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Syria

COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS:

2024 Update (endorsed by the UNCT on XX February 2025)



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Acronyms

CCA	Common Country Analysis
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (<i>United Nations</i>)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
MSMEs	Micro, small, and medium sized enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (<i>United Nations</i>)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SYP	Syrian Pound
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNSF	United Nations Strategic Framework
US\$	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

1. Executive Summary

Now in its thirteenth year, the conflict in Syria remains one of the world's most severe humanitarian, socio-economic, and protection crises. The protracted crisis has led to widespread displacement, economic collapse, environmental degradation, and the deterioration of governance and public services. The situation was further compounded by the February 2023 earthquakes, which caused extensive infrastructure damage and deepened existing vulnerabilities. Additionally, the Israeli-Lebanese conflict (September–November 2024) has exacerbated challenges, triggering an influx of Lebanese refugees and Syrian returnees, while disruptions to supply chains through Lebanon due to the destruction of land crossings have further strained access to essential goods.

In 2024, an estimated 16.7 million people—including 30 percent women, 45 percent children, and 17 percent persons with disabilities—require life-saving assistance, an increase from 15.3 million in 2023. Furthermore, Syria ranks 127th out of 166 countries in the 2024 Sustainable Development Report, underscoring the country's limited progress toward achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The political landscape has been marked by the collapse of the Asad regime in December 2024, following intense clashes with armed groups led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. These groups seized control from the former government and established a caretaker authority to oversee the political transition. However, the situation remains highly fragmented, with various internal and external actors engaged in ongoing hostilities. Despite these developments, no substantial progress has been made toward a political resolution in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015). Violence and insecurity persist, contributing to civilian casualties, forced displacement, and the destruction of vital infrastructure. Governance indicators continue to decline, with restrictions on civic space, political participation, freedom of expression, and human rights. Women and marginalized groups face entrenched discrimination, gender-based violence, and economic exclusion. The UNCT underscores the importance of a gender-responsive and inclusive approach to Syria's recovery and development. Women, children, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and marginalized groups must be central to decision-making processes, particularly in areas such as governance, economic recovery, and social protection.

Economic conditions have worsened, with over 33 percent of the population facing extreme poverty in 2024 and 67 percent falling below the lower-middle-income poverty line. This has led to the widespread adoption of negative coping strategies such as child labor, early marriage, and reduced food consumption. Inflation, currency devaluation, and a shrinking job market have further eroded purchasing power and economic resilience. In 2024, 12.7 million people are food insecure, and 5.9 million—mostly women and children—require urgent nutritional assistance. The healthcare system is in crisis, with only 54 percent of hospitals and 39 percent of health centers fully functional, exacerbated by medicine shortages, staff attrition, and power outages. The education sector faces similar challenges, with more than 2.45 million children out of school and over a million at risk of dropping out, further jeopardizing human capital development. In December 2024, the exchange rate of the Syrian pound (SYP) against the US dollar slightly improved and stabilized, leading to a gradual decrease in the prices of some imported goods. However, cash shortages in banks and markets, coupled with recently imposed strict restrictions

on cash transfers, have created significant hardships for Syrians. These constraints have disrupted business activities across all sectors, including humanitarian intervention projects.

Syria's water, energy, housing and agriculture sectors have suffered severe deterioration due to conflict-related destruction, resource depletion, and climate change impacts. Over 70 percent of sewage is discharged untreated, and half of sewerage systems are nonfunctional, contributing to severe environmental and public health risks. Damage to housing and land ownership disputes have left 6.8 million people in need of humanitarian shelter assistance, while land confiscations and bureaucratic obstacles hinder recovery efforts.

During the winter of 2024, Syria received significantly low rainfall—70% below the long-term average. This is expected to further deplete groundwater levels, exacerbating water scarcity. The decline in water availability could also negatively impact food production and agricultural livelihoods, further contributing to the country's deteriorating economic situation.

The economic collapse remains severe, with real GDP projected to decline further in 2025, reflecting continued macroeconomic instability and structural weaknesses. GDP is expected to face additional pressures due to inflation, declining public revenues, unintended impact of sanctions, and disruptions in trade and production. Unless macrostructural reforms are implemented, the Syrian pound is anticipated to experience further depreciation in 2025, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis, canceling the public subsidies on bread and fuel and reducing household purchasing power. Structural challenges, including widespread business closures, regulatory barriers, and an expanding informal economy, continue to hinder private sector recovery. Meanwhile, labour market shortages persist despite high unemployment, which stands at 21.3 percent in 2024, with limited job creation prospects for 2025.

Despite these challenges, humanitarian and development actors continue to advocate for early recovery and resilience-building efforts. The United Nations Strategic Framework 2022–2024 (UNSF), extended until the end of 2025, focuses on four pillars: basic and social services, socio-economic recovery, conditions for a resilient return, and institutional responsiveness. The Early Recovery Strategy (ERS) for the Whole of Syria, launched in November 2024, aims to mobilize funding and international engagement to facilitate a transition from humanitarian assistance to early recovery as well as a long-term, sustainable development.

On 8 December, the collapse of the Assad regime marked a pivotal moment, creating opportunities for new leadership and allowing Syrians to shape their future differently. In this evolving landscape, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Syria underscores the urgent need for a strategic shift toward sustainable development that is gender-responsive and equitable. The UNCT has identified twelve priority areas aligned with SDG 1 (poverty reduction), SDG 10 (reducing inequalities), and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). However, achieving meaningful progress hinges on increased cooperation with national authorities, increased financial support for recovery and reconstruction, and renewed political engagement to advance a peaceful resolution. To guide this transformation, Syria's development agenda needs to be framed within the Six Transitions, addressing food systems, energy, digital connectivity, education, social protection, and climate resilience. These transitions are aligned with the SDGs and provide a strategic framework for addressing Syria's most pressing challenges. They must

be underpinned by Engine Groups—robust local governance structures to ensure that recovery efforts are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all Syrians.

2. Introduction

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) update for Syria serves as the analytical foundation for UN engagement and programming, aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Initially developed in 2022 to inform the UNSF, this 2024 update incorporates new data, emerging trends, and evolving political, economic, and social conditions. It covers developments up to the end of 2024, while recognizing the ongoing uncertainty and fluidity of the situation in 2025.

This update employs a systems-thinking approach and multidimensional risk perspectives to support evidence-based decision-making. Despite ongoing challenges in data availability and reliability, the CCA provides an independent, impartial, and comprehensive assessment, leveraging diverse data sources from UN and non-UN actors.

This update maintains key analytical pillars, including political dynamics, governance, economic transformation, social development, and environmental sustainability, while refining its structure to enhance policy relevance. The update process was inclusive and participatory, with input from UN entities operating in Syria under the guidance of the UNCT and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). Interagency coordination mechanisms, such as the Programme Management Team, Risk Management Working Group, Gender Working Group, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network and Results Groups, played a central role in shaping this analysis.

Syria is undergoing a historic political transition, with significant shifts in political leadership, governance structures, and international engagement. This CCA update provides a strategic and forward-looking assessment of these developments, while acknowledging the complexities and risks associated with the evolving political landscape. It serves as a critical tool to guide UN engagement, programmatic priorities, and policy recommendations for the years ahead.

3. Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Limited data availability imposes significant impediments to accurately assessing Syria's progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Analysis on data availability for measurement of the SDG framework across its 169 targets found that 59 percent of 248 global SDG indicators had sufficient data for measurement (2 data points or more), 13 percent had insufficient data (one data point), while 28 percent had no data.¹

¹ UN Statistical Division SDG Global Database publishes data on behalf of the custodian agencies and includes five types of data: country, country adjusted, estimated, modelled and global indicators. Analysis as May 2024. Data available at ESCWA Syria SDG Monitor [dashboard](#).

The 2024 Sustainable Development Report assigns Syria an SDG Index score of 60.6, ranking it 127th out of 166 countries. Syria lags behind the MENA regional average, with countries such as Jordan (71.8), Egypt (68.7), and Lebanon (63.4) achieving higher scores, reflecting stronger progress toward the SDGs. Moreover, Syria's ranking falls well below the global average, underscoring the compounded effects of prolonged conflict, economic instability, and weak institutional capacity on its sustainable development trajectory.² Regarding the status of progress against SDG targets, the Report determines that 37.7 percent are “on track”, 34 percent had “limited progress”, while 28.3 percent were “worsening”.³ Figure 1 illustrates the SDG trends as tracked by the Sustainable Development Report.



Figure 1: SDG Trends (Sustainable Development Report 2024)

The SDG progress highlights significant challenges for Syria, with major obstacles in areas such as peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)—all of which are deteriorating. Key areas like zero hunger (SDG 2) and life below water (SDG 14) are stagnating, signaling persistent vulnerabilities in food security and environmental sustainability. However, some moderate progress is seen in decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), reflecting small but positive shifts despite ongoing structural challenges. These trends underscore Syria’s uneven SDG trajectory, where conflict and economic instability continue to hinder holistic development.

The below sections provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the situation in Syria through the lens of the thematic areas of the SDGs, notably 1) Politics and Governance; 2) Social Development; 3) Economic Transformation, and 4) Environment and Climate Change, based on the most recently available data from various sources.

² The overall score measures the total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs. The score can be interpreted as a percentage of SDG achievement. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved.

³ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2024). The SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future. *Sustainable Development Report 2023*. Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2024.

Politics and Governance (Peace)

Following the collapse of the Assad regime, new opportunities for a comprehensive political transition have emerged. The caretaker authorities have issued encouraging statements pledging support for national unity, political inclusivity, and plurality. Engagement with foreign stakeholders has also increased significantly compared to the previous regime.

Appointments to the caretaker authorities have been limited to figures associated with the Syrian Salvation Government, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), and allied armed groups. Efforts to unify armed factions under a centralized military command are underway but have met some resistance, with some groups so far declining to merge or disarm. This poses serious security risks and raises the specter of new conflict if not well handled. Additionally, unresolved questions regarding the status of the northeast further exacerbate political and security challenges.

This transitional period demands intensified international support to help stabilize Syria. As the Security Council emphasized on 17 December 2024, the realization of key principles of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 remains crucial. This includes ensuring a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition, establishing a credible and inclusive transitional government, drafting and adopting a new constitution, and conducting free and fair elections. The meaningful participation of women and youth, alongside broader gender-inclusive approaches, in the political transition is essential in all these processes to ensure representation, equity, and inclusive and sustainable peace. The UNCT recommends establishing quotas for women and youth in transitional governance structures and supporting capacity-building initiatives to empower these groups to take on leadership roles.

Political Dynamics

By the end of 2024, Syria's conflict landscape had shifted significantly, though territorial control remained fragmented among various actors. The Command of Military Operations (CMO)—the military wing of the caretaker authorities—held control over most of Syria, including Damascus, Aleppo, central regions, and the coast. However, challenges persisted in the south, where local armed factions in Deraa and Sweida continued to resist and negotiate with the caretaker authorities over the terms of a potential merger.

In northern rural Aleppo, the Syrian National Army (SNA), operating under the Syrian Interim Government, maintained control while engaging in merger discussions with the caretaker authorities, alongside military efforts to expand into northeast Syria. Meanwhile, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) retained control over the entire northeast, engaging in limited and largely confrontational talks with the caretaker authorities.

Despite the shifting power dynamics, security threats persisted. ISIL cells remained active in the Syrian desert, while new conflict hotspots emerged along the coastal region, where remnants of Assad's former army resisted integration into the CMO structure. These unresolved tensions underscored the ongoing political and military complexities shaping Syria's evolving transition.

Foreign involvement in Syria shifted significantly. The US enhanced its support for the SDF in some areas, while Iran withdrew its military assets entirely. Russia consolidated its presence in

its Latakia base. Simultaneously, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) expanded their physical footprint in Syria's southwest and intensified strikes on military installations, weapon depots, and research centers.

The balance of political influence among external stakeholders also shifted. Russia and Iran's influence and presence are significantly degraded, giving way to Türkiye and Qatar, which gained stronger leverage over decision-making in Damascus. The US, along with Arab and European countries, engaged cautiously with the HTS-led caretaker authorities, sending high-level delegations while conditioning further sanctions relief and de-listing to a credible and inclusive political transition in cooperation with the UN. Political engagement with BRICS, Asian countries has yet to start.

Under his official UN mandate, the Special Envoy engaged with the caretaker authorities, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and adherence to the principles of Resolution 2254. He participated in the Aqaba and Riyadh Summits, which gathered regional and international stakeholders to discuss Syria's future.

In light of governance changes and the significant challenges facing the caretaker authorities, the Special Envoy stressed the importance of open communication with all players and advancing the political track to prevent further deterioration of Syria's fragile situation. The level of cooperation from Damascus will be reassessed further into 2025. The Special Envoy also continues to engage diverse Syrian voices including through the Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room.

Governance

In early 2025, the caretaker authorities in Damascus are the dominant governance structure in the vast majority of Syria, including Damascus, Aleppo, central Syria and the coast. Even in southern Syria, where CMO control is patchy and resisted by local armed groups, the caretaker authorities are the main service provider and control the key roads and border crossing with Jordan. In northern rural Aleppo where the SNA is militarily dominant, the Syrian Interim Government remains the governance structure – though it is expected that, as the transition proceeds, these governance structures might be folded into the caretaker authorities in Damascus, with the ongoing talks to this end with the support of Türkiye. Finally, the entire north-east is under the control of de facto authorities associated with the SDF, called the “Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and Northeast of Syria” (DAANES). While there have been initial talks between the SDF and caretaker authorities, in which the latter called for DAANES' dissolution and integration into state structure, these talks have not proceeded very far, and the prospect of this occurring is somewhat less likely in the short-term.

The extent to which these different governance forms can be integrated into a single governance structure will likely be a function of the political process itself, with the SDF, armed groups in the south and even the SNA to some extent, linking their willingness to dissolve and merge governance structures to inclusiveness in the political process. The first test in this regard is likely to be a national dialogue conference, anticipated to be held in early 2025, which as currently

understood aspires to produce transitional governance arrangements, unified military arrangements and committees to oversee the drafting of a new constitution as well as elections and transitional justice. Preparations for the national dialogue conference are ongoing. Important details on its timing, framework, participation, process, agenda, decision-making and outcomes remain under development and subject to intense discussion and debate among Syrians.

The UN will continue to engage positively and flexibly with the caretaker authorities to emphasize the expectations from the transitional period to be inclusive, ensuring inclusive non-sectarian governance, constitutional reform, free and fair elections and meaningful participation of women.

Human Rights

Syria continues to face grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Civilians are subjected to indiscriminate attacks, arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, and severe restrictions on fundamental freedoms. Women and girls, in particular, face heightened risks of sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, and violations of housing, land, and property rights.

Syria has ratified several international human rights treaties,⁴ forming the foundation for the UN's human rights-based approach to the country.⁵ During its third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle in 2022, Syria supported and noted 207 recommendations and engaged with UN human rights mechanisms, including visits from the Special Rapporteurs on Unilateral Coercive Measures and Counterterrorism in 2022 and 2023. However, despite these engagements, human rights abuses persist, exacerbated by ongoing conflict and political instability.

