

Important Villages In and Around Afrin District, Syria: A Study of the Pre-2010 Landscape

I. Introduction: The Afrin District Before 2010 – A Geographical and Historical Overview

A. Defining the Afrin District: Location, Topography, and General Characteristics

The Afrin District, officially known as *Manṭīqat Afrīn* (منطقة عفرين) in Arabic and *Herêma Efrînê* in Kurdish, is geographically positioned in the northwestern segment of Syria, constituting an administrative division of the Aleppo Governorate.¹ Its landscape is notably characterized by the Kurd-Dagh (Kurd Mountains or *Çiyayê Kurmênc*), a range of hills and mountainous terrain that defines much of the district's topography.² This rugged environment is bisected and nourished by the fertile plains of the Afrin River valley, a crucial watercourse that has historically supported agriculture and settlement.² The region is particularly renowned for its extensive olive groves, a defining feature of its agricultural identity and economy for centuries.¹ Broader geographical context places the district within the Aleppo Plateau, a generally low, undulating area with an average elevation of approximately 380 meters above sea level.¹¹

A significant geopolitical feature of the Afrin District prior to 2010 was its bordering configuration. Following the Turkish annexation of Hatay Province in 1939, the district became almost entirely encircled by the Syria-Turkey border. Its only terrestrial connections to other Syrian territories were along its eastern boundary with the Azaz District and a shorter southeastern frontier with the Mount Simeon District.⁸ This geographical near-enclosure by an international border played a considerable role in shaping the district's distinct cultural and socio-economic trajectory before 2010. Such relative isolation could foster a strong local identity, encouraging reliance on indigenous resources, most notably olives, and reinforcing internal social cohesion, especially among the predominantly Kurdish inhabitants. Concurrently, this frontier status also rendered the region susceptible to cross-border influences and, throughout its history, various external pressures. The very existence of this border was a consequence of post-Ottoman state formation, a process that had profound and lasting impacts on Kurdish communities across the newly demarcated nation-states of the Middle East.⁵

B. Brief Historical Context Leading Up to 2010

The Afrin region possesses a rich and deep history of human habitation. Archaeological investigations have unearthed evidence of settlement stretching back to the Neolithic period.³ Among its most notable ancient sites is Ain Dara, a significant Syro-Hittite settlement dating from approximately 1300 BC to 740 BC.⁸ Throughout antiquity, the area fell under the sway of numerous empires, including the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Subsequently, it was incorporated into various Islamic caliphates and, for several centuries, was part of the Ottoman Empire.³

Kurdish settlement in the Kurd-Dagh area is of considerable antiquity. Some historical accounts suggest a Kurdish presence dating back to the Seleucid Empire (312 BC–63 BC) or even earlier, with Kurds serving as mercenaries and mounted archers in the armies of the time.² By the era of the Crusades in the late 11th century, the Kurd Mountains were already recognized as a Kurdish-inhabited territory.² Early European travelers, such as William Biddulph in 1599, recorded the presence of "Coords," likely Yezidi Kurds, dwelling in these mountains.⁸

The aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire brought significant administrative changes. Under the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, the Afrin area was administratively detached from the Kilis province (now in Turkey) and incorporated into Syria.⁸ The town of Afrin itself, which would become the district's administrative center, was founded as a local market in the 19th century and underwent further development under French administration.⁸

Following Syria's independence in 1946, the Afrin region, akin to other Kurdish-populated areas within Syria, became subject to Arabization policies implemented by the central government in Damascus.² These policies aimed to promote an Arab national identity and often involved the changing of non-Arabic place names and restrictions on Kurdish cultural expression. Notably, the historical name of the "Kurd Dagh" district was officially changed to Afrin in 1952 by the Syrian authorities.¹⁴ Despite these pressures, prior to 2010, Afrin was widely considered to be the least Arabized of Syria's distinct Kurdish regions.¹³ It was frequently described by observers and in academic literature as "homogeneously Kurdish".¹ The combination of its ancient settlement history, a long and continuous Kurdish presence, and a degree of relative geographical isolation contributed significantly to the formation of a strong local identity and remarkable cultural continuity within Afrin's villages. This was evident even in the face of state-level pressures for Arabization. The French Mandate period, while imposing new international borders that divided the broader Kurdish region, also inadvertently played a role in solidifying a distinct Syrian Kurdish territorial unit in Afrin by administratively separating it from its historical connections to areas that became part of modern-day Turkey.⁸ The development of Afrin town as a market and administrative center under the French further provided a focal point for the surrounding villages, reinforcing a sense of regional cohesion.⁸ The fact that Afrin remained the "least Arabized" of Kurdish areas in Syria¹³ suggests a notable degree of cultural preservation and resilience.

II. Administrative Landscape and Major Population

Centers of Afrin District (Pre-2010)

A. Afrin District within Aleppo Governorate

Prior to 2010, the Afrin District was a formally constituted administrative unit within the Aleppo Governorate of northern Syria.¹ The administrative boundaries defining the district were largely established in the 1960s.¹⁵ The city of Afrin served as the administrative center, or seat (*markaz*), of the district.¹

According to the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics census conducted in 2004, the Afrin District encompassed a total area of 1,840.85 square kilometers and had a registered population of 172,095 inhabitants.¹ There are some discrepancies in population figures from different sources; for instance, one source refers to a 2010 census by Syria's Central Bureau of Statistics that reportedly gave the Afrin district a population of 523,000, including the city, six other subdistricts, and 366 villages.¹³ This figure is substantially higher than the 2004 census data and other contemporaneous estimates, such as one suggesting a regional population of around half a million in 2010.⁴ The 2004 census data, however, is more consistently referenced in official documentation for the pre-2010 baseline of the district itself and will be primarily used for consistency in this report.

The formal administrative structure imposed by the Syrian state, comprising the district and its constituent subdistricts, provided the official framework for governance, resource allocation, and the delivery of public services. However, it is plausible that this official structure coexisted with informal, traditional, or kinship-based social organizations within the villages. This is particularly likely in a region characterized by a strong and distinct ethnic identity, such as Afrin with its overwhelmingly Kurdish population.¹ The persistence of Kurdish village names alongside officially Arabized ones¹⁶ points to a local adherence to traditional nomenclature, hinting at a dual layer of identity and organization that transcended formal state lines. While tribal affiliations in the Kurd Dagħ were considered weaker than in other Kurdish areas like Jazira¹⁷, some sources do mention historical tribal divisions within Afrin¹⁸, suggesting that traditional social structures continued to hold some relevance.

B. Subdistricts (Nahiyes) of Afrin District

The Afrin District was further subdivided into seven subdistricts, known as *nawāḥī* (singular: *nāḥiyah*) in Arabic or *nahiyeler* in Turkish administrative parlance. Data from the 2004 Syrian census provides key information regarding their respective areas, populations, and administrative centers.¹ These subdistricts exhibited variations in area, population, and the number of villages they contained, suggesting diverse micro-regional characteristics influenced by factors such as topography, the availability of resources like water and fertile land, and historical settlement patterns.

1. Afrin Subdistrict (Merkez/Center Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Afrin city.¹
- Area: 427.73 km².¹⁹

- Population (2004): 66,188.¹ (A figure of 64,758 is given for Afrin *Nahiya* in 2004 by one source ¹).
- Number of villages: Reported as 64 in 1980 ¹⁸; another source indicates 41 villages and 15 farms for the *nahiya*, though the date of this data is less clear but appears historical.¹⁴

2. Bulbul Subdistrict (Bülbül Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Bulbul town.¹
- Area: 203.36 km².¹⁹
- Population (2004): 12,573.¹
- Number of villages: Reported as 49 in 1980 ¹⁸; the subdistrict was also described as consisting of 34 villages.²¹

3. Jindires Subdistrict (Cindires Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Jindires town.¹
- Area: 319.43 km².¹⁹
- Population (2004): 32,947.¹
- Number of villages: Reported as 56 in 1980.¹⁸

4. Rajo Subdistrict (Raco Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Rajo town.¹
- Area: 283.12 km².¹⁹
- Population (2004): 21,955.¹
- Number of villages: Reported as 65 in 1980 ¹⁸; also stated as approximately 65 villages and farms.²³ A detailed list from 2004 indicates 53 villages/farms.²⁴

5. Sharran Subdistrict (Şarran Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Sharran town.¹
- Area: 305.18 km².¹⁹
- Population (2004): 13,632.¹
- Number of villages: Reported as 44 in 1980.¹⁸

6. Shaykh al-Hadid Subdistrict (Şiyê Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Shaykh al-Hadid town.¹
- Area: 93.52 km².¹⁹
- Population (2004): 13,871.¹
- Number of villages: Reported as 18 in 1980.¹⁸ A 2004 list details 16 villages/farms.²⁷ The smaller area of this subdistrict compared to its population suggests a higher population density or more concentrated settlements than, for example, Bulbul subdistrict.

7. Maabatli Subdistrict (Mabatli / Ma'btlê Nahiyesi):

- Administrative Center: Maabatli town.¹
- Area: 208.51 km².¹⁹
- Population (2004): 11,741.¹ This subdistrict is particularly noted as a significant center for the Alevi community within Afrin.¹ It was reported that about 12,000

people, mostly of Alevi faith, lived there until the onset of the Syrian revolt.²⁹

- Number of villages: Reported as 42 in 1980.¹⁸

The administrative centers of these subdistricts typically functioned as local economic and social hubs for their surrounding villages. The varying populations, areas, and village counts across these nahiyes point to differing settlement densities and land-use patterns, shaped by local geography such as mountainous terrain versus plains², access to water resources like the Afrin River⁷, and historical settlement dynamics, including specific migrations such as the Alevi settlement in Maabatli.¹

C. Key Towns: Afrin City and Jindires

Within the Afrin District, two urban settlements stood out due to their population size and administrative or historical importance: Afrin city and Jindires town.

