

RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Statistics & More (SAM) is a research organization which aims to provide timely, accurate and reliable research about public safety and security, natural and humanitarian disasters, global threats, geo-political dynamics and poverty.

Our world is facing currently a great threat; Numerous conflicts are taking place in different regions, 40% of the world population is living on less than US\$2.5 per day, every day over 20,000 people die of hunger related causes, millions of people can't reach basic food and health services and live without any shelter, the refugee population is at record levels, and the number of terrorist organizations is at its highest ever.

The bi-weekly research newsletter of SAM aims to provide timely, independent and reliable analysis through its experts located in different parts of the world.

We believe we will make a difference with our approach. We dedicate our first issue to the victims of war in Syria.

“There will be no end to the troubles of states, or of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands.”
[Plato](#)

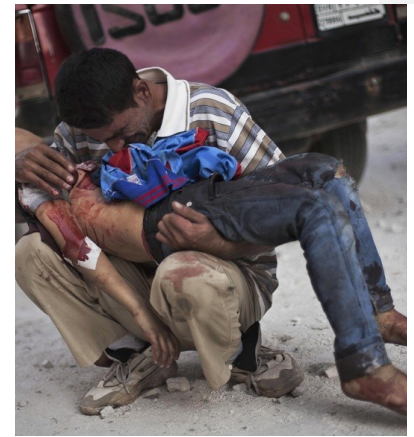


Escape from War in Syria

The world is facing the largest refugee crises ever; since the conflict started in Syria, over 250,000 people have died. Over 4.5 million Syrian people have moved to neighboring countries. Around 7 million Syrians are internally displaced. There are at least 12 million Syrian people urgently in need of humanitarian aid.



Syrian Refugee Camp



Thousands of Syrian children have died since the conflict started in the country. The future of Syria is dying...

Future of The People of Syria

The expansion of the Arab Spring reached Syria at the beginning of 2011. As a result, public unrest started in the country. It was expected that president Assad would have to leave the country, as had happened in Libya and Tunisia. Instead, things developed in a very negative way for the country and entire region.

The people of Syria wanted to have more freedom to express themselves and integrate with the world. They only wanted a better life and democracy. But the situation developed in an uncontrolled way. As a result, one of the world's most complicated and chaotic war started in Syria. Many internal and external actors got involved in. The EU, US and a number countries in the region openly expressed their support for the opposition groups in Syria. Hundreds of illegally armed groups were shaped in a very short time. Thousands of foreign fighters, Islamic jihadists, young adventurers and paid fighters arrived in Syria. The level and complexity of the situation has started to deepen day by day in the country.

IS, one of the bloodiest and most violent terrorist groups also positioned themselves in Syria through "Al-Nusra Front" in August 2011. Al Nusra is an extension of well-known terrorist group, IS (which was alliance of Al-Qaeda) that started to fight against the Syrian Army. However, later on, in August 2013, Al-Nusra Front rejected to re-merge with IS and started to act independently from IS. So, now , both IS and Al –Nusra are separately holding locations in the country.

Towards the end of 2011, another Islamic Jihadist group, " Harakat Ahrar Ash-Sham-Al-Islamiyya " became active in Syria. They started to fight against the Syrian Regime Forces and lined-up with Syrian Free Army. The ultimate purpose of this group to establish an Islamic country or a region which is ruled by Sharia law. The size of the group is estimated to be around 15,000. It is supported by the anti-Assad community (countries, power groups and etc externally).

Number of other Islamic Salafist Jihadist groups became active in the county. Among these groups, some of the well-known ones are Muhajirin wa-Ansar Alliance (Muhajerin and Ansar Bridge), Sham Legion and Jabhat Ansar al-Din.

The common characteristics of all of these jihadist groups are;

- *They are illegally armed,*
- *They are Sunni Salafist and Jihadist*
- *They want to establish an Islamic State ruled by Sharia Law,*
- *They are supported externally*

In addition to these groups, the Free Syrian Army was established in July 2011. It is in fact an umbrella organization to fight against the Syrian National Army. Total size of armed forces of FSA is estimated to be around 50,000. Head of the command and headquarter of FSA was based in Hatay province of Turkey until September 2012. Later on, it was moved to Idlib Governorate in Syria. Free Syrian army has been supported by US, EU countries, Gulf countries and Turkey.

At the same time, YPG (People's Protection Units) – Kurdish armed group took also defensive position as soon as the civil war started in the country in 2011. YPG started to provide control over Kurdish populated locations in Northern Syria (Like Kobani, Amuda and Afrin) in agreement with Syrian Assad Regime (Syrian National Army). Although, IS managed to capture Kobani briefly, YPG forces managed to re-capture the town with the support of US and NATO bombardments. Currently, YPG has around 50,000 armed fighters. YPG wants to shape a semi or fully independent Kurdish autonomous region at Northern Syria.

While opposition groups and Syrian Regime were fighting against each other, IS terrorist organization seized Raqqa city in Syria on 2nd of March 2013 and declared as the capital city of Islamic State. Later on, IS continued to expand in Syria and Iraq. IS captured important Iraqi cities, Mosul, and Tikrit in June 2014. Then, announced Islamic Caliphate in Mosul city on 29th June 2014.



The indirect support of US, EU, NATO and Gulf countries didn't bring any positive solution. US and some of the NATO countries decided to intervene directly. Thus, US Army has started to bomb IS fronts and camps in September 2014. After that date, US and some of the NATO members (Canada, France, Australia, Turkey, Germany and UK) have organized number of bombardments against IS forces.

However, nothing has stopped IS so far. It still provides control in a large area (over 200,000 sq-km) and number of populated cities including Mosul and Raqha. They also control number of oil production stations as well. It is estimated that IS has between 30,000 – 100,000 armed fighters in Syria and Iraq. In addition to this, it has around at least 50,000 ready fighters located in West Africa, European Countries, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Caucasus region. IS fighters regularly go back to their countries to find new ones. IS claims land in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, North Caucasus. Therefore, IS threat is wider than Syria and Iraq. In addition to this, IS able to fight in different fronts against to different forces at the same time. It is one of the most capable and flexible terrorist organization established so far at global level.

Although number of countries and international organizations have been helping, there has been a very sad humanitarian tragedy going on in Syria and some parts of Iraq for many years. A multi-directional and multi-players chaos and fighting have been going on. In addition to this, although the opposition groups are against to Assad regime, they have no intention to bring democracy to the country. Their ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic country (or countries) ruled with Islamic Sunni Sharia. It is well known that Sharia Law is against to all type of political regimes including democracy. In addition to this, majority of Syrians are Shia. It is obvious that in case opposition groups manages to eliminate Assad, then there will be a number of small countries or regions controlled by Islamic Jihadist groups in Syria. Therefore, It is not really easy to understand if the purpose of international actors is to bring democracy to Syria and keep the country unified or not.

While the chaos is going on, the people of Syria are paying a high cost. Since the conflict started, over 250,000 people have been killed and thousands have been injured. Half of the population of Syria (22 million) have been forced to leave their homes. It is estimated that at least 4 million Syrian refugees are currently living in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. In addition to this, there are at least 7 million Syrians internally displaced. Furthermore, there are at least 12 million Syrians living with extreme poverty and urgently in need of support. Not only Syrians but Iraqi people, especially Yazidi people and Shia Muslims were killed or forced to move from towns. The democracy desire of People of Syria now turned into a bloody war and genocide. There has been an on-going genocide systematically applied for Shia Muslims and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq. People of Syria wanted to have more democracy but they ended up losing their country and life.



Syrian Refugees crossing from Turkey to Greece

Another powerful country, Russia is now actively involved in Syria. It is time to end the conflict before it is too late. Because, If this conflict continues, it will affect more countries in and outside of the region. The peace in the world will be seriously damaged. Therefore, it is time for UN Security Council and NATO members to act together. It is time NATO and Russia to combine their powers and bring peace to the region. There is no way that peace can arrive to region with the help of Jihadist opposition groups. We got enough lessons learned from the conflict in Afghanistan. There cant be an agreement with illegally armed or terrorist groups. International community should not rely on these groups to eliminate Assad regime. Because these illegally armed groups will turn into a dangerous enemy one day. Everyone should analyze how Taliban in Afghanistan was created and what is happening now. Free Syrian Army and Assad Regime should urgently declare cease fire and join forces against IS, Al-Nusra and other Islamic Jihadist groups. NATO countries need to support Russia to remove all Islamic jihadist groups from the region urgently. Once the region is cleared from these groups, then Syria can be rebuild, a transparent and democratic elections can be done and people of Syria can return their home. Otherwise, more people will continue to die in cold waters of Mediterranean and Aegean Seas.



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Contact Us

Web page

www.statisticsandmore.at

Email

info@statisticsandmore.at