

عمران
للدراسات الاستراتيجية
OMRAN
FOR STRATEGIC
STUDIES

Annual Report

2015

A Message from Omran's Team

Omran Center for Strategic Studies has achieved a high level of relevance and importance among a wide spectrum of **influential readership**. Omran has taken part in advancing a **comprehensive understanding** of the Syrian scene and its regional and international impact.

Omran attempts to **asses policies** by different actors, **deconstructs their narratives and claims**, and **presents policy recommendations to decision-makers**.

Omran strives to promote an **in-depth analysis** of the **political process, good governance mechanisms, democratic practices** and **economic empowerment of local economies**.

Ammar Kahf, Ph.D.
Executive Director

About Omran

- ◉ Established in November **2013** in Istanbul, Turkey.
- ◉ **A research institution** that serves as an essential reference on Syrian affairs in **political, Local Administration, and development sectors.**
- ◉ Publishes **studies** and **policy briefs** that empower relevant actors and institutions working on Syrian affairs, supports **decision-making mechanisms**, and assess a complex set of data to present **analytical maps** and **recommendations.**
- ◉ Conducts **round-table discussions, seminars** and **workshops** that promote a more systematic and methodical culture of decision-making among Syria's future leaders.

Our Vision

An independent think tank and policy center focusing on presenting an objective understanding of Syria and the region in order to become a **reference for public policies impacting the region.**

Objectives

- Support decision-making mechanisms and **presenting strategies** on Syrian affairs.
- Provide practical solutions and **policy recommendations to decision-makers.**
- **Publish policy studies** that identify **challenges within the Syrian context** and **the region**, and foresee scenarios and alternative solutions.
- Publish papers in **several languages** to facilitate interaction with international actors.
- Contribute to the **accumulation of knowledge** that best serves the Syrian issue.

Omran Core Values

- ⦿ Adhere to **professional** standards in describing and analyzing the complex reality.
- ⦿ Adopt an appropriate **research methodology**.
- ⦿ **Enrich** and **develop** our research team.
- ⦿ **Adapt to changing conditions** and needs.
- ⦿ **Localize** and **adapt concepts** and **solutions** to the Syrian and regional cultural and political contexts.
- ⦿ **Open to different orientations** and methodologies through dialogue and bridge-building.

Why Omran

Quality Readership

Advises key opinion leaders and networks; more than **72** Arab and international websites republish Omran products with over **45,000** readers.

In-Depth Assessment

Conducts **up-to-date analysis** of political and social developments in Syria and the region using a **dynamic** and **objective methodology** based on direct access to information on the ground and abroad.

Bridge-Building Platform

Provides a platform for **Syrian policy makers**, human rights activists, local council members, and thinkers to **exchange** and **develop new ideas** and **solutions** faced by Syrians.

Multilingual

Issues original products in **Arabic, Turkish** and **English**.

Omran Organizational Chart



Research Unit

Economics and Development

Politics and International Relations

Local Administration & Promotion
of Democratic Practices



Information Unit

Monitoring and Maps
Production

Public Opinion Polls and
Surveys



Negotiations Support Unit

Political Track

Public Services Track

Military and Security Track



International Affairs Unit

The Turkish Affairs Department

Research Unit



The Research Unit focusses on **analyzing the Syrian scene** through political, military, economic and local administration dimensions, and assessing the impact of changes within it on **regional** and **international affairs**. It presents **recommendations** and **projections** for decision-makers in Syria. Researchers strive to put forward an accurate, realistic and objective assessment of the **challenges** and **opportunities faced by Syria** and circulate it to experts on Syrian affairs. The Research Unit focusses on **three tracks**:



Economics and Development



Politics and International Relations Unit



Local Administration & Promotion of Democratic Practices

Information Unit



The Information Unit specializes in **collecting data** that is key for a better understanding of Syrian and regional affairs. It also offers support to the research unit by constantly **monitoring** and **archiving** news and information received from the ground and abroad, producing special reports, bulletins, and maps. Furthermore, it tracks **products by think tanks** and **policy centers** relating to Syria to make available to Syrian and other decision-makers.