Escalation of Hostilities in 2024

Although large-scale military operations have subsided since 2020, violence remains widespread. The ongoing war in Gaza has intensified tensions, with a spillover effect in Syria. In August 2024, clashes erupted in Deir-ez-Zor as Arab Tribal Forces, backed by pro-government militias, launched attacks on SDF positions. In October 2024, hostilities escalated further, with Israeli airstrikes targeting Syrian military installations amid broader regional tensions.

In northwest Syria, regime forces and HTS engaged in intense clashes, severely affecting civilians. The region witnessed indiscriminate airstrikes and ground-based attacks, leading to mass casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure. In northeastern Syria, hostilities escalated between Turkish-backed factions and the SDF following a Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)-affiliated attack in Türkiye. Turkish forces launched airstrikes and shelling campaigns, further compounding civilian suffering and disrupting livelihoods.

Additionally, the past year saw intensified attacks from third-party states and affiliated militias, including Israeli and U.S. forces, particularly in the context of ongoing regional conflicts. Israel's

⁴ Including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, amongst others.

⁵ A full list of the ratification status of human rights treaties ratifications can be found at the UN Human Rights Treaty Body [Database](#).

military operations in Syria expanded, increasingly targeting populated urban areas, contributing to a sharp rise in civilian casualties.

Explosive Ordnance Contamination

Syria remains one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world in terms of explosive remnants of war. Over 65 percent of the population—approximately 14.4 million people—face risks from explosive ordnance, a 20 percent increase from 2023. For the third consecutive year, Syria recorded the highest number of explosive ordnance-related casualties globally.⁶ Explosive ordnance contamination also remains a major impediment to the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance in 146 sub-districts (54 percent of all sub-districts) and early recovery support.

The humanitarian impact of this contamination is severe. A recent survey identified 749 hazardous areas covering over 38 million square meters, along with 570 locations containing unexploded ordnance, posing immediate threats to civilians. Contamination impedes humanitarian aid, disrupts early recovery efforts, and restricts access to essential services. Although no countrywide baseline contamination survey has been conducted, Northeast and Northwestern Syria are particularly affected regions. However, contamination is widespread throughout the country, including on agricultural land, and the limited clearance operations are struggling to keep pace with the scale of contamination.⁷

Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearances

Syria's human rights crisis is marked by widespread arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and systematic torture. Individuals, including political dissidents, journalists, and humanitarian workers, are frequently detained without due process. Many detainees face inhumane conditions, including torture and extrajudicial executions.

On 16 November 2023, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a binding order requiring Syria to prevent torture and inhumane treatment in detention facilities. However, reports indicate continued abuses in regime-controlled areas and regions under non-state actors.⁸

The plight of the disappeared remains one of Syria's most pressing human rights challenges. An estimated 100,000 individuals remain missing, with families left in limbo, unable to determine the fate of their loved ones. In June 2023, the UN General Assembly established the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria, which began operations in April 2024. Its mandate includes clarifying the fate of missing persons and supporting affected families. However, significant obstacles remain in ensuring accountability and justice.

The Syrian regime and de facto authorities continued to impose severe restrictions on freedoms of assembly, association, and expression. Arbitrary arrests, harassment, and violence against activists, journalists, and civil society members are widespread.

⁶ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, *Landmine Monitor 2023*, 14 November 2023.

⁷ 3iS, *Syria Explosive Ordnance Contamination and Impact Survey, May 2024*. 3iS, May 2024.

⁸ International Court of Justice, Press Release on the "*Application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Canada and the Netherlands v. Syrian Arab Republic)*", 16 November 2023.

Syria ranks among the worst countries in the world for press freedom, placing 175th out of 180 countries in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index.⁹ Independent media is almost nonexistent, and journalists who report on previous government under Bashar Al Assad abuses or armed group activities face imprisonment, torture, or death. Civil society organizations operate under extreme constraints, with security forces frequently shutting down independent initiatives.

Challenges for Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons

Millions of displaced Syrians, both within and outside the country, face dire conditions. Refugees returning to Syria remain vulnerable to human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, forced disappearances, and lack of access to basic services and livelihoods. Many returnees struggle with inadequate infrastructure, destroyed housing, and bureaucratic obstacles in obtaining legal documentation, which affects their ability to access education, healthcare, and employment.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly those in informal settlements, endure harsh living conditions with limited humanitarian assistance. Housing, land, and property rights violations are rampant, with authorities often expropriating land and homes from displaced individuals, exacerbating vulnerabilities, particularly for widows and female-headed households who may struggle to reclaim their property.

Despite the dire human rights situation, international mechanisms continue to seek avenues for accountability and protection. The UN Security Council, through Resolution 2254, continues to call for a Syrian-led political transition, emphasizing human rights protections and the release of arbitrarily detained persons. However, meaningful progress remains limited amid ongoing conflict and political divisions.

To mitigate human rights violations, the international community must enhance efforts to ensure access to humanitarian aid, push for the enforcement of international legal rulings, and support documentation efforts for future accountability measures. Strengthening protections for returnees, especially women and children vulnerable to exploitation, improving conditions in IDP camps, with gender-sensitive infrastructure, and reinforcing demining operations are also crucial for stabilizing affected communities.

Social Development (People)

Before 2011, Syria was a lower middle-income country making steady progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with significant improvements in human development indicators. However, over a decade of conflict has reversed these gains, plunging millions into poverty, food insecurity, and deteriorating living conditions. Syria's Human Development Index ranking fell from 119 in 2011 to 157 in 2022,¹⁰ illustrating the severe setbacks in social and human development. Today, an increasing share of the population faces extreme poverty, hunger, limited access to healthcare, livelihoods and disruptions in education. Economic instability, decline in food production, ongoing conflict, and environmental degradation have exacerbated

⁹ Reporters Without Borders, *World Press Freedom Index dashboard*.

¹⁰ **United Nations Development Programme**. "Country Insights." *Human Development Reports*, UNDP, <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights/#/ranks>

vulnerabilities, forcing many to adopt negative coping strategies, including child labor, early marriage, and school dropout.

This section analyzes the key factors contributing to Syria's social development crisis through the lens of the People-focused Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It examines the growing poverty and food insecurity crisis, the collapse of social services, the worsening healthcare system, and the challenges in education and housing.

No Poverty

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis, poverty has worsened significantly. As of 2024, Syria's GDP per capita remains low, continuing the sharp decline that began in 2011. In 2022, about 25 percent of the population lived in extreme poverty, with an estimation indicating that over 33 percent will face extreme poverty by 2024.¹¹ At the same time, 67 percent of the population falls below the lower-middle-income poverty line, revealing the widespread economic hardship Syrians face.¹² The outlook for Syria's GDP is highly uncertain and depend on developments in the war in Gaza. Amid exceptionally high uncertainty, real GDP is projected to shrink by 1.5 percent in 2024 and 1.0 percent in 2025, following a 1.2 percent decline in 2023¹³. With per capita GDP continuing to fall, extreme poverty is expected to rise to 28.8 percent in 2023, 33.1 percent in 2024, and 37.4 percent in 2025.¹⁴ In 2024, 16.7 million people—including 30 percent women, 45 percent children, and 17 percent persons with disabilities—are in need of life-saving assistance, marking an increase from 15.3 million in 2023.¹⁵

Poverty in Syria disproportionately affects female-headed households, children, and persons with disabilities, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Widespread poverty has resulted in a rise in the use of negative coping strategies, including child labour, early marriage, begging, increased household debt, selling or deterioration of assets, deferment of needed medical care, school dropout, and reduced or lower quality food intake, amongst others. Meanwhile, persons with disabilities encounter significant barriers to employment, healthcare, and social services, deepening their economic and social marginalization. Gendered social norms often place a heavier caregiving and economic burden on women, further exacerbating their vulnerability. Between the summer of 2021 and 2022, the share of households relying on at least one extreme negative coping strategy increased from 59 to 76 percent.¹⁶¹⁷

Syria's new caretaker authorities have started implementing economic reforms that could impact poverty levels by addressing inflation, wages, and market access. The Central Bank's push for greater independence that aims to stabilize monetary policy, while the expansion of Islamic banking could enhance financial inclusion for low-income households. A planned 400 percent

¹¹ World Bank. *Macro Poverty Outlook: Syrian Arab Republic – April 2021*. World Bank Group, Apr. 2021, thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/65cf93926fdb3ea23b72f277fc249a72-0500042021/related/mpo-syr.pdf.

¹² World Bank, Poverty & Equity and Macroeconomics, Trade & Investment Global Practices.

¹³ World Bank. *Syria Economic Monitor: Conflict, Crises, and the Collapse of Household Welfare*. Spring 2024, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington, DC.

¹⁴ World Bank. *Macro Poverty Outlook: Syrian Arab Republic – April 2021*. World Bank Group, Apr. 2021, thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/65cf93926fdb3ea23b72f277fc249a72-0500042021/related/mpo-syr.pdf.

¹⁵ OCHA, *Summary Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2024*, December 2023.

¹⁶ World Bank, *Syria Economic Monitor: Winter 2022/2023*, March 2023.

¹⁷ World Bank, Poverty & Equity and Macroeconomics, Trade & Investment Global Practices.

public sector salary increase seeks to improve living standards, though its effectiveness will depend on inflation control. Additionally, trade liberalization, including eased import restrictions and lower customs duties, has increased the availability of foreign products, making essential goods more affordable. These measures could boost purchasing power and alleviate some economic pressures, but their long-term success in reducing poverty will depend on sustained economic stability and job creation.

Zero Hunger

In 2024, 14.5 million people are in need of food assistance in Syria, including 9.1 million people acutely food insecure, and 5.4 million people at risk of falling into acute food insecurity. Out of the 9.1 million people acutely food insecure, 1.3 million are severely food insecure¹⁸. In 2025, nearly 3 million people are estimated to fall into severe food insecurity, following the halting of the broad-base bread subsidies in Syria¹⁹.

The influx of displaced people from Lebanon could increase the number, with 440,000 crossing the border between 24 September to 24 October 2024.²⁰ The impact of the economic crisis is manifesting itself in reduced access to and consumption of quality diets at the household level. With food reported as the top unmet need, families across Syria are continuously changing daily habits to maintain some level of food consumption. Ninety percent of households have reported that they select less expensive or less preferable food at least once a week, and almost half of all households reported that they reduce the size of their meals at least once a week. Conditions were particularly poor for female-headed households in which 19 percent reported at least one household member going to sleep hungry due to lack of food, 93 percent purchased less expensive food at least once a week, and 63 percent reduced the meal size at least once a week.²¹ The main drivers of food insecurity in Syria include erosion of purchasing power amid high domestic food prices, high cost of agricultural production inputs, water scarcity and erratic weather patterns due to climate change, destruction of irrigation systems, scarcity of energy supplies especially fuel, and electricity for various farm and off-farm activities, unstable food supply chains and high food production costs, among others. The Ministry of Agriculture under the caretaker authority is working to improve the efficiency of the agricultural sector by restructuring institutions and developing a strategic vision for its recovery. However, ongoing challenges in 2024-2025, including low rainfall, abnormal temperature trends, and weakened purchasing power, are expected to further reduce food production and availability, particularly for major crops and livestock. These factors, combined with high agricultural input costs and continued disruptions in food supply chains, will likely exacerbate food insecurity across the country.

¹⁸ OCHA. *Humanitarian Response Priorities: Syrian Arab Republic, January – March 2025*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Jan. 2025.

¹⁹ An unpublished simulation exercise conducted by WFP in December 2024 reveal that the number of severely food insecure people could increase from 1.3 to up to 3 million people following the removal of bread subsidies in Syria - expected to be fully halted by the end of 2025.

²⁰ UNHCR. 2024. *Syria Flash Update #18. Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria*.

²¹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2023*, December 2022.

Good Health and Wellbeing

Despite notable improvements in key health indicators prior to 2011, the crisis has reversed most of the progress achieved. More than 14.9 million people in dire need of health assistance in Syria in 2024.²²

The health system has been devastated by the conflict, including destroyed or damaged health service infrastructure and other civilian infrastructure, targeting hospitals and humanitarian workers, human resource shortages, high staff turnover and attrition, lack of essential medicines, and supply chain disruption. In 2024, only 54 percent of 118 public hospitals across all governorates were fully functional, 22 percent were partially functional, while 24 percent were not functional. Of 1777 health centers, 39 percent were fully functional, 31 percent were partially functional, and 30 percent were non-functional.²³ Fuel reserves for generators in hospitals are critically low. More than 13 years of crisis have also resulted in an ever-growing need for mental health and psychosocial support and services for persons with disabilities. As per official figures, around 20 percent of the Syrian population lives with some type of disability, further stressing the need for specialized health services.

There is clear evidence for health inequities by geography and sex and other factors. Health services in underserved areas – where over 43 percent of the population lives – are provided by externally funded NGOs. The private sector is expanding, although high costs make it unaffordable for most. Out of pocket spending on health is estimated at 53 percent²⁴.

Despite the high health workforce production capacities in the country, production has not kept pace with population growth and evolving health needs. The aggregated density of key health workers (e.g. doctors, nurses and midwives) per 1,000 population is 2.1 per 1,000 population which is far below the minimum 4.5 per 1,000 estimated to be required to achieve SDGs and Universal Health coverage²⁵.

Women of reproductive age (15–49 years) represent around 30 percent of people in need of humanitarian health services in 2024, of whom almost 500,000 were pregnant. Those pregnant and lactating women are losing access to reproductive and maternal health care mainly due to access to functional health services. Increased rates of violence against women and girls, child marriage, as well as further restrictions on their movements and unavailability of health services, have limited access to healthcare, especially sexual and reproductive health services. This is compounded by cultural and social norms and low insurance coverage rates that discourage women and adolescent girls from seeking medical care for reproductive related health issues.²⁶

Communicable diseases remain a major public health concern and important preventable causes of death. The water crisis in northern Syria has triggered significant increases in waterborne diseases, including a 20 percent or more increase in proportionate morbidity observed in cases

²² OCHA, *Summary Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2024*, December 2023.

²³ Data from WHO's Health Resources Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS)

²⁴ *Global Health Observatory*, WHO, Accessed 18 Jan. 2025, <https://www.who.int/data/gho>.

²⁵ WHO, *Country Cooperation Strategy, 2022-2025*.

²⁶ UN Syrian Arab Republic, *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, 2021.

of acute diarrhea, acute bloody diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid.²⁷ The Cholera outbreak declared by the Syrian Ministry of Health in September 2022 continues to overstretch the already weak health system and has had direct consequences on vulnerable communities and patients increasing morbidities and mortalities²⁸.

Limited laboratory capacity at subnational levels, as well as challenges with sample transport, continue to hamper the health system's ability to rapidly detect, identify, and respond to outbreaks of disease. Child health is also affected, particularly due to sub-optimal levels of immunizations.²⁹ Around 150 000 children were not vaccinated during 2023 due to different reasons, most importantly access and low demand issues.

Non-communicable diseases are the main driver of all-cause mortality in the country, accounting for over 75 percent of the deaths among adults³⁰, requiring more complex health care arrangements for prevention, promotion, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. Prior to the conflict, the domestic pharmaceutical industry covered around 90 percent of national drug needs and exported drugs to between 45 and 60 countries.³¹ Currently, due to the migration of many specialist physicians, patients are struggling more than ever to access the care they need.

