



عمران
للدراسات الاستراتيجية
OMRAN
Strategic Studies

One of Syrian Forum's Programs

Annual Report 2020



www.omrandirasat.org

   omrandirasat

About Us

- Established in 2013 in Turkey with presence in Syria, and an office in Washington, DC
- Publishes in-depth studies, analytical maps, and policy recommendations on Syrian and regional security, politics, economics, and local governance
- Hosts conferences, workshops, and seminars, bringing together scholars from around the world

Vision

An independent policy research center that presents an objective understanding of Syria and the region and serves as a reference for policymakers around the world

Mission

- To become an essential reference on Syria and the region on political and security affairs, local governance and administration, and economic development.
- To publish policy studies and briefs that empower relevant actors and institutions working on Syrian affairs, support decision-making mechanisms, and assess a complex set of data to produce analytical maps and recommendations.

Omran center focuses on the following:



Public Policies



Governance & Political System



Security & Military



Rule of Law



Regional & International Affairs



Economic Recovery & Development

Accomplishments 2020

2

Studies

21

Research Papers

213

Conferences & Events

148

Media Appearances

11

Editorials

4

Books

23

Field Maps

4

Surveys & Polls

44

Published and
Unpublished Reports

Accomplishments through 2020

52

Studies

445

Research Papers

547

Conferences & Events

689

Media Appearances

125

Editorials

16

Books

Why Omran?

Promoting a Comprehensive Reform Agenda

in Syria as an entry point for stability, security and development

Accurate Field Data

through a network of relationships, field researchers and partnerships

Extensive Reach

among Syrian, regional and international decisions makers and provide analysis and opinion for Arab and international actors

Bridge-Building Platform

Provides a platform for Syrian policy makers, human rights activists, local council members and scholars to exchange and develop new ideas and solutions for Syria

In-depth Assessment

conducts critical analysis of current political and social issues in Syria and the surrounding region through direct access to information on the ground

Issues

- Security & Military
- International Forces
- The Political Process
- Rule of Law & Accountability
- Terrorism & Extremist Groups
- Constitutional & Election Process
- Identity, Social Contract & Community Cohesion

- Education
- Healthcare
- Refugees Resettlement
- Local Economic Development
- Youth & Women Empowerment
- Livelihood Development Policies
- Regional & International Geopolitical Affairs

Research Programs

- Governance
- Security & Military
- Kurdish Affairs
- Rebuilding Syria

Omran's Impact

Continuous engagement with public opinion and decision makers. Omran provides a range of solutions and policies that drive political change and stability.

Social Engagement

- 650K people reached through social media and online platforms
- 3,851 people engaged in physical meetings
- 26 agencies republished outputs of the Omran Center, while 18 local and international institutions relied on the Center's outputs as a main source for their published materials
- 44 local, regional and international media organizations engaged with the aim of informing the public on the developments and events of the Syrian issue
- 8 field meetings inside Syria with local activists and local groups: Ihsan's Women Empowerment Centers, Ihsan's Child Protection Centers, Local Councils and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Research Collaboration

- 6 research products published by several Arab and foreign intellectual institutions
- Research consultations for 18 researchers working on the completion of studies and research related to the Syrian issue in various political, economic and social aspects
- 62 events through which the center provided a number of academic lectures and training workshops for a number of youth activists
- Training 9 university students with the aim of developing their skills and research tools through 125 training hours and employing 3 of them

Engagement with Decision Makers

- 28 events with local activists (civil society organizations, activists, human rights defenders, military personnel, academics)
- 20 research meetings with Arab and foreign think tanks institutions
- 51 meetings with representatives of local, regional and international states and political figures

Highlights

Studies & Research Papers

- Turkey's New Approach After the Attack on Turkish Soldiers in Idlib - February
- Power Centers in The Regime's Army 2020: "The Al-Safa Alawite Approach" - March
- The Issue of Refugees and Displaced Persons at the Heart of the Crisis and Settlement in Syria - April
- East of the Euphrates: Competition of International Forces and Dialogue of Local Forces - May
- The Commission and Restructuring of Jihadi Space ... Internal Arrangements and External Messages - June
- Replacement of the Syrian pound with the Turkish pound in northern Syria: The Extent of Success - July
- Soft Coordination to salvage early recovery in opposition areas - September
- Baath democracy... the 2020 elections and approaches to consecrating Article 8 - October
- Religion and the State: Between Liberal and Conservative groups in Syria: a reading of three Syrian constitutions 1920 -1950 -1973 - November

