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Field Report

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AFTER THE ASSAD REGİME REPORT ON RETURN MİGRATION TO SYRIA AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS



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Report

Report on Return Migration to Syria and Internally Displaced
Persons After the Assad Regime

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Foreword

This comprehensive report, prepared by the International Refugee Rights Association, provides an in-depth analysis of Syria's post-regime reconstruction process. Syria's current situation is characterized by the humanitarian crises, economic challenges, and infrastructural destruction caused by years of conflict. This report serves as a guide equipped with concrete solutions for overcoming the heavy legacy of war.

The report focuses on the safe, dignified, and sustainable return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), individuals under temporary protection in Türkiye, and Syrian refugees in neighboring countries and Europe. Supported by field studies, surveys, and detailed interviews with local communities, this report identifies the obstacles to returns and establishes a solid foundation for developing sustainable policies.

The content of the report covers the following key topics:

- The current state of Syria's infrastructure, economy, and social structure after the regime;
- The challenges faced by displaced persons and refugees;
- The humanitarian, economic, and social dimensions of the peace, security, and reconstruction process;
- The humanitarian, economic, and social dimensions of the peace, security, and reconstruction process;

In light of findings from field studies, the report examines the extent of destruction in critical areas such as Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, Homs, and Damascus. Limited access to essential services like electricity, water, education, and healthcare has made the restoration of social order increasingly difficult. The near-collapse of economic activities, compounded by the decline in the agriculture and industrial sectors, has worsened living conditions. This report aims to contribute to addressing these challenges by offering solutions that meet the population's basic needs and promote regional stability.

International support is vital to the success of Syria's reconstruction process. This report not only analyzes the impacts of post-war destruction but also provides a roadmap for reconstruction and peacebuilding. The voluntary, safe, and dignified return of displaced persons and refugees can only be achieved through a combination of national leadership, international cooperation, and sustainable development projects.

We all have a role to play in Syria's future. We hope this report will serve as a guiding tool for decision-makers and international organizations, contributing to a peaceful future. We firmly believe that together we are stronger in building a future where the Syrian people can rise again with hope, justice, and peace prevailing.

Sincerely,

International Refugee Rights Association

such as Europe, Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan to Syria, as well as the return of IDPs to their pre-war regions. The study focuses on solutions that support humanitarian aid needs, infrastructure reconstruction, economic development, and social peace. The report also proposes strategies to promote local and international cooperation. In this context, priorities have been ranked based on field data and feedback from local stakeholders.

Introduction

This report, prepared by the International Refugee Rights Association, examines the current situation in Syria and the challenges faced during the recovery process after the fall of the Assad regime. The report focuses on the return of asylum seekers, refugees, and individuals under temporary protection status in European and neighboring countries to Syria, as well as the return of IDPs to their pre-war regions. The field studies aim to identify the obstacles to these returns and to design policies that support the process. Based on information obtained from field research, the report evaluates humanitarian, economic, and infrastructural needs. The goal of the report is to create a framework for identifying the challenges faced by local communities and proposing sustainable solutions.

Objective and Scope of the Report

The primary objective of this report is to address the return processes of refugees in countries



Research Methodology and Study Team

This report is based on fieldwork, interviews, and detailed discussions with local communities. The research team comprises experts from various disciplines. Their primary focus is to deeply understand the problems faced by local communities and develop practical solutions. The interviews included interactions with local governments, NGO representatives, refugees, and IDPs.

The research methods used include:

- **On-Site Observations:** The research team conducted field visits to critical areas such as

Aleppo, Damascus, Idlib, and Homs, making direct observations.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Data was collected through detailed interviews with local residents and experts.
- **Surveys:** Extensive surveys were conducted among households to analyze their needs.
- **Documentation and Archival Research:** Previous reports and national and international documents were examined for comparative analysis.



Geographical Scope and Timeline of Field Research

Fieldwork was conducted across a broad geography, including Aleppo, Damascus, Idlib, Homs, and surrounding villages. The research was carried out intensively from December 14–21, during which detailed data was collected from each region. The unique dynamics of each region were taken into account, and the data was analyzed to reflect regional differences.

Key aspects emphasized during the research include:

- **Infrastructure:** The current state of electricity, water, and sewage systems was evaluated in detail.
- **Social Dynamics:** The specific challenges faced by various segments of society (women, children, the elderly) were examined.
- **Economic Conditions:** The fundamental dynamics of the local economy, unemployment rates, and livelihood sources were observed.
- **Security:** Security risks and post-conflict effects in each region were analyzed.

This extensive fieldwork provides a solid foundation for understanding the current conditions of the region and developing effective policies. The study also highlights the importance of international cooperation to ensure the dignified and safe return of refugees and the provision of permanent solutions for IDPs.



Current Situation in Syria

Following the fall of the regime, Syria has entered a phase of efforts to establish a new governance and social order. However, the deep divisions caused by years of war have posed sig-

nificant challenges to this process. Attempts at social reconciliation and reconstruction have become increasingly complex due to political uncertainties and disputes among regional groups. Moreover, the infrastructural deficiencies and economic problems inherited from the previous regime have made recovery even more difficult. While the Syrian people demand peace and stability after years of conflict, the support of the international community has emerged as a deci-



sive factor in the success of this process.

