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Dr. Ahmed Zikrallah



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TURKEY- ISTANBUL

Bahçelievler, Yenibosna Mh 29 Ekim Cad. No: 7 A2 Blok 3. Plaza D: 64
Tel/Fax: +90 212 227 2262 E-Mail: info@eis-eg.org

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Egyptian military and domination of the country's wealth - *Ghalyoun Pond project for Aquaculture: Preliminary information:*

Berkat Ghalyoun (Ghalyoun Pond) is a sandy area on Egypt's International Coastal Road, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. It lies on the outskirts of the Green Island village, Metobas, Kafr Al-Sheikh (About 134 kilometers north of Cairo). Berkat Ghalyoun includes a renewable natural pond in the shape of a triangle. (The triangle's base lies on the shore of the pond, one side overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, and the other side overlooking the Nile). Ghalyoun Pond is rich in natural resources.

Berkat Ghalyoun area borders with the Mediterranean Sea in the north, the forests of palm trees in the south, and the Rashid branch of the Nile in the west. Berkat Ghalyoun is also a natural fishing and hunting area, surrounded by historical and archaeological spots in Rashid and Borollus Lake.

Over the past years, Berkat Ghalyoun area used to be a meeting place for those wishing to immigrate illegally to Europe, and was also home to many outlaws. However, the area has now become the headquarters of one of the largest projects in the Middle East and Africa, namely, the Ghalyoun Pond Project for Aquaculture.

The Ghalyoun Pond Project for Aquaculture – which was carried out by the Egyptian military institution in cooperation with China's Evergreen Co following an agreement in July 2015 (on an area of 3500 feddans) – was inaugurated by Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi on November 18, 2017 at a cost of LE one billion and 700 million. Al-Sisi also laid the

foundation stone for the second stage (on an area of 2815 feddans) immediately after opening the project's first stage, as well as a number of national projects.

The National Company for Fishery and Aquaculture (NCFA) – owned by the Egyptian Armed Forces – started implementation of Ghalyoun Pond Project for Aquaculture in 2014 using modern and advanced technology in fish farming.

The first phase of the project, which has already been inaugurated, covers an area of 3500 feddans, including: 457 saltwater farmlands, 626 shrimp basins, 186 nurseries for vaccinating and taking care of the fish fry, a hatchery plant for fry production.

The project includes two centers for training, research, and development; an 18.5-feddan hatching area at a capacity of 2 billion shrimps and 20 million fish; and a 119-feddan drainage pond; as well as an industrial zone covering an area of 55 feddans.

The industrial zone of this project consists of a fish and shrimp processing plant with a production capacity of 100 tons, a fish fodder factory with 3 production lines and a total capacity of 3600 tons per year, and a shrimp fodder factory with 3 production lines and a total capacity of 1800 tons per year.

An 18-kilometer-long road was built to serve the project at a cost of LE 112 million, as well as 45 kilometers of internal roads and a 35 kW power station.

Some 52 national companies prepared and built the project's fish farms. A number of 5000 workers, technicians and engineers participated on a daily basis in the construction of the project's first phase. Some 1700 heavy equipment and machinery were used on a daily basis during the first phase day. The total amount of drilling and landfill reached about 16 million m³, equal to 6 pyramids of the size of the Great Pyramid, and the total iron weight of about 13,000 tons, which is more than the weight of iron at the Eiffel Tower in France.

A 350-meter-deep "sea outlet" to draw water from inside the sea and many "groynes" were also constructed. Also, an ice factory producing 60 tons per day was built, as well

as a foam factory producing 1-2 tons per day and a packaging factory with a daily capacity of 100 tons.

A fishing fleet is being prepared in the regional and international waters, and several fish farming projects have been implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and several state agencies.

Egypt is ranked 'Seventh' in the world in fish farming according to FAO statistics. Egypt is also considered the first fish producing country in Africa according to Egypt's General Authority for Fisheries Development. The volume of fish imports is approximately 236,000 tons, representing 16% of fish production. The production of these fish farming projects is expected to contribute to the reduction of fish imports by approximately 27%, according to Hamdi Badin, the head of the National Company for Fish Resources.

The Ghalyoun Pond Project for Aquaculture was established at the highest level in accordance with the European Union standards. A great number of the project employees were delegated to China for training.

Remarks

1. The project is completely owned by the armed forces' National Company for Fishery and Aquaculture (NCFA).
2. The focus on the production conformity with European (not international) specifications may be explained by the fact that the production is entirely for export to the EU countries in accordance with a prior agreement.
3. According to Sisi's statement, the clearing of the pond cost between LE 40-50 billion which was borne by the public budget in full while the public budget will not receive

any proceeds from the project, except for taxes. It is noteworthy that the project mainly depends on army recruits

4. All the fisheries that have been established so far will only contribute to the reduction of imports by 25%. Therefore, we are not expected to witness a significant decline in fish prices.

5. Reliance on Chinese expertise raises question marks in light of the availability of expertise in Egypt's General Fisheries Commission. Some may explain this as attempt to deliberately hide the details of the project, its expected production, as well as other financial matters that the Egyptian people is not allowed to know.