Editorials

- Elections in Syria... a right or privilege - January
- The military campaign against Idlib... a reading in the stages of international highways - January
- Hayat Tahrir al-Sham... Questions of the future and possibilities of dismantling - February
- The most prominent military orders with the March 8 coup and their impact on Syria's current ordeals - March
- Positive messages between Kurdish parties... Wishes burdened with challenges - March
- Makhoul as a change in the regime's intentions... Attempts to return to Hafez al-Assad's balance - May
- The Syrian Army's Doctrine: Transformations of reducing the homeland to the party and then the leader - June
- The chemical massacre and the criminalization of al-Assad - August
- The Front for Peace and Freedom... a hope of effectiveness and a reality full of challenges - August
- French politics falter in fragile European geopolitics - October

Special Reports

- The governance situation and reconstruction in the areas of the Syrian regime during November and December 2019
- Assassinations in opposition areas during the period from August to December 2019
- Indicators of early economic recovery in opposition-held areas from July to December, 2019
- The Assad regime's policies to confront the Corona virus: between denial and manipulation
- Briefing on the latest developments in Idlib - (in English)
- Autonomous Administration and the Corona Virus crisis: a weak health sector and increasing challenges
- Hurras al-Din: emergence, dynamics and future trends
- The economy in regime areas... low growth indicators in 2019 and downside scenarios during 2020
- Indicators of early economic recovery in opposition-held areas during the first half of 2020
- Assassinations in opposition areas during the period from January to June 2020.

Research Training Program

Out of 65 applicants, 9 Syrian students, Bachelor and Master's level, selected according to specific criteria, underwent 125 training hours divided in two parts:

Part 1: Methodology, analysis and field work approaches:

- Public policy research and its dynamics in Syria
- Think-tanks approaches, role, and importance
- Concepts of social sciences research
- The political process and the multiple negotiation tracks
- Map of actors and their interests
- The political and military scene
- The economic, administrative and development scenes

Part 2: Practical / field work

- Preparing and conducting a research paper
- Research production cycle till publication
- Event/ workshop organization: design of the event and size, choice of main theme, title and sub-topics
- Managing discussion and facilitating sessions
- Logistic preparations

Omran’s Research Projects

1 Local Communities as Agents of Cohesion and Stability

	Number	Women	Men	Total Reach
Individual Interviews	362	104	258	362
Focus Groups	82	156	268	424
Round-table Discussions	30	97	196	293
Polls	3	40	107	147
Workshops	4	41	116	157

The project aimed to promote a culture of dialogue in local communities to reach common views on the future vision of Syria. Conversations centered around public affairs, governance, state building and social cohesion. The project also worked on raising awareness among local actors on issues that affect state building in a future stage

A major component to the project was related to managing conflicts. Local communities were exposed to collective knowledge based on several different dynamics and proposed realistic frameworks aimed at developing community capital, social cohesion and promoting issues of governance and accountability

2 Stability Indicators in Syria and Its Link to the Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons

	Number
Published Works	4
Discussion Tables	2
Polls	1/600 sample
Workshops	1

This project was implemented with the aim of developing measurable indicators to study local security and safety conditions in Syria that may affect the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. This was done through surveys in select Syrian regions as well as neighboring countries among refugees. Questionnaires, personal interviews, desk surveys and field monitoring methods were used to implement this project

3 Developing a Road Map Towards a Decentralized Syria

	Number
Research Outcomes	1
Focus Groups	10
Bilateral Interviews	10
Workshops	2

At the start of 2020, Omran Center and LACU launched a project to develop a community-based Roadmap to Decentralization for Future Syria to serve as a live document, while outlining the path and range of options for decentralization in post-conflict Syria and challenges thereof based on a multi-track consultative process. The Roadmap to Decentralization for Future Syria thus had two complementary purposes: Creating a space for dialogue and linkages across and within Syrian Political Tracks I-III both inside and outside Syria; and providing a roadmap to decentralization, a framework for discussion on future governance of Syria



Books

The results of a research project launched by the center at the beginning of 2020, titled: **“Stability Indicators in Syria & Its Link to the Return of Refugees & Displaced Persons”** and included four components:

The Security Landscape in Syria and its Impact on the Return of Refugees Opinion Survey (Ar & En)

The aim of survey is to identify realities of the sub-indicators related to the security stability index in Syria, which include efficiency of security services and the legal system, the behavior of these agencies and their security

operations, as well as the accountability and follow-up systems related to complaints. The paper also analyzed the extent these indicators have on the return of Syrian refugees from neighboring countries

Indicators of Security Stability in Syria and Refugees Return

An Evaluation of Select Cases (Ar & En)