Challenges of Security and Political Instability

In the aftermath of the regime's collapse, Syria's security and political structures have taken on a complex dynamic. The weakening of central authority has brought about a power struggle among local groups and international actors. Observations across all regions indicate a lack of coordination among local militias and the risk of conflicts, which threaten civilian safety. Although temporary security mechanisms have been established, these measures have proven insufficient.

Field research has highlighted the difficulties faced by families in the return process. Infrastructural deficiencies, landmine threats, and limited access to basic services such as electricity, water, and food hinder safe returns and slow down re-

construction efforts. Syria is currently undergoing a period of profound social transformation and reconstruction. This period has been marked by efforts to establish a structured government and military in a context where different provinces are controlled by various armed groups. However, slow decision-making processes, lack of coordination, and infrastructural challenges have fallen short of meeting public expectations. While people are relieved that the oppressive regime has ended, uncertainties about achieving peace and stability persist.

The political vacuum has slowed the return process for those under international protection and displaced persons within the country, increasing the need to strengthen new governance structures. Improving the functionality of public institutions and accelerating the process through international support—especially focusing on security and economic recovery—is critical. While the population maintains hope for the future, local leadership and international cooperation play a key role in building a peaceful future.



Economic Situation

Following the fall of the regime, Syria's economic and infrastructural conditions have been plunged into a severe crisis due to the destructive effects of the war. The country's gross domes-

tic product has dropped from \$67.5 billion in 2011 to \$9 billion in 2023, with economic activities contracting by 75%. This dramatic decline is a result of hyperinflation, loss of production, and the extensive destruction of infrastructure. Industrial centers such as Aleppo and Homs have nearly lost all production capacity during the war. In the Cobar district of Homs, once-thriving textile factories and other industrial facilities have been entirely destroyed, leaving behind only ruins.



The population bears the heavy burden of the economic collapse, marked by rising unemployment rates, insufficient income sources, and restricted access to essential services. Access to basic needs such as electricity, water, heating, and food has become limited, especially complicating the return process for refugees and displaced persons. Industrialists face challenges reopening their businesses due to heavy tax burdens and bureaucratic obstacles in raw material imports. Furthermore, many industrial facilities have been destroyed by fires and conflicts, further hindering economic recovery.

According to field studies, financial constraints have made the return process impossible for many individuals who wish to go back to their homes. Traders and industrialists demand legal facilitations and financial incentives to revitalize production. Interviews have also emphasized

that the return process can only succeed with state support and international aid.

The agricultural sector has also been deeply affected by the war's destructive impacts. The destruction of irrigation infrastructure, logistical disruptions caused by the war, and shortages of agricultural inputs have reduced production by 60%. While agricultural products accounted for 30% of the country's exports before the war, this figure has dropped to just 5% during the conflict. Approximately 12 million people are affected by malnutrition, including 5 million children. The livestock sector has been severely impacted as well, with feed prices increasing by 150% and veterinary services decreasing by 70%. It is estimated that rebuilding agricultural infrastructure will require an investment of \$10 billion.



Industrial production has declined to only 20% of 2010 levels. During the war, hundreds of factories in industrial hubs such as Aleppo were either destroyed or looted. Consequently, industrial workers lost their jobs, and a significant portion of the production infrastructure was obliterated. According to data from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Syria, once known for its robust industrial production, has now completely lost this advan-

tage due to soaring production costs and limited access to basic services such as electricity.

The United Nations and other international organizations have emphasized the need for extensive aid to facilitate Syria's economic recovery. The Vision of Humanity report states that a sustainable peace environment is essential for revitalizing economic activities in the country. Without it, poverty rates are expected to remain high for years, with economic growth staying below 1%.

The reconstruction process prioritizes modernizing infrastructure and rebuilding energy, transportation, and communication services. This requires not only short-term humanitarian aid but also the implementation of long-term development projects. Large-scale investments and a comprehensive development plan are necessary to address the destruction in key sectors such as agriculture, industry, and energy.

Syria's economic recovery will depend not only on the reconstruction of physical infrastructure but also on achieving political stability and enhancing local capacities. National and international projects aimed at meeting basic needs

and establishing a sustainable economic system in the long term will be instrumental. In this process, local leadership and international cooperation will play critical roles.

Status of Industry, Trade, and Agriculture

After the fall of the regime, Syria's industry, trade, and agricultural sectors entered a recovery phase. However, these areas continue to face significant challenges due to the heavy legacy of the war. Agricultural production has declined substantially due to damaged irrigation systems and deteriorating soil quality, negatively affecting the livelihoods of local communities and the country's economic stability.

Disruptions in trade routes and logistical issues have hindered the acceleration of economic activities, though reconstruction efforts have been initiated with international support and local initiatives. Infrastructure repairs and support programs for resuming operations in the industrial sector are underway. Priority sectors, such as textile and agricultural equipment production, have been identified as key areas for economic revitalization.

For these sectors to recover sustainably, it is crucial to quickly repair infrastructure, ensure security, and increase financial support. Revitalizing agriculture, trade, and industry will play a fundamental role not only in the recovery of the local economy but also in expediting the return of refugees.

Status of Basic Needs and Services

Following the fall of the regime, access to basic humanitarian needs in Syria remains a signifi-



cant challenge due to the destruction caused by the war. Inadequate provision of essential services like electricity and water has severely impacted living conditions. Even in urban centers, frequent energy outages persist, while access to these services in rural areas is nearly impossible. Damage to water networks has made it difficult for the population to find clean drinking water, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks.