Quality Education

Prior to the crisis, Syria had near universal primary education enrolment, while secondary school enrolment stood at 67 percent.³² However, from 2011 to 2022, the share of the national budget allocated to education dropped from 7.1 to 3.6 percent. In real terms, allocations have decreased by 78 percent compared to 2011.³³ As of 2024, 7.4 million children and teachers across Syria require education assistance, reflecting a continuous rise from 7.2 million in June 2024. The number of out-of-school children has reached more than 2.45 million, with 46 percent being girls and 54 percent boys. Additionally, over a million children are at risk of dropping out. School attendance is affected by the crisis situations, financial and social issues, unaccommodating school environment, lack of schools, and family perception on the importance of education.³⁴

Access to quality education in Syria is further hindered by multiple barriers, disproportionately affecting girls and vulnerable children. Cultural norms and gender-based discrimination often limit girls' enrollment, particularly in rural areas where early marriage and domestic responsibilities take precedence. Safety concerns, including conflict-related violence further discourage attendance. Additionally, the lack of female teachers in many regions poses a challenge, as families may be reluctant to send girls to schools with predominantly male staff.

²⁷ UN Syrian Arab Republic, *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, 2021.

²⁸ World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. *Cholera Situation Report – Syria, 23 November 2023*. 23 Nov. 2023. Available at: https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/syria/Cholera-Sitrep_23_november_2023.pdf.

²⁹ Ministry of Health, *Post National Polio Immunization Report*, March 2021.

³⁰ Syria: Country Profile – Global Health Estimates." *NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC)*, <https://ncdportal.org/CountryProfile/GHE110/SYR>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2025.

³¹ Hamada, A. (2014) 'The Syrian crisis repercussions on the pharmaceutical industry: analytical field study,' *Journal of Academic Researches and Studies* Volume 6, Number 10, 74-77.

³² UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2011.

³³ UNICEF, *Budget Brief: The 2021 State Budget in Syria*, August 2021.

³⁴ OCHA. *Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024.

Access to education is further constrained by inadequate education infrastructure, much of it destroyed by the conflict, with one in three schools no longer functional or accessible.³⁵ This has resulted in a reduction in the number of instructional hours children receive as multi-shift systems have been implemented to accommodate all students.

The situation for children with disabilities is particularly dire as they are more likely to be out of school, are often exposed to higher risks of violence, and face difficulties accessing basic services that accommodate their needs, including education. A 2018 assessment on children with disabilities in Syria found that 64 percent of children interviewed required adaptive educational services, although less than 20 percent had access to such services in their area.³⁶

Early childhood education participation rates (3–5 years old) reduced from 9 percent in 2010 to 5.4 percent in 2013, impacting school readiness. Parents have noted challenges in accessing affordable early childhood education services and the poor quality of available services.³⁷ In response, the Ministry of Education is allocating a classroom in basic education schools in addition to training kindergarten teachers and developing appropriate curricula.

There is an overall need for more qualified and experienced teachers to meet the learning needs of Syria's children, especially in rural and underserved areas where girls may face more severe barriers to education. The professionalization of teachers by institutionalizing pre-service training and accrediting and certifying on-going in-service training is essential. Remuneration and transportation support for teachers in formal education systems will also help ensure that skilled education personnel are retained and able to work. These measures will help ensure that teachers, particularly female educators, remain in the profession, helping to create a more gender-responsive educational environment.

To strengthen evidence-based planning, the Ministry of Education has rolled out a School Integrated Management Information System to improve the quality and completeness of education data within the broader Education Management and Information System. This will enable more effective collection and processing of educational data, and support better monitoring of gender disparities in access to education and progress towards the achievement of SDG 4.

Clean Water and Sanitation

By the end of 2010, Syria enjoyed close to universal potable water coverage.³⁸ However, following the onset of the conflict, the water sector witnessed a drastic deterioration. Reasons relate to civilian infrastructure being heavily damaged and destroyed by the conflict, decreased infrastructural efficiencies due to the semi absence of preventive maintenance, spare parts, equipment, and qualified managing and operating staff.

³⁵ UNICEF, *The Situation of Children in Syria* ([web](#)).

³⁶ Syria Relief, *Children with disabilities in Syria*, 2018.

³⁷ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Syrian Arab Republic Country dashboard*.

³⁸ UNICEF, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)*, 2006.

Syria, one of the region's most water-scarce countries, faces worsening shortages due to droughts, declining water reserves, outdated irrigation, and pollution from untreated sewage. Limited electricity and fuel shortages further hinder agricultural water access, forcing reliance on alternative energy sources, which, if mismanaged, could accelerate groundwater depletion.

Syria's environment and socioeconomic system are experiencing severe water stress, with the Water Stress Indicator reaching an unprecedented level of 124 by the late 2010s. This indicator, which measures the ratio of total freshwater withdrawals to available renewable water resources, suggests that Syria is extracting significantly more water than can be naturally replenished, placing immense pressure on its water supply.³⁹

Water use withdrawal is overall mainly recorded from agricultural activities and the other main sectors' is almost equal. Other indications of the fact that there is a declining trend in the indicators of water use efficiency in irrigation and more significantly in agriculture. Water supply through networks to households is reaching around 2 million fewer people than in mid-2020, with 47 percent of the population relying on unsafe alternatives to meet or complement their water needs compared to 38 percent in mid-2020.⁴⁰ Water trucking services are the only source of water for 73 percent of IDP site residents.⁴¹ Syria's irrigation and drainage systems, once the backbone of a thriving agricultural sector, have been severely degraded by years of conflict and neglect. Currently, around 60 percent of irrigated land remains underutilized due to damaged infrastructure, leading to a 25–50 percent decline in agricultural productivity. Irrigation accounts for over 80 percent of the country's water consumption, but inefficient practices and the uncontrolled use of solar-powered irrigation—coupled with low rainfall—are further depleting groundwater levels, threatening both drinking and irrigation water supplies.

In 2006, the use of improved sanitation facilities stood at 97.1 percent.⁴² In governorate capitals, sewage was disposed of through sewage networks connected to wastewater treatment facilities. Other households had septic tanks requiring periodic emptying. Hygiene standards have always been high with handwashing and personal hygiene being almost universally practiced. However, half of sewerage systems are now nonfunctional, and 70 percent of sewage is discharged untreated, posing serious environmental and health risks.⁴³ The Euphrates River, which serves as an important source of drinking water, receives almost all the untreated raw sewage from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.⁴⁴ In parallel, over 30 percent of garbage is inappropriately disposed of or rarely collected.⁴⁵

In 2024, UNICEF, in coordination with the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), completed a nationwide Water Infrastructure Assessment to evaluate the efficiency of water facilities. The assessment, using numerical modeling, found that water infrastructure operates at only 47.97% efficiency, dropping to 21.75% when factoring in electricity shortages. Additionally, the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) dependability score stood at just 26.16%, highlighting

³⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). *AQUASTAT Database*, 2024.

⁴⁰ WASH Household Assessments (countrywide) 2016-2021.

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² UNICEF, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)*, 2006.

⁴³ Ministry of Water Resources, 2021.

⁴⁴ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic*, February 2022.

⁴⁵ Mid-2021 WASH Household Assessment (countrywide)

systemic challenges in facility management. This assessment provides a robust data set for stakeholders and donors, enabling targeted interventions based on needs and equity considerations, while offering a comprehensive mapping of Syria's water infrastructure status.

Shelter and Housing

According to the Syria 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview, shelter assistance remains a top unmet need, particularly for IDPs in camps and returnees. It estimated that almost 6.8 million people will require shelter support in 2024 (19 percent increase from previous year).⁴⁶ Safe, warm and secure shelter remains out of reach for many vulnerable families across Syria, a consequence of a decade of hostilities which has had a severe impact on housing stock and left over a third of the overall population living in substandard, damaged and inadequate shelters.

Housing and infrastructure damage resulting from the conflict has severely affected Syria's housing stock and economy. Before the 2023 earthquakes, an estimated number of 328,000 dwellings were uninhabitable. A further 600,000 to 1 million dwellings were moderately or lightly damaged.⁴⁷ Moreover, approximately 225,000 Syrians live in houses which are understood to be in dangerous or life-threatening condition. It is estimated that it would cost US\$ 30 billion to recover the loss in the private realm, not including linkages to related urban infrastructure networks. The widespread contamination with explosive remnants of war, confiscation, forcible possession of properties, and seizure of ownership documents further prevents return and rebuilding of the housing sector.

In addition, the February 2023 earthquakes destroyed and damaged hundreds of thousands of housing units resulting in a total impact of US\$ 4.9 billion on the housing sector. The amount required for recovery is estimated at US\$ 9.2 billion, which includes rehabilitation of damaged housing, and seismic retrofitting of moderately and partially damaged housing units, as well as debris removal, rents, and hosting costs of the displaced population in the interim.⁴⁸

Damage from the crisis further complicates the more recent history of housing development in Syria, which pre-crisis was heavily influenced by rapid rural-to-urban migration resulting in 55 percent of the population living in cities by 2011. The cost of physical damage was estimated by a 2020 Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) and University of St. Andrews report at US\$117.7 billion in 2010 prices by the end of the 8th year of the conflict. When added to the GDP loss, which was estimated at US\$ 324.5 billion in the report, the total economic loss amounted to US\$ 442.2 billion. Physical damage beyond 2018 was relatively small, but GDP continued to decline, especially in the two years 2021 and 2022. The drop in GDP was affected by physical destruction as well as by the deteriorating macro-economic framework and by the exodus of capital and labor, among other factors. The sharp drop in GDP prompted the World Bank to reclassify Syria as a low-income country.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ OCHA, *Summary Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2024*, December 2023.

⁴⁷ UN-Habitat, *Considerations for a housing sector recovery framework in Syria*, July 2022.

⁴⁸ Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA), 2023.

⁴⁹ UNESCWA, Syria at war: eight years on, January 2020.

Most of the formal systems, including regional and urban planning, failed to cope with this increased demand. As a result, massive areas of informality were created, particularly in peri-urban areas of major metropolitan areas and in secondary cities. Estimates indicate that 40 percent of Syria's urban population resides⁵⁰ in informal areas. Moreover, as a result of the earthquake, hundreds of informal buildings were destroyed or are being demolished by local authorities due to public safety concerns, including in Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia, and Hama.

Hostilities have caused widespread damage to housing, land and property (HLP) across the country. The destruction of land and civil registries has affected real property, land governance and the recording/updating of HLP transactions. Forced evictions of IDPs living in host communities, camps and informal settlements continue unabated, along with the seizure, expropriation and confiscation of properties by the authorities in place.

Half the population of Syria experience HLP concerns, affecting the ability of households to access shelter and housing assistance. In addition, 36 percent of the population do not own the property in which they reside and 7 percent hold no or weak forms of occupancy agreement which heightens the risk of eviction and homelessness.⁵¹

Economic Transformation (*Prosperity*)

Syria has witnessed a continued economic deterioration as a result of conflict, inflation, fuel shortages, reduction in agricultural output, difficulties in accessing water and electricity, externalities related to dependency on the Lebanese banking system and the war in Ukraine, a buoyant illicit economy. Sanctions are also part of this complex picture together with military, community, and tribal dynamics that impede regular access to services.⁵²

The World Bank estimated the total cost of conflict-related physical damage in the country as of 2020 to be US\$ 117.7 billion in 2010 prices.⁵³ When added to the GDP loss, estimated at US\$ 324.5 billion in the same report, the total economic loss amounted to US\$ 442.2 billion. Amid exceptionally high uncertainty, real GDP was projected to shrink by 1.5 percent in 2024 and 1.0 percent in 2025, following a 1.2 percent decline in 2023.⁵⁴

The collapse of Syria's production system and disrupted supply chains severely reduced exports, leading to currency depreciation. The Syrian pound saw significant depreciation, with the black-market exchange rate rising from 5,650 SYP per US\$ in December 2022 to 14,000 by December 2023. It remained stable until the regime's collapse in late 2024, reaching 14,750 SYP per US\$.⁵⁵ To stabilize the currency, the former Syrian authorities imposed import restrictions, raised interest rates, and mandated exporters to surrender foreign currency earnings, but these measures had limited impact. Following the Assad regime's fall, the pound appreciated by 10 percent against the US dollar, though this was driven by temporary factors such as halted imports, lower demand

⁵⁰ UN-Habitat, *Considerations for a housing sector recovery framework in Syria*, July 2022.

⁵¹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2024*, December 2023.

⁵² Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2139 (2014), August 2023, paragraph 50.

⁵³ UN ESCWA and University of St. Andrews, *Syria at War: Eight Years On*, 2020.

⁵⁴ World Bank, *Poverty & Equity and Macroeconomics, Trade & Investment Global Practices*.

⁵⁵ "US Dollar Exchange Rate in Damascus." *SP Today*, https://sp-today.com/currency/us_dollar/city/damascus.

for dollars, and a scarcity of Syrian currency. Talks of lifting restrictions on dollar transactions and reopening borders further boosted confidence in the pound, but without structural reforms, its long-term stability remains uncertain.

Between 2011 and 2020, the inflation rate mostly moved in tandem with the exchange rate, with currency depreciation triggering high inflation. The World Bank estimates that annual inflation reached 90 percent in 2021, after hitting 114 percent in 2020.⁵⁶ In July 2023, the standard reference food basket had already reached SYP 588,666, representing a 17-fold increase in three years,⁵⁷ and increased by 88 percent between February to September 2023 alone.⁵⁸ This escalation in food costs disproportionately impacted the poor and vulnerable populations.

To stimulate economic recovery, the UNCT recommends prioritising private sector engagement through targeted incentives for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). This includes reducing regulatory barriers, providing access to finance, and fostering public-private partnerships to create jobs and rebuild critical infrastructure.

Structure of the Economy

Public Sector

The public sector – Syria’s largest employer and contributor to GDP – has been negatively affected by the fiscal adjustments in the public budget. As of 2021, 36 percent of all employees in Syria were in the government sector, with a significant higher share among women (57 percent) compared to men (29 percent).⁵⁹ Employees have seen their wages diminish in value and their standards of living deteriorate. The average monthly public sector wage fell from SYP 16,975 in 2011 (or US\$ 365 using the yearly average rate of SYP46.5 to the US dollar) to SYP 57.7 in 2020 (equivalent to US\$ 17.3 using the yearly average rate in the parallel market). Similarly, a mid-level to senior public employee earns around SYP 300,000 per month, equating to approximately US\$ 20 using the average rate of January 2024 in the parallel market.⁶⁰ While there is no current data on the average public sector salary, it is estimated as roughly the same as in 2020 in US dollar terms. To compensate, the Assad-led government has granted multiple one-time raises to state employees and pensioners and provided tax exemptions for specific categories of workers. In August 2023, the Assad-led government increased public sector wages by 100 percent, and again in December 2023. However, the impact of such wage increases is effectively nullified by corresponding increases in essential items and services.

In December 2024, after the collapse of the Assad regime, the caretaker authorities announced a 400 percent salary increase for public sector employees, set to take effect in February 2025, aiming to enhance living standards amid ongoing economic challenges.

⁵⁶ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2023*, December 2022.

