

The Roots, Factors, and Reasons that Made the Syrian Crisis a Protracted Crisis*

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Abstract

The Syrian crisis began as a protest movement in 2011 and changed into an armed conflict and a global crisis, leaving profound regional and international repercussions. This study aims to provide a detailed analysis of the sequence of events in the Syrian crisis, starting with the Hama massacre in 1982 and the Damascus Declaration in 2005, up to the last developments that have led to the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. Through the historical analytical approach, the study explored the geopolitical dynamics surrounding the Syrian crisis and leading to multiple international interferences, and how these interferences contributed to changing the development of events in order to provide a profounder understanding of the Syrian crisis, not only as a local or regional conflict, but also as a crisis with a global dimension that requires international cooperation to find lasting solutions to the humanitarian and political challenges it has forced. The study also included a review of international agreements and laws related to refugee rights, and how these agreements have affected the international community's dealings with Syrian refugees. The concept of refugee was also addressed, as one of the essential aspects of the crisis, with reference to the historical development of refugee movements around the world and international legislation and institutions concerned with refugee rights. The study presented the impact of the Arab Spring on the transformation of the Syrian protests into an armed conflict and later into a huge humanitarian crisis that has displaced millions.

Keywords: Syrian Crisis, Refugee Crises, Arab Spring, Civil War, fall of Assad's regime.

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Suriye Krizini Uzun Süreli Bir Krize Dönüştüren Kökler, Faktörler ve Nedenler



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Öz

Suriye krizi, 2011 yılında bir protesto hareketi olarak başlamıştır ve silahlı bir çatışma ve küresel bir krize dönüşerek derin bölgesel ve uluslararası etkiler bırakmıştır. Bu çalışma, Suriye krizinin olaylar sırasını detaylı bir şekilde analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, 1982 Hama katliamı ve 2005 Şam Deklarasyonu ile başlayıp, Aralık 2024'te Esad rejiminin düşmesine yol açan son gelişmelere kadar olan süreci incelemektedir. Tarihsel analiz yaklaşımıyla, çalışma Suriye krizini çevreleyen jeopolitik dinamikleri ve bu dinamiklerin uluslararası müdahalelere nasıl yol açtığını, bu müdahalelerin olayların gelişimini nasıl değiştirdiğini keşfetmiştir. Amacı, Suriye krizini sadece yerel ya da bölgesel bir çatışma olarak değil, aynı zamanda uluslararası işbirliği gerektiren ve insani ve siyasi zorluklarla karşılaşan küresel bir kriz olarak daha derin bir şekilde anlamaktır. Çalışma ayrıca, mülteci haklarıyla ilgili uluslararası anlaşmalar ve yasaların gözden geçirilmesini ve bu anlaşmaların uluslararası toplumun Suriye mültecileriyle ilişkilerini nasıl etkilediğini de içermektedir. Mülteci kavramı da, krizin temel yönlerinden biri olarak ele alınmış, dünya genelindeki mülteci hareketlerinin tarihi gelişimi ve mülteci haklarıyla ilgilenen uluslararası mevzuat ve kurumlara da atıfta bulunulmuştur. Çalışma, Arap Baharı'nın Suriye protestolarının silahlı bir çatışmaya ve sonrasında milyonlarca kişiyi yerinden eden büyük bir insani krize dönüşmesi üzerindeki etkisini de sunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriye Krizi, Mülteci Krizleri, Arap Baharı, İç Savaş, Esad Rejiminin Düşüşü.

Introduction

Refugee movements began at the beginning of creation. The Syrian refugee movements are considered the largest one. Their effects have not ended yet because of the lengthy nature of Syria's conflict events. Syrian refugees themselves and their host countries have paid a high price for years compared to other Arab countries. The Syrian conflict has been a complicated and diverse subject for more than a decade. The Syrian crisis stems from a confluence of political, social, economic, and historical forces.

The Al-Assad family had ruled Syria since 1971, when Hafez al-Assad became the president of Syria under the Syrian Ba'ath Party (Kmak & Björklund, 2022). According to Kılınç (2024) the rise of the Assad family, who are themselves Alawites, transformed the fortunes of Alawites under Hafez Assad who ruled Syria between 1971 and 2000.

Syria is a diverse country with several ethnic and religious groups. The Assad regime's policies caused issues for populations, notably the Sunni majority. Political persecution, a lack of freedom, and limited political engagement fuel public resentment in Syria. These schisms had a crucial role in the crisis's intensification (freedomhouse, 2023).

The 2011 events started in Syria started with spontaneous peaceful protests in search of freedom in parts of Syria, and anti-corruption and anti-persecution demonstrations soon spread to most parts of Syria. Millions of Syrians have been uprooted and forced to flee to other areas of the world. The Syrian people were affected by the Arab Spring, and on February 17, 2011, the capital Damascus' Al-Harika Market was shuttered. After a security guard insulted a merchant's son, traders and residents gathered and started shouting, "The Syrian people will not be humiliated!" (Aljazeera, 2016). Humiliation of a Syrian citizen by the traffic police is a common occurrence, but the insult that took place on February 17, 2011 was not glossed over as before (Aljazeera, 2012). The incident aroused uproar among the community. The rally was attended by more than 1,500 people, according to estimates.

This incident is attributed to the Syrians being inspired by the revolutions that started with Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia, which Bouazizi did not accept as humiliation, and which unfolded in other Arab countries. In solidarity with the Libyan revolution, hundreds of Syrians gathered in front of the Libyan Embassy in Damascus five days later. For the first time, the demonstration was dubbed "A Traitor Who Kills His People!" and, as a result, security personnel were forced to disperse it (Aljazeera, 2016). Later, the spark of the revolution was ignited in Daraa at the beginning of March 2011, when a number of students under the age of 13 involved in the Arab Spring Movement scribbled anti-regime inscriptions on the walls of their schools. Security forces arrested the students from the school (McEvers, 2012). Daraa city in Syria, is comparable to Sidi Bouzid in Tunisia, in that demonstrations began there and extended throughout the country.

The Syrian revolution has historical origins that may be traced back to political dynamics and regional power conflicts that shaped Syria's government and stability during the twentieth century. The Arab Spring was not the only reason that the Syrian revolution was affected, but was preceded by the political events that were previously discussed. Many factors were involved, including, but not limited to, the restriction of free expression and opinion, as well as the ban on using the internet and the inability to express thoughts not just vocally, but also via the internet or social media owing to the regime's internet censorship (Aldamen, 2023a). Thus, the Syrian revolution was political deposits from all previous events and its social, political and cultural repercussions on the Syrian people. The Syrian refugee crisis is an embarrassing humanitarian disaster with recent suffering and displacement (Aldamen, 2023b). It has had far-reaching regional ramifications. The surge of refugees into neighboring nations such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq has put a burden on their resources and stability.

This study is based on the historical analytical approach, which is defined as the approach that analyzes events that occurred in the past, by collecting the required data, interpreting it, and predicting the future through it. It also aims to link events that occurred in the past, and studies and analyzes them according to a set of methodological foundations, in order to understand reality based on the light of the past. The study's objective is to analyze the roots of the Syrian crisis based on similar refugee crises and factors shaping the conflict in Syria for decades. By collecting data and information from their primary sources, analyzing events and linking them to interpret reality and predict the future. The historical data collected to explain the study problem from its roots was classified through the aftermentioned sections. The study presents data based on a deductive reasoning, which involves providing broad background and general information to reach a specific conclusion on the study's problem.

