territory — which is known in Arabic as the Jawlan — have remained tense.

Relations soured further when Israel began building settlements in the area in the 1970s before formally annexing it in 1981 against the wishes of the majority of residents, in a move rejected by most of the world but recognized by the Trump administration in 2019. Unlike the Druze living inside Israel's pre-1967 borders — who have Israeli citizenship, are represented in parliament across the political spectrum, and mostly serve in the military — the majority of Druze in the Jawlan are not Israeli citizens and reject the state's authority, identifying instead as Syrians.

To understand more about how the community is faring in the wake of last month's tragic incident, +972 Magazine spoke to Wael Tarabieh — an artist, activist, and manager of the economic, social, and cultural rights program at Al-Marsad. He explained the impact of the Majdal Shams attack on the Jawlan's residents, how it relates to their long struggle against Israeli occupation and colonization since 1967, why the territory should not be characterized as Druze but rather Syrian-Arab, and what his vision for the future looks like. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.



Wael Tarabieh. (Courtesy)

How do you view the July 27 strike on Majdal Shams against the backdrop of the broader regional tensions and ongoing war in Gaza?

The tragic event in the Jawlan must be placed in its broader context. We should avoid treating it in the same manner as the October 7 events — which were erroneously dealt with in Israel and abroad as if they marked the beginning of history, and lacked any context to explain them.

Throughout the first nine months of the war on Gaza, the Jawlan remained removed from the main conflict geographically, if not politically. Residents felt relatively secure that they would not be attacked, and expressed their solidarity with Gaza's victims.

The daily exchanges between Hezbollah and Israel in the region suggested that any incident in the Jawlan would likely be accidental rather than intentional, given the proximity of Majdal Shams to the Shebaa Farms [an area in northern Israel that Lebanon claims as its own territory], and the seeming improbability that any Arab or Lebanese force would target Syrian Arabs. Israel typically avoids military actions in the Jawlan as it seeks to integrate the area and its residents — despite the fact that 80 percent are not Israeli citizens, holding a legal status similar to East Jerusalemites.

The rocket strike came as a sudden, unexpected catastrophe. Upon arriving at the scene, I witnessed the horrific sight of the children's mangled bodies and parents desperately searching for their own among the casualties.



Mourners attend the funeral of children killed by an airstrike in Majdal Shams, occupied Golan Heights, July 29, 2024. (Oren Ziv)

How did Israel portray and seek to exploit this incident, and how did the local residents respond?

Media coverage of the event was immediate. Israeli political figures — including Benjamin Netanyahu and Bezalel Smotrich — quickly arrived on the scene, vowing to avenge the children of Majdal Shams.

However, local residents were suspicious of such rhetoric, and many who spoke to the media, including the families of the victims, affirmed that they were not seeking revenge. Residents protested the politicians' visits, chanting "War criminals are not welcome here" and demanding that they leave. They made it clear they would not accept any killing of children or civilians, nor the instigation of a broader regional war, in the name of the Jawlan's victims — a stance that was echoed in an official statement by the Religious and Social Authority of the Jawlan.

These recent events have shed light on the complicated relationship between Jawlani residents and the Israel state. How has this relationship evolved over time, and what does the local response to this tragedy reveal about its current nature?

The relationship between us and Israel has evolved through several distinct stages since 1967. The history of the occupied Jawlan is often overlooked and neglected, which is why we at Al-Marsad refer to it as "the forgotten occupation."

The onset of the Israeli occupation of the Jawlan in 1967 was marked by extensive ethnic cleansing: within weeks, 130,000 Syrian citizens were displaced, leaving only 6,404 people, according to Israeli archives. Yet this mass displacement was not widely recognized as ethnic cleansing, nor were those who fled termed or afforded the protection of "refugees" — particularly by the Syrian government, which referred to those who were forced to relocate within Syria as "displaced persons." Today, estimates suggest that there are about 500,000 displaced Syrians living in the diaspora, waiting to return to their homeland in the Jawlan.



An Israeli Border Police jeep passes by the headquarters of the Syrian army, Quneitra, Golan Heights. (Moshe Milner/GPO)

The physical transformation was equally drastic: 340 villages, farms, and two cities were destroyed, leaving only five villages intact. These remaining villages — Majdal Shams, Buq'ata, Mas'ade, Ein Qiniyye, and Ghajar — endured 16 years of military rule, mirroring the treatment of Palestinians in Israel [after the Nakba]. Israel also eliminated Syrian educational curricula, severed ties with Syria, and attempted to reshape the identity of the remaining Syrian-Arab population.

