

Illegal Construction in and around Kalkan The Foreign Voice



Bezirgan in Bloom



Environmental Clutter Islamlar

The Survey

People were asked their opinion about illegal construction on three popular Facebook sites used by foreigners whether residents, property owners or regular visitors to Kalkan

- **Kalkan Living**
- **Friends of Kalkan**
- **Visit Kalkan**

Participants were asked to participate once and respond to the statement

“Illegal, unlicensed building must be stopped”

The poll was open from 3rd to 5th May. 600 unique responses were recorded. Results were as follows.

	KL	VL	FoK	Total	%
Strongly Agree	257	142	186	585	97.8
Agree	2	3	3	8	1.2
Not my concern			5	5	0.8
Disagree	2			2	0.2
Total	361	145	194	600	100%

Note that, overwhelmingly, respondents selected Strongly Agree rather than simply Agree.

We hope that this brief document is helpful to the District Governor, *Kaymakam Bey*, and the District Mayor, *Belediye Başkanı Bey*, in planning how to tackle the growth of this worrying environmental crime

Chris Davies, resident, writer and organiser of Mouse Island Charitable Swim

With the support of

Tony Basoğlu, Turkish national, part time resident, business owner and owner of Kalkan Living and Visit Kalkan Facebook sites

Alan Homersham Kalkan holiday visitor and owner Friends of Kalkan Facebook site

The problem of illegal construction locally, particularly in the villages of Islamlar (an officially designated landslip area), Saribelen and Üzümlü, is well known.

It caused national attention when reported in the [Hürriyet Newspaper](#) 21st November 2018. Bizarrely, since that date the problem has become significantly larger.

A recent article 7th May 2021 in the Online Journal [Antalya3T](#) reported on the problem and the role of the Covid-19 Pandemic in fuelling it. This article was translated in to English by the author and distributed via Facebook where 900 people looked at it <https://anenglishmanabroad.net/kashing-in/>

Why does it matter what foreign residents and tourists think? Some, perhaps most, local people will say or think

“What do foreigners, with their secure incomes, know of our problems?”

“Foreigners! They live on a different planet. What can they tell us?”

“Why should we listen to lectures from people sitting in luxury villas built on land that was once olive groves?”

They have a point. In offering our opinions, we should remember our share of responsibility for this problem. As guests in a foreign country too we should speak with modesty.

BUT

Foreigners (particularly UK nationals) established tourism and bought villas in the Kalkan area. Their investment has brought wealth and opportunity to local people.

Foreigners can bring an external perspective to bear on problems.

Foreigners visiting and residing here come from largely successful Western countries which have established mature planning processes to address these same problems.

Kalkan’s foreign visitors and residents, are well travelled. We know that the Kaş Kalkan area is a rare jewel in today’s world. Local people may not be so aware of the value of what they are sitting upon. Of course it must develop and grow. But valuing and protecting its world class cultural and natural assets, should be at the heart of its ongoing development

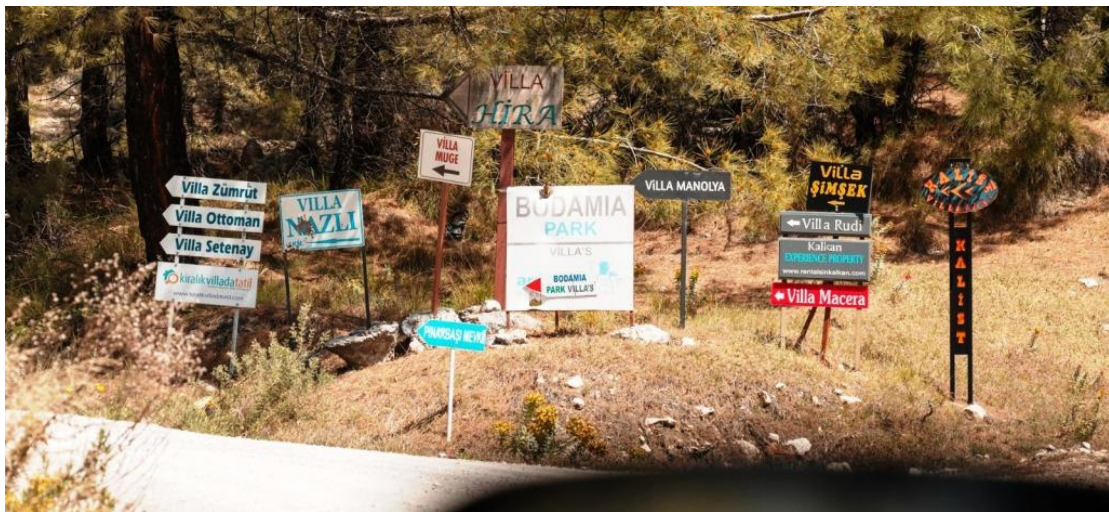
In brief, we Love Kaş Kalkan and urge the authorities to bring vision, creativity and planning to the development of this special place.

