

As a civil coalition of individuals and non-governmental organizations invested in the safeguarding of Beirut's livability, we have come together to advocate for the protection of the city's sea-front façade as a shared-space, open access zone to be used by all city-dwellers and visitors in a civil, yet unscripted form. We are propelled by a shared love of the city in its social and ecological diversity but also an uncontrollable urge to enshrine democratic and inclusive processes of decision-making in the production and organization of the everyday spaces of Beirut. We take issue with those calling Beirut "an ugly city" and mourning its once beautiful face. Instead, we perceive current dis*xgurations as momentary embodiments of the greed that has motivated building processes in the city. **Our message is directed to all city dwellers; we invite everyone to join us in struggling for her/his right to the city, a city where private capital cannot trump the desires of the urban majorities in enlarging and improving the city's shared commons**

1 PROVIDING CONTEXT

Daliet el-Rawsheh* ...

In Arabic, Dalieh refers to any plant that hangs down, typically used to roof terraces where families, neighbors and friends gather to mark the end of the workday during most of the year. In Beirut, Dalieh refers to a vast terrain that extends across from the city's emblematic Sakhret el-Rawsheh, and slopes gently towards the sea.

For decades, Daliet- Beirut or Daliet el-Rawsheh has acted as an **open-access shared space for a wide variety of city dwellers**. Families and friends found in this large green space a **natural destination** for end-of week picnics, lovers a quiet and idyllic setting, sea-goers a strategic swimming and fishing destination, and communities a xx landscape for the celebration of communal events.

This urban commons has also hosted a **vibrant informal economy** of boat touring, fishing, popular restaurants, peddlers, photographers, and others who have animated the life of this unique area of the city.

... threatened by development

This communal space survives amidst the private take-over of the city's coast that has turned lush sandy and rocky beaches into enclosed, high-end resorts. **These transformations** are primarily **facilitated by the history of property formation** in the city as well as **changes in the zoning and building regulations**. Since the mid-1960s, pressure by building developers and the propertied elite have reversed the full provisions against building in this zone and allowed increasingly intensive building coefficients that have reached a

The site has also been recognized for its **ecological wealth**, a unique landscape ensemble extending naturally from/to the monumental breakaway rocks that have granted their name to the city district "Rawsheh".

It includes a **rich diversity of topographical and geological features**: coastal cliffs on the landside and rock islands, protruding stone terraces and natural pool enclaves, all valuable habitats for native plants, insects, birds and marine fauna in an uncommon ecological equilibrium that has prompted many scientists and researchers to identify it as a prime area for protection in Lebanon.

whooping 60% in some cases and allowed for the privatization of areas typically used as public spaces. Thus, city dwellers are increasingly confined to the 4m wide sidewalk of Avenue des Français, the main artery that runs along the city's sea-front, while access and visibility to the sea is obscured by an increasing number of **private developments consistently serving the needs of the high-heeled urban dwellers and visitors at the expense of the urban majorities**.

* from French *rocher* meaning **rock**, but perhaps also Aramaic *rosh* and *ras* meaning **head**.

Daliet-Beirut doesn't escape the threat of development: In June 2014, a newly installed **fence bars public access to the sea-shore**, signaling the eminent and radical transformation of this shared open-access space. This follows and enshrines the **displacement of most site users** and the erasure of the physical infrastructure that once sustained their activities: the fishermen boats are gone, their restaurants dismantled, as is the sounding of the children's laughter that until recently melted in the crashing waves. Only scattered candy wrappers recall the active life that once used to be while **large cement blocks stacked by the seaside** forewarn of the looming destruction of sea-life that accompanies this type of developments...

Ironically, the Municipality of Beirut that had never overlooked public practices in the site despite decades of intensive uses has recently set-up a **security booth that actively monitors and constrains the activities of those who choose to defy the fence and reclaim their access to the sea**, a right in fact enshrined in the Lebanese law.

But there is more: information leaked to activists indicates that several offices have been commissioned, invariably by **private parties, to propose urban and building regulations for the area**, conduct impact

studies required by the law, and formulate actual recreational and commercial developments.

Meanwhile, **building and zoning regulations were altered yet another time in April 2014**, making it possible to build most of the area.

Finally, a **dubious process of privatization** has concentrated ownership since the mid-1990s into the hand of two private companies, both held by the same high-profile politician. **Private land holdings have also encroached over the public maritime domain** through dubious processes that are obscured by missing property records.

In short, the "growth machine" is unleashed, rendering claims over the public nature of this space urgent.

2 About the **CAMPAIGN**

The “Civil Campaign to Preserve Daliet el-Raouche”



The Civil Campaign to Preserve Daliet el-Raouche is a coalition of individuals and non-governmental organizations who have come together since 13 March 2014 in order to advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the role of Dalieh as an open-access shared space for all city dwellers and visitors. Partners in the coalition share a strong commitment to the preservation of Beirut's shared spaces, ecological and cultural diversity as the pillars of the city's livability.

The Coalition encompasses civilians, parents and children, young and old, who are committed to the protection of Beirut's shared spaces, particularly its sea-front façade as the asset to maintain the livability of the city. It includes individuals, environmental, cultural and civil groups working through legal and civil means to protect the Dalieh as a shared, free and unrestricted area for the people.