⁵⁷ WFP, *Syria – Market Price Watch Bulletin, July 2023*, August 2023.

⁵⁸ World Food Program (WFP) minimum food basket price index used as a proxy for inflation.

⁵⁹ Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria, *Labour Force Survey*, 2021.

⁶⁰ UN Syrian Arab Republic, *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, 2021.

Agriculture

The value added of agriculture declined from US\$ 16.6 billion in 2011 to US\$ 5.6 billion (constant 2015 US\$) in 2023, with its share in GDP rising from 21 to 29 percent.⁶¹ The agricultural value added per worker declined from 18.1 to 6.5 thousand constant US\$ between 2011 and 2021.⁶² The agriculture sector continues to be severely affected by numerous factors, such as climatic shocks, water scarcity, mines, shortage of critical production inputs including energy and fuel, widespread destruction of irrigation structures, economic decline resulting in reduced purchasing power among affected people involved in agriculture-based livelihoods and sharp reduction in subsidized agricultural inputs distributed to farmers. The disrupted or weakened public services, including agri-extension, veterinary and financing for example,

Syria's agriculture sector faces significant market access and logistical challenges. In 2023, transportation costs—driven by fuel shortages and damaged roads—doubled or even tripled within a year, raising production expenses and making it increasingly costly for farmers to access markets. As a result, many are forced to sell locally at lower prices, further squeezing already thin profit margins. Additionally, the lack of adequate storage and processing facilities, coupled with limited power supply, has further weakened Syria's agrifood system.

The number of operational cold storage facilities has fallen to just 10 percent of pre-crisis levels, severely limiting the ability to preserve perishable produce like fruits and vegetables. This storage deficit leads to significant losses during peak harvests, as produce spoils before reaching consumers. The lack of processing facilities compounds this issue, making it difficult to convert excess fresh produce into longer-lasting products, highlighting the paradox of food waste in a country facing widespread food shortages.⁶³

Climate change, extreme weather, and scarce, low-quality, and costly agricultural inputs have severely impacted Syria's agricultural production, particularly wheat yields. Wheat production in 2024 is estimated at 2 million tons, about 47 percent below the pre-crisis average and 16 percent below last year's level⁶⁴.

Livestock farming faces similar challenges, including pasture depletion, restricted grazing access due to security concerns and rising fodder prices, increasing financial strain on breeders. Additionally, weak veterinary services and high treatment costs further threaten the sector.

Despite these difficulties, agriculture remains the key source of income, food security, and social stability for millions across the country, and will be an essential component of any future economic recovery in Syria. Recognizing the vital contributions of both female and male farmers, gender-inclusive approaches will be essential in ensuring sustainable agricultural development and economic recovery in Syria.

⁶¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). *AQUASTAT Database, 2024*.

⁶² World Bank. *World Development Indicators 2024*. The World Bank, 2024, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

⁶³ FAO. 2021. Special report: 2021 FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic – December 2021. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8039en>

⁶⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). *GIEWS Country Brief: Syrian Arab Republic*. FAO, <https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?lang=ar&code=SYR>. Accessed [15/2/2024].

Private Sector

Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent more than 95 percent of private sector activities in Syria and remain a key generator of jobs and livelihoods⁶⁵, with around 56 percent of the country's workforce is employed in the private sector⁶⁶. However, MSMEs have been particularly impacted by the long-lasting conflict and widespread insecurity, weak enabling environment and instability with the consequent deterioration in the business environment. The destruction of physical infrastructure has negatively affected productivity and significantly hampered the restoration of value chains, thereby impeding economic recovery. Access to electricity has continued to decline despite violent conflict having subsided in many areas.⁶⁷ MSMEs across all sectors cite the high cost of electricity as a key impediment to scaling up of production, and the lack of reliable electricity has pushed many small businesses into lower-margin economic activities.⁶⁸ The February 2023 earthquakes caused further major structural and economic damage, resulting in the discontinuation of an estimated 35,000 micro- and small businesses.⁶⁹

The private sector faces significant hurdles in business registration due to lengthy procedures, complexity, high costs, and regulatory gaps. Entrepreneurs struggle with high taxes, arbitrary taxation, inefficient electronic invoicing, and weak dispute resolution. Overcompliance with sanctions, export controls, and international regulations (e.g., counter-terrorism financing, anti-money laundering) restricts MSMEs' access to financial markets, limits trade and raises production costs due to import shortages. Additionally, MSMEs contend with complex export procedures, high insurance costs, and informal payments or bribery at borders and checkpoints to officials to secure passage.

Industrial Sector

Since 2011, the conflict has destroyed a large part of the industrial facilities and infrastructure necessary for industrial work, including electricity, water, roads, and transportation networks. It has also negatively affected the value chains of industrial production, as the availability of production inputs from raw materials, semi-manufactured materials, and industrial machinery has sharply decreased. Huge industrial facilities were looted by the various warring parties, and industrial capitals fled the country, along with most of the industrial expertise and skilled labour. As a result, the manufacturing industry's output decreased by about 43 percent between 2010 and 2020. It should be noted that this loss is related to production only and does not include losses resulting from the destruction, looting, and theft of capital.⁷⁰

While a relatively small producer by regional standards, oil sales for 2010 were projected to generate US\$ 3.2 billion and account for a quarter of total state revenues.⁷¹ However, the outbreak of conflict in 2011 resulted in the exit of foreign companies investing in the oil fields in Syria. Losses resulting from the destruction, looting, and theft of facilities and mechanisms for

⁶⁵ UN Syrian Arab Republic, *Socioeconomic Impact Assessment*, 2021.

⁶⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Syria at the Crossroads: Towards a Stabilized Transition*. United Nations, 2025

⁶⁷ Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), 2021.

⁶⁸ UN Syrian Arab Republic, *Impact Assessment*, 2021.

⁶⁹ Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA), 2023.

⁷⁰ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, *Mechanisms of Exploitation: Economic and Social Changes in Syria During the Conflict*, September 2022.

⁷¹ IMF, *Syrian Arab Republic: 2009 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report; and Public Information Notice*, 2010.

extracting oil and natural gas were estimated at US\$ 19.3 billion by the end of 2020,⁷² while the estimated oil and gas output value in 2020 was about 10 percent of that in 2010, depriving the former government of a critical source of revenue.

With the outbreak of the armed conflict, the subsequent deterioration across economic activity, including in the extractive, financial and trade sectors and the tightening of international sanctions further negatively affected the economy. Combined, the mining (including oil) and manufacturing sectors, two essential sectors to GDP growth in the pre-conflict period, saw their contribution to real GDP fall from 23 percent on average between 2006–2010 to just 12 percent between 2011–2018,⁷³ and accounted for 13 percent in 2020,⁷⁴ making of the Government services the major contributor to the GDP.

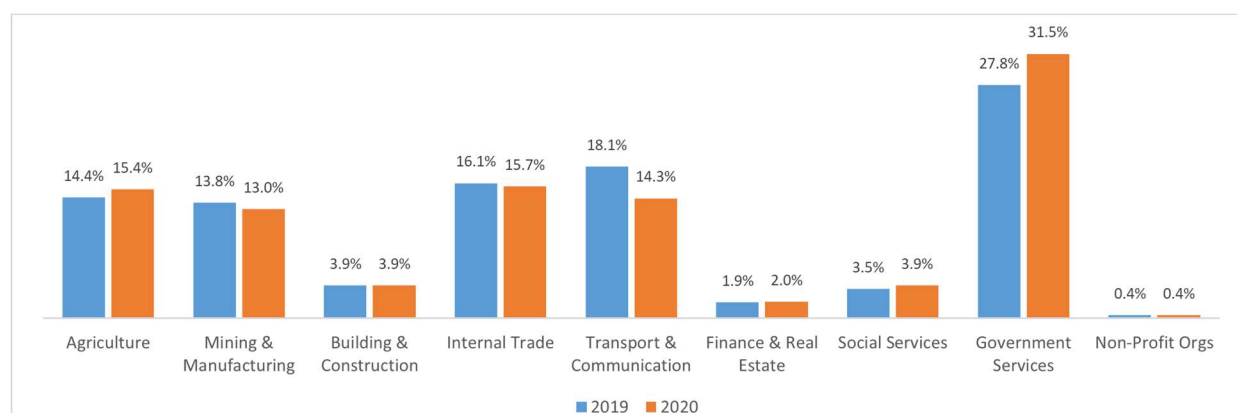


Figure 2: Sectoral Contribution to GDP (% of total)
Source: Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria, *Statistical Yearbook*, 2021

Labour and Employment

The crisis in Syria has profoundly impacted the labour market, leading to significant worker displacement and a decline in the working-age population. This has resulted in structural challenges and labour shortages in some areas, despite persistently high unemployment and a struggling private sector unable to generate sufficient decent jobs. Economic activity has increasingly shifted to the informal sector, where poor working conditions, health and safety risks, lack of social protection, low wages, unstable incomes, and long working hours are prevalent. However, the absence of comprehensive labour force data limits a full understanding of these impacts.⁷⁵ This shift erodes the Governments tax base, further limiting fiscal revenues.

In the agricultural sector, these challenges are linked to migration (loss of skilled labor) and wage dynamics. Farmers perceive labour costs as high, yet wages remain insufficient to provide a

⁷² Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, *Mechanisms of Exploitation: Economic and Social Changes in Syria During the Conflict*, September 2022.

⁷³ UN ESCWA and University of St. Andrews, *Syria at War: Eight Years On*, 2020.

⁷⁴ Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria, *Statistical Yearbook*, 2021.

⁷⁵ The Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA) process identified that the Central Bureau of Statistics methods and product did not meet international standards for labour market information.

sustainable livelihood⁷⁶. Additionally, security concerns and high transportation costs further limit the mobility of skilled labor, impacting both availability and affordability for farmers.



Figure 3: Distribution of employees (aged 15 and over) by economic sector and sex in 2021 in percent. Source: Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria, *Statistical Yearbook*, 2022.

The impact of demographic shocks has been partially offset by a rise in labour force participation, driven by household financial pressures that have pushed women, youth, and the elderly to seek employment. Unemployment rates surged from 8.6 percent in 2010 to 21.9 percent in 2021 and are estimated to have remained high at 21.3 percent in 2024.⁷⁷ Unemployment rates among youth aged 15–24 rose from 20.4 percent in 2010 to 45.9 percent in 2021 (42 percent for males and 59.7 percent for females),⁷⁸ while more than 60 percent of persons with disabilities are out-of-work.⁷⁹

Women’s participation in the labour force increased from 13 percent in 2010 to 28.5 percent in 2021 as a result of their growing desire to participate in the labor force to compensate for the high cost of living. However, many women remain in vulnerable employment with limited job security and benefits. This growth has been accompanied by an increase in the women’s unemployment rate, which grew from 22 percent in 2010 to 36.5 percent in 2021 compared to 15.72 percent among males. Creating safer and more inclusive work environments benefits all employees but is particularly crucial for women’s sustained participation and career advancement. Ensuring policies that support work-life balance, parental leave, and gender-responsive workplace protections can help reduce disparities and foster economic resilience for both men and women.

Syria’s social protection framework includes universal services (education, healthcare), contributory schemes (pensions, social insurance), and targeted assistance (cash transfers, disability benefits). While the 2012 Constitution guarantees these rights, outdated policies, institutional fragmentation, and fiscal constraints – worsened by sanctions – hinder

⁷⁶ FAO. 2021. Special report: 2021 FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic – December 2021. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8039en>.

⁷⁷ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2023-2024: Executive Summary*. 2024, <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/executive-summary/survey-economic-social-developments-arab-region-2023-2024-summary-english.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria, Labour Force Survey, 2021.

⁷⁹ Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) 2019

implementation. Strengthening shock-responsive social protection is essential to providing sustainable support for vulnerable households and safeguarding Syrians' well-being.

Environment and Climate Change (*Planet*)⁸⁰

Environmental challenges facing Syria are deeply intertwined with the complex impact of protracted conflict. On a 2024 global index of 191 countries, Syria ranks ninth in terms of risk of a humanitarian or disaster event that could overwhelm response capacity, due in part to ongoing instability which hinders preparedness measures.⁸¹ The country is also one of the least prepared against climate shocks, ranked 158 out of 187 countries in the 2022 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Index.⁸² Where it ranks 114th in vulnerability, but ranks 185th out of 192 in terms of readiness, which measures the country's ability to leverage investment and turn them into action.⁸³

Syria's geographical location in the eastern Mediterranean basin has made it vulnerable to climate change-related impacts such as drought, sand and dust storm, flash flooding, pests and disease outbreaks, changes of rainfall patterns, increased sandstorm frequency, and increasing ambient temperature. These factors are expected to compound baseline development and crisis-related degradation and depletion of the environment, natural resources, and ecosystem services. These effects will have significant impacts on the already-burdened agricultural and water sectors upon which the country depends for its subsistence and much of its economy.^{84,85}

The World Meteorological Organization's Mediterranean Climate Outlook Forum statements refer to the drier and warmer than average conditions in the last three years in Syria, particularly during the winter. It is important to note that it was during a drought-like seasons that heavy rainfall, flooding, hailstorms, and strong winds consecutively affected Syria.

Land degradation, fueled by weak land and resource management practices, increased firewood consumption, and escalating droughts, has given rise to a cascade of environmental problems. Dust and sandstorms, desertification, and the loss of productive lands and ecosystems are direct consequences. This has contributed to the decline of pasture areas and the gradual expansion of desertification. Deforestation has been particularly severe, with forest cover shrinking from approximately 32% in the last century to less than 3% in recent years. Increasing forest fires in Syria, especially in the central and coastal governorates, have led to the loss of thousands of hectares of forestland.⁸⁶

Syria depends on international river flows for over 70 percent of its water as it shares major rivers with neighbouring countries, rendering the water supply highly vulnerable to upstream or international human and climate impacts. Water deficits have been exacerbated due to more

⁸⁰ Text for this section is largely adapted from: OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2023*, December 2022.

⁸¹ European Commission, *INFORM Risk Index 2024, 2023*.

⁸² University of Notre Dame, *Global Adaptation Initiative Country Index, 2020*.

⁸³ The number of countries included in the overall ranking differed from those included in the readiness ranking.

⁸⁴ Ismail, S.H., 2019, May. Rural Areas in Post War Syria: Challenges and possibilities for Resilience and sustainability. In International Conference on Contemporary Affairs in Architecture and Urbanism (ICCAUA-2019) (Vol. 9, p. 10).

⁸⁵ Selby, J., 2019. Climate change and the Syrian civil war, Part II: The Jazira's agrarian crisis. *Geoforum*, 101, pp.260-274.

