REFUGEE RETURN IN SYRIA: DANGERS, SECURITY RISKS AND INFORMATION SCARCITY

July 2019

Table

Boxes

Abbreviations

CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CTC	Counter Terrorism Court
HLP	Housing, Land, and Property
IDP	internally displaced person
MFC	Military Field Court
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOLA	Ministry of Local Administration and Environment
NSB	National Security Bureau
RMP	Russian Military Police
SAA	Syrian Arab Armies
SNHR	Syrian Network for Human Rights
STJ	Syrians for Truth and Justice
SYP	Syrian pounds
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Executive Summary

More than 13 million people have been displaced within and outside Syria during the country's 8-year ongoing conflict. As immediate conflict-related violence reduces and President Bashar al-Assad his allies consolidate territorial control over south and central Syria, the pressure on refugees in neighbouring countries to return has increased. This new stage in the war has also boosted so-called voluntary returns by those facing difficult circumstances in their places of refuge.

The conditions to which refugees are returning, and how the mechanics of the process work, are poorly understood—including by the refugees themselves. As Assad consolidates control over larger swathes of territory, less and less information is available. Those living in government-controlled areas have a renewed sense of fear about communicating with friends and family in other parts of Syria or neighbouring countries. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the agency charged with monitoring conditions on the ground, continues to face access and data collection restrictions from the Syrian government which they have tacitly accepted to protect their ability to operate in the country at all.

This report examines the broad concerns of all categories of returnees—those returning to Syria as refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), or as the result of the so-called reconciliation process— to identify the key challenges and the extent of the risks involved. Assessing the conditions affecting all those returning to the state, rather than only refugees, provides a greater opportunity to identify patterns and concerns and to understand the nature and legitimacy of guarantees offered by Assad and his international backers.

The study finds that conditions on the ground are worrying. Even among the self-selecting 'voluntary' returnees, hundreds of detentions and arrests have been reported—including of refugees from abroad, IDPs from armed opposition areas, and those who have undergone a 'reconciliation' in an area retaken by the government. Recent detainees report having experienced brutal torture while in custody; deaths in custody have also been recorded.

The security sector is re-establishing pervasive (formal and informal) control over society. A reduction in the availability of the extractive war economy activities that have kept the Syrian military and security sector afloat throughout the conflict has caused them to turn to alternative means of income generation. Detentions and arrests are being conducted both to gather intelligence and punish those considered disloyal and to extract payments from families for the release of loved ones. Other forms of extortion are also affecting the security of those living in and returning to the country.

The security sector is controlling the returns process. The security services are institutionalizing a system of self-incrimination and informing to build large databases of information about real and perceived threats from within the Syrian population. To return from abroad or internally, as well as to reconcile affairs with the state, individuals must fill in extensive forms that defy international practice for refugee returns. The existence and nature of the forms is poorly understood and must be highlighted as a threat to any Syrian choosing (or being pressured) to return. Currently, no such concerns are being raised by those working with refugee communities.

The study also finds that state guarantees to communities or individuals as part of reconciliation agreements are not being met. Additionally, instances have been recorded of individuals from all returnee categories being arrested, detained, conscripted, or harassed after completing the reconciliation process and receiving protection or security papers. Based on the evidence, no communities or individuals should expect the government of Syria or its benefactors to fulfil the terms of any such agreement.

The process of securitized reconciliation and return is being undertaken even within ostensibly humanitarian venues, such as so-called IDP shelters within Syria. In Eastern Ghouta, thousands of people were offered shelter and aid within IDP shelters during the military campaign waged by Assad and Russia against the area. There, men were separated from women and children and the process of reconciliation and release began. Under the watch of the aid organizations that provided assistance to the shelters, men were detained and conscripted while the so-called reconciliation forms were completed. This process is currently being repeated in Homs, where evacuees from Rukban IDP camp are being detained, ill treated, and forced to undergo interrogation and reconciliation. Fears that similar processes could be used in the event of larger-scale returns from Lebanon are rising.

In February 2018, with minimal consultation, the UNHCR detailed 22 protection thresholds that must be met before large-scale or facilitated returns could begin. Despite the thresholds representing only the minimum acceptable standards according to IHL experts, none of these thresholds is currently being met—nor is there any way in which most of them *could* be met given the current situation. Underpinning these thresholds is the need to monitor the current conditions, including the security of those who choose to voluntarily return. Presently, no such monitoring is possible.

Russia's thwarted attempt to sell its own refugee return plan to European governments last year suggests the European Union's (EU's) position on returns is firmer than some expected. The Russian plan, which favoured logistics over rights, was the first overture toward bartering refugee return for reconstruction funding. Since then, Russia has turned its attention toward Lebanon and, to a lesser degree, Jordan, and is currently negotiating minor points in an attempt to appease Lebanon and allow for an increase in refugee returns from the country. This process has increased the focus on minor adjustments to housing, land and property (HLP) issues, the rate of conscription, and access to personal identification documentation. These amends will not produce tangible changes in the conditions and prognosis of Syria's potential returnees.

This report assess these issues in order to formulate specific policy objectives to be pursued by peace-builders, European governments, humanitarians, and parties to the conflict. The research was undertaken between November 2018 and April 2019 and involved interviews with local interlocutors or community focal points from local areas, as well as with more than 30 individuals and focus groups. These individuals were located in government-controlled areas of Syria, in Idlib and northern Aleppo, Turkey, and Lebanon. Each took enormous risks in speaking with the researchers; for every interview conducted, dozens of individuals were unwilling to speak. Researchers also interviewed 15 other actors, including documentation organizations, refugee experts, and domestic and international nongovernmental organization workers. The research is not exhaustive in either scope or geographical reach, but it provides an initial set of findings to help identify problems for further study.

Key Findings

- Significant numbers of arrests and detentions are occurring across the country, in all categories of returnees: refugees returning from abroad, IDPs returning from within the country, or through reconciliation. These risks are reflected in refugee intentions surveys, which routinely identify security concerns as the primary barrier to return. Particular risk profiles appear to be more susceptible to arrest, such as those who return without seeking security permissions and reconciling before travelling, individuals who worked in sectors or activities believed to be associated with the opposition (journalism, aid work, local councils, rescue workers), men of military age, and those with family members who were forcibly displaced to Idlib or Aleppo. However, arrests are taking place across all demographics, and it cannot be assumed that only those within these groups are at risk of being detained or arrested, now or in the future.
- All Syrians returning to the jurisdiction of the state are forced to interact directly with the security sector, completing forms that force them to volunteer information that may incriminate them or their loved ones. For Syrians living abroad—in neighbouring countries, or Europe—or in areas

outside of government control within the country itself, there is presently no pathway to return that does not involve volunteering extensive amounts of information. There are no guarantees in place that this information will not be used against the individual or others in the future.

- Syrian returnees are being forced to complete illegal forms as part of a system of return and reconciliation in which the UNHCR is not formally engaged. UNHCR has remained indirectly involved, by providing technical and material support, but has not spoken out on behalf of refugees and IDPs or about the inherent risks and illegalities of these returns and reconciliations forms and pledges. The UN office has also been silent about its lack of access to both returnees and communities, the presence of significant security concerns across the country, and the lack of independent and comprehensive information about the nature and level of security threats as measured against the UNHCR protection thresholds. This disengagement represents a failure to uphold its principles, and risks significant harm to returning IDPs and refugees.

- The security sector is exploiting the return and reconciliation process to re-invigorate and institutionalize its historic use of local informants to gather intelligence and control the population. The government is continuing to build a vast repository of information about anyone returning to, or remaining in, the country. Historically, this kind of information has been used to blackmail or arrest individuals who are perceived as a threat or problem for any reason.

- Negotiated guarantees are not being honoured at the regional, local, or individual level. There is evidence to suggest that reconciliations and local agreements between Russia, the Assad government, and local communities are not being upheld in practice. Nor have individual reconciliation agreements—designed to grant security guarantees to individuals—prevented the arrest, harassment, and detention of reconciled Syrians across the country. Additionally, a national amnesty regarding military conscription issued in 2018 has made no tangible difference to Syrians. For this reason, it is impossible to advise any community group or individual, either inside or outside the country, that negotiations or agreements with any of these parties would be in any way maintained or upheld, now or in the future.

- There is some evidence that Russian agreements are more likely to be upheld than those made with the Syrian government. While Russia has not always upheld all of its promises, this seems to have been at least in part due to their inability to enforce absolute control over the governments of Syria and Iran, which have frequently sought to undermine these deals. The presence of the Russian Military Police has improved immediate security for civilians in some areas, though this has not equated to overall or long-term security.

Security Sector and Structures

Prior to 2011, the primary task of the intelligence services was to monitor Syria's citizens. Pre-war residents of the heavily controlled and securitized state coined the phrase 'the walls have ears'. Syria has four main security intelligence branches (see Box 1) and two minor branches (discussed below). Each of these bodies is managed by the National Security Bureau (NSB), which is overseen by the president's office. The Presidential Guards Office also maintains contact and influence across all security agencies. The NSB was headed by Brigadier General Hisham Bekhtyar until his death in a 2012 bombing that killed several government ministers. Since then, it has been headed by the infamous commander Ali Mamlouk.

While each of the four main security agencies has a specific role, there is extensive crossover between their activities. Each agency is comprised of a series of departments, known as branches, in addition to regional offices which are led by some of the most powerful men in each province. Political Security is spread throughout the Syrian provinces; it is the most intrusive into citizens' daily lives. The agency is closely linked to civil records offices, which provide bureaucratic civil documentation, and maintains an archive of all citizens who have requested paperwork related to everyday activities such as applying for a marriage certificate or buying a house. Political Security relies on a network of informants and agents spread throughout society, using state employees and members of Ba'ath Party branches to monitor citizens' views and relationships. These informants gather information by tricking their acquaintances into making incriminating statements about the regime and submit reports to the security branches in return for payment or sought-after jobs.

Box 1: Syria's Four Main Security Intelligence Branches

Air Force Intelligence—Maintains the closest relationship to Assad. Its staff is comprised mostly of Alawite and loyalist officers. The agency was not well known before 2011, but has been a key player in the conflict, and committed extensive human rights abuses. It is comprised of seven branches plus regional offices, the most notorious of which is the Investigation Branch.

Political Security Intelligence—The administrative heartbeat of the agencies, this agency is made up of ten branches that monitor Syrians abroad and in embassies and issue licences for businesses and other activities inside the country.[1] For instance, the Political Parties Branch and the State Affairs Branch monitor state employees and politicians, and the Prisons Branch manages all civilian prisons in the country.

State Security Intelligence—Comprised of around a dozen branches, plus geographical offices, the agency covers the training and evaluation of workers in all other security branches. Information Branch 255 oversees administration and travel bans, Counter-Terrorism Branch 295 was involved in suppressing the initial protests in Daraa and Banayis, Internal Branch 251 monitors the opposition and ensures appointments to councils and committees, Branch 279 oversees diplomatic missions inside and outside Syria, and Branch 300 engages in spying and undercover operations.