The campaign began in November 2013 through a petition that was published on social media. This evolved into a campaign under the slogan “Lift Your Warshé Off Our Rawshé” (warshé Arabic for construction site).

Throughout this past year, we've worked on sending official letters to relevant ministries, organizing activities in Dalieh, preparing legal and environmental research and producing slogans, visuals and videos to promote this space. We've also archived old photographs of the site, published press releases and filed lawsuits.

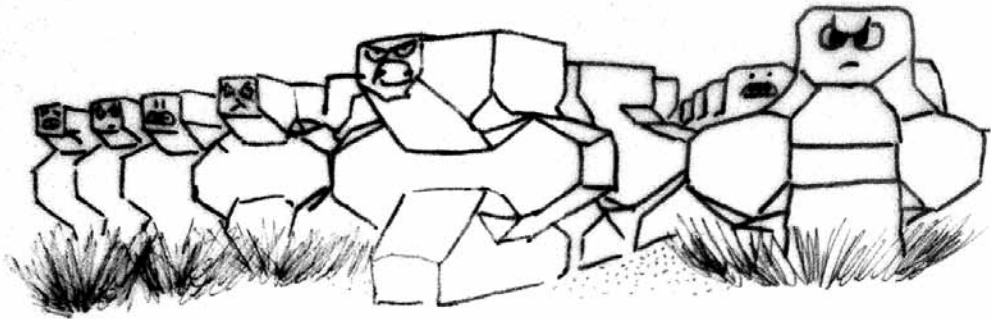


Measures to restrict access to Dalieh
by the real estate companies in collaboration
with the municipality and other state actors

Huge Cement Blocks

2012 Huge cement blocks were placed on site by Ministry of Public Works for the purpose of enlarging the port. The project was discontinued when the companies that own plots of Dalieh intervened, but the blocks remain occupying a large surface area of Dalieh.

15 June 2014 Intervention of the Angry Dolosse Army.



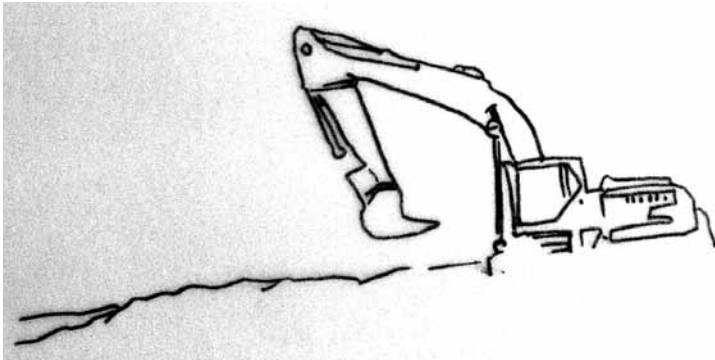
Notices

September 2013 Urgent court cases were filed against the fishermen to evict their informal houses in Dalieh

7 October 2013 Fishermen and their families demonstarted several times with slogans such as: “The sea of Dalieh is no longer found, but on maps”, “We are not drug dealers, nor money smugglers, all we want is to make a living: poor fishermen”, “We don’t want brokers negotiating over our children’s living”

Eviction

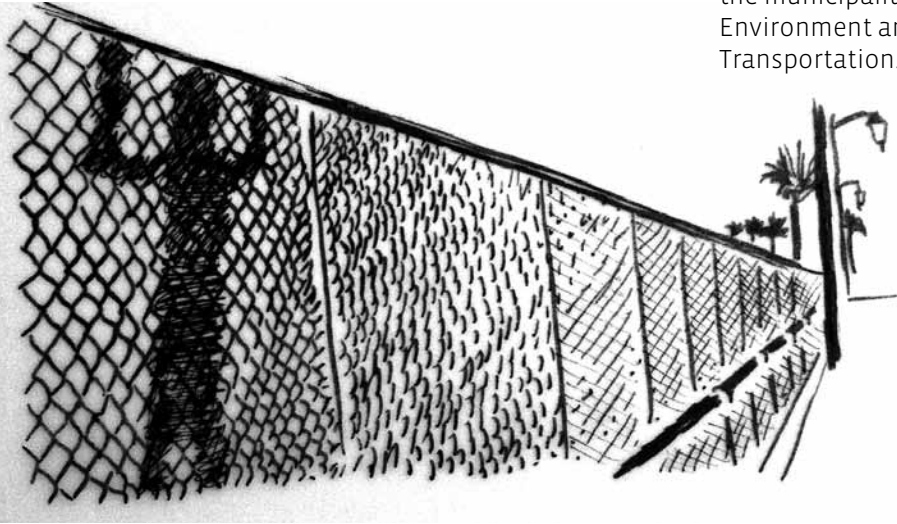
March 2014 Eviction of Fishermen started and most of their houses demolished, after most negotiations over compensation were settled. Some fishermen received exubernt amounts from the real estate companies that own Dalieh in order to evict. Other cases are still in court.