⁸⁶ Syrian Arab Republic. 2018. Nationally Determined Contributions Under Paris Agreement. UNFCCC.

frequently drier seasons, but also by increasing evaporative demand associated with above-normal air temperatures during the July-September hot and dry season. Projections indicate an estimated decrease in surface and groundwater by around 1,300 million cubic metres, with a projected increase in evaporation by around 190 million cubic metres in 2050.⁸⁷

Syria's agriculture sector, which consumed 86–89 percent of total water in 2019,⁸⁸ faces challenges from conflict and climate change. Water productivity remains low at 0.3 US\$/m³, less than a third of the global average.⁸⁹ Irrigated land shrank from 25 percent in 2011 to 17 percent in 2021 due to damaged infrastructure (for both irrigation and agricultural drainage channels) and reduced maintenance capacity, increasing reliance on private groundwater wells.⁹⁰ This has lowered water tables and raised extraction costs, with fuel shortages posing a major barrier. Many farmers have adopted solar-powered pumps to reduce fuel dependency, but this has further accelerated groundwater depletion.⁹¹

Rapid and extensive urbanization, particularly noticeable in cities such as Hama, Damascus, and Lattakia, and increased water consumption has led to a visible reduction in river levels. The absence of a comprehensive city-wide blue-green network planning approach exacerbates these challenges. Urban areas, especially newly formed informal outskirts, experience heightened pressure on potable water resources, straining availability and accessibility.

The destruction of industries and cities due to the conflict, in addition to weak institution capacities, has increased environmental pollution, with adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems and communities dependent on these water sources. Damage to water supply systems and waste management facilities, resulting in improper waste disposal and sewage treatment, and compounding environmental challenges.⁹²

Over 30 percent of garbage is inappropriately disposed or are not frequently collected, causing serious health, environmental, and protection risks.⁹³ The exploitation of informal dumps and the persistence of large volumes of rubble in city neighbourhoods further exacerbate the issue. Moreover, debris from demolished structures has found its way into nearby water bodies, contaminating them with construction materials and chemicals.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Mourad, K.A., Berndtsson R. (2020). Syrian Water Resources Between the Present and the Future. *Air, Soil and Water Research*, 4(1).

⁸⁸ FAO. 2021. Special report: 2021 FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic – December 2021. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8039en>.

⁸⁹ Arab Monetary Fund. 2024. Joint Arab Economic Report of 2023.

⁹⁰ World Bank. 2024. Syria Economic Monitor. Spring 2024.

⁹¹ FAO. 2021. Special report: 2021 FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic – December 2021. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8039en>.

⁹² Gaafar, R. (2021). The Environmental Impact of Syria's Conflict: A Preliminary Survey of Issues," *Arab Reform Initiative*

⁹³ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic*, February 2022.

⁹⁴ Beyond the Debris – The Environment Is a Major Victim of the Syrian Conflict, November 2018.

4. Population Groups (at risk of being) Left Behind

Those at risk of being left behind in Syria face multiple forms of exclusion, deprivation, disadvantage, and discrimination arising from circumstances or characteristics over which an individual or group has little or no direct control, including gender, age, disability, displacement, socioeconomic status, This section identifies those population groups that are most vulnerable and assesses the causes and impacts of their marginalization and vulnerability. However, it is important to note that these vulnerabilities and characteristics are often intersectional and overlapping and usually apply to multiple groups or individuals simultaneously. Gender plays a significant role in shaping experiences of exclusion, with women and men facing distinct but interconnected challenges.

Women and Girls

Almost five million of those in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024 are women, while 3.4 million are girls.⁹⁵ Deteriorating economic hardship, and the lack of income generating and work opportunities, further reduces opportunities for women and girls to live in a place that they consider safe. In 2023, women and girls do not feel safe in specific areas of their community, including markets, public transportation, and to a lesser extent distribution points, community centres, and travelling to work or school. The risks are heightened for individuals with disabilities and those from social or religious minority groups, with women and girls in these communities facing compounded vulnerabilities.

The crisis-induced displacement has left many women and girls as refugees or IDPs, exposing them to increased risks of exploitation, trafficking, and various forms of gender-based violence. Instances of sexual violence forced marriages, and Intimate Partner Violences (IPV) have become prevalent, leaving enduring physical and psychological scars. Reduced availability and accessibility of comprehensive gender-based violence services limit the ability of survivors to seek timely support. Around 8.5 million people in Syria are in need of gender-based violence assistance.⁹⁶ They are also vulnerable to violations of housing, land and property rights and civil documentation rights, while frequently being single heads of household.

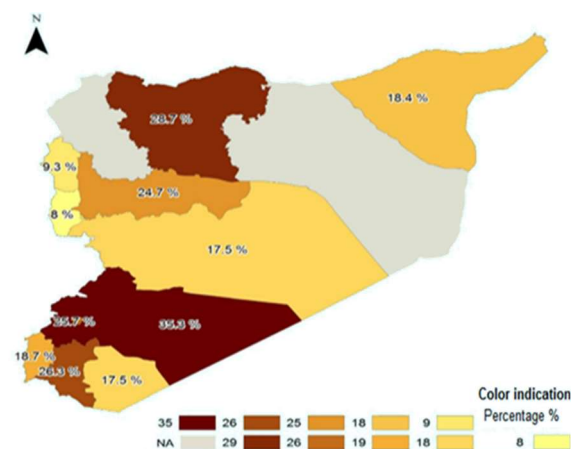


Figure 4: Percentage of Married Women under the age of 18 by Governorate

⁹⁵ OCHA, *Summary Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2024*, December 2023.

⁹⁶ OCHA, *Summary Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2024*, December 2023.

The breakdown of security and infrastructure further compounds their vulnerability, restricting their movement and access to fundamental services like education and healthcare. Traditional gender roles and discriminatory practices have been exacerbated, limiting women's participation in decision-making processes, and curtailing their educational and employment opportunities.

Around 24 percent of women in Syria were married below the age of 18 years.⁹⁷ In Syria, adolescent girls are exposed to child marriage for traditional mechanisms of protection, financial hardship, social/cultural practices, and sharing shelter with other households to normalize a forced co-living situation due to crowded housing, especially in IDP camps. In 2022, eighty-four percent of children are reported to live in locations across Syria where child marriage is an issue for girls aged between 15 and 17 years.⁹⁸

Access to reproductive health services and maternal care has declined, increasing health risks for women and girls. Economically, many women have become heads of households due to crisis-related casualties or displacement, yet they face further marginalization from lost livelihoods and limited job opportunities, access to information and training opportunities. Formal employment remains scarce, restricting economic empowerment and financial independence. Legal protections for women's rights are often inadequate or poorly enforced, particularly in areas such as inheritance, divorce, and protection from gender-based violence. Additionally, humanitarian aid faces logistical and access constraints, limiting support for vulnerable populations.

Children⁹⁹

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to have a devastating impact on children, particularly in Northwest Syria (NWS), where displacement, food insecurity, and disruptions in essential services have worsened. According to the Inter-Cluster Rapid Needs Assessment Report (January 2025)¹⁰⁰, children face multiple overlapping vulnerabilities, including lack of access to adequate diet to prevent malnutrition, education, child labor, child marriage, recruitment and used in armed groups, trafficking, exposure to forced family separation, and protection risks.

The report shows that the education sector remains severely disrupted, with 35 percent of communities reporting that most children attend school, and 24 percent indicating no school attendance at all. The primary reasons include child labor (27 percent), safety concerns (25 percent), and psychological distress (11 percent). Schools lack essential materials, with 15 percent reporting shortages of textbooks and learning supplies. Additionally, winter conditions have worsened access, as many schools lack proper heating, and children lack winter clothing.

Malnutrition remains a critical concern, especially among infants, toddlers, and pregnant or lactating mothers. An estimated 500,000 children suffer from life threatening acute malnutrition

⁹⁷ UNFPA according to calculations based on the multipurpose demographic survey data.

⁹⁸ OCHA, KI protection assessment, 2022.

⁹⁹ Text for this section is largely adapted from: Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG). *Inter-Cluster Rapid Needs Assessment Report: Aleppo and Idlib, 14 Jan 2025*. UNOCHA, REACH, and IRVD (AI-AMEEN), 2025.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

and in urgent need of lifesaving treatment¹⁰¹. Many younger children live with food poverty; 3 in 4 children are deprived of the right to adequate dietary diversity and are at an elevated risk of malnutrition and mortality. Syria is off track to achieve the global targets on anemia which is affecting 30 percent of women and adolescent girls exposing them to an increased risk of morbidity and low birthweight for their offspring. Most displaced households cannot meet their food needs, with 83 percent of communities reporting severe food shortages and 86 percent lacking food assistance programmes.

Children face heightened protection risks, with child labor (26 percent) and psychological distress (12 percent) among the most reported concerns. Begging (11 percent) and early marriage (10 percent) are also prevalent. Children with disabilities face additional barriers, including lack of specialized services (26 percent) and limited assistance (27 percent). The protection risk prioritization 2025 through expert reviews along the 15 protection risks indicated that lack of birth certificates and legal representation for children in contact with the law ranked at severity scale 4 of the ranking matrix.

Over the past 13 years, the UN in Syria has verified approximately 25,500 grave violations including child recruitment and use of over 9,000 children were committed against children in Syria. In 2023, 1,574 grave violations were documented, verified, and reported against 1,549 children (1,385 boys, 118 girls, 46 sex unknown) in Syria attributed to the five listed parties to the conflict.¹⁰² The UN Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict Included the killing and maiming of 475 children (326 boys, 103 girls, 46 sex unknown), 1,073 children (1,059 boys, 14 girls), some as young as 12, used and recruited by parties to the conflict as combatants and in various support roles, such as guards, manning checkpoints, and porters. A total of 54 schools (52) and hospitals (2) have been continuously attacked and used for military purposes during the reporting period and over 1,000 children have been arbitrarily detained in Northeast of Syria¹⁰³.

Health services remain inadequate, with 61 percent of communities reporting limited or no access to healthcare. Women and children face the greatest health risks, particularly due to gaps in maternal and pediatric care. Access to clean water is also a challenge, with 31 percent of communities facing an insufficient water supply, contributing to poor hygiene and increased health risks.

Youth

Young people (aged 15–24) make up nearly a third of Syria's population, representing both a potential demographic dividend and a significant challenge. While youth could drive economic

¹⁰¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic* 2024. OCHA, Feb. 2024

¹⁰² The listed parties include ISIS, Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and pro-government militias, HTS, The Opposition SNA, including Ahrar Al-Sham and army of Islam and SDF, including the People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women's Protection Units (YPJ)

¹⁰³ United Nations. "Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General." *United Nations Digital Library*, 3 June 2024, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4051293>

productivity, innovation, and development, their potential is hindered by limited access to education, employment, and social participation.

Education disruptions have left many without opportunities for higher education, vocational training, or smooth entry into the job market. Youth unemployment surged from 20.4 percent in 2010 to 45.9 percent in 2021, with young women facing an even higher rate of 59.7 percent. Barriers to employment include skill mismatches, limited training, a weak enabling environment, and a lack of support for entrepreneurship and innovation. Many young people, particularly those affected by displacement and family disruptions, are forced into adult responsibilities without adequate support, further limiting their economic prospects.

In response, Syrian youth have adopted both positive and negative coping mechanisms. Many engage in informal education, community service, volunteering, and entrepreneurship, demonstrating resilience and adaptability. However, others are driven toward dangerous migration routes, unsafe jobs, armed conflict, substance abuse, or withdrawal from social engagement.¹⁰⁴ The shift to the informal sector has become widespread, forcing vulnerable youth into low-paying, insecure jobs without social protection.

To unlock Syria's youth potential, targeted interventions are essential. Addressing gender and geographic disparities, socio-economic inequalities, and barriers to inclusion can foster youth engagement. A strategic, dynamic approach that promotes entrepreneurship, digitalization and innovations expands employment opportunities, challenges gender norms that limit access to resources, and enhances economic participation is critical to ensuring young people play a central role in Syria's recovery and long-term development.

Older Persons

By the end of 2024, the elderly population in Syria, comprising approximately 825,000 individuals in need, faces severe challenges due to conflict, economic decline, and limited access to essential services.¹⁰⁵ Many have lost traditional support systems due to displacement and family separation, leaving them vulnerable to poverty, neglect, and inadequate healthcare. Limited geriatric care, medication shortages, and mobility restrictions further isolate them, increasing dependence on humanitarian aid. Economic hardship forces some to continue working despite poor health, while aid distributions often fail to prioritize their specific needs. Strengthening healthcare, financial support, and social inclusion is critical to ensuring dignity and improved quality of life for this marginalized group.

Displacement, limited access to healthcare, and scarcity of essential resources heighten their risks. Many struggle to access food, clean water, and medical care, increasing their susceptibility to health issues. Damage to healthcare facilities restricts access to necessary treatment. The

¹⁰⁴ UNICEF, *Earthquake response in Syria, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 8*, April 2023.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). *Humanitarian Response Priorities: Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025)*. United Nations, Jan. 2025.

cost of healthcare services is often prohibitive, leaving many older individuals with unmet health needs and vulnerability to chronic illnesses. Limited mobility hinders access to aid and safe areas. Ninety-two percent of individuals older than 59 years have disabilities.¹⁰⁶

Loss of livelihoods due to the crisis leaves many without sufficient resources to sustain themselves, with older women and men facing distinct challenges. Older women, often primary caregivers within families, may struggle with increased caregiving burdens while lacking access to financial resources or social protection. Older men, traditionally seen as providers, may experience loss of status and economic independence, leading to heightened stress and mental health concerns. Both older men and women are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, with eroded support systems exacerbating their risks. Additionally, many lack robust support networks, leading to isolation and neglect within communities already strained by the crisis. Loss of loved ones, displacement, and living in unstable environments contribute to higher levels of anxiety, depression, and trauma among older Syrians.

Persons with disabilities

People living with disability in Syria, including the victims of explosive ordnance, face challenges and have specific needs that too often remain unmet. Recent assessments found that nearly a quarter people in Syria live with a disability, with similar proportions for men and women.¹⁰⁷ Seventeen percent (2.8 million) of those in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024 are persons with disabilities.¹⁰⁸

Households headed by a member with a disability are more likely to be unable to meet their basic needs compared with other households. In 2022, 69 percent of households with members with disabilities reported lacking meaningful access to health services. People in north-east Syria are the most affected with 87 percent lacking access. In addition to insufficient income, households with members with disabilities reported spending 50 percent more on health care and medical expenses than other households.¹⁰⁹

For children with disabilities, barriers to education are created through physical inaccessibility to school, inadequate school facilities, lack of specialized teaching and learning, and a non-inclusive culture within schools and communities. All these factors deny the basic right of these children to education. Over 60 percent of school-age children with severe mental or physical disabilities have never attended school or any other form of education.¹¹⁰

Barriers to WASH facilities are also reported, especially by camp populations. Water points are either too far away, or premises not adapted to their needs, including slippery ramps or lack of handrails, wheelchair access, or ease of use for washing. These are reported to be serious

¹⁰⁶ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2023*, December 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Disability Prevalence and Impact 2022 Spring Report, Series.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). *Humanitarian Response Priorities: Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025)*. United Nations, Jan. 2025.

¹⁰⁹ Disability Prevalence and Impact 2022 Spring Report, Series.

¹¹⁰ UNICEF, *Post-Distribution Monitoring Surveys, Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities, 2022*.

barriers to accessing safe water for 57 percent of households with a member with a disability.¹¹¹ Attitudinal and physical access barriers related to age and disability particularly affect participation by men and women with disabilities in community activities.

