The Wars in Syria: 2011-2019

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Photo: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/Getty Images
Introduction

Metrics are never a substitute for narratives or detailed analysis. They can, however, reveal broad patterns in the course of war, and key uncertainties in the nature of how a war is being analyzed and reported. The Burke Chair at CSIS has prepared a selective comparison of the key metrics available on the “wars” in Iraq and Syria that help to illustrate both the patterns in the conflict and some of the key uncertainties -- or “fog of war” – that shape efforts to portray and to understand it.

It is important to note that this analysis only provides only a small selection of the maps, graphs, and other metrics on the war, and relies on unclassified material. It also is so selective that it is important to note that the sources chosen only provide a picture of the more credible efforts address the problem of how to describe the uncertainties in the data.

The BBC – drawing largely on the work of HIS Janes – and the Institute for the Study of War (http://www.understandingwar.org/) are particularly outstanding examples of efforts to provide such analytic rigor and address the inevitable limits to summary metrics. The United States government, NATO, IHS Janes and Stratfor have also made important contributions to such mapping and graphics and the New York Times, and Washington Post have provided consistently good attempts to provide reporting in graphic and map form.

At the same time, even the limited selection of comparative graphics and metrics
presented in this report show just how different given pictures of key patterns in the fighting can be and the sharp limits to the way it is being portrayed and analyzed.

Any effort to compare the different maps and graphics included in this report highlights just how different given versions are -- sometimes when they are drawn from the same original source.

In many cases, reviewing the narrative reporting at the time a given graphic was issued indicates that it did not track with the detailed combat reporting in the article presenting it, and that any supporting numbers were generally point estimates when they should have been a range of figures that reflected serious uncertainties. One critical problem throughout the following survey – and one that the Institute for the Study of War does avoid in the detailed maps on its own web site -- is to show large blocs of color or “blobs” where there is only empty desert or only token levels of force are present. Most of the fighting is concentrated in populated areas that are very small and in securing the lines of communication between them.

It is also clear from the maps and graphics drawn from official U.S. sources that the material that is declassified and/or drawn from official sources is often designed to “spin” its contents to favor the source or support official policy. This is particularly true in the case of reporting showing territory lost or gained and related measures in square kilometers. This is a war for population centers and measuring gains and
gains in empty areas is virtually meaningless.

Furthermore, much of the official data released by the U.S. Department of Defense are rarely updated, and often lags months behind media and think tank reporting based on background and press briefings, and maps and charts used in press briefings are not included in the transcripts provided on DoD web sites.

There is a clear need to provide both better transparency and more accurate ways of reporting on the “war” against ISIS. This can only be done by providing better official reporting, mapping the actual nature of combat rather than showing large blobs of territory.

Better efforts are need to providing data and graphics that link the air and land battles, and that link combat to its impact on civilians and casualties and in ways that show the impact of current battles and developments. There has also been a virtual cutoff in efforts to summarize and map the patterns in “terrorist” or asymmetric attacks that are not related to major battles, although it is clear from the START and other data bases that these patterns of violence have a major impact in both Iraq and Syria.
Turkish Invasion of Kurdish Area
Turkey and Russia have agreed what they say is a "historic" deal aimed at keeping Kurdish forces away from Syria’s border with Turkey.

It comes during a pause in Turkey’s offensive to drive Kurdish forces out, creating a "safe zone" in the area.

In its offensive, Turkey seized a 120km-long strip of land between the towns of Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad - part of its attempt to create a "safe zone" to resettle up to two million refugees currently in Turkey and remove the Kurdish fighters.

Under the deal, Russia has agreed to allow Turkish troops to remain in the area they have taken and to retain sole control.

Kurdish fighters have been given 150 hours from midday on Wednesday (09:00 GMT) to pull back 30km (18 miles) along almost the whole frontier from the Euphrates, just east of Manbij, to the Iraqi border.

Russian and Syrian forces will move in immediately to oversee the Kurdish pullback.

The area around Qamishli, which has a large Kurdish population, is not included and no immediate details were given as to what would happen there.

After the 150-hour deadline expires on 29 October, Turkish and Russian troops will begin joint patrols in areas described as "in the west and the east of the area" of the Turkish offensive.

The statement from Russia and Turkey also says Kurdish forces "will be removed" from Manbij and the town of Tal Rifat, 50km to the west of Manbij - both of which lie outside the operation area.

Kurdish militias and political leaders have made no immediate comment on whether they will agree to the demands.

Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad has raised concern about foreign interference in Syria but the Kremlin said he had thanked President Putin and "expressed his full support for the results of the work as well as the readiness of the Syrian border guards, together with the Russian military police, to reach the Syrian-Turkish border".

Oil and Syrian- Russian Advances into NE Syria, 21.10.19

Syria was producing about 385,000 barrels of crude oil daily, according to David Butter, an associate fellow in the Middle East and North Africa Program at Chatham House. About 100,000 to 110,000 of those barrels came from fields in the northeastern Euphrates Valley, Butter said. This area includes the oil-rich province of Deir al-Zour, where the protests against President Bashar al-Assad first kicked off and where the Islamic State militant group later reigned.

Syria’s oil revenue was already falling before 2011 because of dropping global oil prices, but the market has taken a deep hit after nearly eight years of fighting that have destroyed Syria’s economy and infrastructure, alongside the hundreds of thousands of lives lost and people displaced.

According to Butter, Syria has been largely able to meet its daily demand for 150,000 barrels through imports from Iran, its oil-producing ally, and production in government-controlled areas.

When the Islamic State swept across Iraq and Syria in 2014, it took control of strategic oil fields in both countries. The militant group subsequently turned a profit by selling oil at about $100 a barrel to black market traders or refining it in local makeshift facilities, according to Butter. In 2015, the Treasury Department estimated that the group made about $40 million a month, or nearly $500 million a year, from producing and exporting oil.

The deal briefly halts a Turkish-led invasion of northern Syria that began last Wednesday, after Mr. Trump withdrew American forces from the Turkish-Syrian border, allowing Turkish forces to enter a swath of Kurdish-held territory. Still, in many respects, the agreement is a triumph for Turkey, giving it most of what it had wanted and averting Mr. Trump’s threat of economic sanctions against the country. Turkey sought to force a withdrawal from the border area of Syrian Kurdish fighters, whom the United States formerly supported but Turkey considers terrorists. Since 2012, Kurdish forces had harnessed the chaos of the Syrian civil war to carve out an autonomous region along the border with Turkey, free of Syrian government control. They greatly expanded their territory by partnering with American troops to force out Islamic State militants from the area. The agreement now promises Turkey that those Kurdish forces will withdraw from that area without a fight, in addition to the United States accepting a Turkish-controlled “safe zone” and agreeing to lift President Trump’s threat of painful economic sanctions on Turkey for its incursion.

Syrian- Russian Advances into NE Syria, 16.10.19 - II

Syrian-Russian Advances into NE Syria, 16.10.19

Turkish Objectives in Northwest Syria  
(BBC 16.10.19)

Dozens of civilians have reportedly been killed in Turkey’s operation so far and at least 160,000 have fled the area, according to the UN.

The medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said it had "taken the difficult decision to suspend the majority of its activities and evacuate all its international staff from north-east Syria".

On Tuesday, Syrian government forces entered the strategic town of Manbij, inside the area where Turkey wants to create its "safe zone".

Meanwhile, Turkish troops and pro-Turkish, anti-government fighters have also been gathering near Manbij.

Over the past two years, hundreds of US troops have visibly patrolled the strategic town, but they left earlier this week.

On Tuesday, Russia - a key ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad - said its forces were patrolling along the "line of contact" between Syrian and Turkish forces".

Syrian-Russian Advances into NE Syria, 14.10.19
Demographics

Where Russian and Syrian Army forces are located in northern Syria


Sources: Times reporting; Control areas as of Oct. 14 via Conflict Monitor by IHS Markit | By Allison McCann, Sarah Almukhtar and Anjali Singhvi
Syrian-Russian Advances into NE Syria, 16.10.19

Assad’s forces have already reentered a number of cities and areas, said Columb Strack, the principal Middle East analyst at IHS Markit, an analysis firm that has tracked the war in Syria. But he cautioned it remained unclear what sort of control regime forces will exert there, both in the short and long run. Syrian forces may initially act as a deterrence to Turkey but not seize full control of the areas, Strack said. That could change in coming weeks, however. While the Syrian government may not yet fully control those areas, its forces now have a more expansive geographical footprint than at any time during the past half decade — a direct result of Trump’s Syria pullout.

Syrian-Russian Advances into NE Syria, 16.10.19

On paper, a deal between the SDF and the Syrian regime could give Assad control over all territory held by Kurdish forces. Before the U.S. pullout, Kurds occupied 28 percent of inhabited, non-desert territory in Syria. The Assad regime could now theoretically gain control over this area, meaning it would double the amount of land it governs.

In reality, however, Assad is unlikely to gain control of the full area so far held by the SDF.

For one, the Turkish offensive in northern Syria already has gained control over a significant stretch of land previously held by the Kurds. Turkey is unlikely to give up that territory, as it plans to resettle Syrian refugees there. (It’s unclear how much farther Turkey can advance, though, as international pressure from Europe and the United States mounts, and as Assad’s forces begin facing off with Turkish troops.)

A second unknown factor is whether all stakeholders that so far had a say in the SDF-held territory are on board with an Assad deal. “The SDF are not purely Kurdish. There are also Sunni Arab tribal components and they are opposed to this reconciliation with the Assad government,” said Strack, the Middle East analyst.

Areas in Syria’s east were particularly likely to resist Assad seizing control, he said.

Syrian-Russian and Turkish Advances into NE Syria, 14.10.19

Demographics

Turkish Objectives in Northwest Syria

(BBC 14.10.19)

Turkey had long threatened to launch an operation in SDF-held territory to create a 32km (20-mile) deep "safe zone" running for 480km (300 miles) along the Syrian side of the border.

It wants to push back members of the YPG, which it views as an extension of a Kurdish rebel group that has been fighting in Turkey for decades and is designated a terrorist organisation - the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Turkey also hopes to resettle, in the zone, up to two million of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees it is hosting.

In an attempt to avert an offensive, the US and Turkish militaries agreed in August to set up a "security mechanism" on the Syrian side of border – an area that would be free of YPG fighters, but pointedly avoided using the term "safe zone". US and Turkish troops carried out joint patrols in the area and the YPG co-operated, withdrawing fighters and heavy weapons and dismantling fortifications.

But on 6 October, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told US President Donald Trump that a cross-border operation would "soon be moving forward", according to the White House. Mr Trump responded by saying US troops based in the area would not support or be involved in the operation, it said.

Three days later, Mr Erdogan announced the start of "Operation Peace Spring" by the Turkish military and allied Syrian rebel factions. He said they aimed "to prevent the creation of a terror corridor across our southern border, and to bring peace to the area".

The SDF said it was determined to defend its territory "at all costs", but Turkish-led forces were able to steadily push their way into a sparsely populated, mostly Arab area between the towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain in the first five days of the assault. Turkish air and artillery strikes affected a much larger area, including predominantly Kurdish towns and villages to the west and east.

Amid growing chaos, US officials said on 13 October that Mr Trump had decided to begin withdraw all its troops from northern Syria.

Hours later, the SDF said an agreement had been reached with the Syrian government - which considers the US an enemy - for the Syrian army "to enter and deploy along the length of the Syrian-Turkish border" and repel the Turkish assault.

Fighting as of October 14th (BBC 14.10.19)

As part of a deal with the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian Democratic Forces — or SDF, the Syrian Kurdish-led faction backed by the United States but seen by Turkey as the analogue of an outlawed Kurdish separatist group within its own borders — invited in regime forces to help thwart Turkey and its militant proxies.

“For the first time in years, Syrian government forces arrived in the towns of Tabqa, on the outskirts of Raqqa, and Ain Issa, which served as the headquarters of the Kurdish-led autonomous administration in northeast Syria, about 20 miles from the Turkish border,” my colleagues reported. “Images published by the official Syrian Arab News Agency, or SANA, showed government troops arriving atop pickup trucks and waving Syrian flags.”

Both the Syrian Kurds and Turkey accused the other of releasing Islamic State detainees as battles raged. Europeans fretted on the sidelines, bemoaning Trump’s decision to pull out. “We don’t have magic powers” to stop the Turkish assault, said Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell, who is slated to become the European Union’s foreign policy chief later this year. “If the American troops wouldn’t have withdrawn, this attack would have been impossible. The American troop withdrawal was a condition in order to make the attack possible.”

By Monday evening, attention fell on a possible clash between Syrian regime forces and Turkish-affiliated fighters as they both converged on the town of Manbij, where a detachment of U.S. troops was preparing to hastily depart. The whirlwind of events marked the sudden reconfiguring of the Syrian battlefield, with the Americans exiting the fray, the Turks hoping to assert their authority over the Syrian borderlands, the Kurds submitting to Damascus, and the regime further consolidating its control of a war-ravaged nation. The scenes in Riyadh on Monday of Russian President Vladimir Putin meeting Saudi Arabia’s King Salman only seemed to add to the growing impression of a geopolitical rug getting pulled from under American feet.

“We know that we would have to make painful compromises with Moscow and Bashar al-Assad if we go down the road of working with them,” wrote Mazloum Abdi, commander of the SDF, in an op-ed for Foreign Policy. “But if we have to choose between compromises and the genocide of our people, we will surely choose life for our people.”

Abdi emphasized that he didn’t expect the United States to be the “world police,” but had hoped Trump would use Washington’s “leverage to mediate a sustainable peace between us and Turkey.”

It doesn’t seem that will happen. Trump said in a statement on Monday that he was “fully prepared to swiftly destroy Turkey’s economy if Turkish leaders continue down this dangerous and destructive path.” But critics suggested the proposed punitive measures — including a steel tariff and targeted sanctions on Turkish individuals — were relatively light and symbolic. Moreover, Trump has also started to parrot Ankara’s arguments about the SDF, dwelling on their connections to a U.S.-listed terrorist group and ignoring the tremendous sacrifice they made on behalf of the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State.

Kurdish Areas in Syria and Iraq (BBC 14.10.19)

Who are the Kurds?

Between 25 and 35 million ethnic Kurds inhabit a mountainous region straddling Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Armenia. But they have never had a widely-recognised permanent nation state of their own.

Kurds make up between 7% and 10% of Syria’s population. For decades, they were suppressed and denied basic rights by President Bashar al-Assad and, before him, his father Hafez.

Before the uprising against Mr Assad began in 2011 most Kurds lived in the cities of Damascus and Aleppo, and in three northern areas near the Turkish border - Afrin in the west, Kobane (Ain al-Arab) in the centre, and Qamishli in the east.

When the uprising evolved into a civil war, the main Kurdish parties avoided taking sides. In 2012, government forces withdrew from Kurdish areas to concentrate on fighting rebel factions elsewhere, and Kurdish militias took control in their wake.

In late 2014, the jihadist group Islamic State (IS) launched an assault on Kobane. The battle sparked alarm across the world and a US-led multinational coalition against IS intervened by carrying out air strikes. After the militants retreated, the Kurds became the coalition’s most critical partner on the ground in Syria.

The biggest Kurdish militia, the People’s Protection Units (YPG), formed an alliance with local Arab militias called the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in 2015. With the help of coalition airpower, weaponry and advisers, SDF fighters drove IS out of a quarter of Syria and captured its last pocket of territory in the country in March 2019. They also set up an “autonomous administration” to govern the region.

The area falling within Turkey's "safe zone" is fertile plain that once served as Syria's breadbasket. It is dotted with dozens of villages and towns, unlike the barren, desert regions to the south.

When the Turkish offensive began, the UN said the potentially affected area included SDF-controlled territory that was home to 2.2 million people, including 1.3 million in need of humanitarian assistance, and two government-controlled cities where 450,000 people live - Qamishli and Hassakeh.

By 13 October, air strikes, shelling and fighting on the ground had reportedly killed dozens of civilians and forced more than 150,000 others to flee their homes. The UN said most of the displaced were from the towns of Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad, which were the initial targets of the Turkish assault. Some 5,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) living at the Mabruka camp, west of Ras al-Ain, had to be evacuated towards Hassakeh city after the surrounding area came under artillery fire on 10 October.

Conflict Dynamics involving Kurds and Turks in North
Kurdish Expansion in Syria

Kobani has been the focal point of the U.S.-Kurdish battle with ISIS. American airstrikes have hit more than 1,000 targets there, almost half of all their strikes in Syria, helping the Kurds push back ISIS in the north.

Kurdish Population in Northern Syria


https://mail.google.com/_/scs/mail-static/_/js/k=gmail.main.en.R9ZlbKBqeHM.O/m=m_jt/am=OotHBjD_7_3BuJYBOf65V573---VR22D0Le_78PCKvAy9v9vBA_g_2oi0U/rt=h/d=1/rs=AHGWg9BDjiJG87z инU-sjuuWl5oP8hA, August 25, 2016.
Syrian Kurds and Tensions with Syrian Arabs

Amnesty International visited 14 towns and villages in the Kurdish controlled areas of northern Syria. In ten of these villages, they found the local population had either had their homes demolished or faced either forced displacement as a group or targeted displacement.

**Abuse:**
- Village demolished
- Forced displacement
- Targeted displacement

Irrigated Land in Northern Syria


Euphrates Valley Irrigation Project


Irrigation Sources in Northeast Syria

Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Battle of Manbij


Population = 100,000

Source:
Battles of Manbij and Hasakah: Kurds Moving towards Arab Rebel Areas and Sensitive Turkish Areas

Source: https://www.google.com/maps/@36.5795694,37.7277141,8z, 22.8.16, 32
Battle of Manbij

ISIS use of Human Shields

Source: BBC, 22.8.16. https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?search_map/156afc36473552bd.

Source: IHS Jane’s Conflict Monitor as of August 8

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-launches-operation-against-islamic-state-held-town-on-border/2016/08/24/4983b9d2-b71a-446e-967e-894bf4b9e845_story.html

THE WASHINGTON POST

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-launches-operation-against-islamic-state-held-town-on-border/2016/08/24/4983b9d2-b71a-446e-967e-894bf4b9e845_story.html
Turks as of October 1, 2016
BBC

Estimate of Zones of Influence in Northern Iraq: 3.10.2016

Defeat of ISIL/ISIS “Caliphate”
Where Kurdish fighters were guarding ISIS detainees


Sources: Control areas as of Oct. 14 via Conflict Monitor by IHS Markit; locations of detention facilities via Institute for the Study of War
Syria Map showing an assessment by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the number of people in need in Syria, and severity of needs, based on data compiled for the 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview.

The State of Syria

ACLED’s data-driven and expert-based State of Syria Map assigns control to conflict actors at the sub-district (nahiya) level of the country. The map denotes each sub-district as contested (colored black), inactive (not currently seen), or controlled by an actor (all other colors). Further, each actor in control of a sub-district is assigned two unique colors to signify whether, while under that group’s control, violence has continued to be actively carried out by rival groups or whether the controlled area is generally ‘inactive.’ This allows viewers to examine in detail the changing scope, focus, and role of various actors in the Syrian conflict.

June 2019

During Q3 of 2019, regime and allied forces made substantial ground advances and brought the sub-districts of Tamanahit, Kafar Zita, Harvard, Khan Shaykhun, Matlah Castle, Mukrafit, and Saruka under its effective control (from black to dark beige).

June 2019

Q3 2019 (July – September)

In spite of the regime’s constant artillery and aerial bombardments of Idlib province, two sub-districts away from the front lines still fell into active status in Q3. Saruka and Idlib became even more secure controlled by rebel (light blue) and HTS (light tan) forces, respectively.

A combination of Israeli air raids and Russian military raids in and near Damascus brought the sub-district into active status (from gray to dark beige) for the first time in several years.

Control Status

- Operation Olive Branch (inactive)
- Opposition Rebels
- Opposition Rebels (inactive)
- QSD
- QSD (inactive)
- Military Forces of Israel (2009-) (inactive)
- Contested

June 2019

Q3 2019

Notable Status Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Districts</th>
<th>June 2019</th>
<th>Q3 2019</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>Regime (inactive)</td>
<td>Regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kafar Zita</td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Regime</td>
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<td>Khan Shaykhun</td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Regime</td>
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<td>Matlah Castle</td>
<td>Contested</td>
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<td>Quamshali</td>
<td>QSD (inactive)</td>
<td>QSD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tal Hmeiri</td>
<td>QSD (inactive)</td>
<td>QSD</td>
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The area around the camps was hit by shells on 13 October as Turkish forces advanced, prompting some of the 13,000 residents to flee, it said. SDF officials reported that dozens of women and children being held at the camps because of suspected links to IS, including British nationals, were among those who fled.

Meanwhile, there were reports of unrest at al-Hol camp, which is about 60km from the Turkish border and so would not be in Turkey's proposed "safe zone".

Some 68,000 people linked to IS are being detained al-Hol. More than 94% of them are women and children, and 11,000 are foreign nationals.

The SDF says it is also holding more than 12,000 men suspected of being IS members in seven prisons. At least 4,000 of the prisoners are foreign nationals.

Some of the prisons are in areas close to the Turkish border, including Ain Issa, Qamishli and Derik.

On 11 October, the SDF said five IS militants had escaped from a prison in Qamishli after Turkish shelling nearby and that a car bomb had exploded next to the wall of a prison in Hassakeh, causing damage.

Mr Trump told Mr Erdogan before the offensive that Turkish troops would be responsible for securing detained IS fighters in areas they captured. The SDF has said its fighters will continue to guard the prisons and camps, but there is a concern they could be called away to other areas or be forced to flee if attacked.

WP Estimate of Situation as of December 10, 2018

DoS Estimate of Cuts in ISIS Influence as of November 2018

Idlib Province Map

Adapted from https://www.google.com/search?q=Idlib+map&client=firefox-b-1&tbnid=isch&sclient=iu&sa=t&source=iu&pbx=1&fpr=SOGxj639TKBWM%253A%252CBHs8L4khQiPyVM%252C&_suggs=AFQnEzft_2IN4gIkfICQURw5Sjqa7k-iw&usg=AFQjCngnJWv3C58Y%252BtRQ6jX12f%252B5z%253A&cad缘分=RAIQCA%253A&bih=780&biw=1366&ved=2ahUKEwiyjtnAqqm8HdAhWSIMKHVg-AgMQ9QEWAXOECAIgB#imgrc=E7gD8sko1JwM_M
Idlib Zone of Control Map

Adapted from Al Jazeera, https://www.google.com/search?q=Idlib+map&client=firefox-b-1&tbs=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=S0gpj639TMKBWM%253A%252C_&usg=AFrqEzft_2IN4gJkFcthUQRwSBjqq&ved=2ahUKEwiyjtnAqqHdAhWSt1MKBHMg-AgMQ9QEwAkoECAIQBA#imgrc=S0gpj639TMKBWM::
At least 6.6 million Syrians have been internally displaced, while another 5.6 million have fled abroad - more than 3.5 million of them have sought refuge in Turkey, and almost one million in Lebanon and almost 700,000 in Jordan.

Many Syrians have sought asylum in Europe, with Germany taking the greatest number.

In Iraq, the number of displaced people has fallen below 2 million for the first time since December 2013.

By September 2018 the International Organization for Migration estimated nearly four million people had returned home. But the UN reports that a lack of jobs and destruction of property and limited access to services are still preventing many people from returning to their homes.
The US military has warned that while the jihadists are "in the final throes of their evil ambitions" they are "not yet defeated".

Between 1,500 and 2,000 militants are estimated to be holed up inside the area around the Syrian town of Hajin, in the Middle Euphrates River Valley, where the US says it has witnessed some of the most intense fighting in more than a year.

One recent US report said there were still as many as 14,000 IS militants in Syria and as many as 17,100 militants in Iraq, where they no longer fully control any territory.

UN experts meanwhile estimate that there are between 3,000 and 4,000 IS militants in Libya and about 4,000 in Afghanistan. The group also has a presence in South-East Asia, West Africa, Egypt's Sinai peninsula, Yemen, Somalia and the Sahel.

In Iraq and Syria many militants have shifted tactics and returned to their insurgent roots, carrying out bombings, assassinations and kidnappings while attempting to rebuild their networks.

Individuals inspired by the group's ideology continue to carry out attacks in Europe and elsewhere.

The New York-based strategic intelligence group the Soufan Center carried out a study in October 2017 which estimated that about 5,600 IS fighters had returned home to 33 countries around the world.

The greatest number, about 900, had returned to Turkey. About 1,200 had returned to the European Union - including 425 to the UK, and about 300 each to Germany and France.

Hundreds of other foreign fighters are being held by the SDF in Kurdish-controlled north-eastern Syria. The US has called other countries to take back their own nationals for prosecution.

ISIS Losses: 5/1/2015-8/1/2018

Coalition Air Strikes Density: 8/2015-11/2018

US-led coalition strikes
Syria: 16,183
Iraq: 13,476

Raqqa was hit on average 30 times a day for 133 days
4,059 strikes which occurred between 6 Jun-17 Oct 2017
3,250 people were killed

Top three cities hit by most air strikes
Raqqa ○ 6,039
Mosul ○ 3,283
Abu Kamal ○ 2,384

Source: US Central Command, 10 Nov 2018

The UN has warned that an attack on Idlib, where 2.9 million people live, "will overwhelm capacities and has the potential to create a humanitarian emergency at a scale not yet seen through this crisis". It estimates that as many as 800,000 people could be displaced and that the number of people in need of aid, which is already high, could increase dramatically.
U.S., Russian, and Iranian Deployments in Syria, as of April 2018

Approximate Military Situation in Syria, April 2018

Legend
- Syrian Government
- Various Kurdish Entities
- Various Rebel Factions
- Turkish Military and Affiliated Rebel Groups
- ISIS
- Gas Field
- Oil Field
- Gas Pipeline
- Oil Pipeline

The Energy Consulting Group
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Force Alignments: 23/3/2018

The US-led coalition, which included forces from Australia, Bahrain, France, Jordan, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the UK, began launching air strikes against IS targets in Iraq in August 2014. The coalition’s Syrian air campaign began a month later.

Since then aircraft deployed as part of the coalition’s Operation Inherent Resolve have carried out more than 13,400 air strikes in Iraq and more than 16,100 in Syria.

Russia is not part of the coalition, but its jets began air strikes against what it called “terrorists” in Syria in September 2015 to bolster the government of President Assad.

The Russian defence ministry reported in August 2018 that its forces had flown 39,000 sorties in Syria since 2015, destroying 121,000 “terrorist targets” and killing more than 5,200 members of IS.
Density of Airstrikes: 5/1/2015-28/3/2018

Destination of Syrian Refugees as of February 2018

Situation as of March 5, 2017

By August 2016, IS was reported to be operational in 18 countries across the world, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, according to evidence seen by the US National Counterterrorism Center. It also found signs of what it called "aspiring branches" in Mali, Egypt, Somalia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Since 2016, IS has claimed attacks in a number of countries, including Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, France, Belgium, Germany, the US, Finland and Bangladesh. In 2017, IS claimed to be behind at least two attacks in the UK.
Estimated Nationalities of Foreign fighters in 2017


*Most numbers are approximate and are dated between Mar 2016 and Aug 2017. In the case of Uzbekistan there is no data for returned fighters.

Source: The Soufan Group (Oct 2017)
Situation as of March 5, 2016

Islamic State Revenues: 2014-2016

*2015 kidnapping figure is unknown

Note: Amounts shown are upper estimates. Other income comes from the sale of antiquities and foreign donations, but is not thought to be significant.

Source: ICSR

Force Alignments in January 2015


Source: IHS Conflict Monitor, January 2015
Situation as of October 2015

Situation as of September 2013

The Russian, Iranian, and Hezbollah Side of the War
Russian sea and air assets move into Syria
The Russian Defense Ministry last month announced the deployment of ships from its Black Sea Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean Sea to carry out military drills. Included were:

1 *Cruiser* (Moskva)

1 *Destroyer* (Smetlivy)

2 *Frigates* (Pytlivy and Ladny)

Russia has deployed a variety of military aircraft to Bassel al-Assad International Airport in Latakia, including:

4 *Su-34* Fullback fighter-bombers

12 *Su-24* Fencer attack aircraft

12 *Su-25* Frogfoot close-air-support aircraft

Other aircraft at the airport in Latakia:

4 *Su-30* Flanker multi-role fighters

12+ *Mi-24* Hind attack helicopters

Russian Facilities in Syria: 9/2015

Russia’s introduction of the S-400 Triumph weapons system in Syria near Latakia, confirmed by CJTF-OIR officials on December 2, poses additional risk to U.S. and coalition forces in the airspace over the battlefield in Syria. The S-400 is a mobile surface-to-air defense missile system with long-range strike capability of about 400 kilometers. See Figure 4 for key cities and airspace positions in full range of the missiles. In December, CJTF-OIR reported that Russia’s SA-17 air-defense radar system is located in Aleppo, but its location was not influencing coalition airstrikes.

CJTF-OIR officials repeatedly denied that the deployment of these advanced systems had any effect on the U.S. air mission.

DoD reported that, over a 27-day span during December 5–31, the coalition conducted 172 airstrikes in Syria (6.37 per day). The month prior, during November 7–27, it conducted 185 strikes (8.01 per day).
On 03 OCT the Russian military deployed the S-300 (NATO reporting name: SA-23) air defense system to the Syrian naval base in Tartus. Russian forces already operate the S-400 (NATO reporting name SA-21 Growler) long-range air defense system, which has a claimed range of 400km, as well as the S-200 (SA-5 Gammon), in Syria. Russia also operates a number of short-range air defense systems, including the Pantsir-S1 and Buk missile systems, as well as the naval version of the S-300 a Slava-class guided missile cruiser in the Mediterranean. In addition to the IADS, Syrian forces operate the Bastion coastal defense system out of Tartus.

Now that the Russian IADS in Syria is deployed and presumably fully functional, it changes the regional security situation in two ways. First, it confirms that the ongoing Russian deployment of disparate missile systems to Syria over the past year always intended to culminate in a fully functional IADS, rather than individual missile systems in different locations. SAM systems in the S-300 family (including the S-400) are designed to be both forwards and backwards compatible, which means that their component parts - command and control modules, search and fire control radars, missile launchers and missiles - may be used in different combinations.

Second, this deployable and road mobile IADS solely aims to threaten US and coalition aircraft and deter further involvement or escalation of coalition operations. The only purpose of this IADS is to pressure US and coalition policy makers to cede the majority of Syrian airspace to Russian and Syrian aircraft in order to continue their campaign of targeting civilian populations for destruction or depopulation, as evidenced by recent Russian threats to shoot down U.S. coalition aircraft. This expeditionary, modular, and mobile Russian IADS is a significant upgrade over the legacy Syrian IADS. The component parts of the Syrian IADS were largely fixed, difficult if not impossible to move, and highly dependent on centralized command and control as well as external long range radar cueing.
Russian Air Defenses in Syria: WP Map of 6.10.16

Source: Institute for the Study of War, IHS Jane's Conflict Monitor as of Oct. 6
THE WASHINGTON POST
High Confidence Locations of Russian and Coalition Air Strikes


Source: Institute for the Study of War
Air Campaign: New Patterns in Air Strikes
December 3 to February 23rd

Russian Airstrikes in Syria: July 14 - August 9, 2016


[Map of Syria with various labels and annotations]

Source: ISW, https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/map/156c2e29103a8a70
Russian Expansion of Activity: August 2016

• Tu-22M3 bombers and Su-34 attack fighters fly out of Iran (8.19)
• Targets were hit in Aleppo, Idlib and Deir al-Zour provinces. Local groups said 27 civilians had died.
• Two ships from Black Sea Fleet --Zelyony Dol and Serpukhov -- fired three Kaliber cruise missiles from off the coast of Syria in the eastern Mediterranean (19.8)
• Talks stall on all levels from humanitarian to settlement.
• Syrian fighters bomb U.S. supported Kurdish forces (?) (8.19)
• Saleh says he and Houthi may invite Russians to aid ,them in Yemen (?) (8.21)

Zones of Al Nusra or Jabhat Fateh al-Sham: "the Front for the Conquest of the Levant."

Activity in Syria:

1 August 13: Iran reportedly appoints new National Defense Forces head in Sweida Province. Jordanian Ambassador to Syria Mohammad Afraa Skiba reportedly appointed Saleh al-Rahman as the new commander of the National Defense Forces in Sweida Province following a meeting at the Jordanian Embassy in Damascus. If confirmed, the appointment illustrates the growing degree of control held by Iran over the security apparatus of the regime, particularly its network of pro-regime militias.

2 August 16: Military Operations Center in Jordan allegedly orders Southern Front to refrain from anti-regime operations.

The covert U.S.-backed Military Operations Center (MOC) based in Amman, Jordan, allegedly directed the Free Syrian Army (FSA) to withdraw from several areas against the regime-held town of Sukhna in Hama Province, according to local activists. The MOC allegedly directed the formation of anti-regime fighters in the region in support of regime forces. The decision was reportedly taken in coordination with Russian authorities and Russian-backed forces led by Sowt al-Masri from the opposition in January 2016.

3 August 16: Senior Chinese official meets with Syrian Minister of Defense in Damascus.

Director of the Office for International Military Cooperation of China's Central Military Commission, Guan Youfei, met with Syrian Minister of Defense Fahd Jassem al-Freij and an unidentified Russian general in Damascus, according to Chinese state-run media. Guan stated that China "is willing to strengthen" its military cooperation with Syria. An unnamed Chinese official stated that China is ready to provide humanitarian aid to Syria as well as consider the deployment of troops to the Syrian Arab Army.

4 August 16: Islamic State detonates SVESV at key opposition-held border crossing in Idlib Province.

The Islamic State detonated a SVESV near a crossing point held by the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), killing at least 20 soldiers in the Turkish Armed Forces.

5 August 14: Pro-regime forces repel opposition offensive on Aleppo City.

Jabhat Fateh al-Sham - the successor to the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra - and other members of the Islamic State's Lieutenant's Room launched a two-pronged offensive targeting both the its factories and other positions in the outskirts of Aleppo City. Pro-regime forces pushed into the northwest of the city before being forced to retreat by heavy artillery.

6 August 14: Opposition groups from Al-Rahim Military Council.

Seven leading opposition groups announce the formation of the Al-Rahim Military Council with the goal of ousting the regime and its allies from the surrounding areas of Idlib Province. The Al-Rahim Local Council later announced the formation of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - a coalition with heavy participation of the Kurdish YPG.

7 August 17: Opposition claims to seize key border town from Islamic State.

The US-backed Iraqi-Kurdish Operations Room announced the full control over the key border town of Al-Shuhada in northern Aleppo Province following three days of heavy clashes with IS. The Turkish Armed Forces reportedly provided support to the offensive. Al-Shuhada served as a key transit route for smuggling fighters and supplies across the Syrian-Turkish border.

8 August 12: Syrian Democratic Forces seize full control of Manbij.

The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - a coalition consisting of the Kurdish YPG and other opposition groups - seized full control over Manbij after defeating the Islamic State from the last remaining districts of the city center. A large number of remaining IS fighters withdrew towards the north in a move containing several hundred civilians.

9 August 17: Regime warplanes target Syrian Kurds in Al-Hassakā City.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes at six locations held by the Kurdish YPG in Al-Hassakā City amid ongoing clashes between pro-regime National Front Forces (NSF) militia and Syrian Kurdish internal security forces.

