

Syria Update

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Tightening Belts on Empty Stomachs: Ukraine Crisis to Take Syria from Bad to Worse

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The clashes may reflect a heightened alert status as a result of the Ukraine crisis. Pg 6

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While stipulating that all returns will be voluntary, the announcement presents further considerations for donor and aid agencies. Pg 6

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Service-related protests reflect public discontent in Arab-majority areas. Pg 9

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Russian Defence Minister Sergi Shoigu meet in Damascus on 15 February. Disruptions resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine will prompt shortages and price hikes for many essential commodities in Syria, such as wheat supplies and fodder for livestock. Image courtesy of SANA.



WEEKLY SYRIA UPDATE DIGEST



Syria in 2022

Although conflict in Syria has slowed considerably, humanitarian needs continue to rise. Aid actors have struggled to adapt. To do so, they must recognise that the crisis in Syria is arguably undergoing a paradigm shift. This report, a forecast for the year 2022, offers guidance to aid actors seeking to move beyond outmoded emergency response approaches to achieve more substantive, lasting change.

[READ MORE](#)



The Future of LGBTQ+ Syria and the Aid Response

LGBTQ+ Syrians face specific challenges, including healthcare disparities, legal discrimination, social prejudice, and the aid sector's unpreparedness to meet resulting needs. This report explores regional case studies to identify programming opportunities and entry points to meet these needs and empower and support LGBTQ+ Syrians.

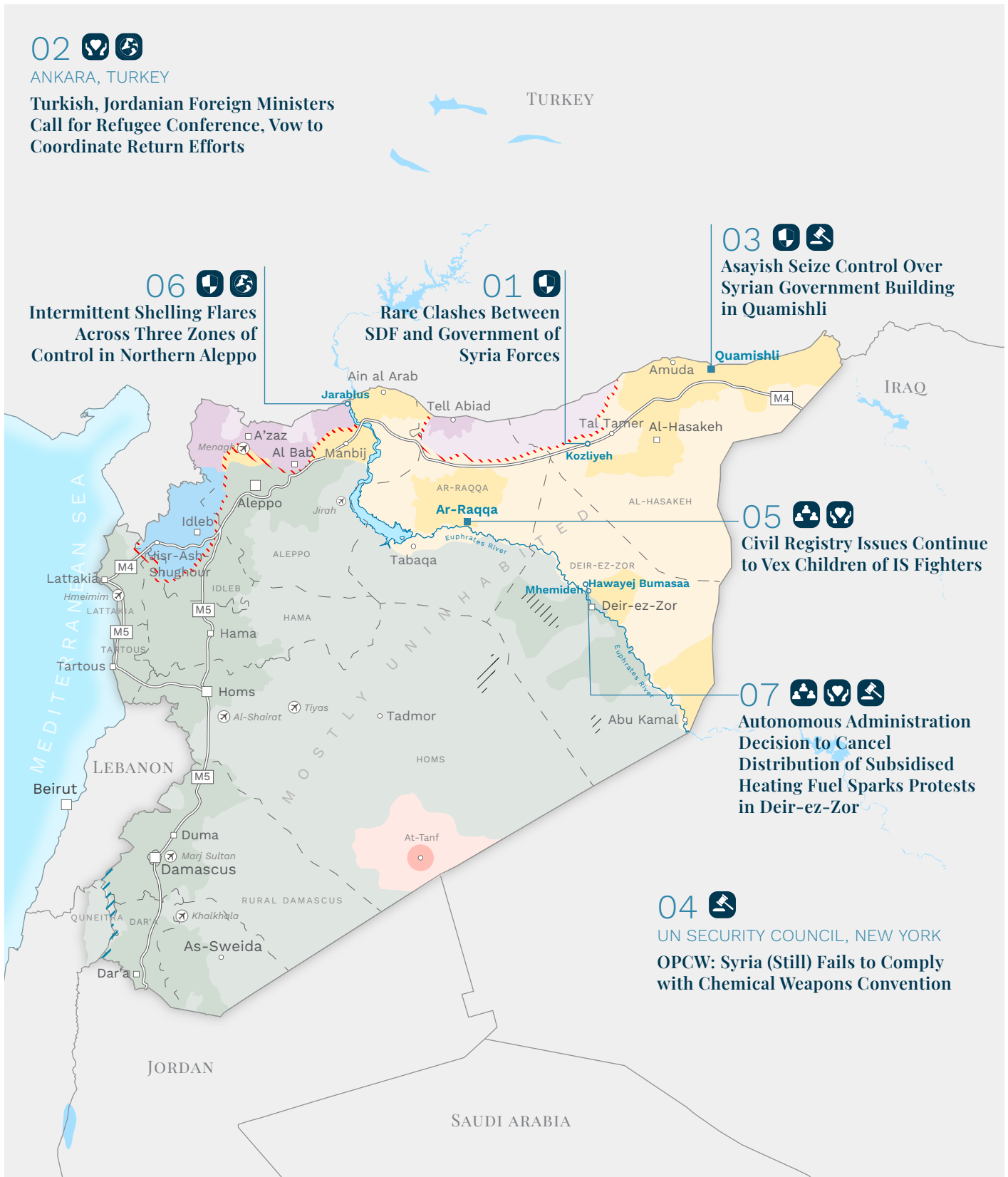
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The following is a brief synopsis of the *In-Depth Analysis* section:

The Syrian Government has announced spending cuts as it braces for the fallout of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Damascus anticipates shortages and price hikes, namely in oil and food commodities and transportation costs. Wheat supply issues are arguably the most significant, but the availability and affordability of all food products in Syria's markets are also at risk. The Syrian population has never been more vulnerable, nor the state more fragile. This reality will inevitably exacerbate popular discontent and overall instability, potentially pushing people to extreme coping measures. Aid actors should see these events as a wake-up call over the urgency of the resilience and recovery initiatives they have been slow to endorse and implement. Such initiatives may be the only way to insulate Syrians from such external shocks as the Syrian state loses capacity to do so itself.

The following is a brief synopsis of the *Whole-of-Syria Review*:

- 01 On 1 March, clashes erupted between the SDF and Government of Syria troops near the village of Kozliyah in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Two people from each side were killed. Armed clashes such as this are relatively rare in northeast Syria, and may reflect a heightened alert status as a result of the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- 02 On 2 March, the Jordanian and Turkish foreign ministers agreed to coordinate to facilitate voluntary return of Syrian refugees. Regional refugee issues are returning to the spotlight, lending host nations greater leverage over European actors.
- 03 On 25 February, the Asayish seized the Syrian Government's Social Security and Labour building near the security square in Quamishli City. Despite the non-aggression pact between the Syrian Government and the SDF, occasional confrontations reveal underlying tensions and governance aspirations.
- 04 On 28 February, the UN Representative for Disarmament Affairs reported Syria's continued failure to comply with the OPCW's reporting requirements. Damascus' noncompliance is a pertinent reminder of the limitations inherent to coordinated negotiations frameworks and international obligations with the Government of Syria.
- 05 On 28 February, local media reported that dozens of Syrian women who married IS foreign fighters in Ar-Raqqa have not been able to register their children in the Syrian official civil registry. Leaving the children of IS fighters unregistered risks compounding their vulnerabilities, preventing them from enjoying their basic rights, and fuelling grievances that in the long term makes them more susceptible to radicalisation.
- 06 On 1 March, SDF mortar shells targeted residential neighbourhoods in the opposition-controlled city of Jarablus in Aleppo's eastern countryside. Tensions in northern Aleppo countryside, although currently small-scale and intermittent, continue to affect civilians in the region and reflect the governorate's division between four zones of control.
- 07 On 28 February, residents of two towns in northwest Deir-ez-Zor protested the Autonomous Administration's decision to reallocate subsidised heating fuel to farmers. Service-related protests have become increasingly pronounced in northeast Syria, particularly in Arab-majority areas, speaking to issues of governance and inequality.