Stereotyping and discrimination, particularly when combined with other social factors, such as marital status – 20 percent of women with disabilities in Syria are widowed – increase the risk of social isolation and exacerbate challenges in performing daily activities. As a result, households with members with disabilities resort to more negative coping mechanisms than others.¹¹²

Compared to other households, those headed by a member with disability were twice as likely to report safety and security concerns related to discrimination based on personal factors, including disability.¹¹³ Women with disabilities are at least two to three times more likely than other women to experience violence, including from family, partners, caregivers, and institutional facilities. Women and girls with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities are at particularly high risk, experiencing violence two to four times more often than women without disabilities.¹¹⁴

Internally Displaced Persons, Returnees, and Refugees

Roughly half of the pre-war population remains displaced inside or outside Syria – the largest displacement crisis in the world. From 2011 until late 2023, 13.8 million Syrians, including 6.5 million Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers, have remained forcibly displaced in 137 countries,¹¹⁵ resulting in a devastating decline in human capital required for the country's recovery.

Syria remains the home to one of the largest numbers of internally displaced people, with almost 7.2 million IDPs as of the end of October 2024, the second-highest figure globally.¹¹⁶

In 2023, conflict and violence continued to trigger displacement amidst a continuously deteriorating social and economic environment further compounded by the February earthquakes. Approximately 174,000 internal displacements due to conflict and violence were recorded throughout the year, a slight increase from 2022 figures (171,000), with most displacements taking place in the north-western governorates of Aleppo and Idlib where approximately half of the country's IDPs are living.¹¹⁷ The total site-registered IDPs to 1.98 million as of 31 October 2023 – of whom 56 percent are children and 23 percent are women – with around 3.6 million people in total internally displaced in north-west Syria.¹¹⁸

From 2016 to 2023, almost 400,000 Syrian refugees have returned to Syria. In 2023, there were 38,257 verified Syrian refugee returns from Türkiye, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt, compared

¹¹¹ Disability Prevalence and Impact 2022 Spring Report, Series.

¹¹² OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2023*, December 2022.

¹¹³ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic 2023*, December 2022.

¹¹⁴ UNFPA: UNFPA guidance note on the rights of women with disabilities.

¹¹⁵ UNHCR, [Global Trends report 2023 | UNHCR](#), 13 June 2024.

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal](#).

¹¹⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, [Syrian Arab Republic country profile](#).

¹¹⁸ CCCM Cluster Syria (Turkey cross-border).

to 50,792 in 2022.¹¹⁹ Increased trends of returns, however, could be observed in 2024, with over 30,000 refugee returns verified up to mid-2023, including through the coordination between Syrian and Lebanese and Jordanian authorities. Moreover, since late September to late October 2024, escalating hostilities in Lebanon have pushed approximately 260,000 individuals to flee to Syria. While it is estimated that 70 percent of those crossing into Syria are Syrians returning under adverse circumstances, the remaining 30 percent are Lebanese refugees.

In October 2023, at the Executive Committee of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the previous government under President Bashar al-Assad issued a statement on the issue of refugee returns – later repeated at the UN Security Council – in which it committed to continuing its cooperation with UNHCR to effectively tackle the main concerns of refugees, including: using a communication and consultation channel to verify cases reported regarding voluntary, dignified, and safe return; not subjecting returnees to any discrimination on account of having fled their former places of habitual residence, sought asylum abroad, or remained or resided in an area under the control of non-state actors; and addressing issues relating to military service, non-discrimination, access to documentation, and housing, land and property rights.

As of 30 September 2024, 16,065 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR in Syria, mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen, and Pakistan. Most registered refugees primarily reside in urban areas in Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Latakia Governorates. Refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria are victims of multiple displacement in their countries of origin and asylum. Given the security and political situation in their countries of origin, there are limited prospects for them to return in safety and dignity. In Syria, refugees and asylum-seekers are severely affected by the security and deteriorating economic situation, which is further worsened by the fact that they do not have the right to work in Syria. Around 38 percent of refugees and asylum-seekers have specific needs, including serious medical conditions, specific legal and physical protection needs, or are elderly or children at risk.

Syria is also home to an estimated 438,000 Palestine Refugees living in 12 refugee camps and various other gatherings across the country. Three of the camps (Yarmouk, Ein el Tal, and Deraa) have been destroyed with only a small proportion of residents having returned. An estimated 40 percent of the Palestine refugees continue to live in displacement. Eighty-nine percent of Palestine Refugees live below the poverty line, earning less than US\$ 2.15 per day.¹²⁰ As per a Post Distribution Monitoring Report (March 2024), 62 percent of the population showed poor or borderline food consumption patterns despite 72 percent of household expenditure being on food commodities.¹²¹

While the humanitarian community has continued to support IDPs, returnees, refugees and their host communities, the Syrian crisis remains severely underfunded, including early recovery, further hampering efforts to promote access to basic services, self-reliance, and social cohesion. The rising needs and damage to property and infrastructure after the February 2023 earthquakes

¹¹⁹ Verified figures, the actual number of refugee returns may be significantly higher.

¹²⁰ Data from UNRWA assessment.

¹²¹ Data based on post distribution survey conducted by UNRWA in October 2023.

continue to be unmet due to the lack of resources. Women, men, girls, and boys experience displacement differently, with women and girls often facing heightened risks of gender-based violence, limited access to healthcare, and increased caregiving burdens. Every year, heavy rainfall, strong winds, and snowstorms tend to hit the country during the winter months. Despite the cyclical and predictable nature of these hazards, IDPs, returnees and refugees continue to lack appropriate shelter and mitigation measures, leading to repeated displacement.¹²² Recognizing the high-level of vulnerabilities faced by those forcibly displaced and returning to Syria, UNCT in Syria will enhance its efforts to ensure these populations are included in early recovery programmes, This includes addressing protection concerns, ensuring equitable access to resources and services, support to resume their economic activities (such as agriculture for returnees in rural areas), and revising eligibility criteria whenever necessary to prevent gender-based discrimination and exclusion.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Humanitarian and development operations take place in fragile environments with exceptionally high risks of abuse and exploitation, particularly for displaced populations, including children and women. In emergency displacement contexts, protective institutions—such as families, communities, and law enforcement structures—often break down, leaving individuals more vulnerable. Livelihood disruptions further exacerbate hardships, with forcibly displaced persons, especially women and children, facing heightened risks of exploitation and abuse due to a lack of awareness about their rights in unfamiliar settings. In line with the High-Level Steering Group’s decision on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and the endorsed model clause on protection from SEA (PSEA) for inclusion in Cooperation Frameworks, UN agencies in Syria are committed to integrating SEA risk mitigation measures into all programmes targeting girls, boys, women, and men.

5. National Vision for Sustainable Development

At the end of 2019, the former Government of Syria launched its strategic plan, “Syria 2030,” covering the period 2020–2030. The plan is based on a national analysis of the financial situation before and during the crisis, emphasizing the link between needs-based responses, essential service restoration, socio-economic resilience, and social cohesion to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. The strategy is built around five strategic pillars: administrative reform and integrity enhancement, infrastructure and energy, growth and development, human development, and national dialogue and political pluralism.

In 2020, Syria presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the SDGs at the UN High-Level Political Forum, highlighting both international cooperation and national efforts to advance

¹²² Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, [Syrian Arab Republic country profile](#).

sustainable development. Four years later, in preparation for its second VNR, Syria reviewed the unfulfilled commitments from its first report. Internationally, the lack of genuine efforts for peace, ongoing foreign interference, unilateral coercive measures, and restricted access to international organizations and frozen assets have severely hindered development. The VNR explains that, at the national level, the Syrian former government had implemented policies, launched development programmes, and engaged with the private sector, academia, and civil society, despite the devastating impact of war, resource theft, sanctions, and the 2023 earthquake. However, these efforts have been constrained by funding shortages and international restrictions. Syria reiterates its calls for the international community to uphold its commitments, including ending foreign military presence, halting support for terrorism, lifting sanctions, condemning Israeli aggression, and providing financial and technical assistance for sustainable development.

Focusing on multi-year resilience and early recovery programming, the UNSF 2022–2024¹²³ aims to design and implement sustainable and impactful interventions benefiting Syria’s most vulnerable populations. This framework is structured around four main pillars: availability and access to basic and social services, sustainable socio-economic recovery, an enabling environment for a resilient return, and people resilience and institutional responsiveness. The UNCT Syria also completed the rapid assessment of the UNSF in 2024, identifying a number of key recommendations¹²⁴.

As part of shifting from humanitarian aid to long-term investments, the UNCT finalized the Early Recovery Strategy (ERS) for the Whole of Syria in October 2024, officially launched in Damascus and Geneva in November. With recent political developments, consultations with the new national counterparts will determine the feasibility of implementing the ERS and establishing an Early Recovery Trust Fund (ERTF).

Following the collapse of the Assad regime, new opportunities have emerged for development-oriented interventions and a shift toward sustainable development. In the absence of a national strategy for development, the UNCT has identified twelve priority areas aligned with three SDGs. Under SDG 1, efforts focus on financial reform and engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFIs), relieving sanctions, and fostering reconstruction and economic development. Under SDG 10, priorities focus on supporting refugees and returnees while strengthening social protection systems to reduce inequalities. Under SDG 16, key areas of focus include constitutional reforms, national dialogue, elections, Security Sector Reform (SSR), Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR), legal and judicial reform, transitional justice, and media reform. These efforts align with Syria’s national development agenda and international recovery initiatives, requiring sustained cooperation, strategic partnerships, and robust institutional frameworks to ensure an inclusive and resilient path toward sustainable development.

¹²³ In 2023, the UNSF was extended till the end of 2025.

¹²⁴ <https://syria.un.org/en/286923-rapid-assessment-report-united-nations-strategic-framework-syria-2022-2025>

6. Financial Landscape¹²⁵

Syria's financial landscape has been shaped by over a decade of conflict, international sanctions, economic disruptions, and reliance on external funding. The country's economy is characterized by extreme fragility, making it highly dependent on various sources of funding such as Official Development Assistance (ODA), foreign investment, national expenditure, remittances, and private sector involvement. However, sanctions and ongoing conflict continue to limit the flow of these funds and exacerbate the economic crisis.

The post-8 December 2024 context, however, has opened new opportunities for international engagement, including a planned Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) conference on humanitarian assistance and reconstruction in 2025, creating a platform for mobilizing new partnerships.

ODA remains a critical source of financial support for Syria, especially in the form of humanitarian aid. After the devastating earthquakes in February 2023, ODA temporarily surged, with total humanitarian funding reaching approximately \$2.8 billion in that year. However, this represented a 5 percent decline from 2022, indicating the difficulties in sustaining continuous aid inflows. Going forward, the ODA funding landscape could face further reductions as global attention shifts to other regional crises, particularly the ongoing Gaza conflict.

As of 21 January 2025, the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Syria has received \$1.39 billion, meeting 34.2% of the total funding requirement of \$4.07 billion. This leaves 65.8% of the funding requirements unmet. Funding coverage varies across sectors, with Coordination and Common Services receiving 52.2% of its required funds, while sectors like Logistics have received only 0.3%.¹²⁶ The significant funding gap poses challenges to addressing the humanitarian needs of the 16.7 million people in Syria requiring assistance in 2024.¹²⁷

Foreign investment in Syria has all but collapsed since the onset of the conflict in 2011. Prior to the conflict, Syria attracted some foreign direct investment, particularly in the energy and construction sectors. However, the conflict, combined with international sanctions, has made Syria a highly unattractive environment for foreign investors. Some evidence suggests that there are still informal or illicit investments, particularly in the energy sector.

The Syrian government's national expenditure has been significantly constrained by the collapse of its main revenue streams, particularly oil exports, and the shrinking tax base due to widespread poverty and unemployment. The government's shrinking fiscal capacity led to cuts in subsidies for basic goods such as fuel and food, which exacerbated inflation and deepened poverty. While the former government allocated limited resources for disaster relief efforts, such as those following the 2023 earthquakes, these were insufficient to meet the growing needs of the population. In the absence of substantial international financial support, Syria's national budget will remain under severe pressure.

¹²⁵ Text for this section is largely adapted from: World Bank. *Syria Economic Monitor: Surviving Amidst Multiple Crises*. Spring 2024, World Bank Group, 22 May 2024.

¹²⁶ "Syria 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan." *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*, 21 Jan. 2025, <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/1175/summary>. Accessed 3 Feb. 2025.

¹²⁷ "Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024." *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*, 2024, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1175/article/syria-hno-2024>. Accessed 3 Feb. 2025.

The country faces nearly comprehensive sanctions from the USA, the EU, and other countries. These include targeted sanctions together with restrictions on multiple sectors such as petroleum and gas, telecommunications, and banking. Together with the soaring of an illegal and war economy and a deteriorating business environment, these restrictions have contributed to isolating the country from the global financial system. All these factors make it difficult for the country to attract foreign investment or engage in international trade.

The socio-economic unintended impact of sanctions due to overcompliance is far-reaching, affecting various sectors that are critical to the daily lives of its population. The unintended impact of sanctions, as part of a broader set of conflict-related aspects, have contributed to significant disruptions in key social sectors. The education system has also been affected, with over-compliance leading to limited access to educational materials and online educational platforms. Agriculture, a vital source of livelihood for many Syrians, has seen declines due to rising costs of inputs, fuel shortages, and the inability to diversify and import necessary machinery and dual-use items such as fertilizers. These constraints further worsen inflationary and other market patterns, reducing production and increasing food insecurity. Additionally, sanctions and overcompliance have created unintended consequences with hurdles for humanitarian organizations, delaying financial transactions and supply chains, ultimately impacting the delivery of aid to those in need.¹²⁸

Besides general licenses exempting the UN, NGOs, and personal remittances, the 2023 earthquakes led the US, UK, EU, and Switzerland to issue additional humanitarian carveouts to enhance relief efforts. However, short durations, especially the 180-day US license, and temporary renewals have limited their impact. In contrast, EU and Swiss carveouts offer broader scope and longer duration. Meanwhile, over-compliance with sanctions—driven by export controls, counter-terrorism, and anti-money laundering regulations—continues to hinder humanitarian efforts, as financial institutions and businesses remain risk-averse, a concern repeatedly raised by stakeholders.¹²⁹

The private sector in Syria has also been severely affected by the conflict. While much of the formal private sector has been decimated, some local entrepreneurs have adapted to the war economy, engaging in informal trade and reconstruction services.¹³⁰ However, the scope for significant private sector growth is limited due to the ongoing conflict, sanctions and overcompliance, and the fragmented geography.

Remittances have become a vital source of income for Syrian households, with estimates suggesting they account for up to 20 percent of the country's GDP. These funds are crucial for covering basic needs like food, healthcare, and education, especially as formal employment opportunities have become scarce.¹³¹ Due to international sanctions and the collapse of the formal financial system, much of the remittance flow occurs through informal channels such as the hawala system. This reliance on informal networks complicates the accurate tracking of

¹²⁸ Dynamics and unintended effects of unilateral coercive measures against the Syria Arab Republic.

¹²⁹ See for instance, "Invisible Sanctions: How Overcompliance limits humanitarian work on Syria", IMPACT, Principal Researcher: Dr. Joseph Daher, Review and Editing: Dr. Erica Moret, 2020.

¹³⁰ World Bank. *Syria Economic Monitor: Surviving Amidst Multiple Crises*. Spring 2024, World Bank Group, 22 May 2024, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099515505222471242/pdf/IDU12e419274142fc14ff31baf411ef0c0aef81c.pdf>.