1. A Look at The Concept of Refugeehood

It can be said that the concept of refugeehood dates back to pre-Islam, through the story of the Prophet Noah (Abdullah, 2024). The story of the Prophet Noah is one of the first stories to include the meaning of migration in the Qur'an. The Prophet Noah, who lived among his people for 950 years (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankebut, 29:14) made the ark after Allah commanded him to sail in it. His emigration, which was auspicious for him and those with him in the ark, male and female, from all living creatures, ended when the ark settled on Judi after a year and ten days.

"So it was until then there came our command and the oven gushed forth (water like fountains from the earth). We said: Embark therein, of each kind two (male and female), and your family, except him against whom the Word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And none believed with him, except a few."
(The Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankebut, 29:14).

The Prophet Ibrahim also gave an example of primitive emigration. He called his father and his people to worship Allah and monotheism, but they didn't listen to him, and he met with a lot of torment. Then Prophet Ibrahim emigrated with

his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot to the Levant, and this migration is what God mentioned in the Quran:

"So Lot believed in him. And Abraham said, I am emigrating in obedience to my Lord. He alone is indeed the Almighty, All-Wise." (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankabut, 29: 26).

The Prophet Lot also rejected the obscene actions of his people, as his call was to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and warned them against immorality and disobedience, but his people refused and threatened him with expulsion if he did not stop denouncing and warning them. The Prophet Lot continued to deny their indecency, which no one had preceded them in, which was sexual intercourse with men rather than women, so his people conspired against him, but God commanded him to leave that village.

"Then We delivered him, along with Lot, to the land We had showered with blessings for all people" (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:71).

The Prophet Moses, after a man directed him out of the city, fearing that he might take revenge for the man who had killed him earlier, without guidance or knowing where to go, migrated from Egypt to Midian and went out on his way to Madyan (Wheeler, 2006).

"And a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, "O Moses, indeed the eminent ones are conferring over you [intending] to kill you, so leave [the city]; indeed, I am to you of the sincere advisors." 20. "So he left from there, fearful and vigilant. He said, "My Lord! Save me from the wrongdoing people!" (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Qasas, 28:20-21).

The term "Hijrah" refers to a religious journey from one country to another with the goal of increasing obedience to Allah (Andilau, 2022).

"Whoever emigrates in the cause of Allah will find many safe havens and bountiful resources throughout the earth. Those who leave their homes and die while emigrating to Allah and His Messenger—their reward has already been secured with Allah. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (The Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:100).

The beginning of the Islamic era witnessed migration movements when the first Muslims migrated to Abyssinia (the Kingdom of Axum). The first group migrated from Mecca to the lands of Abyssinia in A.D. 615; they were eleven men and four women, and then many other Muslims also migrated for the second migration from Makkah once again in A.D. 616. This new group was made up of 83 men and 18 women (Razwy, 2014; Safieddine, 2011). As they suffered from the persecution of the Quraysh leaders. The Prophet Mohammad (SAW) told his oppressed and bullied comrades, whose money was confiscated, to migrate to Abyssinia because there is a fair king there to whom they can take refuge.

When the apostle saw the affliction of his companions, he said to them: "If you were to go to Abyssinia, it would be better for you, for the king will not tolerate injustice and it is a friendly country, until such time as Allah shall relieve you from your distress." Thereupon his companions went to Abyssinia, afraid of

apostasy and fleeing to God with their religion. This was the first hijra in Islam (Ibn Ishāq, 2004, as cited in Watt, 1961).

The Qur'an mentioned the emigrants (Muhajireen) who migrated with the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) to Medina; they were those who converted to Islam on the day of the conquest, and they were called by this name because they abandoned their homelands and separated from them, seeking the worship of Allah.

"Some of the gains will be for poor emigrants who were driven out of their homes and wealth, seeking Allah's bounty and pleasure, and standing up for Allah and His Messenger. They are the ones truly in faith." "As for those who had settled in the city and "embraced" the faith before "the arrival of the emigrants, they love whoever immigrates to them, never having a desire in their hearts for whatever "of the gains" is given to the emigrants. They give "the emigrants" preference over themselves, even though they may be in need. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are truly successful." (The Qur'an, Surah Al-Hashr, 59:8-9).

The origin of the English word refugee comes from the French word réfugié, which refers to Protestant Huguenots, the more than 400,000 French Protestants who fled France in 1685 (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). After that, the word refugee was used to refer to a person who fled to another country. Refuge, which is sought because of injustice and persecution, has come to mean the place or shelter sought by the refugee (UNHCR, n.d). While refugeehood means unprotected statelessness, being a refugee in another country has nothing to do with immigration. According to Shacknove (2017), there are three basic conditions for granting refugee status to individuals:

1. The situation where there is no right of recourse to the government of the country
2. The government's failure to protect and deprive basic needs and rights
3. The situation of seeking international assistance for the needs of accessing international assistance.

Consequently, many countries follow the definitions set out by the 1951 UN Convention, which defines a refugee as:

"Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." (UN Convention, 1951).

According to Shacknove (2017) in refugeehood persecution, vital economic distress, and natural calamities are the three most serious hazards to an individual. Natural disasters such as floods and droughts are frequently discarded as the foundation for reasonable claims when determining who qualifies for refugee status. Such calamities, unlike violent crimes, are not considered "political" events.

Natural disasters and vital economic depression threaten the individual, but they do not pose a solid threat to the return of individuals to their country's borders. They constitute the least effective prevention of return, rather than oppression and injustice. If the cause of persecution still exists, it is possible to say that the most

fundamental thing about refugees is the presence of persecution, which is feared when they re-enter the homeland.

The existence of persecution in a country, according to other vital economic depression and natural disaster reasons, is the main reason why people who have fled do not return to their countries. For other reasons, there is no obstacle for them to return to their country whenever they want. As long as persecution continues in the country, the return of refugees is a critical and serious threat to their lives, and persecution manifests in many forms, including religious, racial, and political persecution.

Refugee status should be granted in the first class where the government is not able to protect basic requirements, leaving no other choice but to have these needs provided internationally, and where international aid is possible. The legitimacy of the policy is jeopardized if refugee status is denied to these beneficiaries or if basic needs are given to others who are not in danger (Shacknove, 2017).

It is necessary to differentiate between many terms related to asylum and refugees, because each case has a specific term that explains it. Table 1 shows the differences in refugee terminology in three languages. It shows that refugeehood terms are universally accepted in all languages to provide the same meaning for each situation and to differentiate between situations separately. Each term describes a particular asylum situation for political, economic, or climatic reasons.

Table 1: Refugeehood Terminology

| # | Term |
|----|---|
| 1 | Refugeehood, Refugeeism |
| 2 | Refugee |
| 3 | Climate refugee or environmental refugee |
| 4 | Refuge |
| 5 | Asylum |
| 6 | Asylum Seeker |
| 7 | Internally Displaced Person |
| 8 | Stayees in Informal Tented Settlements |
| 9 | Immigration to and migration from |
| 10 | Immigrant: a person who moves to another country to live permanently. Emigrant: someone who leaves their own country to live permanently in another. |
| 11 | Economic Immigrant |

While Table 2 shows the explanations of the main four terms most commonly related to asylum according to international definitions, Besides, it explains the fifth term of "Informal Tent Settlement ". The term was coined to describe Syrians who, upon arriving in Jordan, prefer to live in tents rather than living in refugee camps or applying for asylum.