10 August 16: Russia conducts airstrikes from Western Iran.

Russia launched airstrikes from the Al-Tanf area in eastern Syria targeting IS positions in the eastern province. The operation targeted an IS position near the Syrian-Iraqi border.

11 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.

12-18 August 2016

13 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.

14 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.

15 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.

16 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.

17 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.

18 August 14: Regime warplanes target Southern Damascus.

Regime warplanes conducted airstrikes near the southern Damascus countryside.
ISW Estimate of Russian air Strikes at Time of Failed Ceasefire: September 12-19, 2016

Source: ISW, Genevieve Casagrande, Syria Analyst and the ISW Syria Team, https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/map/1574e8a532c9826e?projector=1.
ISW Estimate as of October 11, 2016

8 October 19: Russian Airstrike in Northern Aleppo Province: The Ministry of Defense denied that Belgium had time of the alleged airstrike. It also summoned the Russian Ambassador to explain the allegation. The accusation coincided with IS and the Syrian Democratic Forces in the northern Aleppo province.

9 October 16 - 20: Turkish-Backed Opposition Forces Conducted Airstrikes Against IS in Northern Aleppo Province: Turkey in operation to retake al-Shaidiye and seized the town of Dabiq in N October 16 following clashes with IS. The fall of Dabiq represented a symbolic ideological significance as the alleged site of a future apocalyptic battle against the Islamic State (IS) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) after the group seized the town. Both Turkey and the SDF are fighting IS in the Al-Bab operation, aiming to encircle and sever IS in the area.

10 October 16: Coup Attempt in Jordan: A coup attempt was reported in Jordan, but details are not yet confirmed.

Russia renewed its violent, indiscriminate air campaign against civilians in Western Syria in order to coerce groups opposed to the Bashar al-Assad regime to accept a ceasefire or ‘de-escalation zone’ in Idlib Province. Russia shifted its air campaign to target rebel-held terrain in Idlib and Hama Provinces following an offensive launched by Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) – the successor of Syrian al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Fatah al-Sham – in Northern Hama Province on September 19. The Russian Ministry of Defense launched an immediate disinformation operation to present this shift in its air campaign as a legitimate series of strikes against extremist groups attempting to disrupt a ‘de-escalation zone’ in Idlib Province brokered by Russia, Turkey, and Iran on September 15. Russia nonetheless mounted a systematic campaign of airstrikes against civilian infrastructure – including hospitals, schools, power stations, and mosques – as well as former U.S.-backed rebel groups unaffiliated with HTS or al Qaeda. The strikes marked a return to the widespread punitive air campaigns Russia previously directed against opposition-held terrain across Western Syria. Russia also employed advanced weapons systems to further inflict violence against Idlib Province under the guise of counter-terrorism operations. The Russian Black Sea Fleet’s Permanent Mediterranean Task Force launched Kalibr cruise missiles targeting Ma’arat al-Numan in Southern Idlib Province on September 22. Russia Tu-95MS ‘Bear’ strategic bombers later launched Kh-101 cruise missiles targeting the outskirts of Idlib City on September 26. Russia’s deliberate use of violence against civilians precludes any legitimate, Russian-enforced ‘de-escalation’ zone in Idlib Province.

Russia also leveraged its ongoing air campaign to co-opt Turkey away from the U.S. and NATO in order to further set conditions for the planned ‘de-escalation zone’ in Idlib. Russia concentrated its airstrikes in areas of Western Idlib Province along the Syrian-Turkish Border from September 25 - 30. The Russian Air Force likely sought to interdict the movement of HTS and opposition forces ahead of a Turkish Armed Force (TSK) deployment into Idlib by targeting rebel-held areas connecting Western Aleppo Province to the Bab al-Hawa Border Crossing on the Syrian-Turkish Border as well as key supply routes around Idlib City. Turkish President Recep Erdogan subsequently announced the start of cross-border operations to implement the Idlib ‘de-escalation zone’ on October 7. Erdogan stated that Russia would support his intervention. The TSK began deployments to observation positions in Northern Idlib Province near the majority-Kurdish Afrin Canton on October 12 following earlier reconnaissance missions. Russia likely perceives an opportunity to exploit widening diplomatic fissures between the U.S. and Turkey. Russia could thus attempt to use the ‘de-escalation zone’ to compel Turkey into deeper – albeit temporary – cooperation with Russia in Northwestern Syria at the expense of the United States.

The graphic depicts ISW’s assessment of Russian airstrike locations based on reports from local Syrian activist networks, statements by Russian and Western officials, and documentation of Russian airstrikes through social media. This map represents locations targeted by Russia’s air campaign, rather than the number of individual strikes or sorties. The graphic likely under-represents the extent of the locations targeted in Eastern Syria, owing to a relative lack of activist reporting from that region.
ISA: Russian Retargeting of Civilians: Post Al Qaida Hama Offensive - II

Casualty Estimates
Syria Casualty Estimates: 2011-2016

Estimates of deaths in the Syrian Civil War, per opposition activist groups, vary between 301,781[1] and 470,000. [2] On 23 April 2016, the United Nations and Arab League Envoy to Syria put out an estimate of 400,000 that had died in the war.[3]

UNICEF reported that over 500 children had been killed by early February 2012.[4][5] Another 400 children were reportedly arrested and tortured in Syrian prisons.[6][7] Both claims have been contested by the Syrian government.[8] Additionally, over 600 detainees and political prisoners died under torture.[9] The United Nations stated that by the end of April 2014, 8,803 children had been killed,[10] while the Oxford Research Group said that a total of 11,420 children died in the conflict by late November 2013.[11] By mid-September 2016, the opposition activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported the number of children killed in the conflict had risen to 15,099, while at the same time 10,018 women were also killed.[1]

The number of fatalities in the conflict, according to the Syrian opposition website Syrian Martyrs, is 151,888, updated to 30 April 2016.[12] The number includes 35,859 rebels but does not include members of the government security forces or pro-government foreign combatants who have died.[13] The Syrian Martyrs number of civilian deaths is significantly higher than the ones presented by other organizations, including the UN, one reason being they record deaths even when no name is given for the reportedly killed individual.[14]