A shortage of fuel has led to a sharp rise in food prices, and heating problems have deeply affected the population, particularly during winter months. Children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic illnesses are among the most affected groups. Although the new government has been working to rebuild infrastructure, a lack of resources and logistical challenges have resulted in significant disruptions in the distribution of humanitarian aid. In rural areas most affected by conflict, the delivery of aid and rapid improvement of infrastructure remain critical priorities. In this regard, the support of international organizations and civil society groups plays a vital role. Ensuring sustainable access to services like electricity, water, and fuel is essential for meeting the population's daily needs and fostering recovery.



The situation is equally dire in education and healthcare. The war's prolonged destructive effects have severely damaged infrastructure in the

se sectors. Many schools and hospitals have been either completely destroyed or heavily damaged. Access to education, particularly in rural areas, faces major challenges due to the lack of physical infrastructure and a shortage of qualified teachers. The deprivation of education for children poses a significant obstacle to the country's reconstruction process in the future. Rebuilding schools, training teachers, and providing necessary materials should be among the top priorities.

The healthcare system is similarly struggling. A shortage of doctors and medical personnel, combined with inadequate supplies of medicine and medical equipment, has made it difficult to meet the population's healthcare needs. To prevent the spread of infectious diseases and make basic health services accessible, it is essential to rapidly repair damaged healthcare infrastructure. In the short term, temporary field hospitals and mobile health teams can provide immediate solutions, while long-term projects should focus on rebuilding hospitals and training healthcare professionals.

In this new era, it is crucial to direct national and international support effectively in the fields of education and healthcare. Humanitarian organizations and governments must collaborate to make these basic services more widespread and accessible, in line with sustainable development goals. Ensuring that children have access to education, making healthcare services accessible, particularly in rural areas, and strengthening infrastructure are vital for the population to look toward the future with hope. Syria's reconstruction process hinges on progress in these critical areas.

Field Observations

Post-regime field observations in Syria, particularly in the regions of Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus, reveal significant destruction and challenging living conditions. While urban centers are generally in relatively usable condition, the situation in rural areas is dramatically worse.



Idlib and Surrounding Areas

Following the regime's collapse, the city center of Idlib remained somewhat functional, but rural areas present a starkly different picture. Field studies have determined that most buildings in areas like Ma'arretü'n-Nu'man, Atarib, and Khan Sheyhun have been completely destroyed, with very few remaining usable. This level of destruction has made life exceptionally difficult for rural populations. The near-total loss of electricity and water infrastructure has rendered daily life unsustainable in these regions.

Residents in rural areas face severe challenges regarding shelter, access to basic services, and the continuation of agricultural activities. There is an urgent need for the reconstruction of infrastructure, provision of electricity and water, initiation of housing projects, and revitali-

zation of economic activities with international support. The dramatic state of the region makes it imperative to implement long-term development plans without delay.

Despite the destruction, farmers in the region strive to maintain agricultural production but struggle with high costs, lack of equipment, and marketing challenges.

Aleppo and Its Countryside

Aleppo and its surroundings experienced massive destruction during the war and have emerged as regions urgently needing international aid for reconstruction. Field studies indicate that approximately 30% of buildings in the city center have been destroyed, industrial facilities have suffered extensive damage, and the infrastructure has been severely compromised. Commercial activities in the city continue on a limited scale, but infrastructure deficiencies and economic uncertainties hinder their revival.

In rural areas, the situation is even more dire. Bombings and artillery attacks by the regime have left areas like Atarib, Urum al-Sughra, Urem Al-Kubra, and Khan Al-Asal entirely destroyed. Most buildings in these regions are unusable, and the complete absence of infrastructure has made daily life unsustainable. The lack of electricity, water, and transportation services has rendered agricultural and trade activities in rural areas nearly impossible.

Before the war, Aleppo was a leading industrial hub in Syria, but intensive attacks targeted at the region have caused significant devastation. The absence of basic services such as electricity, water, and transportation disrupts not only daily life but also efforts for economic recovery. Rebuilding irrigation systems for agriculture, repairing industrial facilities, and securing trade routes are critical for the region's redevelopment.

Rehabilitation of Aleppo requires prioritizing infrastructure repairs, initiating housing projects, and mobilizing tangible support mechanisms from the international community. Additionally, economic and social projects to facilitate resettlement must be launched, and long-term development plans implemented. Given the strategic importance of Aleppo, specialized rehabilitation programs for both the city center and rural areas are essential.

Hama

Hama's city center, like Idlib, remains relatively habitable, but serious infrastructure deficiencies limit the quality of life. In contrast, the situation in rural areas is far more dramatic. Field studies have identified areas such as Morek, Suran, Tayyibat al Imam, Maardes, Qomhane, and Besireen as having been completely destroyed by airstrikes and artillery fire, with only a small number of buildings remaining usable. These conditions make access to basic needs almost impossible for the rural population.



While Hama was known as the centre of agriculture and livestock in Syria before the war, the regime's intense attacks caused a great destruction in these sectors.

Agricultural activities have been severely affected due to deterioration in irrigation infrastructure and lack of equipment. Livestock breeding activities have also been drastically reduced due to the lack of feed supply and shelter. The population is in urgent need of national and international assistance to revitalise agricultural production, repair irrigation systems and provide logistical support.