Military Security Intelligence—Includes a dozen branches plus regional offices. The most notorious are Branch 293, which oversees officers' affairs, and Branch 235 (also known as the Palestinian Branch), which is responsible for monitoring Palestinian groups, parties, and refugees. The Information Branch monitors media and journalism inside and outside Syria, Branch 211 specializes in monitoring the internet and websites and is believed to be responsible for the Syrian Electronic Army, alongside Branch 225, which covers telecommunication and mobile phone operators. This agency is thought to manage the flow of Jihadi networks from Syria to Iraq and Lebanon.[2]

While Air Force Intelligence[3] has historically been a lesser-known agency that largely operated on military air bases and in civilian airports, during the conflict it has played a critical role in some of the most brutal treatment of political opponents of the Syrian government. In the past, Military Security focused on the army and has several branches that manage and monitor officers and soldiers, but their role has expanded to cover Palestinian affairs and media and information monitoring. State

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[1] Syrian Network for Human Rights, *Syrian Security Branches and Persons in Charge*, 1 April 2013 (in English), http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/Syrian_security_branches_and_Persons_in_charge_en.pdf, accessed 13 May 2019.

[2] Maan Talla, 'Syrian security services and the necessities of structural and functional change', *Syria Noor*, 14 January 2016 (in Arabic), https://syrianoor.net/article/1162, accessed 13 May 2019.

[3] Anwar al-Bounni, 'Security services in Syria. Reality and change', *Geiroon*,1 January 2017 (in Arabic), https://geiroon.net/archives/72521, accessed 13 May 2019.

Security Intelligence trains and evaluates the other agencies المخابرات 20%, while also overseeing administration such as travel bans, and was involved in the suppression of the initial protests.

There are two lesser security agencies. The first is the Criminal Security Department, which manages the traffic police and police stations around the country.. It was not directly involved in detaining or monitoring political opponents, but transferred them to its prisons from other intelligence branches. The second, the Customs Department, manages the customs force and regulates imported products as well as the free trade zones   . With the legal restrictions and informal monopoly contracts operating in Syria, this department has greater power than might be expected.

Since the uprising began, President Bashar al-Assad has relied heavily on the security sector to maintain control of the country. These agencies monitored, arrested, tortured, and executed political opponents and peaceful protestors alike; the next section of the report examines the evidence. To tighten his control over the security services, Assad generated hostility and competition between them in a variety of ways. The internal performance indicators for departments and individuals are linked to loyalty and absolute obedience to authority.

To give security officials a stake in the success of the security apparatus and its grip on the population, they were given access to (and jurisdiction over) all aspects of the state, which has constituted an enormous source of wealth for them. For example, each border port belongs to a single security agency, which controls the wealth generated there.[4] Agencies also maintain detailed files on individual officials, including records of all corrupt activities and transgressions, in order to easily dispose of them if they threaten the regime.

The intervention of the security services into Syria's civil service, judicial, and other services has contributed to the spread of providing public service for personal interest within these organizations. Material gains and benefits are sought in return for turning a blind eye to administrative, and even criminal, offences. At the same time, these behaviours have deepened the culture of favouritism and patronage, as well as the rates of malicious reporting or informing against perceived opponents. This culture has also facilitated a growth in extortion, which is especially problematic for traders, industrialists, and investors, who rely on permission from the security branches to import, export, build, or to conduct other work with the government, which leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. This control also impacts a range of civilians, as permissions and licences are required for a number of activities in Syria, including renting or selling a home or taking up a regulated profession.

The security services also exercise absolute power over the humanitarian sector in Syria. Throughout the conflict, aid convoys and projects have had to be approved by both line ministries and the Relief Committee, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MOLA). The Relief Committee requires the signatures of the heads of both the Military and Air Force Intelligence Services—Muhammad Mahalla and Jamil Hassan, respectively—on any humanitarian access request. These agencies have not approved humanitarian access to populations regarded to be anti-government or politically problematic; these civilians have subsequently been deprived of aid and subject to siege.

The security services are now in control of local and individual reconciliations, refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) returns, and all reconstruction efforts. Therefore no discussion of civilian protection in Syria or refugee return is possible without addressing the inherent threat that the security sector poses to individuals and communities. A number of aspects of the security forces and structures—and how they operate—are important to highlight, particularly as they relate to returnees.

Informing
The extent of the Syrian government's intelligence gathering from local informants was revealed early in the conflict, when towns fell under armed opposition control and intelligence branches were ransacked. When rebel groups took control of Al Bab in 2012, Political Security offices were found to contain numerous documents about town residents and details of how information was gathered

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[4] Omran for Studies, 'Syrian security services and the necessities of structural and functional change', 14 July 2016 (in Arabic), https://www.omrandirasat.org/component/k2/tag/العامة20%المخابرات20%إدارة.html, accessed 13 May 2019.

through networks of local informants and information systems.[5] The scale of the practice surprised locals, as did the identities of those informing and the wide range of information the security services were recording on each of them. A May 2019 SJAC report based on more than 5,000 documents recovered from government of Syria security branches during the conflict also confirmed the use of informations and the way in which these networks were activated during the initial protests in 2011 to stifle dissent and political opposition.[6]

A loyalist source explained that informing is currently occurring even more frequently than before the war, describing it as a form of informal social control. Corruption and illegal economic activity are rife, so snitching on neighbours and competitors has become common as individuals seek to maintain their personal sphere of influence.[7]

Other interviewees confirmed that informing on others was becoming commonplace as Assad consolidates control, which forces people to find ways to ingratiate themselves with the regime and state security structures for safety. One local interviewee stated that: 'There are many types [of people who write denunciations]: there are neighbours, there are people who wish to do evil to clean their record with the regime and gain its trust. There are people who do this to get money for their reports. As far as I was informed, there are reports for which people can get about SYP 200,000. And of course there are people who write reports for the sake of personal revenge or something similar.'[8]

This technique also appears to have been institutionalized in the reconciliation and returns forms, which involve both informing and self-incrimination. This process is helping the security sector collect in-depth information on individuals for reasons that are not yet clear, though history suggests it is likely to be instrumentalized at some point in the future. See the *Forms for Returnees and those Reconciling* section for further details.

Military Industrial Complex
As the economy faltered, the Syrian government and its allies faced financial difficulties, which has made financing the ongoing war effort increasingly difficult. As a result, the military, security, and intelligence apparatus have been funded at all levels through war economy activities, in particular bribes and looting. For instance, informal payments are sought to allow certain activities such as giving transporters access to besieged areas or areas of government control. Bribes are paid at high levels to maintain monopolies and contracts, and at checkpoints, which has subsidized stagnant government military wages.

Likewise, areas returned to government control have been stripped of value. A loyalist source described visiting a suburb of Eastern Ghouta with the Syrian Arab Armies (SAA) 4th Brigade immediately after the government took control of the area. He observed well-planned, systematic looting; particular techniques were employed to acquire high-value times such as high-quality benchtops. The practice is so widespread that copper (from looted copper wire) was one of the country's top exports in 2014.[9]

The finite nature of these revenue streams is now fuelling a security crisis. Without new properties and territories to loot, and with fewer sieges and opportunities to seek regular bribes, the additional cash flow keeping the military and security sectors afloat is drying up. They are now turning to activities such as kidnapping for ransom or seeking regular protection payments from businesses to prevent the regular arrest of their employees or the looting of their properties.[10]

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[5] *AlJazeera*, 'Syria files reveal regime espionage', 2 August 2012 (in English), https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/08/20128213363370291.html, accessed 13 May 2019.
[6] SJAC, 'Walls Have Ears, May 2019, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oefoZDsIXf9PnslRAXwQyJBX1vpBWICp/view
[7] Interview with a loyalist source, November 2018.
[8] Interview with a former resident of Eastern Ghouta, February 2019.
[9] Chloe Cornish and Assar Khattab, 'Can Syria rebuild with Assad still in power?' *Financial Times*, 16 February 2019, https://www.ft.com/content/fb2263e8-2477-11e9-b329-c7e6ceb5ffdf.
[10] Interview with Aleppan businessman, February 2019.

Another increasingly common informal revenue stream is the practice of charging of exorbitant amounts for the release of detainees, or pay-for-information schemes in which family members are charged large amounts for information on detained loved ones. One interviewee said that recent detainees were sometimes able to have their freedom bought: '[Those who receive bribes to release a person] is based on who wrote the report [denunciation] against the person and which branch demanded him'.[11] Another reported that bribes for the release of detainees were currently as much as 20 million Syrian pounds (SYP) ($38,800 USD).[12] The unpredictable and informal nature of these activities means they operate outside formal ministry or agency structures; bringing them into line cannot be guaranteed without political and military will.

Localization

Local actors such as governors, prominent businessmen, and Local Councils have developed alliances with particular security or intelligence agencies. As a result, the manner in which local military forces, intelligence agencies, militias, and power structures operate is inconsistent across the country. In Aleppo, for example, the current governor enjoys a close relationship with Iran and the Local Defence Forces they support in the city. This means that security in the city, particularly in the east of the city where refugee return issues will be most important, is essentially overseen by Iran and its proxies. In Zabadani, which is discussed in greater detail below, the Local Council leader is closely linked to Assad's Ba'ath Party, and is therefore able to manage returns and other security matters in part through local committees with some degree of devolved authority from the state.

Thus assessing the current security situation in a given area requires understanding the local dynamics. Without unfettered local access across the country, it would be impossible to evaluate the security situation or conditions for return. Additionally, security in one area or jurisdiction does not equate to similar security elsewhere: individuals can face risks moving around to visit family or friends, or to seek employment opportunities or services. For example, a Zabadani local described below was arrested while seeking medical treatment in Damascus, despite enjoying safety within his area of origin.

Detentions, Arrest, Torture, and Executions

Ongoing arrests and detentions add to the large numbers of detainees and disappeared that have been mounting throughout the conflict. They risk the same torture, unfair trials, and executions as those who have been detained or killed since 2011. As such, the issue of detentions and disappeared must be treated as an ongoing and open issue, which is being compounded by the day, rather than a historical injustice to be tackled through longer-term accountability efforts. Understanding the scale and nature of the detentions issue helps to frame the protection and security concerns that returnees face.

Another factor often mentioned in conjunction with detentions is mandatory military conscription. Under Syrian law, all men aged 18 to 42, with the exception of a few exempt categories, must perform active military duty. This requirement has motivated many Syrian men to flee the country or remain in hiding, and allows for extensive overreach in arresting men of this age. In October 2018, an amnesty was announced[13] that removed the *penalties* for those who failed to undertake military service—but did not provide amnesty from the service itself. The amnesty had to be taken up within 4 months if residing within the country, or 6 months if residing outside it. Very few people took up the offer during the months it applied, and its framing as a concession on the part of the government overstates its impact. Instead, thousands of young men have been detained and investigated before being forced into military service across the country in recent months.

Detentions

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[11] Interview with a former resident of Eastern Ghouta, February 2019.
[12] Interview with a former resident of Eastern Ghouta, February 2019.
[13] SANA, Legislative decree No. 18 for 2018, 10 October 2019, https://sana.sy/?p=826281.

The issue of detentions is poorly understood and takes an overly narrow focus. The focus of the political track—via both the Geneva-led UN process and the Astana process—remains on confidence-building measures brought about by minor prisoner exchanges between armed groups and the government. The larger, pervasive issue of widespread detention and disappearances that have plagued Syrian society for decades, but which reached outlandish proportions in the early years of the uprising, has not yet been discussed.