Table 2: The Difference Between Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Migrant, Internally Displaced Person, and stayers in the Informal Tent Settlement (ITS)

| # | Term | Explanation |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Refugee | <i>"A person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion and is therefore unable or unwilling to return to her country because of her fear" (UNHCR, 1951).</i> |
| 2 | Asylum seeker | <i>"A person who has left his country for the above reasons and whose asylum claim is still at the stage of 'investigation' by the authorities of the country from which he fled (UDHR, right of asylum, Article 14/1).</i> This is the case when asylum seekers leave their country on the grounds that they are refugees and seek international protection as refugees, but their status has not yet been officially recognized. <i>"Everyone has the right to seek asylum in other countries against persecution and to be treated as asylum seekers."</i> |
| 3 | Migrant | According to the UN, the word "migrant" <i>means a person who leaves their country voluntarily for economic or other reasons. In other words, while immigrants leave their country of their own accord, refugees consist of people who have to leave their country or are forced to leave." (Un. Org)</i> A migrant is a person who leaves her nation voluntarily for employment, education, or to seek others and settles in another country with the knowledge and permission of that country's authorities. He or she does not flee his or her homeland due to injustice or persecution. |
| 4 | Internally Displaced Persons | <i>"Internally displaced people have not crossed a country border to find a safe place. Unlike refugees, they are fleeing within their own country." (Un.org)</i> They are people who do not cross the national borders of neighboring countries and stay within their country. However, they are resettled somewhere other than where they live and are not considered refugees. |
| 5 | (Informal-Tented-Settlements ITS) | This name was given to many Syrians who came to Jordan and lived in tents. For Syrian refugees who are unable or unwilling to reside in formally established refugee camps and provide regular housing solutions in host communities, informal tent settlement (ITS) has become the default option, especially for the most vulnerable, poor, and displaced Syrian households (UNICEF/REACH, 2014). Because informal tent settlements are often located far from city centers, their residents sometimes fall outside the scope of the bulk of charity that assist refugees. As a result, they are among the most vulnerable. Water access is a constant and significant difficulty for inhabitants due to a shortage of water in their living quarters, as well as a lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities (ACTED, 2018). |

2. International Conventions, Laws, and Organizations Involved in Legislation Concerning Refugee Rights

There are various international laws governing refugee issues; explain their meanings and distinguish them from other notions, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the most important documents in the history of human rights, was drafted by representatives from various legal and cultural backgrounds from around the world and adopted as General Assembly Resolution 217 on December 10, 1948, at the General Assembly meeting in Paris. As stated in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is agreed that those seeking asylum in other countries have their claims met.

Article 14: (1) Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum in other countries from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations..

The 1951 Convention pertaining to the Status of Refugees is a legal treaty that serves as one of the study's fundamental cornerstones. It defines the word "refugee," which has been accepted by 145 state parties, and establishes displaced persons' rights as well as states' legal responsibility to protect them. The United Nations High Council for Refugees (UNHCR) is the 'custodian' of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. The convention requires nations to work together to guarantee that refugees' rights are recognized and protected. The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which entered into force on October 4, 1967, is another major convention in international refugee law. A total of 146 countries have become parties to the protocol.

While the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees limits refugee status to "Events that occurred before December 1, 1951" and "Events Occurring in Europe" or "Events in Europe and the Rest of the World," the 1967 Protocol limits both geographical and temporal constraints. The restrictions have to be loosened due to the decolonization that occurred during this period. The Protocol thus gave countries that had previously been parties to the 1951 Convention and placed geographical restrictions on refugees a chance to withdraw it.

On September 10, 1969, the board of heads of state and government of the Organization of African Unity adopted the 1969 Convention controlling particular aspects of refugee problems in Africa at the organization's sixth ordinary session in Addis Abeba. It is the accord that governs different areas of Africa's refugee crisis. Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde Islands, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have ratified and signed this Convention (OAU, 1969).

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) definition of "refugee" is the only clear requirement that persecution is a fundamental criterion of refugee status. This definition, after combining the narrative language of the United Nations, is based on oppression. According to Shacknove (2017), a "refugee" is someone who has been compelled to escape his or her place of origin or nationality due to external invasion, occupation, foreign control, or circumstances that substantially disrupt public order in part or all of his or her country of origin or nationality.

The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees is non-binding regional document to protect refugees. It was adopted in 1984 with the participation of delegates from ten Latin American countries (Colombia, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela). The document is the outcome of the seminar "International Protection of Refugees and Homeless Persons in Central America, Panama, and Mexico," which was conducted in Cartagena, Colombia, between November 19 and 22, 1984. The proclamation is a continuation of the "Contadora Peace and Cooperation Clause" Document, which closely follows the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol. The declaration

stresses the significance of the right to asylum and long-term solutions, and it firmly opposes the repatriation of refugees (UNHCR, 1984).

There are a variety of international refugee organizations that regulate refugee issues and legislation, but the two most important are the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). On December 14, 1950, the United Nations General Assembly formed the UNHCR. After WWII, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded to aid the millions of Europeans who fled or disappeared from their homes. The UNHCR is in charge of coordinating and directing international efforts to protect refugees and respond to refugee crises across the world. Its principal purpose is to defend refugees' rights and well-being. Africa's independence was the first of the continent's recurrent refugee crises in the 1960s. At the turn of the century, UNHCR stated that it is assisting with significant refugee problems in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. While the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an international organization that works in areas such as emergency assistance, refugee resettlement, voluntary repatriation assistance, migrant health, sending money, and supporting legal immigration options, the IOM, an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, has 132 member states from both developing and developed countries. The name of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), which was formed to assist persons who moved as a result of World War II, was modified to its current form (IOM) in 1951. English, French, and Spanish are the official languages of the organization.

3. History of Refugee Movements around the World

3.1. 1940–1950: World War II's Consequences on the Numbers of IDPs

According to the report of Depillis et al. (2015), published in Washington Post the world's major displacement and refugee movements began in the 1940s. When the Second World War began and lasted for about five years, displacing more than 65 million Europeans, including 13 million from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union. 11.3 million Europeans fled to Germany. It also covers one million Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. For 75 years, between 1940 and 2015, the globe had a huge refugee crisis, resulting in a high number of refugees and displaced persons.

The tables 3-6 below describe refugee crises ranging from World War II to the Syrian refugee crisis:

Table 3: 1940–1950: World War II and its Consequences on the Numbers of IDPs

| # | Period | Number of Years | Crisis | Number of Internally Displaced Persons |
|---|------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | 1940-1945 | 5 years | World War II | 40 million Europeans |
| 2 | 1945- 1950 | 5 years | Post-World War II | 13 million in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Poland |
| 3 | 1945- 1950 | 5 years | Post-World War II | 11.3 million forced workers migrated from European countries to Germany. |
| 4 | 1948-1950 | 5 years | Post-World War II | 1 million Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians |
| Total Number of Internally Displaced Persons: 65.3 Million | | | | |

Source: Depillis et al. (2015)

3.2. 1947–1960: The Asian Crises' Consequences on the Numbers of IDPs

According to numbers and statistics and as shown in Table 4, from 1947 to 1960, events in Asia began that resulted in the largest wave of displacement in human history, beginning with the relocation of millions of Indians and Pakistanis and ending with the formation of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been forced to flee to the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon as a consequence. Political dissidents from China fled to Hong Kong. Others emigrated from North Vietnam to South Vietnam, while hundreds of thousands came from Hungary, Austria, and Serbia.