- Afrin City:

As the administrative capital of the district and the Afrin Subdistrict, Afrin city was the primary urban, economic, and administrative nucleus of the region.¹ Its origins trace back to the 19th century when it was founded as a market. The town experienced considerable growth over the decades, expanding from a modest 800 residents in 1929 to 7,000 by 1968.⁸ By the 2004 census, its population had reached 36,562.¹ The French Mandate authorities played a role in its development.⁸ The original settlement area was situated on a hillside, with more recent urban expansion occurring across the Afrin River and extending towards the neighboring village of Turandah.⁸ Economically, Afrin city served as a vital hub, particularly for the district's dominant olive oil industry and related products such as the famed Aleppo soap. It maintained strong commercial links with the markets of Aleppo city.¹ Additionally, due to its scenic landscapes, the Afrin area, with the city as a base, was a recognized center for domestic tourism within Syria.¹

- Jindires (Cindires):

Jindires served as the administrative center of the Jindires Subdistrict.¹ The 2004 census recorded its population at 13,661, making it the second-largest urban settlement in the district.¹ Jindires is distinguished by its profound historical roots, being the site of the ancient town of Gindarus or Gindaros.²² Its history extends back to the Hellenistic period, and it held significance during the Roman era, notably as the site of the Battle of Mount Gindarus in 38 BC.²² In the late 19th century, European observers noted it as a Kurdish settlement comprising about 50 cottages.²²

The urban landscape of the Afrin District before 2010 was thus characterized by a notable duality. Afrin city, a relatively more recent development from the 19th century⁸, emerged as the modern administrative and economic engine of the district, its growth fueled by its market function and later by light industry such as textiles.¹ In contrast, Jindires' importance was deeply embedded in its ancient past as Gindarus²², representing a site of long-term historical continuity and strategic significance. This co-existence of a modern economic center and an ancient historical town reflects the layered history of settlement and urban functionality within the district. Such patterns, where newer centers emerge alongside or supersede ancient ones

due to evolving trade routes, administrative reforms, or new economic opportunities, are common in regions with long settlement histories.

Table: Summary of Afrin District Subdistricts (Pre-2010)

Subdistrict Name (English)	Alternative Names	Administrative Center	Population (2004)	Area (km2)	Approx. No. of Villages
Afrin	Merkez, Center, Efrîn	Afrin City	66,188	427.73	41-64 ¹⁴
Bulbul	Bûlbûl	Bulbul	12,573	203.36	34-49 ¹⁸
Jindires	Cindires, Jendêres	Jindires	32,947	319.43	56 ¹⁸
Rajo	Raco	Rajo	21,955	283.12	53-65 ¹⁸
Sharran	Şarran, Şera	Sharran	13,632	305.18	44 ¹⁸
Shaykh al-Hadid	Şiyê, Sheikh Hadid	Shaykh al-Hadid	13,871	93.52	16-18 ¹⁸
Maabatli	Mabatli, Ma'btlê, Mobetan	Maabatli	11,741	208.51	42 ¹⁸

Sources for table data: ¹ Population figures primarily from 2004 census data presented in ¹⁹ and ¹. ¹⁹ Village counts vary by source and date; ranges reflect this.

III. Villages of Prominent Historical and Archaeological Significance

The Afrin District is home to numerous sites that bear witness to its long and varied history. Several villages are particularly important due to their archaeological remains, which span millennia from prehistory to the classical and medieval periods.

A. Ain Dara: The Syro-Hittite Temple and its Enduring Legacy

The archaeological site of Ain Dara, situated approximately 8 kilometers south of Afrin town ⁸ and near the modern village of the same name ¹², stands as one of the most significant historical locations in northern Syria. It is renowned for its monumental Iron Age Syro-Hittite temple, which flourished from circa 1300 BC to 740 BC. ⁸ This temple is of particular interest to scholars due to its noted architectural and iconographic similarities to Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, as described in the Hebrew Bible; crucially, the Ain Dara temple predates the First Temple. ¹²

The temple complex featured unique elements, including massive carved footprints in its thresholds, possibly symbolizing the deity's presence, and impressive sculptures of lions and sphinxes, which have drawn parallels to the cherubim of the biblical temple. ¹² The tell, or

settlement mound, upon which the temple was built, reveals a long history of occupation, with layers dating from the Chalcolithic period (4th millennium BC) through to the Ottoman era, indicating continuous human presence over millennia.¹² Historically, the temple at Ain Dara may have been dedicated to a major deity of the ancient Near Eastern pantheon, possibly the goddess Ishtar (or her Canaanite counterpart Astarte) or the storm god Ba'al Hadad.¹² In the period before 2010, Ain Dara was recognized as an important tourist attraction, drawing visitors to the region and contributing to the local economy.³³ Adding to the site's archaeological richness, a Luwian stele, known as the Ain Dara Stele and dating to the 9th or 8th century BC, was discovered in a field northwest of Afrin city.⁸ The existence of such a world-class archaeological site within a district that was, by the 20th century, predominantly rural and agriculturally focused, points to a significant historical layering. Ancient sacred or political centers like Ain Dara were eventually overlaid by different forms of settlement and land use as civilizations rose and fell and economic priorities shifted. The site's role as a tourist destination prior to 2011³³ suggests an early, though perhaps not fully developed, effort to integrate this profound ancient heritage into the modern economic and cultural life of the Afrin region, an effort predicated on a level of stability and accessibility that allowed for archaeological work and visitor access.

B. Cyrrhus (Nabi Hori): Roman and Byzantine Era Strategic Site

The ancient city of Cyrrhus, identified with the modern site of Nabi Hori, held considerable strategic and religious importance during the Roman and Byzantine periods. Located in a commanding position overlooking the Afrin River, Cyrrhus served as a key Roman military base, particularly for legions conducting campaigns against the Armenian Empire to the north.⁸ The city was part of Roman Syria, specifically within the region known as Cyrrhestica, of which it was the center.³

By the 4th century AD, Cyrrhus had transformed into an important center for Christianity in the region, prominent enough to have its own bishop.⁸ This evolution from a military outpost to an episcopal see reflects a common pattern observed across the late Roman Empire. As the Empire transitioned, imperial infrastructure and established administrative centers often became nexuses for the expanding Christian church. Strategically important locations like Cyrrhus, suitable for military control, also proved logical centers for regional religious administration, thereby embedding new layers of religious significance onto existing foundations of power and communication. This demonstrates how successive historical forces—military, administrative, and religious—accumulated and interacted in specific, pivotal locations within the Afrin landscape.

C. Barad and the "Dead Cities" Phenomenon

Barad, known in antiquity as Kaprobarada, is another site of historical importance in the vicinity of the Afrin region. It is listed as one of the "Villages antiques du Nord de la Syrie" (Ancient Villages of Northern Syria), a cluster of settlements from the late Roman and Byzantine periods (roughly 1st to 7th centuries AD) that are collectively recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, often referred to as the "Dead Cities".³⁴ These villages are

primarily situated within the limestone massif of northwestern Syria, an area that includes Jebel Sem'an and extends towards the Afrin region. They are characterized by remarkably well-preserved domestic, religious (churches, monasteries), and agricultural (olive presses) architecture, all constructed from the local limestone.³⁴

While Barad itself is listed under "Jebel Sem'an, au Nord" ³⁴, its proximity and the shared characteristics of these limestone hill settlements connect it to the broader historical landscape relevant to Afrin. Several other villages belonging to this "Dead Cities" complex are found within or very near the Afrin District, including Basufan, Burj Haidar, Deir Seman, Kalota, Kharab Shams, Mushabbak, and Kafr Nabu.³⁴ Some of these, such as Basufan, Kalota, and Kafr Nabu, are explicitly identified as belonging to the Afrin subdistrict in other records.⁸ The sophisticated stone architecture and significant evidence of olive oil production ³⁵ found in these ancient villages strongly suggest that the Afrin region's deep reliance on olive cultivation has ancient historical roots, extending back at least to Roman and Byzantine times. The pre-2010 olive-centric economy of Afrin can thus be seen as a continuation, or a revival, of agricultural practices and economic specializations established many centuries prior. This implies that many villages in Afrin before 2010 were situated within a landscape already profoundly shaped by ancient agricultural traditions centered on the olive.

D. Other Villages with Notable Historical Layers

Beyond the major sites of Ain Dara and Cyrrhus, and the "Dead Cities" cluster, several other villages in the Afrin District possess distinct historical significance:

- **Jindires (Gindarus):** As previously noted (Section II.C), Jindires has a rich history as an ancient town dating back to the Hellenistic period, with significant Roman and Byzantine phases. It was the site of the Battle of Mount Gindarus (38 BC) and later an episcopal see.²² Its archaeological strata make it a key historical site.
- **Basufan:** This village contains the remains of a 5th-century church dedicated to Saint Phocas, along with other Byzantine-era architectural vestiges.³⁶ It is also recognized as a historical Yazidi settlement.²⁹
- **Qibar:** Qibar is noted for its historical depth, having been the scene of a battle between Byzantine and Arab forces that preceded the significant Battle of Azaz in 1030 AD. The village was mentioned by the 13th-century Syrian geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi. Archaeological remains from ancient settlements and caves bearing ancient inscriptions are found in its vicinity.³⁸ Qibar was also an important Yazidi center.⁴
- **Rajo:** An old settlement situated on the Baylan plateau, Rajo's name is said to originate from an old Kurdish family. A significant development in its more recent history was its connection to the Baghdad Railway in 1912.²³ The arrival of the railway in the early 20th century would have had a considerable impact on local trade, connectivity, and potentially settlement patterns in this part of the Afrin district. It linked Rajo and its environs to a major international transport artery, potentially altering traditional economic flows and integrating it into wider regional and even international networks, which may have set its development trajectory apart from more isolated parts of the Kurd Dagh.

- **Villages with Documented Historical Houses and Tombs:** Several villages contain domestic architecture or funerary monuments that attest to long-standing settlement and the presence of local notable families. These include: Topelî Mehmûd (Mahmoud Agha Obeisi), with a residential house dated to March 1032 according to the Eastern Gregorian calendar; Ma'arrate, with houses dating to 1830 AD and 1857 AD; Büyûk Obe (Gundî Mezin), featuring houses with inscriptions from the early 19th century; Berbenê, with a house dated to 1173 AH (Islamic Hijri calendar); Sêwiya, where three graves belonging to individuals with the surname Haj Omar date to 1223 AH/1808 AD and 1225 AH/1810 AD; and Juweq, with a tomb of Nasser bin Youssef Agha bin Ahmed Bek dated to 1213 AH/1798 AD.¹⁸ These structures provide tangible links to the social and architectural history of these specific localities over the past few centuries.

IV. Villages Distinguished by Ethno-Religious Composition (Pre-2010)

The Afrin District, while overwhelmingly Kurdish, was also home to several distinct ethno-religious minority communities, each contributing to the region's diverse cultural tapestry. Their presence was often concentrated in specific villages or subdistricts, which served as centers for their unique traditions and communal life.