Fencing

April 2014 The real estate companies started installing a 377m fence at the level of the corniche, stretching from Mövenpick Hotel to the rock of Raouche. Later on, barbed wires were added to the fence

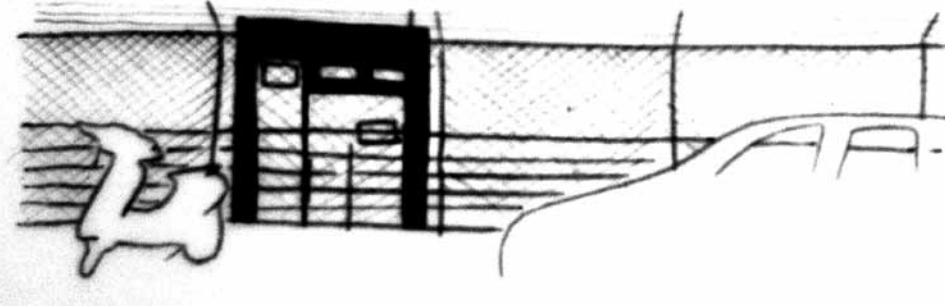
1 June 2014 Objection to the fence through a call for intervention during an event organized at Dalieh under the slogan «An encounter to recclaim public space», and the issuance of a press statement. In parallel, objection letters were addressed to the municipality, the governor, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation.



Security Booth

June 2014 Setting up a municipal security booth on ‘private property’ to safeguard the fence, after the mayor of Beirut had repeatedly declared that municipal authority ends with the beginning of the Corniche’s rail.

8 June 2014 During an event organized in front of Raouche on the International Day of the Ocean, and in the prescence of Beirut’s head of municiplaity and media coverage, a huge banner was put up from Dalieh (facing Raouche) that read: Raouche is our seafront, while Dalieh is our shared sapce, lift your real estate project off our Raouche”



Roadway Barrier

July 2014 A roadway barrier was installed by the Internal Security on the main vehicle entrance to Dalieh next to Mövenpick.

26 June 2014 During a live broadcasting of an episode of LBC’s Kalam al-Nas in Downtown Biel’s “Dream Real Estate Expo”, 4 people intervned with banners that read “The dream of our city does not lie in real estate development, rather in public spaces and open access to the sea.” “The dream of the 3% are producing nightmares for 90% of the people”, “80% of the Lebanese households don’t even earn the minimum required salary to access a subsidized bank loan”

The Take Over of the Coast by Private Exclusive Development

Exceptional Regulation

In parallel to the land purchases that took place in Dalieh by real estate companies, law 402 was issued in 1995 to enable land owners with a plot larger than 20,000 square meters to double their total exploitation factor and quadruple their surface exploitation if a hotel is to be built.

The so-called «exceptional» law was valid for five years, and was accompanied with long debates in parliament. It was prolonged again in 2001 for another 5 years.

However, on April 24 2014 the effect of Law 402 was prolonged for 19 years and was passed without any objection from any parliamentary member.

Theft of Public Land

Historical and contemporary property records and maps (such as the French Plan Danger de Beyrouth) demonstrate that property boundaries in Dalieh have been modified to encroach on the maritime public domain, in contravention of the law. In other words, a large section of Dalieh has been illegally privatized, including the fishermen port that until recently secured the livelihood of over 75 families.

The official French 1926 cadatral map was not found in the official land registry in Beirut. If revealed, this document would act as an ultimate proof to the theft of public property and cadastral forging.

Commissioning Design Offices for a Project Development

There has been clues that indicate that several design offices have been commissioned to develop a design for a projected development in Dalieh, the most recent being the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). No matter the design, any project in Dalieh within the existing usurped legal framework will serve the interests of a handful of policy-makers/property-owners who are blatantly manipulating the law to their own advantage, at the detriment of the city, its natural environment, and its dwellers.

Actions to Preserve Dalieh as a Shared-Access Open Space

DGU Declaration

The Higher Council for Urban Planning has the power to refuse any exception to the law in a specific site. It is also capable of proposing new legislation and planning for the area to preserve it.

On two TV interviews (Tele Liban and LBCI during November 2014), the head of the Directorate General of Urban Planning Elias Tawil declared that he will not permit any exceptions to the law for a project development in Dalieh, and he called upon the mayor of Beirut Bilal Hamad to propose a framework to protect Dalieh as a public space for the DGU to implement it.

Ministry of Environment)

After several meeting with the ministry, the minister of Environment addressed a letter to ?? in order to categorize Dalieh as a «natural area»

Law Suit

The campaign, through two of its member NGOs, filed a law suit against Decree 169 of 1989 which removed state protection from “zone 10” of Beirut’s master plan. Up until 1989, “Zone 10” had been exempt from any development by the 1966 decree 4810 that had allowed the exploitation of maritime public domain by property owners who hold land adjacent to the sea, with the exception of Zone 10. Furthermore, the decree abolished the article in Decree

Competition

In an effort to solicit alternative visions for Dalieh, and to advocate for inclusive, ecologically responsible, and socially diverse urban futures, the campaign put together an ideas-competition inviting professionals and/or citizens to forward visions for possible spatial, programmatic, and institutional arrangements in the area of Dalieh. The proposals seek to open a debate about public space and act as advocacy tools.

