

# Annual Report 2021



عمران  
للدراسات الاستراتيجية  
**OMRAN**  
Strategic Studies

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# Public Policy and Research

Omran is a policy research center focusing on presenting an objective understanding of the Syrian cause, including its local and international dynamics, as well as engage with stakeholders to create solutions and policies.



Public  
Policies



Governance &  
Political System



Security  
& Military



Rule  
of Law



Regional &  
International Affairs



Economic Recovery  
& Development

# 2021 Accomplishments

37

Research Papers

3

Studies

20

Field Maps

379

Conferences and Events

8

Published and Unpublished Reports

1

Surveys and Polls

168

Media Appearances

29

Editorials

1

Book

# Through 2021

482

Research Papers

55

Studies

857

Media Appearances

926

Conferences and Events

154

Editorials

17

Book

## Why Omran?

- Reinforcing the important role of policy research centers through reliable research outputs and community engagements related to the complex realities in Syria.
- Conducting objective evaluations of the transformations in Syria and proposing policies and recommendations that promote the Syrian narrative and Syria-tailored solutions.
- Engaging decision makers and public policy makers in Syria, countries in the region, and other countries with influence in Syria.
- Collecting and assessing field data and conducting regular visits inside Syria that expand our network and circles of influence and partnerships.
- Working in a systematic manner to build internal capacity of Syrian researchers through cumulative institutional knowledge that develop specialized scholarship in the different fields necessary for future Syria.
- Promoting a comprehensive reform agenda in Syria as an entry point for stability, security, and development.

## Research Programs

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

# Issues

- The Political Process
- Security and Military Affairs
- International Forces
- Terrorism and Extremist Groups
- Identity, Social Contract
- Community Cohesion
- Constitutional and Election Process
- Rule of Law and Accountability
- Refugee Resettlement
- Livelihoods Development Policies
- Education Policies
- Healthcare Policies
- Local Economic Development
- Regional & International Geopolitical Affairs
- Youth and Women Empowerment



# 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.**

## Research Collaboration

- 28 research products published by Arab and international intellectual institutions.
- 18 research consultations for researchers and students working on Syria.
- 66 workshops in collaboration with research centers, institutions, and other parties.

## Engagement with Decision Makers

- 61 events with local activists networks, Syrian NGOs, civil society organizations, lawyers, military experts, and scholars.
- 28 research meetings with Arab and international research centers and think tanks.
- 117 meetings/events with representatives of local, regional, and international states and political figures.

## Social Engagement

- 732,409 people reached through social media and online platforms.
- 12,047 people engaged in meetings and dialogues .
- 12 agencies republished outputs of Omran, while 31 local and international institutions relied on the center's outputs as a main source for their published materials.
- 109 field meetings and activities inside Syria with local activists, including Ihsan's protection centers, Local Councils and Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- 40 local, regional, and international media organizations engaged with the aim of informing the public on the developments and events of the Syrian issue.

# Highlights

- Challenges and motivations of attempts to create a political umbrella organization east of the Euphrates March (En & Ar)
- Early economic recovery in opposition areas in the second half of 2020 March (En & Ar)
- Assassinations in opposition areas during the period between July and December 2020 May (Ar)
- An analysis of attacks conducted by Russia and the regime in the vicinity of the M4 highway in Idlib May - June (En & Ar)
- Demining as an indicator of early recovery in both Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch regions May (Ar)
- Syrian presidential elections July (En)
- Evaluating the reality and effectiveness of agricultural livelihood programs in the Euphrates Shield and Afrin regions August (En)
- Chain of Command in the Syrian Army: Official and Unofficial Tracks November (En & Ar)
- Positioning of Turkish political parties towards the renewal of Turkish presence in Syria November (Ar)
- Sixth round of Constitutional Committee meetings: A floating agenda and chronic deadlock November (Ar)
- Daraa Reconciliation Agreements 2021: Context and Possible Repercussions on the Syrian Scene November (Ar)

# Research Training Programs

Omran completed 4 major training programs in 2021. The target audience were Syrian graduate students and Syria Students Union, both in Turkey and Syria.

## Research Training Program

**Istanbul, Turkey**

36 students applied and 16 applicants were accepted.

19 theoretical and practical instruction courses were delivered by Omran team totaling 56 hours.

The 16 students were later split into 4 working groups and began their field research project under the mentorship of Omran Center research team for 6 months.

## Training Program on Student Union Activism

**with the Syria Students Union**

The program was conducted in two phases with 5 sessions. Two sessions for student candidates and three sessions tailored for the elected executive committee of the Syrian Student Union.

56 students participated in this program; some of whom are currently in leadership positions in the Syrian Students Union.

## Syria Cause Awareness Program Tailored

**for the Syria Students Union**

12 online lectures/workshops were conducted addressing the Syria cause timeline, major historical junctures, political, social, and economic files, approaches to organizing student unions, and other issues that further enrich the knowledge base of students and enhance their engagement in public spaces.

## Research Training Program

**A'zaz, Syria**

In cooperation with Free Alepp University, 141 students applied to Omran's Research Training program, and 18 graduate students were accepted.

The program consisted of 40 theoretical and practical instruction hours, followed by 5 months of mentored field research.

The objective of the Istanbul and A'zaz programs was to familiarize young researchers with the cumulative knowledge base, and research approaches and methodology developed by Omran Center as a policy research center.

It highlighted the importance of think tanks, and mechanisms of how public policies are developed and evaluated.

Omran also presented an in-depth analysis of Syria's current affairs, its transformations, potential trends in the political, security, governance, developmental, and economic levels.

The program followed a systematic and methodical approach to build the capacities of young researchers in order to present a Syrian narrative on the Syrian affairs.



# Research Projects

## The Syrian Social Contract from Local Perspectives

The project aimed to develop a grassroots-based framework and approach for a national guidebook on “Shared Principles of the Social Contract.”

This was implemented through a series of activities that targeted different segments of influential local figures and Syrian communities both inside Syria and in main refugee hubs.

The discussions focused on shared values across Syria and constitutional principles that could be a common ground for national dialogues.

Omran researchers produced several research papers that may serve as important reference documents on the topic.

## Communities as Drivers of Stability and Cohesion

In its second phase that started in 2021 and continues throughout 2023, the project aims to better understand local communities and factors affecting social cohesion and stability, to empower actors in local communities, and to assess challenges related to governance, economic recovery, and community reconciliation.

All of this is achieved through a participatory dialogue methodology applied at the local and national levels to bond and bridge actors in the respective target audience.

The dialogues build on the collective knowledge base to formulate shared principles and solutions according to legal, societal, and institutional requirements that contribute to building solidarity, restoring trust between Syrians, and alleviating the negative effects of the conflict on local communities.

In the coming year there will be multiple activities and outputs of this project including research papers, focus group dialogues, local and national dialogues, and interviews with key local actors.

**4**

Research Papers

**6**

Workshops

**10**

Focus Groups

**1**

Surveys

**50**

In-depth Interviews

# Print Publication

## The Autonomous Administration: A Judicial Approach to Understanding the Model and Experience

(Ar & En)

This study attempted to examine the judicial authority in north-east Syria as an entry point to stability policies. The study consisted of seven chapters that assessed the nature, structure and working mechanisms of the judicial system in its various institutions and levels.

The first chapter outlined the philosophical origins and theories that the Autonomous Administration adopted in its administrative model, including the judiciary.

The remaining five chapters presented in-depth case studies of the five judicial districts declared by the Autonomous Administration.

The last chapter provides a concluding summary of the most prominent challenges and factors that hinder the work of the sector considering any future stabilization policy in the region.



# Events and Conferences

## Hosted by Omran

### A'zaz, Syria

- Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act: A reading in the context of the sanctions and their economic and political impacts. A dialogue session with the Political Committee of Idlib Governorate.
- A visit to Free Aleppo University. The meeting aimed to strengthen cooperation with the faculties of Political Sciences and Economics in order to develop the research and professional skills of current students and graduates.
- Indicator of Arab Normalization with Assad: A Reading of the Rationale and Expected Scenarios. A dialogue seminar held in cooperation with the Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) focused on the precursors of normalization with the Assad regime, its political and security contexts, and the positions of regional and international states.
- A visit to Sham International University in the liberated areas of Syria. The visit aimed to increase collaboration efforts with Omran and hold joint activities that benefit students.
- A visit to the Free Council of the Aleppo Governorate. The discussion focused on ways to enhance the council's effective communication and outreach efforts with local councils in order to synchronize and better respond to community needs.
- American and European Economic Sanctions on the Syrian Regime: A research symposium with Free Aleppo University.
- A Frozen Conflict Scenario and its Impact and Possible Trajectory: A research symposium with Free Aleppo University, Faculties of Law and Political Sciences, and Media Academy.

### Jarablus, Syria

A visit to strengthen collaboration efforts with the Local Council of Jarablus City and discuss Omran's upcoming dialogues and better understand local dynamics and challenges within the governance sector.

### Qabasin, Syria

A visit to the Local Council of Qabasin City to discuss field developments and security challenges in the region and enhancing joint cooperation projects.

### Akhtarin, Syria

Evaluating Living and Economic Conditions: A workshop in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the town of Akhtarin in rural Aleppo.

## Afrin, Syria

The Role of Youth Between Reality and Hope: A lecture at the Faculty of Education at Gaziantep University in Afrin highlighting the contribution of Syrian youth in the launch of protests in Syria and their significant impact and potential opportunity to serve at political, social, economic, and cultural levels.

## Al-Bab, Syria

- Impact of changes in the American Position in Syria East and West of the Euphrates River: Dialogue session in cooperation with Qiyam Foundation.
- Local Priorities and Needs of Stability: A round-table discussion hosted by the Youth Forum in Al-Bab, Syria, and Omran Center. Participants included local businesspersons, influential figures, local council members and activist youth in order to exchange ideas about the political and constitutional processes and ways to understand and serve their communities.
- Commercial and Industrial Realities: Challenges and Problems. Dialogue session with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- Developments East of the Euphrates and Expected Scenarios: A dialogue session in cooperation with the Hooz Center for Social Development attended by activists and members of civil society organizations.
- A visit to the Local Council of Al-Bab City to strengthen collaboration and mutual dialogues between local communities and local councils.

## Doha, Qatar

A Frozen Conflict Scenario and Future Possibilities in Syria: Research seminar in cooperation with the Syrian Business Forum.

## Online

- Expected Scenarios in Idlib Following the 16th Round of Astana Meetings and UNSC Res. 2585: An online dialogue session attended by many experts and Syrian activists.
- Iranian policies in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon: Evaluating the Past Decade: A research seminar in cooperation with the Middle East Research Institute (ORSAM) and attended by politicians and experts focusing on the Syrian issue.
- Early Economic Recovery in Opposition Areas: a research symposium attended by experts and local actors in economic and development affairs including local councils, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and representatives of relief and development organizations.

### Istanbul, Turkey

- Political Economy in Syria in 2021: A dialogue session hosted by Omran with Economist Dr. Samir Al Aita.
- A Reading of the Interests of Local, Regional, and International Actors in Daraa and the Priority of cross regional efforts: a workshop organized by Omran to dissect the positions of various actors regarding the latest events in Daraa and the possible scenarios.

### Gaziantep, Turkey

- Syria's Historical Context and Potential Future Trajectory: A dialogue session hosted by Omran with Dr. Yaser Al Aiti attended by activists and members of civil society organizations.
- The Role of Syrians in Preventing Rehabilitation Efforts of the regime: A discussion session presented by Mr. Ayman Abu Hashem attended by researchers and local civil society actors.



## Attended Events and Engagements

- The Role of Civil Society in National Debates: The Social Contract as a Model. A joint dialogue session in cooperation with Omran Center, Local Development Organizations, Syrian Dialogue Center, Ain al Sharq Center for Political Studies, and the Local Administration Councils Unit.
- US Sanctions on the Syrian Regime: A Comparison between the Trump and Biden Administrations. Omran Center contributed to a research symposium. This was hosted by Nama Center for Research, A'zaz.
- The Escalation of Grievances in Syria: Omran Center was a main presenter at the annual TRT World Forum.
- American Policies in Syria under the Biden Administration: Omran Center experts participated in the discussion hosted by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- More than a year after the Moscow Agreement, Continuity Factors and Expected Scenarios: Omran Center participated in a dialogue symposium hosted by the Center for Middle East Studies (ORSAM).
- Omran Center attended a dialogue session on the 10th anniversary of the Syrian revolution hosted by the Center for Middle East Studies (ORSAM).
- The Social Contract and the Constitution: Concepts and Priorities. Omran Center was a main participant in a symposium organized by the Syrian Dialogue Center.





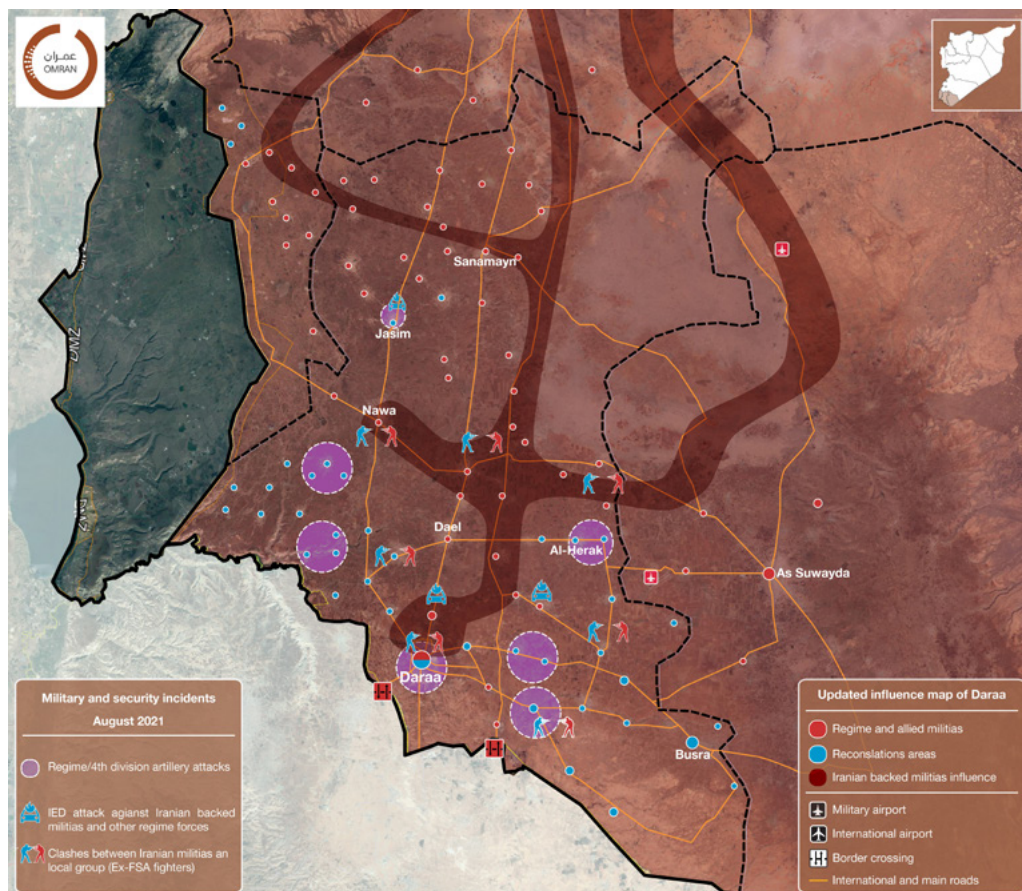


# Attended Events and Engagements

- Statement of the European Union and Turkey, Reassessment of the Migration Agreement: A panel discussion organized by the Center for Policy, Economic and Social Studies (SETA), in which Omran Center participated as an official speaker.
- Omran Center participated in a research symposium hosted by the Arab Planning Institute discussing the impact of a number of policies and programs that aim to alleviate poverty rates in the Middle East.
- Early Recovery Process in Northern Syria and Women's Needs and Expectations: A research symposium hosted by the Syrian Women's Network.
- Omran Center reviewed and provided comments on the draft version of the second edition of the Strategic Framework for Policy Alternatives. Omran experts also participated in the ESCWA Expert Meetings.
- Repercussions of Presidential Elections in Syria: A roundtable discussion hosted by the Center for Middle East Studies. (ORSAM)
- The Security Situation in Syria and Possible Scenarios: A workshop organized by the Geneva Center for Security Policy. (GCSP)
- Post-Election Iran, Implications and Uncertainties Ahead: A research symposium by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies. (ISPI)



# Maps



# Media Coverage



# Collaborations and Partnerships





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