02  

ANKARA, TURKEY

Turkish, Jordanian Foreign Ministers Call for Refugee Conference, Vow to Coordinate Return Efforts

06  

Intermittent Shelling Flares Across Three Zones of Control in Northern Aleppo

01 

Rare Clashes Between SDF and Government of Syria Forces

03  

Asayish Seize Control Over Syrian Government Building in Quamishli

05  

Civil Registry Issues Continue to Vex Children of IS Fighters




07   



Autonomous Administration Decision to Cancel Distribution of Subsidised Heating Fuel Sparks Protests in Deir-ez-Zor

04 

**UN SECURITY COUNCIL, NEW YORK
OPCW: Syria (Still) Fails to Comply with Chemical Weapons Convention**

Population Density

-  Major city (750,000+)
-  City (100,000+)
-  Town (25,000+)

-  Governorate
-  Military airbase

100 km

Territorial Control

LOW POPULATION DENSITY

-  Government of Syria
-  Syrian Democratic Forces
-  Syrian National Army
-  US-Backed Opposition Groups
-  Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
-  Islamic State presence
-  Contested area
-  UN Disengagement Observer Force

Type Of Incident

-  Humanitarian Issues
-  Social
-  Regional Intervention
-  Security
-  Economy
-  Governance

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

As the world scrambles in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, on 24 February the Syrian Government convened an "exceptional meeting" to deal with the ramifications of the invasion. The Syrian Prime Ministry [issued a statement](#) outlining 'action points' to deal with the invasion's consequences over the next two months, namely anticipated shortages and price surges in oil, food commodities, and transportation costs. The meeting set the grounds for wide-ranging austerity measures: rationing reserves of food products, prioritising and expediting imports of basic materials, restraining exports to feed domestic demand, "studying the possibility" of lowering the costs of essential products, and establishing a plan to ration the distribution of fuel products. The Government will also place tighter controls on market prices and the currency exchange rate, further limit its public spending, and prioritise its foreign currency reserves to import wheat, a necessity for bread and therefore an essential component of the Syrian diet. While likely necessary given the state's limited capacity to deal with external shocks such as the Ukraine crisis, the austerity measures will heighten the vulnerability of the Syrian population, many of whom already face dire living conditions.

On empty stomachs

Wheat supply issues are the most significant impact of the unfolding crisis in Ukraine to be seen thus far. Even before the invasion of Ukraine, food prices in Syria had increased [by 86 percent](#) compared to last year. A severe drought in 2021 ruined hopes for the "year of wheat" championed by the Syrian Government, with domestic wheat production falling by more than 60 percent compared to 2020 (see: [Syria Update 10 January 2022](#)). Syrians' annual consumption of wheat ranges around [4 million tonnes](#), of which it is estimated that [10 percent](#) is secured through [Russian imports](#). Previous Russian pledges to sell 1 million tonnes of wheat to Syria throughout 2022 [were suspended](#) due to fluctuations in global wheat prices. Both Russia and Ukraine are major exporters of food products, especially grains, and dis-

F *The war in Ukraine has consequences for Syria which aid actors and donor governments can do little to mitigate directly. Nonetheless, these events should be taken as a wake-up call over the urgency of the resilience and recovery initiatives the aid community has been slow to endorse, let alone implement.*

ruptions resulting from the ongoing invasion will likely threaten the already fragile state of food security across Syria — and indeed in other import-reliant countries in the region, many of which host Syrian refugees in large numbers. All this compounds the immense fragility across state institutions and domestic markets, making some of the most severe predictions of [famine](#) all the more likely (see: [Syria Update 10 January 2022](#)).