The number of people recorded as being detained or forcibly disappeared in Syria varies according to the various documentation organizations. Not all families choose to provide details of a loved one's detention to human rights documentation organizations for a variety of reasons. Families often fear that reporting to documentation organizations—often thought to be pro-opposition or political in nature—will endanger their relative or themselves. Others simply do not know about the organizations that document detentions. Additionally, the Counter Terrorism Court (CTC) and Military Field Court (MFC) systems, through which most detainees are eventually tried, are secretive and opaque, making them difficult to monitor.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) maintains case information on persons detained during the conflict, which currently stands at more than 140,850 people not including those that have been released or confirmed dead. It estimates that more than 215,000 people have been detained throughout the conflict, including those who have been reported killed and those who were not reported to them.[14] According to the New York Times, the number of people that have passed through Syria's prisons during the conflict stands at between hundreds of thousands and a million.[15] The network estimates that 85 per cent of all detentions it has documented—representing 81,652 people between the beginning of the conflict and August 2018[16]—became 'enforced disappearance cases', whereby the families of the detainee are denied information. In many cases those making enquiries about the detainee risk being arrested themselves.[17]

Another organization, Urnammu, has maintained a list of detainees since 2014. Its database contains 87,000 cases of detention and disappearance in Syria.[18] Amnesty International declared in July 2018 that 'At least 82,000 people have been subjected to enforced disappearance since the start of the conflict.'[19] Families for Freedom, a Syrian advocacy group, say that 'Across Syria, more than 100,000 Syrians have been arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared.'[20] The United Nation's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria say that 'Current estimates made by credible non-governmental organisations engaged in documentation efforts concur, putting the figure between 60,000 and 100,000.'[21] The latter estimate may only include those currently believed to be alive.

During reconciliation negotiations, some areas provided lists of local detainees; returnees requested information on the whereabouts of those on the list as part of the agreement. In Al Waer, for example, local sources reported that the original list contained 7,500 names. The government initially provided information on just 1,500 of them, and later provided information on a further 3,500. Eventually, the demand for information on (or the release of) the 7,500 local detainees was dropped as part of the reconciliation negotiations, due to the urgency created by the government's military

[14] Syrian Network for Human Rights, 'At least 7,706 cases of arbitrary arrests documented in Syria in 2018', 3 January 2019 (in English), http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Documenting_at_least_7706_arbitrary_arrests_in_Syria_in_2018_en.pdf, accessed 13 May 2019.
[15] Anne Bannard, New York Times, 'Syria's Secret Torture Prisons', May 11, 2019; https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/11/world/middleeast/syria-torture-prisons.html
[16] Syrian Network for Human Rights, 'Record of enforced disappearances', 24 September 2018 (in English), http://sn4hr.org/blog/2018/09/24/record-of-enforced-disappearances1/, accessed 13 May 2019.
[17] Syrian Network for Human Rights, 'At least 567 cases of arbitrary arrests documented in Syria in January 2019', 2 February 2019 (in English), http://sn4hr.org/blog/2019/02/02/53303/, accessed 13 May 2019.
[18] Interview with Urnammu researcher, February 2018.
[19] Amnesty International, 'Syria: government must return remains of 161 people confirmed dead after being forcibly disappeared', 26 July 2018, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/07/syria-government-must-return-remains-of-people-confirmed-dead-after-being-forcibly-disappeared/, accessed 13 May 2019.
[20] Families for Freedom, 'We are the families for freedom', ND, https://syrianfamilies.org/en/, accessed 13 May 2019.
[21] OHCHR, 'Death notifications in the Syrian Arab Republic', 27 November 2018.

campaign against the area.[22] It is unclear whether these local lists, which existed only in some areas, were linked to larger nation-wide documentation projects.

Despite imperfect information, it can be concluded that between 80,000 and 250,000 people are currently detained in Syria's prisons. This represents 0.33–0.81 per cent of the pre-war population, or 1 in every 1,200 people. Countless others have passed through the prison network during the conflict.

Wanted Lists

In addition to those currently detained, the head of Air Force Intelligence, Jamil Hassan, stated in a private meeting reported by an opposition news outlet last year that there were 3 million names on Syria's wanted lists, representing 12.5 per cent of the pre-war population.[23] These lists include individuals wanted for mandatory military service. While it is not possible to verify this figure, it is possible to gather information from smaller incidents and announcements to demonstrate that the number is not inconceivable. In March 2018, *Zaman Al Wasl* published a list of 1.5 million names of people wanted for arrest by the government as of 2015.[24] In 2016, a list of 108,123 men wanted for military service in Aleppo city was leaked on the same site.[25] The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights published a similar list, for those wanted for arrest in Eastern Ghouta, which included more than 5,000 names.[26]

At the same meeting, Hassan was said to have noted that the large wanted lists are designed to deter disloyal individuals from returning. He asserted: 'A Syria with 10 million trustworthy people obedient to the leadership is better than a Syria with 30 million vandals.'[27] In addition to those wanted for military conscription, wanted lists also comprise those believed to have been involved in opposition-related activities, which range from protesting to working in media or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and human rights activists and local administrative officials under opposition control.

During reconciliation negotiations, the government produced lists of 'irreconcilables' in some areas. In Northern Homs, the government gave local negotiators a list of around 1,000 people it deemed to be 'irreconcilable', effectively suggesting that they had a choice between forced displacement and prison without the opportunity to reconcile their affairs with the state. Additionally, interviewees reported that individuals who had not previously had problems with the government had recently found themselves on arrest lists, suggesting that they are live lists with ongoing additions and subtractions.

Military Field Courts and Counter Terror Courts

MFCs were established by Decree 25/2/1966 and were initially located at the Military Police headquarters in Qaboun, Damascus before additional courts were established in the provinces. MFCs have the authority to try civilians and military personnel. Their jurisdiction allows them to consider crimes committed during wartime, or during military operations, as designated by the minister of defence.[28] The minister appoints the head of the court as well as other members, drawing from the cohort of army officers, and selects a judge from the military prosecution. This practice violates the constitution, which stipulates that no member of the executive has the authority to intervene in the judiciary.

MFC decisions are final; no appeals are possible. They do not observe normal procedures. For example, these courts can refuse to appoint a lawyer to represent the accused, in defiance of the

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[22] *Syria Direct*, 'Why did Waer's opposition drop its prisoner-release condition?', 14 March 2017, https://syriadirect.org/news/why-did-waer%e2%80%99s-opposition-drop-its-prisoner-release-condition/

[23] *Syrian Reporter*, 'Jameel al-Hasan: death is the punishment of who said, acted or even kept silent', 31 July 2018, https://syrian-reporter.net/ خاص-جميل-الحسن-التصفية-مصير-كل-من-قال-و/

[24] *Zaman al-Wasel*, 'The third patch... 1.5 million wanted by Assad regime in the largest search engine', 25 March 2018, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/85855

[25] *Zaman al-Wasel*, 'Wanted for military service in Aleppo and its countryside', 12 December 2016, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/75561/

[26] SOHR, 'Lists of more than 5 thousand names wanted for reserve service in the ranks of the regime's army of civilians in east Damascus and its countryside', 18 December 2018 (in Arabic), http://www.syriahr.com/?p=295289

[27] *Syrian Observer,* 'Jamil al-Hassan: any and all opposition will be eliminated', 2 August 2018, https://syrianobserver.com/EN/features/19769/jamil_hassan_any_all_opposition_will_be_eliminated.html

[28] Syrian Legal Forum, 'Military field courts: courts or crimes', 12 February 2018, http://www.syrianlegalforum.net/publications/view/32

constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The courts' death sentences are subject to the approval of the head of state, while lesser sentences are ratified by the minister of defence. However, both the president and the minister of defence can reduce a sentence, replace it with another penalty, or cancel the case. After 2011, the government used the First and Second MFCs to issue death sentences against opponents and detainees in civilian and military prisons. According to a defected army officer, the head of the MFC, Colonel Mohamad Kanjo, had personally issued more than 5,000 death sentences by the end of 2014.[29] These sentences took an average of 2–3 minutes to prosecute.

CTCs operate a similar rapid and opaque system outside usual legal structures. These secretive courts hear a wide range of terrorist offences, which have been used against political opponents throughout the conflict. Human Rights Watch reported that up to 50,000 people had been referred to these courts by mid-2013.[30] CTC trials tend to be brief; defendants are generally unable to mount adequate defences, and evidence gathered under torture is admissible.[31] Those outside the country can be placed on wanted lists or tried *in absentia*, sometimes without being notified. Verdicts made *in absentia* can only be challenged if a defendant voluntarily surrenders to the government. Sentences in CTC cases frequently include the death penalty and asset seizures.

Torture

The widespread use of torture in Syria's prisons is well documented and dates back decades. One former detainee, Hend Alkawaji said that his torture under arrest in the 1980s included being 'Blindfolded and gagged, I was electrocuted on my fingertips, ears, and feet, until I bled. Then, they forced me to walk through icy cold, salty water. The pain was unbearable.'[32] This treatment hasn't changed. Mizyed Khalid Tahad recounted how, in 2012 and 2013, he faced daily torture: 'They electrocuted me three times a day. Once my toenail popped out with the impact.'[33] Another former detainee, who was held between 2012 and 2014 in Aleppo, told Amnesty International that: 'You are thrown to the ground and they use different instruments for the beatings: electric cables with exposed copper wire ends—they have little hooks so they take a part of your skin—normal electric cables, plastic water pipes of different sizes and metal bars. Also they have created what they call the "tank belt", which is made out of tyre that has been cut into strips... They make a very specific sound; it sounds like a small explosion. I was blindfolded the whole time, but I would try to see somehow. All you see is blood: your own blood, the blood of others. After one hit, you lose your sense of what is happening. You're in shock. But then the pain comes'.[34]

SNHR has recorded the details of at least 13,983 deaths under torture in Assad's prisons between the beginning of the conflict and March 2019. *Prison Insider*, however, recorded 17,725 such deaths from the beginning of the conflict to December 2015.[35] Neither of these figures is likely to represent the total number of people who have died in this way, as information about many detainees remains scarce. A December 2018 *Washington Post* article about the rate of executions in Syria's prisons relied on the testimonies of those who had been released; severe torture—particularly of those recently arrested in formerly opposition-held areas—was reported to be ongoing. One individual described guards forcing a metal bar down the throat of a man from the Damascus suburb of Daraya. They pinned the man to the wall with the pipe and left him to die. In another incident, a man from Daraa was kicked to death when the guards forced his fellow cellmates to attack him.[36]

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[29] Military Field Court, live testimony by Asem al-Zoubi for *Geiroon*, 21 October 2016, https://geiroon.net/archives/67203
[30] Human Rights Watch, 'Syria: counterterrorism court used to stifle dissent', 25 June 2013, https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/25/syria-counterterrorism-court-used-stifle-dissent
[31] ILAC, 'Rule of law assessment report: Syria 2017', 28 April 2017, www.ilacnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Syria2017.pdf
[32] *Prison Insider*, 'Syria: the unspeakable prisons', ND (in English), https://www.prison-insider.com/en/ressources/enquetes-reportages/syrie-les-prisons-de-l-innommable, accessed 13 May 2019.
[33] Anchal Vohra, 'Syrian detainee No. 72's tales of torture', *DW*, 8 August 2018, https://www.dw.com/en/syrian-detainee-no-72s-tales-of-torture/a-44998055
[34] https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE2454152017ENGLISH.PDF
[35] *Prison Insider* ND.
[36] Louisa Loveluck and Zakaria Zakaria, 'Syria's once-teeming prison cells being emptied by mass murder', *The Washington Post*, 23 December 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/world/syria-bodies/, accessed 13 May 2019.