Then we come to 1981, a pivotal year. I understand this marked the beginning of what's been called the "identity uprising" in the Jawlan, which included a significant labor strike. Can you walk us through what happened during this period and why it was so important?

The year 1981 marked a major turning point. Israel announced the end of military rule and imposed civil law on the Jawlan, which sparked the uprising and a major, six-month-long strike.

During this period, the Jawlan was besieged, with villages separated from one another by the Israeli military. The army deployed about 16,000 soldiers, matching or exceeding the number of Jawlani residents. For weeks, soldiers went door-to-door with Arabic translators, presenting every adult with an Israeli identity card [conferring permanent residency].

Most people rejected these identity cards, to which Israeli authorities responded with widespread arrests, transforming local schools into makeshift prisons. But after the siege was lifted, residents gathered in village squares to burn the identity cards and send a clear political message.



Residents of Majdal Shams attend a demonstration near the border fence with Syria, against the annexation of the Golan Heights in 1981, February 14, 2022. (Michael Giladi/Flash90)

While the Jawlanis couldn't overturn Israeli annexation, which was ratified by the Knesset, they succeeded in resisting this imposed identity: the following two decades saw a political and cultural renaissance in the Jawlan. The Jawlanis defined themselves clearly: first as Arabs, second as Syrians, and third as residents of the villages, with most [except those living in Ghajar, who are Alawite] belonging to the Druze-Muslim unitarians (Al-Muwahhidun).

This self-definition contrasted with Israel's attempts to re-engineer their identity as Druze — a process we call "Druzization." Therefore, this period was marked by a long cultural and political conflict between the residents and the State of Israel over the nature of Jawlani identity.

This policy of "Druzization" appears similar to the policies Israel implemented toward the Druze of Palestine, where it seems to have been more successful.

Certainly, with the difference that the Druze of Palestine were subjected to these policies in 1948, and even earlier. In 1939, as historian Kais Firro documented, the Jewish Agency had a project to displace 14,000 Druze from Palestine to Jabal al-Arab in Syria. They even purchased land there but failed to convince [Syrian] leaders like Sultan al-Atrash.

This historical work reveals long-standing policies toward Druze in northern Palestine, showing how they were victims of minority manipulation — fragmenting Palestinians into smaller religious groups and separating them from one another. Now, we're witnessing a counter-awareness process among the youth.



Family and friends of soldier captain Wassem Mahmoud attend his funeral service in the Druze village of Beit Jann, after he was killed during a ground operation in the Gaza Strip, June 16, 2024. (David Cohen/Flash90)

In the Jawlan, this process began in 1967. By 1974, Israel introduced a curriculum for Jawlani Druze based on concepts such as “Druze heritage,” which suggests Druze are an independent nation and religion, rather than Arabs. Israel invented the distorted notion of a “covenant of blood” between Druze and Jews, primarily rooted in their shared service in the Israeli military.

One of the important turning points for the Jawlan, following these years of identity politics, was the outbreak of the uprising in Syria in 2011. How did these events affect the people of the Jawlan?

The 2011 Syrian uprising caused the biggest rift in the Jawlani community since the 1967 occupation. It's important to understand that my generation's relationship with Syria was largely indirect: I was born a year after the occupation and have never visited Syria. Before 2011, some Jawlani students were allowed to study at Damascus University, and male sheikhs made annual visits to holy sites in Syria. Our Syrian nationalism wasn't based on direct benefits or interests, but rather on shared identity.

Additionally, family members who found themselves cut off from one another after 1967 communicated through "shouting valleys": unable to cross the border to meet in person, relatives would gather on opposite sides of the valley and use megaphones to communicate across the divide. This practice allowed families to maintain contact, share news, and even participate remotely in significant life events such as weddings or funerals. Although the advent of mobile phones and the internet has largely rendered the practice obsolete, the areas have retained symbolic significance.

The 2011 uprising deeply divided the Jawlan community. On March 23, just eight days after the first demonstration in Daraa, the first statement supporting the Syrian people's demand for freedom and democracy was issued in the Jawlan. This sparked a sharp local divide between regime supporters and opponents, sometimes leading to violence.



Residents of the Golan Heights hold Syrian flags and portraits of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, during a rally in the Druze village of Majdal Shams, to mark the Syrian Independence Day. April 17, 2012. (Matanya Tausig/Flash90)

This division came at a heavy price. It gave Israel an opportunity to “re-engineer” Jawlani identity: the government encouraged youth movements, promoted Druze Scout projects, and increased funding for other initiatives aimed at “Israelizing” the Druze community.

From 2014, Israeli citizenship applications increased significantly. Groups seeking to “Israelize” the Jawlan found a platform in opposing what Israel called the “bloody regime in Damascus,” arguing that Jawlani residents’ interests lay with Israel rather than Syria.