University Talks

In an effort to widen the scope of public engagement with the cause to reclaim Dalieh, the campaign organized a series of seminars at universities. Each seminar revolved around three talks: the social and property history of Dalieh, the legal framework, and landscape features of the site. The seminars took place at:

American University of Beirut
6 November 2014

Lebanese University Hadath
7 November 2014

Lebanese University Furn Chebbak
11 December 2014

Notre Dame University
12 December 2014

3 Why **DALIEH**?

Background / Reality of Public Spaces in Beirut

During the last decade, Beirut has witnessed an emergence of non-governmental organizations, as well as a body of research, advocating for spaces for the public and improving quality of life in the city. Many argue that it is the lack of such spaces that renders Beirut an 'ugly' or 'unlivable city'. A recent report about *Public Green Space* by the World Health Organization stipulates that the **relative surface of open green areas in Beirut is 1 square meter per person, far below the recommended 40 sq.m./person.**

Aside from the very few public gardens in Beirut (Sanayeh, Sioufi, Jesuites, Hasan Khaled Garden, Hawd El Wilaya),

the city's largest public park, **Horch Beirut**, has been **closed off** for the last twenty years.

The Lebanese waterfront is also turning to an inaccessible zone.

It is estimated that one-fourth of **seafront property** was privately developed in violation of zoning regulations,

mostly during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990)

A report commissioned by the World Bank and the Lebanese government (dated 1997) indicates that

capital holders, some holding political office, **own eighty-one percent of the coastal areas between the Jounieh Bay and Beirut International Airport** - that is a stretch of land approximately fifty-one kilometers in length.

Today, private beach resorts, hotels, and exclusive marinas, with walls, gates and entrance fees, punctuate the entire coast of Lebanon, and hinder the access of the public to the sea.

Situating Dalieh in relation to the Corniche

In Beirut, the Corniche is a linear public space available for Beirut residents, stretching along 4.8 kilometers encircling the city's promontory from the Saint George Bay on the northern coast of the city, into the continuous Avenue de Paris and Avenue du General De Gaulle all the way to Ramlet el Bayda. The Corniche includes urban and landscape landmarks such as the Saint George Hotel, the lighthouse [old and new] and the Ferris wheel to cite a few.

Dalieh and Ramlet el Baida are the only two rocky and sandy sites that **remain of Beirut's natural untamed landscape heritage, still accessible to the public.**



Compared to the Corniche, which has since the 1920s evolved as a highly frequented shared space, Dalieh has always been appreciated for its untamed, wild character though situated within an urbanized modern district.

It is a meeting place for a wide variety of visitors and tourists, who flock to enjoy the view from the city towards the sea, but also from the sea towards the city's skyline.

Dalieh cannot be dissociated from the two monumental rock formations of Raouche the natural landmark or 'Pigeons' Rock' located at Beirut's westernmost tip.

Dalieh is the place where Beirutis celebrate feasts and holidays. It has always been a place for swimming, promenading and fishing that is engraved in the memory of Beirut and the Beirutis, a landmark and a landscape heritage ensemble that is of ecological and social significance.

Situating Dalieh in relation to Ras Beirut Urban Growth

According to urban historians, the growth of Beirut happened in a radiating manner starting towards the end of the 1880s, following the enlargement of the port, thus transforming Beirut from a walled provincial harbour town in the Eastern Mediterranean to an open, commercial city of regional importance in the Levant. The urban geography of the city was evolving with the onset of mass rural exodus triggered by sectarian unrest in the mountain's hinterland during the 1860's. Until the construction of the Corniche [Avenue des Français], the sea was merely used as infrastructure for trade and small fishing ports.

The French Mandate [1920-1943] planned a series of urban renewal projects in Beirut, one of which was creating the first seaside promenade, the Avenue des Français. Chic hotels such as the St Georges built in 1932 and restaurants spurred in Minet el Hosn, setting the tone for the character of the area.

Compared to Nice's 'Promenade des Anglais', with its broad sidewalks and palm trees, Beirut's Corniche Maritime [meaning French seaside promenade] became the preferred esplanade for the city's prominent bourgeoisie. Printed postcards featured the Corniche to promote French tourism in the Levant. The esplanade offered framed views of the Mediterranean and summits of Mount Lebanon to the East, casting Beirut's heritage image of sea and mountain, and adding another layer to the relationship of the city to its waterfront.

Until the 1940's, the land use of areas adjacent to the Corniche, Ain el Mreisseh, Jal el Bahr, Manara and uphill towards Raouche can be characterized as coastal agricultural and vegetables orchards, with orange groves, mulberry trees, cacti, palm trees and rural 'hakurats'. Dalieh (as well as the rest of Raouche) was the site of extensive agricultural activity. One Beirut resident said: "That's where we used to plant zucchini until down to the water!"

The density of these areas increased in the 1930's and the 1940's as those areas neighbored the American University of Beirut in Ras Beirut. In the early 1950's another wave of urbanization forged the character of the Hamra district, which was until then displaying rural 'Khoukh' housing typologies and agricultural fields adjacent to Bliss Street and the American University of Beirut. Hamra became the centre of the intellectual activity in Beirut during the 1960's and the 1970's, with its numerous

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Aerial
photo 1962, 1971, 1983, 2003

sidewalk cafes and theatres, frequented by the Arab region's most prominent writers, intellectuals and artists. This effect seeped downhill and southwards towards Manara and Raouche. The location of these neighborhoods down the steep ridge of Hamra, spatially peripheral to the American University contributed towards forming the community of Ras Beirut.