Additional interviews with Syrians who were arrested within the last year reported that their treatment was similar to the kind of torture reported throughout the conflict, confirming that torture in detention has not subsided, nor is it limited to those detained early in the conflict. An interviewee from a formerly opposition-held area who was arrested at a checkpoint in Damascus in August 2018 described being taken to the Political Security branch: 'I was tortured badly everyday along with other detainees. They broke my teeth, my fingers, hung my body from a wall for 10 hours, and banned us from eating for 4 days.' He also witnessed the torture of others: 'I saw them torturing 3 children from Deir Ezzor, and they almost killed one. They poked the left eye out of a kid who was screaming so much.' He was then moved to the Military Security branch, where he was subjected to daily interrogations and torture by officers who wanted detailed information about rebel activities. After being moved to   Adra Prison, he became very ill and was taken to a military hospital where he witnessed doctors and nurses torturing detainees, and suffered ill treatment himself. 'They wouldn't treat us. The nurses would bring knives and cut us everyday and doctors say "we will kill you later". After someone with government links spoke on his behalf, he was given medical attention. From the hospital, he was returned to Adra prison, where he was held alongside others who had been detained from formerly opposition-held areas. 'I saw many detainees from Eastern Ghouta who said they were arrested from shelters and inside Ghouta. I remember they brought all males from one family including a 12-year-old kid and tortured them all to get information on their relative. They also brought 20 men from Harasta in Eastern Ghouta and asked them too about burial sites of regime soldiers. I met detainees who have been there since 2014 and one of them was completely blind.' He was finally released after a sizeable bribe was paid by well-connected family members to secure his freedom.[37]

Another local interviewee returned to Syria from Lebanon in early 2018 due to financial constraints. He was arrested in July 2018 when his phone was checked at a checkpoint and calls from a Turkish number were identified on his WhatsApp account. He was taken to Air Force Intelligence along with two other men who were arrested at the checkpoint. On arrival, they were beaten and sent to cells so crowded that they were unable to sit down until ten of the occupants were moved out two days later. Until the interrogations and torture began 2 weeks later, he was beaten alongside the other detainees. During the interrogations, the officers repeatedly asked for the names of anti-regime Syrian and Lebanese residents. The week of torture included 'beating, using the "German Chair," hanging my body up from the ceiling, and electricity shocks, after which, he 'gave fake names and information' to try end the ordeal but 'they wanted more and kept torturing me. I couldn't feel my back because of the beating and kicking'. During his detention, he met others from 'Eastern Ghouta and Aleppo and some from Deir Ezzor'. He met other returnees, including 'a man and his 17-year-old child who are from Homs countryside and were in Lebanon but came back to Syria and were then arrested after a week; the man had diabetes and he almost died before they either released him or transferred him to another place'. After that, he lost track of the man and his son. He was eventually released in late 2018 and left Syria.[38]

Identifying detainees who were willing to speak was incredibly difficult due to their profound fear of being rearrested or their families harmed. Detailed information about the present conditions in prisons was therefore difficult to obtain. However, it is clear that the brutal torture that has become synonymous with Assad's prison network remains a day-to-day occurrence. Those who are arrested while returning to the country face the same treatment and the very real risk of being tortured during detention, even if they are later released. For this reason, detentions in Syria must be treated as an urgent, ongoing danger—not a historical concern to be addressed through transitional justice and accountability mechanisms.

Death Notices and Executions
For several years there has been near-total silence regarding the fate of Syria's detainees, with the notable exception of the infamous 'Caesar' photographs. In 2014, more than 28,000 photos of at least

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[37] Interview with Damascene former detainee, April 2019.
[38] Interview with former resident of Homs, and former detainee, April 2019.

6,700 bodies subject to death in government custody were smuggled out of the country by a defector code-named 'Caesar'. The photos were later verified as authentic images of deceased prisoners from Syria's jails who had experienced horrific torture and starvation.[39] An interviewee described trawling through thousands of the grisly images trying to identify their loved ones and acquaintances to find out whether they were alive or dead.[40] It is not clear exactly how many individuals have been executed in Assad's prisons, due to a lack of information from official or informal sources.

Recently, this silence has begun to change. Following the opening of a 'detainees file' as part of the Astana peace process in the spring of 2018, the Syrian government began to update the records at civil registry offices, changing the status of detainees to 'dead'. The cause of death in these cases is almost always listed as due to natural causes, such as 'heart attack' or 'stroke'. The SNHR documented 161 cases between May and August 2018 of family members being presented with death certificates for their disappeared relatives.[41] Since then, hundreds of records have been updated in civil registry offices in the Damascus countryside, Hama, Homs, Latakia, Hassakeh and Aleppo, and the practice continues.[42] These records list dates of death and are sometimes accompanied by the signatures of workers in government hospitals. In other cases, the deceased were reportedly executed on the orders of a field court. Some individuals from the same geographic area, such as Daraya or Moudamya al-Sham, share common death dates, indicating that group executions may have taken place.[43] In some towns, families have been informed of their loved one's death personally, while in other cases they have discovered their relative's fate by accident while dealing with other issues through the civil registry.

In December 2018, *The Washington Post* published a story suggesting that the rate of death sentences and executions in Syria's crowded and brutal prisons was increasing.[44] Some executions were long-delayed sentences issued by the CTC in the past but carried out recently in an attempt to resolve the detainee file and empty the prisons. Others were new sentences, handed down during brief trials and carried out almost immediately, according to survivors of the prisons. The execution of prisoners has sped up so much that entire wings of Syria's worst detention facilities, like Sedneya Prison, have begun to empty.

In February 2019, the head of the General Intelligence Directorate, Major General Mohamed Mahla, made two visits to southern Syria to try to negotiate a peace agreement with locals who were frustrated with events since the area's return to government control the previous year. During those conversations, in response to requests for information and the release of local detainees, Mahla was reported to have urged them to forget about detainees arrested prior to 2014, saying they were in 'critical state and most of them could be deceased'.[45] These comments have not been verified, but they are consistent with the increase in executions and death certificates.

It is clear that the rate of executions in Syria's prisons has been, and remains, high. Entering the country's network of intelligence branches and secretive courts and prisons potentially comes with a death sentence in addition to interrogation and torture. Until all current detainees and disappeared persons are accounted for, and their legitimate crimes litigated through fair trials in open court, any interaction with the security sector comes with enormous levels of risk for Syrians.

Refugee Return: Policy and Practice

Within the highly securitized and insecure environment described in this report, the nascent refugee return and reconciliation process is beginning. The process is influenced by the security sector and

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[39] Human Rights Watch, 'If the dead could speak,' 16 December 2015, https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/12/16/if-dead-could-speak/mass-deaths-and-torture-syrias-detention-facilities
[40] Interview with a Syrian detainee documentation and advocacy worker, February 2018.
[41] SN4HR, 'The Syrian regime records forcibly disappeared persons as dead in civil registration offices', 13 July 2018, http://sn4hr.org/blog/2018/07/13/52450/
[42] Hiba Mohamad, 'The Syrian regime announces the death of hundreds of detainees daily without any noise in its prisons ... amid international silence', *al-Quds al-Arbi*, 11 July 2018, https://www.alquds.co.uk/النظام-السوري-يعلن-وفاة-مئات-المعتقل/
[43] UNCOI, 'Death notifications in the Syrian Arab Republic', 27 November 2018.
[44] Loveluck and Zakaria 2018.
[45] *Syrian Observer*, 'Daraa told to forget prisoners taken before 2014', The Syria Report, 1 March 2019, https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/48878/daraa-told-to-forget-prisoners-taken-before-2014.html

the security situation as well as the suite of returns policies and practices being enacted by humanitarian organizations and the government of Syria. There are several key actors in the area of refugee return and reconciliation. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads on both protection and shelter. The Norwegian Refugee Council leads on Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) alongside UN Habitat, UNHCR, MOLA, and other international NGOs and ministries, in addition to the security sector and military actors. This section provides an overview of the framework of the returns process.

Refugee Status

Throughout the conflict, in line with their mandate, UNHCR has provided guidance on the International Protection Considerations for Syrians fleeing violence in the country.[46] The guidance contains 13 risk profiles and details the nature of the protection concerns of each group. The guidance notes that individuals who fit these risk profiles are likely to require international refugee protection in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention criteria. The profiles contained in the Protection Considerations document form the basis of asylum claims and provide the framework for allowing Syrians residency and protection in neighbouring countries.

In late 2017, this document was amended for the fifth time, and reduced the severity of the protected status of two groups. The majority of Syrians in Europe and neighbouring countries hold only temporary protected status or time-limited residency documentation, meaning that any change to these profiles can influence the likelihood of an individual having their claim accepted or renewed, or increase their risk of being forced to return prematurely.

In Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, refugee status is less clear in practice; refugees in these countries face increasing instability, both politically and with regard to their legal status. In Turkey, a 2013 law created a 'temporary protection' status for Syrian refugees. This status can be 'provided to foreigners in cases when there is a large influx into Turkey and where they cannot return to the country they were forced to leave'.[47] A large number of Syrians in Turkey live under this classification, and in recent months increasing restrictions have been placed on their freedom of movement.

Lebanon did not ratify the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its accompanying 1967 protocol; it thus considers Syrian refugees in the country to be guests. In December 2014, General Security—the country's internal security apparatus—established procedures restricting the entry of Syrians,[48] requiring Syrians wishing to obtain or renew a residence permit pay a fee of $200 per year, provide a valid passport or identity card, and hand public security a document signed by a Lebanese citizen who provides a guarantee for the Syrian citizen or family. On 6 May 2015, UNHCR suspended the registration of refugees at the request of the government of Lebanon.[49] This has resulted in unstable status for many of the country's estimated 1–1.5 million refugees.