Table 4: 1947–1960: The Asian Crises' Consequences on the Numbers of IDPs

| # | Period | Number of Years | Crisis | Number of Internally Displaced Persons |
|--|------------|-----------------|---|--|
| 1 | 1947 | - | Partition of India and Pakistan | 14 million Indians and Pakistanis |
| 2 | 1948- 1950 | 2 years | Founding of Israel | 750,000 Palestinians fled to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon from occupied Palestinian cities. |
| 3 | 1950-1954 | 4 years | Cultural Revolution in China | 385,000 Chinese political dissidents have fled to Hong Kong. |
| 4 | 1954- 1956 | 2 years | Founding of the Communist Government of North Vietnam | 1 million Roman Catholics migrated from North to South Vietnam |
| 5 | 1956 | - | Suppression of the Hungarian Uprising by the Soviet Union | 200,000 Hungarians fled to Yugoslavia from Austria. |
| Total number of displaced persons: 16,335 million | | | | |

Source: Depillis et al. (2015)

3.3. 1960–2000: The Numbers of Displaced Persons

The crises continued, and the period 1960–2000 was full of displacement (Table 5). It has resulted in the displacement of approximately 46.5 million people from many countries around the world.

Table 5: 1960–2000: Consequences of Crises and Numbers of Displaced Persons

| # | Period | Number of Years | Crisis | Number of Internally Displaced Persons |
|---|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 1960 | - | Algerian War of Independence | 1.2 million Algerians are both internally displaced and have moved to Morocco and Tunisia. |
| 2 | 1960-1964 | 4 years | Belgian-backed Hutu coup | 150,000 Tutsi from Rwanda to Burundi, Congo, and Uganda |
| 3 | 1965-1972 | 7 years | Vietnam War | 2.7 million Vietnamese emigrated from South Vietnam to North Vietnam. |
| 4 | 1967 | - | Arab-Israeli War | 300,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan, Syria, and Egypt |
| 5 | 1967 | - | Nigerian-Biafran War | 2 million Nigerians |
| 6 | 1971 | - | Bangladesh's Independence War | 10 million Bengalis from East Pakistan have moved to India. |
| 7 | 1972 | - | Uganda Expulsion Order | 50,000 Southern Asians from Uganda to England, Canada, and India |
| 8 | 1974 | - | Laotian Civil War | 120,000 Hmong from Laos to Thailand |

| | | | | |
|----|-----------|----------|---|---|
| 9 | 1975-1995 | 20 years | Vietnam War | 800,000 Vietnamese from Vietnam to Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand |
| 10 | 1976-1985 | 9 years | Cambodian Civil War | 375,000 Cambodians are displaced, both to Thailand and internally. |
| 11 | 1976-1992 | 6 years | Civil War in Mozambique | 5.7 million Mozambicans are internally displaced. |
| 12 | 1977-1979 | 2 years | Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia | 620,000 people from Ethiopia to Somalia |
| 13 | 1978 | - | Burmese Expulsion | 150,000-250,000 Rohingya people from Burma to Bangladesh |
| 14 | 1978-1984 | 6 years | Ethiopian Invasion of Eritrea | 500,000 Eritreans from Ethiopia to Sudan |
| 15 | 1979 | - | Revolt against white nationalist sovereignty in Rhodesia | 210,000 people from Rhodesia, Mozambique, Botswana, and Zambia |
| 16 | 1979 | - | Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan | In total, 6.3 million Afghans fled to Iran and Pakistan. |
| 17 | 1980-1988 | 8 years | Iran-Iraq war | 600,000 Iraqis to Iran |
| 18 | 1981-1989 | 8 years | Civil Wars in Central America | Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala sent 2 million people to Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and Costa Rica. |
| 19 | 1989-1993 | 4 years | Separatist Fight in Georgia | 320,000 Georgians from Abkhazia and Ossetia came to Georgia and Russia. |
| 20 | 1989-1998 | 9 years | Serbian Cancellation of the Independent Status of Kosovo | 350,000 Kosovo Albanians have fled to Western Europe. |
| 21 | 1990 | - | War with Negrn-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan | 800,000 Armenians and Azerbaijanis have fled to Armenia and Azerbaijan from Nagorno-Karabakh. |
| 22 | 1991 | - | Suppressing the Insurgent Movement in Iraq | 1.82 million Iraqis and Kurds emigrated from Iraq to other regions of the country, Turkey, and Iran. |
| 23 | 1991 | - | Chechnya declares its independence | 150,000 non-Chechnyans were relocated to other regions of the Russian Federation. |
| 24 | 1991 | - | Croatian independence war and subsequent ethnic cleansing | 550,000 Serbs and Croats have fled to neighboring nations. |
| 25 | 1991-1992 | 1 | Persecution by the Burmese government | 250,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh from Burma. |
| 26 | 1992 | - | Civil War in Tajikistan | 600,000 Tajiks, Russians, and Uzbeks from Tajikistan to neighboring countries |
| 27 | 1994 | - | Rwandan genocide | 3.5 million Rwandans, 2 million refugees, and 1.5 million Rwandans fleeing to Tanzania, Zaire, Burundi, and Uganda. |
| 28 | 1994 | - | The Prevention of the Russian Chechen Independence Movement | 250,000 Chechens from Chechnya to Ingushetia, Dagestan, and North Ossetia |
| 29 | 1994-1995 | 1 year | Bosnia and Herzegovina's dispute over Yugoslavia's disintegration | 2.5 million Bosnian Muslims and Croats have fled to Germany, neighboring countries, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. |
| 30 | 1998-1999 | 1 year | NATO carried out air strikes in response to its crackdown on | 800,000 Albanians from Kosovo have fled to Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Western Europe. |

| | | | | |
|---|------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| | | | Serbian Kosovar Albanians. | |
| 31 | 1999 | - | Indonesian repression of East Timor | 540,000 people were internally displaced, with half going to West Timor. |
| 32 | 1999 | - | conflict in Chechnya | 200,000 Chechens from Chechnya to Ingushetia and Georgia |
| Total number of displaced persons: at least 46.5 million | | | | |

Source: Depillis et al. (2015)

3.4. 2000 to 2022: Crises and Number of IDPs

More than 22.86 million individuals have been displaced or sought shelter because of conflicts and crises since 2000 (Table 6). Most notably, Colombia's 15-year civil war resulted in the displacement of 5,841 million people, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, one of the Middle East's crises, resulted in the displacement of 1.9 million Iraqis. The crackdown in Rome led in thousands of displaced individuals, while the civil conflict in South Sudan has displaced two million people. Concerning the Syrian refugee crisis, which began with the Arab Spring and continues to this day, 12 million people, including over 4 million refugees, have landed in neighboring countries and Europe, and the situation is far from over.