A. Overview of Afrin's Predominantly Kurdish Identity

Prior to 2010 and the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, the Afrin District was characterized by its overwhelmingly ethnic Kurdish population.¹ Numerous sources describe the district as "homogeneously Kurdish"¹ and as the "least Arabized" of Syria's historically Kurdish regions.¹³ Estimates from Kurdish sources suggested that at least 97 percent of Afrin's pre-war population was ethnically Kurdish.¹³ The dominant language spoken throughout the district was the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish.¹⁷

This demographic characteristic of being "homogeneously Kurdish" and the "least Arabized" signifies more than just population statistics. It points to a notable degree of cultural resilience and perhaps a measure of geographical or social insulation that allowed the region to preserve its distinct Kurdish character more effectively than other Kurdish areas in Syria, such as the Jazira region, which experienced more intensive Arabization policies.¹³ This resilience could be attributed to a combination of factors, including the mountainous geography of the Kurd-Dagh⁴, the ancient and continuous Kurdish settlement in the area², and potentially strong local social structures that maintained cultural and linguistic traditions despite state pressures. This deeply rooted Kurdish identity was a defining feature of village life and inter-village relations throughout the Afrin District before 2010.

B. Yazidi Villages: Ancient Communities and Sacred Sites

The Afrin District was home to a significant Yazidi population before 2010. Estimates of their numbers vary, with some sources suggesting between 20,000 to 30,000 Yazidis in Afrin specifically²⁹, while broader estimates for all of Syria range from 10,000 to 50,000.⁴⁰ Yazidis

are ethnically Kurdish but adhere to a distinct, ancient monotheistic religion with roots in pre-Zoroastrian Iranian faiths.⁴¹

Yazidi villages in Afrin were often found in clusters, particularly in the geographical area between Afrin city and Mount Simeon (Jebel Sem'an), and frequently situated near specific mountains or sacred shrines that held religious importance for the community.⁴ The intricate network of these shrines indicates that the landscape of Afrin was not merely agricultural or residential for the Yazidi community; it was also imbued with sacred meaning. This "sacred geography," with specific sites acting as focal points for religious practice, pilgrimage, and communal identity, would have profoundly shaped their connection to the land and their social organization. These sites served as repositories of oral history and tradition, reinforcing Yazidi identity and fostering inter-village connections. The association of particular clans, such as the Darwish clan in Qibar³⁸, with certain areas further points to a structured social and religious leadership tied to specific locations.

Key Yazidi villages and centers in the Afrin District included:

- **Qibar (also Arshqibar, official Arabized name al-Hawa):** This village was known as the traditional seat of the Darwish clan, the leading Yazidi family in the Afrin area. It was home to, or in close proximity to, three important Yazidi shrines: the Cave of Cilmera (Çilmera), the Melekadi Shrine, and the Hercerka Sheikh Huseyn Shrine.⁴ In 2009, it was reported that half the families in Qibar were Yazidi.³⁸ The village had a population of 743 according to the 2004 census.³⁸
- **Basufan:** Predominantly populated by Yazidi Kurds³⁶, Basufan had 901 inhabitants in the 2004 census.³⁶ While also known for the remains of a 5th-century Christian church³⁶, its Yazidi identity was prominent. It was listed among Yazidi villages reportedly attacked in later years.²⁹
- **Qestel Cindo (Qastal Jendo):** This was another significant Yazidi village²⁹, housing the important Yazidi shrine of Bars Khatouniya (Sheikh Hamid).⁴
- **Ain Dara Area:** While primarily recognized for its ancient temple, the broader vicinity of Ain Dara included Yazidi villages.²⁹ The shrine of Hoger, which some associate with Zoroastrian traditions, is located near Ain Dara village.⁴
- **Other villages noted for Yazidi presence or shrines⁴:** Baadi, Barad, Kimar, Iska, Shadere (possibly Shuhdair), and Ghazzawiya, Burj Abdalo.
 - **Kafr Jannah:** Contained several Yazidi shrines, including those of Bella Menin, Pir Jaafar, Hanin, and Manan (brother of Hanin, shrine on Mount Kafarjana).⁴
 - **Trenda:** Home to the Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir.⁴
 - **Sinka:** Location of the Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Ghraib.⁴
 - **Pavlon (Baflioun):** Site of the Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Sharafaddin.⁴
 - **Shuhdair:** Contained the Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Rakkab.⁴
 - **Midana / Maidaniyat (Maydankah villages):** Location of the Sultan Sheikhmos Shrine, situated in a cemetery with notable stone pillars.⁴
 - **Holilo and Goran (villages in the Rajo area):** The shrine of Mohammed Ali is located in a valley between these villages.⁴

The following table summarizes some of the notable Yazidi villages and their associated shrines in the Afrin District before 2010:

Village Name (Kurdish/Alternative)	Official/Arabic Name	Subdistrict (if known)	Known Yazidi Shrines or Significance	Key Source(s)
Qibar / Arshqibar	Al-Hawa	Afrin Center	Seat of Darwish clan; Shrines: Cave of Cilmera, Melekadi, Hercerka Sheikh Huseyn	⁴
Basufan	Basufan	Afrin Center	Yazidi Kurd population; also 5th C. church	²⁹
Qestel Cindo / Qastal Jendo	Qastal Cindo	Sharran	Shrine of Bars Khatouniya (Sheikh Hamid)	⁴
Kafr Jannah	Kafr Janneh	Sharran	Shrines: Bella Menin, Pir Jaafar, Hanin, Manan	⁴
Trenda	Turandah	Afrin Center	Shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir	⁴
Sinka	Sinka	Maabatli (?)	Shrine of Sheikh Ghraib	⁴
Pavlon / Baflioun	Baflioun	Maabatli / Sharran	Shrine of Sheikh Sharafaddin	⁴
Shadere / Shuhdair	Shadereh	Rajo (?)	Shrine of Sheikh Rakkab	⁴
Midana / Maidaniyat	Maydankah / Midanli	Sharran / Bulbul	Sultan Sheikhmos Shrine	⁴
Kimar	Kimar	Afrin Center	Yazidi village	²⁹
Barad	Barad	Afrin Center	Yazidi village; ancient site	²⁹
Burj Abdalo	Burj Abdullah	Afrin Center	Yazidi village	²⁹
Ghazzawiya	Ghazawiyah	Afrin Center	Yazidi village	²⁹
Iska	Iskan	Afrin Center	Yazidi village	²⁹

(Note: Subdistrict attributions for some shrine locations are based on proximity or general area mentions if not explicitly stated for the shrine itself. Some villages may have multiple spellings or fall under different subdistrict interpretations in various sources.)

C. Alevi Villages: The Maabatli Heartland and Beyond

The Maabatli subdistrict served as the primary demographic and cultural heartland for the Alevi community within the Afrin District.¹ It was reported that the majority of the approximately 12,000 inhabitants of the Maabatli subdistrict prior to the Syrian Civil War were of the Alevi faith.²⁹ These Alevis were predominantly of Kurdish ethnicity.¹ A significant historical component of the Alevi population in Maabatli traced its origins to Kurdish Alevis who sought refuge there after fleeing persecution by the Turkish Army during the Dersim Massacre in the 1930s.¹

Alevi Kurds in Afrin generally speak the Kurmanji dialect, similar to other Kurdish groups in the region, and often feel a strong connection to the broader Kurdish identity. However, their religious practices and beliefs distinguish them. Many Alevis identify as Muslims but seek recognition as an independent religious path, distinct from mainstream Sunni or Shia interpretations. They typically reject the Islamic Sharia law and emphasize principles such as gender equality in their religious gatherings (Cem) and daily life; for instance, Alevi women are not traditionally required to wear a headscarf.²⁹ The village of Maabatli itself is the administrative center of this subdistrict.²⁸ One source also notes that the subdistricts of Shaykh al-Hadid, Rajo, Maabatli, and Bulbul "almost completely lack non-Kurdish names," reflecting a "pure Kurdish ethnic state in those subdistricts for a long time".¹⁸ While this observation pertains to the broader Kurdish identity of these areas, Maabatli's specific Alevi character is particularly well-documented.

The concentration of Alevis in the Maabatli subdistrict, especially those with ancestral links to the Dersim region of Turkey, suggests that this area functioned as a sanctuary and a zone of cultural and religious preservation for Alevi Kurds. This implies the existence of a robust internal community structure capable of integrating newcomers who shared their faith and of maintaining distinct traditions within the wider, predominantly Sunni Kurdish environment of the Afrin District. This historical development created a unique socio-religious landscape in that particular part of Afrin, distinguishing it from other subdistricts.

D. Christian Presence: Small but Historic

A small but historically rooted Christian community also existed in the Afrin District before 2010. Estimates from the late 1990s or early 2000s suggested the presence of approximately 250 Christian families, numbering around 1,200 individuals, in the wider Afrin region.⁴

These Christian families were primarily located in a few key settlements:

- **Afrin city:** Home to the Church of the Good Shepherd, this was the largest concentration, with approximately 190 families.⁴
- **Rajo town:** A church in Rajo served a community of about 45 families.⁴
- **Maabatli town:** A smaller Christian presence, with a church catering to around 15 families, was noted here.⁴

Additionally, the Qaziqli Shrine, situated on Qazaqli Mountain, was identified as a significant Christian site. This shrine was located within an ancient archaeological cemetery that also contained Greek monuments, indicating the deep historical layers of religious practice in the

region.⁴ The presence of established churches in Afrin city, Rajo, and Maabatli ⁴ indicates that the Christian community, though a minority, was organized and possessed recognized places of worship before 2010. This suggests a degree of long-standing religious coexistence and adds another layer to Afrin's diverse religious landscape, which is often primarily viewed through the lens of its Kurdish Muslim majority and the notable Yazidi and Alevi communities.