Our ideas may be naive or brash but we hope that the “Foreign Voice” will be seen as a helpful voice.

Step One URGENT

Stop the construction destruction





There are many measures that could be taken to prevent illicit construction.

- Publicise a telephone or WhatsApp number for reporting illegal activity
- Make the Tapu office map of plot and parcel numbers easy to find online
- Control rental agencies. Only legally registered buildings can be rented
- Impound building equipment - no excavator means no excavating
- Stop the provision of water or electricity accounts to illegal buildings
- Require sites to post planning agreement 1 month before the start of work
- Use drones to overfly and detect illegal sites
- Control the sale and delivery of cement and steel
- Issue and enforce fines

The revenue from construction fines should be used to resource enforcement and planning activities not be used for other purposes.

“It is not OK to break the law in anticipation of the next planning rules amnesty”
- JF Writer and long term resident

Step Two DIFFICULT

There are many reasons why changing the status of rural land to allow legal development is difficult.

Changes to the Metropolitan Act in November 2012 restructured thousands of villages and hundreds of towns, converting them to metropolitan neighbourhoods (*mahalle*). The Greater Kaş area became a Municipality of Antalya, containing 54 such neighbourhoods. Many local changes have to be enacted at government level. The process of establishing a planning zone and instituting the necessary controls is complex and difficult.

ONLY THREE OF THESE 54 MAHALLE ARE OPEN FOR PLANNING

As a consequence a vicious cycle of illegal building, payment of financial penalty and carrying on undisturbed has established itself. Small builders, big developers, planning officials, politicians and law enforcement officers have all fallen into what is actually a criminal enterprise; an illegal building boom.

Getting out of it will indeed require, to quote the speaker in Yusuf Yavuz’ article referred to above, ‘courage and determination’. Perhaps we can add a third quality ‘Transparency’

This is what we foreign residents and Kalkan loving tourists, with awareness of the difficulty and with due humility, are asking our political leaders to display.

First priority is to stop all illegal construction. A line must be drawn.

Then a strong planning department needs to be established at officer and political level with the task of

- Consulting widely and recruiting support from stakeholders
- Drawing up a realistic strategic vision for development
- Driving it forward with central government
- Publishing progress

Not easy. Not quick. Not politically popular. Not profitable. So Not possible?

Everything is possible as Turkey’s last hundred years of history demonstrate.

So let us state again that this is a big task. Just opening Islamlar for planning, for example, will require a full geological survey to update the landslip categorisation.

But the alternative is worse. Irreversible destruction of the environment, the ending of an agricultural way of life, unsustainable demands for water and electricity or possibly a major landslide.

“Maybe someone will take notice..”

- II, regular visitor and Kalkan Lover

Step Three DESIRABLE



The picture demonstrates very clearly how a (presumably) unlicensed construction can have no reference at all to its regional identity, no sense of its place in the landscape

Developers without reference to long established regional patterns and characteristics often dump large concrete boxes across the mountains and along the coast featuring

- Concrete instead of stone
- Metal and plastic instead of wood
- 3 or even 4 story instead of 1 or, at most, 2
- Flat roofs instead of pitched
- Grey roof tiles instead of red

‘Eventually there will be less and less reason to visit a place that is becoming more and more like the place where everybody else lives’ Kilkenny Council Design Guide, Ireland.

There is now an opportunity to consult with local people and to articulate a sense of identity for Kaş and its 54 *mabelle*. What makes *Islamlar* or *Kalkan* or *Bezirgan* special? What should developers be required to include in their design? What about size of building, plot size, materials?

How can the existing buildings be protected and restored, not pulled down?



These urgent, difficult but desirable steps *must* be taken. The prize is a Kaş Kalkan that will be a source of wealth and pride for Turkey generally but especially for those who live in and visit it.

Kaş Kalkan.....because you are worth it!