Other estimates range from 292,815 to 470,000. All of the following totals include civilians, rebels and government forces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Centre for Policy Research</td>
<td>470,000 killed</td>
<td>15 March 2011 – 11 February 2016 UN and Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League Envoy to Syria</td>
<td>400,000 killed</td>
<td>15 March 2011 – 23 April 2016 Syrian Observatory for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_Syrian_Civil_War
The following figures were all compiled by the SOHR which is considered an authoritative source on the matter.[24] The figures are only for documented deaths, while the SOHR estimates another 120,500 undocumented deaths had occurred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Pro-government forces</th>
<th>Anti-government forces</th>
<th>Civilians</th>
<th>Grand Total (inc. unidentified)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>25,160 killed</td>
<td>32,726 killed</td>
<td>17,790 killed</td>
<td>2013: 73,447 killed[^23]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>17,666 killed</td>
<td>24,010 killed</td>
<td>13,249 killed</td>
<td>76,021 killed[^30]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>1,599 killed</td>
<td>1,687 killed</td>
<td>1,345 killed</td>
<td>55,219 killed[^31]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>1,442 killed</td>
<td>2,209 killed</td>
<td>1,109 killed</td>
<td>4,680 killed[^32]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>827 killed</td>
<td>1,232 killed</td>
<td>588 killed</td>
<td>4,802 killed[^33]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>990 killed</td>
<td>1,263 killed</td>
<td>859 killed</td>
<td>2,658 killed[^34]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>1,318 killed</td>
<td>2,669 killed</td>
<td>917 killed</td>
<td>3,116 killed[^35]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>1,435 killed</td>
<td>2,139 killed</td>
<td>1,208 killed</td>
<td>4,927 killed[^36]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>1,291 killed</td>
<td>1,882 killed</td>
<td>1,590 killed</td>
<td>4,823 killed[^37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td>1,311 killed</td>
<td>1,845 killed</td>
<td>1,289 killed</td>
<td>4,794 killed[^38]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>987 killed</td>
<td>1,302 killed</td>
<td>1,228 killed</td>
<td>3,686 killed[^39]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative 2016</td>
<td>11,200 killed</td>
<td>16,228 killed</td>
<td>10,133 killed</td>
<td>37,961 killed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_Syrian_Civil_War
Syria Casualty Estimates: 2011-2013

Deaths per week during the Syrian civil war

Source:
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/55/Deaths_per_week_during_the_syrian_civil_war_%28October_2013%29.png

The Nation-Building Nightmare in Syria: September 2016

- Population down from 22-24 million to 17.1 million, median age 23.8
- Estimates of dead range from some 270,000 to 470,000
- UNHCR estimates in July 2016 that Syria had 4.8 million refugees out the country – roughly 22% of its prewar population -- and 6.5 million people – over one-third of its present population -- displaced away from their homes and jobs inside Syria.
- 13.5 million need protection. 12.1 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, including 5.7 million children. 11.5 million lack of access to health care and scarcity of medicine have led to a catastrophic health situation. Poor food availability and quality and successive cuts in subsidies on bread have exacerbated nutritional deprivation. An estimated 25 percent of schools were not operational by 2014.
- No reliable summary of how badly the economy has suffered since 2011, but the CIA estimates that Syria's GDP shrank from an already very low $97.5 billion in 2012 to $55.8 billion in 2014, and per capita income was only $5,100 in 2010 – before the fighting began. This drop, instead of growth, ranked Syria as 219th of the world’s nations. Unemployment reached 57.7% in 2014, and 82.5% of the population lived below the poverty line by then – putting Syria at a rank of 202nd, and at the near bottom of the world’s nations.
- OCHA estimates that Syria's development situation has regressed almost by four decades. Four out of five Syrians now live in poverty. Since the crisis began in 2011, life expectancy among Syrians has dropped by more than 20 years, while school attendance has dropped over 50 per cent, with more than 2 million children now out of school. Syria has also seen reversals in all 12 Millennium Development Goal indicators. The Syrian economy has contracted by an estimated 40 per cent since 2011, leading to the majority of Syrians losing their livelihoods.
- Turkey hosts over 2.7 million registered Syrians. In Lebanon, more than a million registered Syrians live in over 1,700 communities and locations across the country, often sharing small basic lodgings with other refugee families in overcrowded conditions. In Jordan, over 600,000 men, women and children are currently trapped in exile. Iraq has also seen a growing number of Syrians arriving, hosting nearly 25,000, while in Egypt UNHCR.
- In 2009, 94 per cent of Syrian children attended primary and lower secondary education, by June 2016 only 60 per cent of children were in school in Syria, leaving 2.1 million children and adolescents without access to education in Syria. In neighboring countries, over 4.8 million Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR, and 35 per cent are of school-age. In Turkey, only 39 per cent of school-age refugee children and adolescents were enrolled in primary and secondary education, 40 per cent in Lebanon, and 70 per cent in Jordan. This means that nearly 900,000 more Syrian school-age refugee children and adolescents are not in school.
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• Exact numbers of casualties from the conflict with IS are not available.

• The UN says at least 3,298 civilians were killed in acts of violence in Iraq in 2017, fewer than the 2016 total of 6,878 - although the true figure is likely to be higher as the organisation has been unable to verify some reports of casualties in the Mosul area.

• According to Iraq Body Count, the total number of civilian deaths in Iraq since 2014 stood at 67,376 up to the end of December 2017. The annual number of casualties has decreased slightly each year since 2014, from a high of 20,218 in that year to 13,187 last year.

• The UN no longer keeps track of casualty figures in Syria due to the inaccessibility of many areas and the conflicting reports from the various parties to the war there.

• The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group, reported in December 2017 that it had documented the deaths of more than 346,600 people, including 103,490 civilians, since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began March 2011. But it noted that the figure did not include 56,900 people who were missing and presumed dead.

Demographics
The Civil Side: Demographics

- Iraq grew 4.5 times between 1950 and 2016. Syria grew 4.9 times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area (Sq. Km.)</th>
<th>Density (Persons Per Sq. Km.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>3,495,000</td>
<td>183,630</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>7,397,736</td>
<td>183,630</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16,514,089</td>
<td>183,630</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>17,185,170</td>
<td>183,630</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>24,537,876</td>
<td>183,630</td>
<td>133.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>31,225,740</td>
<td>183,630</td>
<td>170.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area (Sq. Km.)</th>
<th>Density (Persons Per Sq. Km.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5,163,443</td>
<td>437,367</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>11,117,804</td>
<td>437,367</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>23,128,328</td>
<td>437,367</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>38,146,025</td>
<td>437,367</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>47,656,612</td>
<td>437,367</td>
<td>109.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>76,519,418</td>
<td>437,367</td>
<td>175.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Civil Side: Massive Demographic Pressure

in Millions  81.8   105.5  137.6  184.7  252.5  310.4   376.9  420.1  520.7   581.3   635.8

• MENA Growth in 1950-2010 was 4.5 times.
  • *Egypt* grew 4.5 times between 1950 and 2016.
  • *Iraq* grew 7.4 times
  • *Libya* grew 6.8 times
  • *Syria* grew 4.9 times
  • *Yemen* grew 5.7 times

• Projected MENA Growth in 2010-2015 is 59%.

http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php
The Civil Side: Demographics by Country

Demographic Pressure in Gulf Countries: 1950-2050 (in Thousands)

Multiplication factors represent the change in population from 1950 to 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bahrain</th>
<th>Iraq</th>
<th>Kuwait</th>
<th>Oman</th>
<th>Qatar</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>UAE</th>
<th>Yemen</th>
<th>Iran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>5,163</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3,860</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4,777</td>
<td>16,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>7,917</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5,327</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>6,510</td>
<td>25,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>11,118</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>7,108</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>7,394</td>
<td>35,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>15,694</td>
<td>1,733</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>13,330</td>
<td>1,363</td>
<td>10,540</td>
<td>48,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>19,638</td>
<td>1,664</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>18,755</td>
<td>4,558</td>
<td>14,832</td>
<td>64,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>27,538</td>
<td>2,527</td>
<td>2,697</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>23,642</td>
<td>4,087</td>
<td>20,003</td>
<td>76,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>37,056</td>
<td>2,789</td>
<td>3,287</td>
<td>2,195</td>
<td>27,752</td>
<td>5,780</td>
<td>26,737</td>
<td>81,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>47,657</td>
<td>3,169</td>
<td>3,981</td>
<td>2,563</td>
<td>31,877</td>
<td>7,063</td>
<td>32,822</td>
<td>96,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>50,262</td>
<td>3,482</td>
<td>4,601</td>
<td>2,574</td>
<td>35,614</td>
<td>7,773</td>
<td>38,437</td>
<td>95,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2045</td>
<td>1,806</td>
<td>70,023</td>
<td>3,751</td>
<td>5,147</td>
<td>2,548</td>
<td>38,781</td>
<td>8,204</td>
<td>43,709</td>
<td>99,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>76,519</td>
<td>3,863</td>
<td>5,402</td>
<td>2,559</td>
<td>40,251</td>
<td>8,019</td>
<td>46,081</td>
<td>103,045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php
The Civil Side: Youth Bulge

