

SYRIA



SYRIA

Syrian Arab Republic

الجمهورية العربية السورية (Arabic)
al-Jumhūrīyah al-'Arabīyah as-Sūriyah



Flag



Coat of arms

Anthem: "حماة الديار" (Arabic)
"Humat ad-Diyar"
(English: "Guardians of the Homeland")



Show globe

Show map of Syria

Show all

Location of Syria (green)
Areas not held by government (light green)

SYRIA

Capital and largest city	Damascus  33°30'N 36°18'E
Official languages	Arabic
Ethnic groups	Syrian Arabs · Arameans · Kurds · Turkomans · Assyrians · Circassians · Armenians
Religion	90% Islam 6% Christianity 4% Druzism ^{[1][2]}
Demonym(s)	Syrian
Government	Unitary dominant-party semi-presidential republic ^[3]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Prime Minister • Vice Presidents • Speaker of the People's Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bashar al-Assad Imad Khamis Farouk al-Sharaa Najah al-Attar Hammouda Sabbagh

Legislature	People's Council
Establishment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclamation of Arab Kingdom of Syria • State of Syria established under French Mandate • Syrian Republic established by merger of States of Jabal Druze, Alawites and Syria • Independence <i>de jure</i> (Joint UN / French Mandate ended) • Syrian Republic (1946–1963) independent (French troops leave) • Secession from the United Arab Republic • Ba'ath party takes power • Current constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 March 1920 1 December 1924 1930 24 October 1945 17 April 1946 28 September 1961 8 March 1963 27 February 2012

SYRIA

Area <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total	185,180 ^[4] km ² (71,500 sq mi) (87th)	Gini (2014)	55.8 ^[6] high
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water (%)	1.1	HDI (2018)	— 0.536 ^[7] low · 155th
Population <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2019 estimate	▼ 18,528,105 (63rd)	Currency	Syrian pound (SYP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2010 census	21,018,834	Time zone <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer (DST)	UTC+2 (EET) UTC+3 (EEST)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Density	118.3/km ² (306.4/sq mi) (70th)	Driving side	right
GDP (PPP) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total	2015 estimate \$50.28 billion ^[5]	Calling code	+963
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Per capita	\$2,900 ^[5]	ISO 3166 code	SY
GDP (nominal) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total	2014 estimate \$24.6 billion ^[5] (167)	Internet TLD	.sy .سوريا
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Per capita	\$831 ^[5]		

SYRIA

Once the centre of the Islamic Caliphate, Syria covers an area that has seen invasions and occupations over the ages, from Romans and Mongols to Crusaders and Turks.

A country of fertile plains, high mountains and deserts, it is home to diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Christians, Druze, Alawite Shia and Arab Sunnis, the last of whom make up a majority of the Muslim population.



SYRIA



LIFE EXPECTANCY
72 (M) 77 (W)



CAPITAL
Damascus



LARGEST CITY
Aleppo



NATIONALITY
Syrian



RELIGIONS
Islam, Druze,
Christianity

SYRIA OVERVIEW



CURRENCY
Syrian
Pound (SYP)



POPULATION
17,549,143
(2017)



LANGUAGES
Arabic, Kurdish, Armenian,
Aramaic, Circassian



AGRICULTURE
Wheat, Beef, Milk, Beets, Sugar,
Lentils, Barley, Eggs, Cotton,
Chickpeas, Olives



INDUSTRIES
Petroleum, Textiles, Food
Processing, Tobacco, Auto, Oil,
Seed Crushing, Phosphates

SYRIA

The Syrian Arab Republic

Capital: Damascus

Population 21.1 million

Area 185,180 sq km (71,498 sq miles)

Major language Arabic

Major religion Islam, Christianity

Life expectancy 74 years (men), 78 years (women)

Currency Syrian pound

UN, World Bank





In this picture, taken around 1990, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and his wife Anisa Makhoul pose with their children (L-R) Maher, Bashar, Bassel, who died in a car accident in 1994, Majd and Bushra



In power since succeeding his father in 2000, Bashar al-Assad is fighting for control of his country after protests against his rule turned into a full-scale war.

He inherited a tightly controlled and repressive political structure from long-time dictator Hafez al-Assad, with an inner circle dominated by members of the Assad family's minority Alawite Shia community.

Cracks began to appear in early 2011, in the wake of the "Arab Spring" wave of popular dissent that swept across North Africa and the Middle East.

The country rapidly descended into civil war, but a divided opposition and strong support for President Assad from his Iranian and Russian allies steadily turned the tide of battle in the government's favour from 2017.

Some key dates in Syria's history:



Ottoman governor of Syria, Jamal Pasha riding through the streets of Damascus in 1917

1918 October - Arab troops led by Emir Feisal, and supported by British forces, capture Damascus, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule.

1920 - San Remo conference splits up newly-created Arab kingdom by placing Syria-Lebanon under a French mandate, and Palestine under British control.

1946 - Independence.

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1946 - Independence.

1958-61 - Short-lived union of Syria with Egypt as the United Arab Republic.

1967 - Egypt, Jordan, and Syria are defeated in the Six-Day War with Israel. Israel seizes the Golan Heights.

1970 - Hafez al-Assad comes to power in a coup. His rule is characterised by repression and a major arms build-up.

1973 - Egypt and Syria launch surprise attack on Israel in October to try reverse defeats of 1967.

1976 - Syria intervenes in the Lebanese civil war. It maintains military presence there for next three decades and exerts significant influence on Lebanese politics.

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1976 - Syria intervenes in the Lebanese civil war. It maintains military presence there for next three decades and exerts significant influence on Lebanese politics.

1982 - Muslim Brotherhood uprising in the city of Hama is suppressed in a month-long siege by the military, who kill tens of thousands of civilians.

2000 - President Assad dies and is succeeded by his son Bashar.

2005 - Syrian forces withdraw from Lebanon under international pressure following assassination of Lebanese premier Rafiq al-Hariri.

2011 - Unrest inspired by "Arab Spring" uprisings. Confrontation between government and opposition soon develops into civil war that draws in world powers and triggers refugee crisis.

SYRIA



Flag of Syria

Syria is a country in the Middle East, with a coastline at the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, and it shares maritime borders with Cyprus.

The country occupies an area of 185,180 km², it is about twice the size of Portugal or slightly larger than U.S. state of North Dakota.

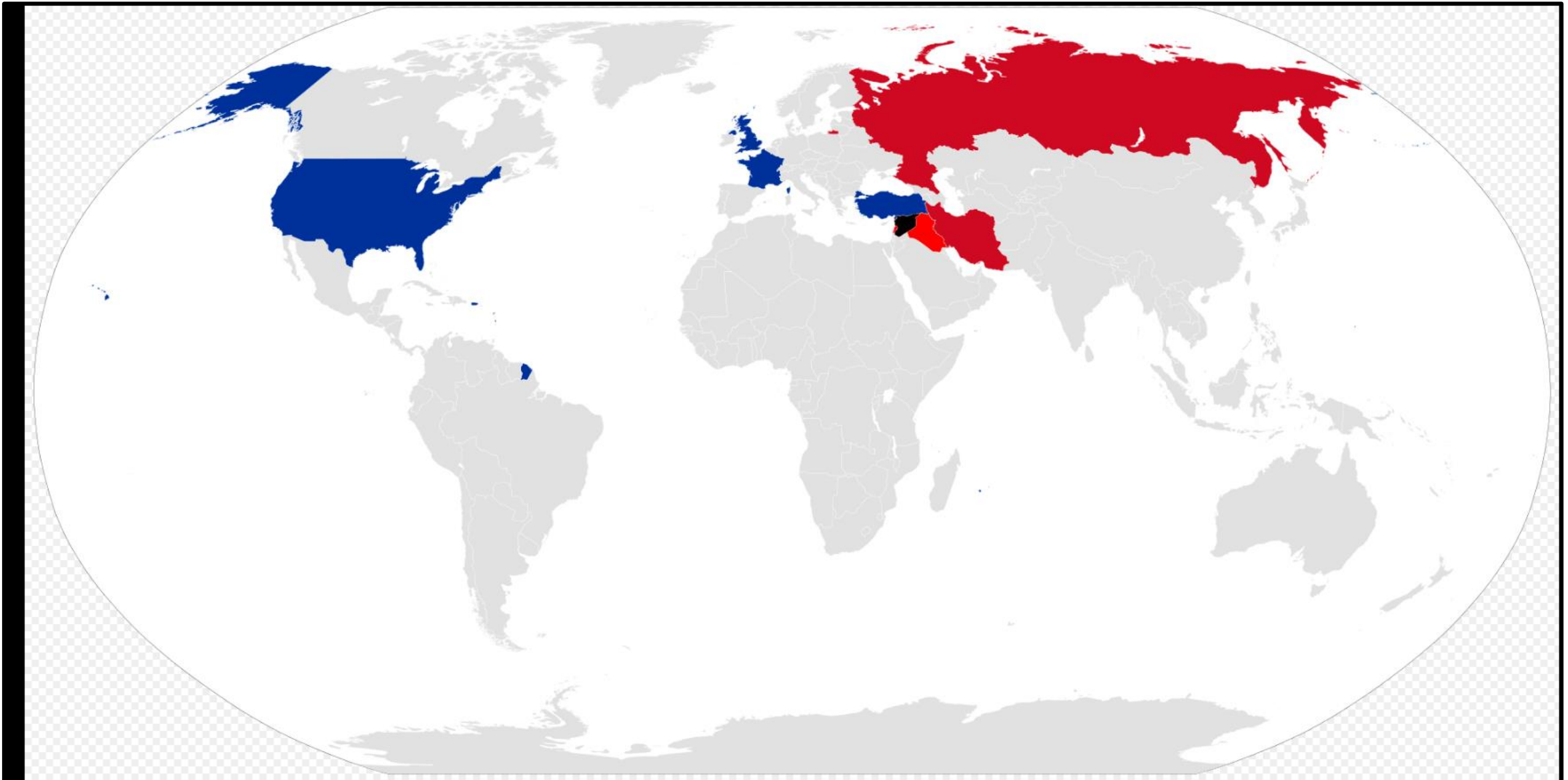
Syria has a population of 24 million people, capital city is Damascus, spoken languages are Arabic (official), English and French (widely understood), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic.

The country is home to a variety of ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Christians, Druze. Syria is a country with a predominantly Muslim population, 12% of Syrians are Alawite Shia and 74% Arab Sunni.

The Assad family who maintained power in the country for more than 45 years are Alawite, Hafez al-Assad strengthened loyalty to his regime by appointing many Alawites to senior positions, particularly in the numerous security services. The family also has long standing ties with Russia, Hafez al-Assad allied himself with the Soviet Union, and sought to lead an Arab coalition bent on the defeat of Israel.



Location map of Syria



world and Syria (red) with military involvement ■ Countries that support the Syrian government ■ Countries that support the Syrian rebels

 More

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria>

SYRIA

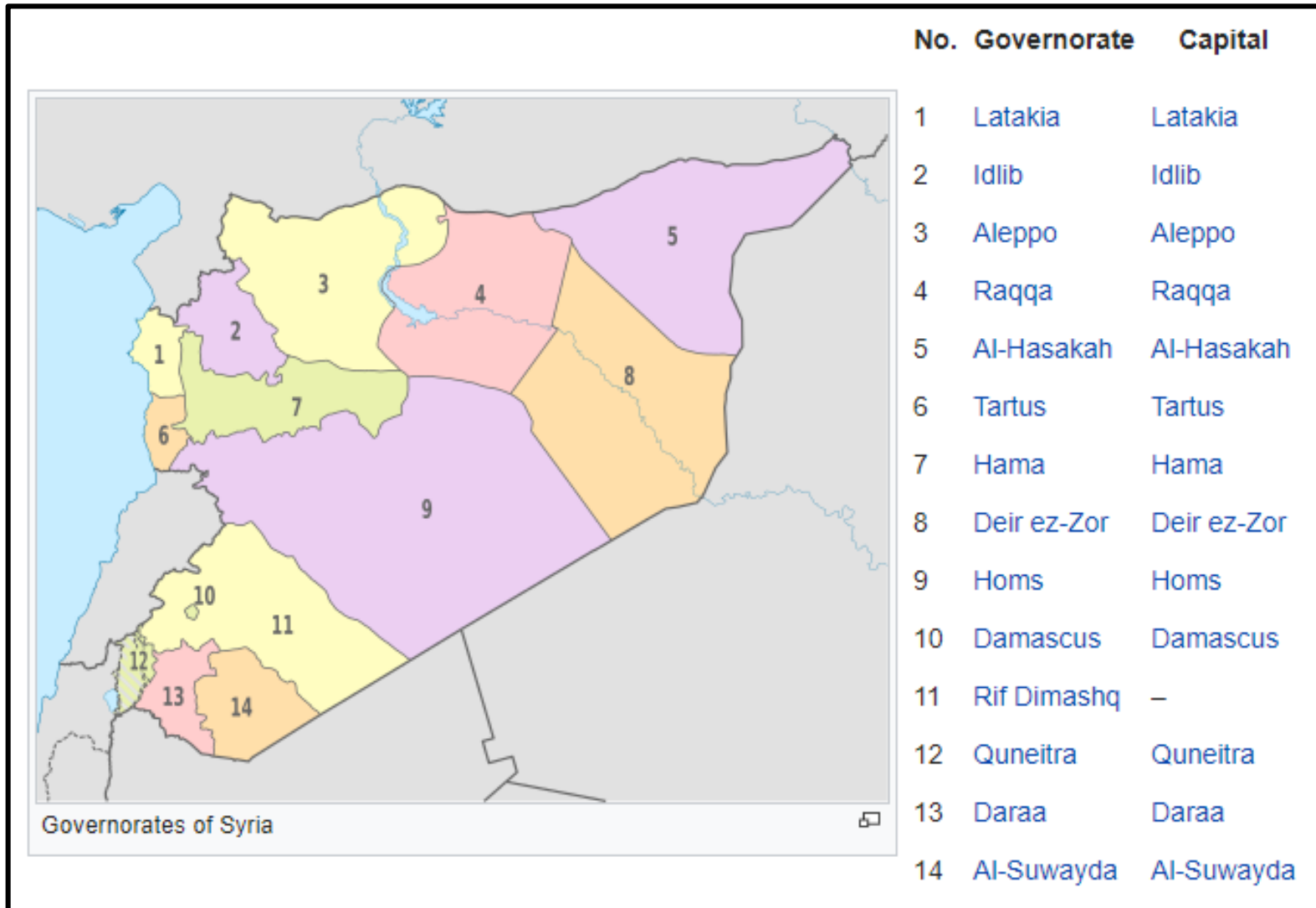
GEOGRAPHY

Syria (Official name: Syrian Arab Republic; Arabic pronunciation: *Suriya*) lies between Lebanon and the Mediterranean Sea on the west, Jordan on the south, Turkey on the north, and Iraq on the east. It has an area of approximately 185,180 sq km, or 71,498 sq miles which equates to an area slightly larger than the American state of North Dakota. The climate is hot and dry in the summers, and mild and rainy in the winters, when snow occasionally falls in the capital city Damascus. Most of the country is semiarid desert, with summer temperatures reaching into the mid 30s Celsius (mid 90s Fahrenheit) and winter temperatures in the 10s Celsius (50s Fahrenheit). There are mountains in the western part of the country.

The northeast of the country is rich with natural resources which include petroleum, phosphates, chrome and manganese ores, asphalt, iron ore, rock salt, marble, and gypsum. Unfortunately, there is a growing problem of deforestation, desertification and water pollution due to poor governmental irrigation practices, rising global temperatures, and war. The Syrian government established an environmental ministry to address these problems in 2009, but the ministry lacks the funding and political power to implement meaningful change in policy.



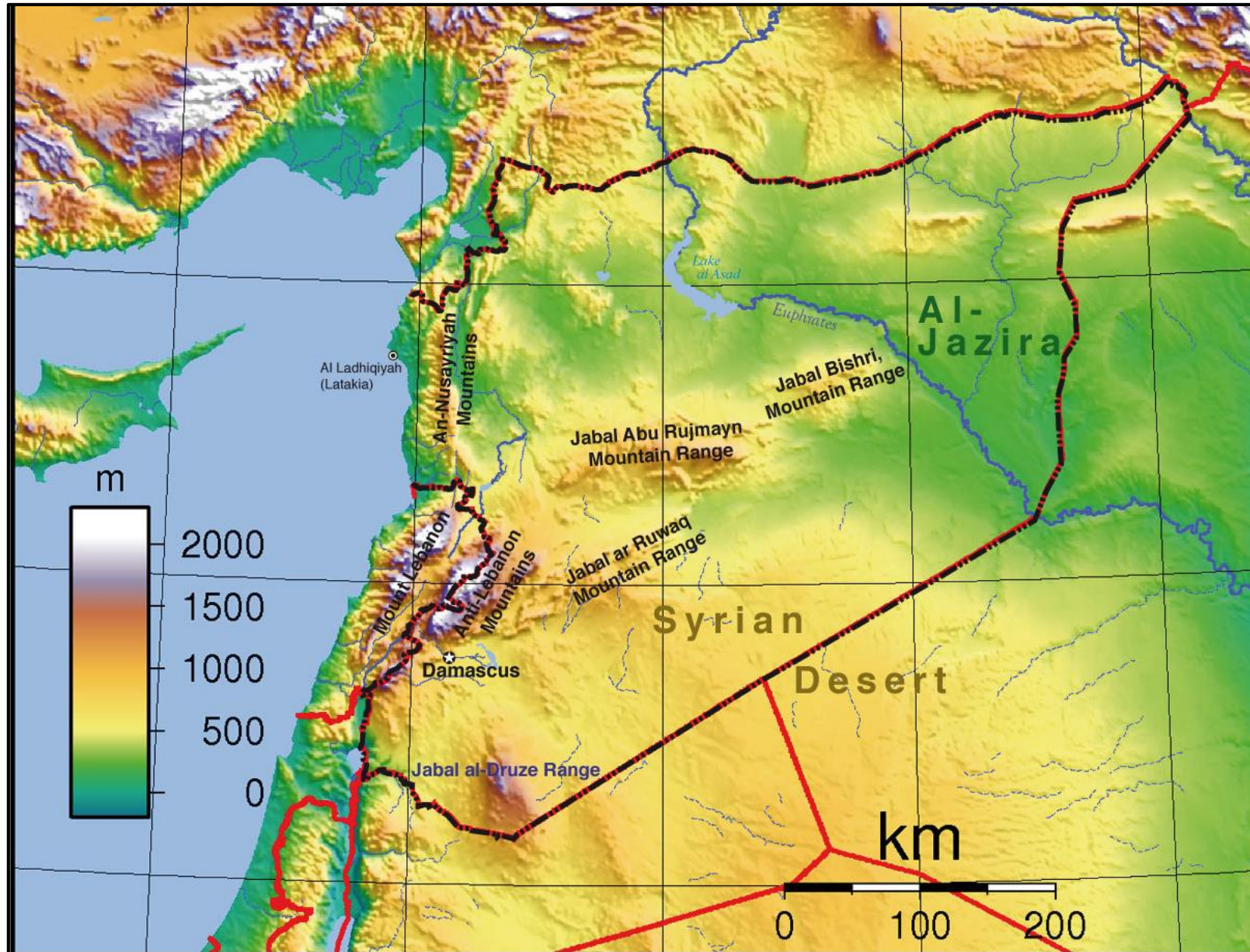
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Largest cities or towns in Syria			
2004 official census 			
Rank	Name	Province	Pop.
1	Aleppo	Aleppo Governorate	2,132,100
2	Damascus	Damascus	1,711,000
3	Homs	Homs Governorate	652,609
4	Latakia	Latakia Governorate	383,786
5	Hama	Hama Governorate	312,994
6	Raqqa	Raqqa Governorate	220,488
7	Deir ez-Zor	Deir ez-Zor Governorate	211,857
8	Al-Hasakah	Al-Hasakah Governorate	188,160
9	Qamishli	Al-Hasakah Governorate	184,231
10	Sayyidah Zaynab	Rif Dimashq Governorate	136,427

SYRIA



DAMASKUS - S Y R I A



View of the Umayyad Mosque in the old city of Damascus.