¹³¹ *ibid*

remittance volumes and limits their potential economic impact.¹³² Nonetheless, remittances will continue to play an essential role in sustaining Syrian households amid the ongoing crisis.

7. Stakeholder/Partnership Analysis

Syria's complex crisis requires the active involvement of diverse stakeholders who collaborate to address immediate humanitarian needs while working towards long-term recovery and development. A multi-faceted approach grounded in SDG 17: "Partnerships for the Goals" is essential, as it enables cross-sectoral partnerships that leverage the capacities of local actors, international organizations, and donors. This stakeholder analysis reflects the roles of key participants and explores how collaboration across sectors can be strengthened.

The Caretaker Authorities and the future elected Governments of Syria will play a central role in facilitating the implementation of UN-led activities. The government's involvement spans various ministries and agencies, helping to streamline activities undertaken by the UN and its implementing partners. Moving forward, a more dynamic partnership could be fostered by supporting the planning capacities within governmental structures, particularly in the areas of governance, service delivery, and early recovery. Ensuring gender equity in decision-making and programme implementation will enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian and development efforts, fostering a more inclusive and locally driven approach that addresses the distinct needs of women, men, girls, and boys. This would facilitate a deeper and more localized approach to planning and executing humanitarian and development efforts.

Local communities - including all vulnerable groups of displaced populations, host communities and returnees - are at the core of the UN's decentralized and area-based programming. The UN's focus on community-centric interventions is vital for ensuring that relief efforts respond directly to the needs of affected populations. Local communities are actively involved in all phases of project design and execution, from needs assessments to service delivery and capacity-building efforts. By adopting a bottom-up approach, the UN empowers communities, fostering ownership and long-term sustainability. To strengthen this engagement, cross-sectoral partnerships with community and locally based organizations should be anchored in participatory decision-making structures that prioritize local expertise and needs. Local NGOs and community groups can serve as intermediaries, facilitating partnerships between international organizations, government bodies, and the private sector.

The UN maintains robust partnerships with donors, whose financial and in-kind contributions are critical for Syria's response. While donors primarily focus on emergency assistance, there is growing interest in supporting resilience and recovery at both national and regional levels, especially in the new political context. To optimize these partnerships, the UN should create more inclusive dialogue mechanisms that involve a wider range of multi-stakeholder representatives. Forums for coordination should also incorporate cross-sectoral dialogues that discuss how to align and bridge gaps between the immediate relief efforts and the longer-term recovery and

¹³² *ibid*

resilience objectives. Regular engagement with donors can help facilitate flexible funding arrangements that allow for more integrated, multi-dimensional interventions.

Since the onset of the crisis in 2011, IFIs have limited their involvement to technical cooperation with UN agencies. While the World Bank's presence is minimal, its studies and assessments continue to inform UN programming. Deeper collaboration between IFIs and UN agencies, particularly around early recovery, can be explored through joint initiatives on economic development, livelihood creation, and social protection. Leveraging IFI expertise and resources in these areas can help lay the groundwork for cross-sectoral partnerships that would pave the way for sustainable development – once the situation permits.

International NGOs (INGOs) are vital to humanitarian efforts, often serving as the implementing arms of the UN in Syria, though they face numerous challenges, including access, bureaucracy, funding and sanctions constraints. National NGOs and faith-based organizations are also increasingly recognized as key partners under the UN's localization approach. Enhancing their roles from implementing partners to central stakeholders in programme planning and advocacy would create opportunities for more locally-driven responses. In fact, there is a need to develop cooperation mechanisms that regulate the work of the local NGOs. To this end, the UN should actively support capacity-building initiatives for local NGOs, facilitating their inclusion in broader policy dialogues and enhancing their ability to address local needs in humanitarian contexts and beyond.

The private sector in Syria has remained underutilized in the current humanitarian landscape due to conflict-related risks. However, private enterprises can offer valuable context-tailored contributions in areas such as capacity development, service delivery, and network building. By strengthening private sector engagement – including rigorous due diligence and risk mitigation strategies – the UN can facilitate partnerships that support both immediate relief and long-term goals. To anchor these partnerships, the UN can foster dialogue between private enterprises, local communities, and other stakeholders, to enhance a shared understanding of the operational risks and the potential for collective gains.

Partnerships with think tanks and academic institutions provide critical inputs for UN advocacy, policy formulation, and evidence-based decision-making. These partnerships can be further leveraged by creating knowledge-sharing platforms that connect academic research with on-the-ground needs.

The media plays an essential role in shaping public perception of the UN's work in Syria. Local media outlets often cover UN interventions, helping to disseminate key messages and inform the public about the Organization's activities. A strategic engagement with the media ensures that the UN maintains coherent communication, building trust among stakeholders. Moreover, cross-sectoral media campaigns can be developed to highlight the achievements of partnerships between the UN, local communities, NGOs, and private sector actors, showcasing gender-inclusive initiatives and amplifying the voices of women and marginalized groups. This approach fosters public support for collaborative efforts that promote gender equality and social cohesion.

8. Multidimensional SDG Risk Analysis

Syria’s fragile context makes it particularly vulnerable to multiple factors that can further undermine its already constrained progress towards sustainable peace and development. According to the latest Arab Risk Monitor, as of December 2021, Syria exhibited alarming vulnerability and limited resilience across multiple risk pathways, marking a concerning deterioration since 2010.¹³³

While this deterioration has been primarily driven by conflict, economic risks have also deteriorated, marked by worsened food insecurity (+167 percent compared to 2010 levels), a shrinking fiscal space (-68 percent), and a ten-fold increase in the country’s reliance on foreign aid and remittances. Syria’s heightened

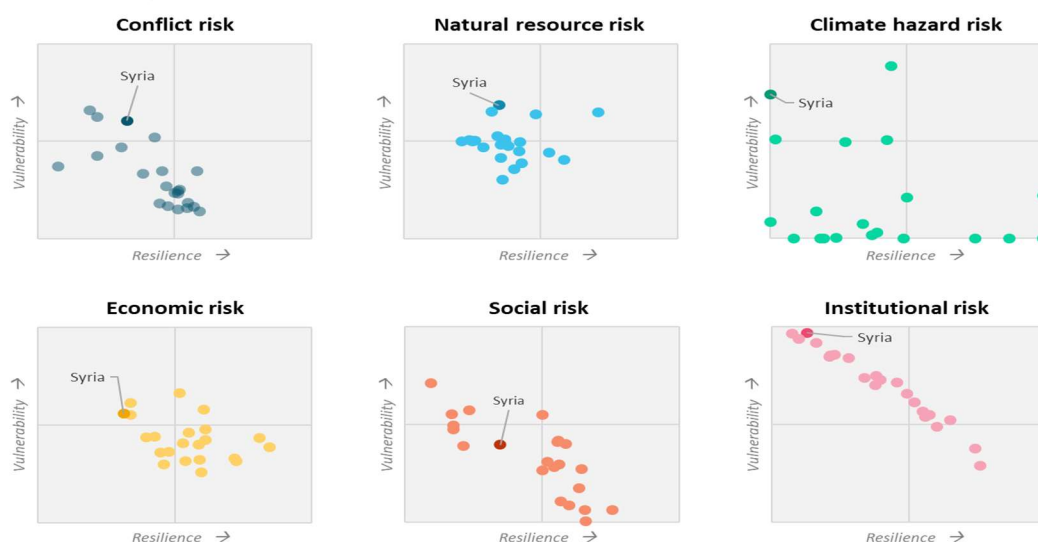
Risk pathway	Component	2010	2021	Trend (2010 - 2021)
Peace and security	Vulnerability	Low	High	Deteriorated
	Resilience	Medium	Medium	Deteriorated
Climate	Vulnerability	Low	High	Deteriorated
	Resilience	Very Low	Very Low	Improved
Development	Vulnerability	Medium	High	Deteriorated
	Resilience	Medium	Low	Deteriorated

Figure 5: Syria’s Risk Profile
 Source: ESCWA, Arab Risk Monitor: assessing vulnerability and resilience in the region, July 2023

vulnerability to natural resource risk is underscored by its increasing reliance on agriculture (+89 percent), a sector particularly vulnerable to impacts of climate change. Climate-induced crop failures, combined with the economic downturn and conflict-related disruptions, have driven up food prices, making it harder for families to afford basic nutrition. Moreover, climate change is exacerbating displacement in Syria. Rural populations, particularly in the northeast and other drought-affected areas, are increasingly being forced to migrate due to water shortages, agricultural collapse, and desertification. IDPs, already among the most vulnerable groups, face limited access to water, sanitation, and health services, compounding their humanitarian needs. The institutional context has also worsened amidst weakening former government effectiveness (-65 percent). Given the country’s high vulnerabilities and low resilience in the six risk domains described in Figure 14, Syria’s path towards stability, recovery, and sustainable development is likely to remain constrained in coming years.

¹³³ ESCWA, Arab Risk Monitor: assessing vulnerability and resilience in the region, July 2023.

Figure 6: Syria's Risk Landscape vis-a-vis other Arab countries¹³⁴



Note: Each scatterplot contains 22 dots, with darker dots representing Syria and lighter dots representing other Arab countries. The top-left quadrant indicates the worst-case scenario, namely high vulnerability with low resilience.

The following SDG risk matrix further highlights the main risk areas where potential shocks may occur. It also assesses their likelihood and potential impacts on Syria's progress toward achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. These factors are highly interconnected, with threats in one area having the potential to negatively impact progress across other areas. Consequently, they should not be interpreted in isolation, but as part of a broader integrated and interdependent network of risks. The full SDG risk matrix can be found in *Annex I* which identifies various risk factors against the following risk areas:

Table 1: SDG Risk Matrix

Risk Areas	Description	Likelihood and Impact	
		Likelihood	Impact
1. Political Stability <i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 5, 16, 17</i>	Continued political fragmentation and a lack of progress towards a political resolution to the conflict, contributing to further instability and threats to peace.	High	High
2. Democratic and Civic Space <i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 5, 10, 16, 17</i>	Further constraints imposed on democratic and civic engagement and threats and human rights violations perpetrated against civil society actors.	High	High
3. Internal Security <i>SDGs impacted: All</i>	Increase in violent conflict and insecurity, as well as widespread contamination with explosive remnants of war, resulting in civilian injuries and deaths, displacement, and increased humanitarian needs.	High	High
4. Justice and Rule of Law <i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 16, 17</i>	Weak rule of law and administration of justice in accordance with international norms and standards, resulting in human rights violations and a lack of accountability.	High	High

¹³⁴ Data from ESCWA 2023.

Risk Areas	Description	Likelihood	Impact
<p><u>5. Economic and Financial Stability</u></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17</i></p>	<p>Economic deterioration resulting in increased unemployment, poverty, and humanitarian needs.</p>	<p>•</p>	<p>•</p>
<p><u>6. Regional and Global Influences</u></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 1, 2, 8, 10, 16, 17</i></p>	<p>Global and regional factors threaten domestic political, security, economic, and social stability.</p>	<p>•</p>	<p>•</p>
<p><u>7. Environment and climate change</u></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</i></p>	<p>Increased frequency, intensity, and duration of disasters, exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation, resulting in increased displacement and/or humanitarian needs.</p>	<p>•</p>	<p>•</p>

9. Conclusions

As Syria navigates its complex recovery and development journey, a comprehensive and forward-looking approach is essential to tackle the country's intertwined challenges. This conclusion synthesizes key insights across six transformative areas and four engine rooms that are central to advancing Syria's sustainable development agenda. These transitions—spanning from food systems, to energy, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate resilience—represent both urgent priorities and strategic opportunities for action. Recognizing the distinct impacts of these transitions on women, men, and marginalized groups will be crucial in shaping effective policies and programmes. Each of the following sections will outline Syria's specific needs within these transitions and provide a roadmap for coordinated UN efforts to accelerate progress across multiple SDGs, ensuring that gender equity remains at the core of sustainable development.

Six transitions

- **Food Systems Transition**

Syria's food systems have been critically disrupted by prolonged conflict, economic instability, and climate change, leaving 12.7 million people food insecure and 2.6 million at risk of hunger in 2024. Agricultural productivity has declined sharply due to damaged infrastructure, reduced access to inputs, and worsening water scarcity. To rebuild a resilient and sustainable food system, a transformative and gender-responsive approach is required, ensuring women's equal participation in decision-making, access to resources, and leadership in food production and distribution.

1. **Strengthen Agro-Food Value Chains:** Enhancing market access, storage, and processing infrastructure is crucial to improving food availability. Investments in cold storage, food safety, and quality control can reduce post-harvest losses, while renewable energy solutions can lower production costs. Expanding inclusive value chains will also support smallholder farmers and women, improving economic resilience.

2. **Integrate Climate Change Adaptation:** Given Syria's increasing vulnerability to droughts, erratic rainfall, and soil degradation, adaptation measures must include drought-resistant crops, improved irrigation techniques, and water-efficient farming practices. UNCT expanding Anticipatory Action approaches will help communities mitigate climate shocks before they occur, reducing long-term disruptions.

3. **Prioritize Food Systems Transformation:** Shifting from emergency food aid to a self-sustaining food system requires policy reforms that diversify local food production, reduce import dependency, and increase productivity. Promoting sustainable consumption, strengthening food safety regulations, investing in research and digitalization, and fostering private sector engagement will be key. The transformation of Syria's food systems must also ensure greater accountability from private sector actors, making food production more efficient, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable.

- **Energy Transition**

Syria's energy sector faces profound challenges, with over 66 percent of its electricity generation capacity lost due to conflict-related damage, leaving millions in energy poverty. Persistent fuel shortages and high fossil fuel costs exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, hinder economic recovery, and obstruct critical services, including health, education, and water systems. Equitable access to sustainable energy is essential for advancing Syria's recovery and long-term development.

1. **Enhance Grid Efficiency and Reliability:** On the way to reconstruction and development, rehabilitating Syria's electricity grid is a critical first step. Improved efficiency will reduce energy losses, optimize the use of available resources, and enable better integration of renewable energy sources. Investments in infrastructure repair and modernization are vital to ensure consistent and reliable power supply for essential services such as hospitals, schools, and water treatment facilities.

2. **Scale Up Renewable Energy:** Harnessing Syria's abundant solar resources can provide decentralized solutions for energy access in rural and underserved areas. Installing regulated solar systems for irrigation, cold storage, and agro-processing can foster resilience in the agriculture sector while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Decentralized renewable energy infrastructure should be prioritized to support critical systems, particularly in remote areas lacking reliable grid access.

3. **Promote Sustainability and Local Capacity Building:** Strategic policy initiatives must encourage the adoption of clean energy technologies while ensuring no over-exploitation of water resources linked to renewable energy systems like solar-powered irrigation. Building local capacity to maintain and operate renewable energy technologies will enhance energy resilience and long-term sustainability.

- **Digital Connectivity Transition**

Digital connectivity is a critical enabler for Syria's recovery, fostering education access, governance improvements, economic growth, and social service delivery. However, as of 2024, only 35.8 percent of Syrians have internet access, with 72.3 percent reliant on limited 3G networks. Syria ranks 163rd out of 193 countries in the EGD index, highlighting significant gaps in digital infrastructure and e-governance capacity.