E. Arab and Turkmen Villages: Documented Minorities

While the Afrin District was overwhelmingly Kurdish, small Arab and Turkmen minorities were also part of its demographic fabric before 2010. Arabs constituted a minor percentage of the total population; for example, an estimate from 1998 suggested they formed about 1% ⁴, while another source indicated that Arabs and Turkmen together comprised approximately 3% of the population.¹³

The Arab presence in Afrin had diverse origins. Some were state employees assigned to the area, others had benefited from agrarian reform laws, and some families had been displaced from the Iskenderun (Hatay) region after its annexation by Turkey in 1938.⁴ Arab tribes mentioned in connection with Afrin include the Amirat, Ajeel, Poptush, Bubana, and Buaasi.⁴ Villages reported to have Arab populations, often in mixed settings rather than purely Arab settlements ⁴, included:

- Basutah, Bablet, Kawkabeh, Tel Hamo, Kafir, Feririya, Nisriya, and Deir Balut.⁴
- Anab, Maryamin, and Shuraga, as well as a locality known as Shaykh al-Arab.⁴ The village of Maryamin is specifically noted as having both Arab and Turkmen residents.¹³
- Additionally, some Arab families originating from adjacent areas like Darat Azza, Nobil, and Zahra resided in Afrin, with some living in predominantly Kurdish villages for purposes such as grazing livestock or agricultural labor.⁴

This pattern of Arab settlement, featuring state employees, beneficiaries of land reforms, and historical tribal communities, suggests that the Arab minority in Afrin had varied origins and socio-economic roles. Their tendency to live in mixed villages rather than distinct ethnic enclaves ⁴ implies a degree of dispersal and interaction with the majority Kurdish population. A Turkmen presence was also documented, often concentrated alongside Arab communities in villages such as Maryamin.¹³ Some Turkish sources list Turkmen villages in the broader northern Aleppo and Kilis regions.⁴³ While the direct applicability of all such lists to the Afrin District before 2010 requires careful assessment, the appearance of certain village names like "Aşkan" in both these broader lists and in lists of Afrin villages ⁴⁴ suggests potential overlaps or the presence of Turkmen settlements in close proximity to or within the district, influencing its demographic composition.

V. Villages of Key Economic Importance (Pre-2010)

The economy of the Afrin District before 2010 was predominantly agrarian, with a strong emphasis on olive cultivation. However, other agricultural activities, local markets, and nascent craft industries also played important roles in the livelihoods of its village populations.

A. Centers of Olive Cultivation and Olive Oil Production

Olive cultivation formed the backbone of Afrin's economy and was deeply embedded in its cultural identity.¹ The olive tree itself is often described as a symbol of Afrin.⁸ The region was reported to have over 15 million registered olive trees, which produced a substantial tonnage of olive oil annually ¹⁰ (though this specific figure dates from a post-2010 context, it reflects the historical capacity and scale of cultivation). The hilly terrain of the Kurd-Dagh is particularly well-suited for olive groves.²

Historically, the Afrin District has been a major supplier of olive oil for the production of Aleppo soap, a renowned traditional Syrian product, a connection dating back to antiquity.¹ While specific villages are not always singled out as exclusive centers—as the industry was widespread across the district—it is understood that virtually all rural settlements were involved in some aspect of olive growing or primary processing. Towns like Afrin city, and likely the subdistrict centers, would have served as nexuses for olive oil pressing facilities and trade.⁸

The deep historical entanglement of Afrin's villages with olive cultivation, possibly extending back to Roman and Byzantine times as suggested by archaeological evidence in the "Dead Cities" ³⁵ and historical statements ¹, fostered a specialized agricultural knowledge system. This long tradition likely resulted in strong inter-generational farming practices and local economies heavily reliant on the seasonal rhythms of olive harvests and processing. This specialization would also create dependencies, with the success or failure of the olive harvest having a significant impact on the entire local economy. The established connection to Aleppo soap production implies well-worn trade routes and a recognized quality for Afrin's olive oil, linking the rural villages to a wider urban and potentially even international market.

B. Agricultural Hubs for Other Produce

While olives were the dominant crop, the agricultural landscape of Afrin was not monolithic. Wheat production was also a focus, with efforts reported to increase its cultivation.¹ The fertile plains within the district ² and the lands adjacent to the Afrin River ⁸ were capable of supporting a more diverse range of crops. For instance, areas around Afrin city were noted for the cultivation of grains, as well as summer vegetables, cotton, sugar beets, and watermelons, often through irrigation using water from the Afrin River or artesian wells.¹⁴

Villages in subdistricts like Sherawa, for example, traditionally grew wheat, barley, and lentils, in addition to their olive groves, figs, and grapes, before access to these lands became problematic in later years ⁴⁶ (this source describes the pre-existing agricultural patterns). The cultivation of staple crops like wheat alongside the primary cash crop (olives) suggests a mixed farming system in many villages. This diversification, even with the predominance of olives, would have aimed at both ensuring local subsistence and participating in market economies, thereby providing a degree of economic resilience against the vagaries of a single crop market or harvest failures. The fertile river plains would have been particularly crucial for this diversified agriculture, supporting crops that might not thrive in the rockier, hillier terrain favored by olive trees.

C. Market Villages and Nodes on Local Trade Routes

Market towns and accessible trade routes are vital for rural economies, providing outlets for agricultural produce and access to external goods and services.

- **Afrin city:** Having been founded as a market in the 19th century⁸, Afrin city naturally evolved into the primary economic and administrative center of the district. It served as the main conduit connecting the agricultural output of the district, particularly olive oil, to the larger markets of Aleppo city.¹⁷
- **Subdistrict Centers:** The administrative centers of the seven subdistricts—Bulbul, Jindires, Rajo, Sharan, Shaykh al-Hadid, and Maabatli—likely functioned as important secondary market towns for their respective surrounding villages. These centers would have facilitated the local exchange of agricultural products, livestock, and other essential goods.
- **Rajo:** The connection of Rajo to the Baghdad Railway in 1912²³ endowed this town with particular significance as a node on a wider trade network, potentially influencing commerce in its hinterland more broadly than other subdistrict centers.
- **Cross-border Trade:** Prior to 2010, border crossings with Turkey in the vicinity of the Afrin region were reported to be crucial conduits for the movement of food supplies and other goods, not only for Afrin itself but also for other Kurdish areas along the northern border.⁴⁷

The economic life of Afrin's villages before 2010 was thus characterized by a dual orientation. Internally, it was heavily focused on Afrin city and subsequently Aleppo as the major regional urban market.¹⁷ Externally, its proximity to the Turkish border significantly influenced both formal and informal trade activities.⁴⁷ This interplay between local, regional, and cross-border economic dynamics shaped the strategies and opportunities available to the inhabitants of Afrin's villages.

D. Villages Associated with Crafts

Beyond primary agricultural production, some craft activities were present in the Afrin District, adding another dimension to its economy.

- **Aleppo Soap Production:** While the final production of Aleppo soap was largely centered in Aleppo city, the Afrin District was a critical supplier of its primary ingredient: olive oil.¹ Therefore, villages throughout Afrin engaged in olive oil production were intrinsically linked to this renowned craft industry.
- **Textile Industry:** Although it appears to have significantly expanded after 2010 due to the displacement of industries from Aleppo during the conflict, evidence suggests a pre-existing capacity for textile production in Afrin. By early 2016, reports indicated that the Afrin District housed around 400 textile industry workshops, employing approximately 17,000 people and producing items like jeans for the Syrian market.¹ The ability to rapidly scale up such an industry implies an underlying artisanal skill base and entrepreneurial capacity within the towns and villages of Afrin that existed before the war. This was likely not an industry created from scratch but rather an expansion built

upon existing, perhaps smaller-scale, traditions or capabilities in weaving, tailoring, or related crafts. This points to a more diverse economic potential in Afrin's villages than just agriculture alone.

VI. Gazetteer of Populated Places in Afrin District (Pre-2010)

A. Methodology for Compilation

This gazetteer aims to provide a comprehensive list of known villages, towns, and significant inhabited farms within the Afrin District as they existed prior to 2010. The compilation draws upon a variety of sources, including data implicitly derived from official Syrian census records¹, local historical and community-based documentation (such as the website LokmanAfrin.com, which provided lists for Rajo and Shaykh al-Hadid subdistricts with 2004 population data²⁴), academic publications mentioning specific settlements, and extensive lists available on platforms like Wikipedia in Arabic and English.⁸

A key aspect of this gazetteer is the attempt to include both the official administrative names (which were often Arabized by the Syrian government) and the original or commonly used Kurdish names, where such information is available.¹⁶ This reflects the linguistic and cultural reality of the region. Population data, primarily from the 2004 census, is included for individual settlements when provided in the source material. The villages are organized by their respective subdistricts. The very act of compiling such a gazetteer, particularly one that endeavors to reconcile official Arabized names with local Kurdish nomenclature, serves as an act of historical recovery. It highlights the linguistic and cultural politics that have shaped the region and underscores the tension between state-imposed uniformity and the persistence of local identity. The existence of dual names for many, if not most, villages points to a historical Kurdish landscape upon which official Arabized names were later superimposed.⁹

B. Village Listings by Subdistrict

The following lists detail populated places within each of the seven subdistricts of Afrin District. Names are provided with Kurdish/original forms first, followed by Arabic/official forms where available or commonly used. Population figures are for 2004 unless otherwise stated. Notes on significance are brief, as more detailed discussions are in previous sections. *(Note: The comprehensiveness of these lists is dependent on the available source material. Spellings may vary between sources. Population data is not available for all listed villages from the pre-2010 period.)*

1. Afrin Subdistrict (Merkez/Center Nahiyesi)

The Afrin subdistrict, with Afrin city as its center, was the most populous. Based on 1980 data, it had 64 villages¹⁸, or 41 villages and 15 farms according to another historical account.¹⁴¹⁶ lists 18 villages with original and Arabized names for this subdistrict.

Selected Important Villages in Afrin Subdistrict:

- **Afrin City (Efrîn / عفرين):** District and subdistrict capital. Pop. 36,562.² Major economic, administrative, and historical center.¹
- **Ain Dara (Ên Dara / عيندارة):** Site of major Syro-Hittite temple. Pop. (village itself) not specified separately from archaeological site context in most pre-2010 sources. Significant archaeological and tourist site.⁸ Yazidi presence in area.⁴
- **Basuta (Basûte / باصوطة):** Mixed Arab/Kurdish village.⁴ Known for scenic beauty.
- **Basufan (Basûfan / باصوفان):** Yazidi Kurdish village. Pop. 901.³⁶ Site of 5th C. St. Phocas Church.³⁶
- **Barad (Beradê / براد):** Ancient village (Kaprobarada), part of "Dead Cities".³⁴ Yazidi presence noted.²⁹
- **Burj Abdullah (Bircê Abdulo / برج عبد الو):** Yazidi presence noted..²⁹¹⁶
- **Inab (Anab / اناب):** Village in Chumah Plain with Arab population.⁴
- **Kafr Nabu (Kefêr Nebo / كفر نيو):** Ancient village site, part of "Dead Cities" complex.⁸
- **Kalota (Kelûtê / كلوتا):** Ancient village site, part of "Dead Cities" complex.⁸
- **Kimar (Kîmar / كيمار):** Yazidi village.²⁹
- **Maryamin (Meryemîn / مريمين):** Mixed Arab/Turkmen/Kurdish village.⁴
- **Oqayba (Aqîbê / عقيبة):**⁸
- **Qibar (Qîbar / قيبار; official: Al-Hawa / الهوى):** Traditional Yazidi center, seat of Darwish clan. Pop. 743.³⁸ Numerous Yazidi shrines nearby.⁴
- **Turandah (Turindê / طرنده; Arabized: El Zerîfa / الظريفة):** Neighboring Afrin city.⁸ Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir.⁴
- **Ghazzawiya (Xezewê / الغزاوية):** Yazidi presence noted.²⁹
- **Kawkabeh (Kefer Kûk / كوكبة):** Mixed Arab/Kurdish village..⁴¹⁶
- **Tel Hamo (Til Hemê / تل حمو):** Mixed Arab/Kurdish village.⁴
- **Other villages listed in ⁴⁴ (Arabic Wikipedia category for Afrin District, includes villages from all subdistricts):** أبرز (Abrez), أبو كعب (Abu Ka'b), أبين (Abbîn), أدّة (Adda), الأمسية (Al-Amsiyah), إسكان (Iskan), إشكان شرقي (Ishkan Sharqî), إشكان غربي (Ishkan Gharbi), تل (Tal), تل غازي (Tal Ghazi), تل طویل (Tal Tawil), تل سلور (Tal Sallur), تل الثعالب (Tal al-Tha'alib), تل الأسود (Tal al-Aswad), تلف (Tellif), خالدية (Khalidiya), خرزان (Kharzan), خزفية (Khazafiyah), خضر (Khidr), الخضراء (Al-Khadra'a), خلطان شرقي (Khaltan Sharqî), خلطان غربي (Khaltan Gharbi), الخليل (Al-Khalil), دوراقا (Duraqa), الديب الصغير (Al-Deeb al-Saghir), الديب الكبير (Al-Deeb al-Kabir), دير حسان (Deir Hassan), دير صوان (Deir Suwwan), الديك (Al-Deek), الرأس الأحمر (Al-Ras al-Ahmar), زعرة (Za'ra), زنده (Zenda), زهرة الحياة (Zahrat al-Hayat), الزيارة (Al-Ziyarah), زيتونة (Zaytouna), شيخ (Sheikh), شيخ خورز (Sheikh Khuruz), شيخ عبد الرحمن (Sheikh Abd al-Rahman), صاغر (Al-Sati), شيركان (Shirkan), الشيوخ (Al-Shuyukh), محمد (Sheikh Muhammad), الصرة (Al-Surra), الصوان الصغير (Al-Suwwan al-Saghir), الصوان الكبير (Al-Suwwan al-Kabir), الضحى (Al-Dahhak al-Fuqani), الضحاك فوقاني (Al-Dahhak al-Tahtani), الضحاك التحتاني (Al-Duha), الطلة (Al-Tafla), الطاقية (Al-Taqiya), دودو (Dodo), ضوضو (Al-Dakhm), الطلّة (Al-Talla), الظاهرة التحتانية (Al-Zahira al-Tahtaniyah), الظاهرة العليا (Al-Zahira al-Ulya), الظريفة (Al-Zarifah), عقيبة (Aqiba), علمدار (Alamdardar), علي الأطرش (Ali al-Atrash), علي بزان (Ali Bazan),

فافتيرتين (Al-Ghazlan), غزاوية (Ghazzawiya), بافليون عمر (Baflioun Omar), العلياء (Al-Alya), الفسحة (Al-Fusha), فافيرتين (Fafirtin), فافيرية (Fiririyah).⁴⁴

2. Bulbul Subdistrict (Bûlbûl Nahiyesi)

Center: Bulbul town. Contained 34-49 villages.¹⁸¹⁶ lists 39 villages with original and Arabized names.

Selected Important Villages in Bulbul Subdistrict:

- **Bulbul (Bilbil / بيليل):** Subdistrict capital. Pop. 1,742.²¹
- **Abîl Oşaxî (Ebil / أبيل أوشاغي):**¹⁶
- **Balê Koyê (Balî / بالي):**¹⁶
- **Deir Hassan (Hesen Dêrlî / دير حسن):**¹⁶¹⁶
- **Khalil (Xelîlak Oşaxî / الخليل):**¹⁶¹⁶
- **Qotanli (Qotan / قطانلي):**¹⁶
- **Maydankah (Meydan Ekbez area, specific villages like Midana/Maidaniyat):** Some Maydankah villages fall under Bulbul or Sharran. Sultan Sheikhmos Yazidi Shrine in Midana.⁴
- **Darmashkanli (Dêr Mîşkanlê / درمشكانلي):**⁸
- **Fafertin (Fafirtîn / فافيرتين):** Ancient village site.⁸
- **Burj Haidar (Birc Heyder / برج حيدر):** Ancient village site.⁸

3. Jindires Subdistrict (Cindiress Nahiyesi)

Center: Jindires town. Contained 56 villages.¹⁸¹⁶ lists 18 villages with original and Arabized names.

Selected Important Villages in Jindires Subdistrict:

- **Jindires (Cindirês / جنديرس):** Subdistrict capital. Pop. 13,661.² Ancient Gindarus.²²
- **Abu Ka'b Sharqi / Abu Ka'b Gharbi (Bavê Ke,eb Rojhilat / Bavê Ke,eb Roj Ava / أبو كعب شرقي / أبو كعب غربي):**¹⁶
- **Hajilar (Hecîler / الحاج):**¹⁶
- **Kafr Safra (Kefêr Sefrê / كفر صفرة):**⁸
- **Jalamah (Cilme / جلما):**⁸
- **Deir Ballut (Dêr Belût / دير بلوط):** Mixed Arab/Kurdish village..⁴⁴⁴
- **Ramadiyah (Remadiyê / رمادية):**¹⁶
- **Qarah Bash (Qerebeş / قره باش):**⁴⁵¹⁶

4. Rajo Subdistrict (Raco Nahiyesi)

Center: Rajo town. Contained 53-65 villages/farms.¹⁸²⁴ provides a detailed list of 53 settlements with 2004 population data.

Selected Important Villages in Rajo Subdistrict:

- **Rajo (Raco / راجو):** Subdistrict capital. Pop. (town) 3,122-4,000.²³ Old settlement, connected to Baghdad Railway.²³ Christian presence.⁴

- Ba'danli (بعدنلي): Pop. 2,722.²⁴ One of the most populous villages in the subdistrict.
- Haj Khalil (حاج خليل): Pop. 626.²⁴
- Ma'mal Ushaghi (معمل اوشاغي): Pop. 1,359.²⁴
- Maydan Ikbis (ميدان اكبس): Pop. 1,302.²⁴ Border town.
- Holilo (هوليلو) and Goran (كوران): Yazidi shrine of Mohammed Ali between them.⁴ Holilo pop. 153; Goran pop. 203.²⁴
- Shaykhlar Obasi (Al-Shuyukh / الشيوخ):²⁴
- Dodo (دودو):²⁴
- Alamdar (علمدار):²⁴
- Atmanli (عتمان):²⁴
- Κσταση (Κσταση / Κσταση): (Kurdish: Kêmarêş, Arabic: Al-Taqiya / الطاقية) Pop. 392.²⁴

5. Sharran Subdistrict (Şarran Nahiyesi)

Center: Sharran town. Contained 44 villages.¹⁸¹⁶ lists 26 villages with original and Arabized names.

Selected Important Villages in Sharran Subdistrict:

- Sharran (Şera / شران): Subdistrict capital. Pop. (subdistrict) 13,632.¹⁹
- Qestel Cindo (Qestel Cindo / قسطل جندو): Yazidi village with shrine of Bars Khatouniya..⁴¹⁶
- Kafr Janneh (Kefêr Cenê / كفر جنة): Yazidi shrines..⁴¹⁶
- Qatma (Qetme / قطننا):⁸
- Dîkme Taş (El Emud / العامود):¹⁶
- Erebi Wêran (El Urûba / العروبة):¹⁶
- Shuraga (Şûrbe Oxlî / شوربة أوغلي, possibly related to شوربة): Arab population..⁴⁴
- Baflioun (Pavlon / بافليون): Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Sharafaddin.⁴ (May be in Maabatli or Sharran).

6. Shaykh al-Hadid Subdistrict (Şiyê Nahiyesi)

Center: Shaykh al-Hadid town. Contained 16-18 villages/farms.¹⁸⁴⁹ lists 13 populated places.²⁷ provides 2004 population for 16 settlements.

Selected Important Villages in Shaykh al-Hadid Subdistrict:

- Shaykh al-Hadid (Şiyê / شيخ الحديد): Subdistrict capital. Pop. (town) 5,063.²⁵
- Anqalah (أنقلة): Pop. 1,299.²⁷
- Darmashkanli (Dêrmîşkanlî / درمشكانلي): Pop. 565..²⁷⁸
- Qarah Mutlaq (Khazafiyah / خزافية): Pop. 1,502.²⁷
- Sanarah (سنارة): Pop. 1,308.²⁷
- Mistanli (Mistekan / مستكان):²⁷
- Arndah (Al-Muzayyinah / المزينة): Pop. 1,184.²⁷

7. Maabatli Subdistrict (Mabatli / Ma'btlê Nahiyesi)

Center: Maabatli town. Contained 42 villages.¹⁸¹⁶ lists 35 villages with original and Arabized names. This subdistrict was the primary center of the Alevi Kurdish community.¹

Selected Important Villages in Maabatli Subdistrict:

- **Maabatli (Mabeta / معبطلي):** Subdistrict capital. Pop. (subdistrict) 11,741.¹⁹ Predominantly Alevi Kurdish.¹ Christian presence.⁴
- **Abrez (Ebrez / أبرز):**¹⁶
- **Darker (Dar Kebir / دار كبير):**¹⁶
- **Gemrok (El Gumrikiyê / الكمركية):**¹⁶
- **Mirkan (El Amîriyê / الأميرية):**¹⁶
- **Sinka (Sîno / سينو, or a separate Sinka):** Yazidi shrine of Sheikh Ghraib..⁴¹⁶
- **Shaykh Kilo (Şêx Kîlo / El Şêxalaqere,e / الشيخ الأقرع):**¹⁶
- **Ereb Sheikho (Şêx Al Ereb / شيخ العرب):**¹⁶⁴...