Rebuilding infrastructure, initiating housing projects, and improving health and education services should be priorities for Hama's recovery. The scale of destruction in rural areas necessitates the rapid implementation of long-term development projects and the activation of more substantial and sustainable support mechanisms by the international community.

Homs and Surrounding Areas

Homs stands out as one of the most severely destroyed regions of the war. Field studies have shown that approximately 70% of the buildings in the city center have been destroyed, and commercial areas largely evacuated. This situation has resulted in an almost complete cessation of economic activities in the city. The situation in rural Homs is even more dramatic.



Areas like Rastan, Telbise, Al-Ghantu, Ter Maela, and Al Dar Alkabera have been entirely destroyed by bombings and artillery fire, leaving very few usable structures.

Before the war, Homs was Syria's second-largest industrial hub after Damascus, serving as the backbone of the country's economy. However, intense attacks on the region have rendered this vital city largely uninhabitable. Basic services such as electricity, water, and transportation are entirely nonfunctional, severely worsening living conditions.

Residents in rural areas face significant challenges in accessing shelter, healthcare, and education. Reviving agricultural activities will require repairing irrigation systems, providing equipment support, and resolving marketing challenges. Additionally, reconstruction efforts in the city require the swift mobilization of international aid mechanisms.

Reconstruction priorities in Homs include rebuilding infrastructure, promoting economic activities, and launching housing projects. Implementing long-term development plans and projects to reintegrate the population into the economy are critical. The scale of destruction left by the regime makes national and international cooperation essential for the region's recovery.

Damascus and Surrounding Areas

As the capital, Damascus has become a focal point for reconstruction efforts following the regime's collapse. Buildings in the city center are in better condition than those in rural areas, and some basic services are accessible. However, the situation in rural settlements is entirely different.



Field studies in areas like Harasta and Duma reveal that most buildings have been completely destroyed, with only a few remaining usable. The total collapse of electricity, water, and transportation infrastructure has rendered daily life unsustainable for those living in these regions.

Rural populations face severe difficulties in accessing basic services such as shelter, healthcare, and education. The scale of destruction underscores the need to prioritize long-term reconstruction projects in these areas. Swiftly initiating housing projects, rebuilding essential infrastructure in rural regions, and activating international aid mechanisms are critical for improving living conditions. The sustainability of these efforts depends on effective national and international coordination.

While the resumption of small-scale enterprises in the city offers hope for economic recovery, financial support and infrastructure repairs need to be accelerated if these efforts are to be sustainable.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Refugees

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

It is estimated that there are approximately 6 million IDPs around Syria after the end of the Assad regime. These people had to leave their homes due to intense attacks and clashes during the war and started to live in temporary tent cities. The living conditions in these tent cities, which are concentrated along the border with Turkey, have been inhumane since the first years of the war. The lack of basic infrastructure and humanitarian assistance makes their struggle for survival even more difficult.



Although IDPs often express the desire to return to their villages, the current conditions make it impossible to realise this desire. Many find their homes either completely lost or destroyed. Moreover, the inability to meet basic needs such as access to clean water, health services and food supply makes the return process even

more difficult. 'The first need of someone who wants to return is a health centre, followed by a school, a house, a structure where they can shelter, drinking water and a bread bakery' clearly summarises the prioritised requirements of the return process.

The economic uncertainties and difficulties in meeting basic needs have had a profound impact on both IDPs and refugees. Limited job opportunities, infrastructural deficiencies, and high costs make planning for a return almost impossible for many. Due to financial constraints, many cannot afford transportation, repair their homes, or access the resources needed to rebuild their lives.

Psychologically, the trauma of years of war has left deep scars among IDPs. Fear of a resump-



tion of war and uncertainties increase anxiety among these groups. However, there is also a general hope that peace will be maintained and that better conditions will prevail in the future. People believe that they can rebuild their lives if peace is made permanent and economic development programs are put in place.

Acceleration of infrastructure projects, the introduction of shelter programs and increased international support are vital for the safe and sustainable return of IDPs to their homes. Ex-



panding psychosocial support projects, implementing economic development programs and accelerating social cohesion processes are critical steps in this process.

The cooperation of the local and international community is essential for people to rebuild their lives. Maintaining peace, boosting economic support and modernizing basic infrastructure are the most important elements for Syria's future peaceful development.

Situation of Those Under International Protection

The fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024, opened a new political chapter for Syria and reignited global discussions about the future of Syrians worldwide. The post- Assad period has highlighted the critical importance of addressing the situation of Syrians in neighboring countries like Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan, as well as those in Europe. Coordinated reconstruction policies are needed to facilitate the safe return of refugees, but coordination challenges have hindered effective progress. Joint policies and solutions at both regional and European levels are therefore of critical importance.

While the end of the Assad regime offers hope for a new political era, security and infrastructure issues persist in Syria. The remnants of conflict and ongoing political uncertainties complicate the safe return of refugees.

In neighboring countries, particularly Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan, the high density of Syrian refugees has increased the costs of social integration, while rising xenophobia in Europe has intensified debates around these costs. Social pressures and financial considerations have brought return policies into sharper focus.

The cornerstone of refugee law, the principle of “non-refoulement,” prohibits the forced return of individuals to places where they risk torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, or threats to their life or freedom based on the five grounds of refugee status. However, returns must be voluntary, safe, and dignified—an obligation under international law and a fundamental humanitarian responsibility.