Image: Bernard Gagnon

SYRIA



Temple of Jupiter in Damascus, the remains of the third-century Roman temple and a Byzantine church form now the entrance to the Al-Hamidiyah Souq, the largest souq (bazaar) in Syria.

Image: © Ron Van Oers

https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/google_map_Damascus.htm

Syrian Arab Republic | Suriyah

Background:

Syria was the site of various early civilizations, most notably that of the Phoenicians. Falling successively within the empires of Persia, Macedon, and Rome, it became a center of Islamic power and civilization from the 7th century and a province of the Ottoman Empire in 1516.

Following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, Syria was administered by the French until independence in 1946.

From 1958 to 1961, Syria was united with Egypt as the United Arab Republic, a Syrian coup in 1961 dissolved the union.

In the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Syria lost the Golan Heights to Israel. Since 1976, Syrian troops have been stationed in Lebanon, ostensibly in a peacekeeping capacity.

President of the Syrian Arab Republic is Bashar al-Assad, he is also Regional Secretary of the Ba'ath Party. Ba'athism calls for unification of the Arab world into a single state.

Bashar al-Assad became president after the death of his father Hafez al-Assad, who held office from 1970 until his death in 2000.

Influenced by major uprisings that began in [Tunisia](#), antigovernment protests broke out first in the southern province of Dar'a in March 2011. Protesters calling for the repeal of the restrictive Emergency Law allowing arrests without charge, the legalization of political parties, and the removal of corrupt local officials. Demonstrations and violent unrest spread across Syria and led ultimately to a full-scale civil war, involving regional and international powers.

Syria is a member state of the [League of Arab States](#)

SYRIA



The ruins of Palmyra in 2010, the city was one of the most important cultural centers of the ancient world, since 1980 a UNESCO World Heritage Site, located southwest of the modern city of Tadmur. In 2015 so called Islamic State (IS or Daesh) destroyed parts of the city.

Image: Bernard Gagnon

Since March 2011, fighting in Syria has killed an estimated 465,000 people, injured more than a million and displaced some 12 million people, almost half of the country's pre-war population.

The Syrian Civil War is an ongoing multi-sided armed conflict in Syria fought between the Ba'athist Syrian Arab Republic led by President **Bashar al-Assad**, along with local and foreign allies, and various domestic and international forces opposing both the Syrian government and each other in varying combinations.

The civil unrest in Syria, was eventually triggered by a wider wave of the 2011 Arab Spring protests; it grew out of discontent with the authoritarian Syrian regime and escalated to an armed conflict.

RED Areas

The **Syrian Arab Republic** and **Syrian Armed Forces** are supported militarily by Iran, Russia, and the Lebanon based Hezbollah.

YELLOW Areas

Kurdish forces (Rojava) control the de facto autonomous region in northeastern Syria. The main cities under Kurdish control are Raqqa, Qamishli, and Al Hasakah.

Light GREEN Areas

Rebel forces; other factions of the Syrian Opposition.

TURQUOISE Area

Turkish occupation of northern Syria, including rebel forces of the Syrian Interim Government (in exile), the Free Syrian Army.

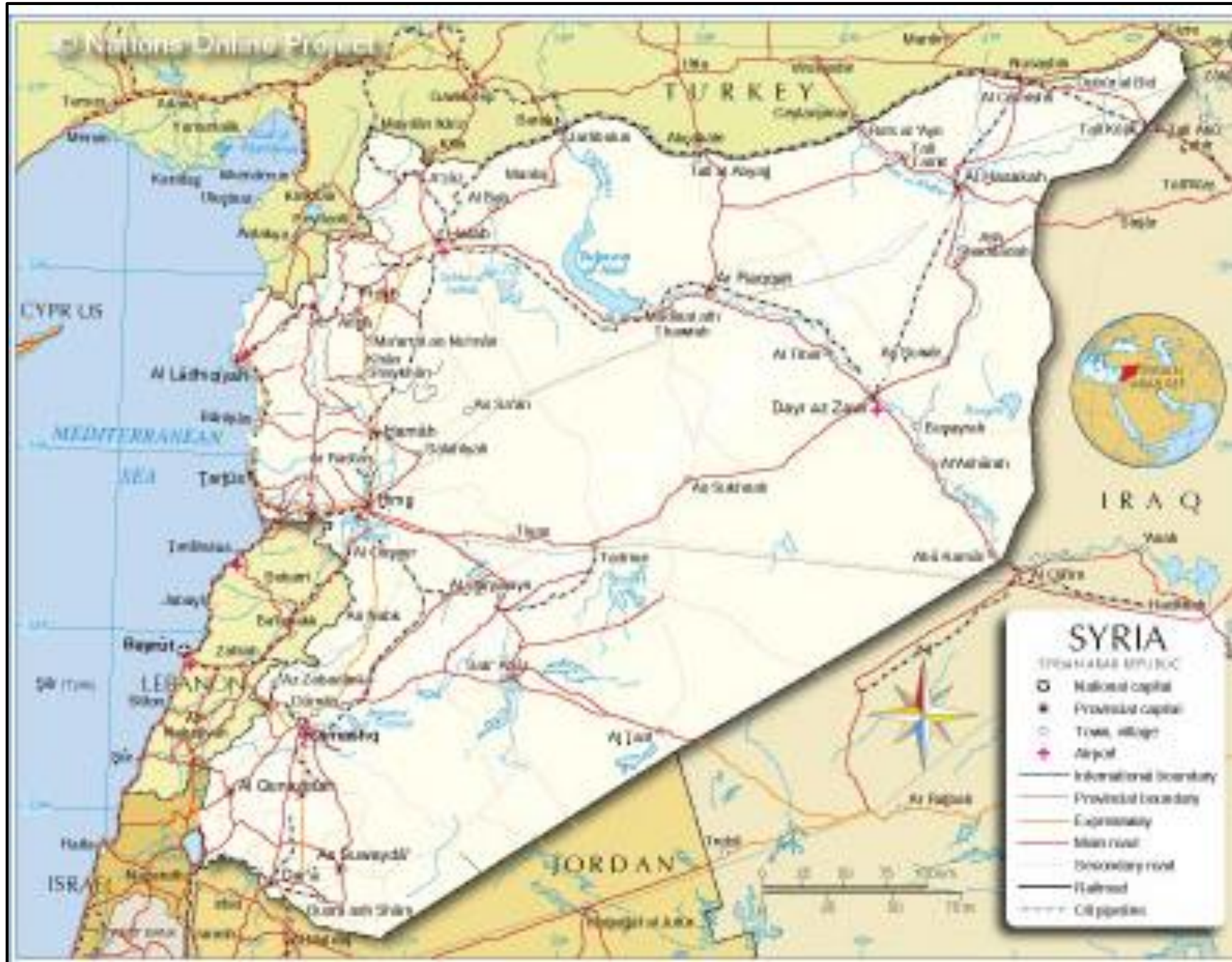
BLUE Area

Israel occupied Golan Heights.



A map of Syria showing the shifting territories of the various forces warring in the country and beyond.

Map source: Al Jazeera and liveuamap



SYRIA

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Syria, like other Levantine states, is located in the heart of what is commonly referred to as the cradle of civilization. This is the area where the first non-nomadic communities were established. In the third millennium BCE, it was the site of the sprawling Ebla civilization, which is thought to have developed one of the oldest written languages. Ebla had been a major economic center that traded with ancient cities such as Byblos, Damascus, and Ur. The Phoenicians, Sumerians, Hittites, and other various ancient empires later conquered the area throughout the first millennium BCE. The city of Antioch (modern day Antakya) became one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire around 13 CE. Around this time, Queen Zenobia of the Palmyrene Empire in Roman Syria expanded the city of Palmyra, which today is one of Syria's most popular tourist attractions. Syria became part of the Islamic Umayyad Empire in 640 CE. It prospered under Umayyad rule throughout the 7th century, at which time the capital of the empire moved to Damascus. After the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, the territory passed through Abbasid, Mongol, Mamluk, and Ottoman hands.



SYRIA

A chronology of key events:

1918 October - Arab troops led by Emir Feisal, and supported by British forces, capture Damascus, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule.

1919 - Emir Feisal backs Arab self-rule at the Versailles peace conference, following the defeat of Germany and the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

1920 March - National Congress elected the previous year proclaims Emir Feisal King of Syria from the Taurus mountains of Turkey to the Sinai desert in Egypt.



The Ottoman governor of Syria, Jamal Pasha, rides through Damascus in 1917

SYRIA

French control

1920 June - San Remo conference puts Syria-Lebanon under a French mandate and Palestine under British control. King Feisal flees abroad ahead of French occupation forces the following month.

1920-21 - Syria is divided into three autonomous regions by the French, with separate areas for the Alawis on the coast and the Druze in the south. Lebanon is separated off entirely.

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Uprising

1925-6 - Nationalist agitation against French rule develops into uprising. French forces bombard Damascus.

1928 - Elections held for a constituent assembly, which drafts a constitution for Syria. French High Commissioner rejects the proposals, sparking nationalist protests.

1936 - France agrees to work towards Syrian independence and dissolves the autonomous regions, but maintains military and economic dominance and keeps Lebanon as a separate state.

1941 - British and Free French troops occupy Syria. General De Gaulle promises to end the French mandate.

1943 - Veteran nationalist Shukri al-Kuwatli is elected first president of Syria, leads the country to full independence three years later.

SYRIA

Baath Party founded

1947 - Michel Aflaq and Salah-al-Din al-Bitar found the Arab Socialist Baath Party.

1949-1954 - Civilian government disrupted by repeated coups.

1955 - Shukri al-Kuwatli returns to power, seeks closer ties with Egypt.

1958 February - Syria and Egypt form the United Arab Republic. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser heads the new state. He orders the dissolution of Syrian political parties, to the dismay of the Baath party, which had campaigned for union.

1961 September - Discontent with Egyptian domination prompts a group of Syrian army officers to seize power in Damascus and dissolve the union.



SYRIA

Rise of Assad

1963 March - Baathist army officers seize power.

1966 February - Salah Jadid leads an internal coup against the civilian Baath leadership. Hafez al-Assad becomes defence minister.

1967 June - Israeli forces seize the Golan Heights from Syria and destroy much of Syria's air force in the Six Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

1970 November - Hafez al-Assad overthrows president Nur al-Din al-Atasi and imprisons Salah Jadid.

1973 - Rioting breaks out after President Assad drops the constitutional requirement that the president must be a Muslim. Suppressed by the army.



Israel occupied the Golan Heights in 1967 during the Six Day War

Golan Heights profile

SYRIA

War with Israel

1973 October - Syria and Egypt go to war with Israel, but fail to retake the Golan Heights seized in 1967.

1975 February - President Assad says he's prepared to make peace with Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from "all occupied Arab land".

1976 June - Syrian army intervenes in the Lebanese civil war to ensure that the status quo is maintained, keeping its Maronite Christian allies in a position of strength.

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Muslim Brotherhood rises

1980 - After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Muslim groups instigate uprisings and riots in Aleppo, Homs and Hama.

1980 September - Start of Iran-Iraq war. Syria backs Iran, in keeping with the traditional rivalry between Baathist leaderships in Iraq and Syria.

1981 December - Israel formally annexes the Golan Heights.



SYRIA

Uprising in Hama

1982 February - Muslim Brotherhood uprising in the city of Hama suppressed by army, tens of thousands of civilians killed.

1982 June - Israel invades Lebanon and attacks the Syrian army, forcing it to withdraw from several areas. Israel attacks the PLO base in Beirut.

1983 May - Lebanon and Israel announce the end of hostilities. Syrian forces remain in Lebanon.

1984 - President's brother Rifaat promoted to vice-president.

Hafez al-Assad brought stability, but did so through repression

Obituary: Syria's shrewd master

SYRIA

Return to Lebanon

1987 February - President Assad sends troops into Lebanon for a second time to enforce a ceasefire in Beirut.

1990 - Iraq invades Kuwait; Syria joins the US-led coalition against Iraq. This leads to improved relations with Egypt and the US.

1991 October - Syria participates in the Middle East peace conference in Madrid and holds talks with Israel that founder over the Golan Heights issue.

1994 - President Assad's son Basil, who was likely to succeed his father, is killed in a car accident.

1998 - President Assad's brother Rifaat is dismissed as vice-president.

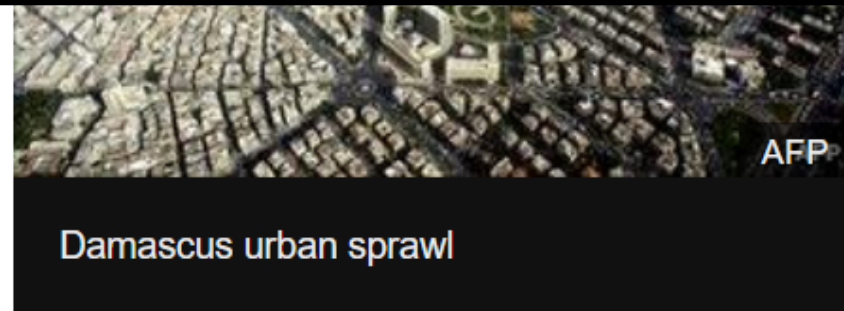
1999 December - Further talks with Israel over the Golan Heights begin in the US, but are indefinitely postponed the following month.



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Assad succession

2000 June - President Assad dies and is succeeded by his second son, Bashar.



Damascus urban sprawl

2000 November - The new president orders the release of 600 political prisoners.

2001 April - Outlawed Muslim Brotherhood says it will resume political activity, 20 years after its leaders were forced to flee.

2001 June - Syrian troops evacuate Beirut, redeploy in other parts of Lebanon, following pressure from Lebanese critics of Syria's presence.

2001 September - Detention of MPs and other pro-reform activists, crushing hopes of a break with the authoritarian past of Hafez al-Assad. Arrest continue, punctuated by occasional amnesties, over the following decade.

SYRIA

Tensions with US

2002 May - Senior US official includes Syria in a list of states that make-up an "axis of evil", first listed by President Bush in January. Undersecretary for State John Bolton says Damascus is acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

2004 January - President Assad visits Turkey, the first Syrian leader to do so. The trip marks the end of decades of frosty relations, although ties sour again after the popular uprising in 2011.

2004 May - US imposes economic sanctions on Syria over what it calls its support for terrorism and failure to stop militants entering Iraq.

2005 February-April- Tensions with the US escalate after the killing of former Lebanese PM Hariri in Beirut. Washington cites Syrian influence in Lebanon. Damascus is urged to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, which it does by April.

Syria and Lebanon



Diplomatic overtures

2006 November - Iraq and Syria restore diplomatic relations after nearly a quarter century.

2007 March - European Union relaunches dialogue with Syria.

2007 April - US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi meets President Assad in Damascus. She is the highest-placed US politician to visit Syria in recent years. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meets Foreign Minister Walid Muallem the following month in the first contact at this level for two years.

2007 September - Israel carries out an aerial strike against a nuclear facility under construction in northern Syria.

2008 July - President Assad meets French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris. The visit signals the end of the diplomatic isolation by the West that followed the assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri in 2005.

2008 October - Syria establishes diplomatic relations with Lebanon for first time since both countries established independence in 1940s.



The killing of former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri sparked anti-Syrian protests in Beirut

Syria withdrawal:
Lebanese speak

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2009 March - Jeffrey Feltman, acting assistant US secretary of state for the Near East, visits Damascus with White House national security aide Daniel Shapiro in first high-level US diplomatic mission for nearly four years. Meets Foreign Minister Walid Muallem.

Trading launches on Syria's stock exchange in a gesture towards liberalising the state-controlled economy.

2010 May - US renews sanctions against Syria, saying that it supports terrorist groups, seeks weapons of mass destruction and has provided Lebanon's Hezbollah with Scud missiles in violation of UN resolutions.

SYRIA

Nationwide uprising

2011 March - Security forces shoot dead protestors in southern city of Deraa demanding release of political prisoners, triggering violent unrest that steadily spread nationwide over the following months.

President Assad announces conciliatory measures, releasing dozens of political prisoners, dismissing government, lifting 48-year-old state of emergency.

2011 May - Army tanks enter Deraa, Banyas, Homs and suburbs of Damascus in an effort to crush anti-regime protests. US and European Union tighten sanctions.

2011 June - The IAEA nuclear watchdog decides to report Syria to the UN Security Council over its alleged covert nuclear programme reactor programme. The structure housing the alleged reactor was destroyed in an Israeli air raid in 2007.

2011 protests



Pro-democracy protests erupted in 2011; the government responded with violence

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Opposition organises

2011 July - President Assad sacks the governor of the northern province of Hama after mass demonstration there, eventually sending in troops to restore order at the cost of scores of lives.

2011 October - New Syrian National Council says it has forged a common front of internal and exiled opposition activists.

2011 November - Arab League votes to suspend Syria, accusing it of failing to implement an Arab peace plan, and imposes sanctions.

2012 February - Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities.

Civil war

SYRIA

2012 February - Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities.

2012 March - UN Security Council endorses non-binding peace plan drafted by UN envoy Kofi Annan. China and Russia agree to support the plan after an earlier, tougher draft is modified.

2012 June - Turkey changes rules of engagement after Syria shoots down a Turkish plane, declaring that if Syrian troops approach Turkey's borders they will be seen as a military threat.

2012 July - Free Syria Army blows up three security chiefs in Damascus and seizes parts of the city of Aleppo in the north.

Civil war



The uprising against President Assad gradually turned into a full-scale civil war

SYRIA

2012 August - Prime Minister Riad Hijab defects, US President Obama warns that use of chemical weapons would tilt the US towards intervention.

2012 October - Fire in Aleppo destroys much of the historic market as fighting and bomb attacks continue in various cities.

2012 November - National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces formed in Qatar, excludes Islamist militias. Arab League stops short of full recognition.

2012 December - US, Britain, France, Turkey and Gulf states formally recognise opposition National Coalition as "legitimate representative" of Syrian people.

Opposition rifts



Divisions and concern about the role of Islamists have bedevilled the opposition

Guide to the Syrian opposition

SYRIA

Rise of Islamists

2013 September - UN weapons inspectors conclude that chemical weapons were used in an attack on the Ghouta area of Damascus in August that killed about 300 people, but do not allocate responsibility.

Government allows UN to destroy chemical weapons stocks, process complete by June 2014.

2013 December - US and Britain suspend "non-lethal" support for rebels in northern Syria after reports that Islamist rebels seized bases of Western-backed Free Syrian Army.

2014 January-February - UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva fail, largely because Syrian authorities refuse to discuss a transitional government.

Chemical arms claims



Government forces have faced - and denied - repeated allegations of chemical weapons use

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2014 March - Syrian Army and Hezbollah forces recapture Yabroud, the last rebel stronghold near the Lebanese border.

2014 June - Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants declare "caliphate" in territory from Aleppo to eastern Iraqi province of Diyala.

2014 September - US and five Arab countries launch air strikes against Islamic State around Aleppo and Raqqa.

2015 January - Kurdish forces push Islamic State out of Kobane on Turkish border after four months of fighting.

2015 May - Islamic State fighters seize the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria and proceed to destroy many monuments at pre-Islamic World Heritage site.

Jaish al-Fatah (Army of Conquest) Islamist rebel alliance takes control of Idlib Province, putting pressure on government's coastal stronghold of Latakia.

Russian intervention

2015 September - Russia carries out its first air strikes in Syria, saying they target the Islamic State group, but the West and Syrian opposition say it overwhelmingly targets anti-Assad rebels.

2015 December - Syrian Army allows rebels to evacuate remaining area of Homs, returning Syria's third-largest city to government control after four years.

2016 March - Syrian government forces retake Palmyra from Islamic State with Russian air assistance, only to be driven out again in December.

2016 August - Turkish troops cross into Syria to help rebel groups push back so-called Islamic State militants and Kurdish-led rebels from a section of the two countries' border.

2016 December - Government troops, backed by Russian air power and Iranian-sponsored militias, recapture Aleppo, the country's largest city, depriving the rebels of their last major urban stronghold.