Expected shocks jeopardise the availability and affordability of many other products in the Syrian market. Syria's livestock reserves have already shrunk by [30 to 50 percent](#) compared to 2010 levels due to the inability to secure fodder at increasingly high prices. Global market prices are likely to be driven even higher by the conflict in Ukraine — a major fodder exporter. Adding to the pressure felt across the market as a whole are the rising cost of fuel products and disruptions in supply chains, adding to increased production and transportation costs. Currently, Syria's oil imports are mainly from Iran, facilitated through a credit line that forgoes the need for immediate cash payments. However, rising global oil prices could raise suspicions over the Syrian Government's ability to foot the growing bill. If the Ukraine crisis does drive up global energy prices, as is likely, it risks Syria's imports and increases Damascus' obligations towards Tehran.

Conditions will likely worsen

The Syrian population has never been more vulnerable, nor the state more fragile. Over [60 percent](#) of Syrians (more than 12 million people) are food insecure, and 90 percent already live in poverty, figures which have likely already grown. The Government has already with-

drawn much of its support to its dysfunctional subsidy system and struggles to maintain current accounts. Actions now underway may have unintended consequences. For instance, suspending exports to prioritise domestic need will further limit hard currency inflows. Since the invasion of Ukraine, the Syrian pound has shed 7 percent of its value, dropping to roughly 3,850 SYP/USD, a low not seen since March 2021. Global price shocks, financial upset, or further actions in Ukraine may continue to undermine Syrians' purchasing power.

This reality will inevitably exacerbate popular discontent and overall instability, potentially pushing people to extreme coping measures. Discontent is already being voiced across Government territories (see [Syria Update February 14, 2022](#)) amid a notable rise in [reported crime levels](#). This is unlikely to prompt nationwide mobilisation against the Government or large-scale confrontations, however, given the Government's strong security grip and tendency to punish disobedience unsparingly.

The urgent need for resilience

The war in Ukraine has consequences for Syria which aid actors and donor governments can do little to mitigate directly. Nonetheless, these events should be taken as a wake-up call over the urgency of the resilience and recovery initiatives the aid community has been slow to endorse, let alone implement. While the Government of Syria [has long embraced](#) an ideology of austerity, current cutbacks in state support to the vulnerable are a product of Syria's increasing isolation and desperation. External shocks like the Ukraine crisis lay bare the fragility of the status quo in Syria.

Building the Syrian Government's capacity under current conditions is anathema to principled aid intervention in Syria, but donors can and should shore up the resilience of the Syrian people. Focusing on market-based interventions, promoting [area-based solidarities](#) that do not rely on state institutions or empower malign actors, and revisiting neglected concepts like small-to-medium enterprises (SME) and civil society space can shed greater light on avenues for delivering much-needed relief that goes beyond emergency humanitarian assistance. But with persistent funding shortages and little room to manoeuvre, aid actors in Syria could quickly find themselves struggling to deal with a crisis in Syria that continues to worsen, even as global attention shifts elsewhere (see: [Syria in 2022: New Aid Approaches For an Evolving Crisis](#)).

WHOLE OF SYRIA REVIEW



01 KOZLIYEH, AL-HASAKEH GOVERNORATE

Rare Clashes Between SDF and Government of Syria Forces

On 1 March, [clashes](#) erupted between the SDF and Government of Syria troops near the village of Kozliyah, west of Tal Tamer in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Two people were killed on each side. One of the casualties was [Rustam Sido](#), a leader in the Tal Tamer Military Council, the local SDF-affiliated military force. According to reports, the confrontation broke out when Government of Syria forces blocked the passage of an SDF-escorted US patrol. US forces did not intervene in the clashes. Each side [blamed](#) the [other](#) for the escalation. A 2 March [meeting](#) between Government of Syria and SDF representatives at a Russian military base near Tal Tamer failed to produce an agreement to resolve the tensions.

Increased risk of misfires amid geopolitical tensions

Armed clashes such as this are relatively rare in north-east Syria, and may reflect a heightened alert status as a result of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Government of Syria forces operate a limited number of checkpoints and bases in northeast Syria, the result of a 2019 agreement with the SDF aimed at countering the Turkish intervention in areas east of the Euphrates (see: [Syria Update 16 October 2019](#)). US patrols are regularly [prevented](#) from passing through these areas, though this does not usually escalate into open confrontation. Clashes previously arose from checkpoint disputes in April 2021, which were resolved through Russian mediation (see: [Syria Update 26 April 2021](#)). Nevertheless, Russia's role as a mediator in the region may come under pressure as the war in Ukraine calls into question alliances globally. In a fast-changing geopolitical environment, donors and the aid sector should be aware that relations between the Russia-backed Government of Syria forces and the US-backed SDF could deteriorate rapidly, risking further clashes throughout the region.

Russia's role as a mediator in the region may come under pressure as the war in Ukraine calls into question alliances globally.



02 ANKARA, TURKEY

Turkish, Jordanian Foreign Ministers Call for Refugee Conference, Vow to Coordinate Return Efforts

During a 2 March press conference held in Turkey, the Turkish and Jordanian foreign ministers [announced](#) joint efforts to facilitate the voluntary return of displaced Syrians residing in the two countries. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi both expressed interest in a ministerial conference focused on identifying a path forward regarding returns. Such a conference would be the first of its kind held between countries that took a direct stance against the Syrian Government in the early years of the conflict.

Durable solutions for Syrians – and Syria's neighbours

Turkey and Jordan's bilateral move risks upending the status quo long favoured by European states, in which refugee communities are kept in areas surrounding Syria in exchange for support (such as the recently renewed [Emergency Safety Social Net](#) in Turkey). The push for returns is likely motivated by Turkish, and to a lesser extent Jordanian, domestic political interests. The Turkish government is keen to curry popular favour ahead of an election year amid surging [anti-migrant sentiments](#) among Turkish communities. Despite a more amenable social environment for Syrian refugees in Jordan, [deportation threats](#) and dismal employment prospects provide push factors to return, while Amman has yet to present a sustainable policy solution (see: [Syria Update 7 February 2022](#)). Such a return strategy may be a backdoor effort to apply pressure on European donors for further funding or other concessions. Europe's enthusiastic reception of Ukrainian refugees has brought already-sensitive refugee issues into the public consciousness among Syria's neighbours. Donor governments should anticipate greater politicisation of regional refugee issues in coming months. Proactively, they can lay greater emphasis on initiatives to address legitimate grievances over refugee issues, including by supporting the search for so-called durable solutions to the protracted displacement crisis, which shows no sign of ending.



03 QUAMISHLI CITY,
AL-HASAKEH GOVERNORATE

Asayish Seize Control Over Syrian Government Building in Quamishli

On 25 February, the SDF-aligned Asayish seized the Social Security and Labour building bordering the Syrian Government-controlled security square in Quamishli City. What triggered the incident is not immediately clear. The building housed a security apparatus base and other Government departments. Members of the Asayish removed the centre's banner, smashed pictures of President Bashar al-Assad, took down Syrian flags, and barred entry. The takeover has reportedly led to difficulties for locals, including teachers and retired civil servants, who collected their wages and completed other administrative procedures at the centre.

A fragile pact

Despite a de facto non-aggression pact between the Syrian Government and the SDF and their cooperation against mutual opponents such as the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, occasional confrontations reveal underlying tensions. The SDF have aimed to impose their full control over civil institutions beyond Government of Syria-held security square areas in Quamishli and Al-Hasakah cities, seizing more than ten service centres and institutions affiliated with the Syrian Government in the past two years alone. This and similar incidents speak to the ongoing power struggle in northeast Syria, which has nonetheless remained relatively dormant since April 2021, when the SDF took control of Tayy neighbourhood, the main stronghold of the Syrian Government-aligned National Defence Forces (NDF) in Quamishli (see: [Syria Update 26 April 2021](#)). Powerful external actors, including the US, Russia, and Turkey, and affiliated local actors, harbour contrasting visions for post-conflict governance in Syria, and confrontations over who controls civil infrastructure are a major fault line. Differences between their views lay the groundwork for future confrontations that risk local clashes, flash displacements, and service interruptions.



