

1. Introduction to the situation in Syria

COMMON ANALYSIS

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This section aims to highlight the main important elements/general considerations in the situation in Syria.

The Syrian armed conflict began in 2011 as a civil uprising against the government of President Bashar al-Assad, inspired by the Arab Spring protests. Since 2012, the conflict became increasingly violent and developed in a full-scale civil war, as armed opposition groups confronted Syrian government forces and began seizing key territories. The rise of Islamist groups and subsequent infighting marked another phase in the conflict that culminated in 2014, with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) conquering large areas in the eastern part of the country and further into Iraq and establishing the so-called 'Islamic State caliphate'. The creation of the 'caliphate' prompted the military intervention of an international US-led coalition against ISIL. Since late 2015, military interventions of other external actors in support of Assad marked the comeback of the Syrian government, which gradually recaptured most territories and consolidated its control. By the end of 2018, the conflict was viewed as having shifted decisively in Assad's favour. Assad was re-elected for a fourth term as President of Syria in the May 2021 elections, which were found to lack any form of credibility. [[Actors](#), 1.1, p. 4; [Security 2021](#), 1.2, p. 13]

During the course of the war, Syria became the scene for a series of intersecting conflicts involving many internal and international actors [[Actors](#), 1.1, p. 4]. Three main campaigns have driven the conflict in Syria: the violence between the Syrian government and opposition forces; the efforts of a US-led coalition to defeat ISIL; and the military operations against Syrian Kurds by Turkish forces [[Security 2021](#), 1.4, p. 19]. Complex alliances, shifting allegiances, rivalries and conflicting

interests between the actors involved continue to affect the balance of power and to foster uncertainty. [[Actors](#), 1.1, p. 4]

The UN reported that, by March 2021, the number of fatalities since the beginning of the conflict was around 350 000, 41 % of them being civilians. Most other sources estimated the number of fatalities to be at around 500 000 or higher. The conflict has also caused the biggest displacement crisis in the world. According to estimates, it has driven some 5.6 million Syrian refugees out of the country and, at the end of 2021, 6.7 million Syrians were living in internal displacement, with around 80 % of displaced households having lived in displacement for at least four years. [[Security 2022](#), 1.6.3, p. 58, 1.6.4, p. 62]

A combination of factors, including international economic sanctions, the COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing economic decline, protracted conflict, hyperinflation, water and fuel shortages contributed to a further significant worsening of the socio-economic conditions in Syria during the reference period. The economic situation has also contributed to a rapid deterioration of humanitarian conditions in the country. Over 90 % of the Syrian population were living below the poverty line. About 14.6 million Syrians (of an overall population of 21.7 million) were assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance and around 12 million persons faced acute food insecurity in Syria in 2022. [[COI Update 2022](#), p. 9; [Damascus 2021](#), 3.1.3, p. 39; [Damascus 2022](#), 3.4.2, p. 45]

The significant impact on the civilian population in the country has been the result of deliberate targeting by multiple actors, as well as risks associated with indiscriminate violence.

The individual assessment of international protection needs should also take into account the presence and activity of [different actors](#) in the applicant's home area and the situation in the areas the applicant would need to travel through in order to reach their home area. Moreover, the assessment should account for the dynamically changing security situation in the country.

It should also be noted that in some cases, where international protection needs would be established, exclusion considerations may be relevant.

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