In 2018, a significant shift occurred when Israel attempted to impose democratic elections in the Jawlan. Historically, the heads of local authorities in the area were appointed by the Israeli Interior Ministry and were required to be loyal to Israel. These councils had not enjoyed any popular, political, or social legitimacy among the Jawlanis.

Only Jawlanis with Israeli citizenship were allowed to run for elected office in 2018, and at that time, they comprised just 20 percent of the population. The rest, who held permanent-resident status and were essentially treated as second-class citizens, were granted the right to vote for those with citizenship, the first-class citizens. This framework met with strong objections from the community. As a result, the first elections in 2018 saw very low participation, with only a few dozen people taking part.

However, the most recent [municipal] elections, held in February 2024, saw wider participation. This increase suggests a potential shift in the community’s approach to these Israeli-imposed local governance structures.

The local authorities, which in my opinion act as agents of the occupation, have begun to monopolize the public space and public issues. They are now seeking to gain some form of legitimacy within the society.



Residents of Majdal Shams gather during a rally to mark Syria's Independence Day, April 17, 2022. (Michael Giladi/Flash90)

In recent years, there's also been controversy over Israel's plans to install wind turbines in the Jawlan. Can you explain what's behind that project and the issues it has raised for the local Arab-Syrian community?

This wind turbine project represents an additional struggle we've faced for the past several years. The project's origins can be traced back to 2008, when a company called "Mei Golan" [Golan Water] began investigating the possibility of investing in wind energy in the occupied territory. A few years later, Mei Golan was acquired by "Energix," which started preliminary explorations and preparations for the project in 2013.

Most Jawlan residents were unaware of it until 2017, except for those directly involved — such as farmers who were approached to lease their land. As awareness grew, people initially thought it was purely an economic project. However, they soon realized it was much more significant: a project that could potentially destroy the agricultural character of their lands and transform them into an industrial landscape.

This realization sparked both popular and legal struggles against the project. Every farmer who signed a leasing agreement for Energix to build turbines on their land has since filed a lawsuit to nullify the agreement.

The proposal unveiled by the local planning authorities in 2018 outlined plans for the installation of 24 colossal wind turbines, each standing 200 to 220 meters tall with a 60-meter diameter, equipped with aircraft warning lights. The proposal extends beyond the turbines themselves, encompassing an undisclosed number of 125-meter wind measurement masts and various electrical facilities.

Infrastructure development features prominently, with plans to expand existing agricultural roads, construct new access routes, and lay both above-ground and underground electricity and communication cables. Additional land has been earmarked for further planning.



A station of wind turbines with Mount Hermon in the background in the Golan Heights, February 12, 2024. (Michael Giladi/Flash90)

These turbines would fundamentally alter our landscape and way of life. The most significant negative impacts of the project include restricting the urban expansion of our villages and changing the agricultural character of the area, which would damage our traditional farming practices. We're also concerned about potential health impacts from the noise and flickering effect of the turbines, as well as the visual disturbance caused by the shadows of their massive blades. Of course, there are various environmental impacts to consider too.

This wind turbine project can also be seen in the context of preparations and infrastructure for settlement expansion in the Jawlan announced by the Israeli government in recent years. According to [statements by some officials](#), they aspire to bring 250,000 Jewish settlers to the Jawlan Heights by 2048, coinciding with the centennial of Israel's establishment. This

broader settlement project includes expanding infrastructure, enlarging current settlements, establishing new ones, extending the railway line to the Jawlan, and creating job opportunities to attract settlers to the region.

The project has gone through several stages and added a new challenge to the many issues already facing the Jawlan community. For instance, Salah Tarif, a former Druze member of the Israeli Knesset, was appointed as director of a subsidiary company to implement the project, likely in an effort to appeal to and persuade the Druze community of the project's merits.

The opposition to the project has led to confrontations. There have been clashes between soldiers and peaceful protesters, resulting in numerous injuries. Ironically, the same soldiers who used force against peaceful demonstrators are now patrolling Majdal Shams, supposedly for its protection.

Currently, while the Israeli government has approved the project's implementation, there are ongoing lawsuits regarding land ownership. The court is expected to rule on these matters soon. However, as of now, the project has been temporarily halted due to the events of October 7.



Residents protest against the construction of a new wind farm in the Druze village of Mas'ada, in the Golan Heights, June 21, 2023. (Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

How would you characterize the relationship between the Druze of the Jawlan and those in the Galilee region, inside Israel? What complexities or nuances exist in this relationship?