2017 January - Russia, Iran and Turkey agree to enforce a ceasefire between the government and non-Islamist rebels, after talks between the two sides in Kazakhstan.

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US intervenes

2017 April - US President Donald Trump orders a missile attack on an airbase from which Syrian government planes allegedly staged a chemical weapons attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun.

2017 May - US decides to arm the YPG Kurdish Popular Protection Units. These fight alongside the main opposition Syrian Democratic Forces, which captures the important Tabqa dam from Islamic State.

2017 June - US shoots down Syrian fighter jet near Raqqa after it allegedly dropped bombs near US-backed rebel Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

2017 July - The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and the Syrian army launch a military operation to dislodge jihadist groups from the Aarsal area, near the Lebanese-Syrian border.

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Islamic State retreats

2017 October-November - The Islamic State group is driven from Raqqa, its de-facto capital in Syria, and Deir al-Zour.

2018 January - Turkey launches an assault on northern Syria to oust Kurdish rebels controlling the area around Afrin.

2018 April - Claims of a new chemical attack in Eastern Ghouta's main town of Douma prompt the US, Britain and France to carry out a wave of punitive strikes on Syrian targets.

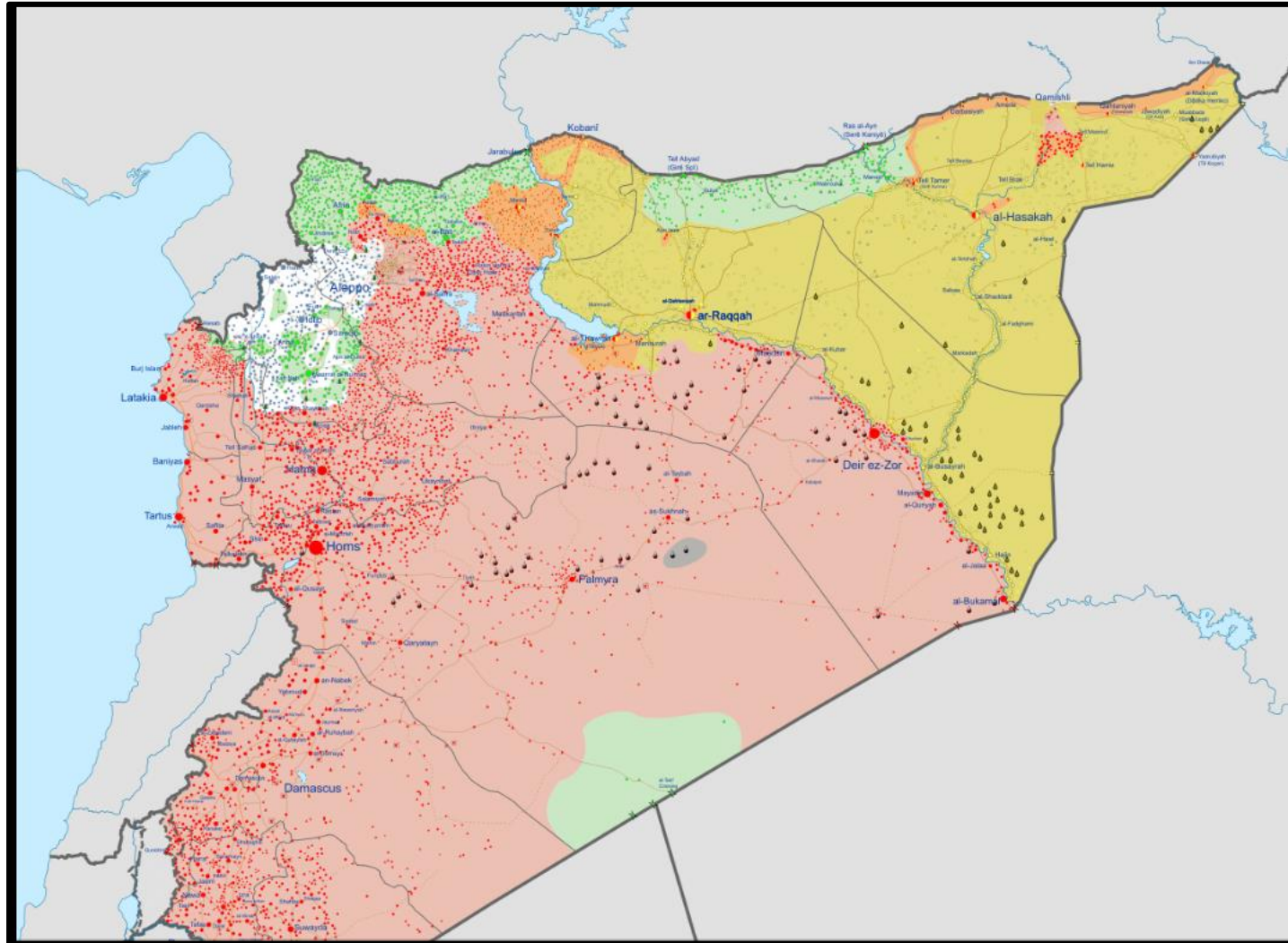
2018 July - Syrian army recaptures almost all of the south of the country, up to the borders with Jordan and Israeli-held territory.

2018 September-December - Kurdish-led SDF forces launch offensive that reduces Islamic State territory to a tiny enclave on the Iraqi border.

2019 October - US withdraws troops from northern Syria, prompting Turkey to attack US Kurdish allies in the area.

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi dies in US raid on his hideout in Idlib Province.

SYRIA



Military situation in the Syrian Civil War (frequently updated map). ■ Controlled by **Syrian Arab Republic** ■ Controlled by **North Syria Federation (SDF)** ■ Controlled by the **Syrian opposition and Ahrar al-Sham** ■ Controlled by **Turkey and TFSA** ■ Controlled by the **Islamic State (ISIL)** ■ Controlled by **Tahrir al-Sham (al-Nusra)** (For a more detailed, interactive map, see [Template:Syrian Civil War detailed map.](#))

SYRIA

During World War I, the Ottomans joined the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria. The Allied Powers (France, Britain, Russia, and the United States) supported the Arab uprisings throughout the Ottoman Empire that would ultimately lead to its weakening and dissolution. In 1915, British parliamentarian, Sir Mark Sykes, and a French diplomat, Francois Georges-Picot, looking toward a collapsed Ottoman Empire, carved up the Middle East into hypothetical spheres of influence under either British or French control. The Sykes-Picot agreement, drafted in secret unbeknownst to other world leaders, would give the northern part of the Middle East, consisting of Christian enclaves in Syria and Lebanon to France, while Great Britain would have authority over southern territory including Palestine and Iraq.

Immediately after World War I, a member of the Hashemite Dynasty, Faisal I, established the independent Arab Kingdom of Syria, of which he was the short-lived king. He would later become the king of Iraq from August 1921 to 1933. This Arab Kingdom of Syria did not last long as the French soon annexed the region under the French mandate as outlined in Sykes-Picot. From the mid 1920s to 1940, Syrians struggled for control through uprisings and attempts of self-governance all of which were stopped by French forces. When France fell to Nazi Germany during World War II, a coalition of British and Free French soldiers pushed the Germans and Vichy government (a puppet French government set up by the Nazis) out of Syria in 1941. Subsequently, the Free French declared an end to its mandate in Syria. By the end of World War II, however, the French forces had not ceded control of Syria to local authorities. After public protests and mounting pressure from the international community, the last French troops left in April 1946 and Syria gained its independence.

SYRIA

With the final departure of the British from Palestine in 1948 and the subsequent formation of Israel, Syria joined the Arab alliance in the war against Israel. Israel stopped the invading armies and the Syrian army retreated to its previous borders. Syria experienced political instability through military coups in 1949, 1954, 1961, 1963, and 1966. The last coup marked the rise of the Assad family as Hafez al-Assad became Defense Minister. In 1967, Syria and Jordan joined the Six Day War following a preemptive Israeli strike against Egypt. In the last days of the war, Israel launched an invasion into the Syrian Golan Heights, and has occupied this territory since. Eventually, Syria and Israel signed a disengagement agreement in 1974.

SYRIA

After assuming power in 1970 through Syria's final coup, Hafez al-Assad established the de facto rule of the Assad family in Syria. During Assad's rule, Syria intervened militarily in the Lebanese civil war in 1976 and troops remained throughout Lebanon until the early 2000s. Hafez al-Assad maintained harsh authoritarian rule over Syria until his death in 2000. His son, Bashar al-Assad, took power that same year and has remained in office since. He was expected to usher in economic liberalization and modernization to the country; however, after his first few years in office Bashar al-Assad reverted to his father's tactics of brutality and repression.

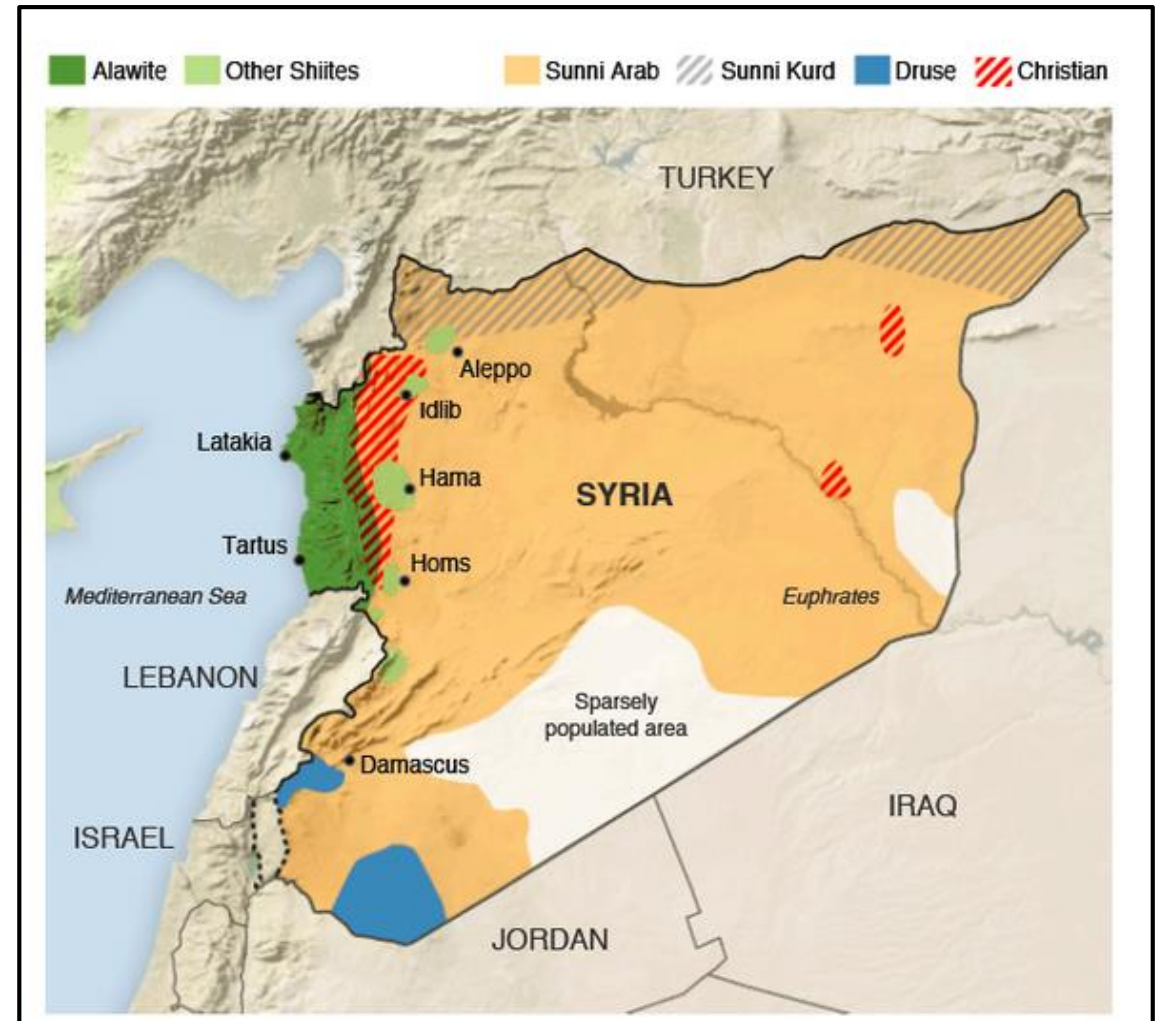
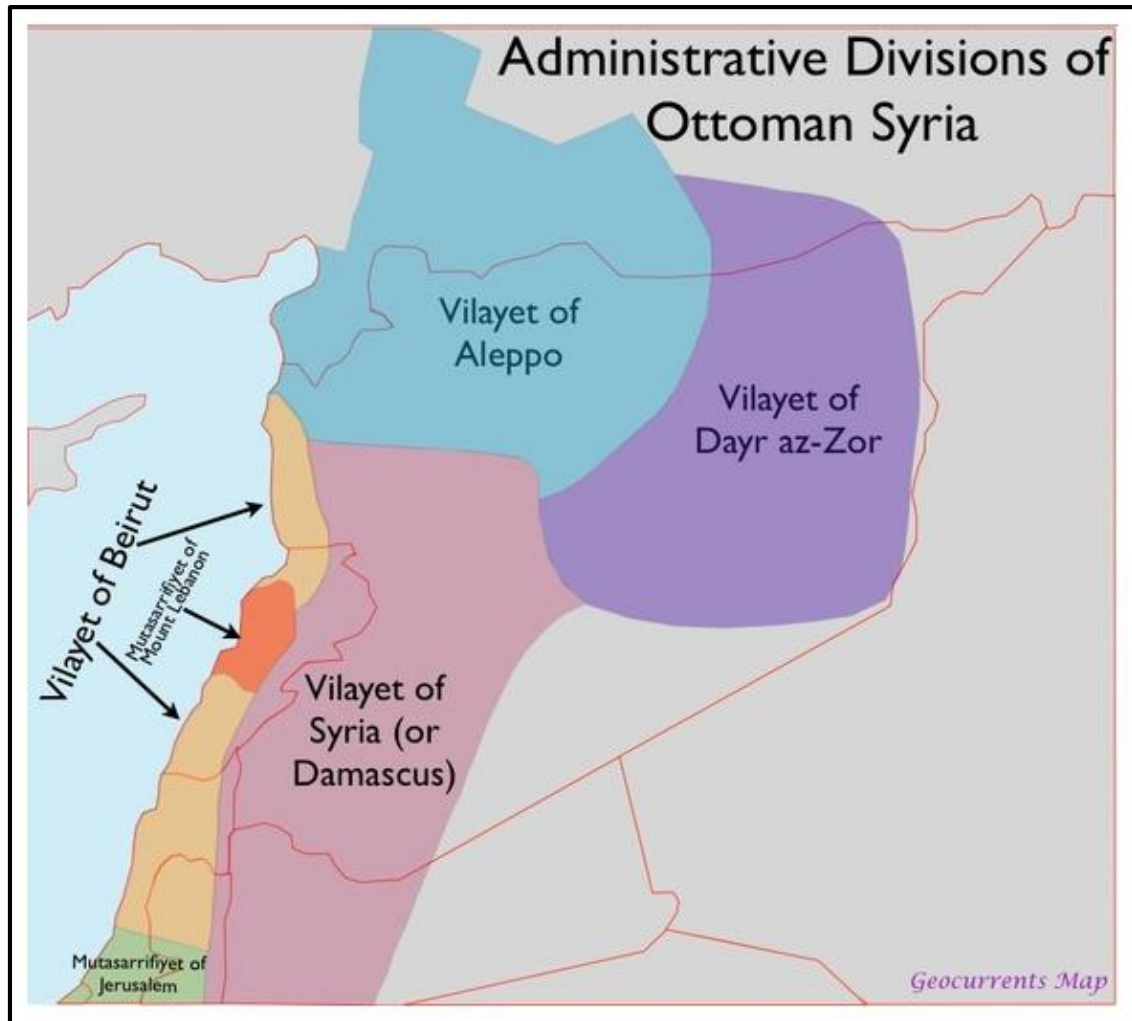
Inspired by a wave of demonstrations now known as the Arab Spring, anti-government protests began within Syria in March 2011. The military's willingness to use violence to suppress the demonstrations further enraged the population and protests grew across the country. By the summer of 2011, armed revolutionary groups had formed to combat government forces. The coalition of revolutionaries formed the Syrian National Council, which was replaced by the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces in 2012 and received international recognition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. The United States and many European countries began imposing sanctions against Assad and his regime. However, the U.N. was unable to enact sanctions or any form of military intervention because of Russia and China's veto power; Russia is an ally of Syria and China opposed the idea of an international body infringing upon a country's sovereignty. Peace talks continued to fail as Assad pulled out of agreements established by the Arab League and the United Nations. Multiple countries began providing non-lethal aid to Syrian rebels but were hesitant to provide military equipment in fear of inadvertently arming extremists groups such as the large al-Qaeda affiliate, al-Nursrah Front.

SYRIA

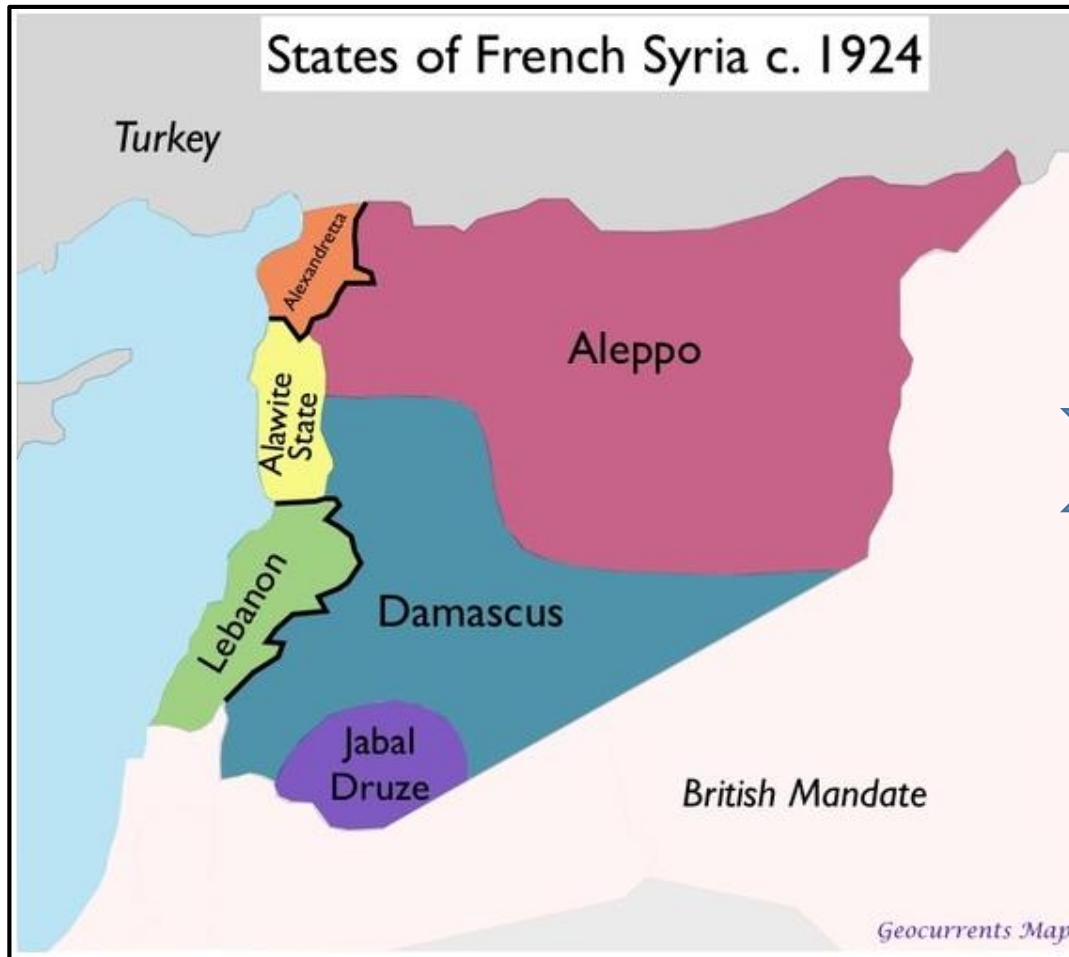
By late 2012, the revolution had clearly turned into a civil war. Several countries, as well as non-state actors, began arming the rebels such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey, while Shia allies — Hezbollah and Iran — have provided support to Assad. In August 2013, Assad crossed what president Obama had called a “red line” by using chemical weapons against opposition and civilian populations, which Assad denied. UN inspectors confirmed that chemical weapons had been used and intelligence assets strongly believed they had been used by government forces. Several western countries began considering military strikes; however, a vote failed in both the British parliament and the American congress to approve any military action. In a media statement, Secretary of State John Kerry made a remark that if Syria hands over its chemical weapon stockpile to the international community, the U.S. would no longer consider military options. This comment led to negotiations facilitated by Russia in which Syria agreed to give up its chemical weapons.