Lebanese, Palestinians but also American and Europeans sought to invest in the flourishing areas and thus modernist buildings by prominent architects were constructed such as the Federal Hotel, the Ghandour building, the Shams building, the Shell Building and the Carlton Hotel, setting a modern character to both areas and punctuating its skyline and streetscape. With increasing demand from the servicing sectors, Raouche became a mixed-use area including residential units but also a strip of office buildings, restaurants, and furnished apartments, pubs and clubs, showcasing modern lifestyle.



4 The characteristics of **DALIEH**

Socio-cultural
significance

Historically, there are countless stories about the social significance of Dalieh as a renowned family picnic site and an outing destination. It was one of Beirut’s *manateq at-tanazuh* (promenade sites) and a destination of *Siran** - an activity which involves strolling, promenading, recreation, and the preparation of food in natural sites, especially barbecuing. People brought their food, beverages, arghileh and a family member played the ‘oud, Bozoq or Tabla.

Arb’a Ayoub (Job’s Wednesday)

Until the 1960s, Dalieh was also one of two sites (the other is Ramlet el-Baida beach) of *Arb’a Ayoub* (Job’s Wednesday), a yearly celebration associated with the miracle of prophet Ayoub (Job). To heal from his pains, Ayoub was advised to reside on the coast of Ouzai, to swim seven times in Ramlet el-Baida, and to repeatedly swim and bathe in the fresh waters of the Dalieh (reference).

In commemoration of Ayoub, Dalieh (and Ramlet el-Baida) became hosting sites for Beirutis hailing from different neighborhoods to celebrate Ayoub’s patience and cure from his disease. Until the 1960s, people marched on the last Wednesday of April every year to the seafront. Those who used to celebrate the event recount how women used to serve their traditional Beirut dish *mfatqa* and kids to fly their kites.

They also recount how they used to buy green peas and sit in Dalieh, then go pick seven different types of flowers and put them in water overnight and in the morning wash their faces and eyes with them (reference).

Nowroz

Dalieh also hosted, until recently, the grand Nowroz festivities celebrated by the Kurdish community living in Beirut. On the 21st of March every year, Dalieh transforms into a space in which they gather in thousands, set up food kiosks, a music stage and dance all day carrying their national flags.

Historical sites

Today, Dalieh still maintains its historical connotations. There are numerous old place names for the site that are still referred to by their users: *Berket Abdul Latif*, the most popular natural pool where Abdul Latif (a famous carpenter) used to swim; *Berket el ‘Hameer*, another natural pool where residents of Beirut used to bathe the sheep for the big Eid; *Magharet el Wataweet*, the cave inhabited by bats; *Magharet el Niswan*, the cave where the women swam; *Magharet el Fukom*, the cave inhabited by two seals; *Bahr Falasteen*, the beach strip where Palestinian resistance fighters hid in 1982 to combat the Israeli invasion of Beirut; And many others, such as the *canal of Burnaytah, Jourit el Rawcheh, Lsein, Barkit el Adi*, etc (refer to map).

* Other *tanazuh* sites in Beirut where *Siran* was made included places such as *Horch el-Ouzai, Horch Saqyet el-Janzir, Karm el-Achrafiye, Mazra’et el-‘Arab, Horch Beirut, Karm Chatila* in Rawcheh, and *Minet Zuraiqa* in Shouran. According to many accounts, the activities of *tanazuh* and *Siran* were not restricted to designated parks, but took place in sites characterized by openness and lack of ascription and whose names refer to spaces from nature: forest, vineyard and plantation (reference).

Social groups

Dalieh has been used over the years by a wide variety of social groups, such as Beirut fishermen, Raouche visitors, suburb dwellers, Iraqi refugees, Syrian migrant workers and refugees, couples and others. Pedestrians access it through a makeshift gap they created in the Corniche balustrade, while cars use an untreated road next to the nearby Mövenpick hotel entrance.

Fishermen

Dalieh has an official port catering for Dalieh and there are 75 fishermen and their boats, all registered in the Ta’awniyyat el-Sayyadeen (fishermen syndicate). In conjunction with the port, there are a few rooms where the fishemen put their nets and clothes, and a space where they weave their fishing nets. The port is a traditional one, made official in the 1950s.

Ten fishermen families used to live in Dalieh. They were recently evicted and their houses bulldozed with the exception of two families. All fishing boats nonetheless remained in Mina’ al-Dalieh port after their eviction. As for the kiosks of the remaining two families, one is located

at the southern end of the site and houses male fishermen. The other is located on the northern side of Dalieh and is occupied by the Itanis and their extended family. They have a café and restaurant that offer fish, beverages and arghile. Their customers today (being the only kiosk) are a combination of social groups, from Iraqis, to Kuwaiti tourists, to Syrians and Lebanese groups and others.

Swimmers

Apart from the general swimmers, there is a group of old men who swim every morning in the sea of Dalieh and enter its caves.