(Percentage of Native Population Below 25)

An extremely young population and massive numbers of young men and women desperate for careers, jobs, marriage, a home, and a family. The CIA estimates that an extraordinary 36.7% of Iraq's population is 0-14 years of age, and 19.6% is 15-24 years of age, and Iraq is nearly 70% urbanized. Its economy, politics, and social tensions will be under acute population pressure for at least another two decades.

Corruption breeds anger and extremism: See Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan

The Civil Side: Governance

Failed governance leads to violence and extremism, or civil conflict. Authoritarianism and repression do not suppress them, simply bottle them up until they explode.

http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home
The Kurdish Issue
The Broader “Kurdish Problem”

The Broader Kurdish Issue: 2017

Broader Ethnic and Sectarian Divisions
Syrian Demographics


Note: The broad demographic categories shown here cover a diversity of ethnic and religious groups. The predominantly Kurdish and predominantly Arab areas are made up of mostly Sunni Muslims. Minority groups include Christians, Druze, Shi’ites, Alawites and others. | Source: Dr. Michael Izady for the Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity (New York, Columbia University, Gulf 2000 Project: 2006-present).
The Syrian Ethnic Nightmare – Pre 2011

Source: Gulf 2000,
https://www.google.com/search?q=Population+density+map+Iraq+and+syria&tbm=isch&tbq=ar&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjEoLW5jLKLAhWlODcKHbCBbMQ6wUgGMAA&biw=1307&bih=912#imgdii=pl5o89pRKnk_hM%3A%3Bpl5o89pRKnk_hM%3A%3BRK-qt8Hcn4MuM3A&imgrc=pl5o89pRKnk_hM%3A.
Iraq and Syria Sunni Dominated Areas: 2017

Syrian Oil and Gas
Syria has never produced sufficient volumes of natural gas to export. Prior to the recent conflict, Syria imported a small amount of natural gas from Egypt to supplement its own domestic production, but production volumes dropped by more than 60% between 2010 and 2011 (from 24.4 Bcf to 8.8 Bcf, according to Cegidac data) and stopped in 2012. Those imports came via the Arab Gas Pipeline, which started operating in 2008 and serves Egyptian gas into Syria (near Homs) via Jordan. There were plans to expand the pipeline into Turkey, Lebanon, and eventually to Europe, but developments are now unlikely.

Damage to energy infrastructure—including oil and natural gas pipelines and electricity transmission networks—hindered the exploration, development, production, and transport of the country’s energy resources. Syria, previously the eastern Mediterranean’s leading oil and natural gas producer, has seen its production fall to a fraction of pre-conflict levels. Syria is no longer able to export oil, and as a result, government revenues from the energy sector have fallen significantly. Prior to the current conflict, when Syria produced 383,000 barrels per day (b/d) of oil and 316 million cubic feet per day (Mmcf/d) of natural gas, Syria’s oil and gas sector accounted for approximately one fourth of government revenues. Syria faces major challenges in supplying fuel oil to its citizens. Electricity service in much of the country is sporadic as a result of fighting between government, opposition forces and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Further, the exploration and development of the country’s oil and natural gas resources have been delayed indefinitely. Nevertheless, even if the fighting were to subside, it would take years for the Syrian domestic energy system to return to pre-conflict operating status.

The Oil & Gas Journal estimated Syria’s proved reserves of oil at 2.5 billion barrels as of January 1, 2015, a total larger than that of Syria’s neighbors except for Iraq. Most of Syria’s crude oil is heavy (low gravity) and sour (high sulfur content), which requires a specific configuration of refineries to process. Sanctions placed on Syria by the European Union in particular—whose countries accounted for the majority of Syrian oil exports previously—limited the number of markets available to import and process the heavier Syrian crudes. The loss of oil export capabilities severely limited Syrian government revenues, particularly the last access to European markets, which in 2011 imported over $3 billion worth of oil from Syria, according to the European Commission. Prior to sanctions, European refineries were the target market for Syrian oil because they were configured to process heavy, sour oil.

Since the swift advance of ISIS in 2014, Syrian oil production has essentially ceased. The lack of domestic crude oil production has caused the country’s two main refineries to operate at less than half of normal capacity, resulting in supply shortages for refined petroleum products. Further, sanctions—and the resulting loss of oil export revenues—make importing petroleum products difficult. It is likely that Iran continues to supply Syria with crude oil and refined products. Oil theft is also a problem, with Syrian officials claiming that hundreds of barrels of crude oil are being stolen and shipped to neighboring countries each day.

The Oil & Gas Journal reported that Syria held proved reserves of 8.5 billion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas as of January 2015. Like the country’s oil fields, the majority of Syria’s natural gas fields are in the central and eastern parts of the country. Most of Syria’s natural gas is used by commercial and residential customers and in power generation. Syria also uses its natural gas in oil—recovery efforts, with approximately 20% of daily gross production reinjected into the country’s oil fields between 2004 and 2013.

In 2008, Syria became a net importer of natural gas, but the country’s current state of conflict—and sanctions—have affected the ability of Syria to receive natural gas. The only source of natural gas imports, the Arab Gas Pipeline, became the target of attacks as the conflict intensified, forcing the pipeline to shut down. Syria plans to convert all existing thermal power generation facilities to natural gas—fed plants (many are currently using refined petroleum products) hinge on these import volumes being available, but this goal seems out of reach.
Turkish Proposed Safe Zone for Northeast Syria

Legend
- **Kurd Controlled Region**
- **Turkish Proposed "Safe Zone"**
- **Oil Field**
- **Gas Field**
- **Oil Pipeline**
- **Gas Pipeline**
- **Power Plant**
- **Refinery**

Source: http://energy-cg.com/MiddleEast/Syria/Syria_Turkey_Kurds_USBasesLocationsReportedKurdArea_Image1x1_Oct19_EnergyConsultingGroup_web.png
Historical Background
Turkish Claims 1920

MENA: Degree of Colonization

Fig. 2: Degree of Colonization

MENA: Cold War Alignments

The Edge of Repression and Impact of Failed States

Country status of selected Arab countries (January 2016)

- **Democracy**
- **Autocracy/restricted democracy**
- **Full autocracy**
- **Failed state/civil war**
- **Non Arab**

Population at onset of Arab spring 2011 estimate, m

Sources: UN; The Economist

A: ISRAEL
B: PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES
C: BAHRAIN
D: QATAR