04 UN SECURITY COUNCIL, NEW YORK

OPCW: Syria (Still) Fails to Comply with Chemical Weapons Convention

On 28 February, the UN Representative for Disarmament Affairs presented an update on UN Security Council [Resolution 2118](#), regarding the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme, and stated that "declarations submitted by Syria cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention". Information provided by Syria to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, has gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies. Meanwhile, Syria has refused to issue an entry visa for a member of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team, preventing its deployment to Damascus. On 24 January, OPCW published its most recent report concerning chemical weapons use in Syria, in which it confirmed two incidents in Marea, Aleppo Governorate, in September 2015.

Damascus out of 'step' as negotiations frameworks founder

Compliance with OPCW requirements is one of the major Western red lines that has remained unaddressed throughout the conflict in Syria. Damascus' refusal is a pertinent reminder of the limitations inherent to coordinated negotiations frameworks and international obligations with the Government of Syria. The use of chemical weapons has been one of the most troubling aspects of the Syria conflict, and has led to specific [EU sanctions](#) as well as attempts at accountability through lawsuits in Germany (see: [Syria Update 12 October 2020](#)) and Sweden (see: [Syria Update 26 April 2021](#)). Syria has also been subjected to the unprecedented step of having its voting rights in the OPCW suspended (see: [Syria Update 12 April 2021](#)). The Government of Syria's intransigence imperils from the outset the nascent "step-by-step" approach to engagement with Damascus, as its stonewalling will likely extend to other areas of concern, such as humanitarian access and the release of political prisoners (as indeed it has throughout the war). Donor governments looking for evidence of more constructive engagement by Damascus on the international community's demands need not hold their breath.



05 AR-RAQQA

Civil Registry Issues Continue to Vex Children of IS Fighters

On 28 February, local media [reported](#) that dozens of Syrian women who married Islamic State (IS) foreign fighters in Ar-Raqqa while the group controlled the city have been unable to register their marriages and children in the Syrian civil registry. Although the Autonomous Administration [created](#) a civil registry in 2017 Ar-Raqqa to allow these marriages to be registered, many locals continue to opt for the Syrian Government-affiliated civil registry, which categorises children of IS fighters as “non-registered”, even when the fathers’ identity is known. The Syrian Government’s [personal status law](#) of 2007 defines “non-registered” persons as those whose father or parents are registered in the Syrian civil records, or have Syrian citizenship, but were not themselves registered within 30 days of birth.

Children at risk

The children of IS fighters already face [stigma](#). Leaving them unregistered may compound their vulnerabilities, prevent them from enjoying their basic rights, and fuel grievances that make them more susceptible to military recruitment or even radicalisation in the long term. Non-registered children cannot benefit from state services such as healthcare or education. Down the road, they will be unable to own property or carry out other state transactions that require official registration, or to register their marriages and children. Beyond the direct impact on their lives and livelihoods, such exclusion will amplify political and social grievances, which may be exploited by various armed actors, IS, or other radical groups. While the Autonomous Administration has started issuing identification cards for foreign women with perceived IS affiliation residing in al-Hol camp (see: [Syria Update 21 February 2022](#)), it remains unclear how it will deal with these “non-registered” children. Aid actors should avail themselves of their access to these areas and push for inclusive policies that provide these children with official documents to preserve their civil rights and help integrate them into their community, although the issue of dual registration and non-recognition by Damascus will be more difficult to resolve.