In 2013, the Free Syrian Army, the moderate revolutionary force favored by the international community, increasingly became eclipsed by radical Islamic groups. The main groups were al-Nusrah Front, a faction of al-Qaeda, and the growing Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (IS also known as ISIS or ISIL) led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. While IS had initially been closely affiliated with al-Qaeda dating back to the group’s origin in 2003, the Islamic State’s willingness to kill large amounts of civilian populations and differing end goals caused the two groups to split. IS began to bring other revolutionary groups under its control through alliances or force. During the summer of 2014, IS forces swept through northern Iraq gaining control of key cities and oil resources. IS had successfully established a large region of control, declared Baghdadi the caliph (leader), and designated Raqqa, Syria its capital city. The group has become infamous for mass executions of what it considers to be apostate civilians and POWs as well as the public beheadings of western aid workers and reporters in the region. A large coalition of Western and Middle Eastern countries has formed to combat IS. The main ground forces — Kurdish Peshmerga, Iraqi military, Syrian military (non-state forces), and revolutionary militias — receive air and arms support from the coalition. The rise of the Islamic State has shifted most of the international focus away from Assad and onto combating this extremist group. According to UNHCR, there are currently 3,727,642 registered Syrian refugees as a result of the civil war. However, the number of actual refugees is likely higher as already struggling countries are limiting entrance of refugees and Syrians are now turning to smugglers to escape the violence.

SYRIA



SYRIA

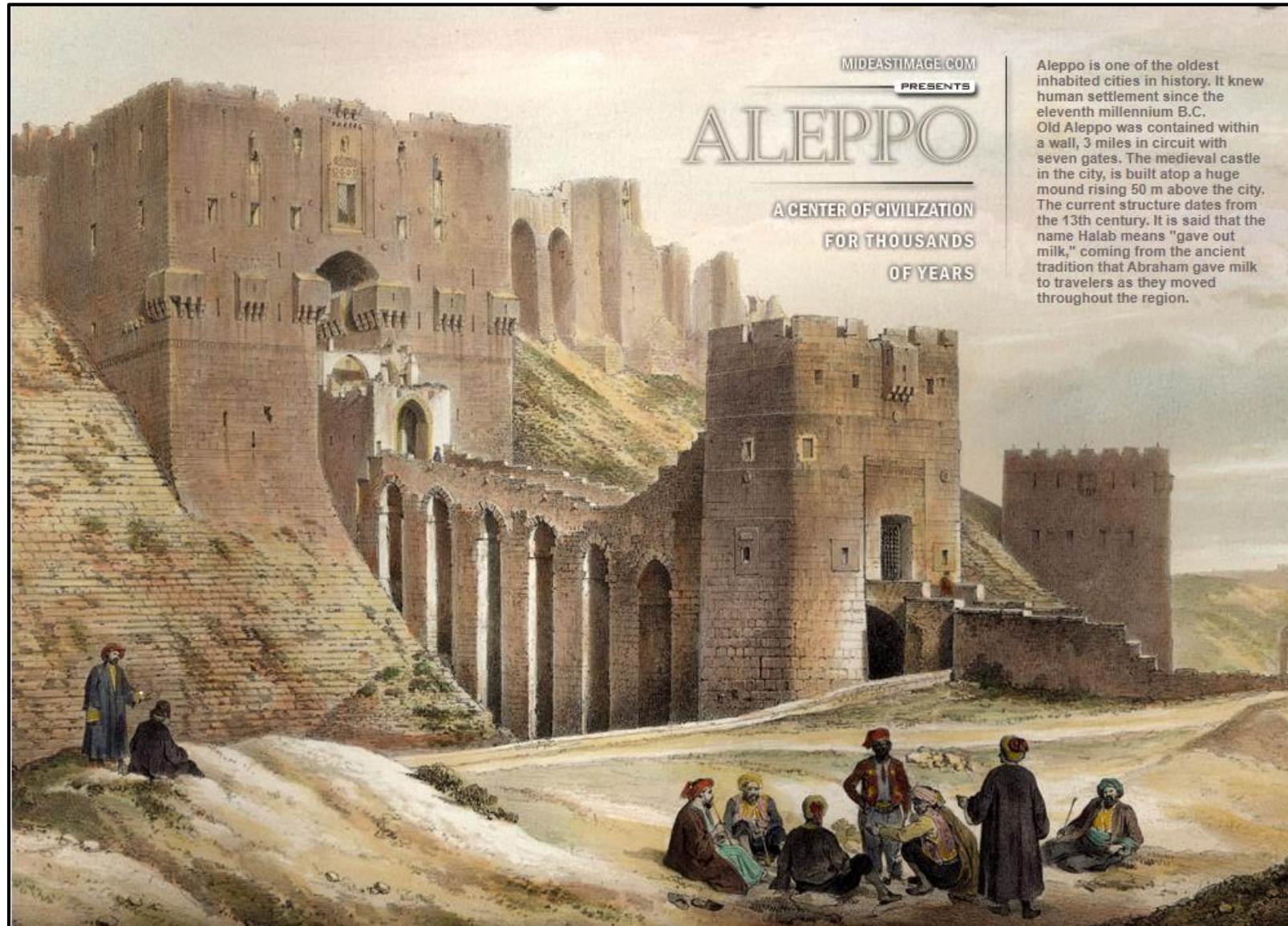


Syrian Independence

As it took hold of at least educated Syrians, nationalism may have been emotionally satisfying, but it did not prove to be an organizing principle. Even spurred by it, Syrians did not grasp the means to control their destiny. So, in the years after the French were forced out, coup leader after military dictator spoke in nationalist rhetoric but failed to lead his followers toward "the good life."

Finally, in 1958, the one coherent, powerful, and mobile force, the army leadership, threw the country into the arms of the one Arab leader they admired and trusted, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser. They thought and hoped that Egypt, always the bellwether of the Arab world, could give them stability. So, for three and a half years, Syria became a part of the United Arab Republic. Despite the media view of the event, Nasser was a reluctant participant in Syrian affairs and set what turned out to be unacceptable terms, including the withdrawal of the army from politics and the holding of a referendum. Union did not work, so in 1961 Syrians were thrown back on their own resources. A fundamental problem they faced was what it meant to be a Syrian.

SYRIA



MIDEASTIMAGE.COM

PRESENTS

ALEPPO

A CENTER OF CIVILIZATION
FOR THOUSANDS
OF YEARS

Aleppo is one of the oldest inhabited cities in history. It knew human settlement since the eleventh millennium B.C. Old Aleppo was contained within a wall, 3 miles in circuit with seven gates. The medieval castle in the city, is built atop a huge mound rising 50 m above the city. The current structure dates from the 13th century. It is said that the name Halab means "gave out milk," coming from the ancient tradition that Abraham gave milk to travelers as they moved throughout the region.

SYRIA

MIDEASTIMAGE.COM

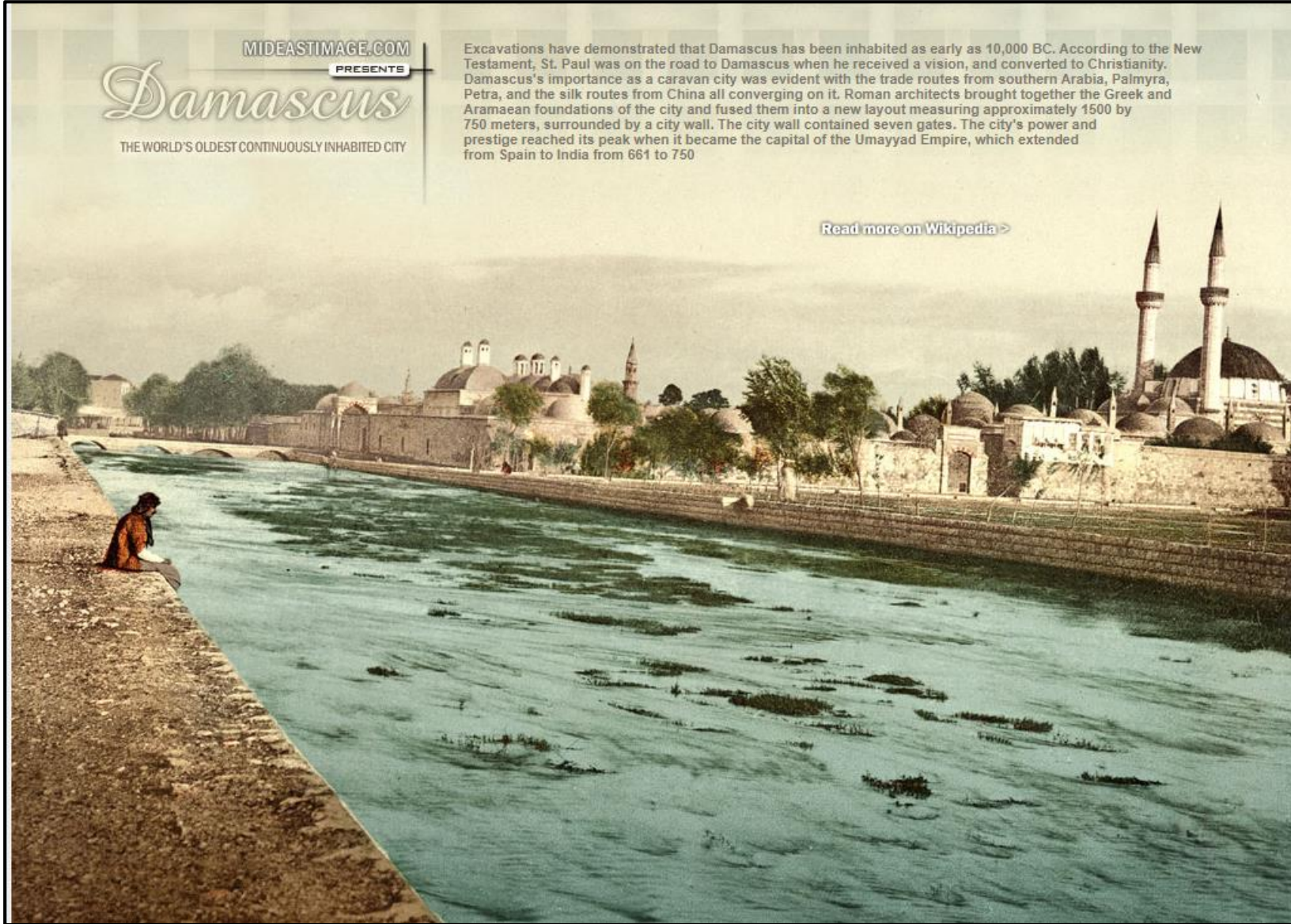
PRESENTS

Damascus

THE WORLD'S OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY INHABITED CITY

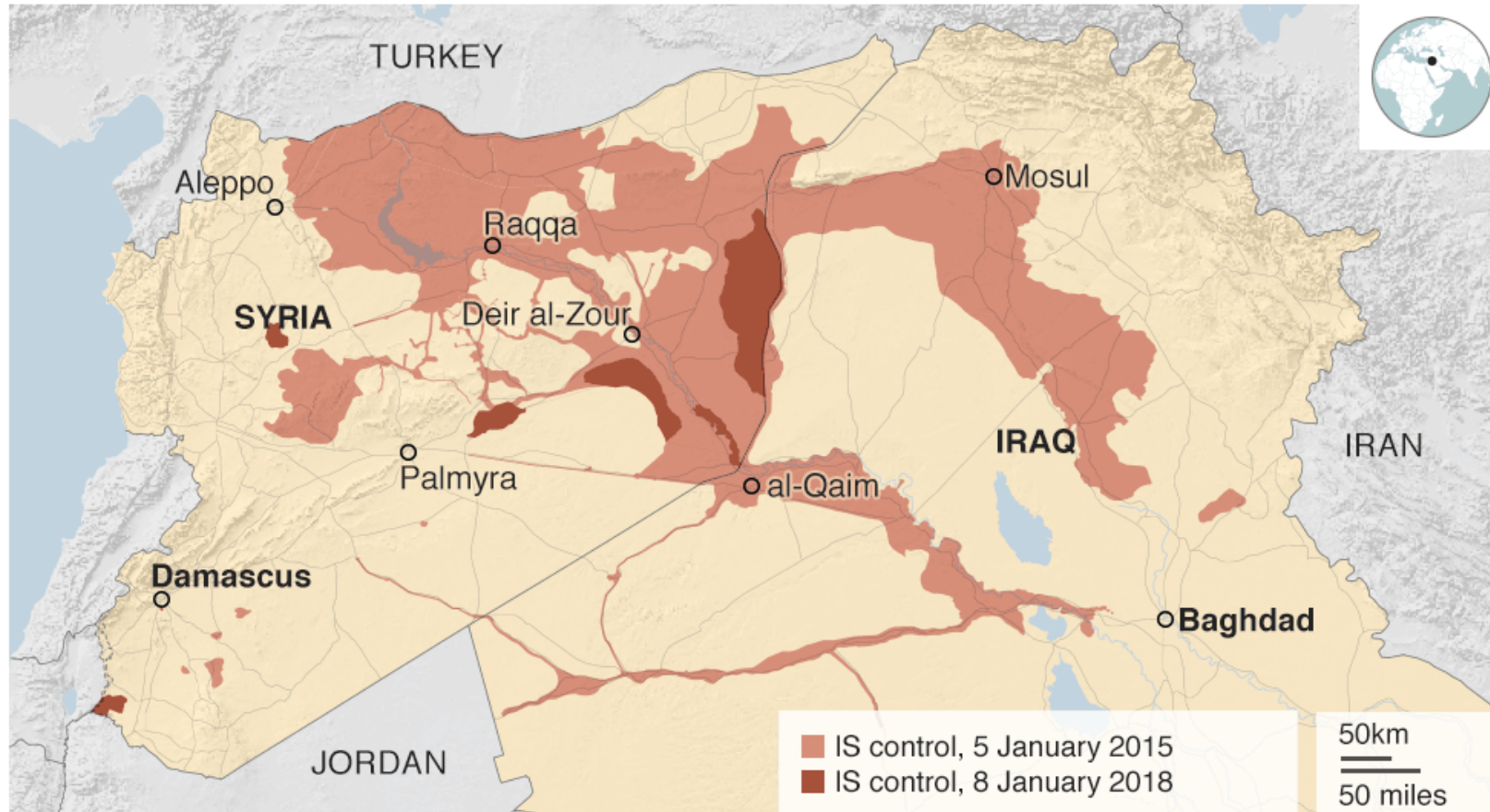
Excavations have demonstrated that Damascus has been inhabited as early as 10,000 BC. According to the New Testament, St. Paul was on the road to Damascus when he received a vision, and converted to Christianity. Damascus's importance as a caravan city was evident with the trade routes from southern Arabia, Palmyra, Petra, and the silk routes from China all converging on it. Roman architects brought together the Greek and Aramaean foundations of the city and fused them into a new layout measuring approximately 1500 by 750 meters, surrounded by a city wall. The city wall contained seven gates. The city's power and prestige reached its peak when it became the capital of the Umayyad Empire, which extended from Spain to India from 661 to 750

[Read more on Wikipedia >](#)



<https://www.mideastimage.com/cities/damascus.php>

How much territory IS has lost since January 2015



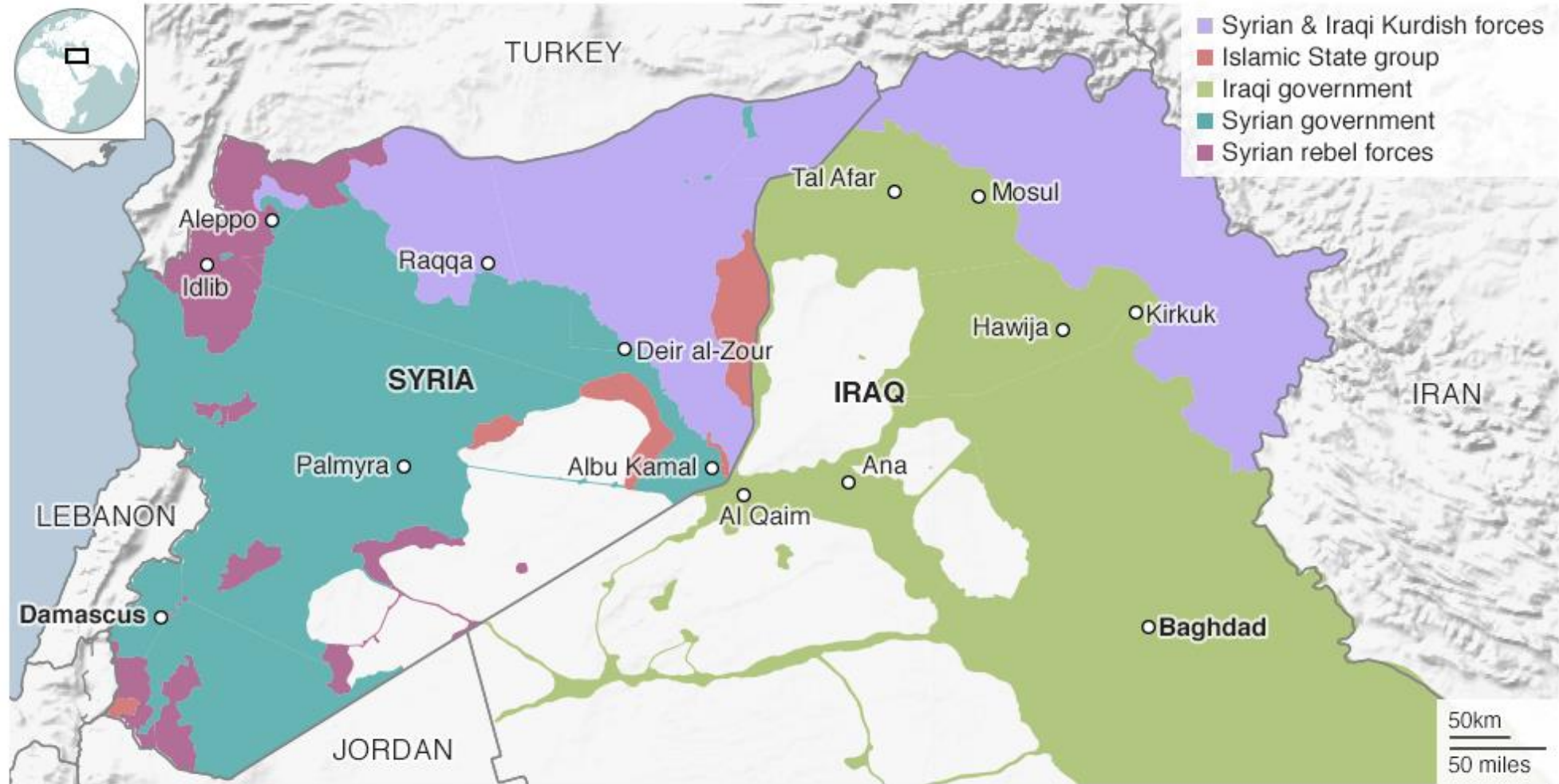
Source: IHS Conflict Monitor

BBC

The capture of Raqqa by a US-backed alliance of Syrian Kurdish and Arab fighters in October was seen as a major victory in the battle against IS. The city was the de facto capital of the "caliphate" the group declared.

