

# Immigration in the Time of the Syrian War

## Existing Causes and Trends

*A field study conducted in Syria, Specifically North and East Syria*

### Context Summary:

Now in its 11th year, the Syrian refugee crisis remains the world’s largest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Since the Syrian civil war officially began March 15, 2011, families have suffered under brutal conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people, torn the nation apart, and set back the standard of living by decades.

About 6.8 million Syrians are refugees and asylum-seekers, and another 6.7 million people are displaced within Syria. This means 13.5 million Syrians in total are forcibly displaced, more than half of the country’s population. Nearly 11.1 million people in Syria need humanitarian assistance. And about half of the people affected by the Syrian refugee crisis are children.

Healthcare centers and hospitals, schools, utilities, and water and sanitation systems are damaged or destroyed. Historic landmarks and once-busy marketplaces have been reduced to rubble. War severed the social and business ties that bound neighbors to their community.

Continued conflict has created economic despair. “On top of the strain on families’ ability to secure basic food rations and household items, the economic impact of the war continues to drive serious child protection concerns, including negative impacts on education, Parents are forced to remove children from school due to the inability to pay fees, and teachers are not receiving their salaries. Some children go to schools in the displacement camps but arrive covered in mud, having walked miles upon miles to attend. Many girls who drop out of school are severely impacted by child marriage.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated the poverty and joblessness faced by refugees. At least 1.1 million Syrian refugees and displaced people in Syria have been driven into poverty as a result of the pandemic.

### Population of concern:

IDPS	IDP Returnees	Stateless Persons	Refugees & Asylum-seekers
6.7 M	169,100	160,000	6.8 M

### What is happening in Syria?

All that many Syrian children have ever known is war. These grim circumstances have had an extreme effect on their mental, physical, and social health, jeopardizing the future of children who will one day need to rebuild Syria.

Syria’s army has been regaining territory since late 2015. Only governorates in the northeast and northwest remain outside government control.

Humanitarian groups are unable to access many conflict areas, so there’s limited knowledge of civilians’ needs.

More than 80% of Syrian live in extreme poverty, on less than \$1.90 a day.

With hundreds of thousands of people displaced in 2020 in northern Syria, aid groups are struggling to meet their needs for shelter, access to clean water, and food.

## **Why are Syrians leaving their homes?**

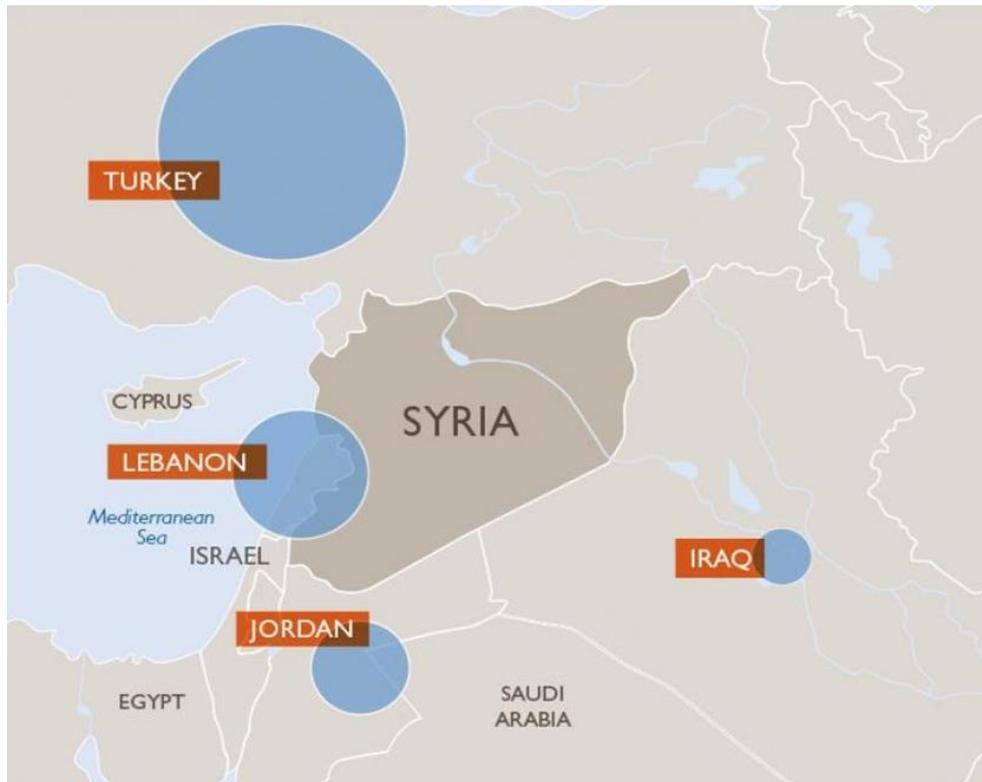
Syrians are leaving their homes when life becomes unbearable. Some of the top reasons they cite include:

- **Violence:** Since the Syrian civil war began, over 606,000 people have been killed, including more than 25,000 children, reports the Syrian observatory of Human rights The war has become deadlier since foreign powers joined the conflict.
- **Collapsed infrastructure:** Within Syria, only 53% of hospitals and 51% of healthcare facilities are fully functional, and more than 8 million people lack access to safe water. An estimated 2.4 million children are out of school. Conflict has shattered the economy, and more than 80% of the population lives in poverty.
- **Children in danger and distress:** Syrian children — the nation’s hope for a better future — have lost loved ones, suffered injuries, missed years of schooling, and experienced unspeakable violence and brutality.

## **Where are Syrian refugees going?**

The majority of Syrian refugees, about 5.6 million, have fled — by land and sea — across borders to neighboring countries but remain in the middle east

- **Turkey** — Nearly 3.7 million Syrian refugees are in Turkey, the largest refugee population worldwide. About 90% of Syrians in Turkey live outside of refugee camps and have limited access to basic services.
- **Lebanon** — 855,000 Syrian refugees make up about one-eighth of Lebanon’s population. Many live-in primitive conditions in informal tent settlements, which are not official refugee camps. With few legal opportunities to earn money, they struggle to afford residency fees, rent, utilities, and food.
- **Jordan** — 668,000 Syrian refugees are in Jordan. Some 120,000 people live in Za’atari and Azraq refugee camps, where aid groups have converted desert wastes into cities.
- **Iraq** — 247,000 Syrian refugees are in Iraq. Most are in the Kurdistan region in the north where more than a million Iraqis fled to escape ISIS. Most refugees are integrated into communities, putting a strain on services.
- **Egypt** — 132,000 Syrian refugees are in Egypt.
- At the peak of the European migrant crisis in 2015, 1.3 million Syrians requested asylum in Europe.



### **Emigration phenomenon:**

After eleven years of war waged by the Syrian regime against its people, and after multiple projects in the local and international politics on the land of Syria, the Syrian citizen was the biggest loser in this difficult equation. The war has changed the Syrian's choices at home and abroad, and the obstruction of the horizon for political solutions "in the foreseeable future" forced him to make decisions related first to security and the margin of safety and to search for alternative places for the daily death he faces.

Significant changes affected the Syrian social structure, perhaps the first and most important of which was the human movement in the geographically close "inside Syria or the border areas", and the second is the movement towards asylum outside Syria in the countries near and far, and the causes and motives that accompanied those two operations; and what supported this the changing reality on Syrian soil.

The Syrian "migration" towards Europe was a phenomenon that had great resonance at the local and international levels. Although immigration has made countries of asylum an increasing number of Syrians victims of the war and others are likewise", as it has met with a lot of acceptance and rejection, as well as the matter, at the local level. Hence, it was necessary to attend research efforts to find out about this phenomenon of "migration" and its causes and its motives inside Syria. Accordingly, the opinions of a sample of citizens in north and east Syria were surveyed.

The research has deepened the question of the role of the military and political structure in these areas in shaping the tendency of young people to migrate, as well as to services and facilities for daily life as a motivator or a brake to emigrate, and to research mechanisms and projects that would form an anti-immigration trend from Syria.

The results of the analysis showed the following with regard to the migration motive:

- The absence of a daily margin of safety, as the regime continues to practice its violence by targeting civilians
- Weak infrastructure and poor services in relation to electricity, water and other necessary living materials due to the limited capabilities of the governing self-administration
- The weak role of youth in leading the local community in light of the societal disintegration occurring in the region
- The collapse of the agricultural sector due to the continuous bombing, which constitutes one of the most important sources of income for a family In these areas, there are no real job opportunities and high unemployment
- The weakness of the educational institution in its different stages, the lack of clarity in its outputs, and the interference of forces different approaches to impose ideological methods in some areas.
- The weak existence of job opportunities for young people of both sexes and the deterioration of the economic situation of employees
- The absence of a vision for an economic system that governs these areas, both in terms of the trading value of the currency approved or the absence of projects that attract Syrian capital internally and externally

#### **Factors that push people to migrate outside the country:**

When talking about the “external” factors driving the emigration of Syrian youth, we can dwell on a census the compelling and “justified” reasons for emigration. But the analysis here remains based on factors external in the formation of this trend. noting that there are other reasons related to the formation of this trend, it is related to the special value system of the loyal individuals, and their unnecessarily perceptions of the near and distant future and their relationship to what is happening on the ground.