06 JARABLUS, ALEPPO GOVERNORATE

Intermittent Shelling Flares Across Three Zones of Control in Northern Aleppo

On 1 March, SDF mortar shells [targeted](#) residential neighbourhoods in the opposition-controlled city of Jarablus in Aleppo’s eastern countryside. This follows multiple recent shelling incidents in northern Aleppo Governorate. On 28 February, one civilian was [wounded](#) by shelling on the National Hospital in the city of A’zaz from areas controlled by the Government of Syria and the SDF. On 27 February, a Turkish drone [targeted](#) Syrian Government forces on a hill in the town of Tall Refaat, with no casualties reported. On 15 February, [three people](#) were killed and others were wounded by shelling targeting the centre of A’zaz, which observers said came from areas controlled by the SDF and Syrian Government forces.

Continued instability is expected

Tensions in northern Aleppo countryside, although currently small-scale and intermittent, continue to affect civilians in the region and reflect the governorate’s division between the Government of Syria, the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration, Turkish-backed opposition factions, and Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Since the Turkish-backed factions took control of areas north of Aleppo, the area has been subjected to repeated bombardments, the majority of which reportedly have been carried out by armed factions associated with the SDF. One of the most concerning incidents was the two-part rocket attack in Afrin City last summer. The first salvo targeted residential neighbourhoods, and the second targeted Shifa’a Hospital, killing 22 and injuring 50 (see: [Syria Update 21 June 2021](#)). The SDF has repeatedly denied responsibility for such attacks, although there are seldom plausible alternatives. Aid actors should be aware that violence in Ukraine may distract Moscow and put local armed actors in Syria on high alert, increasing the risk of smaller-scale conflicts as all sides seek to pressure their antagonists and foreign sponsors. This risk is especially pertinent in Idleb, where Russia and Turkey — which are at odds with each other over Ukraine — have clashed through proxies and directly.



07 MHEMIDEH AND HAWAYEJ BUMASAA,
DEIR-EZ-ZOR GOVERNORATE

Autonomous Administration Decision to Cancel Distribution of Subsidised Heating Fuel Sparks Protests in Deir-ez-Zor

On 28 February, residents of two towns in northwest Deir-ez-Zor took to the streets in continuing [protests](#) against the Autonomous Administration's decision to reallocate subsidised domestic heating fuel to farmers. The director of the Autonomous Administration's General Fuel Department [stated](#) that the authority's hand had been forced by the region-wide drought, which increased demand for fuel from farmers, who rely on pump-driven water extraction. The protestors blocked the main roads with burning tires while the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) sent reinforcements to the area in a bid to contain the protests.

Equality first

Service-related protests have become increasingly pronounced in northeast Syria, particularly in Arab-majority areas, speaking to broader issues of governance and social and political inequalities (see: [Northeast Syria Social Tensions and Stability Monitoring Pilot Project May 2021](#)). In January, the Autonomous Administration cracked down on 100 protestors demonstrating against fuel and bread shortages in Al-Suwaydiyah village in western Ar-Raqqa Governorate (see: [Syria Update 17 January 2022](#)), while security forces broke up a protest against the increase in prices and monopoly over food commodities in the Al-Salhiya neighbourhood of Al-Hasakeh City (see: [Syria Update 24 January 2022](#)). The protests also speak to issues of political exclusion in the Kurdish-dominated Autonomous Administration, in which Arab influence in decision-making processes is limited. While the cancellation of subsidised heating fuel impacts both Kurdish and Arab communities, Arab-majority areas tend to see poorer availability and quality of services to begin with, making cuts more keenly felt. For aid actors, it is important to understand that public discontent over deteriorating living conditions in northeast Syria is exacerbated in Arab-majority areas by feelings of social and political exclusion. Such sentiments, particularly in agricultural areas, will become more acute as water resource issues and environmental concerns go unaddressed.

OPEN SOURCE ANNEX

Open Source Annex

The Open Source Annex highlights key media reports, research, and primary documents that are not examined in the Syria Update. For a continuously updated collection of such records, searchable by geography, theme, and conflict actor – and curated to meet the needs of decision-makers – please see COAR’s comprehensive online search platform [Alexandrina](#).