Return Policies in Countries Hosting Large Syrian Populations

Syria's Neighboring Countries Türkiye

As the country hosting the largest number of Syrians worldwide, Türkiye has implemented return policies based on the principle of voluntariness. Under the leadership of the Directorate General of Migration Management, Türkiye has developed comprehensive policies to accelerate and streamline return processes. These policies include establishing safe zones in northern Syria, focusing on infrastructure projects to meet the basic needs of returning refugees. Türkiye aims to increase voluntary returns by providing financial incentives and guidance services to fa-

cilitate Syrians' return to their homeland. According to statements by Minister Yerlikaya, more than 738,000 Syrians have voluntarily returned to Syria since 2016, with a significant increase in this number by 2024. Türkiye



emphasizes an approach aligned with international law and humanitarian values in its return processes. However, the sustainability of these



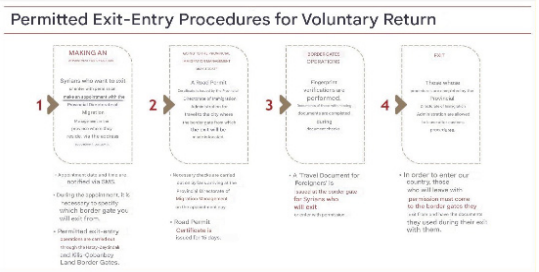
returns heavily depends on international cooperation and addressing infrastructure deficiencies in Syria.



While Türkiye endeavors to maintain dignified and safe return processes, there is concern about

sending refugees to regions with inadequate infrastructure and limited resources given Syria's current situation. To aid Syrians in assessing their country's current conditions and preparing for their return, Türkiye introduced a temporary exit- entry right for those under temporary protection. This right, effective from January 1, 2025, will remain valid until July 1, 2025, and can be utilized up to three times by the head of the family. If the head of the family cannot travel, an adult family member may use this right on behalf of the family.

Exit-entry procedures are carried out through the Kilis-Çobanbey and Hatay-Zeytindalı land border gates. Individuals benefiting from this right are required to re-enter Türkiye through the same gate from which they exited. The specific details of the exit and entry process are as follows:



Directorate General of Migration Management Statement.

Lebanon

The interim Prime Minister of Lebanon, Najib Mikati, has called on Syrian refugees in Lebanon to return to their homeland. With changes in Syria's political and security landscape—especially following the transitional government's demand for all Syrians abroad to return and the announcement of a general amnesty for individuals sought by the regime—some Lebanese politicians argue that there is no longer justifica

tion for Syrian refugees to remain in Lebanon. Speaking at a seminar in Rome last Saturday, Mikati emphasized that “Syrian refugees account for one-third of Lebanon’s population.” He urged the international community, particularly Europe, to support rehabilitation efforts in safe zones within Syria to facilitate the return of refugees. According to official data, Lebanon, with a population of 5.8 million, is hosting approximately two million Syrians, over 800,000 of whom are registered with the United Nations. This figure represents the highest refugee density in the world relative to population size. (Source: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Between Calls for Return and Fear of Retaliation, Asrar Shabaru, accessed January 6, 2025.)

Jordan

Out of 717,000 Syrian refugees registered with the UNHCR in Jordan, only 3,106 have returned to Syria—a very small number due to the restrictive nature of return facilities and the lack of permissions for visits. In the days following the fall of the Assad regime, it was announced that the Syrian Embassy in Jordan had issued approximately 30,000 Syrian passports as the first step to facilitating returns.

The embassy’s Chargé d’Affaires, Dr. Ihsan al-Raman, stated, “To ease the processes for Syrians, the Syrian Embassy in Jordan became the first to issue free passports for six months after the new administration took office in Syria.” Dr. al-Raman also noted that, as of last Saturday, the embassy had issued around 400 transit documents, each permitting the transit of four to six individuals. These transit documents provide

a one-time return authorization to Syrians in Jordan who lack Syrian travel documents.

Dr. al-Raman emphasized, “No distinction is made between Syrians who entered Jordan legally or illegally, or between refugees and non-refugees. Everyone is granted the same facilities.” He also added that procedures for registering children born in Jordan as Syrian citizens have resumed, with the process being made as straightforward as possible. (Source: Syrians in Jordan: Limited Return Facilities, Hayat Dabis, Ammar Yasser Hammou, accessed January 6, 2025.)

European Countries

The fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime represents a significant turning point for both Syria and the millions of refugees who have fled the country since 2011. Currently, the number of displaced Syrians living abroad has reached approximately 6.3 million, equivalent to a quarter of Syria’s pre-2025 population. As a result, the return of Syrians to their homeland has become a politically and humanitarily contentious issue worldwide, including in Europe. (Source: Il Sole 24 Ore, accessed January 6, 2025)

Germany

According to the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, as of the end of October 2024, 974,136 individuals of Syrian origin reside in Germany. Of these, 5,090 have been recognized as asylum seekers, 321,444 have been granted refugee status under the Geneva Convention, and 329,242 have been given “subsidiary protection.” The remaining individuals have other

types of residence permits, such as family reunification, or have acquired German citizenship.