Boat riders

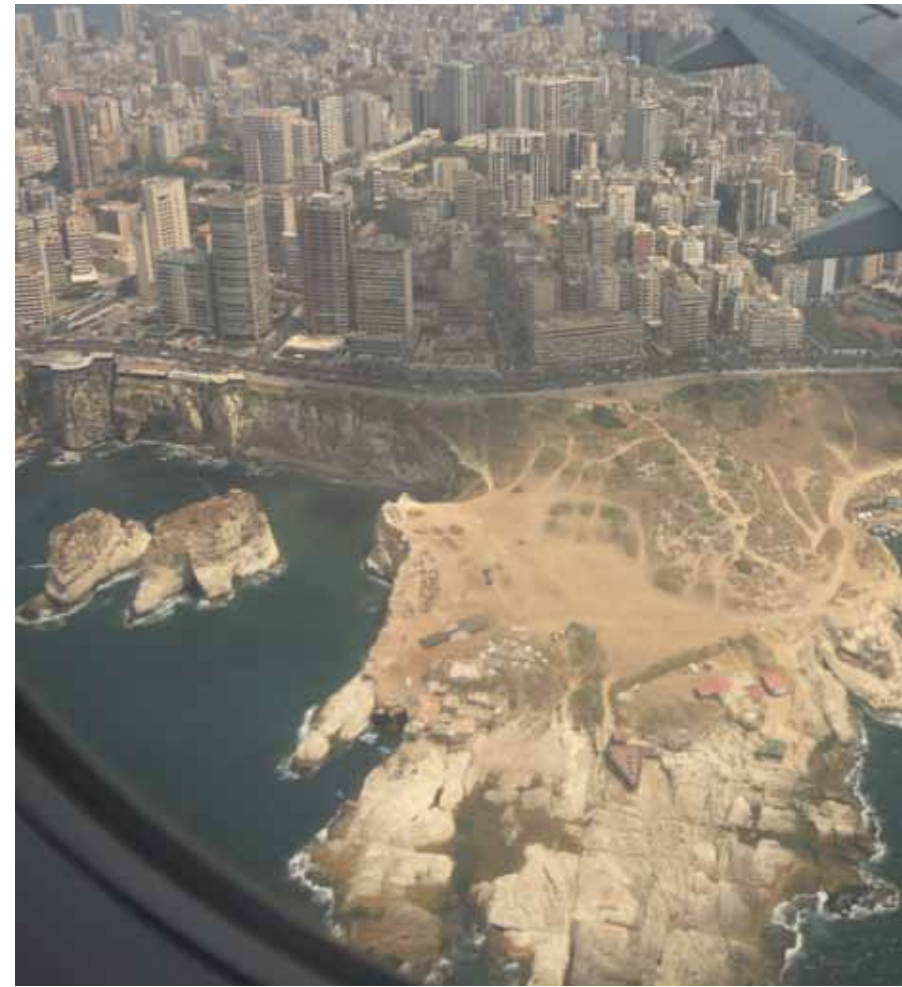
Many tourists (from different parts of Lebanon as well as Arab tourists) come to Dalieh to take boat rides with the fishermen along the coast and into the caves of Raouche. These also stand and take pictures in front of the rock. The Arab tourists include those from Iraq, the Gulf and Syria. Also many Iranian tourists come. The tourism boat rides are the major income and source of livelihood for the fishermen of Dalieh.

Divers

Diving is one of the main activities in Dalieh where divers jump from the cliffs into the Mediterranean waters. Historically, diving competitions used to take place from the rocks of Dalieh (although these were promoted as diving from the Raouche Rock). Today, a lot of divers are young unemployed men who live in different parts of Beirut (mainly Tariq Jdideh, Jnah, Cola, and Chatila).

Yoga Group

There is a yoga group that has been doing yoga every morning at 6 am in Dalieh for the past fifteen years.



4 The characteristics of **DALIEH**

A rich biodiversity

Harboring both marine and terrestrial rich biodiversity, Dalieh is a highly threatened site, as a result of urban developments and habitat fragmentation.

Flora

Dalieh is one of the last remaining patches of semi-natural vegetation that is classified as an important plant area (IPA) of significance to the entire Lebanese marine ecosystem (Bariche, 2010), (Itani, Yazbeck, Zein, 2014). The flora found in Dalieh comprises 6 % of the Lebanese flora (Itani, Yazbeck, Zein 2010; 155). The site shelters the last remaining costal native plants, stenoendemic species (critically endangered) that are restricted to small areas in Lebanon. Tidal ponds host common algae species in addition to other sea grass systems, which once destroyed, require several decades to recover (Bariche, 2010). Dalieh's vegetation is mainly low stand shrubs or ground covers dispersed in patches between the rock formations (Chmaitelly.H, 2007).

Fauna

Dalieh hosts a wide range of ecosystems mainly vermetid reefs which are biogenic platforms situated exclusively in the Levant coast and underwater caves. The vermetid reef is formed at intertidal levels and built by attached marine snails. Tidal ponds are found within the vermetid platforms offering suitable habitats for fish species and several invertebrates, fire worms and sea urchins.

A small community of Mediterranean monk seal has taken refuge in the caves of Raouche. Threatened by hunting activities, entanglement in fishing equipment, it is one of the most endangered species in the world; and usually lives in areas where it can be seen (Bariche 2010; 8).

It is rare, but bottlenose dolphins have also been observed close to the shore as they hunt fish. (wildlebanon.org).

The caves found in the Raouche area nurture a large community of fruit bats, which are common species in coastal cities, thriving around gardens with fruit trees (wildlebanon.org).