These factors, in which people were surveyed, were summarized as follows:

Factors affecting the security of individuals and those related to military operations, and those related to security at the local level, and related factors basic services (health, electricity, clean water), in addition to the economic and educational status

#### **Security situation and immigration:**

From the participants' answers about the military situation and immigration:

- Fear that the war will last longer
- Fear of regime re-establishment
- Fear of arrest and fear of flying
- Fear of killing. The army raped women
- Fear of the system, arbitrary arrest and imposition of siege
- The randomness of the factions, the lack of respect for the members of the military factions

- Stopping the barbaric Russian bombardment and the fear of the regime forces advancing and storming the area
- The bombing of commercial markets and restrictions by the elements controlling the commercial movement, the mass massacres, toxic gases
- Forced torture by factions
- Threatening by other people like a gang belonging to a controlling faction
- The region and the threat are for personal reasons that have nothing to do with the revolution or security situation

**Economic situation and immigration:**

From the participants' answers about economic situation and immigration:

- Low currency rates, high basic needs, lack of job opportunities
- Low prices of agricultural crops
- Low wages and high standard of living
- Restricting job opportunities to people who belong to some factions excellence and favoritism
- The monopoly of the professions of their professions and the prohibition of the circulation of these professions in the villages that shelter the displaced
- the monopoly of merchants on some commodities that are the basis of life, which are fuels
- Sometimes the bombing causes destruction that does not reach the homes, and the person is poor
- He is unable to rebuild his house, so he resorts to emigration in search of a best life
- Exploitation by traders - lack of price control and lack of
- Having a fixed currency to deal with and taking it as a circulating currency where it is
- Trading in dollars and arresting in Syria, for example
- Poor economic conditions and most interests stopped working. Not You have only three main interests: a petrol station, a net or a network Generator amps, but the rest of the professions have disappeared. Income disproportion financial with high expenses
- The main and primary reason is the work of the degree holders in business hard and manual for a living, and in return, wasta remained she is dominant, true to a lesser extent, but she is present
- Lack of job opportunities for women

**Education situation and immigration**

From the participants' answers about educational situation and immigration:

- Fear of going to universities
- Fear of the unknown future and curtailing their participation due to fear after some cases of kidnapping and killing of people with expertise and brains in the country, knowing that they are few but sufficient for people to escape

- Going to universities is a very expensive and difficult road trip
- Corruption - lack of teaching staff in society - lack of interest in education
- The absence of a calm atmosphere for academic achievement and the absence of universities
- The lack of universities to obtain certificates, get a job, and be somewhat safe
- Unavailability of the appropriate atmosphere for study. The lack of suitable universities for the study of young people
- Failure to secure ways to go to universities and colleges
- The sudden collapse of the Syrian currency. Paying sums of money to universities to be able to complete the study. Low salaries
- Lack of recognition of certificates issued by schools of self-administration

**Infrastructure services migration:**

The subject of basic services «infrastructure» has not come out such as the difficulty in providing potable water.

the difficulty in the availability of electricity; As a motive for emigration ,On the other hand, when talking about other reasons ,On service issues, the sample was unanimously agreed that it is one of The reasons that “push” the formation of a trend towards emigration, but it is not one of the main reasons , and withdrew this applies to the entire sample according to the variables of gender, occupation and educational level.The deteriorating medical situation “in the opinion of the sample” played a major role in the trend towards emigration. The main variables of the sample played their role in evaluating this aspect as a strong driver of migration or less important

The importance of this variable for medical and engineering professionals and was less important for professionals’ security and military.

**Other reasons for immigration:*****Pervasive corruption:***

There is clearly resentment about the level of corruption that exists in their areas, as . has been repeatedly mentioned favoritism, wasta, and weak oversight

***Marginalization of youth:***

Among the reasons mentioned by the participants is that young people are marginalized and not given an active role in society, and the lack of centers to take care of them and hone their talents, in addition to the poor economic situation this leaves young people with two options, either to join the fighting factions, or to emigrate

**Recommendations:**

Based on the analytical results of youth migration trends and the factors supporting them, recommendations can be made

The following are for stakeholders on several levels:

**On the military level:**

Putting pressure on the Syrian government and its allies to prevent the use of destructive weapons such as barrels and missiles on civilian areas, as well as internationally prohibited weapons and work to neutralize them urban areas and public utilities for the sponsor, which would reduce the trend towards migration.

