

## **RCHAF VILLAGE PROFILE**

### **1. LOCATION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Rchaf is a village located in the district of Bint Jbeil a city in the Southern Governorate of Lebanon (one of the eight governorates). It sits on a hill interspersed with small meadows and overlooking the villages of Sarbine and Debel.

Rchaf is around 106 kilometres away from Beirut and 8 km from the centre of the Caza'. Its elevation is around 747 meters above sea level with an average annual rainfall of 600-700 mm.

The village covers an area of around 6.8 square kilometers.

Rchaf falls is bordered by the towns of Sarbine, Debel, Al Tiri, Beit Leif and Hadatha.

### **2. POPULATION**

The registered population of Rchaf is around 4000. There are only 900 inhabitants in winter in the village, while the number rises to around 2000 people during the summer. The number of registered voters is around 1900 voters.

The village witnessed internal displacement of large number of its inhabitants, to Tyr, Sarafand and Al Bazoriya in the South and to several places in Beirut (Ouzai, Hay Al Seloum, Bir Hassan and Rwais)..

Additionally, a very few number totalling around 250 of the village inhabitants migrated to other countries such as Germany, Switzerland and Benin.

#### *2.1 Age Groups*

52 percent of the population are less than 21 years old.

#### *2.2 Labour Force*

Unemployment in Rchaf affects around 20 young men. Agriculture including livestock is the dominant economic activity as it absorbs around 86 per cent of the labour force, while liberal professions, crafts and trade account for 14 per cent of the labour force.

### 3. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1 AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

A small portion of Rchaf is considered arable land due to its rocky character. It is worth mentioning that the municipality and Agricultural Cooperative Association in Rchaf started a process of land reclamation, which led to the increase of cultivated land in olives from around 200,000 square meters to 600,000 square meters.

The most common cultivated products within this area are tobacco and grains. Agro-food production is limited to the production of olive oil which is processed by one oil press in the village. Olive oil production is consumed locally, in view of the limited quantities produced and since the cultivation of olive trees is recent.

#### 3.2 LIVESTOCK

Residents in Rchaf are breeding cows and goats. The size of the livestock amounts to 9 cows and 2200 goats in total (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Livestock in Rchaf**

Cows	Goats
9 heads owned by 2 families	2200 owned by 5 families

It is important to note that the village had in the past around 15 families who owned and raised goats. The number dropped as several families were displaced due to the wars.

The village produces an average of around 1000 kilograms of milk per day. The milk which is also processed in yaourt (laban) is sold to the shops in neighbouring villages.

#### 3.3 CRAFTS AND TRADE SECTORS

The crafts and trade in Rchaf provide their services not only to the village but mainly to neighbouring villages. They can be classified as follows (table 2).

**Table 2: Trades and Crafts in Rchaf**

Kind of Trade/Craft	Number of businesses
Metal	3
Aluminum Industries	2
Stone –Concrete Factories	2
Car Mechanics	4
Concrete Carpenters	7
Agricultural tractors	7

#### **4. EDUCATION**

100 % of the school children in Rchaf had primary education.

The village's school has been officially closed this year due to the lack of sufficient number of enrolled students. Parents on the other hand, send their children to schools in the villages of Haris, Kafra and Bint Jbeil. The commuting costs to these villages are around L.L 40,000 and L.L 60,000 per month, depending on the distance to the schools.

School dropout in Rchaf reaches around 30 students who are under the age of 18 years old.

#### **5. HEALTH STATUS**

Rchaf has a health clinic which has been funded and built by the European Union, and it is managed by the municipality.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

Rchaf experiences, like other villages in the Kaza, several environmental problems. Rchaf is not linked to water networks for drinking water, but relies on water collected from the rains. Villagers buy also water from one artesian well that is provided by the agricultural cooperative. There is also absence of a public sewage network. Solid wastes are usually collected three times per week and are disposed in one place, then burned without treatments to the hazards emitted and with no considerations to the environments.

#### **7. RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEARBY VILLAGES AND THE ROLE OF THE IMMIGRANTS**

Rchaf has built trade relationships with the neighbouring villages and businesses, and relies on them to market most of its dairy production.

Additionally, immigrants provide their parents with support specifically by providing funds to rebuild and rehabilitate their houses.

#### **8. INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES**

Rchaf is governed by a municipal council, and is currently administrated by 12 members elected by the locals of the area. The council is assisted by several committees composed of locals from the village. There are also 4 contracted employees working in the municipality. The municipal council rents its headquarters.

Additionally, Rchaf has some associations and groups as follows:

- Agricultural Cooperative Association
- UNDP Youth Gathering