Although Jordan has not ratified the UN Refugee Convention, it did open its borders to refugees fleeing Syria between 2011 and 2014, though this did not extend to Palestinian or Iraqi refugees from Syria or single men aged 18–45 without identification. Jordan closed the Nassib border crossing in 2015 after the armed opposition took control of it, and then closed al-Rukban and Handalat crossings after an attack against the Jordanian army in June 2016. The Jordanian government issued a sponsorship law for Syrian refugees in the country's large camps. At the outset the law was flexible and allowed refugees to leave the camps to access health care or education without the need for sponsors, but it later became more difficult, until 2015 when the government cancelled the law and issued a new

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[46] UNHCR, 'International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic: Update V', November 2017.
[47] Turkish Ministry of Interior, *Law on Foreigners and International Protection*, April 2014, http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng_minikanun_5_son.pdf
[48] *Orient News*, 'New decision sets standards of residence and entry of Syrians to Lebanon', 30 December 2014, https://www.orient-news.net/ar/news_show/83939/0/قرار-جديد-يحدد-معايير-الإقامة-ودخول-السوريين-إلى-لبنان
[49] Amnesty International, 'Pushed to the edge: Syrian refugees face increased restrictions in Lebanon', 15 June 2015, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/1785/2015/en/

system of registration for all Syrian refugees. They were issued biometric ID cards,[50] but refugees who did not obtain an asylum seeker's document or left the camps without a sponsor were prohibited from registering; others could not afford the high cost of the card. Many refugees are unable to obtain the new card as they lack the required documentation: non-expired documents, a sealed rent contract, a residence certificate approved by UNHCR, a health certificate, and a copy of identity documents.[51]

In Europe, the pressure to return is increasing, even within countries with a firm political position on return. Germany, for example, has paused its assessment of new cases while it reviews its asylum claim thresholds for Syrians. Family reunifications ceased some time ago, and a government programme was implemented to provide small financial incentives to those who chose to return to Syria. At least two of the more than 437 refugees who took up this option have been reported disappeared since they arrived in Syria.[52]

Protection Thresholds for Return

In February 2018, the UNHCR published a document entitled *Protection Thresholds and Parameters for Refugee Return*,[53] which details 22 protection conditions that must be met before refugee returns would be facilitated or enforced. Since none of these conditions have been met, the UNHCR's public position is that it is not supporting or facilitating returns.

In addition to requiring a reduction in hostilities, the list of conditions focuses heavily on bureaucratic concerns, such as access to documentation and family unity. The final condition is that the UNHCR has free and unhindered access to all refugees and returnees. The document does not detail the thresholds that underpin these conditions, but at the time of writing a draft document is being prepared that does so.

Appendix 1 analyses these 22 thresholds against the report's findings. The conditions related to physical protection and guarantees regarding physical security are:
- The government / actors in control of the return area must provide genuine guarantees that returnees will not face harassment, discrimination, arbitrary detention, physical threat or prosecution on account of originating from an area previously or currently under de facto control of another party to the conflict; for having left Syria illegally; for having lodged an asylum claim abroad; or on account of any (individual or family) diversity characteristic.
- Acceptance by the government / entity in control of the return area of returnees' free choice of destination and place of residence and right to freedom of movement.
- The physical, legal and material safety of refugees and returnees must be ensured.
- An amnesty, which includes those who evaded compulsory military service or reservist service, deserted from the armed forces, joined a non-state armed group, or left Syria illegally and/or lodged an asylum claim abroad.[54]

Each unmet condition represents a grave risk that this report, and other studies on the fate of refugees and those reconciling with the Syrian government, seek to highlight. In its phased approach to refugee return outlined in their implementation plans, UNHCR states that 'Even with positive developments, conditions in return areas will not be fully conducive for return. Some protection concerns in return areas will remain.' This suggests that the protection thresholds are considered, at least in part, to be aspirational rather than minimum standards.

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[50] Human Rights Watch, *We are afraid for their future: Child education obstacles for Syrian refugees in Jordan*, August 2016, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/jordan0816arweb.pdf
[51] Norwegian Refugees Council, *Syrian Refugees' Right to Legal Identity: Implications for Return*, January 2017, https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/briefing-notes/icla/final-syrian-refugees-civil-documentation-briefing-note-21-12-2016.pdf
[52] Medico International, *Starthilfe in den Tod*, February 2019, https://www.medico.de/blog/starthilfe-in-den-tod-17309/; European Council on Refugees and Exile, *Germany Supported the Return of 437 People to Syria – Reports on Disappearance of Returnees Raise Concern*, March 2019, https://reliefweb.int/report/germany/germany-supported-return-437-people-syria-reports-disappearance-returnees-raise
[53] UNHCR, *Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Strategy*, February 2018, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/63223.pdf
[54] *Ibid*.

As with many of Syria's most complex problems, the critical and most pernicious underlying problem is the fact that: 'The physical, legal and material safety of returning refugees are the responsibility of the State where the returning refugees find themselves.'[55] The state's primary role as the party responsible for civilian protection is predicated on the idea that it is interested in upholding the rule of law and serving and protecting its people. Yet in Syria, the state is the primary party responsible for civilian casualties, attacks on protected buildings and services, and torture in detention, among other crimes and violations of IHL, and continues to be the greatest threat to refugees' right of safe and dignified return and ongoing safety and well-being. To date, the international community has failed to find a way to pressure the Syrian government into upholding its responsibilities under international law on this or any other matter.

Underpinning the protection conditions is the need to monitor them. The government of Syria has maintained a firm grip on humanitarian access throughout the country, even in areas under the control of humanitarian groups. UN agencies are unable to plan or implement projects without the approval of intelligence and security agencies, and are unable to operate on their own or work directly with communities to implement projects. Since the government controls data collection, agencies are unable to conduct their own monitoring and evaluation, or collect population or needs information independently. Undertaking independent needs assessment is fundamental, and should drive prioritization of aid based on needs—a key principle of humanitarian assistance. Without it, prioritization has been driven to a large degree by government priorities.

UNHCR is given no exceptions to these restrictions, and is unable to reach populations and communities regularly in order to monitor the conditions against the thresholds. A senior UN official revealed: 'Access, at any time, to anybody is absolutely key. Unless there are strong guarantees, and the commitments to certain thresholds are respected—which implies that we have full access and monitoring ability—we will not support any plan for large-scale return.'[56] UNHCR has acknowledged that it is presently unable to access the country in the manner required to conduct monitoring. In February 2019, the Shelter Cluster, co-led by UNHCR and the MOLA, reported that 'Opportunities for systematic field-based data collection remain very limited due to access or authorization restrictions, resulting in incomplete needs analysis in some areas.'[57]

Recent reports suggest that Russia and Lebanon have been conducting talks about refugee return conditions, and have begun working with the government of Syria to implement small concessions that they believe will enable refugees from Lebanon to return. The focus is on making incremental improvements in the areas of HLP, personal identification documentation, and mandatory military conscription, but does not extend to the remainder of the UNHCR's protection thresholds.

Current Rate of Returns
While many refugees wish to return to Syria in the future, they are not in a hurry to do so. Nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of refugees surveyed by the UNHCR reported that they do not ever intend to return to Syria; 85 per cent said they do not intend to return in the next 12 months.[58] The survey respondents attributed their reluctance to return to the lack of physical safety—particularly the indiscriminate violence and risk of targeted reprisal. Even among those planning to return in the next 12 months, many conceded that they lacked the required information to make an informed decision.[59]

To date, the numbers of returning refugees and IDPs represent a tiny percentage of the 13.2 million Syrians displaced inside and outside the country. The UN is unable to fulfil its usual role of maintaining direct oversight of refugee and IDP returns due to its lack of access to the country. As a result, the current rate of refugee and IDP return to Syria is difficult to gauge accurately. The government of Syria, UNHCR, and the Russian Ministry of Defence (MOD) are all attempting to keep a record of the rate of return, both inside and outside the country.

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[55] *Ibid.*
[56] 11.11.11, 'Long road to return', November 2018, https://www.11.be/en/news/item/long-road-to-return
[57] https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/201902_shelter_monthly_issue_no._24_0.pdf January/ February 2019
[58] UNHCR, *Provision of Life-Saving Assistance and Supporting Communities*, 2018, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Syria%27s%20End%20of%20Year%20report%202018.pdf
[59] *Ibid.*

At the end of 2018, the UNHCR reported that it had recorded 135,718 refugee returns to Syria from Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt since September 2015—including 56,047 spontaneous refugee returns in 2018. Since 30 September 2015, when Russia joined the conflict, the MOD reports that a total of 356,743 Syrians have returned to the country. As of 8 February 2019, the Russian MOD stated that 127,463 Syrians had returned to their homes from abroad since 18 July 2018,[60] including 52,580 from Lebanon and 74,883 from Jordan. The UNHCR has also reported that 1.4 million IDPs returned home from other areas of the country during 2018.[61]

The UNHCR is reportedly attempting to reconcile its returns figures with those recorded by the government of Syria, though this has not yet been completed. However, this number would not include those who returned outside the formal return or reconciliation process with the government. Additionally, interviewees reported that IDP return numbers included individuals who had temporarily returned to their homes to check on their properties; some such individuals have been counted multiple times in a recently reconciled area.[62]

The returns numbers also fail to consider those who return and leave again. There is some evidence to suggest that there is a notable rate of refoulement among these early returns. Sawa for Development highlights several cases of returnees who ended up back in Lebanon shortly after their return, living in far worse circumstances than before.[63]

UNHCR Implementation
The extent of UNHCR's activities related to returns remains ambiguous. Its official position is that it does not currently support returns, yet its operational plan underpinning the protection threshold strategy lays out a range of activities that ostensibly support and facilitate returns. The challenging balance between member state and donor priorities, a lack of access, operational challenges and ambitions, and humanitarian need is a difficult position for the organization to navigate.

As highlighted above, the UNHCR lacks the necessary access to collect data and monitor conditions in the country, or to undertake humanitarian aid work, including aiding returnees, without the government's permission. In some cases, it is forced to outsource to subcontracting NGOs. In February 2019, a UNHCR returns intentions survey was carried out in Rukban IDP camp in the country's east primarily by Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) volunteers, according to camp residents.[64] In 2018, the UNHCR claimed to have undertaken more than 1,300 'protection missions', which equates to a little over one visit per month to each of Aleppo's neighbourhoods and does not represent adequate access to map baseline conditions against protection thresholds.

UNHCR has been playing a significant practical role in returns from neighbouring countries under the umbrella of planning and preparedness.[65] A UNHCR spokesperson told *Syria Direct* that the agency coordinated with the International Organization for Migration and the Jordanian government to transport 'several groups of refugees, who've expressed a desire to go home, up to the border prior to them returning'.[66] In Lebanon, UNHCR has reportedly liaised with Lebanese General Security to assist with planning for returns—some of which appear to be only questionably voluntary—, acquiring identity papers for individual returnees, and observing returns at the border. They have been unable to access returnees after their return to their places of origin.

[60] Russian Ministry of Defense, 'Bulletin of the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides and Refugee Migration Monitoring', 8 February 2019 (in English), https://syria.mil.ru/en/index/syria/news/more.htm?id=12216433@egNews
[61] UNHCR 2018.
[62] Interview with a loyalist, November 2018.
[63] Sawa for Relief and Development, *Unpacking Return,* February 2019, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SAWA_Unpacking%20Return%20Report.pdf
[64] Interview with Rukban IDP camp resident, March 2019
[65] CAFOD, *Syria Refugee Returns: A CAFOD and SCIAF Policy Position*, October 2018, https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/47394/574322/version/1/file/CAFOD%20SCIAF%20Syria%20refugees%20returns%20policy%20October%202018.pdf
[66] *Syria Direct*, 'In first "organized" refugee returns from Jordan, dozens of Syrians head back to Damascus suburb', 16 January 2019, https://syriadirect.org/news/in-first-%E2%80%98organized%E2%80%99-refugee-returns-from-jordan-dozens-of-syrians-head-back-to-damascus-suburb/

Due to concerns about maintaining organizational access in both Lebanon and Syria, aid workers stated that the UNHCR is taking an increasingly weak stance on returns. Organizations and individuals working in the humanitarian sector alongside UNHCR have become progressively more vocal about their concerns regarding its actions. Aid workers have reported witnessing UNHCR representatives failing to explain to refugees during pre-departure interviews that the agency is not currently facilitating returns to Syria because the conditions are not conducive to safe and dignified return.[67] As a result, refugees lack the information they need to make informed decisions about their future.

