

Burj Hammoud - Locality Profile

A. Basic Information:

Burj Hammoud (برج حمّود) is a Lebanese city and municipality situated in the Matn District, an administrative division of the Mount Lebanon Governorate located 4 kilometers Northeast of Central Beirut.¹

The origin of Burj Hammoud can be traced back to two separate tales: The first story talks about a man named “Hammoud” who surmounted the difficult task of building a 2 level house amid vast groves and shrubbery near the slums of Mar Doumit Church in the Nabaa district. His house still exists today as the famous Burj Hammoud, or “The Tower of Hammoud.” The second tale refers to a watchtower located near the Beirut River and Burj Hammoud Roman bridge. This watchtower was said to be built during the fifties to ensure security in the surrounding neighborhoods.² The area surrounding the tower, or “burj” in Arabic, then became known as Burj Hammoud, with the origin of “Hammoud” still being unknown.

Burj Hammoud is divided into seven major neighborhoods: Dora, Nabaa, al-Naher river, Sader, Anbari, Mar Doumit, and Ghilan.³ It is surrounded by the neighborhoods of Dora, Karantina, Sin el-Fil and Achrafieh⁴ and is elevated 40 meters above sea level with a surface area of 2.19 km².⁵ In 2005, Burj Hammoud’s municipality estimated the range of its population to be between 120,000 and 150,000 residents⁶ making it one of the most densely populated districts in the Middle East.⁷ The town is known for its high population of Armenian residents which flooded Burj Hammoud at the beginning of the 20th century as refugees from the Medz Yeghern, Armenian for “the Great Crime”.⁸ The Medz Yeghern was the systematic extermination of the

¹ Data center on local development in Lebanon, June 2015, available at: <http://www.localiban.org/article4502.html> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

² Rindala Jabbour, “Burj Hammoud: The Lebanese Formula in the street”, *Al-Akhbar*, March 4th, 2009, available at: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/86474> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

³ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Georges Krikorian, deputy Mayor of Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 14th 2015, Burj Hammoud.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Data center on local development in Lebanon, June 2015, op.cit.

⁶ Susan Wilson, “Burj Hammoud: Lebanon’s Little Armenia”, *The Daily Star*, April, 24, 2015, available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Apr-24/295589-burj-hammoud-lebanons-little-armenia.aspx> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

NB: There was no studies or statistics after that date, the deputy mayor proclaimed that the cause is the lack of resources at the municipality of Burj Hammoud.

⁷ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Georges Krikorian, deputy Mayor of Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 14th 2015.

⁸ Ibid.

Ottoman Empire's Armenian population in modern day Turkey from 1915 to 1923.⁹ Seeking refuge, Armenians fled to Lebanon and were given permission to build on Burj Hammoud's swamp land. With time, Burj Hammoud began to develop and soon became an independent municipality in the early 1950s.¹⁰

Although Burj Hammoud has a majority Armenian population, it also has a notable Lebanese Shi'a Muslim, Lebanese Christian, and Palestinian population.¹¹ Furthermore, according to the UNHCR's statistics, the municipality of Bourj Hammoud hosts around 19,477 registered Syrians.¹² Notably, the largest families in Burj Hammoud are Abi Saleh, Abdullah, Kahwaji, Bezdikian, Abounayan, Moundjian.¹³

B. Political and Institutional Context:

The municipality is a member of the Federation of Matn El-Chemali El-Sahli and Aoussat Municipalities.¹⁴

Contact details: Phone Number: 01/256404 - 256 155 - 6, Fax Number: 01/ 260 156.¹⁵

Website: <http://www.bourjhammoud.gov.lb>

Address of the municipality: Armenia Street - Burj Hammoud Place - Municipality of Burj Hammoud - Matn District.¹⁶

The municipality of Burj Hammoud was founded in 1952.¹⁷

Presently, it has 21 municipality members working in various social and economic fields such as health, education, agriculture, media, environment.¹⁸

In the last municipal election of 2008, Burj Hammoud counted approximately 39,000 registered

⁹ The Armenian Genocide & Genocidal Awareness Website, Robert Fisk, "The Great War for Civilization" (2005), available at: <http://thegreatcrime.weebly.com/> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

¹⁰ Susan Wilson, "Burj Hammoud: Lebanon's Little Armenia", *The Daily Star*, April, 24, 2015, available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Apr-24/295589-burj-hammoud-lebanons-little-armenia.aspx> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

¹¹ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Priest Mekerdirj Kichichian, Armenian Diocese in Burj Hammoud, September 15th 2015.

¹² UNHCR, "Lebanon Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorates. Distributed of the registered Syrian refugees at the Cadastral Level", August 29th, 2013, available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=2777> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

¹³ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Jean-Missak Moundjian Mokhtar in Burj Hammoud, September 15th 2015, Burj Hammoud.

¹⁴ Data center on local development in Lebanon, June 2015, available at: <http://www.localiban.org/article4502.html> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Data center on local development in Lebanon, June 2015, available at: <http://www.localiban.org/article4502.html> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

¹⁷ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Georges Krikorian, deputy Mayor of Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 14th 2015.