Table 6: 2000 to 2022: Crises and Number of IDPs

| # | Period | Number of Years | Crisis | Number of Internally Displaced Persons |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2000-2015 | 15 years | Civil conflict in Colombia: protracted conflict between government and rebel forces | 5,841,040 people were displaced. |
| 2 | 2003-2015 | 12 years | US invasion of Iraq | 1.9 million Iraqis from Iraq to both domestic and neighboring countries. |
| 3 | 2012-2015 | 3 years | Printing in Burma | Due to the military regime's persecution of ethnic minorities, especially the Rohingya, 891,000 Burmese individuals are refugees, internally displaced, or lack full citizenship. |
| 4 | 2013-2015 | 2 years | South Sudanese civil war | 2,230,000 people |
| 5 | 2011-Ongoing | More than a decade has passed since then. | Conflict in Syria | 7 million internally displaced persons and 4.1 million refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Western Europe. |
| Total number of displaced persons: 22,86204 million | | | | |

Source: Depillis et al. (2015)

The Syrian refugee crisis, the repercussions of war in Afghanistan, the implications of civil war in southern Sudan, Rohingya persecution in Myanmar, and decades of drought and natural catastrophes in Somalia are the five most significant displacement crises that mankind has faced (Table 7). Two-thirds of all refugees globally are from Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia (UNHCR, 2019). Syria's conflict displaced 12 million people, culminating in the largest refugee influx into Europe since World War II. Other global events in the preceding half-century, on the other hand, have caused millions of individuals to flee violence and persecution (Depillis et al., 2015).

Table 7: The Five Biggest Refugee Crises in the World

| # | Crisis | Consequences | Reasons |
|---|-------------|--|---|
| 1 | Syria | There are around 6.6 million refugees worldwide. | The civil war in March 2011 |
| 2 | Afghanistan | Approximately 2.7 million people have been forced to flee the nation for Iran, Pakistan, or Europe. | Unemployment, insecurity, and political instability |
| 3 | South Sudan | 2.3 million refugees. Over 4 million people have been evacuated from their homes, with over 2.3 million having to relocate to neighboring countries. | The civil war in 2013 |
| 4 | Myanmar | Bangladesh received 1.1 million refugees, including around 932,000 Rohingya. | In August 2017, there was violence and persecution in Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State. |
| 5 | Somalia | In the Horn of Africa and Yemen, almost one million refugees and internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) dwell in refugee camps. | Twenty years of continuous natural disasters such as droughts and floods |

Source: Mercycorps (2017)

4. The Crises Occurred in Syria

4.1. 1982: Hama Massacre

Syria's revolution, which began in 2011, is not a recent occurrence. When Bashar's father, Hafez al-Assad, began a military assault against the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama, tens of thousands were killed. While President Hafez Al-Assad, the father of current President Bashar Assad, carried out a massacre in Hama in 1982 to suppress a Sunni insurgency, the city was burned to the ground, and around 20,000 people were slaughtered (Fisk, 2010).

The Hama massacre, which began on February 2, 1982, and lasted 27 days, is largely recognized as the deadliest attack, and it is remembered as a pivotal atrocity in Syrian history (Rodrigues, 2011). The Hama Massacre is widely considered to be one of the most terrible massacres in modern Syrian history (Abdallah, 1983; Seale, 1989). The precise number of victims is unknown, however it was thought that there were tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of them. The Syrian government responded to the slaughter with enormous artillery, indiscriminate shelling, and house-to-house searches. The military attack's severity resulted in serious damage to the city and civilian fatalities.

The Hama Massacre is largely recognized as one of Syria's worst tragedies in recent memory. The exact number of victims is unknown; however, estimates range from tens of thousands to thousands (Mikaberidze, 2013). The Syrian government deployed heavy artillery, indiscriminate shelling, and house-to-house searches throughout the slaughter. The severity of the military engagement resulted in significant destruction of the city and civilian casualties. Because of its scale, intensity, planning, and targeted outcomes, the Hama Massacre has been recognized as a military operation that constituted a massacre. It marked the end of a bloody conflict between the Syrian government and the Islamist opposition that had raged since the mid-1970s (Ismael 2009).

4.2. 2000: The Damascus Spring

The Arab Spring was not the first in Damascus; the "Damascus Spring," which started before the Arab Spring and was suppressed in 2000, was the name given to the period of intense opposition activity and liberation in 2000–2001. On June 10, 2000, when Hafez Al-Assad died and his son Bashar Assad took office, the Damascus Spring began. The movement was started by a number of intellectuals in Damascus. Informal political forums have been established to encourage open discussion on political issues related to civil society and reforms. The most famous of these forums were the National Dialogue Forum, founded by Riad Seif, and the Jamel El-Atassi Forum, founded by Suhair El-Atassi. In order to achieve their goals, they have established committees demanding political reform and judicial action to stimulate civil society in Syria. Although it lasted for a short time, the Damascus Spring was the most important period after 1963, when the Ba'ath came to power. Due to the Damascus Spring, Syria experienced an unprecedented period of discussion in which cultural forums and community organizations led by a number of intellectuals were created. The Damascus Spring did not occur from the bottom up but in reverse. That is, it was carried out by individual and collective initiatives, not from politicians but from the cultural, economic, and social sectors. Change has come from cultural elites, not political parties. The regime started to fear that it would create an incentive to threaten the existence of the forums and started to narrow the forums in 2001, thinking that the red lines were crossed after the progress of the discussions and discourses such as "corruption and oppression regime" (Bishara, 2013).

The Damascus Spring lasted only one year, after which the course of civil transformation in Syria reversed. In December 2001, the conditions restricting the activities of the forums were announced. The seminars held in the forums were seen as a "red line" by the security authorities; the organizers were required to give the name of the lecturer who would give the seminar, the text, and the names of the audience 15 days in advance, then the "security" approval process was initiated, which prevented many forums from continuing, and only two forums, the National Dialogue Forum and the Jamel El-Atassi Forum, continued their work without responding to these procedures (Reuters, 2008). The government then mandated that all forums be granted an official license from the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the forums were granted a license, but all applications were rejected except for the Jamel Al-Atassi Forum. The Jamel Al-Atassi Forum was also closed after holding a seminar on the banned Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, and several of its members were imprisoned, thus ending the spring of Damascus (Bishara, 2013).

4.3. 2005: Damascus Declaration

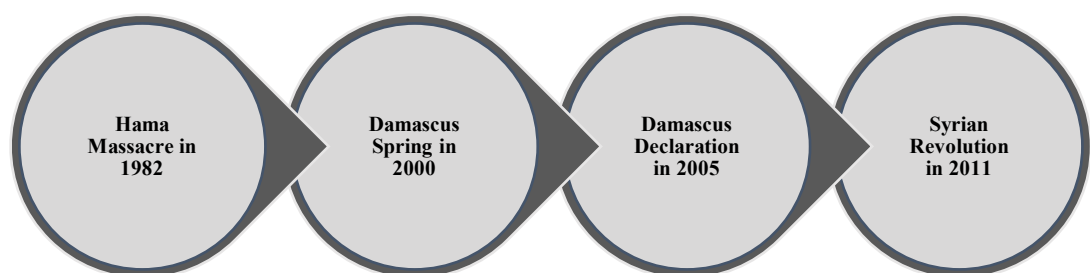
The "Damascus Declaration on National Democratic Change" is an alliance of secular opposition groups. It is named after a statement prepared in October 2005 by several opposition organizations and members to seek multi-party democracy (Wright, 2008). It was established on the site of the Damascus Spring, which began in 2000 after Bashar Assad assumed power. It calls for a peaceful and gradual transition to democracy and equality for all Syrian citizens in a secular and independent Syria. The Damascus statement is named after a 2005 statement signed by prominent civil society, Islamists, and liberals calling for the Assad

family's 41-year reign to end and campaigning for a democratic administration (BBC, 2011). Members of the Damascus Declaration considered the Syrian regime an obstacle to democracy and political reform. The first session of the National Declaration of Democratic Change of the Damascus National Council was held on 1/12/2007, and the bodies were selected. A statement was made in which he emphasized the need to establish a national democratic system and return to the sovereignty and circulation of power by the people, and many cadres of the state declaration were subsequently arrested (Carnegie.org).