Note: These records are solely the responsibility of their creators. COAR does not necessarily endorse – or confirm – the viewpoints expressed by these sources.

Syria: The Consequences of New Urban Plans in Alhajar Al Aswad, Sbench, Jaramana, and Yalda

What does it say? The misuse of urban planning laws is allowing the Government of Syria to appropriate and demolish property for development.

Reading between the lines: Housing, land, and property rights are a cross-cutting and increasingly pressing issue, particularly for the large number of IDPs throughout the country. Aid actors should recognise this as a key area for the humanitarian response.

Source: [Syrians for Truth and Justice](#)

Language: English

Date: 24 February 2022

Ratified Plan Doubles the Size of At Tall City, Rural Damascus

What does it say? The At Tall municipal council approved the massive expansion of the city, which lies to the north of Damascus.

Reading between the lines: New construction is sorely needed in At Tall, which hosts a large number of IDPs and is an important centre of trade for the surrounding area. The details of land and property ownership will, however, determine whether it will help those most in need or allow money to flow into the pockets of regime-aligned developers.

Source: SANA

Language: Arabic

Date: 23 February 2022

Syria: Has the Recruitment of Syrian Fighters Towards Ukraine Begun?

What does it say? Syrian security services have begun registering the names of experienced urban warfare fighters, while armed opposition groups are collecting names to back Ukraine without official Turkish endorsement.

Reading between the lines: The lack of livelihood opportunities and challenging living conditions in Syria leave veterans with little choice but to register to fight abroad, for which wages are often lucrative.

Source: [Syrians for Truth and Justice](#)

Language: English

Date: 4 March 2022

161 Civilians Documented Killed in Syria in February 2022

What does it say? The report found a significant increase in the civilian death toll, with 77 killed at the hands of the regime, including 56 from Deir Elasafir town in Rural Damascus who died in Government custody.

Reading between the lines:

The issue of detainees is a key point of mobilisation for Syrian diaspora groups, and among the top priorities in a “step-by-step” approach to engagement with Damascus. Continued deaths in custody show that the Government of Syria has made little progress in this regard.

Source: Syrian Network for Human Rights
Language: English
Date: 1 March 2022

Undeportable (Part I): The Syrians trapped in Danish limbo

What does it say? Denmark has begun revoking the residency permits of Syrian refugees after deeming Damascus and Rural Damascus “safe” for refugee return, although they cannot actually be deported as there is no bilateral agreement with the Government of Syria.

Reading between the lines:

Revocations apply only to those who were granted asylum based on the “general circumstances of war”. Nevertheless, the Government of Syria remains a gross violator of human rights, rendering life in its territories dangerous, not least for those who may be viewed as opponents.

Source: Syria Direct
Language: English
Date: 4 March 2022

Opposition-Affiliated Fund Received EUR 31.1 million For Early Recovery Projects in 2021

What does it say?

The donations go toward early recovery projects in northern Aleppo and northeast Syria.

Reading between the lines:

Although the Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF) has arguably fallen out of favour among some donors, its emphasis on early recovery projects and stabilisation activities is notable and a sign of continued momentum for projects that advance beyond emergency assistance.

Source: Syria Report
Language: English
Date: 22 February 2022

The Wartime and Post-Conflict Syria project (WPCS) is funded by the European Union and implemented through a partnership between the European University Institute (Middle East Directions Programme) and the Center for Operational Analysis and Research (COAR). WPCS will provide operational and strategic analysis to policymakers and programmers concerning prospects, challenges, trends, and policy options with respect to a mid-conflict and post-conflict Syria. WPCS also aims to stimulate new approaches and policy responses to the Syrian conflict through a regular dialogue between researchers, policymakers and donors, and implementers, as well as to build a new network of Syrian researchers who will contribute to research informing international policy and practice related to their country.

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