Lebanon is situated on the second most important route for bird migration in the world. In the winter, gulls are commonly observed and often gather in huge flocks feeding off schooling fish that approach the shore. In spring and fall, migrating pelicans, grey herons, egrets and cormorants can be observed (wildlebanon.org). Following winter storms marine species such as gannets and shearwaters can be spotted from headlands.



4 The characteristics of **DALIEH**

An Archeological Site

Dalieh is the second headland located on the 15 m marine terrace, rising abruptly from the sea to 45m, forming a rocky cliff that is connected to the Corniche (Jidejian 1993; 28).

Originally, it was a rocky cliff island, covered with sand dunes separate from the Beirut peninsula. During the middle Paleolithic, this part of Beirut became joined to the mainland (Cheikho 1993: 18). Known for its prehistoric finds, it is believed that Ras Beirut was occasionally utilized for different uses from the lower Paleolithic (2,000,000- 12,000 BC) to the Byzantine Period (Jidejian 1993:21).

In 1914, Jesuit Father Raoul Desribes discovered many tool fragments scattered in Dalieh, but few products were found. 80 of the pieces found by him are part of the collection of the Musée des Confluences in Lyon today, originally donated to the Musée de Lyon in 1925 (Bodet, 2007).

It has been proven that Minet el Dalieh is one of the richest flint (hard grey rock, used to make tools) areas in Lebanon (Saidah, 1970). This site is the earliest known factory on the coast of Lebanon, heavily utilized until the Iron Age, when metal replaced stone for producing tools, which resulted in the abandonment of the site (Jidejian, 1993). It is possible that Ras Beirut coast could have been used as a burial ground during the Bronze and Iron Age.



4 The characteristics of **DALIEH**

A Geological Treasure

Dalieh is etched with features and inscriptions that could trace back the geological history of Lebanon. Considered as the backbone of the city's visual landscape heritage, both Raouche and Dalieh may be the last remaining costal karstic outcrops on the coast of Beirut (RIF, 2000).

Geologically it is a study area of high importance since it shows all the different types of processes that have helped shape the Lebanese coast.

Ras Beirut is formed by a limestone headland that protrudes from the west side of Beirut. The shoreline to the north is comprised of vertical limestone cliffs 30 to 40m high with two prominent stacks forming the Pigeon Rocks (Breen, Forsythe, O'Connor, Westley 2014; 8). The headland known as 'Minet el Dalieh' dips southwest forming a series of rocky platforms at the shoreline and another potential terrace is located at the top of the headland, southeast between 20 and 40 m including sand dunes and vegetation. The uplifting fluctuation of the sea level and slow dissolution of rain was one of the factors that aided in creating this peninsula.

Dalieh is not only the symbol of Beirut but is symbolic of Beirut and Lebanon at large.



The Legal Framework

Like most of the western coastline of Beirut, Dalieh properties were the result of the visions of Ottoman and later French authorities to entrust the city’s commons to the main families of the city. The official cadastral property records indicate that since the 1920s up until 1995, these properties had multiple owners, who were all members of the so-called “old families of Beirut.”

However, **these property titles did not contradict with Dalieh as the site of the city’s collective commons**. Urban and building regulations had relatively protected Beirut’s seafront for decades, making of the promenade along the coast a landmark communal space in the city. On one level, Order 144 issued in 1925 defines what constitutes *al-Amlak al-‘Oumoumiyyah* (public property) and categorizes the sea as an inalienable maritime public domain. On another level, the 1954 Beirut Master Plan prohibited construction of any kind in Zone 10 where Dalieh lies.

As of the mid-1960s, pressure by real estate developers and property owners has resulted in a few laws and decrees that reversed the initial legislations against building in this zone. Such **legal changes allowed increasingly intensive building coefficients, allowing for the privatization of areas typically used as public spaces**. Decree 4711 / 1966, for instance, permitted building activity in parts of Dalieh, allowing a 15% surface exploitation and 20% general (*refer to next page*).

The gradual private take-over of Beirut’s coast that started in the 1960s did not initially affect Dalieh. Yet an investigation into contemporary property registry records reveals a dubious process of land agglomeration. **In 1995, three private companies, all held by the same high-profile investor, managed to buy these property shares, consolidate single private ownership and expand it over what was the city’s collective commons.**

This take-over operation has been represented as a de-facto reality that overshadows the historical communal practices in Dalieh and represents them as illegal squatting of private land. **In parallel to the land purchases, a law 402 / 1995 was issued** to enable land owners with a plot larger than 20,000m2 to double their total exploitation factor and quadruple their surface exploitation if a hotel is to be built. **Additionally, another decree was issued 7464 / 1995** to allow for the exploitation of the maritime public domain in Zone 10. The last alteration (April 2014) to the building and zoning regulations governing Zone 10 prolonged the effect of Law 402/1995 for 19 years.

In addition to the above-mentioned transformations, **old cadastral maps show that private land holdings have also encroached over the maritime public domain**. Historical and contemporary cadastral maps demonstrate that property boundaries in Dalieh have been modified to illegally privatize a large section of the coast.

