

Date

Thursday 19 July 2007

Title of session

Workshop 1 - International Boundaries

Name of presenter/chair

Chair: James Kavanagh, Director, Land Group, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, UK

Presenter: Haim Srebro, Director General, Survey of Israel.

Rapporteurs

Nicholas Hutchings, Defence Geographic centre and Jenny Harding, Ordnance Survey

Presentation title: Ghadjar - A whole or a divided village?

The presentation dealt with the strange case of the village of Ghadjar (Ghajar). Ghadjar is near the point where Lebanon, Syria and Israel (in their pre-1967 boundaries) meet. From 1920 to 1967 it was under Syrian rule, and was then occupied by Israel from 1967 to 2000. Following the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the village was partitioned between Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. This has adversely affected the village's economy and plunged its inhabitants into legal limbo.

The partition is a direct result of a poorly defined old boundary being re-imposed onto a village which had, over a period of decades, expanded to a size where the old boundary now splits it in two.

The presentation ended with a plea for those who demarcate boundaries to pay more attention to the situation 'on the ground' and to ensure that boundaries are defined and demarcated utilising orthophotos and a universally accepted coordinate system such as WGS84.

Questions	Answers
<p>Note: Questions following this session were largely connected with the session as a whole, and not the particular case of Ghadjar.</p>	
<p>Jean Dotse (Ghana): How should boundaries be maintained and managed post-demarcation?</p>	<p>Martin Pratt: maintenance should refer not just to the boundary line but to an appropriate area of surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Haim Srebro: the pillars which mark the Israel-Jordan boundary are re-checked annually.</p>
<p>Tyrone Leong (Trinidad and Tobago): Are boundary surveyors trained as land surveyors?</p>	<p>Haim Srebro: a boundary should be decided on first in broad terms but minor adjustment of details should be acceptable at the time of demarcation on the ground. This was done for the boundaries between the British mandate of Palestine and the French mandates of Lebanon and Syria during the 1920s.</p>
<p>Hadgu Medhin (Ethiopia): How are boundaries in rivers defined?</p>	<p>Martin Pratt: there are many possibilities. For navigable rivers, it is usually the thalweg (deepest point). In other cases, it may be the mid line or one bank. For intermittent streams, the question becomes more difficult and this is one cause of the poorly defined boundary between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is a very important issue, because nearly 25% of the World's international boundaries follow watercourses.</p>