VII. Conclusion: The Diverse Village Landscape of Pre-2010 Afrin

A. Recap of the Multifaceted Importance of Afrin's Villages

The Afrin District, prior to the profound transformations of 2010 and the subsequent Syrian Civil War, presented a rich and complex tapestry of human settlement. Its villages were not mere dots on a map but were imbued with significance derived from their administrative roles as subdistrict centers, their deep historical and archaeological legacies as seen in sites like Ain Dara and the "Dead Cities" cluster, their distinct ethno-religious compositions forming enclaves for communities such as the Yazidis and Alevis, and their crucial contributions to a predominantly olive-based agricultural economy that shaped the livelihoods and landscapes of the Kurd-Dagh. Afrin city and Jindires stood as the main urban centers, one a modern administrative hub and the other an ancient settlement, both vital to the district's coherence.

B. Reflection on the Rich, Predominantly Kurdish, yet Diverse Human Geography

While the Afrin District was characterized by its overwhelmingly Kurdish demographic, a closer examination of its villages reveals a significant undercurrent of diversity. This diversity manifested in ancient heritage sites connecting the region to millennia of Near Eastern history, and in the varied religious practices of its inhabitants, which included Sunni Muslims (the majority among the Kurds), Alevi Kurds (concentrated in Maabatli), Yazidis (with their unique faith and numerous shrines scattered across the district), and a small but historic Christian community. Even within the Kurdish majority, these religious distinctions created unique local cultures and social dynamics. Small Arab and Turkmen populations also contributed to this mosaic, often living in mixed villages.

The villages of Afrin were not isolated entities. They were interconnected through a network of administrative ties to subdistrict and district centers, local markets where agricultural produce

was exchanged, shared natural resources like the Afrin River and its tributaries, and overarching cultural affinities, particularly within the Kurdish community. The primary orientation of this network was towards Afrin city as the local nexus, and more broadly towards Aleppo, the historical economic and cultural metropole of northern Syria. The pre-2010 landscape of Afrin's villages was the cumulative product of centuries, indeed millennia, of settlement, migration, cultural interaction, conflict, and adaptation to the specific geography of the Kurd-Dagh mountains and the Afrin River valley.

This pre-2010 village landscape represented a complex, and for a long period, relatively stable equilibrium. This balance involved the assertion and maintenance of cultural autonomy, especially for the Kurdish majority and distinct minority groups like the Yazidis and Alevis, coexisting with their integration into the Syrian state's overarching administrative and economic framework. While this equilibrium was subject to underlying tensions, exemplified by state-led Arabization policies and restrictions on minority cultural expression, it nonetheless allowed for the persistence and flourishing of a unique regional identity in Afrin. The events post-2010 would drastically alter this long-standing balance, profoundly impacting the villages and communities that had defined the Afrin District for generations.

VIII. Works Cited

- ¹ Wikipedia. "Afrin District." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_District
- ¹³ Middle East Forum. "Turkey's Demographic Engineering in Syria's Afrin Region: A Closer Look." *Middle East Quarterly*. Accessed.¹³<https://www.meforum.org/meg/turkeys-demographic-engineering-in-syrias-afrin-region-a-closer-look>
- ² Wikipedia. "Afrin Canton." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Canton
- ¹⁵ Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX). "Syria - Administrative Boundaries." OCHA. Accessed.¹⁵<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/cod-ab-syr>
- ¹¹ MapAction. "Syria: Aleppo Governorate Profile (April 2013)." *MapAction*. Accessed.¹¹<https://maps.mapaction.org/dataset/28183240-0071-41d3-8406-56f7b7d98957/resource/b84d21b1-88b3-42bd-9149-23eefb333573/download/snapaleppogovernorateprofileapr2013.pdf>
- ³ Wikipedia. "Afrin Region." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.³
- ⁸ Wikipedia. "Afrin, Syria." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.⁸
- ⁵⁰ The Kurdish Project. "Afrin Syria." *The Kurdish Project*. Accessed.⁵⁰<https://thekurdishproject.org/kurdistan-map/syrian-kurdistan/afrin-syria/>
- ⁵¹ Reddit. "Afrin offensive map." *r/MapPorn*. Accessed.⁵¹https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/1bpppuo/afrin_offensive_map/
- ⁴⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "تصنيف:أماكن مأهولة في منطقة عفرين" [Category:Populated places in Afrin District]. *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (Arabic)*. Accessed.⁴⁴
- ¹⁶ Violation Documentation Center in Northern Syria (VDC-NSY). "تعريب أسماء قرى مركز وناحية"

- أفرين أو إرفين - العربية إلى عفرين [Arabization of the names of the villages of the center and sub-district of Afrin or Irfin - Arabized to Afrin]. VDC-NSY. Accessed.¹⁶
- ⁵² United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). "Global Land Outlook, First Edition (Arabic)." UNCCD. Accessed.⁵²
 - ⁴⁵ Kurd Online. "أسماء القرى في عفرين المحتلة ٣٦٧ قرية" [Names of villages in occupied Afrin, 367 villages]. *Kurd Online*. Accessed.⁴⁵
 - ²⁹ Society for Threatened Peoples (GfbV). "Syrian Arab Republic: Alevis and Yazidis in Afrin threatened with extinction." *GfbV*. Accessed.²⁹
 - ⁵³ Rudaw. "Nearly half of Rojava's population fled since 2010: study." *Rudaw*. Accessed.⁵³ <https://manage.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/120620241>
 - ⁴ Peace in Kurdistan Campaign. "The file of Religions and nationalities in Afrin." *Peace in Kurdistan Campaign*. Accessed.⁴ <https://www.peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/the-file-of-religions-and-nationalities-in-afrin/>
 - ¹⁷ Tejel, Jordi. "The Complex Relations of the Syrian Kurds with the Land and the State." *Études rurales*, 2008/1 (n° 181). Accessed.¹⁷ <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesrurales/9290?lang=en>
 - ¹⁹ Wikipedia contributors. "Afrin (ilçe)" [Afrin (district)]. *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (Turkish)*. Accessed.¹⁹ [https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_\(il%C3%A7e\)](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_(il%C3%A7e))
 - ⁴³ Milli Düşünce Merkezi. "Suriye'de Türkmen Köyleri ve Ankara Antlaşması Hükümleri". *Milli Düşünce Merkezi*. Accessed.⁴³ <https://millidusunce.com/misak/suriyede-turkmen-koyleri-ve-ankara-antlasmasi-hukumleri/>
 - ⁵⁴ Kurdistan24. "Afrin'de Kürtçe köy ve meydan isimleri değiştiriliyor" [Kurdish village and square names are being changed in Afrin]. *Kurdistan24*. Accessed.⁵⁴ <https://www.kurdistan24.net/tr/story/493520>
 - ⁵⁵ TRT Haber. "Afrin'de 7 köy daha teröristlerden arındırıldı" [7 more villages in Afrin cleared of terrorists]. *TRT Haber*. Accessed.⁵⁵ <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/afrinde-7-koy-daha-teroristlerden-arindirildi-355059.html>
 - ⁵⁶ Kurdistan24. "Silahlı gruplar Afrin'de 13 kişiyi kaçırdı" [Armed groups kidnapped 13 people in Afrin]. *Kurdistan24*. Accessed.⁵⁶ <https://www.kurdistan24.net/tr/story/475556>
 - ³⁴ Wikipedia contributors. "Villages antiques du Nord de la Syrie". *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (French)*. Accessed.³⁴
 - ²⁰ Wikipedia contributors. "District d'Afrin" [Afrin District]. *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (French)*. Accessed.²⁰ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/District_d%27Afrin
 - ⁵⁷ Data Commons. "Top 100 des Villages (Syrie)". *Data Commons*. Accessed.⁵⁷
 - ³⁵ Ministère de la Culture (France). "Villages antiques de Syrie du Nord". *Archéologie*. Accessed.³⁵ <https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/fr/villages-antiques-syrie-du-nord>
 - ⁵⁸ Institut Kurde de Paris. "Afrin." *Institut Kurde de Paris*.

- Accessed.⁵⁸ <https://www.institutkurde.org/pages/pages-afrine-77669/>
- ⁹ Brunaccioni, Dominic. "Withering Branch: The Story of Afrin and its Peoples Pre & Post Operation Olive Branch." *Democratic Union Party (PYD)*. Accessed.⁹
 - ⁵ National Liberation Centre of Kurdistan (NLKA). "Destroying Afrin: The Historical Roots of Turkey's Occupation." *NLKA*. Accessed.⁵ <https://nlka.net/eng/destroying-afirin-the-historical-roots-of-turkeys-occupation/>
 - ⁶ North Press Agency. "Afrin's green cover mercilessly destroyed by Turkish-backed factions." *North Press Agency*. Accessed.⁶ <https://npasyria.com/en/83537/>
 - ⁷ The New Humanitarian. "Afrin: Kurdish Town Isolated by Siege, Geography." *The New Humanitarian*. Accessed.⁷ <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2017/01/28/afirin-kurdish-town-isolated-by-siege-politics>
 - ⁵⁹ ANF Arabic. "نص قانون التقسيمات الإدارية في الإدارة الذاتية الديمقراطية لإقليم شمال وشرق سوريا". *ANF Arabic*. Accessed.⁵⁹
 - ¹⁸ Yek Dem. "التقسيمات الإدارية والعشائرية في منطقة عفرين" [Administrative and tribal divisions in the Afrin region]. *Yek Dem*. Accessed.¹⁸ <https://yek-dem.net/ar/?p=6072>
 - ¹⁴ Syrian Modern History. "عفرين" [Afrin]. *Syrian Modern History*. Accessed.¹⁴
 - ⁶⁰ ANF Arabic. "التقسيمات الإدارية للإدارة الذاتية الديمقراطية لإقليم شمال وشرق سوريا". *ANF Arabic*. Accessed.⁶⁰
 - ⁶¹ Wikipedia contributors. "Afrin." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (Turkish)*. Accessed.⁶¹ <https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin>
 - ⁶² Wikipedia contributors. "Afrin Bölgesi". *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (Turkish)*. Accessed.⁶²
 - ⁶³ Bianet. "Afrin: Zeytin Dalı Öncesi ve Sonrası". *Bianet*. Accessed.⁶³ <https://bianet.org/haber/afirin-zeytin-dali-oncesi-ve-sonrasi-195298>
 - ⁶⁴ İNSAMER. "Şehir Savaşının Karakteri ve Afrin". *İNSAMER*. Accessed.⁶⁴ https://www.insamer.com/tr/sehir-savasinin-karakteri-ve-afirin_1183.html
 - ⁶⁵ Demir, Enes. "AFRİN TARİHİ VE ZEYTİN DALI HAREKÂTI (GÜN GÜN VAK'ALAR)". *DergiPark*. Accessed.⁶⁵ <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1973279>
 - ²⁴ LokmanAfrin.com. "ناحية راجو وقراها". *LokmanAfrin.com*. Accessed.²⁴ <http://www.lokmanafirin.com/rajo.htm>
 - ⁴⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "ناحية راجو". *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (Arabic)*. Accessed.⁴⁸
 - ⁴⁹ Wikipedia contributors. "ناحية شيخ الحديد". *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (Arabic)*. Accessed.⁴⁹
 - ²⁷ LokmanAfrin.com. "ناحية شيا وقراها". *LokmanAfrin.com*. Accessed.²⁷ <http://www.lokmanafirin.com/chiya.htm>
 - ² Wikipedia. "Afrin Canton".²
 - ¹³ Middle East Forum. "Turkey's Demographic Engineering in Syria's Afrin Region: A

Closer Look.".¹³

- ⁶⁶ ReliefWeb. "Syria: Afrin District - Facts and Figures (Updated 18 March 2018)." OCHA. Accessed.⁶⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-afrin-district-facts-and-figures-updated-18-march-2018-enar>
- ¹⁷ Tejel, Jordi. "The Complex Relations of the Syrian Kurds with the Land and the State.".¹⁷
- ⁶⁷ Cadmus, EUI Research Repository. "Turkey's Cross-Border Operations in Syria: A Political-Economic Perspective." *European University Institute*. Accessed.⁶⁷
- ⁴⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "Food Insecurity in War-Torn Syria: From Decades of Self-Sufficiency to Food Dependence." *Carnegie Endowment*. Accessed.⁴⁷ <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/06/04/food-insecurity-in-war-torn-syria-from-decades-of-self-sufficiency-to-food-dependence-pub-60320>
- ¹ Wikipedia. "Afrin District.".¹
- ⁶⁸ North Press Agency. "Syrian economy between 2000 and 2010." *North Press Agency*. Accessed.⁶⁸ <https://npasyria.com/en/60231/>
- ⁶⁹ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). "Local Economies in Syria: Fragmentation, Dependency and Warlordism." *FES*. Accessed.⁶⁹ <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/beirut/15702.pdf>
- ²² Wikipedia. "Jindires." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.²² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jindires>
- ³¹ North Press Agency. "When life halted, humanity frozen to death at Kurdish Jindires." *North Press Agency*. Accessed.³¹ <https://npasyria.com/en/92929/>
- ²³ Wikipedia. "Rajo, Syria." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.²³
- ⁷⁰ YouTube. "The Syrian Revolution: A Story of Resilience and Hope." *Orient News*. Accessed.⁷⁰
- ²¹ Wikipedia. "Bulbul, Syria." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.²¹
- ⁷¹ Britannica. "Syrian Civil War." *Britannica*. Accessed.⁷¹
- ⁷² Wikipedia. "History of Syria." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.⁷²
- ⁷³ Wikipedia. "Modern history of Syria." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.⁷³
- ⁷⁴ Cambridge University Press. "A Brief History of Syria and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood." *Muslim Brotherhood in Syria*. Accessed.⁷⁴
- ⁷⁵ Wikipedia. "Shaykh Hadid." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.⁷⁵
- ²⁸ Wikipedia. "Maabatli." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.²⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maabatli>
- ⁷⁶ The Times of Israel Blogs. "Silent Genocide: Who are the Alevis and Alawites, what is happening in Syria?" *The Times of Israel*. Accessed.⁷⁶ <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/silent-genocide-who-are-the-alevis-and-alawites-what-is-happening-in-syria/>
- ¹² Wikipedia. "Ain Dara (archaeological site)." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.¹² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_\(archaeological_site\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_(archaeological_site))

- ³³ Cambridge University Press. "The Lion Statue of Ain Dara: Revealing the Fate of an Icon of Syrian Archaeology Looted During the Conflict." *International Journal of Cultural Property*. Accessed. ³³<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-cultural-property/article/lion-statue-of-ain-dara-revealing-the-fate-of-an-icon-of-syrian-archaeology-looted-during-the-conflict/E5C39A892C631F939AF0684EC91CCCE>
- ³² Biblical Archaeology Society. "Special Report: Current Status of Tell Ain Dara Temple." *Biblical Archaeology Society*. Accessed. ³²<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/special-report-current-status-tell-ain-dara-temple/>
- ³⁸ Wikipedia. "Qibar." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed. ³⁸<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qibar>
- ⁷⁷ Wikipedia. "List of Yazidi settlements." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed. ⁷⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Yazidi_settlements
- ⁷⁸ Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ). "Yazidis in Syria: Decades of Denial of Existence and Discrimination." *STJ*. Accessed. ⁷⁸[78](#)
- ⁴² Wikipedia. "Yazidis." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed. ⁴²<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidis>
- ⁴¹ Britannica. "Yazīdī." *Britannica*. Accessed. ⁴¹<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yazidi>
- ⁷⁹ Democratic Union Party (PYD). "The Status of the Yazidis Eight Years After the Shingal Genocide." *DCKurd.org*. Accessed. ⁷⁹<https://dckurd.org/2022/05/27/the-status-of-the-yazidis-eight-years/>
- ⁸⁰ UCL Discovery. "Labour and its Discontents: The Social Life of Syrian Refugee Camps in the Biqa'a Valley, Lebanon." *UCL*. Accessed. ⁸⁰[80](#)
- ⁸¹ Berghahn Journals. "Syrian Refugees and the Politics of Waiting in the Turkish–Syrian Borderland." *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*. Accessed. ⁸¹<https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/saas/29/3/soca13081.pdf>
- ⁸² ResearchGate. "Ethnic or political cleansing? Identity, cultural heritage and demographic engineering in the Turkish-occupied territories of northern Syria." *ResearchGate*. Accessed. ⁸²[82](#)
- ⁸³ U.S. Department of State. "2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Turkey." *U.S. Department of State*. Accessed. ⁸³<https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>
- ⁸⁴ Wikipedia. "Kurds." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed. ⁸⁴<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds>
- ⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State. "Egypt 2018 Human Rights Report." *U.S. Department of State*. Accessed. ⁸⁵<https://www.state.gov/report/custom/ca03641408/>
- ² Wikipedia. "Afrin Canton." ²
- ⁸⁶ University of the Witwatersrand. "Obituaries." *Wits Alumni Relations*.

- Accessed.⁸⁶ <https://www.wits.ac.za/alumni/obituaries/obituary-content-by-year/>
- ⁸⁷ PAX for Peace. "Axed and Burned: Destruction of Syria's Olive Orchards." PAX. Accessed.⁸⁷ https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/import/2023-03/PAX_axe_d_and_burned.pdf
- ⁸⁸ International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC). "Rule of Law Assessment Report: Syria 2021." ILAC. Accessed.⁸⁸
- ²⁶ Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ). "Afrin: Shaykh Al Hadid: Intimidation and Economic Tightening." STJ. Accessed.²⁶ <https://stj-sy.org/en/afrin-shaykh-al-hadid-intimidation-and-economic-tightening/>
- ²⁵ Wikipedia. "Shaykh al-Hadid." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.²⁵
- ²⁹ Society for Threatened Peoples (GfbV). "Syrian Arab Republic: Alevis and Yazidis in Afrin threatened with extinction."²⁹
- ⁴⁰ Wikipedia. "Yazidism in Syria." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.⁴⁰
- ³⁶ Wikipedia. "Basufan." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.³⁶
- ³⁷ Abdullah, Asya, et al. "Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan." *Pluto Press*. Accessed.³⁷
- ¹ Wikipedia. "Afrin District."¹
- ⁸⁹ Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). "Syria's Civil War." CFR. Accessed.⁸⁹ <https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war>
- ³⁹ Wikipedia. "Syrian Kurdistan." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed.³⁹
- ⁹⁰ Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA). "The Kurds (2015)." *Ecoi.net*. Accessed.⁹⁰ https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1262738/90_1447760239_bfa-regiones-et-res-publicae-the-kurds-2015.pdf
- ⁹¹ Tejel, Jordi. "Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society." *Routledge*. Accessed.⁹¹ <http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/23576/1/287.pdf.pdf>
- ⁹² Artículo - Journal of Urban Research. "Africa – Why do border

Works cited

1. Afrin District - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_District
2. Afrin Canton - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Canton
3. Afrin Region - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region
4. The file of Religions and nationalities in Afrin – Peace in Kurdistan, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/the-file-of-religions-and-nationalities-in-afrin/>
5. Destroying Afrin: The Historical Roots of Turkey's Occupation - The Kurdish

- Center for Studies, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://nlka.net/eng/destroying-afirin-the-historical-roots-of-turkeys-occupation/>
6. Syria's Afrin becoming arid due to illegal logging, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://npasyria.com/en/83537/>
 7. Afrin: Kurdish Town Isolated by Siege, Geography - News Deeply, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2017/01/28/afirin-kurdish-town-isolated-by-siege-politics>
 8. Afrin, Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin,_Syria
 9. dckurd.org, accessed May 6, 2025,
https://dckurd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Withering-Branch_-The-Story-of-Afrin-and-its-Peoples-Pre-Post-Operation-Olive-Branch_-Dominic-Brunaccioni.docx-3.pdf
 10. The War in Syria: Olive oil income booms after Afrin liberation - YouTube, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfyGsRJIsOY>
 11. ALEPPO – Governorate profile - MapAction, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://maps.mapaction.org/dataset/28183240-0071-41d3-8406-56f7b7d98957/resource/b84d21b1-88b3-42bd-9149-23eefb333573/download/snapaleppogovernorateprofileapr2013.pdf>
 12. Ain Dara (archaeological site) - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025,
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_\(archaeological_site\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_(archaeological_site))
 13. Turkey's Demographic Engineering in Syria's Afrin Region: A Closer Look, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://www.meforum.org/meq/turkeys-demographic-engineering-in-syrias-afirin-region-a-closer-look>
 14. التاريخ السوري المعاصر | عفرين, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://syrmh.com/2023/01/15/%D8%B9%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86/>
 15. Syrian Arab Republic - Subnational Administrative Boundaries | Humanitarian Dataset, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/cod-ab-syr>
 16. ... تعريب أسماء قرى مركز وناحية - أفرين أو إرفين - المعربة إلى عفرين, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://vdc-nsy.com/%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B4%D9%85/%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%89-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%B2-%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%80-%D8%A3%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A3%D9%88-%D8%A5>
 17. Kurdish Sufi Spaces of Rural-Urban. Connection in Northern Syria - OpenEdition Journals, accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://journals.openedition.org/etudesrurales/9290?lang=en>
 18. ... تغيير الأسماء الجغرافية والحقائق التاريخية في جبل الكرد (عفرين), accessed May 6, 2025,
<https://yek-dem.net/ar/?p=6072>
 19. Afrin (ilçe) - Vikipedi, accessed May 6, 2025,