This unit includes **two teams**:



Monitoring and Maps Production



Public Opinion Polls and Surveys

Negotiations Support Unit



This technical unit includes **Syrian and international experts** that **empower Syrian actors** and **decision-makers** with the tools, information and **analysis** necessary for any negotiation process. It focuses on political, military, security and public services tracks.

International Affairs Unit



This unit includes Syrian and international **academics** and **experts** who **focus on reaching out** to think tanks and policy centers with similar interests to build partnerships. It also **provides decision-makers in other countries the latest studies and analysis** of the political and military situation in Syria. **The Turkish Affairs Department** was established and operates in Turkey. We also hold functions and briefings in the US and Europe.

Fields Covered by Omran Studies

- The Political Process
- Security and Military
- Refugees Resettlement
- Rebuilding Syria
- Local Economic Development
- Decentralized Local Administration
- Societal Security
- Regional and International Studies
- International Relations
- Legal and Human Rights Studies

Omran Accomplishments 2015



Research Unit

Studies	17
Papers and briefs	90
Editorials	45
Events & conferences	49
Media appearances	90
Books	3



Information Unit

Monitoring report of think tanks and research centers	21
Local councils reports	12
Daily news reports	325
Special update reports	308
Territorial control maps	29
Military news reports (maps and analysis)	141

Research Unit – Most Important Studies

- ◉ **An Evaluation of Syrian Crisis:** Internal Dynamics.
- ◉ The **US** and **Russian Policies** Towards Syria.
- ◉ Rule of Law in Syria? **The Assad Regime** and **ISIS**.
- ◉ **Limitations of Iranian Policies** in Syria and Impact on the Political Settlement.
- ◉ **Idleb Provincial Council:** Assessment and Recommendations (2 parts).
- ◉ **Local Governance in ISIS Controlled Regions:** an Illusion of a State.
- ◉ **Russian Policy** Towards Syria Since the Revolution.
- ◉ **Political Components of the Syrian Revolution** and Their Role in the Syrian Cause.
- ◉ **Water Security in Syria:** Analytical Study and Recommendations to Manage Water Resources.
- ◉ **Development of Livelihoods** in the Liberated Syrian Territories.

Research Unit – Most Important Papers

- ◉ **The Rise and Fall** of the Hazm Movement.
- ◉ **Al-Nusra and Al-Qaeda:** Repercussions of Revoking Pledge of Allegiance.
- ◉ **The Cairo Syrian Opposition Meeting:** a Needed Effort with Complexities.
- ◉ The Regional Complexity of Syria as an **Arab Gateway to Stability.**
- ◉ **Pivotal Junctions in the Military Situation** in Syria.
- ◉ **Post-Palmyra ISIS:** a Functional Test for all Parties.
- ◉ Fuel Crisis and the **Economic Security Challenge** in Northern Syria.
- ◉ **Local Tax Collection:** Challenges Faced by Local Councils.
- ◉ **Riyadh Conference:** an Opportunity for a Syrian-based Action Plan.

Research Unit – Most Important Editorials

- ◉ Localized Truces as Indication of **Regime Disintegration**.
- ◉ **Vienna Conference** and Limitations of its Political Track.
- ◉ **Al-Waar Truce**: Messages and Indications.
- ◉ **Moscow Forum**: Farcical Support for a Crumbling Regime.
- ◉ **Livelihoods** and the Challenge of Economic Resilience in Syria.
- ◉ **Local Councils in Syria**: a Successful Power Transition Model.
- ◉ Why Local Councils are Targeted by **Russian Warplanes**.
- ◉ **Turkey's Role in the International Coalition** against ISIS: a Test for US-Kurdish Relations.

To view more studies and papers, please visit **Omran website** at:

www.OmranDirasat.org



SETA's Panel "The Syrian Crisis After the Russian Intervention"

Amman Security Conference, Jordan

The conference was organized by the **Arab Institute for Security Studies**, in cooperation with the **Danish government** and the **Konrad Adenauer Stiftung**. The goal was to research the paths for international cooperation in **strengthening security** and **economic development**, in addition to all aspects of **achieving the nuclear program and the ban on weapons of mass destruction**. Omran presented a paper entitled **“International Initiatives for a Political Solution in Syria: Challenges and Opportunities”**.