The Damascus Declaration has been hailed as an important expression of solidarity among Syrian opposition figures. It opposes the Assad dynasty's Syrian administration and urges peaceful and gradual transformation based on negotiation and agreement. The proclamation calls for multiparty democracy in Syria and advocates for a democratic transition and the equality of all citizens in a secular and independent Syria.

From the above-mentioned events, we conclude a pattern of increasing political activism and repression. The cumulative effect of unresolved grievances, failed reforms, and brutal suppressions led to the eruption of the 2011 revolution. Each event can be seen as both a response to previous suppressions and a cause of future unrest, illustrating the complex interplay between government actions and public response in Syria's recent history. These events are linked as each represents a step in the escalating conflict and societal changes in Syria, reflecting a growing demand for political reform and greater freedoms, which eventually led to widespread upheaval.

Figure 1: The Sequence of the Main Events that led to the Syrian Revolution in 2011



4.4. 2011: Arab Revolutions and Their Consequences on Syria Revolution

The Arab Revolutions were uprisings that began in a number of Arab countries in late 2010 and early 2011 and were limited to the countries with the republican regime; there were no protests in the Arab countries with the monarchical regime due to the heavy pressures applied. Since 2011, the Arab world has been undergoing a political transition characterized by populist movements opposing authoritarian power systems. Arab peoples have begun to oppose authoritarian power structures and seek freedoms, economic and democratic rights through public marches. Against the one-man regime, change is demanded to protect human rights, ensure political freedoms and a fair distribution of incomes, and eliminate unemployment. In Arab countries where the administration has not changed, governments have resorted to political reforms and options to increase economic support to prevent the people from attempting to revolt (Sandıklı and Semin, 2012).

Countries with monarchical regimes, such as Jordan and Morocco, were able to control the protests through reforms. The main reasons behind these revolutions, in addition to political and security restrictions and a lack of fair elections, are the spread of corruption, poor living conditions, and poor economic conditions. Largely peaceful demonstrations against established regimes led to rapid power transfers in Egypt and Tunisia (Tesch, 2011).

Although the common denominator of these revolutions is the demand for freedom and reform, the relationship between citizenship and the state is the search for a new contract based on citizenship and civil rights. Bernard Lewis, certain Arab intellectuals, and Thierry Meyssan, on the other hand, claim that the Arab world is undergoing a metamorphosis similar to the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916. Some American politicians such as the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice referred to their arguments as "constructive chaos", "the greater Middle East", and "the new Middle East". In March 2004, the Bush administration used the term "Greater Middle East Project" in the same way (Elhousseini, 2014). Some media writers also argued that the USA started the Arab Spring demonstrations and planned them five years in advance (Erlich, 2016).

The Arab Spring was inspired by the suppression of freedom of expression, human rights violations, economic mismanagement, corruption, and the elimination of political dissidents and was used for a series of uprisings, armed rebellions, and protests (Manfreda, 2019; Murphy, 2012). While the term Arab Spring is an expression of anti-government protests and riots in the Middle East and North Africa in late 2010, many commentators argue that the main reason is an attempt by government forces to eliminate the opposition to divide the Middle East or to control oil prices and production. It has been evaluated as an initiative (Elhousseini, 2014).

The Revolutions of 1848, which caused a wave of political upheaval in numerous European countries, have been mentioned (Manfreda, 2019). The phrase "Arab Spring" is a reference to the 1848 Revolutions known as the "spring-time of countries". The phrase also is a reference to the 1968 Prague Spring which describe a period of political liberalization and protest in the Czechoslovak Socialist

Republic (Migiro, 2018). The phrase was used by many bloggers and commentators who anticipated a main Arab revolution against democratization after the Iraqi war (Migiro, 2018). The first use of Arab Spring to refer to these events was used by an article published in the "Foreign Policy," an American political journal. In his article "Obama's 'Arab Spring'?" published in Foreign Policy magazine, Lynch (2011) used the term spring when he wondering if we are now witnessing the beginning of the equivalent of the Arab Spring that the region witnessed in 2005 under the Obama administration. If these protests continue to spread then we may be able to speak of an Arab Spring under the Obama administration, but with the problem of climate change intensified. He said Arab Spring as "a term I may have unintentionally coined in a 6 January 2011 article" (Lynch, 2012) According to Joseph (2012), it was part of the American tactic for controlling the goals of the movement and directing it towards liberal democracy and the first use of the term Arab Spring as used to describe these events may have started with the US political journal.

The European Revolution began on February 23, 1848, and continued until early 1849. It was the most famous revolutionary wave in European history. The German states, France, the Austrian Empire, the Italian states, the Kingdom of Hungary, Poland, Wallachia, Denmark, and others took part in this revolution (Merriman, 1996). The movements that started in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria were similarly triggered and took to the streets, and the common denominator was the demand for freedom and the reshaping of the relationship between citizens and the state. Unlike the European Spring, which saw the collapse of absolute monarchies and the birth of representative democracy, the Arab Spring had no response from monarchs and went down in history as an uprising in nations with republican governments.

5. The Conflict in Syria after the Revolution

5.1. The Conflict's Repercussions and Consequences on the Population

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, between the start of the Syrian Revolution and December 2017, around 500,000 people were murdered in Syria (Syriahr, 2017). According to the UNHCR, around 7,600,000 individuals were forced to flee their homes in July 2015. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recorded 5,116,097 refugees leaving Syria's civil war in July 2017. Bordering countries and Egypt (but not Israel) have formed a coordinating platform as part of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). In July 2019, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) counted 5,625,871 registered refugees. According to the most recent data, Turkey is the largest registered refugee host nation, with over 3.6 million refugees. While the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports on their website that the population of Syria was estimated at 19,454,263 in July 2017, the exact number is difficult to determine due to the instability caused by fleeing the civil war. According to the United Nations, 5,000 people flee Syria every day, and 28% of the country's population has gone. In 2019, there were 9 million Syrians fleeing the civil conflict and 6.5 million displaced but staying Syrians (WPR, 2019).

Syria's conflict is known colloquially as the Syrian Civil War, a term that emphasizes both its revolutionary and crisis features. The Syrian Observatory for

Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group with a network of on-the-ground sources, would have tallied 503,064 deaths by March 2023. According to the report, at least 162,390 individuals were killed, with the Syrian government and its supporters responsible for 139,609 of them (SOHR, 2023). The Violations Documentation Center, another monitoring organization that relies on information from activists around the country, has documented 240,215 battle-related deaths as of March 2023, including 145,765 civilians (SCM, 2023).