The report focused on four indicators of critical importance encompassing individual and community security. These indicators are:

- Assassinations
- Bombings
- Arrests
- Kidnappings

This was conducted through a selected sample representing different cities and geographic locations. The purpose was to assess the rates of security stability associated with early recovery and social stability processes, whether related to those residing inside Syria, those displaced from other areas and refugees abroad who demand a dignified, safe and voluntary return

Safe Environment as a Precondition for the Return of Refugees and the Internally Displaced People

(Ar & En)

The paper served as a summary of the research project, focusing on three areas:

- Refugee perspectives on the issue of return and its security links
- The concept of civil-military relations as the legal, institutional and governance regulator for a stable and secure environment

- Security indicators that affects the life of citizens in general, by monitoring all security operations related to assassinations, bombings, arrests and kidnappings throughout Syria

The paper was based on two focus group meetings that were held inside Syria, in areas retaken by the regime after 2018. The paper is also based on a dialogue workshop and individual interviews conducted in Turkey

An Assessment of Civil-Military Relations in Syria

(Ar & En)

This paper focused on the readiness of security environments in areas controlled by different ruling patterns, while demonstrating its effect on the criteria for safe return

The paper also drew on the extent of civil-military relations being a factor driving the return of refugees



Events and Conferences

Hosted by Omran

- **Overview of Idlib: Challenges and Expected Scenarios:**
Discussion session focused on latest developments in Idlib and expected scenarios that could occur in the near future. (online)
- **Reality of the Political Process and Extent of a Solution in Syria:**
The event was co-hosted by ORSAM Center for Middle Eastern Studies and discussed dialogue of the political process and its gaps. (online)
- **The Political Process in Syria and What is Nationally Required:**
In collaboration with the LACU and the Syrian National Coalition Office, the political process was discussed as well as the role of national entities in strengthening their partnerships (A'zaz City)
- **Indicators of Security and Stability and its Consequences on Safe Returns:**
In collaboration with LACU, the event attempted to strengthen social dialogue around the factors influencing refugee decisions to return and challenges of defining a 'safe environment'
- **Disputes between Assad and Makhlof and its Potential Consequences on the Syrian File:**
Research group presented recommendations to the Syrian opposition revealing national economic corruption and its effects on the public and international general opinion. (online)
- **Syrian Civil Society in an Unstable Environment:**
This event discussed the importance of independent Syrian civil society organizations, its shared interests and their responsibilities. (online)
- **Dissecting Stalemate of the Syrian File:**
The event focused on efforts of the international community overcoming stalemate of the Syrian file and reaching a political solution. (online)
- **Kurdish Dialogue - Successes, Failures and its Effects on the Syrian File:**
The event was conducted as a follow up to Omran's research paper related to overcrowding of international actors and dialogue of local actors in NE Syria. (online)
- **Developments of the Political Scene and Challenges on a Local Scale:**
In partnership with the Independent Syrian Kurdish Group - the event was hosted inside Syria and centered around developments of the Syrian political scene and its local challenges
- **Stability Indicators in Syria and its Link with Refugee and Internally Displaced Returns:**
A public event to present results of a research study. Among the attendees were researchers, media personalities and representatives from local, regional and international civil society organizations.

- **Decentralization as an Entry Point to a Political Resolution:**
Dialogue workshop conducted at the Middle East Research Institute (MERI) in Erbil, Iraq. The framework was to understand local dynamics and assess guarantees for stability conditions within the Syrian context
- **Roadmap to a Decentralized Future Syria:**
10 Focus groups were conducted to develop a roadmap encompassing decentralized elements for a future Syria
- **Field Visits to Local Organizations in Northern Aleppo Suburbs:**
In an effort to strengthen partnerships and develop common goals between Omran and local organizations in Syria. Talks centered around increasing collaboration and strengthening dialogue
- **Through Omran's Fellowship Program:**
Select students presented their research papers to a panel of activists and civil society representatives and experts. (Gaziantep, Turkey)



Attended Events

- **The Crisis in Idlib and the Evolving War in Syria:**
Discussion panel hosted by SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research - Ankara, Turkey
- **Effects of Migration on Labor Markets:**
Research symposium organized by RAND Corporation to discuss published reports with experts. (online)
- **Supporting Livelihoods of the Most Vulnerable People:**
Side event to the Brussels Conference; the United Kingdom's governmental development section discussed mechanisms on supporting continuous education and health services to displaced and refugee Syrians.
- **The Security Sector and its Role in Preserving a Safe Environment:**
A workshop conducted by the Syrian Platform through its Stabilization Committee at the Middle Eastern Studies Center - University of Hasan Kalyoncu (Azaz, Syria)
- **Changes of Religious Institutions in Damascus after 2011's Uprising:**
Discussion panel hosted by Carnegie Middle East Center
- **Results of the Kurdish Dialogue:**
A workshop conducted by ORSAM discussed the possibility of dialogue success or failure within the American presence in the region
- **Connection of the Lebanese and Syrian Economy:**
Workshop organized by Refugees - Partners, the American University in Beirut and the Syrian Center for Policy Research. Workshop was attended by experts and organizations working on Syrian refugee issues. (online)
- **Voices of Syrian Locals on the Constitution:**
Discussion hosted by the Stabilization Committee to discuss the Constitution and what is required by the Constitutional Committee.



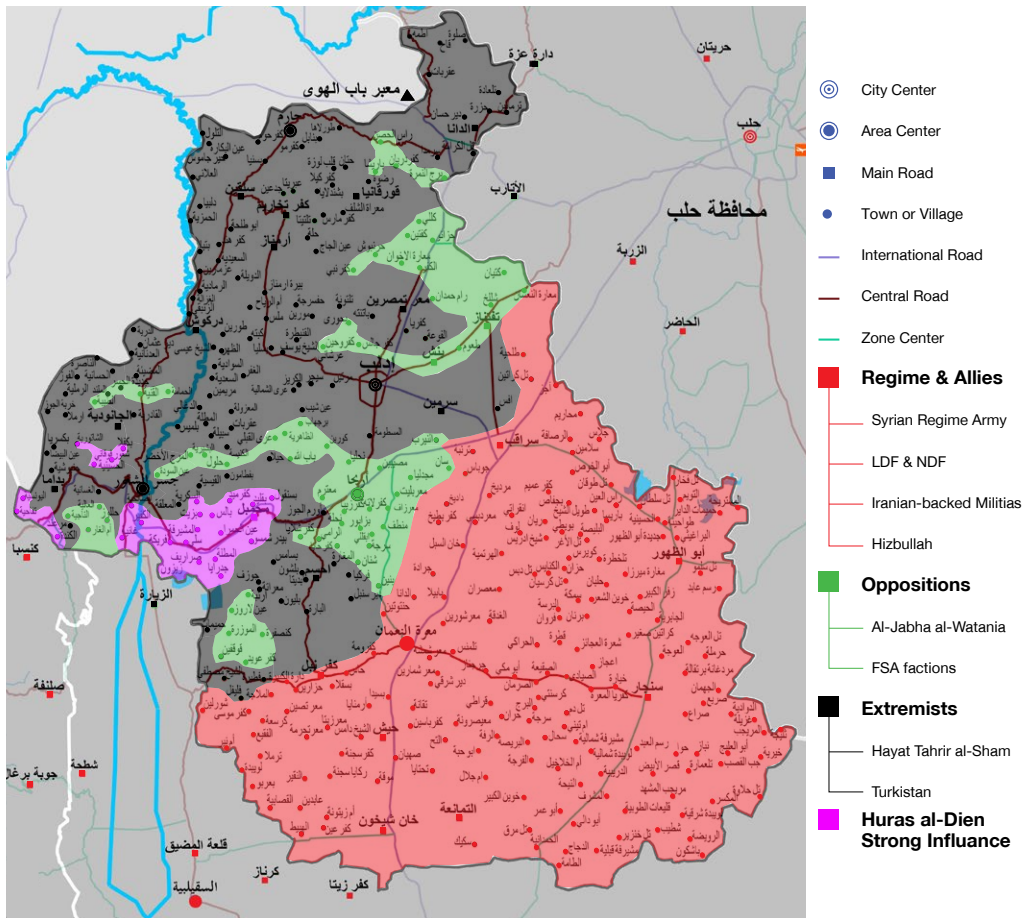
■ **Turkey's Steadfastness Towards Refugees-Expanding and Improving Economic Inclusivity of Syrians in Turkey:**

Workshop organized by the Atlantic Council and the United Nations Development Program. A joint report was launched. (online)

■ **Developing a Decentralization System in Post-Conflict Syria for the Sake of Sustainable Development:**

Interactive event organized by the United Nations ESCWA on introductory mechanisms on developing a decentralized system in Syria..

Maps

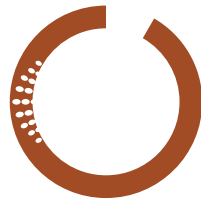


Media Coverage




Cooperation and Partnerships





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