**On the economic level:**

- ❖ Coordination with stakeholders from civil and military leaders at home in order to develop plans, it aims to create job opportunities for young people. This is done by attracting national capital and coordinating with international donors that will strengthen the economic sectors that can provide opportunities a lot of work for different segments of young society (males and females).
- ❖ Supporting agriculture (including providing essential materials for the whole cycle) as well as livestock to enhance food security in the region.
- ❖ Supporting young owners of independent small businesses and productive family businesses, which contributes to devoting individual and collective experiences alike in creating job opportunities in proportion to the nature of work the course of daily life in those areas.
- ❖ Supporting the agricultural sector mainly and providing the necessary facilities for the expansion of agriculture in this period regions, because of their important economic and social outcomes (employment of a large number of young people, it is impossible to achieve self-sufficiency for these areas
- ❖ Attempting to settle on a unified trading currency in transactions commercial, economic and living conditions, which contribute to creating a unified financial system regardless of its characteristics.
- ❖ Going to open investments and projects to absorb the available manpower.
- ❖ Focusing on supporting individual efforts in small projects and finding effective solutions to the problems they face, such as loan issues, the exploitation of the market by large traders, and the failure to protect small producers and the consumers.

**On the educational level:**

- ❖ Continuance improving the curriculum, syllabuses, instructional methods and techniques quality and linking local education with the international educational, scientific, and technical community.
- ❖ Expanding the opening of primary and secondary schools.
- ❖ Activating the Syrian universities that were opened in areas outside the control of the regime, and expanding its specializations and the admission of qualified graduates as assistants in these universities, and striving in the same time to obtain recognition of the certificate issued by it
- ❖ University scholarships are provided to students wishing to complete their undergraduate or postgraduate studies abroad and individual scholarships for girls
- ❖ Provides virtual university electronic access centers for students who are unable to enroll in universities due to various circumstances.

**On the youth level:**

- ❖ Interest in establishing various centers that gather the energies of young people in these areas, with diversified tasks and intertwined between sponsorship, talent discovery, motivation, and other process of connecting young people to the place to which it belongs.
- ❖ Activating programs that enhance the culture of volunteering in the various fields of the operating institutions, which it is about organizing young people, unloading their energies, and creating a concept of belonging and citizenship for them.

**On the societal and service level:**

- ❖ Supporting and improving the service sector
- ❖ Securing and improving the provision of basic services (such as health, education, energy, etc.) to the community.
- ❖ Enacting substantive laws and explaining them with clear executive regulations.
- ❖ Work to enforce the law in all institutions and departments and on all segments of society as well as individuals.
- ❖ Focusing on improving the laws regulating economic affairs and the measures that contribute to sustaining the economic growth and social development.
- ❖ Work to raise the efficiency build the capacities of workers in government departments and institutions.

## References:

This research relied on several internal and external sources, where several interviews and focused discussion sessions were conducted internally, and several external websites used as sources, according to the following

The characteristics of the “case study and focus group” sample were as follow:

- 25 singles of young people between the ages of 18-35 years, who live in Syria
- Males 15 and females 10
- And three focused discussion sessions, two for men and one for women, each session consisting of 10 people.
- The educational level included the different stages (primary - preparatory - secondary - university)
- Marital status (single and married)
- Occupational status (not working - worker - media employee - employee - teacher - private work)

[Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.](#)

<https://reliefweb.int/country/syr>

<https://www.unhcr.org/search?query=immigration%20from%20Syria>

Source: 2022 HNO

Source: OCHA, December 2021

Source: UNHCR, February 20

Photo credit: AL-MONITOR

## Appendices:

### Immigration form

What is your assessment of the most important factors that push young people to migrate outside the country?

	1	2	3	4	5
Barrel bombing					
Clashes and battles in the town or nearby towns					
Fear of intrusion into the area by the regime or anything else					
Security restrictions by the dominant faction					
Fear of arrest					
Kidnapping, Stealing					
Gun chaos in the local community					
The lack of discipline of the armed factions' members in your area					
There is no judiciary to which everyone is subject					

Are there other reasons on the security front that push young people to migrate; mention it?

How would you rate the most economic factors that push young people to migrate?

	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of job opportunities					
No fixed income					
Continuous rise in prices					
Lack of income					
Difficulty securing the basics of living from food					
Weakness in the provision of health services in the region					
Difficulty in providing safe drinking water					
Difficulty finding electricity					
Weakness/lack of formal primary education					
Weakness/lack of formal secondary education					
Unavailability of universities					

Fear for the future of children					
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Are there other reasons, on the economic front, that push young people to emigrate? mention it?

Are there efforts being made by local and non-local authorities to reduce youth migration?

Do you think that the efforts being made to reduce immigration are sufficient? And why?

What are the things that, if achieved, will be one of the factors that will reduce the migration of young people?

Is immigration considered a problem or a solution to what is happening? And why?