1. **Expanding Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Investment in rural connectivity and affordable mobile services is crucial to closing Syria's digital divide. Enhancing public Wi-Fi access and reducing internet costs can unlock e-learning, telehealth, and e-governance opportunities, particularly in underserved areas.

2. **Strengthening Digital Access for Education:** With 600,000 university students, but limited digital resources, initiatives such as laptop lending programmes, digital library hubs, and free internet bundles for students engaged in community service can enhance online learning. Advocacy for lifting digital sanctions is also essential to improve access to international academic resources.

3. Leveraging Digital Tools for Economic Recovery: Expanding e-commerce, mobile banking, and digital entrepreneurship will enable small businesses and farmers to access markets, training, and financial services. Investing in digital literacy and cybersecurity training will support a resilient and inclusive digital economy.

- **Education and Skills Transition**

Syria's education system has suffered severe disruptions due to conflict, displacement, and economic collapse, leaving 6.89 million children and education personnel in need of assistance in 2024. More than 2.45 million children are out of school, and over a million are at risk of dropping out, exacerbating the long-term human capital crisis. Inadequate infrastructure, outdated curricula, and a shortage of trained teachers further hinder learning outcomes and employability.

1. Rebuilding Education Infrastructure: Restoring and modernizing schools, equipping classrooms with digital learning tools, and expanding early childhood education are critical to ensuring universal access. Targeted efforts are needed to increase school enrollment for displaced children, girls, and children with disabilities, while providing safe learning environments to mitigate the risks of violence and exploitation.

2. Enhancing Curriculum Relevance and Skills Training: Syria must transition to an education model that equips youth with market-relevant skills. This includes integrating digital literacy, vocational training, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) into school curricula. Special emphasis should be placed on agricultural education, equipping farmers and rural communities with sustainable farming techniques and agribusiness skills to improve productivity and food security. Addressing gender stereotypes in career paths will help create a more inclusive workforce.

3. Scaling Up Teacher Training and Workforce Development: Strengthening teacher training programmes, incentivizing educators to remain in the profession, and expanding professional development opportunities will improve the quality of instruction. Public-private partnerships can also support skills development programmes for youth, fostering entrepreneurship and economic resilience. Public-private partnerships can also support skills development programmes for youth, ensuring that both young men and women have equal access to entrepreneurship and economic resilience opportunities.

- **Jobs and Social Protection Transition**

Syria's economic collapse, widespread unemployment, and weakening social protection systems have deepened poverty, with 67 percent of the population below the poverty line and 33 percent facing extreme poverty. Cuts to subsidies and declining revenues have further reduced access to essential services, increasing reliance on international aid. To lift people out of poverty and build economic resilience, job creation, economic diversification, and inclusive social protection must be prioritized.

1. Strengthen Job Creation and Economic Diversification: Addressing labor market gaps requires investments in entrepreneurship, MSMEs, and local value chains, particularly in agriculture and

manufacturing. Expanding vocational training and skills development—especially for youth, women, and persons with disabilities—can enhance employability and promote equitable workforce participation. Gender-sensitive policies should ensure safe, inclusive, and non-discriminatory work environments.

2. Expand Inclusive Social Protection Systems: Syria’s current rationed ‘smart card’ system for food subsidies does not adequately address the needs of vulnerable population. Establishing more resilient social safety nets will protect vulnerable groups from economic shocks. This includes gender-responsive cash assistance programmes, expanded healthcare coverage, and unemployment support to prevent households from resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as child labor and early marriage.

3. Promote Institutional and Policy Reforms: Developing strong labor policies to improve working conditions, support workers’ rights, and enhance financial inclusion is essential. Technical assistance should focus on strengthening institutional frameworks for inclusive employment and integrating informal workers into the formal economy. Legal reform for the protection of women’s rights, protection against discrimination, harassment, and gender-based violence, and security at work needs to be introduced.

- **Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Pollution Transition**

Syria faces severe environmental challenges, including desertification, water scarcity, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and land degradation have intensified food insecurity and economic instability, while pollution from untreated sewage, industrial waste, and agricultural runoff threatens public health and natural ecosystems. Urgent action is needed to strengthen climate resilience, protect biodiversity, and promote sustainable resource management.

1. Promote Sustainable Natural Resource Management: Efficient irrigation technologies, groundwater conservation, and soil restoration are critical to reducing water pollution and land degradation. Rehabilitating sewage, agricultural drainage, and industrial waste systems will help protect soil, rivers, and freshwater supplies from contamination.

2. Enhance Early Warning Systems: Investing in advanced climate monitoring and disaster preparedness can improve Syria’s response to droughts, floods, storms, and wildfires. Strengthening early warning systems for extreme weather events and wildfires will help protect biodiversity, farmland, and communities from climate-related disasters.

3. Strengthen Research, Innovation, and Climate Finance: Expanding research on climate adaptation, agri-biodiversity conservation, and pollution mitigation will foster locally driven solutions. Increased climate finance and investment should support renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and resilient infrastructure to address long-term environmental threats.

4. Prioritize Biodiversity Conservation and Governance: Protecting natural habitats and endangered species as well as promoting agrobiodiversity will enhance ecosystem resilience. Establishing strong governance and multi-stakeholder partnerships will ensure coordinated climate, biodiversity, and pollution management efforts.

Four engine rooms

1. Financing the SDGs

Syria's financial landscape remains fragile, with limited public revenues, declining foreign aid, and restricted access to international financial markets due to sanctions and conflict-related economic disruptions. The 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has received only 34.2% of its required funding (\$1.39 billion of \$4.07 billion), highlighting the persistent financing gap for essential services and development initiatives. Mobilizing public, private, and international resources is critical to financing the 2030 Agenda and addressing Syria's recovery and development needs.

1. **Enhancing Public and Private Investment:** Supporting the future Syrian Government to Strengthen domestic revenue generation, improve tax collection, and prioritize public spending on critical SDG sectors can increase funding for education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Promoting private sector engagement in sustainable agriculture, manufacturing, and digital industries will help create jobs and drive economic growth.

2. **Leveraging Innovative Financing Mechanisms:** Exploring public-private partnerships (PPPs), blended finance, and community revolving funds can mobilize additional resources for infrastructure rehabilitation, renewable energy, and social protection. Unlocking climate finance and impact investment will support resilient and sustainable development projects.

3. **Strengthening International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness:** While ODA remains a critical funding source, a shift from humanitarian aid to resilience-building financing is needed. Advocacy for lifting digital and financial sanctions could facilitate access to international banking systems, reduce transaction costs, and attract investment.

4. **Strengthening Fiscal Governance through Data-Driven Tools:** Enhancing Syria's capacity for evidence-based financial planning will be essential in optimizing resource allocation, assessing fiscal risks, and improving expenditure efficiency. Advanced digital solutions, such as financing for development platforms and AI-powered budgeting tools currently deployed by other countries in the region, can support policymakers in designing sustainable recovery strategies and aligning public finances with the SDGs.

2. Governance and Institutions

Syria's governance structures remain fragmented, with national and local institutions struggling to deliver essential services, uphold transparency, and ensure inclusive decision-making. The caretaker authorities are the dominant governance entity, yet decentralization efforts remain limited, and political transitions are still unfolding. Institutional weaknesses, limited regulatory oversight, and governance deficits continue to hinder SDG implementation and public service delivery.

1. **Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Accountability:** Investing in public administration reforms, regulatory frameworks, and anti-corruption mechanisms will improve transparency,

efficiency, and citizen trust, and can contribute to lifting sanctions. Enhancing sex-disaggregated data collection and policy coordination across government levels is crucial for evidence-based decision-making.

2. Promoting Decentralization and Local Governance: Strengthening local governance structures can enhance community participation and service delivery, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas where women and marginalized groups often face barriers to representation. Capacity-building efforts should focus on public finance management, local planning, and administrative decentralization to ensure inclusive and responsive governance.

3. Governance in Key Sectors: In the agriculture sector, improving land tenure policies, investment regulations, and market oversight can boost food security and economic resilience. Establishing participatory governance mechanisms will allow farmers, private sector actors, and civil society to play a role in shaping policies.

3. Data and Digital Systems

Syria's data ecosystem remains fragmented, with limited access to reliable, real-time statistics, particularly in conflict-affected areas. The lack of standardized data collection and digital integration hinders evidence-based policymaking and SDG monitoring. Weak data-sharing mechanisms further restrict access to essential information for governance, economic planning, and humanitarian response.

1. Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis: Investing in robust national statistical systems, real-time monitoring tools, and geospatial mapping will improve data accuracy and availability. Prioritizing disaggregated data collection, especially for marginalized groups, is essential for ensuring inclusive development policies.

2. Enhancing Digital Infrastructure for SDG Monitoring: Expanding digital data systems can streamline information-sharing across government, private sector, and humanitarian and development actors. Digitalizing data collection, analysis, and circulation will enable faster response to economic, environmental, and social challenges.

3. Leveraging Technology for Agriculture and Food Security: Digital platforms can connect farmers to markets, provide climate forecasts, and improve access to training resources. Strengthening data-driven agricultural policies will support food security and climate resilience.

4. Partnerships and Collaboration

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential for advancing Syria's SDG agenda, ensuring that government agencies, local organizations, private sector actors, and international donors work together to address development challenges. While humanitarian coordination mechanisms have been instrumental in delivering aid, stronger collaboration is needed to transition from emergency response to sustainable development and reconstruction.

1. Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Engaging private sector actors in agriculture, infrastructure, and digital innovation can mobilize investment, create jobs, and

improve service delivery. Encouraging blended finance models will help bridge funding gaps in key sectors.

2. Enhancing Regional and Global Cooperation: Expanding cross-border collaboration on climate adaptation, trade, and knowledge-sharing can strengthen Syria's long-term economic and environmental resilience. Advocacy efforts should also focus on easing donor restrictions on partnerships with public service institutions, particularly in agriculture.

3. Leveraging Local and Civil Society Engagement: Community-driven initiatives, social enterprises, and cooperatives can play a crucial role in delivering localized solutions, particularly in rural areas. Strengthening inclusive governance mechanisms will ensure that marginalized groups actively participate in decision-making. Gender-sensitive approaches should be integrated into community engagement strategies to address specific barriers to participation, ensuring equitable access to resources, leadership opportunities, and economic benefits.

10. Annex I: SDG Risk Matrix

Risk Areas	Risk Factors	Likelihood	Impact
<p><u>1. Political Stability</u></p> <p><i>Description: Continued political fragmentation and a lack of progress towards a political resolution to the conflict, contributing to further instability and threats to peace.</i></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 5, 16, 17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External regional actors exacerbate internal political tensions and support various armed factions to advance geostrategic interests. • Weak social cohesion. • Continued marginalization and exclusion, particularly of women and youth, from political and governance mechanisms and platforms. • Civil unrest and clashes leading to internal displacement and humanitarian crisis, further impacted by regional crisis. 	•	•
<p><u>2. Democratic and Civic Space</u></p> <p><i>Description: Further constraints imposed on democratic and civic engagement and threats and human rights violations perpetrated against civil society actors.</i></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 5, 10, 16, 17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritarian, non-representative authorities. • Exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly women, from decision making processes and platforms at all levels of governance. • Violations of freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association in areas under the control of different parties to the conflict. • Shrinking civic space and threats and perpetration of human rights violations against civil society activists, journalists, etc. 	•	•
<p><u>3. Internal Security</u></p> <p><i>Description: Increase in violent conflict and insecurity, as well as widespread contamination with explosive remnants of war, resulting in civilian injuries and deaths, displacement, and increased humanitarian needs.</i></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: All</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued fragmentation of the country and a lack of progress towards a political resolution to the crisis. • Conflict and military operations between non-state armed groups and pro-regime forces. • Continued presence and activity of Islamic State. • Weak social cohesion and inequality. • Increase in crime-related security incidents resulting from the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation. • Widespread presence of explosive hazards, including landmines and unexploded ordnance. • Inequitable and contested access to natural resources, including water and fuel. • Contested housing, land, and property issues. 	•	•
<p><u>4. Justice and Rule of Law</u></p> <p><i>Description: Weak rule of law and administration of justice in accordance with international norms and standards, resulting in human rights violations and a lack of accountability.</i></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 16, 17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impunity for human rights violations by all parties to the conflict. • Arbitrarily and indefinite detention of civilians, including of children and young people. Lack of unified system of justice capable of upholding the rule of law and due process. • Differences in the execution of justice in different jurisdictions across the country. • Lack of judicial independence and political and armed group interference. 	•	•

Risk Areas	Risk Factors	Likelihood	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater affordability of legal rights to men over women, particularly in matters related to marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship, and inheritance. • Legal framework that does not meet international norms and standards. • Discriminatory laws against women and the absence of legislation specifically addressing violence against women. • Limitations on ability to assess protection risks, conduct protection interventions and monitoring, and engage caretaker authorities in dialogue on protection issues. 		
<p><u>5. Economic and Financial Stability</u></p> <p><i>Description: Economic deterioration resulting in increased unemployment, poverty, and humanitarian needs.</i></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel and energy crisis reducing agricultural production capacity and increased costs. • Disconnection from the international payment system. • High levels of inflation and currency depreciation leading to further erosion of purchasing power. • Vulnerability of productive sectors to shocks, particularly climate change and external geopolitical factors, etc. • Reduced access to essential services and ability to rehabilitate infrastructure. • Weak private sector, high level of public sector employment, and declining national financial resources. • Declining international assistance and lack of longer-term development support. • Further decline in human capital through emigration and lack of educational opportunities. • Continued systemic corruption. • International sanctions, overcompliance • Complex international regulatory landscape 	•	•
<p><u>6. Regional and Global Influences</u></p> <p><i>Description: Global and regional factors threaten domestic political, security, economic, and social stability.</i></p> <p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 1, 2, 8, 10, 16, 17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External regional actors exacerbate internal political tensions and support various armed factions to advance geostrategic interests. • Ongoing active and residual regional conflicts. • Uncertainty regarding humanitarian access, particularly across the Bab al-Hawa border crossing in the north-west of Syria. • Persistent occurrence of security incidents, marked by attacks on crucial infrastructure, such as ports and airports, threaten to disrupt aid delivery. • Politicization of humanitarian aid. 	•	•
<p><u>7. Environment and climate change</u></p> <p><i>Description: Increased frequency, intensity, and duration of disasters, exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation, resulting in increased displacement and/or humanitarian needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak community resilience to shocks and lack of scalable and shock-responsive social safety nets. • Reliance on vulnerable productive sectors, including agriculture and pastoralism. • Increased frequency and severity of extreme climactic events, including recurring drought-like conditions. • Natural disasters and other drivers of humanitarian emergencies. • Weak national and local-level disaster mitigation and response strategies, capacities, and resources. • Lack of holistic natural resource management strategies/plans. 	•	•

Risk Areas	Risk Factors	Likelihood	Impact
<p><i>SDGs impacted: Particularly 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage and destruction of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including deforestation. • Lack of water, sanitation, and waste and medical waste management, including for hazardous and explosive materials. • Land degradation and salinization, excessive logging, and forest fires. 		



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