A few months earlier, in July 2017, Iraqi government forces retook the second city of Mosul, which fell to IS in 2014 when militants routed the Iraqi army.

How did IS spread across Iraq and Syria?



Source: IHS Conflict Monitor (23 March 2018)

BBC

SYRIA

The jihadists exploited the chaos and divisions within both Syria and Iraq.

IS grew out of what was al-Qaeda in Iraq, which was formed by Sunni militants after the US-led invasion in 2003 and became a major force in the country's sectarian insurgency.

In 2011, the group joined the rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, where it found a safe haven and easy access to weapons.

At the same time, it took advantage of the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, as well as widespread Sunni anger at the sectarian policies of the country's Shia-led government.

In 2013, the group began seizing control of territory in Syria and changed its name to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Isis or Isil).

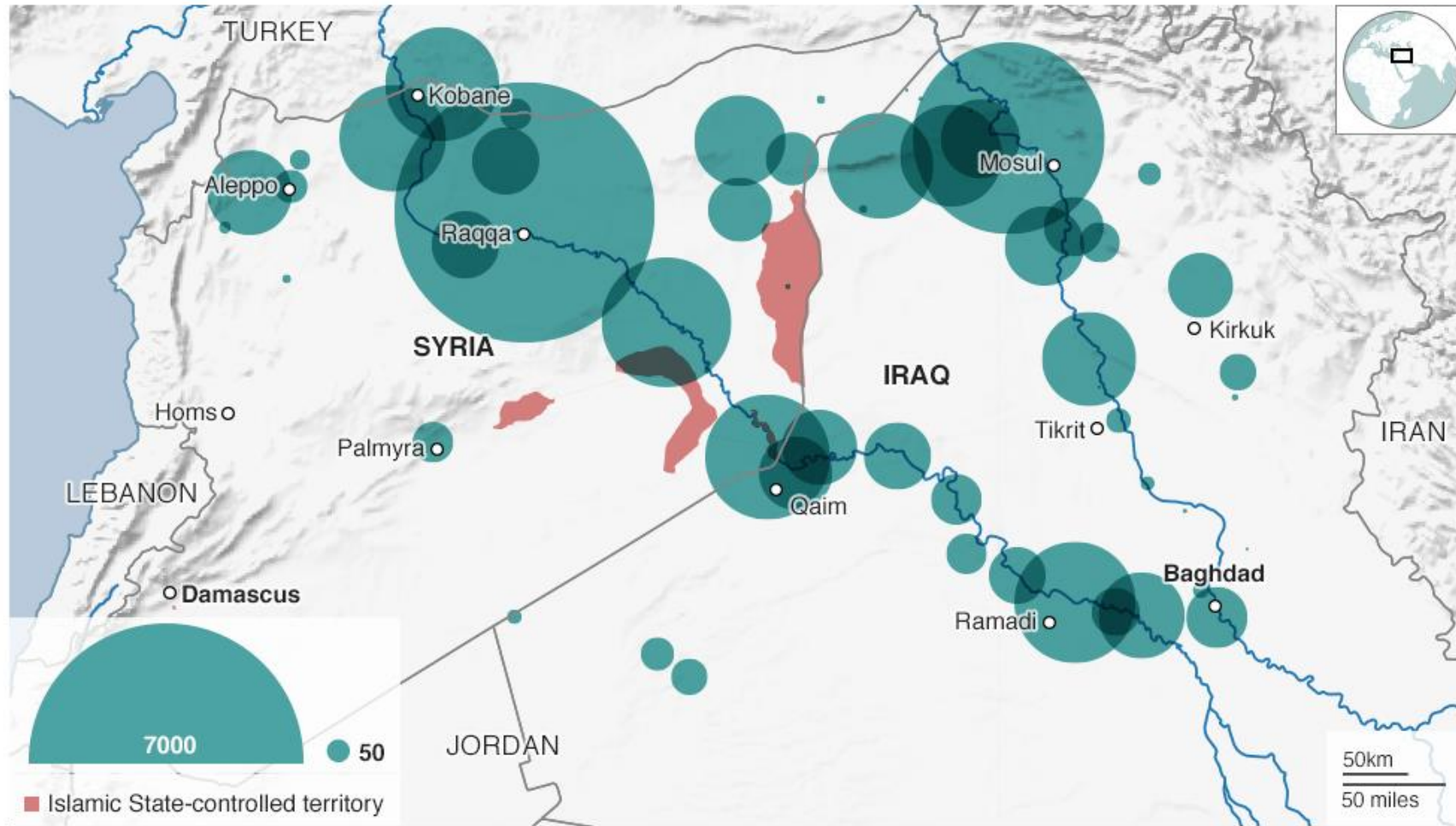
The following year, Isis overran large swathes of northern and western Iraq, proclaimed the creation of a "caliphate", and became known as "Islamic State".

A subsequent advance into areas controlled by Iraq's Kurdish minority, and the killing or enslaving of thousands of members of the Yazidi religious group, prompted the US-led coalition to begin air strikes on IS positions in Iraq in August 2014.

As IS is now being forced out of Iraq and Syria, another problem is the likely resurgence of hostilities between rival groups. In October 2017, Iraqi forces pushed Kurdish Peshmerga fighters back from land they took during the fight against IS around Kirkuk.

Who is fighting IS?

US-led coalition strikes: **IRAQ: 13,315** **SYRIA: 14,660**



Source: IHS Conflict Monitor, 23 Mar 2018

BBC

SYRIA

The US-led coalition has conducted more than 13,300 air strikes against IS targets in Iraq since August 2014.

Most attacks have been carried out by US aircraft, but those from Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Jordan, the Netherlands and the UK have also taken part. By the end of 2017, 74 countries were said to have joined the US-led coalition fighting IS in Iraq and Syria.

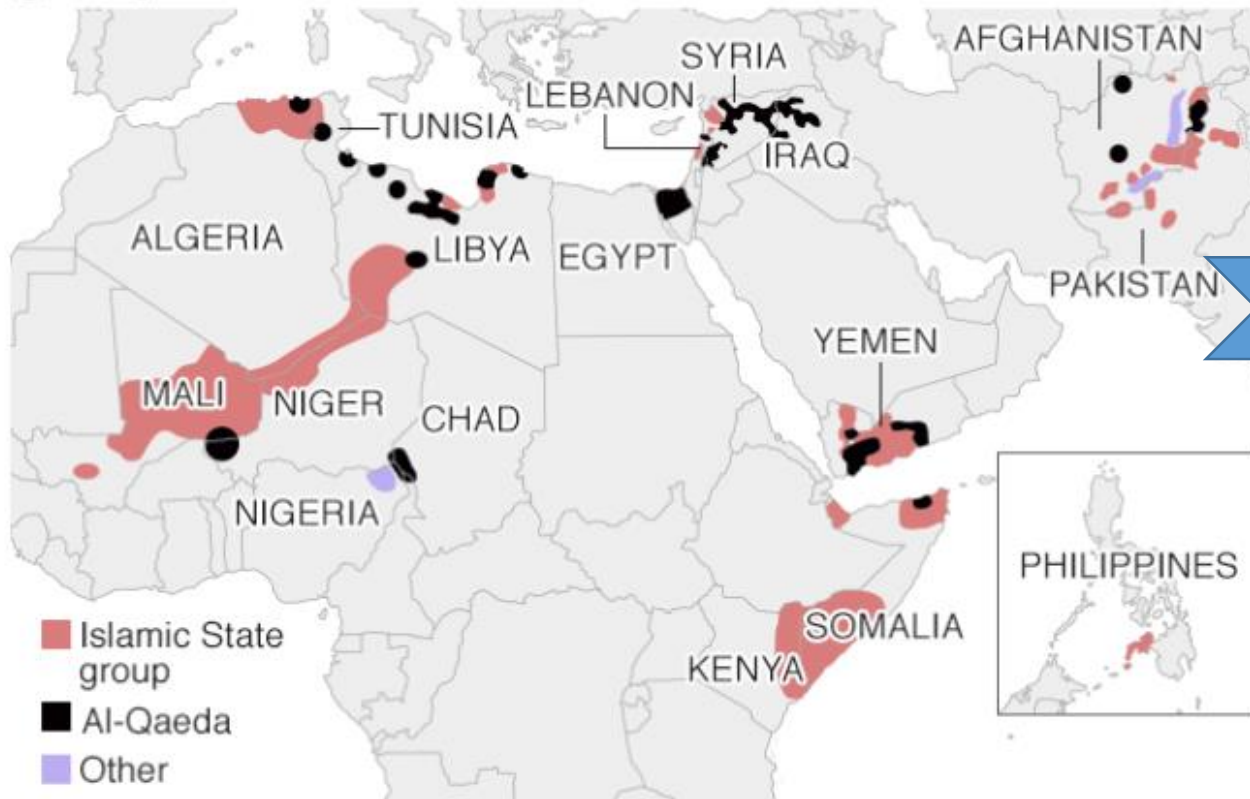
In Syria, the air campaign began in September 2014. Since then, more than 14,600 strikes have been carried out by coalition forces, which include Australia, Bahrain, France, Jordan, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the UK.

The number of strikes each month rose steadily in Iraq up to a peak in January 2016 and then began to fall as the number of strikes in Syria increased dramatically, reaching a high of just over 1,400 in August 2017.

Russia is not part of the coalition, but its jets began air strikes against what it called "terrorists" in Syria in September 2015.

SYRIA

Primary operating areas of Sunni extremist groups in 2017



Source: US Office of the Director of National Intelligence

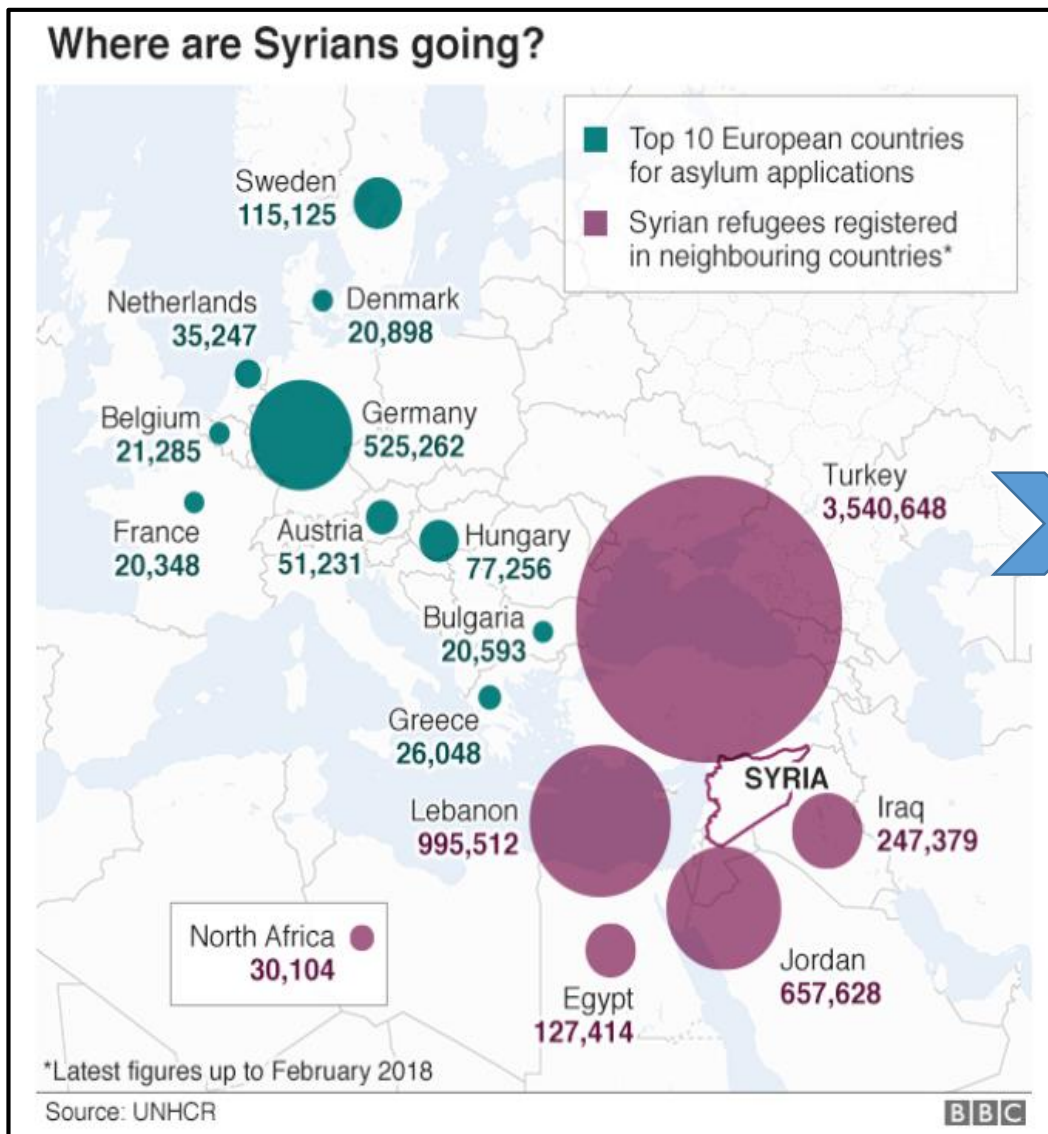
BBC

With the proclamation of a caliphate at the end of June 2014, IS signalled its intention to spread beyond Iraq and Syria.

By August 2016, IS was reported to be operational in 18 countries across the world, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, according to evidence seen by the US **National Counterterrorism Center**. It also found signs of what it called "aspiring branches" in Mali, Egypt, Somalia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Since 2016, IS has claimed attacks in a number of countries, including Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, France, Belgium, Germany, the US, Finland and Bangladesh. In 2017, IS claimed to be behind at least two attacks in the UK.

SYRIA



More than 5.6 million Syrians have fled abroad to escape the fighting in Syria, according to the UN. Most have ended up in neighbouring Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

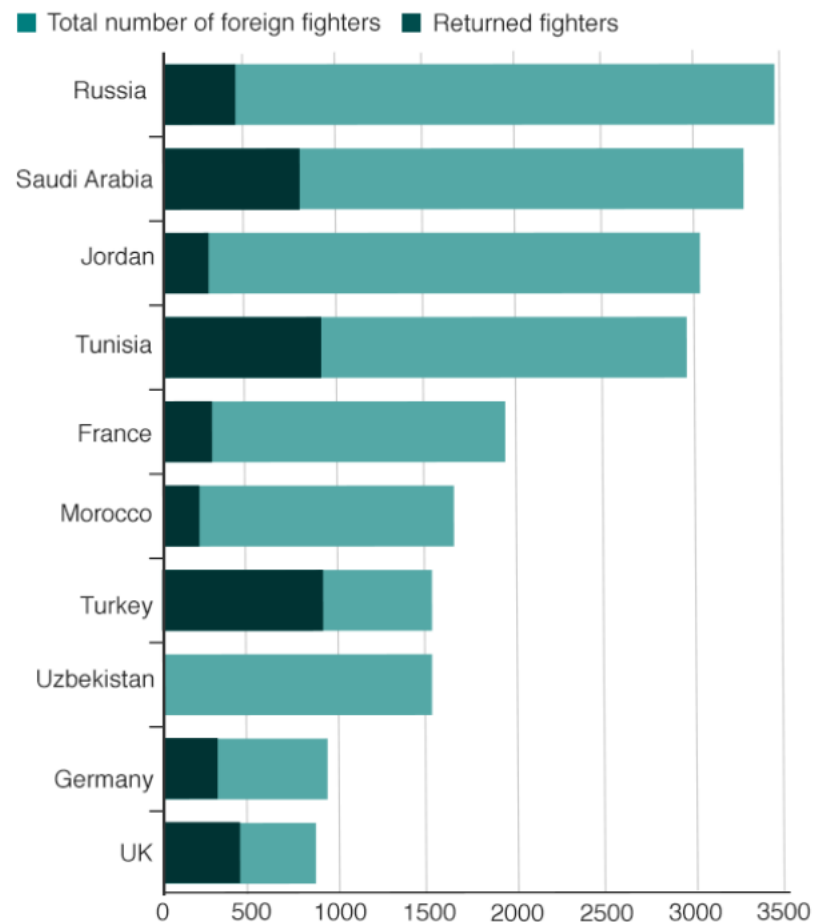
Almost one million Syrians applied for asylum in Europe between April 2011 and July 2017, according to UN figures.

There are also estimated to be 6.1 million Syrians who have been displaced inside Syria and are living in camps or other makeshift accommodation.

For the first time since the beginning of the crisis in Iraq in December 2013, the number of people returning to their area of origin in the country has surpassed the number of people displaced in the country. By the end of 2017, some 3.2 million people had returned home, while a 2.6 million remained displaced, according to the International Organization for Migration.

SYRIA

Nationalities of IS foreign fighters

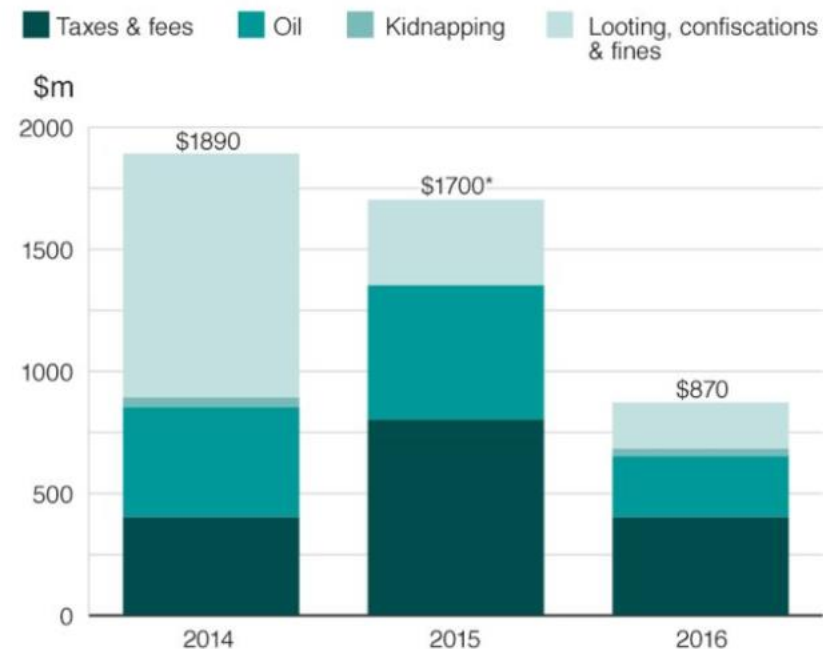


*Most numbers are approximate and are dated between Mar 2016 and Aug 2017. In the case of Uzbekistan there is no data for returned fighters.

Source: The Soufan Group (Oct 2017)

BBC

Islamic State revenue



*2015 kidnapping figure is unknown

Note: Amounts shown are upper estimates. Other income comes from the sale of antiquities and foreign donations, but is not thought to be significant.

Source: ICSR

BBC

Syria Situation Report: June 10 - 25, 2019

1 Jun 16 - 17: Likely Druze Militia Attacks Syrian Military Intelligence Building in Sweyda City: Unidentified "local" gunmen fired on an office of the Syrian Military Intelligence Directorate in majority-Druze Sweyda City in Southern Syria on June 17. The gunmen kidnapped between ten and fifteen members of Syrian Military Intelligence and demanded the release of local activist Muhammad Shahabuddin, who was detained by Syrian Military Intelligence on June 16. It remains unclear whether the standoff is resolved.

2 Jun 20: ISIS Potentially Using New Assassination Methods in Southern Syria: Unidentified actors used a toxic injection to kill a hospitalized former opposition commander in Basra al-Hajar in Eastern Dera'a Province. The incident marks the first known assassination via poison in the ongoing assassination campaign against former opposition commanders in Southern Syria. ISIS supporters published a series of posters encouraging assassinations via poison injections on June 20.