Middle East Think Tank Forum by Institute of Strategic Thinking, Ankara, Turkey

The **Institute of Strategic Thinking-SDE** in Ankara, Turkey, organized the conference entitled “Building a Common Vision for a Peaceful and Stable Middle East”, **co-sponsored by the Office of the Prime Minister**. Omran presented a paper in the conference, titled **“Syrian Peace Process: Challenges and Opportunities for a Political Solution”**.



SED's Middle East Think Tank Forum – Ankara

Symposium Entitled “The Implications of the Iranian Nuclear Deal on Syria and the Region”

Omran organized a one-day symposium hosting **4** sessions with **experts on Iran, Egypt, Syria, GCC, and Turkey** to discuss the implications of the **P5+1 Iranian nuclear deal** on the Syria file and the regional balance of power. Papers submitted were compiled and published by Omran. The symposium also **tackled the projected scenarios** for political developments in Syria as a result of this agreement.

The Role of General Management in International Migration and Accommodation of Refugees by the Turkish Migration Directorate

The conference was held at the **Mustafa Kemal University**, in cooperation with the Directorate of Regional Governance. Omran presented two papers, the first entitled “**The Problem of Refugees in Turkey: Opportunities and Obstacles**”, and the second entitled “**The Implications of the Syrian Crisis on the Balance of Power in the Middle East**”.



Omran's Symposium Entitled "The Implications of the Iranian Nuclear Deal"

Anti-Corruption Training Program

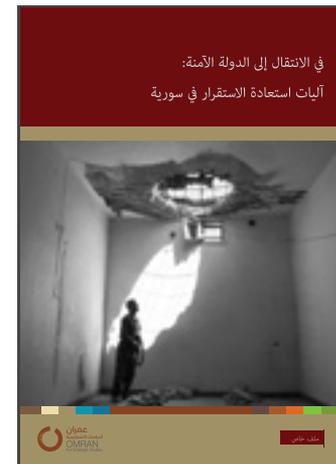
Omran co-organized a training program on **anti-corruption** on January **12-16, 2015** in cooperation with the Local Administration Councils Unit (**LACU**), **Bousla for Training and Innovation** and Canadian Funds for Local Initiatives (**CFIL**). Omran experts presented a training as part of its goal to **promote principles of good governance and democratic practices** to combat corruption on all levels. The program reviewed many international, regional and local anti-corruption regulations, the **UN Anti-Corruption Agreement** and ways for Civil Society Organizations in Syria to counter fiscal and administrative corruption.



Anti-Corruption Training Program

Books: “Transitioning to a Secure State: Mechanisms for Restoring Stability in Syria”

This book focused on the totality of the formal and non-formal political, military, legal and local opposition actors, recommending several mechanisms to **push the Syrian issue towards a breakthrough**. This breakthrough is needed, whatever the expected scenario, due to the **need to fill the vacuum of governance** and **provision of basic services** as a function of the state and not the regime. This vacuum was induced by the abandonment and **dysfunctionality of the Assad regime** to execute some of its political, economic and social duties expected from it as a state.



Books: “The Syrian Revolution in its Fifth Year”

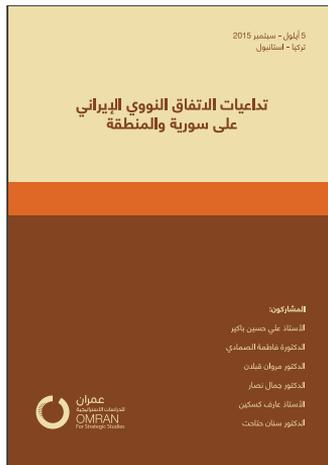
Omran’s Year Book focused on **assessing the emerging realities** of the Levant Region which pushed many of the regional and international actors to explore new positions, taking into consideration their **security** and **economic interests** and reducing the effect of other emerging variables. This is a result of the **political** and **military impasse** in Syria that continues this year. The expected scenarios include

increased military shifts and more entrenched areas of control, in conjunction with the continuing fluidity of the political track, especially concerning the rehabilitation of Assad. Within the complex Syrian reality, the **experience of local governance stands out as an alternative de-centralized system**; as it has a political latency beyond just providing public services, especially in its adoption of non-traditional economic solutions.