Before the occupation, the Jawlan historically boasted a rich ethnic, sectarian, and national fabric representing Syria's diversity: Turkmen, Circassians, Sunni Muslims, Alawites, Druze, and Christians. The Druze were a small minority before the ethnic cleansing of the region. The portrayal of the Jawlan as predominantly Druze is an Israeli invention. In fact, Ein Qiniyye village has Christian families and a church, Majdal Shams has a Christian family, and Ghajar village is Alawite Muslim. The Jawlan isn't a Druze community, but a Syrian-Arab one.

Regarding relations with Palestinian Druze, there are historical ties through family connections and intermarriages across Lebanon, Palestine, and Jabal al-Arab in Syria. Jawlani Druze played a role in the 1925 revolution against the French mandate, with Majdal Shams, twice burned, being a revolutionary stronghold.

Some Jawlan youth even participated in the 1936 Great Revolt in Palestine, demonstrating that Jawlani integration with their Arab surroundings transcends sectarian distinctions. It's unjust to limit this to Druze-Druze relations or minority solidarity.

However, there's a clear political distinction between Jawlani and Palestinian Druze. Jawlan Druze are Syrians with a state to return to, while Palestinian Druze, like all Palestinians, have a special status in the absence of their own state. Grouping all Druze together serves Israel's agenda, particularly with regard to issues of religion and personal status.

As someone who has lived through significant historical events in the Jawlan, what is your vision for the future? How do you anticipate developments in the region, and what lessons can we draw from the history you've experienced?

First and foremost, we must learn from history. Over the years, we've seen groups and minorities whose identities were altered through "Israelization." However, the occupation itself continually reinforces our sense of identity. Today, despite Israel's attempts to grant the Druze a "special status," we see contradictions. The Jewish Nation-State Law discriminates against us, yet simultaneously, Druze in Israel-Palestine are losing their youth in Israel's conflicts and facing extensive land confiscation. These contradictions serve as a catalyst for awareness.

I firmly believe our future is intertwined with those around us, from Palestinians to Syrians. The policies of integration, containment, and subjugation are unlikely to succeed in manipulating people into serving Israeli agendas.

While we're currently enduring perhaps the most challenging phase and witnessing what amounts to genocide, I remain hopeful. Despite these immense obstacles, I believe that the future of freedom and dignity belongs to us.

Mariam Farah is a Palestinian journalist from Haifa.

Our team has been devastated by the horrific events of this latest war. The world is reeling from Israel's unprecedented onslaught on Gaza, inflicting mass devastation and death upon besieged Palestinians, as well as the atrocious attack and kidnappings by Hamas in Israel on October 7. Our hearts are with all the people and communities facing this violence.

We are in an extraordinarily dangerous era in Israel-Palestine. The bloodshed has reached extreme levels of brutality and threatens to engulf the entire region. Emboldened settlers in the West Bank, backed by the army, are seizing the opportunity to intensify their attacks on Palestinians. The most far-right government in Israel's history is ramping up its policing of dissent, using the cover of war to silence Palestinian citizens and left-wing Jews who object to its policies.

This escalation has a very clear context, one that +972 has spent the past 14 years covering: Israeli society's growing racism and militarism, entrenched occupation and apartheid, and a normalized siege on Gaza.

We are well positioned to cover this perilous moment – but we need your help to do it. This terrible period will challenge the humanity of all of those working for a better future in this land. Palestinians and Israelis are already organizing and strategizing to put up the fight of their lives.

Can we count on your support ? +972 Magazine is a leading media voice of this movement, a desperately needed platform where Palestinian and Israeli journalists, activists, and thinkers can report on and analyze what is happening, guided by humanism, equality, and justice. Join us.

BECOME A +972 MEMBER TODAY

More About Golan Heights



Clean energy, dirty dealing: Syrian Druze resist greenwashing of Golan occupation
An Israeli wind farm slated for construction on Syrian Druze agricultural land in the occupied Golan Heights has been met with profound resistance from residents.
By Ellie Stern February 6, 2020



Talk of Golan annexation leaves out those expelled from it
President Trump's recognition of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights has been widely celebrated by Israelis. But do those same Israelis know of the hundreds of thousands of people expelled from the territory during the 1967 war? By Tom Pessah The vast majority of Israelis are still unaware that over 130,000 residents of the Golan Heights were expelled from...
By +972 Magazine March 24, 2019



The legitimacy of land grabs in the Trump era: From the Golan to Crimea
Trump's administration needs to come to terms with the unacceptability of states snatching
territory from other states through armed force and keeping it — no matter what rationale the
historical context might provide. By Paul R. Pillar The main takeaway from the recent G-7
summit obviously is the striking damage to U.S.-allied relations from Donald...
By +972 Magazine June 12, 2018