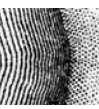


1920

COMMONS ENTRUSTED TO MAIN FAMILIES THEN REGISTERED AS MULTIPLE OWNERSHIP

The official cadastral property records indicate that Dalieh has been owned by members of several Beirutee families:

Chatila
Baydoun
Itani
Matar
Aff
Mawad
Murr



REGULATION FOR MARITIME PUBLIC DOMAIN

1925

THE FURTHEST HIGH-WATER POINT ON THE BEACH, ALONG THE SAND AND GRAVEL SEAFRONTS ARE INALIENABLE MARITIME PUBLIC DOMAIN

ORDER 144
in effect until today, defines public property and formulates right of access to natural resources.

1966

ALLOW TO EXPLOIT THE ENTIRE LEBANESE COAST, EXCEPT ZONE 10, WITH CONDITIONS SET TO PRESERVE THE COMMON GOOD.

DECREE 4810/1966
a main condition obliges owner to give 25% of property to municipality to transform it into a public garden

1989

ALLOW TO EXPLOIT **ZONE 10** WITH MINIMAL CONDITIONS A NOTORIOUS LEGISLATION FOR THE Mövenpick

DECREE 169/1989
is being challenged in front of the court.

1995

THREE REAL ESTATE COMAPNIES BOUGHT THE PLOTS OF DALIEH

ALLOW AGAIN TO EXPLOIT **ZONE 10**
DECREE 7464/1995
simalr to decree 169/1989, however published in more legal conditions.



REGULATION FOR LAND ALONG THE COAST

1954

ZONING REGULATION PROHIBITS CONSTRUCTION OF ANY KIND ALONG THE COAST

BEIRUT MASTER PLAN

AMMEND ZONING REGULATION FOR **ZONE 10** AND PERMIT MINIMAL BUILDING ACTIVITY

DECREE 4711/1966
in Dalieh, the current zoning is in part non-edificande and in part an allowable 15% surface exploitation and 20% general.

HIGH EXPLOITATIONS EXCEPTIONS GRANTED TO OWNERS WITH LARGE PLOTS OF LANDS WISHING TO BUILD A HOTEL

LAW 402/1995
owner with a plot larger than 20,000m2 can double their total exploitation factor and quadruple their surface exploitation. The periodical law had expired in 2000, but it **WAS RENEWED AGAIN FOR 19 YEARS IN 2014**.

5 Roles of Institutions in Preserving **DALIEH**

Municipality

The Municipality of Beirut **has full authority to approve or disapprove any building permit for a project in Dalieh**, in accordance with Article 13 of the Lebanese Building Law.

The Municipal Council can opt for the acquisition of Dalieh lands through a process of **expropriation**.

The Municipality of Beirut is primarily **responsible for the organization and management of the city** in coordination with other government departments.

Directorat General d’Urbanisme

The DGU **can reject any change or modification in the zoning/master plan** of the area at large especially Dalieh.

It **can reject the implementation of law 402**, which necessitates a request from DGU for exceptional building exploitation .

Ministry of Environment

Prepare as a first step, a decree proposal (under preparation) to **enlist the Entire Dalieh as a *Protected Natural Site*** due to its Ecological, Archaeological and Geological importance

Rally and lobby other Ministries to adopt its proposal to protect Dalieh based on its inclusion in several plans and studies commissioned by different Lebanese governments as a site of specific importance especially the “Schema Directeur des territoires Libanaise adopted by a decree number.....

Reject any EIA study for the project based on the importance of the site. This is possible by adopting the basic principles of EIA.

Work with the Ministry of Public Works to reject any request to “exploit” Public Maritime Domains in the area which will be key for any project.

Start working on a law to protect ZONE 10 and the Lebanese Coast “once and for All” with a clear language, based on previous legislation the last of which is the 444 of 2002.

5 What Can You Do to Preserve **DALIEH**?

When complicated problems arise in Lebanon, many give up, but others choose to do something. Here are some ways average citizens can get involved in the campaign to protect Dalieh and Beirut’s last undeveloped shoreline.

Spread the word

Use your networks on social media to talk about Dalieh, whether if it is to post pictures, tell stories or even to pose questions. Use the hashtag #SaveDalieh so that we can keep track of these conversations. The more people talk and ask questions about Dalieh, the greater the pressure will be on officials in the public and private sector to provide answers.

Share stories about Dalieh

Ask your friends, relatives even strangers about their memories of Dalieh and share your own. Post old or new photos on your social media networks and share a link on our facebook page (www.facebook.com/dalieh.org) to spread those memories to an even wider audience

Join our mailing list

Attend our meetings and/or volunteer for events. Keep up to date by joining our mailing list. We can use all type of volunteers from professionals to concerned citizens. Everyone can help and the more of us get involved, the more pressure will be put on decision-makers to hear our concerns and respond to them.

Rally for Dalieh

Talk to your friends and colleagues about the issue of Dalieh and the seafront, ask them to join you and us for a meeting. Contact us if you think your workplace or institution would be interested in hosting us for a presentation and discussion about Dalieh. Share this booklet and ask for copies to distribute. Sign the petition.

Participate in the competition

We are organizing an urban and landscape design competition to provide alternative uses for the Dalieh peninsula, to dream and re-imagine how this space can be used to serve the public, rather than solely private interests. Help us not only call for change, but also provide a solid path to get there and serve our community.