These activities are giving refugees the perception that UNHCR is involved in the process. However, it is not allowed to be present when people return to Syria or to monitor them to determine whether they remain safe.[68] Some humanitarian workers stated that they have observed these actions and believe they are not in accordance with the UNHCR's core principles, and may be actively causing harm.

In addition, the UNHCR is working through the UN Strategic Framework[69] to provide the Ministry of Information's civil affairs and documentations offices across the country with furnishings and information technology equipment to facilitate their ability to issue identification documentation. Agencies and implementing partners are subsequently aiding in the acquisition of identity documents for refugees through these same systems. As mentioned above, the civil registries work closely with the security apparatus; this support therefore effectively empowers their ability to gather and monitor information about Syria's residents. Additionally, they have been actively promoting returns and fundraising for work to support returnees in areas without the appropriate conditions for return, including politically sensitive areas such as Baba Amr neighbourhood in Homs city, where returns are currently banned and large-scale redevelopment projects are likely to be implemented.

Forms for Returnees and those Reconciling

Syrian refugees and diaspora wishing to return from abroad, or IDPs looking to return from opposition-controlled areas to an area under government control, or those remaining in situ when the government takes control of a formerly opposition-controlled area, must complete certain forms. Those who do not complete them cannot return or are subject to access restrictions and a heightened risk of arrest. The forms do not align with those normally required for voluntary refugee returns (see Table 1).

Table 1: Example Repatriation Forms: UNHCR (left) and Government of Syria (right)

UNHCR example Voluntary Repatriation Form[70]	Syrian 'Information Bulletin'
Linked cases: Family/Group Number: Address/Location in Camp: Identity/Ration Card Number: Family Name: First Name: Sex: Year of Birth: Place of Birth: Relationship: Skills: Special Needs: Intended departure date: Reception Centre:	Name and Surname: Father: Mother: Date of birth: Place and number of register: National ID number: Previous address: Current address: Cell phone number, Landline: Brief of your life: Political orientation: Current job: Previous job: Sentences and arrests:

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[67] Interview with aid worker in Beirut, February 2019.
[68] Interview with a second aid worker in Beirut, February 2019.
[69] UNICEF, *UN Strategic Framework*, January 2017, http://files.unicef.org/transparency/documents/Syria_End-Year_UN_SF_29Jan2017.pdf; UNDP, *UN Strategic Framework 2016-17*, https://www.undp.org/content/dam/syria/docs/Framework/UN%20Strategic%20Framework%20for%20Syria%202016-17.pdf
[70] UNHCR, Voluntary Repatriation: International Protection, 1996, https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/3bfe68d32/handbook-voluntary-repatriation-international-protection.html

Intended destination:	Have you ever raised a gun against the SAA?
I, the undersigned principal applicant, declare that I (and my dependents) after due consideration wish to be repatriated to:....	Have you ever committed a crime against innocent civilians or had blood on your hands?
	Have you travelled outside the country?
	Do you have any relatives detained during the current events?
	Date: --/--/2018
	Name and signature
	Left thumb fingerprint

Return has been made conditional on a 'clean record'. These forms are therefore inhibiting the right to return to one's country, as stipulated in Article 12 (4) of the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), to which Syria is a party. The General Comment of the Human Rights Committee (no. 27), CCPR General Comment No. 27: Article 12 (Freedom of Movement) (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.9), para. 21 states that:

> In no case may a person be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his or her own country. The reference to the concept of arbitrariness in this context is intended to emphasize that it applies to all State action, legislative, administrative and judicial; it guarantees that even interference provided for by law should be in accordance with the provisions, aims and objectives of the Covenant and should be, in any event, reasonable in the particular circumstances.

For those reconciling their affairs with the government, either because they were living in a formerly besieged area under armed opposition control that has returned to government control, or because they are returning from an opposition-controlled area, the forms are even more extensive. For the former group, the forms must be completed in so-called IDP shelters, which operate more like detention facilities. In Eastern Ghouta during the military operation, these were home to tens of thousands of civilians for a number of weeks; men and women were separated. As of January 2019, an estimated 40,000 people remained in the so-called shelters.[71] The UN and other humanitarian agencies provided aid in the shelters, despite the presence of SAA forces and security branches. In these same areas, those who remained in their homes or in the area must complete these forms before they can move through checkpoints out of the area into Damascus or other parts of the country, in effect maintaining a siege on those who have not provided these detailed responses.

The complete form can be found in Appendix 2, but the form asks questions such as:
● State your role in the current events and your involvement in the protests, riots, and armed terrorist activities
● State what you know regarding armed terrorist groups, their commanders, command centres, and positions
● State what you know regarding weapons warehouses, ammunition, explosives, or any material set to be used in terrorist activities
● State the details of your relatives' involvement in the current events

Article 14(3)(g) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that 'In the determination of any criminal charge against him, everyone shall be entitled to the following minimum guarantees ... (g) Not to be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt'. Yet Assad announced in February 2019 that those who are truthful in their reconciliation with the state face no risk from it, thus creating a dangerous catch-22, whereby individuals either incriminate themselves (including for crimes that are punishable by the death penalty) and hope they will not face consequences (even though some individuals completing these forms have been subject to arrest and detention), or risk being punished for failing to have confessed to such activities.

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[71] MEI/ETANA, 'Forgotten Lives,' May 2019, https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-05/Forgotten%20Lives_East%20Ghouta.pdf

In his   February 2019 public speech to the leaders of Local Councils from across the country, Assad stressed that individuals who left state control have only one path to return—through reconciliation. He stressed that those who repented honestly would be forgiven.[72] However, in an investigation into the fate of returning refugees, the *Irish Times* interviewed a former prisoner who had undergone the reconciliation process. During one torture session, he says he was told: 'Who told you reconciliation erases your past? We will return you to here every time.'[73]

Both forms ask individuals details about the actions or whereabouts of their family members—in keeping with the Syrian security sector's traditional reliance on local informants. The process incentivizes people to provide false information or allegations. Neither option guarantees a respondent's safety or security, as discussed below. These forms have the effect of creating security through fear: citizens are aware that the government and its most brutal security apparatus, which still has not accounted for roughly 100,000 prisoners, has information about their crimes—both real and perceived.

Returning to the State

This report has focused on those returning to the Syrian government control, including: returning refugees, returning IDPs, and so-called post-reconciled areas that have recently switched from opposition to government control. This broad view of 'return' helps explore the security threats facing the wide range of Syrians who did not remain in government-controlled territories throughout the conflict. It can also help highlight relevant local dynamics and the history of agreements and security guarantees reached between the government of Syria (and its allies) and Syrian communities or individuals. Since protection guarantees form a critical part of future policies on refugee return, examining the reliability of previous and current agreements foreshadows what might reasonably be expected from these actors in the future.

This report examines cases of returnees from abroad and within the country. Due to the inherent difficulty of tracking individual returnees, it describes a case study of a local area where refugee returns have occurred in notable numbers. It also assesses two areas that have recently reconciled with the government following extended siege, military campaigns, and forcible displacements in order to describe the security situation for those returning to state control in more detail, regardless of the reason for their return. These areas help illustrate the threats faced by those suspected of disloyalty to the Syrian government.

This research is not exhaustive in scale, depth, or geographical focus, and does not seek to replace or undermine the need for immediate independent monitoring on the ground in Syria. Rather, it identifies overarching figures and themes and focuses on a handful of areas in order to highlight the scale and variety of issues affecting Syrians returning to state control. This research is designed to highlight the critical need for large-scale, independent, forensic, nationwide research and monitoring to be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Arrested Returnees

Any analysis of the current fate of those returning to Syria must be understood in the context of who is returning at this time. There are widely advertised arrest warrant lists, unresolved detentions, large-scale evacuations during the breaking of sieges through military campaigns, a lack of documentation, and general fear in opposition areas or among those who fled the country during the conflict. Further, UNHCR survey results discussed above reveal that the vast majority of Syrians have no plans to return to the country in the near term. Thus only those who believe themselves to be without issues with the state and free of security threats are currently choosing to return. Even within this group, some are denied permission to return. Therefore, those returning at the present time do not represent a cross-section of Syrian society by any measure. It would be reasonable to expect arrests and detentions within the group to be low or even non-existent, yet this is not the case.

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[72] SANA**,** *President al-Assad: The war was between us Syrians and terrorism, we triumph together not against each other*, February 2019, https://sanasyria.org/en/?p=158819
[73] Sally Hayden, 'Arrests and torture of Syrian refugees returning home reported', *Irish Times,* 17 March 2018, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/arrests-and-torture-of-syrian-refugees-returning-home-reported-1.3429762

Data collected within the UN system indicates that 14% of more than 17,000 surveyed IDP and refugee returnee households were stopped or detained during return, while returning in 2018. Of this group, 4% were detained for more than 24 hours. Within the refugee cohort, 19% were detained. These numbers relate specifically to the journey home and not to detentions in the weeks and months following.[74]

The SNHR documented the arrest of at least 312 individuals who returned to Syria from abroad in 2017 and no less than 719 in 2018.

Urnammu[75] has documented at least 311 Syrians arrested at the border while attempting to return, while the SNHR reported more than a dozen Syrians were arrested at Nassib border crossing between Jordan and Syria within the first weeks of its operation. The SNHR also reports that 5,607 Syrians were arbitrarily arrested by the government of Syria and its allies in 2018,[76] many of whom had recently returned to state control. Both SNHR and Urnammu reported a rise in the number of detentions of civilians in Syria since October 2018, which they attributed to an increase in returns to areas that were formerly under opposition control. In August and September 2018, 60 per cent of the arrests recorded by SNHR in government-controlled areas were of those who had undergone reconciliation, including members of the reconciliation committees.

IDPs returning to newly government-controlled areas from areas under opposition control, such as those returning from Idlib to Hama, or from Idlib to Eastern Ghouta, are particularly vulnerable to arrest. Those returning without undergoing the formal government reconciliation process are especially vulnerable to arrest. Recent detainees gave information about being arrested and brutally tortured in government custody within months of their return to the country.[77]

In addition, it is estimated that tens of thousands of individuals have been conscripted into military service. Interviewees from Eastern Ghouta and Homs stated that thousands of young men had gone from their areas into military service, some voluntarily in an attempt to avoid long-term security concerns, and others as the result of raids by the military and police. Eastern Ghouta has almost no young or middle-aged men.[78]

Arrested Returnees—Open Sources

No systematic research is currently being undertaken to trace returnees, from outside or inside the country, to monitor what happens to them. The limited number of reports available on this topic all paint a bleak picture.

