



**Facilitating the rapid reincorporation of Syria into the  
global economy and international community**



**Tables of contents**

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Definition of important terms</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Timeline of key events</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Position of key nations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Suggested solutions</b>	<b>9</b>



## Overview

A major challenge of the United Nations (UN) and the wider international community today is the reintegration of Syria into the global economy as quickly as possible. Since 2011, when the Syrian Civil War started, there has been widespread destruction of infrastructure, economic collapse, and displacement within Syria, which has weakened the country's ability to function within the global economy [2].

The conflict began through an anti-government protest and rapidly escalated into a prolonged civil war involving domestic factions, regional actors and international powers. The prolonged violence has caused Syria's infrastructure, governance system and economy to be heavily damaged [3]. Millions of innocent civilians were displaced across the globe, while basic necessities such as technology, healthcare and education deteriorated significantly. The long term instability resulted in widespread poverty, food security, economic isolation and a huge decline in Syria to be actively taken part in the global economy [5].

Today, millions of Syrians live in poverty and are dependent on relief assistance, and economic recovery and reconstruction are still ongoing processes. In 2025, it is estimated that 16.5 million people will still need humanitarian relief, and more than 13 million Syrians will still be displaced either internally or externally [1].

The process of economic recovery in Syria has also been hindered by the impact of sanctions, political volatility, and the lack of access to the global financial systems [3]. Inflation, production disruptions, and the impact on the country's internal market have also contributed to the country's economic decline [6]. The current regional tensions and the impact on the country's borders with neighboring countries such as Iraq and Lebanon also play a role [7] [9].

Despite these challenges, recent developments indicate emerging prospects of reintegration into the global community, though gradually. There have been various attempts by different nations to ease some of the economic sanctions and open trade routes to improve the economic situation in the region [13] [10] [14]. Re-engagement into the global community will most likely improve the economic situation in Syria, and would develop even without the



dependency on any kind of humanitarian aid. However, the level of re-engagement of Syria into the global community is still a topic of debate in the global community regarding the governance and security situation in the country.



## Definitions of important terms

### **Syrian Civil War**

The Syrian Civil War was the armed struggle between the Government forces loyal to the authoritarian President of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad, and the anti-government pro-democracy rebels. Massive destruction and deaths and displacement of millions of Syrians during the war occurred. After the victory of the anti-government rebels, the former President Bashar Al-Assad fled to Moscow, where he received protection from Russia [7].

### **Provisional Government**

A provisional government is a temporary government which takes charge in a particular country in a period of political transition, often after a war, revolution, or the fall of the previous government. The main objective of a provisional government is to provide stability in the country, run the affairs of the government, and pave the way for a new government, often through the process of election[18].

### **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)**

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), is a Sunni Islamist militant organization which operates in Syria, in the northwestern part of the country, specifically in the Idlib region. The organization was founded formally in 2017 after the merger of various rebel groups. Though the organization's foundation traces back to the Jabhat al-Nusra movement, which was previously associated with the al-Qaeda movement during the initial years of the Syrian Civil War. It has been one of the most dominant and strongest militant groups that have fought against the Syrian government during the Syrian Civil War and have controlled the territory of opposition-held Syria. It has been categorized as part of a terrorist organization due to its militant activities and previous association with the al-Qaeda movement[9].

### **International Sanctions**

International sanctions refer to the political and economic steps taken by one or several countries or international organizations against a country, group, and individual with the objective of controlling the behavior and enforcing international law. International sanctions are normally enforced against a country by other countries or international organizations in order to control the behavior and enforce international law with regards to conflict or threats to international peace, security and human rights violations. International sanctions can include different steps such as trade sanctions, freezing assets and finances, travel restrictions, and restrictions on financial transactions[5].



## Timeline of key events

### **2011-12: Protest starts**

Pro-democracy and anti-government protests emerged across Syria in 2011, calling for political reforms and the end of the rule of President Bashar al-Assad. The government security forces took on police brutality and the use of force to suppress demonstrations including arrestings, but the police brutality and repression further fueled the protests[8].

### **2011: Free Syrian Army (FSA) forms**

With the escalation of the protest, the Syrian army witnessed an increasing defection of military personnel, who formed the Free Syrian Army (FSA). The Free Syrian Army sought to protect the demonstrators, as well as fight against the Syrian government of Assad through armed struggle. The FSA was the first armed opposition against the Syrian government [10].

### **2011-12: Beginning of Armed Insurgency**

The conflict escalated from demonstrations to an armed rebellion by mid-2011. Various anti-government groups have been engaging in armed conflict with the Syrian government. This marked the start of the prolonged Syrian Civil War that has ravaged the country for over a decade[9][11].

### **2012-13: Escalation and Rise of Extremist Groups**

As the situation worsened in the country, extremist groups started to rise to power. Groups linked to al-Qaeda and other radical groups started to set up shop in the country. This rise in the number of extremist militias in the country led to the worsening of the situation, as all these groups started to fight for power[11].

### **2014: The Prominence of the Islamic State (ISIS)**

The radical group, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), had grown rapidly, seizing territory in eastern Syria, declaring an Islamic caliphate, and becoming a dominant force in the region. ISIS has imposed strict rule in the territory under its control [10].



### **2014: United States Military Involvement**

The United States and its allies started carrying out airstrikes on ISIS positions in Syria and Iraq. In addition to air operations, the US supported anti-ISIS militias such as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which included training, equipping, and financially supporting them [12].

### **2015-21: Russian Involvement Against Rebel Forces**

In 2015, Russia deployed its military to support the Assad government. This helped to maintain the Assad regime and forced the rebels to retreat. This was a major contribution to the fact that the Syrian government was not overthrown during this period[13].

### **2016: Operation Euphrates Shield**

Turkey launched the operation, which was called "Operation Euphrates Shield." The operation was a military operation in northern Syria, where the objective was to drive ISIS forces away from the Turkish border and prevent the expansion of Kurdish forces in the region. The operation lasted over several months, and it had a major impact on the region [14].

### **2024: Collapse of the Assad Regime**

In late 2024, a group of rebel forces led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham launched a major offensive in Syria. The rebel forces were able to capture major Syrian cities such as Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus. Finally, on December 8th 2024, the Assad government was overthrown and Bashar al-Assad was forced to flee from Syria, ending decades of Assad rule in Syria[15][16].

### **2025-2026: Transitional Government and Political Transition**

After the ouster of Assad, a transitional period began in Syria. Ahmed al-Sharaa, the leader of the rebels, who was previously the leader of HTS, became the transitional president of the country. A provisional government was formed, along with a temporary constitution, to rebuild the country and integrate different armed groups into the national military[17]

Although the regime of Bashar Assad has come to an end, the country of Syria still faces a number of challenges, such as political instability, economic downfall, humanitarian crisis, as well as the presence of different armed groups in the country. The new government focuses on rebuilding the infrastructure of the country, as well as its relations with the international community.



## Position of key nations

### -United States-

The United States has historically been against the Syrian government, led by Bashar al-Assad, and has imposed sanctions against Syria during the Syrian Civil War due to the violation of human rights and political suppression in the country. At the same time the United States has been supporting the humanitarian efforts in the war-torn country, as well as the opposition, by imposing sanctions against the Syrian government. In recent years, the United States has also implemented a number of sanctions relief measures to allow the Syrian citizens to carry out their activities[18][12]

### -Russia-

Russia has been one of the strongest supporters of the Syrian government from the international community. Since 2015, Russia has provided military support to the Syrian government and has been the biggest factor in the continuation of the Assad regime in the country. Russia has been against international sanctions on Syria and has supported the integration of Syria into the international political and economic system. Moscow still retains strategic interests in Syria[13][19].

### -Turkey-

Turkey has had a complex role to play in the Syrian conflict. Turkey started by supporting the Syrian opposition against the Assad government but has also engaged in military action against extremist groups and the Kurds in northern Syria. In the recent past, Turkey has made efforts to normalize trade and economic relations with Syria. Turkey has lifted trade restrictions and opened the borders to improve the Syrian economy[20][14].

### -China-

China has generally supported the sovereignty of the Syrian government and has also been against military intervention in the country. China has also supported the search for political solutions to the Syrian conflict and has also stressed the need to rebuild the country and also promote economic development. China has also expressed interest in taking part in the rebuilding process in Syria and also in promoting economic cooperation[21].



-European Union-

The European Union has imposed sanctions on Syria due to its human rights issues, as well as the government of Syria's activities in the war. On the other hand, the European Union is one of the biggest supporters of the Syrian refugees in the form of humanitarian aid. The EU has stated that the Syrian government must first implement political reforms before the EU can assist in the rebuilding of the Syrian economy[22]



## Suggested Solutions

A possible approach to addressing Syria's economic challenge could be the gradual easing of the international sanctions, which would be beneficial to the Syrian economic development, as well as the establishment of a system of responsibility. There are many sanctions currently imposed on Syria, which affect its ability to use the international banking system, attract foreign investment, as well as participate in the global trade arena, which has hindered the rebuilding of the Syrian economy as well as its development [4][5]. A step-by-step approach to the lifting of sanctions would be beneficial to the rebuilding of the infrastructure, the agricultural industry, as well as the humanitarian trade, while sanctions against violators of the international law remain in effect[18].

Another possible solution could be the increase in international reconstruction aid and economic cooperation. As decades have passed with its national conflict, the country's infrastructure, such as hospitals, roads, homes, and even the energy sector, has suffered significant damage. Organizations such as the United Nations could play an important role in supporting reconstruction programs to rebuild the country's infrastructure and improve the country's economic situation[2][23].

Strengthening regional trade and economic integration could also play a role in the economic rebuilding process in Syria. For example, the opening of border crossings and establishing trade routes with neighboring countries could help rebuild the supply chain and increase access to vital services and goods for Syria. Recent events, such as the reopening of border crossings and the establishment of new trade regulations between Syria and neighboring countries, indicate the role regional economic integration could play in rebuilding the Syrian economy and reconnecting it to the global economy[24][20].

Lastly, the long-term process of rebuilding and recovering will depend on the continuation of the humanitarian process and the displaced populations. Currently, there are millions of people in the country who are displaced and also depend on food assistance due to the war. Organizations such as the World Food Programme offer food assistance to the populations affected by the war [25] [26]. Therefore, the continuation of the process and rebuilding the country will depend on the continuation of the process and rebuilding the country.



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