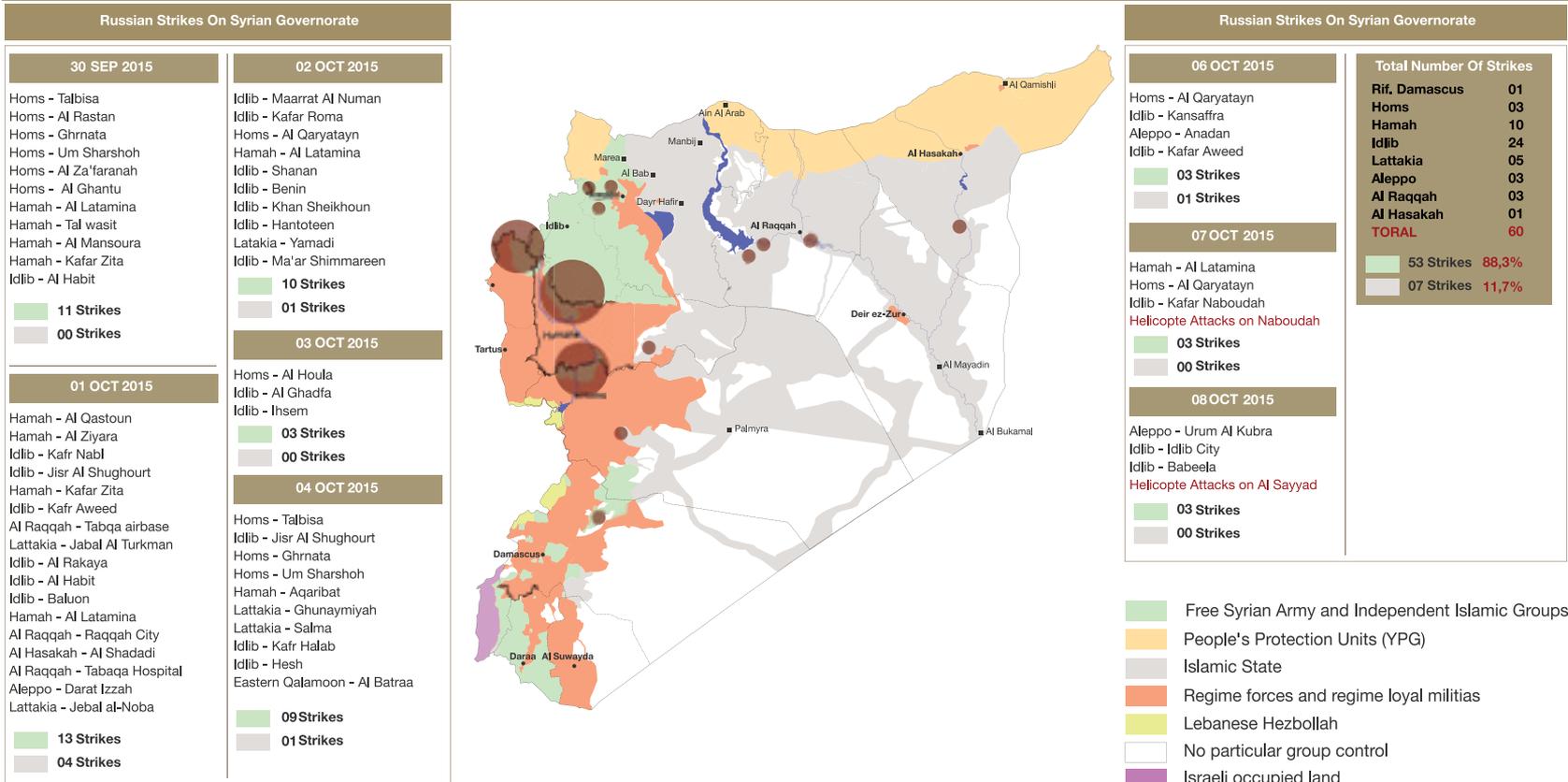
Books: “The Implications of the Iranian Nuclear Deal on Syria and the Region”

Omran invited **researchers and experts in Iranian affairs** from different regional backgrounds. Participants in the symposium presented papers to **address the impact of the international agreement** on the balance of power in the region as it pertains to Iran, GCC, Turkey, Syria and Egypt.

