



Afrin Under Occupation (307):

The Absent Pay from Their Own Pockets to "Abu Amsha" for the Olive Harvest, Widespread Thefts, "Gamrouk" Irrigation Station as an Empty Shell, Forest Fires in Raju

*Arabic to English Translation**

With a simple calculation, the individual known as "**Mohammad al-Jassim/Abu Amsha**," leader of the "Sultan Suleiman Shah Division" militia, imposed a levy of \$20 USD per olive tree last season and \$30 USD this season on every tree belonging to absent citizens in the plains of Sheikh Al-Hadid/Shiyeh and villages in Jenderes, areas under his control. The average cost per tree, covering cultivation, pruning, fertilization, cleaning, harvesting, transport, pressing, and the cost of empty tins, amounts to about \$20 over two years, since olive trees yield only once every two years due to alternate bearing cycles. Therefore, the total cost for a tree reaches \$70.

If each tree produces an average of 10 kg of oil (valued at \$45 USD at the current price) after a 5% cut of the oil is deducted at the mill for "Abu Amsha," the absent owner ends up paying out-of-pocket. They incur a net loss of \$25 (\$70 in costs - \$45 from oil proceeds) to avoid the risk of "Abu Amsha" confiscating or cutting down their trees or threatening their local representative.

The following are facts about the current situation:

= Olive Harvest Season:

- The official in charge of the villages of "**Ashouna**" and "**Zivinkeh**" in Bulbul, known as "**Abu Yazan**" from the "Sultan Murad Division" militia, imposes a levy of 15 Turkish Lira on each olive tree, ostensibly for "protecting the season," and directly takes 10% of the olive yield in the fields, in addition to the economic office - Sultan Murad Division's levy on olive oil production. He also confiscates thousands of olive trees belonging to absentee villagers.

- On October 12, 2024, "**Mustafa Darwish**, a 50-year-old" resident of "**Kafarzeeteh**" village southwest of Afrin, and his family went to their olive grove with around 300 trees located south of the village. They were surprised to find a group of workers, settlers brought into the area, harvesting their olives. The workers' supervisor claimed to have "secured" the harvest by paying the "economic office of the Hamza Division militia," sparking a dispute between the parties. A patrol from the "Hamza Division" arrived, detaining and humiliating Mustafa and three of his sons, asserting that the field was guaranteed without his knowledge under the claim of "state property," although Mustafa had owned the field for decades with ownership documents and had planted sesame between the trees that summer. The detainees were released days later, though their olive grove remained unharvested.

- The official for the villages of "**Kokan Foqani and Tahtani**" in Mobato/Maabatli, known as "**Abu Sultan**," from the Ma'awli tribe in rural Hama and a member of the "Hamza Division" militia, imposed a levy of 30-40% on the olive harvest for absentee owners' fields and a tax of \$1 USD per olive tree owned by local residents. He also demanded 150 tins of olive oil from all Kurdish families in the two villages (approximately 70 families), with each family owing 1 to 3 tins. This was in addition to widespread olive thefts, despite the militias' claims of providing security.

- A video was sent to us showing a local olive grove owner in the **Maydanky** sector controlled by the "Sultan Murad Division." The video, recorded on Saturday, October 26, 2024, documented how a group of armed men and settlers completely stripped his grove, containing 90 trees, of olives, with broken branches and scattered olives left behind. The grove owner stated that the same group had harvested two nearby

confiscated fields the previous day. Out of fear of retaliation, he chose not to file a complaint with local authorities and requested that his name and the video not be shared.



= Irrigation Station in "Gamrouk":



Before the Turkish occupation in early 2018, the irrigation station built on the main canal from the Maydanky Dam, near "Gamrouk" village in Mobato/Maabatli, was fully equipped with five pumps, an electrical transformer, a 1-megawatt backup generator, and more. This station was intended to irrigate approximately 1,600 hectares of agricultural land under the Sixth Project. However, during June and July 2018, the "Northern Hawks Brigade" militia, led by "Hasan Khairiyeh," looted all the station's equipment, including doors and windows, leaving it as an empty shell, a fact highlighted in previous reports.

On October 6, 2024, the so-called "Afrin Local Council" published images of the now-barren station as part of an announcement about a planned rehabilitation project aimed at restoring it by the 2025 irrigation season.

This station, along with three others—Bableeteh, Tall Tawil, and Juimkeh—was entirely emptied by militias and has been out of service since 2018. Meanwhile, Turkey diverts water from the Maydanky Dam to its Reyhanli Dam at the mouth of the Afrin River.

= Forest Fires:

Despite the relatively cool weather, fires erupted on Saturday, October 26, 2024, in the forests surrounding the neighboring villages of "Shingeileh" in Bulbul and "Kawanda/Maydono" in Raju. The "Syrian Civil Defense" confirmed that its teams extinguished the fires after nine hours of manual isolation techniques. Another fire in a forest and olive grove near the village of "Sheikh Muhammad/Meydono" in Raju was put out after two hours of work, with significant challenges due to the terrain.



These fires consumed vast areas of natural forests and hundreds of olive trees in the vicinity, reportedly set deliberately by armed groups from the "Sham Legion" militia controlling those villages.

Given the above—and the many other violations and crimes—it is both inaccurate and deceptive for anyone to refer to the Turkish-aligned militias as the "National Army" or claim they represent the "revolution." Moreover, some even go as far as to welcome their representatives with undue warmth, calling them the "guardians of faith and honor," a stance that distorts the reality on the ground.

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**Media Office-Afrin
Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekiti)**

Images:

- Olive Theft from a Grove of 90 Trees by the "Sultan Murad Division" Militia in the Maydanky Sector on October 24, 2024.
- Construction of the Gamrouk Irrigation Station on October 6, 2024: Now an empty shell after the "Northern Hawks Brigade" militia looted all its contents in June and July of 2018.
- A fire in a forest around the village of "Shingeileh" –Bulbul, on October 26, 2024.

* Under the supervision of the European Organization of the Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekîti).

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