3 Jun 21 - 22: Pro-Regime Conscription Efforts Likely to Incite Further Anti-Regime Protests in Southern Syria: Pro-regime forces of checkpoints forced a number of young men to sign pledges to visit recruitment centers within seven days or face arrest across Dera'a Province in Southern Syria on June 21. One associated opposition commander - former Free Syrian Army (FSA) Engineering and Mines Regiment Commander Adnan al-Kamal - warned that the conscription drive could stir "civil disobedience" in Southern Syria. Dozens of protesters marched against forced conscription by pro-regime forces in Dera'a City on June 21.

4 Jun 20: Assad Meets with Russian Delegation as Part of Likely Talks on the Astana Peace Process: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad hosted a high-level delegation from Russia including Russian Presidential Special Envoy to Syria Alexander Lavrentiev, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vostokov, and members of the Russian Ministry of Defense in Damascus. The participants discussed ongoing operations in Greater Idlib Province as well as efforts to "activate the political process in parallel with the continuation of the war on terror" in Syria. Russia's delegation previously met with officials in Iraq on June 18 and Lebanon on June 15. Russia likely intends to incorporate Lebanon and Iraq as observer states in the Astana Process on Syria.

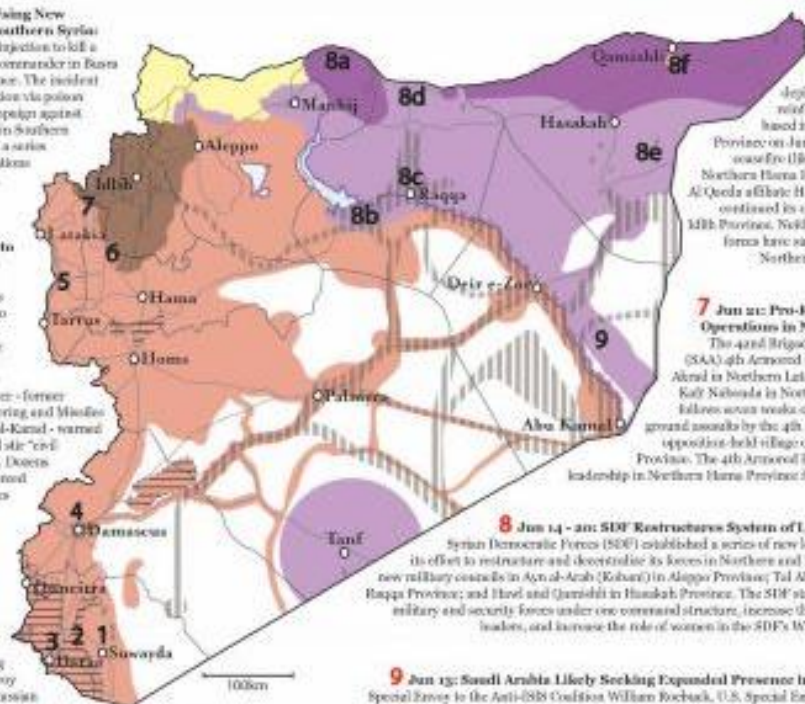
5 Jun 22: Unidentified Actors Sabotage Underwater Oil Pipelines Near Syrian Coast: Unidentified actors damaged at least five underwater pipelines supplying the Baniyas Refinery in Tartus Province on the Syrian Coast. The Syrian Oil Ministry published pictures purportedly showing the remnants of explosive devices used to destroy the pipelines, blaming the attack and resulting oil spill on unspecified "terrorists". Iran retains significant control over operations at Baniyas Refinery.

6 Jun 22 - 20: Frontlines Remain Largely Static in Northern Hama Province Despite Reinforcements: The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) deployed an unspecified amount of reinforcements from three divisions based in Damascus to Northern Hama Province on June 20. Russia later announced a ceasefire (likely to integrate these forces) in Northern Hama Province on June 22 - 24. Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) also continued its ongoing mobilization in Qadisiyah Province. Neither pro-regime nor anti-regime forces have successfully seized new terrain in Northern Hama Province since June 7.

7 Jun 21: Pro-Regime Forces Deprioritize Operations in Northern Latakia Province: The 4th Brigade of the elite Syrian Arab Army (SAA) 4th Armored Division redeployed from Jabal al-Banat in Northern Latakia Province to frontlines near Kalf Nabwala in Northern Hama Province. The shift follows weeks of inactivity by bombardment and ground assaults by the 4th Armored Division targeting the opposition-held village of Kabanah in Northern Latakia Province. The 4th Armored Division may assume battlefield leadership in Northern Hama Province from the elite SAA Tiger Forces.

8 Jun 14 - 20: SDF Restructures System of Local Military Councils: The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) established a series of new local military councils as part of its effort to restructure and decentralize its forces in Northern and Eastern Syria. The SDF opened new military councils in Ayn al-Arab (Kobani) in Aleppo Province; Tal Abyad, Tabqa, and Raqqa City in Raqqa Province; and Hama and Jarablis in Hama Province. The SDF stated that the councils will unify military and security forces under one command structure, increase the decision-making role of local leaders, and increase the role of women in the SDF's Women's Protection Units (WPU).

9 Jun 13: Saudi Arabia Likely Seeking Expanded Presence in Eastern Syria: U.S. Deputy Special Envoy to the Anti-ISIS Coalition William Koeback, U.S. Special Envoy to Syria Joel Rayburn, and Saudi Minister for Arab Gulf Affairs Thamer al-Sabhan met with local tribal representatives and the Deir ez-Zor Civil Council near the Dumar Oil Fields in Deir ez-Zor Province in Eastern Syria. The participants discussed stabilization assistance and the current political, social, economic, and security conditions in Deir ez-Zor Province. Saudi Arabia may intend to invest in stabilization projects to build its relations with local tribes and expand its long-term influence in the Middle Euphrates River Valley (MERV).

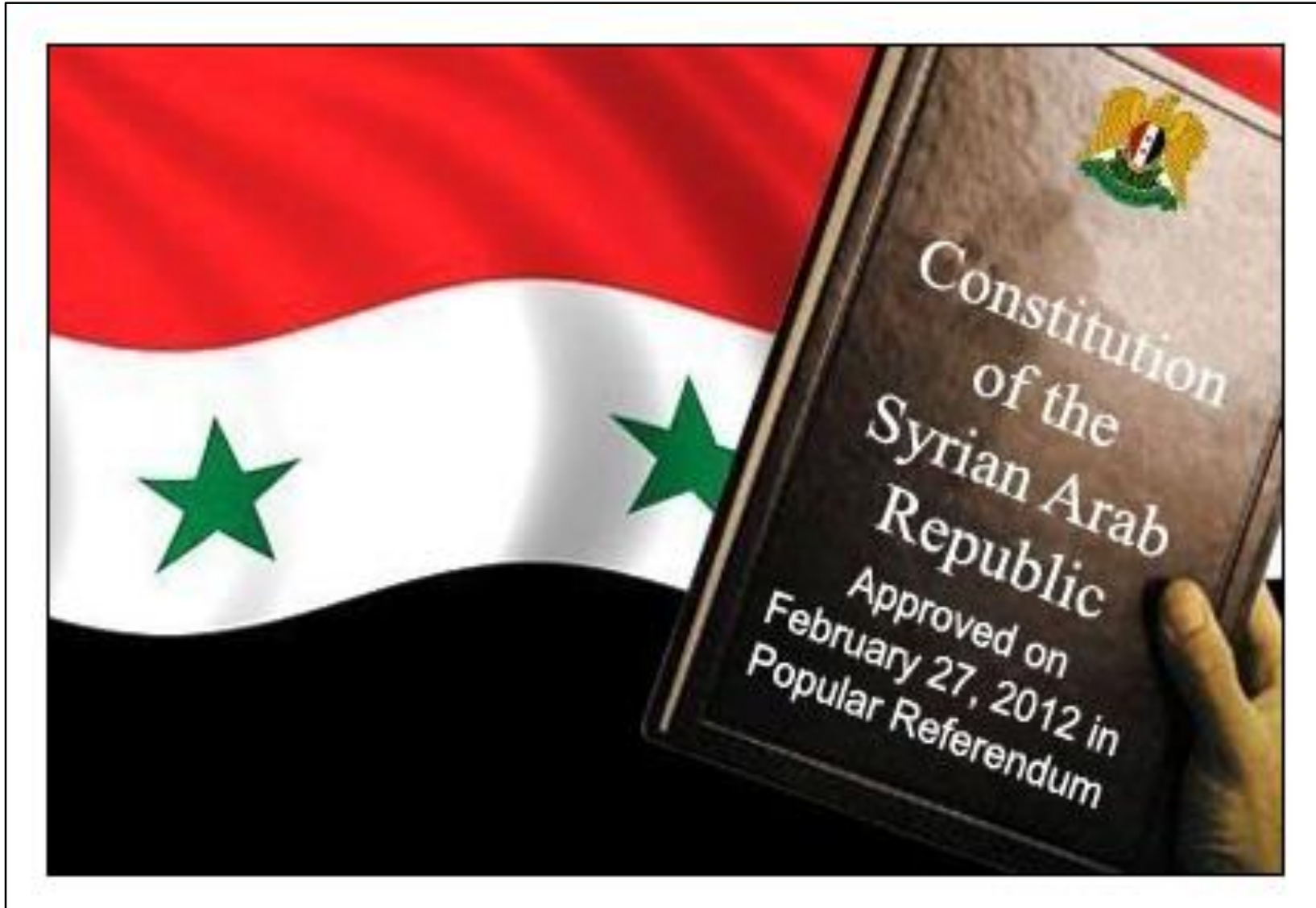


- Pro-Regime
- Turkish-Dominated
- U.S. and Partner Forces
- Core SDF-Held Kurdish Terrain
- Former Opposition Terrain (Reconciled)
- ISIS Support Zones
- Al Qaeda-Dominated*



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SYRIA

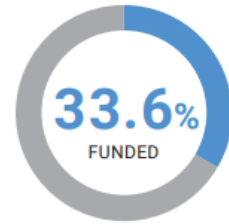


2019 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) FUNDING OVERVIEW



AS OF 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Source: Financial Tracking Service (FTS)



FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US\$ **3.29**
BILLION

FUNDING RECEIVED

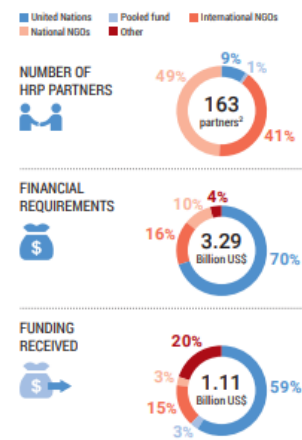
US\$ **1.11**
BILLION

UNMET REQUIREMENTS **US\$ 2.19** BILLION

BY SECTOR (US\$)

Sector/Cluster	% Covered	Funding Received	Requirements
Food security	27.4%	294M	1.1B
Health	13.1%	58.8M	449.1M
WASH	17.2%	47.2M	274.2M
Education	16.6%	41.8M	251.1M
Shelter/NFI	7.6%	40.2M	526.6M
Protection ¹	8.12%	28.6M	352.6M
Nutrition	29.6%	24.6M	83.2M
Camp coordination and camp management	46.2%	22.5M	48.6M
Coordination	38.4%	20.3M	52.9M
Early Recovery and Livelihoods	9.1%	15.8M	173.6M
Logistics	38.1%	2.4M	6.4M
Emergency Telecommunications	12.9%	0.1M	0.8M
Not specified		491.7M	-
Multiple Field clusters (shared)		17.1M	-

BY ORGANIZATION TYPE



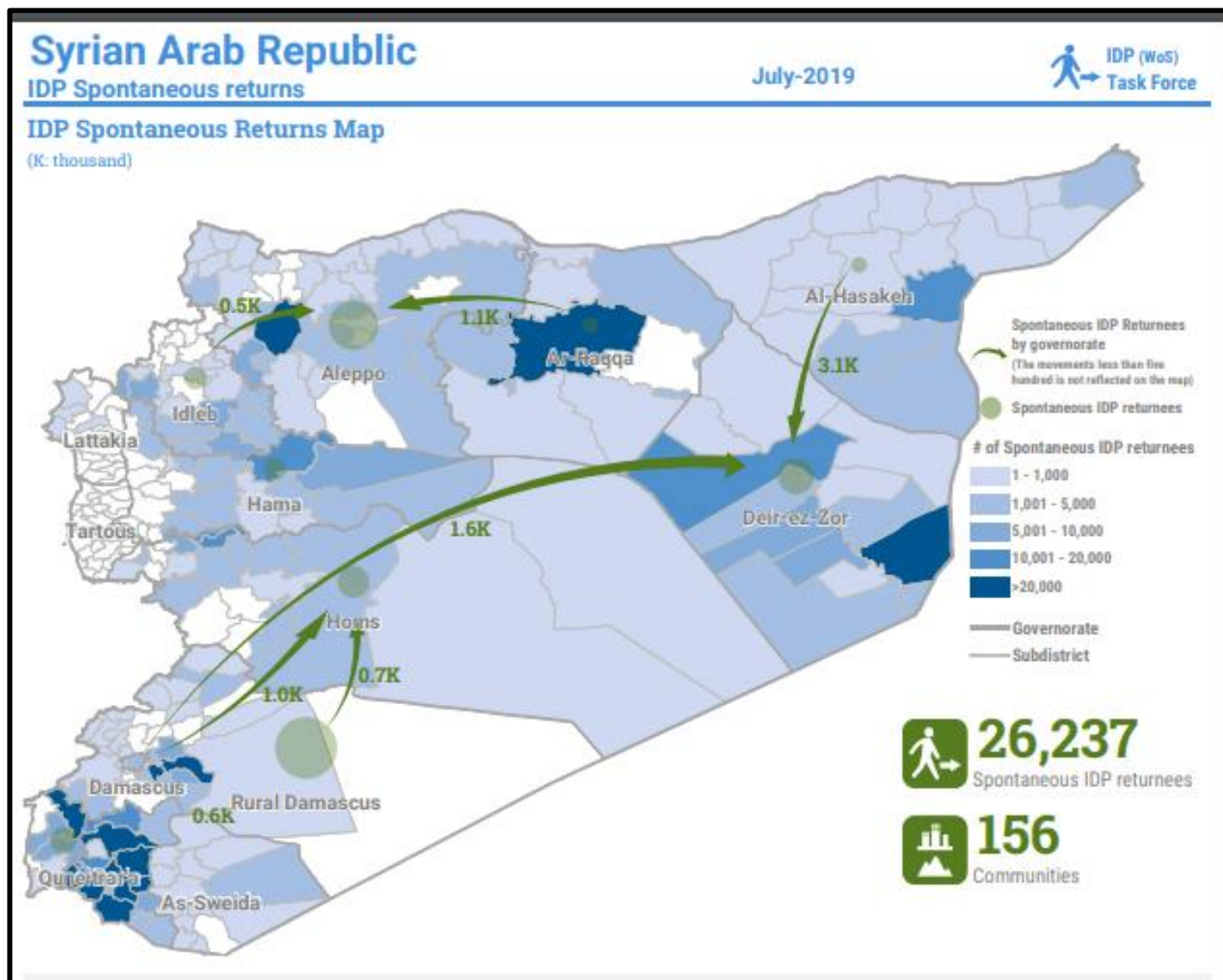
BY DONOR (TOP 10 DONORS) (US\$)



1. "Protection" includes "Child Protection Act", "Gender-Based Violence Act" and "Mine Action Act".
2. Partners reported on FTS.
3. Includes funding from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department, European Commission European Development and Cooperation, European Commission.

Data provided by the Financial Tracking System (FTS): <https://fts.unocha.org/> OCHA manages FTS, which records all humanitarian contributions, (cash, in-kind, multilateral and bilateral) to emergencies. FTS reflects funding flows received against the HRP as reported by donors and/or partners. In some cases funding received is under-reported. Please report your contributions to fts@unocha.org or through the on-line contribution report form at <https://fts.unocha.org/content/report-contribution>

SYRIA



SYRIA

July 2019 Updates

In July 2019, the humanitarian community recorded 26,238 spontaneous IDP returnees in several areas across Syria. The largest of these returns were recorded in Aleppo governorate with 5,267 returnees, about 3,600 of which returned from within the governorate and about 1,000 returnees from Ar-Raqqa governorate. Deir-ez-zor governorate received the second largest number of IDP returnees with 5,150 spontaneous returns majority of which returned from Al Hasakeh governorate, while 4,375 returns were recorded in rural Damascus and 4,269 were recorded in Homs governorate, followed by Dar'a Governorate with 1,810 recorded spontaneous returns.

Notes

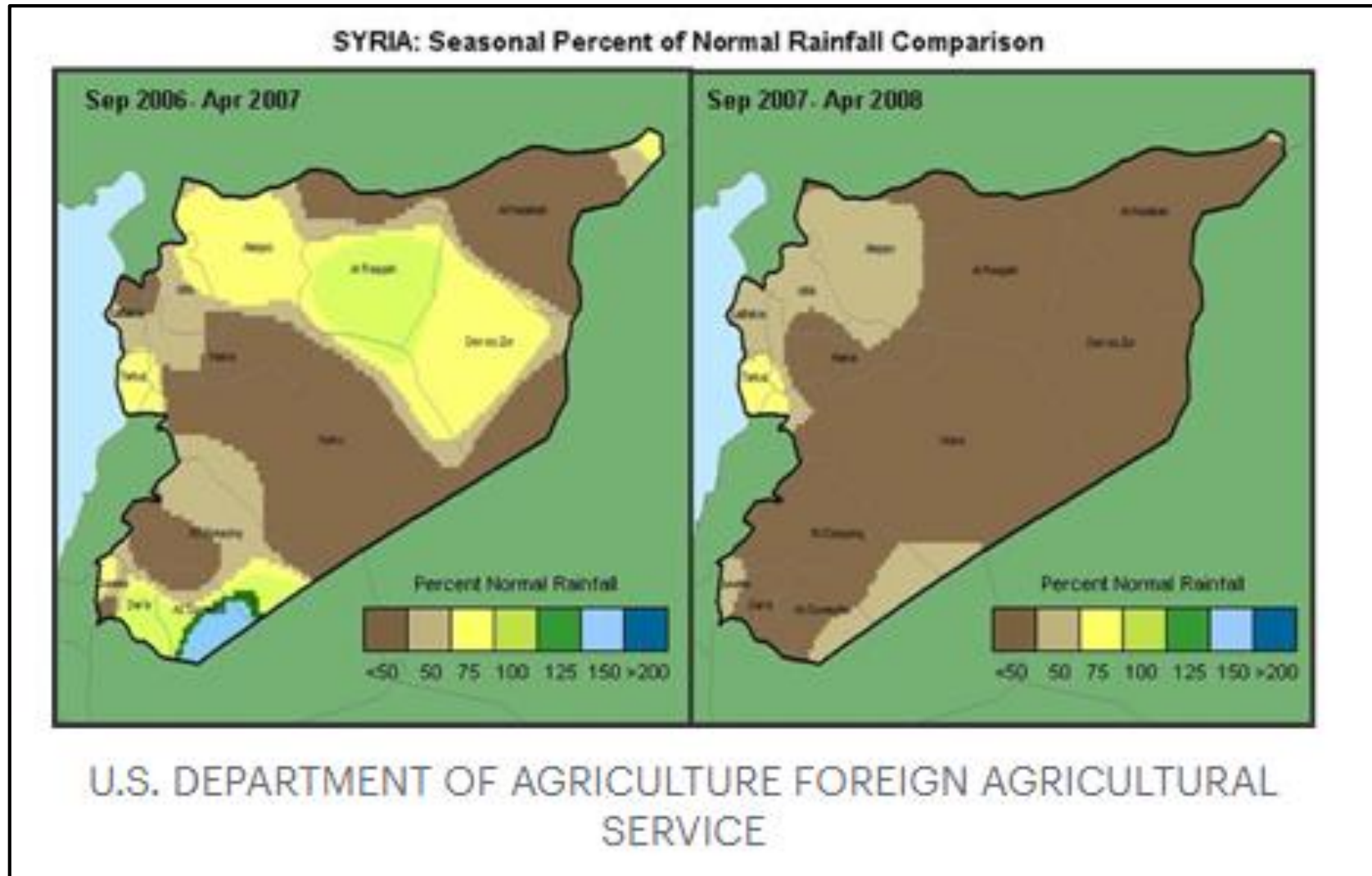
- The returns refer to IDP spontaneous returns and does not necessarily follow the global definitions of 'Returnees' or durable solutions for IDPs.
- The IDP spontaneous returns includes IDPs returning to their homes or communities of origin.
- The IDP spontaneous returns referred in this monthly report refers to the return movements occurred in the reported period only.
- The process of verification is based on triangulation of verified IDP spontaneous returns reported by different mechanisms and further examined by the IDP TF through cross-checking population numbers from previous years