A June 2019 report by the Washington Post uncovered instances of returnees being arrested and subject to torture in detention.[79] In February 2019, Sawa for Relief and Development published a report on refugee returns from Lebanon which highlighted the increasing pressure on refugees to return, as well as widespread fears of conscription or arrest on their return. Several cases of refoulement were highlighted, as outlined on page 19.[80]

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[74] UN Partners data collection report, February 2019.
[75] Interview with a researcher from Urnammu, February 2019.
[76] Syrian Network for Human Rights 2019.
[77] Interview with former resident of Homs and former detainee, April 2019.
[78] Interviews with former resident of Eastern Ghouta, February 2019.
[79] Louisa Loveluck, Washington Post, 'Assad urged Syrian refugees to come home. Many are being welcomed with arrest and interrogation,' June 3, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/assad-urged-syrian-refugees-to-come-home-many-are-being-welcomed-with-arrest-and-interrogation/2019/06/02/54bd696a-7bea-11e9-b1f3-b233fe5811ef_story.html?utm_term=.49cee48367af
[80] Sawa for Development and Aid 2019.

In March, *Syria Direct* published an interview with a defector who had decided to return to Syria and has not been heard from since.[81] Reports have also emerged that one of the young men from Daraa province whose arrest and torture in prison helped spark the protests in 2011 had been arrested despite having gained security permissions to return home.[82] Another report from February 2019, in *Foreign Policy* magazine, describes the fate of two young returnees from Germany who vanished after being called in for questioning by the intelligence services.[83] Also in February 2019, two young men from Harasta reconciled their affairs with the state and returned from Turkey, only to be arrested by the secret police on arrival.[84] In December 2018, *Al-Moldon* reported that, due to an increase in the number of military police at the Jdaidet Yabous crossing, an average of four people per day were being arrested on their way from Lebanon to Syria.[85] In the same month, the same news outlet also reported that five Palestinian refugees were arrested after reaching Damascus on a flight from Tehran.[86] In September 2018, the *Irish Times* reported that at least four of the returnees it had followed had been killed. Three had been arrested within 3 months of returning and were killed 2–4 months after that in detention.[87]

Similar concerns face those returning from opposition-controlled areas to government control, even after reconciling their status and informing the authorities of their plans. In January 2019, three young men who had submitted the appropriate papers were arrested while returning to Hama from Idlib.[88] In November 2018, a woman and her child who had returned from Idlib to Hama were arrested while they sought medical attention. The child was eventually released after a bribe was paid, while the woman was transferred to Adra prison.[89] In the same month, a family from Barzeh was arrested after returning from Idlib.[90] In November and December 2018, in Qalamoun and Deir Ezzour, respectively, returnees from Lebanon were arrested.[91] In August 2018, 19 people (including 11 women) returning from the northern Aleppo countryside to Eastern Ghouta were arrested, despite having completed their papers. One of them has since died in custody.[92] Additional similar reports have been forthcoming.

Returns Case Study: Zabadani
Background
Zabadani is a south-western Syrian town in rural Damascus, close to the Lebanese border. Its pre-war population was around 30,000. Zabadani was historically a popular tourist area, and many

[81] *Syria Direct*, 'To venture into the unknown': After several years in the diaspora, a defector returns to Syria and then disappears', 18 March 2019, https://syriadirect.org/news/%e2%80%98to-venture-into-the-unknown%e2%80%99-after-seven-years-in-the-diaspora-a-defector-returns-to-syria-and-then-disappears/

[82] https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/103153

[83] Anchal Vohra, 'A deadly welcome awaits Syria's returning refugees', *Foreign Policy*, 6 February 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/06/a-deadly-welcome-awaits-syrias-returning-refugees/

[84] *Damascus Voice,* 'Young men from Harasta arrested after they came back from Turkey', 3 March 2019, http://damascusv.com/archives/5901

[85] Raed al-Salhani and Alexander Haddad, 'Wanted for reserve service? 1M SYP to stop the arrest warrant', *al-Modon*, 1 December 2018, https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/12/1/%D9%85%D8%B7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A8-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B7-%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%80-%D9%83%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%AB

[86] *al-Modon*, 'Palestinians coming back to Damascus taken to Palestine Branch', 20 December 2018, https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/12/20/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86

[87] Hayden 2018.

[88] STJ, 'Syrian security agency arrest 3 young men on the way back from Idlib to Hama', 17 January 2019, https://stj-sy.com/en/view/1148

[89] STJ, 'Hama: mother and her infant girl arrested by Military Security Services due to malicious report', 7 December 2018, https://stj-sy.com/en/view/1054

[90] *Qasioun*, 'A family arrested in Rukn al-Din in Damascus after they returned from Idlib', 30 November 2018, اعتقال عائلة في حي ركن الدين عقب عودتهم من إدلب/https://www.qasioun-news.com/ar/news/show/165626

[91] Hasan Rajab, 'The return of Syrian refugees is unsafe: arrests and targeted assassinations', *al-Arabi al-Jadid*, 12 November 2018, عودة-اللاجئين-السوريين-غير-آمنة-اعتقالات-وتصفيات-تلاحقهم/https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2018/11/12; al-Gherba, '19 Syrian regime arrested civilians who came back to Deir Ezzor from Lebanon', 19 December 2018, https://www.algherbal.com/archives/4809

[92] STJ, 'Arrest of returnees from northern Syria to Eastern Ghouta and one dies in Custody', 14 August 2018, https://stj-sy.com/en/view/687

Damascenes have summer houses in the town and the surrounding areas, making it a desirable area to rebuild and redevelop in order to maintain the quality of life of the Damascus elite.

Initial protests in the area occurred in March 2011, and the town was the first to fall under armed opposition control in January 2012. Government forces mounted a counteroffensive and took back much of the town. Negotiations between the sides broke down in 2013 and a siege was implemented, which was tightened against the armed opposition in 2014. From then, the town was surrounded by Hezbollah, which had long been part of the battle in the area. By 2015, Zabadani's fate was tied to that of neighbouring Madaya and the Shia towns of Foua and Kefreyah located in Idlib in a four-way ceasefire agreement that subjected all four areas to extensive suffering.

When the towns were evacuated in a carefully choreographed evacuation effort in 2017, Zabadani was empty of all citizens. Zabadani is an interesting case study, since the government has effectively had a blank slate, with no residual opposition supporters. Thus the government has had control over who lives inis allowed to return to the town.

Immediately after the evacuation, Hezbollah entered the area, where it remained for some time before withdrawing to a nearby base.[93] Hezbollah no longer maintains control inside the city and, to date, the feared 'shia-ization' of Zabadani has not been forthcoming.

Governance and Security
Zabadani is now under the control of the State Security branch, which controls the city in collaboration with the police. A loyalist Local Council is led by Basel Ali al-Dalati, who has held the role for some time and was re-elected in September 2018. The Ba'ath Party have a strong presence and have held rallies and celebrations in the town since it returned to government control.

The State Security branch has arrested some individuals from Zabadani who undertook reconciliations[94] in order to return, though most of them were later released after questioning. At least five are still missing, including a man who undertook the reconciliation process and joined the SAA. Later, he returned to his farm and was injured by a landmine. He went to a hospital in Damascus to seek treatment for the loss of his leg and was arrested, then released. He was subsequently arrested for a second time in Damascus and at the time of writing had not been released. In addition, at least two men and two women are still detained. One of the women is the mother of two sons known to have fought with the armed opposition. Their fate is still unknown.[95]

Locals report that many people in Zabadani have been stopped at checkpoints and had their phones searched. Some have been arrested and questioned for communicating with relatives in Idlib as a result. Area residents suspect that the Syrian government targets those known to make phone contact with numbers in Idlib.[96] Local sources also complain about the lack of security: the police allow local pro-government militias to loot IDPs' houses. Many families decided to flee to Idlib in the months after the reconciliation agreement due to safety concerns when the government regained control of the city.[97]

Returns
Almost 2 years after the implementation of the four-towns agreement, there are around 7,000 people living in Zabadani.[98] The majority of those who returned after the reconciliation agreement came from government-controlled areas of Damascus or from the nearby town of Bludan where they had been sheltering.[99] These people were government-supporting individuals who left Zabadani after it fell under the rule of armed opposition groups in 2012. Given the nature of their political positions, they were not subject to the reconciliation process in order to return, according to local sources.[100]

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[93] Interview with a former resident of Zabadani, February 2019.
[94] Interview with focus group of refugees from Zabadani, Autumn 2018.
[95] Interview with a former resident of Zabadani, February 2019.
[96] Interview with focus group of refugees from Zabadani, Autumn 2018.
[97] Interview with a former resident of Zabadani, February 2019.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Interview with focus group of refugees from Zabadani, Autumn 2018.
[100] Interview with a former resident of Zabadani, February 2019.

A large number of those displaced from Zabadani are now based in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Lebanon's General Security set up a process to encourage them to return to Zabadani.[101] In Syria there is a locally led process, whereby people can register their names with the Local Council through Mr Al-Dalati. Those wishing to return register their names and provide information about their life inside and outside Syria after 2011 on a local version of the forms discussed earlier in this report.[102] In Lebanon, local community groups are being approached by General Security and encouraged to give lists of names of Syrian refugees. In both cases, names are then checked by Syrian security agencies.[103] Returnees are supposed to receive a 6-month grace period from conscription into the army.

Although the initial groups of people requesting permission to return had chosen to do so because they did not face security concerns, around 12.5 per cent of those applying were not granted permission to return.[104] Locals reported that in Zabadani, the list of names approved for return by the government of Syria was subject to a secondary set of permissions from the Local Council and local elites. Local sources suggest that some names were reported to the security branch to prevent their return as a result of personal grievances or for financial gain.[105] Local sources reported cases in which returns were prevented at the local level due to the actions of a member of the refugee's family during the conflict. Additionally, those with family members who left for Idlib are forced to disown them if they wish to return to Zabadani or remain there.[106]

A local source stated that his cousin and the cousin's 16-year-old child had registered their names in Lebanon to return to Zabadani; the young boy was accepted but the father was denied. The father has no idea why his reconciliation application was rejected, since he had not been involved in anti-government activities.[107] Individuals whose requests to return were rejected are faced with a difficult psychological situation as a result. One man had previously been detained and tortured in Syria. After his release, he fled to Lebanon where he spent years posting pro-regime material on social media in an effort to rebuild his status with them. He has suffered enormously since his application to return was denied; he fears he no longer has any options for a safe life.[108]

Through this process, two groups of refugees have returned from Lebanon to Zabadani—the first in July 2018 and the second in September 2018—almost 150 and 200 people, respectively.[109] In October 2018, a third batch of Zabadani refugees wishing to return was registered but has not yet received information about the status of their requests.[110] The Local Council cited Assad's February 2019 speech in its call that month for more people from Zabadani to return.[111]

Those returning were motivated by a variety of reasons, including increased pressure in Lebanon. In one case, a woman returned to Zabadani out of desperation even though all of her immediate male relatives were being detained by the government of Syria.[112] A local source from Zabadani confirmed that some of the returnees were arrested by the regime on the pretext of interrogation and were detained for a few days. Most of the returnees, later detained, were women. Additionally, people who were unaware that they were wanted by the regime until they took part in the reconciliation process and returned to Zabadani were arrested.[113]