Following the events of December 8, 2024, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) temporarily suspended decisions on all asylum applications from Syrians due to uncertainties. According to a BAMF spokesperson, this suspension does not apply to “Dublin procedures,” where responsibility for asylum cases lies with another EU country. However, applications where the situation in Syria is decisive have been affected. Currently, over 47,000 asylum applications from Syrians, including 46,081 initial applications, remain pending. (Source: Tagesschau, accessed January 6, 2025)

Federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD) proposed a plan to cancel protection for those displaced from Syria. In an interview, Faeser stated, “Under our laws, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees will review and cancel protection for individuals in Germany who no longer need it due to stabilization in Syria.” This applies to those who do not have residency rights for other reasons, such as work or education, and who do not voluntarily return to Syria. (Source: Tagesschau, accessed January 6, 2025)

France

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot announced on January 5, 2025, that 700 Syrian asylum applications are currently on hold as France waits for developments in the political transition process in Damascus. He stated, “700 Syrian asylum applications are being reviewed by OFPRA [French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons] and are currently pending further information.” (Source: InfoMigrants, accessed January 6, 2025)

Italy

The Italian government joined the list of countries suspending asylum applications late Monday. This decision was announced in a statement issued by Palazzo Chigi following a summit on the situation in Syria. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni made the announcement alongside Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi, Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, and security advisors. (Source: Fanpage, accessed January 6, 2025)

Austria

The recent developments in Syria were a focal point during Austria’s National Council session titled “Asylum Brake: Effective Measures.” Interior Minister Gerhard Karner outlined plans for a “structured return and deportation program” for Syrians. Voluntary returns will be encouraged, while individuals who commit crimes or refuse to integrate or work will be prioritized for deportation. Plans for mandatory returns will be implemented once the situation in Syria becomes clearer, with initial focus on offenders and those unwilling to integrate. (Source: Parlament.gv.at, accessed January 6, 2025)

Belgium

Belgium has halted the processing of over 4,000 asylum applications from Syrians. Officials stated that more clarity on future developments in Syria and the possibility of returns is needed. “Refugee status does not need to continue indefinitely. If the situation in Syria permanently improves, CGRS [the body responsible for evaluating applications] will be instructed to reassess the refugee status of Syrians who arrived within the past five years.” (Source: European Newsroom, accessed January

6, 2025)

Netherlands

Asylum policy for Syria was based on the assumption that the Assad regime maintained de facto control over much of the country, but this assumption is no longer valid. Minister Faber announced in a letter to the House of Representatives that a six month moratorium on asylum decisions and deportations for Syria has been implemented. This moratorium will allow for more information about the power transition's impact. Forced returns to Syria are also officially suspended, though exceptions may apply to cases involving individuals registered in other EU countries, public order cases, or Geneva Convention 1F cases.

(Source: IND, accessed January 6, 2025)

Denmark

The majority of Syrian refugees in Denmark hold temporary residence permits, which can be renewed as needed. On December 9, 2024, the Refugee Appeals Board decided to suspend the processing of all pending asylum applications related to Syria. These cases will not be processed until further notice.

(Source: Arbejderen, accessed January 6, 2025)

Spain

On December 10, 2024, Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares stated that it is “unnecessary” to suspend asylum procedures for Syrian nationals, as their numbers in Spain remain low compared to other European countries. He explained that additional measures are not needed because the situation does not represent a significant proportion of asylum cases in Spain. (Source: Infolibre, accessed January 6, 2025)

Slovenia

Slovenia announced that it will not suspend the processing of international protection applications for Syrian nationals. According to the Interior Ministry, Syrians remain the largest group of irregular migrants, with over 14,000 entering Slovenia in the first ten months of the year.

(Source: European Newsroom, accessed January 6, 2025)

Bulgaria

Following the approach of Spain and Slovenia, Bulgaria continues to evaluate all international protection applications from Syrian nationals. The State Agency for Refugees emphasized that access to asylum procedures remains open and consistent with national and EU regulations. Currently, 4,535 Syrian nationals are in the international protection process, including those in the judicial phase.

(Source: News.bg, accessed January 6, 2025)

Human Rights Violations And International Law

The civil war in Syria has been a period of intensified human rights violations, leaving deep scars on society. This tragedy, which began in 2011, turned pre-existing rights abuses into a more systematic and widespread phenomenon. Attacks on civilians, enforced disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment underscore the heavy toll of the war on humanity. Within this context, the Idlib region stands out as one of the most striking examples of these violations.

According to a report by the International Refugee Rights Association (IRRA), between September 2015 and September 2022, 5,700 airstri-

kes carried out by Russia on Idlib resulted in the deaths of 4,056 individuals. The majority of the victims were civilians, including many women and children. These attacks constitute serious violations of the laws of war and international humanitarian law. The events in Idlib reflect only a portion of the war crimes committed across Syria. Systematic bombings, the use of chemical weapons, mass executions, and forced displacements are among the numerous war crimes documented in the country.

During the war, which claimed the lives of more than 610,000 people in Syria, 160,681 civilians were killed, and 49,359 individuals died under torture in Assad regime prisons. Efforts by Iran to alter the demographic structure and the impacts of forced displacements have further exacerbated the human dimensions of the conflict. The reluctance of many Syrians to return to the current regime complicates the peace process further.



Despite the end of the conflict, concerns about the recurrence of human rights violations persist. Issues such as property rights violations, forced displacements, discrimination, and the disregard for basic human rights must be addressed within a legal framework. In this new era, the establishment of a mechanism that integra-

tes both national and international law will be essential to protect the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). International monitoring mechanisms must be implemented during return processes to ensure these are conducted transparently and fairly.

Access to basic needs in northwest Syria's camps remains a significant challenge, further worsening living conditions. The lack of water, electricity, and healthcare services deepens the humanitarian crisis in these areas. This situation clearly demonstrates the necessity for the international community to take more effective action.

With the end of the Assad regime, the implementation of the Geneva Conventions and other international human rights treaties to which Syria is a party will present a critical test for the



new administration. However, Syria's non-membership in the Rome Statute limits the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The new administration must remain open to both national and international cooperation to investigate human rights violations and prosecute those responsible. Furthermore, alternative judicial avenues should be explored to prevent war crimes from going unpunished and to avert future violations, with international oversight and

cooperation mechanisms put in place.

Providing assurances that past violations will not recur is critical for the safe return of refugees to their country. This is not only essential for protecting individual rights but also vital for rebuilding society and strengthening the peace process. Active involvement of the international community and the development of long-term projects will be crucial during Syria's reconstruction phase.

UNHCR's Perspective on Recent Events

The UNHCR has issued an updated document regarding the situation of returns to Syria. The document includes the following statements:

The UNHCR continues to call for the non-forcible return of Syrian nationals and former habitual residents of Syria, including Palestinians who previously resided in the country, to any part of Syria at this time. Furthermore, the UNHCR reiterates its call to all states to allow entry to civilians fleeing Syria, to safeguard their right to seek asylum, and to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement under all circumstances. (UNHCR Policy on Returns to Syria, accessed 07.01.2025).

Property Rights And Cadastral Issues

During the Syrian civil war, the destruction of property and land registry records significantly undermined individuals' property rights. This situation has emerged as a critical issue for the re-establishment and protection of property rights in the post-war period. The inability of displaced persons to claim their property rights, compounded by the lack of records, makes the issue even more complex. Steps need to be taken to digitize property records and safeguard them in compliance with international standards.

The conflicts and policies implemented by regime forces during the war caused cadastral boundaries to be lost. This has necessitated the reorganization of zoning plans; however, the lack of technical infrastructure has complicated the process. Cadastral issues have significantly impacted both agricultural and urban areas, disrupting development activities. Enhancing infrastructure, utilizing modern technologies, and redefining boundaries through international cooperation are vital for resolving these issues.



Property rights are recognized as a fundamental element of international law. In Syria, protecting and re-establishing the property rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) require the effective implementation of protection mechanisms provided under international law. In the post-war era, ensuring the enforceability of legislative regulations within Syrian law and addressing grievances through international cooperation are of paramount importance.

Findings Within The Scope Field Studies

Fieldwork in Syria has revealed in detail the common problems faced in different parts of

the country. These problems are concentrated in the main areas that negatively affect the daily life and economic activities of the people and constitute the issues that need to be addressed as a priority in the reconstruction process of Syria.



1. Infrastructure Deficiencies:

Severe damage to electricity, water, road, and communication infrastructure has severely restricted access to essential services. This issue is particularly acute in rural areas, where the situation is even more dire. These deficiencies, which are crucial for daily life, also substantially hinder economic activities.

2. Economic Challenges:

The country faces severe economic difficulties, including high unemployment rates, the collapse of agricultural and industrial sectors, and the closure of trade routes. These challenges have significantly slowed economic recovery, depleting people's income sources and worsening living conditions. Rural residents, in particular, face insurmountable difficulties due to the cessation of economic activities.

3. Access to Education and Healthcare:

The destruction of schools and hospitals has severely limited access to education and healthcare services. This collapse in basic services has deeply affected vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and others. The lack of educational opportunities further restricts the region's long-term development potential.

4. Housing and Settlement Issues:

Widespread destruction has created an urgent need for safe and sustainable housing. Many families have been left without adequate shelter due to the war. Permanent housing projects are urgently needed to facilitate the return of displaced persons and refugees. Meeting housing needs is not just a physical necessity but also a critical factor for social stability and se-



curity.

5. Security Deficiencies:

The lack of security has negatively impacted daily life and the reconstruction process. Coordination issues between regions and persistent security concerns threaten social order and complicate recovery efforts. Without security, the continuation of daily life and participation in economic activities become impossible..

6. Collapse of Agricultural and Industrial Activities:

The collapse of agricultural and industrial activities has severely impacted the local economy. The breakdown of irrigation systems and the inability of farmers to produce have jeopardized food security. The destruction of industrial facilities has further eroded the foundation for economic recovery. This decline in agricultural and industrial activities has had serious adverse effects on both rural and urban economies in Syria.

These findings summarize the fundamental challenges that need to be addressed as priorities in Syria's reconstruction process. Resolving these issues will not only meet the basic needs of the population but also enable the country to achieve stability and sustainable development.

Solution Suggestions Within the Scope of Field Studies

In the aftermath of the devastation and crises in Syria, field studies have revealed comprehensive solutions to ensure the success of the reconstruction process. From infrastructure to economy, education to security, these recommendations include concrete steps to meet the basic needs of the people and put the country on the path to sustainable development.

1. Rebuilding Infrastructure

One of the priority objectives in the reconstruction of Syria is to repair the severely damaged infrastructure and restore its functionality. Addressing the deficiencies in basic infrastructure elements such as electricity, water, roads and communications is critical for the resumption of economic activities as well as facilitating the

daily lives of the population. Access to basic services has become almost impossible, especially in rural areas. Therefore, comprehensive infrastructure projects need to be implemented and executed in a sustainable manner.

2. Economic Revival

Syria's high unemployment rates and the stagnation of economic activities have severely limited the people's livelihoods. In order to revive the economy, financial support should be provided to businesses and international trade should be facilitated by ensuring the security of trade routes. Projects that encourage local production should be implemented. In addition, innovative financial instruments such as microcredit can be used to support the rural economy. These initiatives will accelerate regional economic development by restrengthening the agricultural and industrial sectors.

3. Improving Education and Healthcare Services

Schools and hospitals, which have been severely damaged by the conflict, must be rebuilt. Access to education and healthcare is critical, especially for vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly. Ensuring equal opportunities in education will enhance Syria's long-term development potential. Similarly, expanding access to healthcare services will improve quality of life and strengthen societal resilience.

4. Housing and Settlement Projects

The destruction caused by the war has created an urgent need for safe and sustainable housing. Permanent housing projects must be prioritized to support the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Additionally, temporary shelters should be made more functional,

and disaster-resistant structures should be constructed to contribute to societal stability.

5. Ensuring Security

Security is a basic necessity for the daily life of the population and the healthy progress of the reconstruction process. Security mechanisms should be strengthened through local and international cooperation. Interregional coordination should be enhanced and policies should be developed to promote social cohesion. Without security, other development activities cannot be successful.

6. Supporting Agricultural and Industrial Activities

Increasing agricultural production is a critical objective for Syria's food security and rural development. In this context, irrigation systems should be repaired and farmers should be provided with equipment. In addition, re-establishment of industrial facilities will ensure the inclusion of the labor force in economic life. Encouraging agricultural cooperatives will make a significant contribution to economic development by increasing production.

7. International Support and Long-Term Development

The international community's contribution to Syria's reconstruction is vital. International organizations and donor countries should contribute to the implementation of long-term projects such as health, education and infrastructure development by providing technical and financial support. The formulation of policies to support sustainable development and the mobilization of international funds to this end is a critical requirement for Syria's future stability and development.

These recommendations offer concrete steps to overcome the challenges Syria faces in its post-war reconstruction process and to meet the basic needs of the population. Successful reconstruction will not only support the stabilization of Syria, but also regional peace and security.

UNHCR's Opinion on the Events

UNHCR has published an update on the situation of return to Syria. The document generally reads as follows: UNHCR continues to call for the forcible return of former habitual residents of Syria, including Syrian nationals and Palestinians formerly residing in Syria, to any part of Syria for the time being. UNHCR also continues to call on all States to allow civilians fleeing Syria to enter their territory, to guarantee their right to seek asylum and to respect the principle of non-refoulement in all circumstances. (https://www.refworld.org/policy/countrypos/unhcr/2024/en/149254?prevDestination=search&prevPath=/search?sort=ds_created&order=desc&result=result=result-149254-en) E.T.07.01.2025

Conclusion and General Evaluation

The prolonged conflict in Syria has left deep scars on the country's political, economic, humanitarian, and infrastructural framework. This report sheds light on the reconstruction process following the end of the regime, offering a comprehensive analysis and solution proposals to facilitate the safe and dignified return of refugees and IDPs. Field studies have clearly demonstrated the scale of destruction across the country and the fundamental issues faced by the population. Deficiencies in infrastructure services such as electricity, water, transportation, and communication have made daily life unsustainable. The

collapse of the education and healthcare systems has deeply affected vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly. The near-total halt of economic activities has led to rising unemployment rates and the depletion of income sources. Additionally, security risks and political uncertainties have tested the population's hopes for the future.

The solutions proposed in this report address not only the existing challenges but also offer concrete steps to support Syria's transition toward sustainable development and peace. Strategies such as rebuilding infrastructure, accelerating economic growth, improving education and healthcare services, ensuring security, and supporting the agricultural and industrial sectors aim to address both short-term humanitarian needs and long-term development goals.

International support plays a decisive role in this process. Syria's reconstruction is of great importance not only for the country's population but also for regional stability and global peace. Therefore, international organizations, donor countries, and civil society organizations should increase financial and technical assistance while contributing to the formulation of policies that support sustainable development.

Ensuring the safe and dignified return of temporary protected persons and IDPs is a critical step for Syria to rebuild its social harmony and heal its wounds. In this context, implementing housing projects, psychosocial support programs, economic incentives, and social cohesion mechanisms is of paramount importance.

The reconstruction of Syria is achievable not only through the repair of physical infrastructure but also through the re-establishment of social solidarity, peace, and stability. This process must be advanced not only on a national

level but also through international cooperation and coordination. For the Syrian people to look toward the future with hope, ensuring their rights and providing humane living conditions will require determination, cooperation, and a long-term vision.

In conclusion, the success of Syria's reconstruction process depends on meeting the population's basic needs, fostering economic growth, ensuring security, and maintaining consistent international support. This report provides a robust roadmap for effectively managing this process and building a peaceful future. With the collective efforts of the Syrian people and the international community, it is possible for the country to rise again and contribute to regional peace.



AFTER THE ASSAD REGİME
**REPORT ON RETURN MIGRATION
TO SYRIA AND INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS**



Refugee^{International}
Rights Association
ULUSLARARASI MÜLTECI HAKLARI DERNEĞİ