Governorate Summary

(K: thousand)



SYRIA

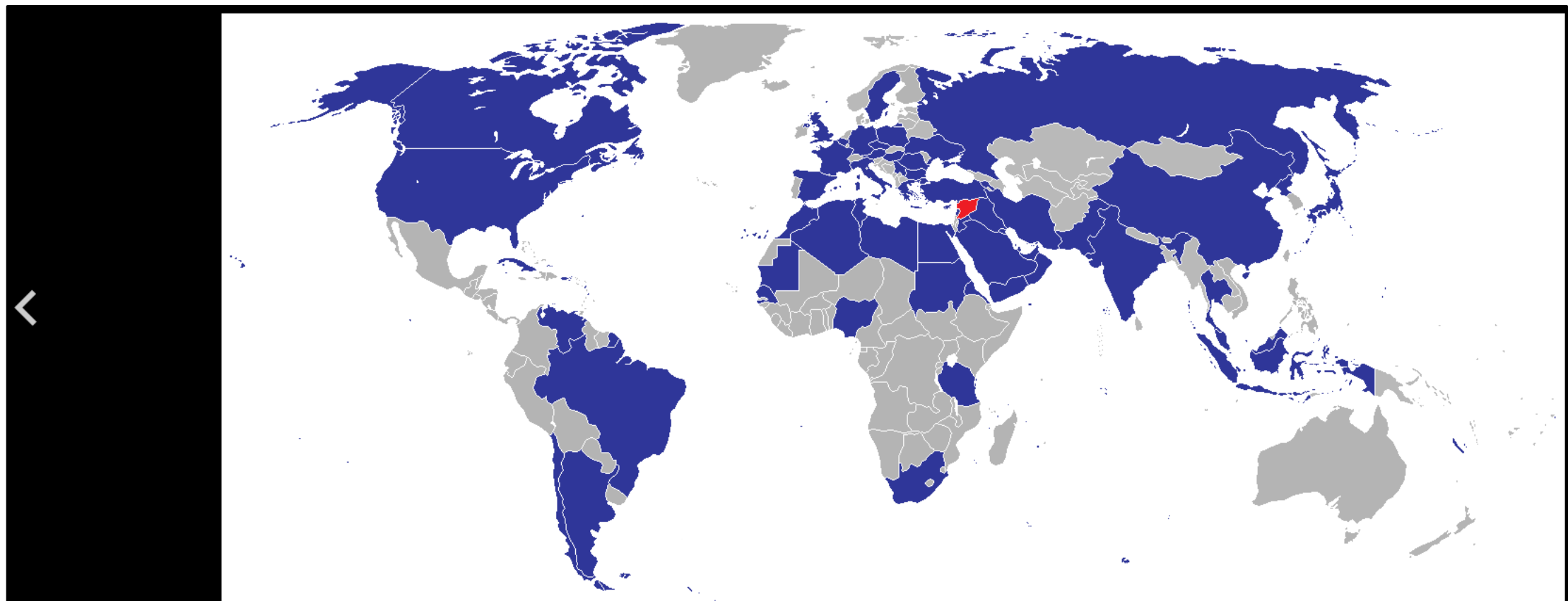


SYRIA

INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL ISSUES

The area known as the Golan Heights remains controlled by the Israeli military with an almost 1,000-strong UN Disengagement Observer Force patrolling a buffer zone since 1964. Lacking a treaty or other documentation describing the boundary, portions of the Lebanon-Syria border are unclear, with several sections in dispute. Since 2000, Lebanon has claimed the Shab'a Farms in the Golan Heights. A 2004 agreement and pending demarcation are attempting to settle a border dispute with Jordan. Syria holds over 486,000 Palestinian refugees and roughly 87,000 from Iraq. These refugees mostly reside within designated refugee camps. Since the outbreak of the civil war in 2011, more than one million Syrians remain displaced within their own country in addition to the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, many refugees of all nationalities in Syria are beginning to flee to neighboring Turkey (1.5 million), Lebanon (1.16 million), Jordan (.62 million), and Iraq (235,000), further escalating regional tensions and straining resources of already struggling host countries. Many of the refugees have been subjected to nearly unlivable conditions, slave like labor, and sex trafficking.

SYRIA



Diplomatic missions of Syria

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria>



Syria: UNRWA - Humanitarian Snapshot, June 2019



UNRWA hosted students coming from Lebanon to sit for the ninth and Baccalaureate examinations

Some 4,546 ninth grade UNRWA students across Syria are taking their exam, which started on 10 June. UNRWA hosted 100 ninth grade and 71 twelfth grade students from Lebanon to help them set their national exam, Students were provided with accommodation at the Damascus Training Centre and the Said Al-Ass Institute in Alliance, remedial classes, transportation, food, medical consultations; in addition to psychosocial support counselling.



CASH ASSISTANCE:

In June, 193,457 Palestine refugees received cash assistance through the second distribution round using the new targeted on 19 May 2019. A pilot ATM card project was launched, aiming at providing Palestine refugees with greater flexibility on cash-withdrawal. 9,100 refugee families, out of the targeted 10,000 have collected their ATM cards thus far. UNRWA to scale up the ATM card alternative to reach all Palestine refugee families living in Syria.

193,457

individuals received cash assistance in June



FOOD, NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI) & SHELTER:

1,143 most vulnerable Palestine refugees received food baskets in June. In addition 1,045 non-food items were distributed to beneficiaries identified as eligible for NFI assistance. Many of them were Palestine Refugee students from Syria currently displaced to Lebanon, who had returned to complete the Syrian national exams.

1,022 food baskets

1,045 non-food items (NFIs)



EDUCATION:

In June, 48,883 students from grades 1 to 9 attended classes in 103 UNRWA run schools across Syria. UNRWA hosted 171 ninth and twelfth grade students from Lebanon to help them set their national exam.

103 schools | 48,883 students



24,098 girls



24,785 boys



LIVELIHOODS:

830 loans were provided by the Microfinance Department benefiting 2,822 Palestine refugees and Syrians. 754 students attended the final exam for the semi-professional courses in Damascus and areas.

830 microfinance loans

45% female

15% youth

754 long-term students set their final exam



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

UNRWA provided Palestine refugees (including older persons, persons with disabilities and students from Lebanon) with 4,693 items of WASH assistance. The distributions included 690 baby diapers, 3,586 adult diapers, 183 hygiene kits and 123 jerry cans. UNRWA also ensured sanitation in the camps through garbage collection.

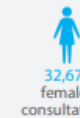
306 hygiene kits & jerry cans

4,276 baby and adult diapers



HEALTH:

Health education campaign focusing on diarrhea control and prevention was conducted. In addition, a total of 55,856 health consultations were provided to Palestine refugee patients through 22 UNRWA health facilities across Syria while 939 consultations were conducted through mobile clinics deployed in to Ein El-Tal, Jillin and Yalda.



32,677 female consultations



24,190 male consultations

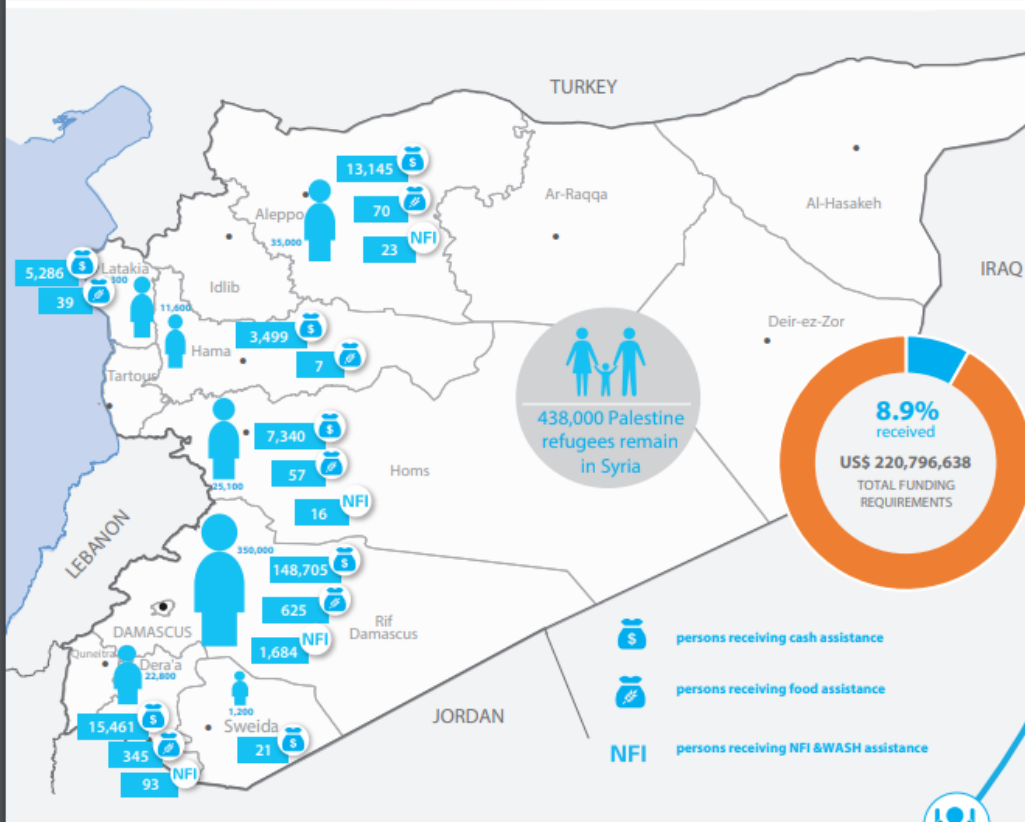


PROTECTION:

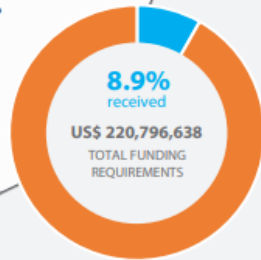
Eighty three frontline staff members in Damascus, Homs and Latakia, received training on protection mainstreaming and disability inclusion. These skills are essential to ensure that the frontline staff members employ a rights-based approach to service delivery. In addition, an estimated 250 Palestine refugees benefited from legal advice or referral through the UNRWA backed Family Support Offices.

83 staff members received mainstreaming training

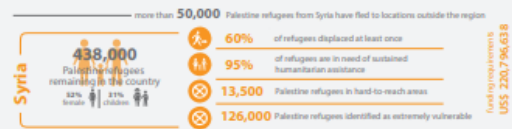
250 Palestine refugees benefitted from legal assistance



438,000 Palestine refugees remain in Syria



- persons receiving cash assistance
- persons receiving food assistance
- persons receiving NFI & WASH assistance



Date: July 2019
Source: UNRWA

The boundaries shown and the distributions used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

FACTS AND FIGURES



ABOUT 400,000 PALESTINE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA (PRS) HAVE BEEN DISPLACED

The majority of the 438,000 Palestine refugees remaining in Syria have been displaced at least once within Syria –with some having been displaced multiple times – and over 95 per cent of them remain in continuous need of humanitarian aid to meet their most basic needs. Up to 280,000 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) are currently displaced inside Syria, with a further 120,000 displaced to neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and increasingly, to Europe. The escalating violence makes movement and access more difficult and causes severe hardship. Jordan effectively closed its borders to Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) early in the conflict; Lebanon followed suit in May 2015.

There are 31,000 PRS in Lebanon. Many of them have been pushed into a precarious and marginalized existence due to their uncertain legal status and face limited social protection, making them heavily reliant on UNRWA for their basic needs.

SYRIA

SOCIETY



In 2011, the population of Syria stood at approximately 23 million. According to the last CIA World Factbook population update on Syria, there were about 17,951,639 people living in the country in 2014. **One source** in September 2015 made an estimate of 16.6 million; however, mass migration due to over five years of civil war preclude accurate updates to that figure.

The population is very young with over 50% of the population under the age of 25, although civil war has dropped the population growth rate from 2% to -0.73%. Approximately 56% of the population lives in the major cities with a 3% rate of urbanization. Though Arabic remains the official language, about 10% of the population also speaks Kurdish, Armenian, or Aramaic. English and French are somewhat understood in the major cities.

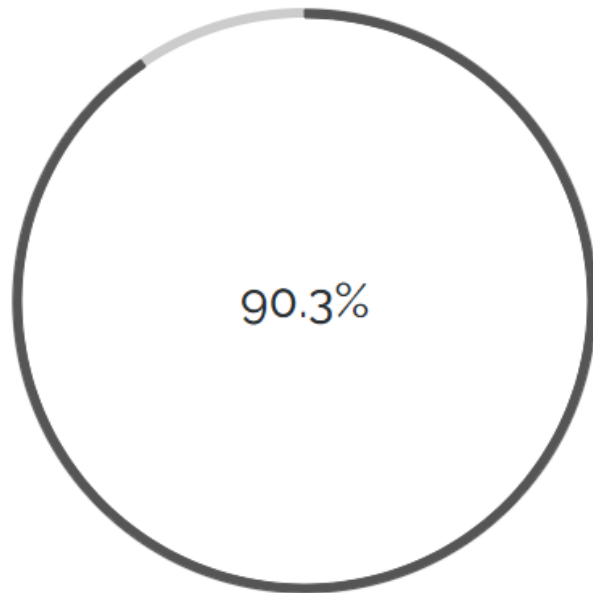
SYRIA

Population of Syria

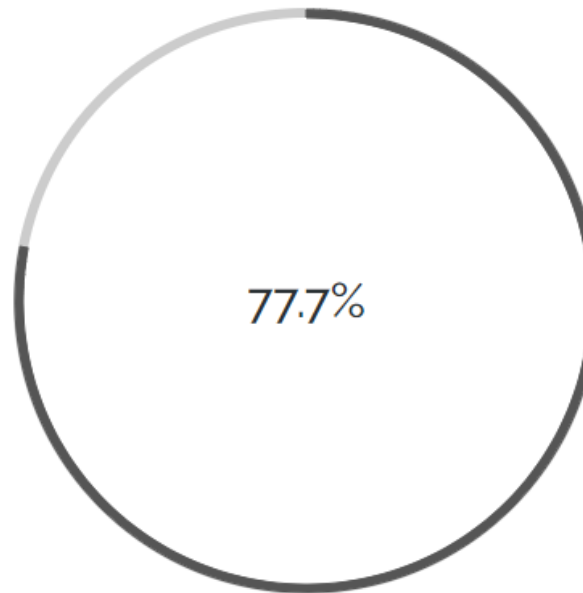
Arabs 90%

Mix of Kurds-Armenians-Greeks-Others 10%

Syria has a literacy rate of approximately 84% of the population. This percentage is higher among men at 90.3% and lower for women at 77.7%. Education is free and obligatory up to 9th grade for all citizens. At the end of high school students must take the difficult baccalaureate exam to determine what university and specialization they will go into. Syria has five state universities and eleven private universities, and the top two for overall educational value are the University of Damascus and the University of Aleppo.

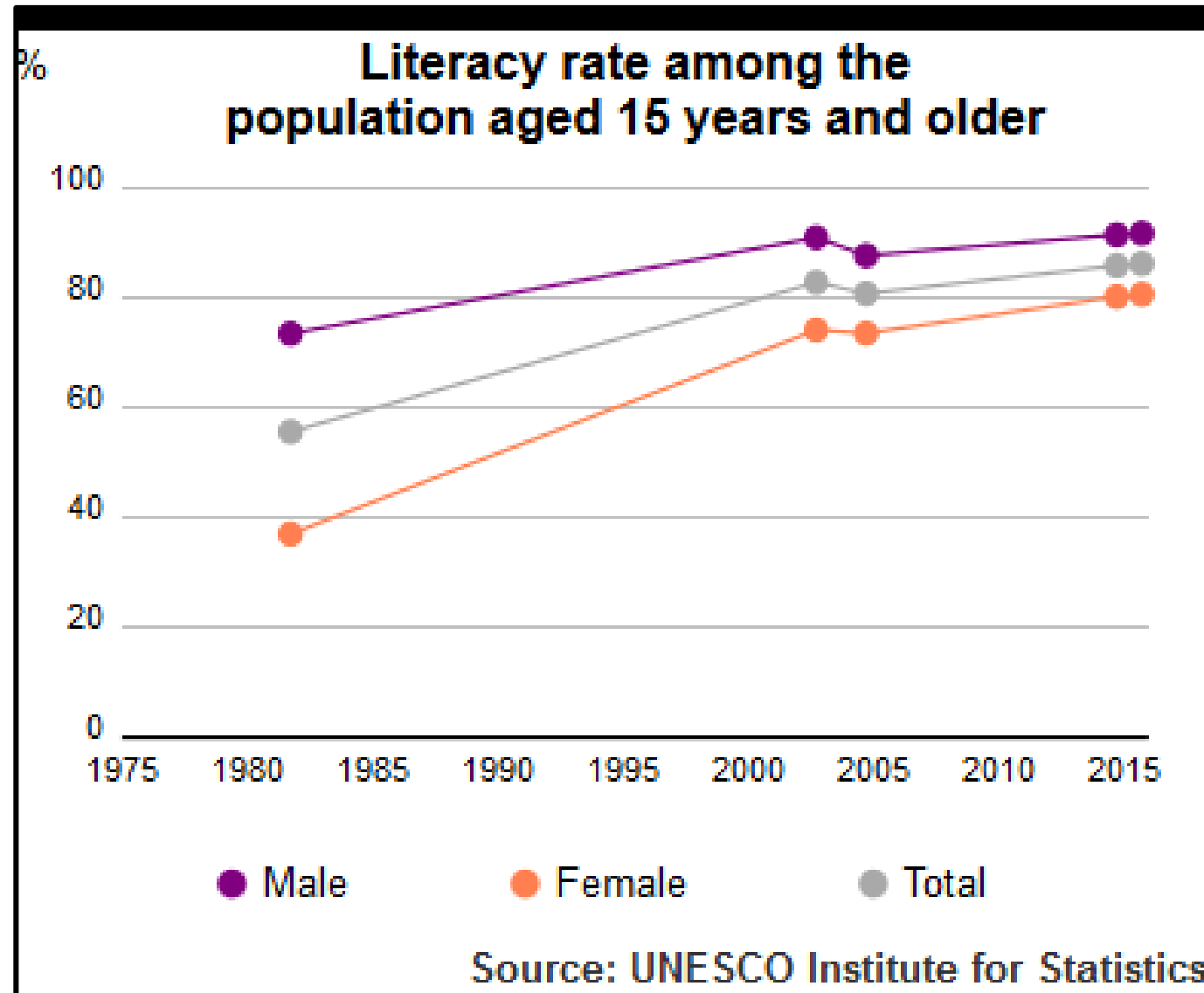


Literacy Rate (Men)



Literacy Rate (Women)