As a result of the Syrian Army's intensification of operations, thousands of civilians have left the civil conflict in Syria and sought asylum in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, and Lebanon since May 2011. According to UNHCR, the overall number of refugees on the globe will be at its highest since the end of World War II, owing mostly to the Syrian refugee crisis. For the first time since World War II, there are more than 50 million people (Sherwood, 2014). One year after the start of the war, UNHCR opened the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan, close to the Syrian border, and gradually the camp turned into a permanent settlement with a population of 80,000 (Schenker, 2015). When the camp opens, around 120,000 refugees are planned to stay (UNHCR, 2018). According to the "World Population Survey", the population of Syria in 2012 was estimated at 22,530,746; this number had decreased to 22,457,336 inhabitants as of September 2013 (WPR, 2019). The conflicts in 2013 increased the number of refugees. From March 2013 to September 2013, the total increased from 1 million to 2 million. The humanitarian situation in Syria has deteriorated day by day. 1 million refugees were in Lebanon, and a new refugee camp (Azraq Camp) in Jordan opened in April 2014. As of June 2014, the number of Syrian refugees in surrounding countries had surpassed 3 million, with 100,000 crossing into Europe. The migration of Syrian refugees continued throughout 2015. Every day, thousands of refugees enter Greece, and almost one million enter Europe.

6.5 million Syrians have been internally displaced since the crisis began in March 2011 (Middle East Star, 2014). In a 2014 statement, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres declared that "the Syrian refugee crisis has become the biggest humanitarian emergency of the century, but the world is unable to meet the needs of refugees and their host countries." In a written statement issued in 2015, UNHCR confirmed that the number of Syrian refugees had surpassed 4 million, that the Syrian refugee crisis had been the world's largest asylum crisis for nearly five years, and that the number of internally displaced people was at least 7.6 million (Aljazeera, 2015).

UN has identified 13.5 million Syrians in need of humanitarian aid, with over 6 million of them internally displaced; 2.9 million of them remain in hard-to-reach areas where assistance cannot be provided regularly; and the number of refugees outside Syria has reached approximately 5 million (UNOCHA, 2016). By 2016, half of the country's population had been displaced, over a million people had been injured, and around 470,000 Syrians had been killed (Barnard, 2016).

5.2. Syria's Conflict in 2011: From Revolution to a Civil War and Eventually a Global Crisis

Syria gained independence in 1946, following World War II and years of French occupation. The democratic rule ended in March 1949 with a US-backed coup,

followed by two additional coups that year (Little, 1990). Syria is today divided into 14 governorates. Aleppo, Raqqa, Suwayde, Damascus, Daraa, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Hasakah, Homs, Idlib, Latakia, Kuneytra, Rif Damascus, and Tartus are among the cities. Syria is part of Mesopotamia, which comprises Arabic "official," Kurdish, Aramaic, Syriac, Armenian, Turkmen, Circassian, English, and French, as well as additional spoken languages such as Domari, Chechen, Turoyo (Surayt), Lomavren, and Afshar (Syriaahr, 2018). The Syrian Arab Republic's Constitution provides religious freedom in Syria (Sands, 2012). Table 8 shows different Syrian religious and ethnic groups.

Table 8: Syrian Religious and Ethnic Groups

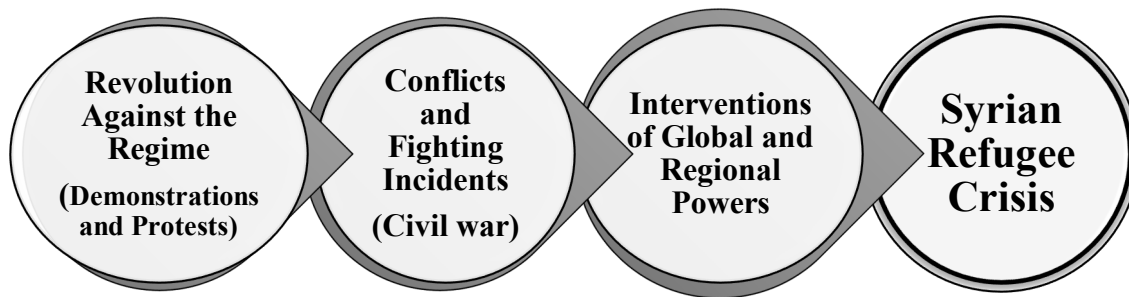
| Religious Groups | | Ethnic Groups | |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Sunni (74%) | Nusayri (12%) | 77-83% Arab | 2% Armenian |
| Christian (10%) | Druze (3%) | 7-8% | 1% |
| | | Kurdish | Circassian |
| A few other Shiite Islamic factions (Ismaili, Jafari) | Very few Jews and Yazidis | 5-6% Turkish | 1% Other |

Source: (haberyirmi, 2017).

The direct involvement of international and regional parties in the war created a kind of conflict and rivalry between the great powers. The revolution has turned Syria into a zone of conflict between regional and international powers and rivalries between the great powers. The revolution has turned Syria into a conflict zone between regional and international powers. "Syrian Revolution" is an expression used by the opposition, while "Syrian Crisis and Syrian War" are expressions used by the government and its supporters. In addition, according to the research in the literature and the observation of the events, what happened in Syria was influenced by the Arab Spring revolutions with protests and demonstrations and started with a revolution against the regime.

The early stages of the war may be defined as a revolution, as demonstrators sought to destabilize the country's long-standing regime and bring about substantial political reforms. Then this revolution turned into conflicting events and a civil war, and this war forced many citizens to flee the country. Therefore, they sought asylum in other countries, which created the world's biggest refugee crisis. Regional and international powers have joined the war in order not to be affected by the large number of refugees. Multiple sides became involved in the fight, including pro-democratic insurgents, diverse rebel organizations, terrorists, and international powers, resulting in a complex and multifaceted situation. The war has resulted in widespread bloodshed, massive loss of life, widespread civilian displacement, and a refugee exodus, resulting in one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters (UN 2020; UN 2021; cfr 2023).

As a result, while the conflict began as a political revolution, it has since morphed into a protracted crisis marked by persistent bloodshed, regional instability, humanitarian issues (Aldamen, 2025), and the involvement of several domestic and external actors. The Syrian crisis has resulted in huge internal and external displacements of people, as Figure 2 shows. Millions of Syrians have been forced to flee their homes, with millions more internally displaced. This has resulted in a massive refugee crisis, putting neighboring countries and the international community under strain.

Figure 2: The Development of the Events in the Syrian Refugee Crisis

The Syrian crisis has lasted an unusually long time. Both Syrian refugees and host countries pay a high price (Achilli, 2015). Media in general and social media platforms in particular have an important role in conflicts and crises (Aldamen, 2024; Aldamen & Abdallah, 2024; Aldamen, & Abdul Jaleel, 2024a; Aldamen & Hacimic, 2023; Mohammad & Aldamen, 2023; Aldamen & Abdul Jaleel, 2024b; Wazzan & Aldamen, 2023; Aldamen, 2017) and particularly in Syrian crisis. The host people experienced compassion fatigue toward Syrian refugees as a result of continuous media exposure to their difficulties and experiences (Aldamen, 2023c). Furthermore, Syrian refugees have received poor treatment in host nations and harsh media coverage (Aldamen, 2023d; Aldamen, 2023e). They have been subjected to racism, and hate speech has also been broadcast against them in the media of a number of host countries (Aldamen, 2023f). Even so, the Syria crisis is still ongoing. The UN estimates that 14.6 million people in the nation still require humanitarian aid, a 9% rise from the previous year, including 6.9 million internally displaced Syrians. According to UNHCR (2022), approximately 9.6 million of that number are in severe need of humanitarian assistance.