¹⁸ Ibid.

voters of which only 13,000 actually voted.¹⁹

Municipality's premises: Two floors are currently in use, including a large room available for meetings.²⁰

Current and past municipal member, names and positions:

Name	Position
<i>Antranik Maserlan</i>	<i>Mayor</i>
<i>Georges Gregorian</i>	<i>Vice Mayor</i>
<i>Jean-Missak Moumdjian</i>	<i>Mokhtar</i>
<i>Elie Abou Waked</i>	<i>Mokhtar</i>
<i>Henri Naja Bou Khalik</i>	<i>Mokhtar</i>
<i>Zarah Sirob Hagop</i>	<i>Mokhtar</i>
<i>Georges Aaris</i>	<i>Previous Mayor</i>
<i>Hagop Hajian</i>	<i>Previous Mayor</i>
<i>Zakaria Megherian</i>	<i>Previous Mayor</i>
<i>Tsoulak Tuterian</i>	<i>Previous Mayor</i>

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State Institutions:

Type	Location
<i>Police station</i>	<i>In the municipality building</i>
<i>Security forces institution</i>	<i>Nabaa, Burj Hammoud</i>

¹⁹ Rindala Jabbour, "Burj Hammoud: The Lebanese Formula in the street", *Al-Akhbar*, March 4th, 2009, available at: <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/86474> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

²⁰ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Zoghrab Aznikian, Key informant and policeman in Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 9th 2015, Burj Hammoud.

²¹ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Jean-Missak Moumdjian Mokhtar in Burj Hammoud, September 15th 2015, Burj Hammoud.

<i>Army barracks and location</i>	<i>Karantina, Burj Hammoud</i>
<i>Union of municipalities</i>	<i>Dbaye - Matn near Emile Lahoud Stadium</i>
<i>Social service center</i>	<i>Burj Hammoud</i>

C. Economic Context

Key economic activities

Burj Hammoud is considered a vibrant commercial and industrial hub in the North East of Beirut and is known for its street market which stretches over a distance of 1km²² The market is composed of local industries and small shops that shape the city’s urban landscape. Specifically, Burj Hammoud is known for selling remarkable goods such as gold jewelry, leather and food products, especially spices and nuts. The reason behind these specialities lies in the ancestry and origins of the city whose founders also worked in these industries.

Notably, Armenian culture has been kept alive in Burj Hammoud through “cultural associations, religious centers, schools, sports clubs” and other institutions.²³

D. Educational Context:

Burj Hammoud encompasses many Lebanese schools as well as Armenian schools which promote Armenian culture and language.

Name of the schools in Burj Hammoud
Al-Inaya School

²² Unipub Adversing agency, available at: http://www.bourjhamoud.com/index.php?page=subcategory&code_id=52 [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

²³ Susan Wilson, “Burj Hammoud: Lebanon’s Little Armenia”, *The Daily Star*, April, 24, 2015, available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Apr-24/295589-burj-hammoud-lebanons-little-armenia.aspx> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

School of the 40 Martyrs
Al-Salam School
Al-Tarraki Secondary School
Al-Wardiya
Apkarian School
Armenian Evangelical Chamelian Tatigian School
Armenian Evangelical School
Atelier D'Art (Art Education Center)
Bourj Hamoud Al-Ahlia School
Aksor Kassarjian School
Kahl
L'Oasis De L'Esperance
L.A.T.C. Technical School
Levon & Sofia Hagopian Secondary School
Lycée National Libanais
Mesrobian Technical School
Sanabel School
St. Agnes School
St. Joseph School
Torossian School
Vahan Tekeyan

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²⁴ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Priest Mekerdij Kichichian, Armenian Diocese in Burj Hammoud, September 15th 2015, Burj Hammoud/ Unipub Adversing agency, available at: http://www.bourjhamoud.com/index.php?page=subcategory&code_id=52 [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

The number of schools and students in each of the private and public sector in Burj Hammoud in 2005²⁵

Public Schools	5
Students schooled in the public schools	985
Private Schools	12
Students schooled in the private schools	1765

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E. Health and Health Services

Name/type	Person in charge
<i>Health social and medical centers</i>	<i>Armenian Relief Cross in Nabaa</i>
	<i>Dimishiyan</i>
	<i>Mar Mansour</i>
	<i>Mar Youssef</i>
	<i>Karakozian</i>
	<i>Araxi Boulghourjian socio medical center</i>
<i>Hospital</i>	<i>Karantina Hospital</i>

²⁵ Data center on local development in Lebanon, Central Administration of Statistics (Lebanese Presidency of the Council of Ministers) - Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR), June 2015, available at: <http://www.localiban.org/article4502.html> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

²⁶Ibid.

F. Social and Leisure Context

Armenian social associations are very prevalent in Burj Hammoud , hoping to promote and preserve their culture and heritage.

Leisure spaces

Type	Notes
Internet cafe, billiards space, sports space, cafe, etc	Burj Hammoud has a large number of leisure space in public and private communities and institutions.
Public garden	Two Public gardens one in Nabaa and other near the Armenian Housing.
Local Cultural Center	There is no cultural centers in the area ²⁷
Football court	Established by the Municipality

Religious institutions²⁸:

Name of Churches	Name of Mosques
Armenian Evangelical Church	Farhad Mosque for Chiite
Armenian Apostolic Catholicate	El Husseiniye - Nabaa
St Vartan Armenian Orthodox Church	
Church al Moukhalles	

²⁷ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Priest Mekerdij Kichichian, Armenian Diocese in Burj Hammoud, September 15th 2015, Burj Hammoud.

²⁸Ibid.

St Maroun Church	
Church of 40 martyrs	
al Saydeh Church for Armenian Orthodox	
St. Joseph Church	
St Charbel Church in Nabaa	
National Evangelical Church	
Shamelian Evangelical Church	

Community-based organizations & Cooperatives

To support local development in Burj Hammoud, many associations have been established.

Name	Field
The Armenian Relief Cross in Lebanon ²⁹	Relief , rehabilitation and development of the Lebanese Armenian community and the Lebanese society at large.
Armenian Catholic Non-profit	Non-profit Organization
جمعية الشعلة	Nursery
جمعية اسرة التأخي الخيرية الثقافية	Socio Medical Centre
الجمعية الخيرية للنساء المصابات بعاهاات	Centre for Special needs
HKCC Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation International organization	Socio Medical Centre
AFED Armenian Fund for Economic Development Community organization without external affiliation (indigenous)	Socio Economic Development

²⁹ Armenian Relief Cross of Lebanon Organization, available at: <http://lokh-arcl.org/eng/about-arcl/> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

ZVARTNOTZ Lebanese Armenian Community Social Workers' Union National organization without external affiliation (indigenous)	Relief , rehabilitation and development
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Past and existing UN work in the village and region: Although there has never been any direct UN projects based in the Burj Hammoud Municipality, the UNDP has recently established a new office in the Municipality to tackle local development goals.³⁰

G. Infrastructure

Although the city has a thriving industry, Burj Hammoud suffers from a large number of environmental issues due to its location at the edge of Beirut and its lack of infrastructure. Major risks concerning the city’s infrastructure are seismic occurrences, flood and technological vulnerabilities.³¹

Water	The Municipality is working with specialists on a project to establish a Water Filtration Station. ³²
Sewage	Burj Hammoud has canals for water sanitation which expel into the Beirut river. The Municipality is working on an ongoing treatment to build new canals. ³³
Garbage collection	Burj Hammoud Landfill was known as a main center to discard the waste of Mount Lebanon and Beirut area, but this landfill was closed in 1997. ³⁴ In order to solve the present conflict of waste management a decision

³⁰ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Georges Krikorian, deputy Mayor of Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 14th, 2015, Burj Hammoud.

³¹ Ghislaine Verrhiest, Patrick Fourmigue, Bernard Guézo, Raffi Kokhoglanian, “Local authorities taking account of the major urban risks “From a case study to a global approach”, November 2005, available at: http://www.euromedina.com/bibliotheque_fichiers/Rapport_Bourj_Hammoud_en.pdf [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

³² Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Georges Krikorian, deputy Mayor of Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 14th, 2015, Burj Hammoud.

³³Ibid.

³⁴ Habib Maalouf, “The minister is not convinced”, Assafir Newspaper, April 28th,2015, available at: <http://mobile.assafir.com/Article/424302> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

	<p>was issued by the prime minister to reopen the historical Landfill in Burj Hammoud.³⁵ Meanwhile the You Stink civil protesters and others from many campaigns are protesting the government’s decision to temporarily reopen the Burj Hammoud landfill stating that, “Burj Hammoud is not a dump.”³⁶</p> <p>The municipality is currently collecting the rubbish and throwing it in the Beirut river. Due to low expertise and underfunding, the municipality is finding it difficult to resolve this costly problem.³⁷ Pollution problems are also increasing due to burning garbage in many localities in Burj Hammoud.</p> <p>Mr. Krekorian revealed that there are many proposals and projects that the municipality members are studying and that the deadlines are close to submission.³⁸ These environmental issues require fast treatment due to the devastating effect that the waste crises may have on groundwater, drinking water and general public health.</p>
<p>Transportation/road network</p>	<p>Due to the great population in the city, and because Burj Hammoud hosts comparatively cheaper housing options than its surrounding areas, the streets of Burj Hammoud are often crowded with cars and buses, contributing to pollution.</p>

[Last updated on September 24, 2015]

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶“Young men stage sit in in Bourj Hammoud”, *National News Agency*, September 18th, 2015, available at: <http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/49920/Young-men-stage-sit-in-in-Bourj-Hammoud> [last accessed on September 24th, 2015]

³⁷ Interview by the Lebanon Support team with Mr Georges Krikorian, deputy Mayor of Burj Hammoud Municipality, September 14th 2015, Burj Hammoud.

³⁸ Ibid.