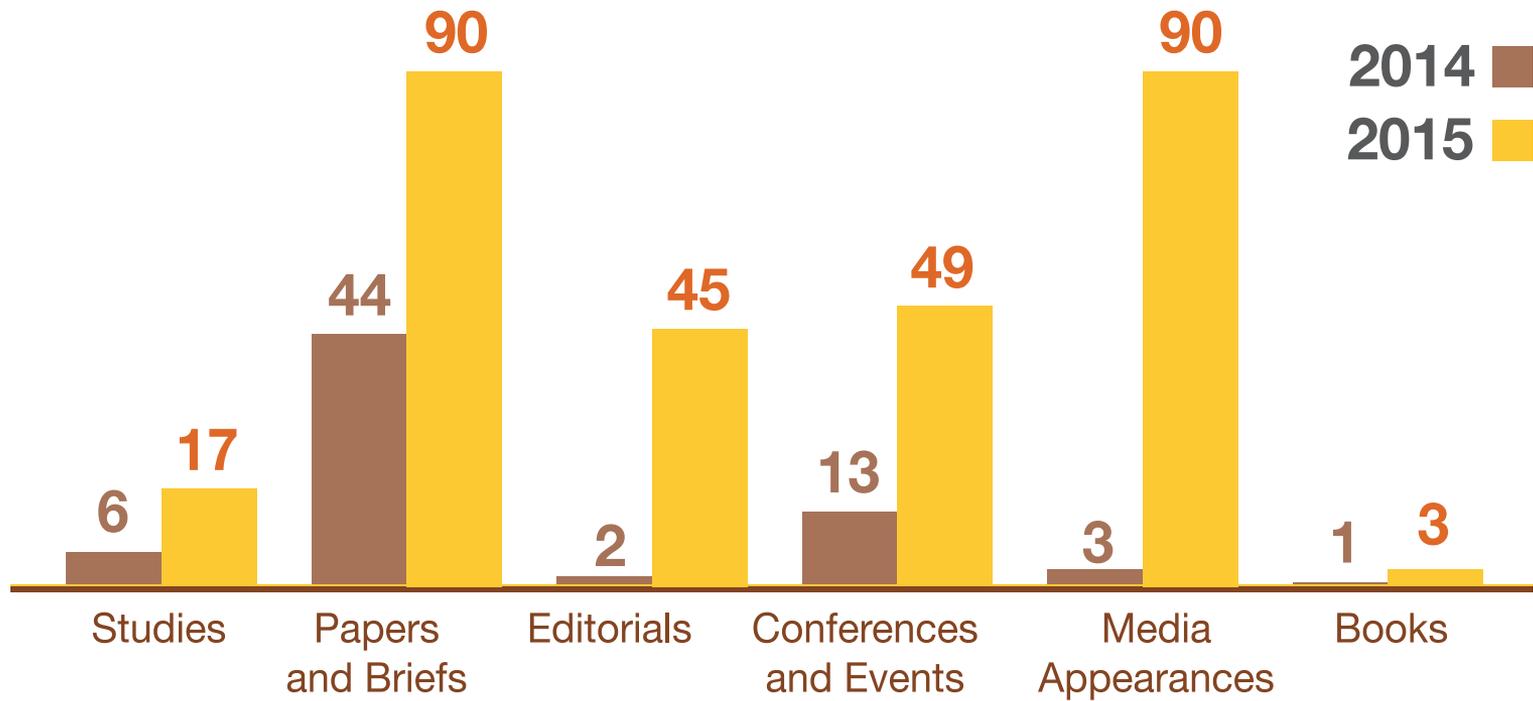


Information Unit - Maps Production 2015

Russian Strikes on Syria From 30th Sep - 8th Oct 2015 « Issue 3#»



A Comparison of Omran Accomplishments in 2014 and 2015





www.OmranDirasat.org



OmranDirasat



OmranDirasat



Omran Dirasat