These migrations have placed a significant strain on public agencies in some member countries. The number of asylum seekers entering the EU has reached historic highs, more than doubling in 2015 compared to 2014. About 1.26 million people applied for asylum for the first time. This number is lower than anywhere else in the world. Therefore, the unexpected entry of these individuals has implications for EU economies (European Union, 2016). The asylum-seeking of Syrian refugees still affects regional and Western countries. According to UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, it is the worst worldwide disaster since World War II, with hundreds of thousands of people injured and millions displaced. According to Eurostat statistics, in 2023, Syrian was the main citizenship of asylum seekers in 12 EU countries. In 2023, the number of Syrian first-time asylum applicants in the EU increased to 183 035 (from 131 790 in 2022), and their share in the total EU first-time asylum applicants rose from 15.1 % to 17.5 %.

The existence of many religious groups influenced the formation of many warring alliances. Since Bashar's sectarian approach is only a remnant of the French occupation, the occupation is to expand the circle of conflict to facilitate

control of Syria and then exploit the sectarian conflict to appear as a savior who wants to manage this chaos. At that time, Syria was divided into four parts, namely Druze, Alevis, Damascus, and Aleppo, under the French occupation. Moreover, paradoxically, Syria's serious economic situation is protected by repressive mechanisms, and the domination of the Alevi minority will prevent opposition movements from achieving a critical mass in the foreseeable future (Brönng, 2011). Both the Syrian government and opposition factions are heavily utilizing social media to sway worldwide opinion in their favor (Salvadoretti, 2013). The main reason for the deepening and prolongation of the war in Syria is the intervention of foreign powers. Syrian opposition groups and military formations have been splintered by the Syrian Baath Party, which is led by Syria's President. Regional and global powers, as well as various armed fanatics, have played crucial roles in this war (Kabalan, 2019).

The humanitarian consequences of Syria's crisis have been disastrous. Millions of Syrians have been displaced, with many seeking refuge in neighboring countries. As a result of the crisis, significant human rights violations have occurred, including the use of chemical weapons, torture, and mass killings. The humanitarian response to the crisis has been poor, with budget deficits, access difficulties, and bureaucratic roadblocks impeding humanitarian aid delivery (UNICEF, 2023).

According to the 2013 Syrian Centre for Policy Research report published by UNDP, the country's economic state was a key aspect contributing to the Syrian conflict. Syria had a variety of socioeconomic challenges, including high unemployment, corruption, wealth disparities, and limited access to basic necessities such as education and healthcare. These concerns compounded the population's complaints. Many Syrians' living conditions have declined because of the Syrian government's mismanagement of the economy, corruption, and unsustainable policies. This, combined with the effects of climate change, such as droughts, crop failures, and resource scarcity, has left millions of Syrians economically vulnerable. High unemployment rates, corruption, inequality, and limited access to essential services were the underlying sources of populist unrest. These elements heightened societal tensions and led to the crisis's escalation.

The intricacy of the conflict, as well as its regional and international elements, distinguishes it from other crises. The humanitarian impact of the situation has been terrible, with millions of Syrians displaced and affected by the bloodshed. Addressing the root causes of the war, delivering humanitarian aid, and finding a peaceful end to the situation continue to be serious challenges for the international community.

6. Conclusion

It is vital to understand the issue's roots as well as the characteristics that distinguish the Syrian crisis from others. The study concludes that the Syrian crisis is the result of a confluence of political, social, economic, and historical factors. The following are some of the key reasons of the crisis: 1) Syria was ruled by France from 1920 to 1946, disrupting traditional social and economic systems and concentrating power in the hands of a tiny elite. Following independence, a succession of military coups and political instability resulted in decades of

authoritarian government, which fanned populist dissatisfaction and resistance. 2) Syria is a multi-ethnic and religious country with a complex mix of ethnic and religious groups. 3) Syria has long struggled with economic issues such as high unemployment, corruption, and a lack of economic opportunities. These conditions have fueled public resentment of the government while also contributing to pervasive poverty and inequality, particularly in rural regions. 4) The Syrian government has a long history of repression, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings. As a result of this atmosphere of fear and distrust, many Syrians have sought change through rallies and other forms of dissent. 5) Syria is situated in a volatile region that has experienced ongoing conflict and instability, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iraq War, and the rise of ISIS. These factors have contributed to the Syrian crisis by exacerbating existing tensions and fueling violence and extremism.

The Syrian conflict has attracted enormous international interest and participation. Several regional and global entities have become involved, either directly or indirectly. The Syrian crisis has resulted in enormous human suffering, including widespread casualties, infrastructural destruction, and a significant impact on the well-being of residents. A multifaceted interaction between several factors contributed to making the Syrian crisis different from other crises and making it a long-term crisis in its political and humanitarian impact. This study examines the historical causes and events that led to the crisis after the demonstrations and protests of 2011, which were influenced by the Arab world's uprisings. The study does not end with the impact of the "Arab Spring" revolutions but rather discusses historical political events, such as the events of Hama, the Damascus Spring 2000, and the Damascus Declaration 2005. The study also discusses how the peaceful protests in 2011 devolved into an armed conflict as a result of the increase in violence, the involvement of various armed groups, and the increasing interference from external parties, particularly in light of the region's presence of contradictory interests, geopolitical conflicts, and strategic rivalries, which increased the crisis's continuity and complexity. As well as the humanitarian implications, such as displacement and large numbers of refugees, which mostly hit neighbouring and Europe countries.

The Syrian crisis, a complex and devastating conflict, stands out from other global crises through its unique interplay of multiple factors that have significantly shaped its political, social, and humanitarian dimensions. Politically, the crisis has been characterized by the involvement of multiple international actors with conflicting interests, turning Syria into a battleground for proxy wars that have exacerbated internal conflict and complicated peace efforts. Socially, the protracted violence has created deep-rooted divisions within Syrian society, altering the social fabric and displacing millions of people, both internally and as refugees around the world. Humanitarianly, the scale and severity of the crisis has led to unprecedented levels of suffering and displacement, creating lasting impacts that may take decades to alleviate. The Syrian crisis highlights the catastrophic consequences when ethnic divisions, political interests, and international interventions converge in a volatile environment. Understanding the multifaceted nature of this crisis is critical to developing more effective international responses to similar conflicts in the future, underscoring the need for coherent international

strategies that address political complexities, social unrest, and humanitarian needs simultaneously.

7. Implications

As a result, addressing all of these elements and their historical foundations would contribute to a better understanding of the crisis and call for more research to assist in reaching a long-term solution. Many studies studied the Syrian refugee situation, but it is essential to call for more studies that deeply examine the Syrian refugee crisis and its repercussions after the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024.

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