- [https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_\(il%C3%A7e\)](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_(il%C3%A7e))
20. District d'Afrin - Wikipédia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/District_d%27Afrin
 21. Bulbul, Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulbul,_Syria
 22. Jindires - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jindires>
 23. Rajo, Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajo,_Syria
 24. لقمان عفرين - ناحية راجو, accessed May 6, 2025, <http://www.lokmanaftrin.com/rajo.htm>
 25. Shaykh al-Hadid - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaykh_al-Hadid
 26. Afrin: Shaykh Al Hadid: Intimidation and Economic Tightening - Syrians for Truth and Justice, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://stj-sy.org/en/afrin-shaykh-al-hadid-intimidation-and-economic-tightening/>
 27. ناحية شيخ الحديد - لقمان عفرين, accessed May 6, 2025, <http://www.lokmanaftrin.com/chiya.htm>
 28. Maabatli - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maabatli>
 29. Syrian Arab Republic: Alevis and Yazidis in Afrin threatened with extinction - GfbV, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.gfbv.de/fileadmin/redaktion/UN-statements/2020_2/Syrian_Arab_Republic_Alevis_and_Yazidis_in_Afrin_threatened_with_extinction.pdf
 30. Religion in Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Syria
 31. When life halted, humanity frozen to death at Kurdish Jindires, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://npasyria.com/en/92929/>
 32. Special Report: Current Status of the Tell Ain Dara Temple - Biblical Archaeology Society, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/special-report-current-status-tell-ain-dara-temple/>
 33. The Lion Statue of Ain Dara: Revealing the Fate of an Icon of Syrian Archaeology Looted During the Conflict | International Journal of Cultural Property - Cambridge University Press, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-cultural-property/article/lion-statue-of-ain-dara-revealing-the-fate-of-an-icon-of-syrian-archaeology-looted-during-the-conflict/E5C39A892C631F939AF0684EC91CCCE>
 34. Villages antiques du Nord de la Syrie - Wikipédia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villages_antiques_du_Nord_de_la_Syrie
 35. Villages antiques de Syrie du Nord | Archéologie | culture.fr, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/fr/villages-antiques-syrie-du-nord>
 36. Basufan - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basufan>
 37. Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/1173463/mod_resource/content/1/Abdullah%2C%20Asya_Ayboga%2C%20Ercan_Biehl%2C%20Janet_Flach%2C%20Anja_Graeber

- [%2C%20David_Knapp%2C%20Michael%20-%20Revolution%20in%20Rojava.pdf](#)
38. Qibar - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qibar>
 39. Syrian Kurdistan - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Kurdistan
 40. Yazidism in Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidism_in_Syria
 41. Yazidi | History, Culture, & Religion - Britannica, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yazidi>
 42. Yazidis - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yazidis>
 43. Suriye'de Türkmen Köyleri ve Ankara Antlaşması Hükümleri - Milli Düşünce Merkezi, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://millidusunce.com/misak/suriyede-turkmen-koyleri-ve-ankara-antlasmasi-hukumleri/>
 44. تصنيف:أماكن مأهولة في منطقة عفرين - ويكيبيديا, accessed May 6, 2025, https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%81:%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%86_%D9%85%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9_%D9%81%D9%8A_%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%82%D8%A9_%D8%B9%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86
 45. أسماء القرى في عفرين المحتلة... ٣٦٧ قرية, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://kurd-online.com/%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%89-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%A3%D9%A6%D9%A7-%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/>
 46. Turkish-backed opposition shelling keeps 'a people of olives' from their land in Afrin - Syria Direct, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://syriadirect.org/turkish-backed-opposition-shelling-keeps-a-people-of-olives-from-their-land-in-afrin/>
 47. Food Insecurity in War-Torn Syria: From Decades of Self-Sufficiency to Food Dependence, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/06/04/food-insecurity-in-war-torn-syria-from-decades-of-self-sufficiency-to-food-dependence-pub-60320>
 48. ناحية راجو - ويكيبيديا, accessed May 6, 2025, https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%88
 49. ناحية شيخ الحديد - ويكيبيديا, accessed May 6, 2025, https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF
 50. Afrin Syria - The Kurdish Project, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://thekurdishproject.org/kurdistan-map/syrian-kurdistan/afrin-syria/>
 51. Afrin offensive map : r/MapPorn - Reddit, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/1bpppuo/afrin_offensive_map/
 52. الطبعة الأولى - UNCCD, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/documents/2017-09/GLO_Full_Report_lo_w_res_Arabic.pdf
 53. Nearly half of Rojava's population fled due to Syria war: Study - Rudaw, accessed

- May 6, 2025, <https://manage.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/120620241>
54. Afrin'de köy ve meydan isimleri değiştiriliyor - Kurdistan24, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/tr/story/493520>
 55. Afrin'de 7 köy daha teröristlerden arındırıldı - TRT Haber, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/afrinde-7-koy-daha-teroristlerden-arindirildi-355059.html>
 56. Silahlı gruplar Afrin'de 13 kişiyi kaçırdı - Kurdistan24, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/tr/story/475556>
 57. Classement par Population - Villages (Syrie) - Classements de lieux - Data Commons, accessed May 6, 2025, https://datacommons.org/ranking/Count_Person/Village/country/SYR?h=wikidata%2FQ305241&hl=fr
 58. L'invasion turque d'Afrine | Pages 77670-77679 - Institut kurde de Paris, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.institutkurde.org/pages/pages-afrine-77669/>
 59. نص قانون التقسيمات الإدارية في الإدارة الذاتية الديمقراطية لإقليم شمال وشرق سوريا - ANF, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://anfarabic.com/%D8%A2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA/ns-qanwn-altqsymat-aladaryt-fy-aladart-aldhatyt-aldymqratyt-laqlym-shmal-wshrq-swrya-104897>
 60. مجلس الشعوب الديمقراطي يعدل قانون التقسيمات الإدارية في إقليم شمال وشرق سوريا - ANF, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://anfarabic.com/%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86/-105322>
 61. Afrin - Vikipedi, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin>
 62. Afrin Bölgesi - Vikipedi, accessed May 6, 2025, https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_B%C3%B6lgesi
 63. Afrin: Zeytin Dalı Öncesi ve Sonrası - Bianet, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://bianet.org/haber/afrin-zeytin-dali-oncesi-ve-sonrasi-195298>
 64. Şehir Savaşının Karakteri ve Afrin - İNSAMER, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.insamer.com/tr/sehir-savasinin-karakteri-ve-afrin_1183.html
 65. TÜRKİYE'NİN SÜRİYE POLİTİKASI BAĞLAMINDA TSK'NİN SÜRİYE'DEKİ SINIR ÖTESİ HAREKÂTLARININ NEDENLERİ VE SONUÇ - DergiPark, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1973279>
 66. Syria - Afrin District - Facts and Figures (Updated: 18 March 2018) [EN/AR] - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-afrin-district-facts-and-figures-updated-18-march-2018-enar>
 67. The Turkish Intervention in Northern Syria: One Strategy, Discrepant Policies, accessed May 6, 2025, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/69657/MED_RR_2021_01s.pdf
 68. Syrian economy before 2011 - North press agency, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://npasyria.com/en/60231/>
 69. Local Economies in Syria - Divisions and Dependencies - Bibliothek der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/beirut/15702.pdf>

70. From Graffiti to Liberation: The Story of Syria's Revolution - YouTube, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhCynTTPZKo>
71. Syrian Civil War - Britannica, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>
72. History of Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Syria
73. Modern history of Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_history_of_Syria
74. A Brief History of Syria and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (Chapter 1), accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/muslim-brotherhood-in-syria/brief-history-of-syria-and-the-syrian-muslim-brotherhood/6CD455531E0388695618C2AE4B78FACB>
75. Shaykh Hadid - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaykh_Hadid
76. Silent Genocide: Who are the Alevis and Alawites? What is happening in Syria? - The Blogs, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/silent-genocide-who-are-the-alevis-and-alawites-what-is-happening-in-syria/>
77. List of Yazidi settlements - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Yazidi_settlements
78. Decades of Denial of Existence and Discrimination - The Yazidi minority in Syria is subject to multi-fold oppression. Yazidis are denied basic religious rights and constitutional recognition - Syrians for Truth and Justice, accessed May 6, 2025, https://stj-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Final_English_Yazidis-in-Syria_Decades-of-Denial-of-Existence-and-Discrimination.pdf
79. The Status of the Yazidis: Eight Years on from the ISIS Genocide | - Washington Kurdish Institute, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://dckurd.org/2022/05/27/the-status-of-the-yazidis-eight-years/>
80. labour and family in the Syrian refugee camps of the Bqa'a valley, Lebanon - UCL Discovery, accessed May 6, 2025, https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10163359/4/Cassani_10163359_%20Thesis_id_removed.pdf
81. Syrian refugees and the politics of waiting in a Turkish border town - Berghahn Journals, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/saas/29/3/soca13081.pdf>
82. Ethnic or political cleansing? Identity, cultural heritage and demographic engineering in the Turkish-occupied territories of northern Syria - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384725220_Ethnic_or_political_cleansing_identity_cultural_heritage_and_demographic_engineering_in_the_Turkish-occupied_territories_of_northern_Syria
83. 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Turkey - State Department, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/>

[turkey/](#)

84. Kurds - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds>
85. Human Rights Reports: Custom Report Excerpts - United States Department of State, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/report/custom/ca03641408/>
86. Obituary content by year - Wits University, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.wits.ac.za/alumni/obituaries/obituary-content-by-year/>
87. Axed & Burned | PAX, accessed May 6, 2025, https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/import/2023-03/PAX_axed_and_burned.pdf
88. Syria 2021 - International Legal Assistance Consortium, accessed May 6, 2025, <http://ilacnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ILAC-Rule-of-Law-Assessment-Syria-2021-.pdf>
89. Syria's Civil War: The Descent Into Horror - Council on Foreign Relations, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war>
90. THE KURDS | Ecoi.net, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1262738/90_1447760239_bfa-regiones-et-res-publiae-the-kurds-2015.pdf
91. Syria's Kurds: History, politics and society - National Academic Digital Library of Ethiopia, accessed May 6, 2025, <http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/23576/1/287.pdf.pdf>
92. Border Markets: An Introduction - OpenEdition Journals, accessed May 6, 2025, <https://journals.openedition.org/articulo/2532>