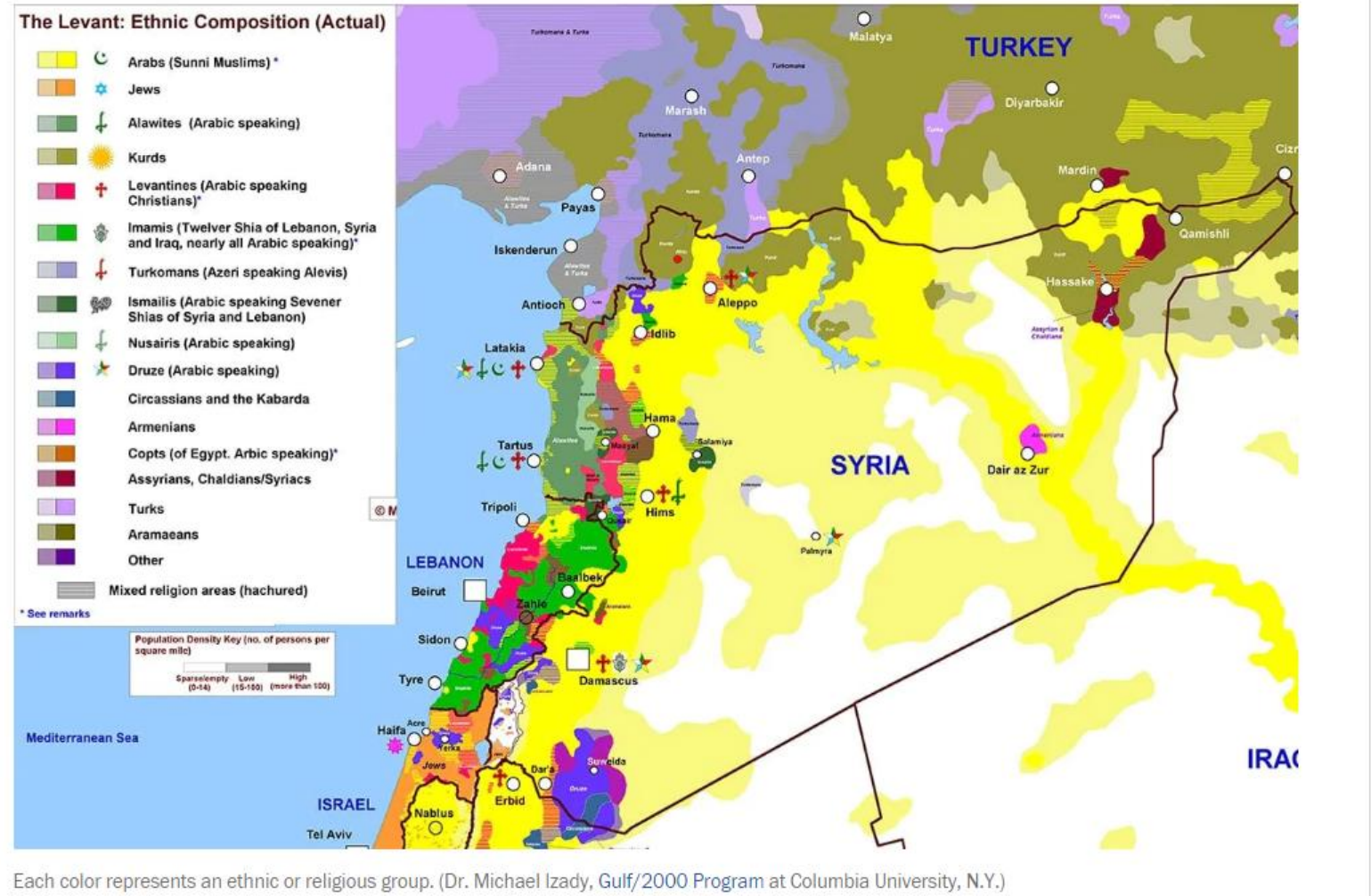
SYRIA



MENGAPA SYRIA KOMPLEKS?

By Max Fisher

August 27, 2013



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/08/27/the-one-map-that-shows-why-syria-is-so-complicated/>

PENDIDIKAN TINGGI DI SYRIA

The war in Syria has generated the 21st century's worst humanitarian crisis, with as many as 300,000 Syrians killed and half the population displaced. This violence and insecurity has also had a devastating impact on professors, university students, and the country's education sector, exemplifying the consequences when scholars are targeted. Before the conflict, Syria boasted one of the Middle East's largest and most well-established higher education systems. War, however, has decimated the university system inside the country, and amongst the refugees are an estimated 2,000 university professionals and a minimum of 100,000 university-qualified students.

On May 17, the Center for Universal Education at Brookings hosted a panel discussion to explore the frequently overlooked impact of the Syrian crisis, and the broader political and security implications on higher education in conflict settings. The panel also highlighted the Institute for International Education's [Scholar Rescue Fund](#), which supports visiting appointments for threatened scholars worldwide, as well as perspectives from a Syrian beneficiary of the fund.

SYRIA



Despite the risk, students and teachers continue to go to school in dangerous Aleppo [Al Jazeera]

SYRIA

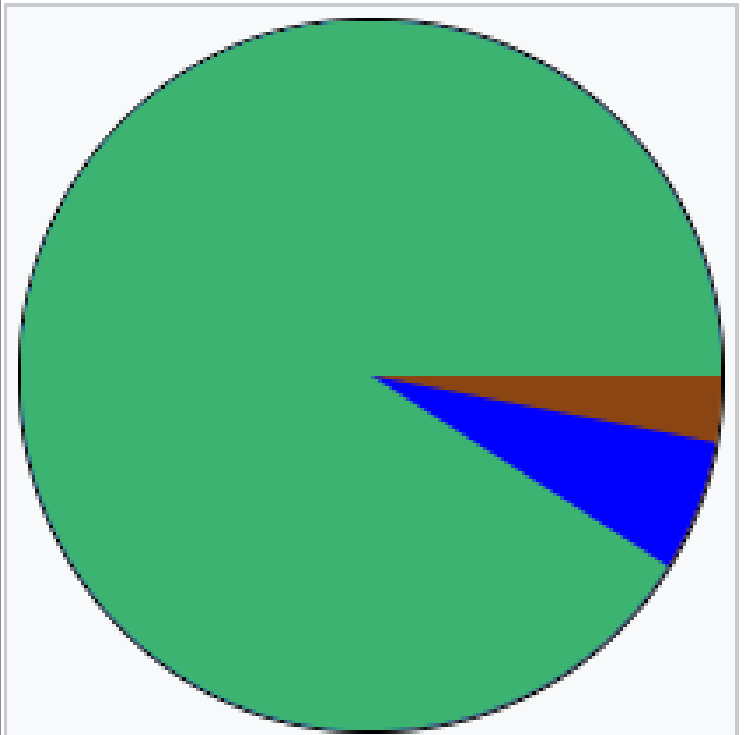
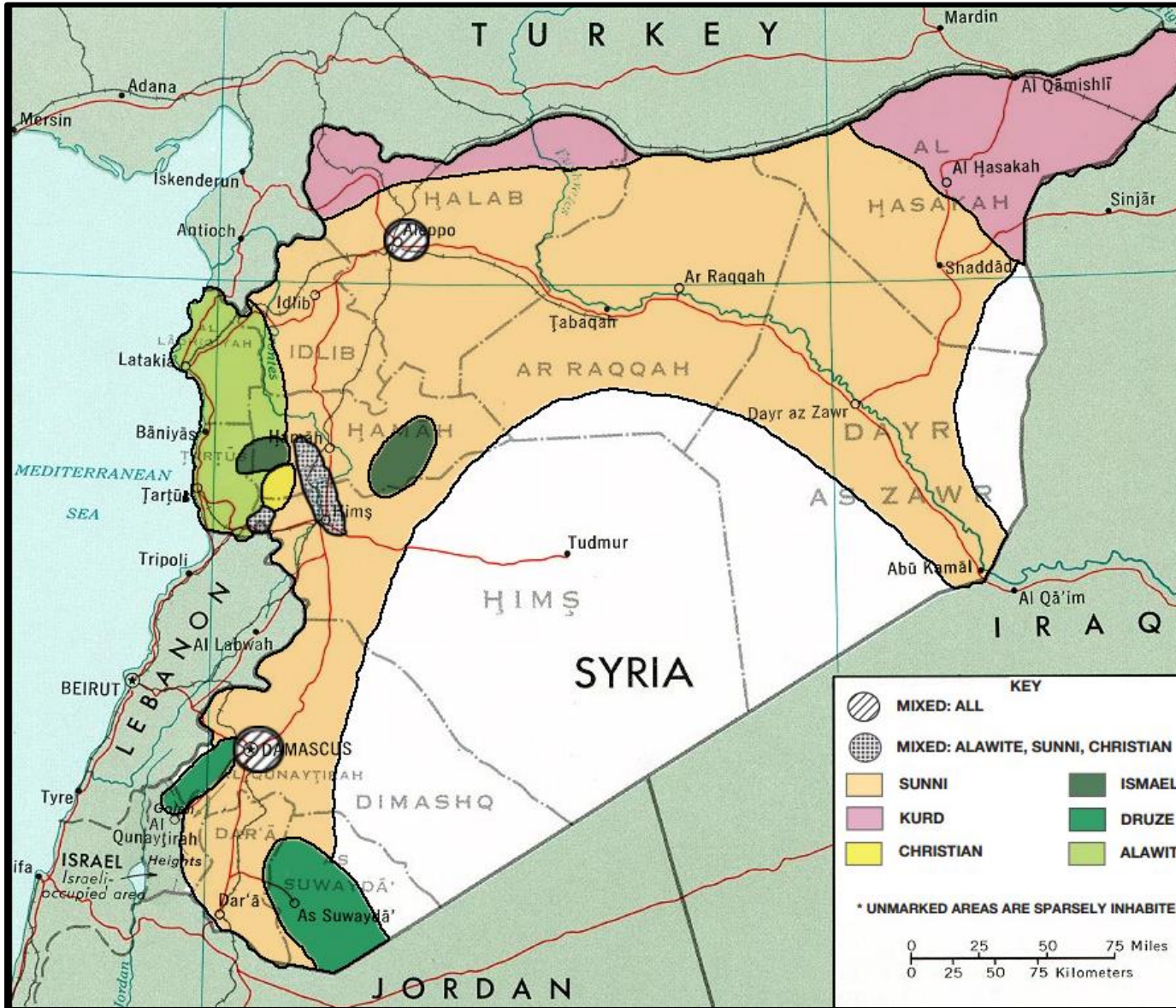
RELIGION



The majority of the population is Muslim with Sunnis accounting for about 74%. The remaining population is a mix of Shia sects, predominantly Alawite at 13%. The Druze population accounts for roughly 3% of the population. The Christian minorities are divided into several groups: Antiochian Orthodox, Catholic, Syria Orthodox, and Nestorian Assyrians. There is a dwindling Jewish community, mostly confined to Damascus after Aleppo's Jews escaped to Israel in 2015. Syria's government was tolerant of other religions, providing constitutional protection to the free practice and expression of religion throughout the country. Competing non-state militant groups, however, have deliberately targeted, abused and killed Muslims they consider apostates as well as several religious minority groups.

<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/syria-map.htm>

SYRIA



Religion in Syria (est. 2006)^[200]

- Islam (91%)
- Christianity (6%)
- Druzism (3%)

SYRIA



Yazidis fleeing Sinjar, Iraq, in 2014 after forces loyal to the Islamic State took the town. Kurdish and Yazidi fighters retook it last fall. Rodi Said/Reuters

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/17/world/middleeast/isis-genocide-yazidi-un.html>

SYRIA

CULTURE

Arts

Syria, as part of the Cradle of Civilization, hosted countless peoples and cultures whose legacies helped shape modern Syrian character and identity. A number of museum collections contained precious relics and artwork from pre-Islamic and Islamic times. Two of the most impressive museums included the National Museum in Damascus and the Aleppo Museum. The most popular part of the National Museum is the reconstruction of the 2nd century CE Dura-Europos synagogue, while the Aleppo Museum is famous for its grand entrance featuring a female sphinx from the Iron Age Neo-Hittite settlement of Tell Halaf (9th century BCE). Sadly, many museums have been looted and numerous historic sites such as the ancient city of Palmyra have been destroyed during the civil war. At the Aleppo Museum, because of the difficulty of connecting with preservation organizations for assistance, curators resorted to using sandbags to protect the sphinx and other outdoor treasures in 2014.



Much of Syria's contemporary art mixes traditional Islamic themes and techniques with Western influences. The Creative Syria project was established by the Syrian Culture, Arts, and History Center, and was established to help promote prominent Syrian artists. The project showcases top calligraphers such as Mohamed Kanou, photographers like Issa Touma, and painters like Sara Shamma and Boutros Almaari. The civil war has forced many contemporary artists and musicians out of the country, and some of them now reside in nearby Lebanon, continuing to produce works of art detailing the Syrian struggle.

SYRIA



The National Museum in Damascus was established under the supervision of the Ministry of Education in 1919. The original core of this museum's contents was initially kept at the Madrasa al-'Adiliya. The collection gradually increased and the discovery of the Umayyad palace of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi in the Syrian desert in 1936 further spurred into action plans for a newer and bigger museum. A building located next to Al-Takiyya al-Sulaymaniya was chosen for the establishment of the National Museum of Damascus.

Qasr Al-Hayr Al-Gharbi added new emphasis to the importance of devoting more attention to the Islamic period and the Directors of Antiquities decided to incorporate these palatial finds into the National Museum of Damascus. After much hard work and technical expertise, the front façade of the Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi was transposed and carefully reconstructed as the National Museum's main entrance. The side halls and the second floor were designated for the most important artistic finds of this early Islamic palace. The completion of the display took several years and the official opening was celebrated in 1950.

In 1953 a three-storey wing was added to house and display ancient oriental antiquities, the Islamic period, modern Syrian art, and temporary exhibitions.

Aleppo National Museum



The Aleppo Museum contains an important collection of items from many periods, with a strong emphasis on Iron Age and the classical period, but including many items from the Late Bronze. It contains a small selection of some of the 20,000 or more early second millennium cuneiform tablets found at Mari.

The middle section of the rear hall is dedicated to two northern sites, Tell Hajib and Arslan Tash. The third section displays finds from Tell Ahmar, excavated by the French in the 1920s. The large gallery that runs along the third side of the building is used to house finds from several sites, including Ebla and Ain Dara. The second floor contains numerous artifacts found during the major excavations carried out by multi-national expeditions in the flooded region of Lake Assad on the Euphrates.

Click [here](#) for a selection of several recently digitized Ur III (ca. 2000 BC) tablets in the Aleppo collection.



Arabic
Français

Tablets in the Aleppo National Museum,
by period:

Ebla (ca. 2400-2350 BC)
Old Akkadian (ca. 2350-2200 BC)
Ur III period (ca. 2100-2000 BC)
Early Old Babylonian (ca. 2000-1800 BC)
Middle Babylonian (ca. 1400-1100 BC)
Middle Assyrian (ca. 1400-1000 BC)

Tablets in the Aleppo National Museum,
by text genre:

Administrative texts
Literary texts
Legal texts
Letters
Lexical texts
Royal/Monumental texts
Uncertain

Tablets in Aleppo National Museum,
by site:

Djebel Arouda
Drehem
Neirab
Tell Ahmar / Til Barsip
Tell Bazi / Başıru
Tell Brak / Nagar
Tell Chagar Bazar / Ashnakkum
Tell Chioukh Faouqani / Burmarina
Tell el-Qitar / Til Abnu
Tell Fray
Tell Hadidi / Azu
Tell Hariri / Mari
Tell Mardikh / Ebla
Tell Mishrife / Qatna
Tell Meskene / Emar
Ras Shamra / Ugarit
Umm el-Marra
Umma

SYRIA

Sites



Syria has an impressive cultural heritage. Extensive archaeological activity in the area has revealed countless sites dating back to the third millennium BCE and to more recent Islamic times. Some of the most ancient cities include Ebla, Ugarit, and Mari dating back to the Bronze Age (3600-1200 BCE). From the Greek and Roman periods, Palmyra, Apamea, and Bosra are by far the most famous. Clashes between the Islamic State and opposition forces have destroyed numerous ancient cities in both Syria and Iraq. According to a 2014 [New York Times](#) article about the civil war's impact on Syrian culture, "Officials at Unesco, the United Nations agency that works to protect historic places, have classified as endangered all six of Syria's World Heritage sites, including Palmyra." Continued fighting, however, has prevented UNESCO from inspecting the damage in person.

SYRIA



A Syrian soldier looking at the castle on Thursday

Government troops in Syria have recaptured the historic Crusader castle of Krak des Chevaliers from rebels, close to the border with Lebanon.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26696113>

SYRIA

The war in Syria has claimed more than 130,000 lives and, as these images reveal, it is also laying waste to its historic buildings and Unesco-listed sites



▲ Umayyad mosque, Aleppo – pictured in 2012, before fighting destroyed it in 2013. Photograph: Alamy

They were sleepy tree-lined boulevards where people lived and worked, time-worn markets where they came to trade and exquisitely detailed mosques where, throughout the ages, they prayed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/26/syria-heritage-in-ruins-before-and-after-pictures>

SYRIA

Music

Folk music permeates Syrian culture and is often used to celebrate weddings or the birth of a child. The typical folk music style is called *muwashshaat*. This style features classical Arabic poetry which is sung while playing instruments like the oud (lute), kemenjah (spike fiddle), and daf (tambourine). This is sometimes accompanied by dabkeh, a popular line dance during which each dancer stomps his feet in rhythmic steps.

Syrian music is sometimes played in tandem with displays from the region's Sufi Islamic religious orders. The Whirling Dervishes, a popular order of Sufi Islam in the Levant region, are known for performing fast spinning dances while wearing long, white robes. These groups often perform in public squares and are a popular exhibit for tourists.

Syria has a number of pop stars, residing both in the country and abroad such as George Wassouf and Bashar Moussa. Wassouf played for his first wedding party at the age of 12, and has released over 30 albums to date. The Syrian Civil War has had an impact on the dynamic of Syrian music as both sides have begun using music to champion their cause. The Syrian government has utilized patriotic songs, such as, "I am Syrian, God is on my side." On the opposition side, a previously unknown musician named Hamwee Ibrahim Qashoosh released a song called "Yalla irhal ya Bashar" ("Get Out, Bashar"). The song mixes traditional dabkeh music with verses denouncing the Syrian government. The link below, "Syria's Music Wars", looks more closely at this trend.

Syria's Music Wars

Omar Adam Sayfo May 6, 2013



REUTERS/Hamid Khatib

Members of the Free Syrian Army chant as one of them plays the guitar near Nairab military airport in Aleppo Feb. 26, 2013

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/music-syria-war-pop-rap-dabke-regime-rebels.html>

SYRIA

Sports

Soccer, swimming, and tennis are very popular in Syria. Soccer is particularly popular and children can often be seen playing it in streets and parks. The Syrian national team, the Red Eagles, has participated in several international competitions; however, the team has had little success. The Red Eagles have competed in five Asian Cups, but each time failed to advance past the quarterfinals round. Syria has never made it to the FIFA World Cup finals, only reaching the final qualifying round in 1986, and losing to Iraq.

Syria has never competed in the Winter Olympic Games, but has sent athletes to every Summer Games since 1976. Syria has won an Olympic silver medal for wrestling in 1984 and a bronze medal for boxing in 2004. During the Atlanta games in 1996, female athlete Ghada Shouaa won the gold medal in the Heptathlon. 2 Syrian swimmers, **Yusra Mardini** and **Rami Anis**, were selected as part of a 10 member refugee team to compete at the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics.



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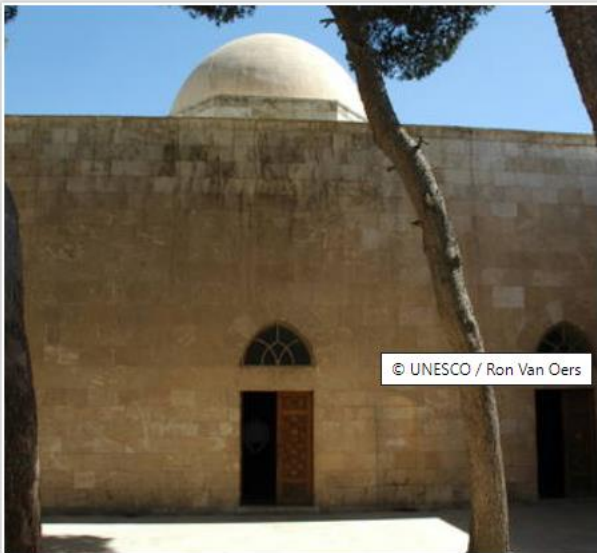
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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria>