



SUMMARY

The Syrian Arab Republic is bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Lebanon and Turkey with Jordan and Iraq to the south.

Chief of State: President Bashar al-ASAD

Capital: Damascus

Gov Type: presidential republic; highly authoritarian regime

Population: 23,865,423

Colonial History: Syria was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1516 until the empire's decline during World War I. With the Ottoman Empire's collapse, the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 set the borders for Syria. In 1920, the League of Nations mandated France to govern Syria. Although the Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936 promised Syrian independence, it was never implemented. During World War II, Syria was controlled by the Vichy French government until British and Free French forces took over in 1941. In 1943, elections were held and Shukri al-Quwatli became Syria's first president, though full independence wasn't until April 17, 1946. The post-independence period began with a series of military coups in 1949. Between 1958 and 1961, Syria briefly merged with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic, but dissolved following a Syrian coup. In 1963, the Ba'ath Party seized power and continues to influence Syrian politics.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Republic of Tunisia is about 187,437 sq km in total area and has 1,550 sq km of water and has 193 km of coastline.

The climate is mostly desert; hot, dry, sunny summers and mild, rainy winters along coast; cold weather with snow periodically in Damascus. The terrain is mostly desert plateau with narrow coastal plains and mountains in west.

Natural resources include petroleum, phosphates, chrome and manganese ores, asphalt, iron ore, rock salt, marble, gypsum, and hydropower

The Syrian Arab Republic

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Noun: Syrian(s)

Adjective: Syrian

Ethnic Groups: Arab ~50%, Alawite ~15%, Kurd ~10%, Levantine ~10%, other ~15% (includes Druze, Ismaili, Imami, Nusairi, Assyrian, Turkoman, Armenian)

Religion: Muslim 87% (official; includes Sunni 74% and Alawi, Ismaili, and Shia 13%), Christian 10% (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and Nestorian), Druze 3% (note: the Christian population may be considerably smaller as a result of Christians fleeing the country during the ongoing civil war)

Literacy: 86.4% (Male 91.7%, Female 81%)

Population growth is at 1.67%

ECONOMY AND GDP

Syria's economy is described as a low-income Middle Eastern economy; prior infrastructure and economy devastated by 11-year civil war; ongoing US sanctions; sporadic trans-migration during conflict; currently being supported by World Bank trust fund; ongoing hyperinflation

Real GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$50.28 billion (2015), \$55.8 billion (2014), \$61.9 billion (2013)

Real GDP Growth Rate: 1.3% (2021), -0.18% (2020), 1.22% (2019)

Real GDP Per Capita: \$2,900 (2015)

GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$8.97 billion (2021)

Inflation Rate (Consumer Prices): 28.1% (2017), 47.3% (2016)

GDP - Composition: agriculture: 20% (2017), industry: 19.5% (2017), services: 60.8% (2017)

Unemployment Rate: 13.81% (2022), 15.08% (2021), 15.28% (2020)

Youth Unemployment: 26.2% (2021)

MAIN POLITICAL CONTENTIONS

The Assad family has ruled Syria since 1970 when Hafez al-Assad seized power in a coup. His son, Bashar al-Assad, took over in 2000. The Assad family belongs to the Alawite sect, a minority in Syria, which has led to tensions with the Sunni majority and other minority groups. Syria is home to diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Christians, Druze, and others. Sectarian divisions have been exacerbated by political influences.

Pro-democracy protests erupted in 2011 as part of the Arab Spring, demanding political reforms and the end of Assad's rule. The regime's violent crackdown on protesters led to a civil war. The civil war has seen various factions vying for control. The conflict has caused a massive humanitarian crisis, with hundreds of thousands killed, millions displaced, and widespread destruction of infrastructure.

Iran and Hezbollah have supported the Assad regime, while Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar have backed various opposition groups. Russia has provided significant military support to the Assad regime, while the United States and its allies have supported certain opposition factions and conducted airstrikes against ISIS.

Syrian Kurds, primarily in the northeast, have sought greater autonomy and established self-administration in areas like Rojava during the civil war. Turkey views the Kurdish autonomy movements as a threat due to its own Kurdish insurgency and has conducted military operations in northern Syria to counter Kurdish forces.

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