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[101] Interview with focus group of refugees from Zabadani, Autumn 2018.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Interview with a former resident of Zabadani, February 2019.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Interview with focus group of refugees from Zabadani, Autumn 2018.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Interview with a former resident of Zabadani, February 2019.
[111] Facebook post by Basel Ali Al-Dalati in the Zabadani Facebook group, accessed March 2019.
[112] Interview with Amer Burhan, local citizen from Zabadani, February 2018.
[113] *Enab Baladi*, 'Syrian refugees' return from Lebanon wrapped in mystery', 23 December 2018, https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/12/syrian-refugees-return-from-lebanon-wrapped-in-mystery/

Reconciled Area Case Study: Eastern Ghouta
Overview
In Eastern Ghouta, the SNHR has documented the arrest of at least 770 individuals, including 69 children and 87 women, between the end of hostilities in April 2018 (which returned the area to government control) and the end of 2018. Open-source research shows that more than 800 people have been arrested in the area since the end of hostilities, while local interviewees report that thousands of young men have been conscripted, including 4,000 from the town of Irbeen alone.[114] In May 2019, an MEI/ETANA report stated that around 1,500 people had been detained from Eastern Ghouta between April 2018 and February 2019 and another 1,200 people had been transferred from so-called IDP shelters to Adra prison. They also report 7,000 conscriptions from the area.[115]

Background
The area known as Eastern Ghouta is a collection of towns in rural Damascus, with a combined pre-war population of around 2 million. Eastern Ghouta was historically an area of agriculture and industry, known as the 'breadbasket' of Damascus. Initial protests in the area began in March 2011, before an armed uprising attacked Damascus from Ghouta in July 2012. In November 2012, the government lost control of Ghouta. From April 2013, the government besieged the area in punishment and from then on aid deliveries were almost non-existent. The fate of the area became tied to the smuggling tunnels between the enclave and opposition-controlled Barzeh and Qaboun, through which goods were transported. A tightening of the siege in 2017 pre-empted a military campaign beginning in 2018, following which a reconciliation deal was negotiated and 66,369 people were forcibly displaced from the area to Idlib and Aleppo (see Box 2).

With an estimated 393,000 people having been besieged in the area, a large number of whom remained in the area following the military campaign and displacement, Eastern Ghouta is an important case study due to the large number of people forced to reconcile their affairs with the state. It is also near the capital city and the site of two of the largest chemical weapons attacks of the war.

On 13 April 2018, after the deal in Eastern Ghouta was reached and implemented, Russian Military Police (RMP) entered the area. According to the reconciliation agreement, they were to stay for a renewable 6-month period.[116] Reports at the time suggested that the RMP arrested SAA soldiers and fighters who were looting civilians' houses;[117] the RMP sent out patrols every 2 days, during which they roamed the area and spoke to civilians before returning to Damascus.[118] Locals say the RMP withdrew early from Eastern Ghouta after 5 months; the security situation deteriorated after the Syrian security agencies took control of the area.

Eastern Ghouta remains under access restrictions which ostensibly equate to a 'soft siege': aid access is limited, and movement to and from Damascus is severely restricted. Civilians must reconcile their affairs in order to be able to move freely inside the enclave and to reach Damascus, and this process is taking far longer than expected. In November 2018, the regime blocked all men aged 12 to 50 from travelling to Damascus if they were not in possession of travelling permission documents from local security branches.[119]

Box 2: Reconciliation Agreement

1. The departure of the armed opposition with their weapons, along with civilians who wish to leave, to northern Syria with Russian guarantees.
2. Guarantees by the Syrian government and Russia that the people who wish to stay in the area are not to be exposed to harm, and the preservation of the city without displacement or demographic change.
3. Formation of a joint committee of the people of Harasta (inside and outside the city) in order to follow up on the affairs of those who remained in the city and follow up the affairs of detainees, and to administer the affairs of the city.

On 24 March 2018, Faylaq al-Rahman reached a reconciliation agreement with representatives of the Hemeimim Centre for Reconciliation, which stipulated:
1. Safe exit under the supervision and escort of the RMP exclusively for those who wish to leave with their families and civilians to the north of Syria.
2. Those who wish to leave can take with them their light baggage, personal documents and personal equipment in addition to their financial savings without being subjected to personal inspection.
3. Those wishing to remain in Eastern Ghouta shall be guaranteed not to be prosecuted by the regime or its allies.
4. Deployment of RMP to checkpoints in the towns formerly under the control of Faylaq Al-Rahman, which are covered by the agreement: Arbeen, Zamalka, Ein Tirma and Jobar.
5. Conduct a prisoner exchange between Faylaq al-Rahman and the government.

On 1 April 2018, the Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam) reached a reconciliation agreement with representatives of the Hemeimim Centre for Reconciliation, which included:
1. The fighters of Jaysh al-Islam will leave for Jarablus in the north-eastern Aleppo countryside with their light weapons.
2. Formation of a working group headed by a Russian delegation and representatives of the Syrian government and the guarantors of the Astana process to settle the issue of prisoners and abducted civilians and military personnel in Jaysh al-Islam jails and ensure their return to the Syrian government and reveal the fate of the others.
3. The delivery of heavy and medium weapons held by Jaysh al-Islam to the Syrian government.
4. Prohibition of any light weapon in the city of Douma after the formation of a Local Council in Douma that is approved by the Syrian government.
5. RMP will enter as a guarantee that Syrian government forces will not enter the area.
6. Return of university students to their universities after their settlement.
7. Initiating the settlement process for those who wish to stay in Douma, while ensuring that no one will be prosecuted or detained for military service for a period of 6 months after the agreement.

Governance and Security

The exact text of the reconciliation agreements in Eastern Ghouta remain secret; armed groups from the area are unwilling to publicize the details of the agreements they reached before evacuating to Idlib. However, like most reconciliation agreements, they allowed for a 6-month grace period for conscriptions, included a Russian protection guarantee, and promised aid access to the area.

Post-military violence security concerns in Eastern Ghouta began when civilians fled the area during hostilities. IDP shelters set up to house them during the fighting effectively operated as detention centres; those arriving were stripped of their IDs, which were held as deposits until their release was approved.[120] The men were separated from the women and children, and civilians were required to complete security checks and reconciliation procedures in order to be permitted to leave. In some cases, guarantors or sponsors were needed to secure release. This process involved completing forms similar to those discussed above, detailing extensive information about the individual's own actions and those of their families and other residents.[121] As of January 2019, an estimated 40,000 people remained in the shelters.[122]

Despite the reconciliation agreements, and supposed Russian safeguards, Eastern Ghouta has been subject to the presence of Syrian forces and government security branches and intelligence services, which have led to renewed and continuous raids and arrests being carried out almost daily, even during the period when the RMP was present. According to testimonies obtained by Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ),[123] after the armed opposition forces were evacuated, Syrian government forces,

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[120]Al Jumhuriya, *Damascus' shelters for Ghouta's displaced: A new kind of prison*, 30 May 2018, https://www.aljumhuriya.net/en/content/damascus%E2%80%99-shelters-ghouta%E2%80%99s-displaced-new-kind-prison
[121] Jina Salem, 'Damascus' shelters for Ghouta's displaced: A new kind of prison', al-Jumhuriya, 30 May 2018, https://www.aljumhuriya.net/en/content/damascus'-shelters-ghouta's-displaced-new-kind-prison
[122] MEA/ETANA, 2019
[123] STJ, 'In contravention to the agreement concluded Syrian regular forces forcibly conscript number of Duma sons and use others for looting operations. discontent by locals following the entry of the Syrian security apparatus into the city after controlling it and carrying out looting operations', 27 July 2018, https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/584

accompanied by the security apparatus—including Military Security, Air Intelligence, and State Security—entered the area. New checkpoints were set up to divide Eastern Ghouta into enclaves. These checkpoints were initially manned by the SAA's 4th Division and the Republican Guards, before they were replaced by personnel from State Security and Air Force Intelligence,[124] who took charge of different sectors. Checkpoints are positioned at the crossroads connecting the cities and towns of Eastern Ghouta, such as the city of Hamouriya, which separates Sabqa from the villages of Madira and Beit Sawa, and the city of Arbin.[125] Several incidents of infighting between government agencies were reported in these areas, as disputes arose about the economic benefits of looting and checkpoint bribes. A loyalist local source described entering a suburb of Eastern Ghouta alongside the 4th Division and witnessing them engaging in systematic, large-scale looting of homes.[126]

According to locals, the security services have again asserted themselves over the population; residents fear being investigated or detained by the regime's intelligence services. This situation is compounded by a delay in processing and responding to reconciliation applications before the end of the 6-month deadline.[127] This delay, and their inability to obtain any additional paperwork from the reconciliation committees, leaves residents in a limbo: they are not allowed to travel to Damascus, and are constantly at risk of being detained for lacking papers. Military-age males are at the highest risk of arrest and detention: they need papers to prove their 'acceptability' to the state and the right to have postponed army service. Many individuals have reportedly been detained despite completing the reconciliation process, based on information from local informants or for other reasons.

Local interviewees reported that it is possible to pay bribes to secure protection or to retrieve someone who has been arrested, depending on what they are accused of; yet most people do not have adequate funds to do this.[128] Locals also reported that it is possible to avoid trouble with the security forces by getting influential people to protect you.[129]

Many Eastern Ghouta residents are afraid to speak about their living conditions with those outside the area, or among themselves.[130] In July 2018 the security forces arrested six women in Eastern Ghouta for communicating with family members in opposition-held areas, and arrested another six women between 17–24 September 2018 for the same reason. These arrests have convinced local residents that the government is monitoring their calls. One local said: 'The regime searches mobiles in checkpoints and even recover deleted items and they follow up regarding numbers "who is this, who is this?" they ask, "how do you know him?" The people are terrified of this.'[131] In other cases, the security services have threatened the families of those who evacuated. As such, gathering information about life inside Ghouta is difficult.

Detentions
Assad's forces have conducted large raids and arrest campaigns throughout Eastern Ghouta, with a particular focus on the towns of Sabqa, Hamouriyah, Douma, Mesraba, and Ein Tarma and the al-Maj area. The areas most affected have been Arbin and Zamalka, where government forces imposed a siege and conducted a large-scale arrest raid in Eastern Ghouta. On 20 March 2019, regime security forces carried out a large-scale arrest campaign against young people in the eastern towns and villages of Eastern Ghouta, days after the closure of all entrances to and exits from the area.

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[124] Adnan Ahmad, 'Regime's dishonesty to the locals', alAaraby al-Jadid, 17 September 2018, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2018/9/16/فصول-جديدة-من-غدر-النظام-السوري-بمناطق-التسويات
[125] *Enab Baladi*, 'Eastern Ghouta under the duress or recruitment and arrest raids', 7 September 2018, https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/09/eastern-ghouta-under-the-duress-or-recruitment-and-arrest-raids/
[126] Interview with activist from Eastern Ghouta now living in Turkey, February 2019.
[127] *Syria Direct*, 'Life after reconciliation: East Ghoutans who stayed behind grapple with delayed settlement papers, disappearances', 24 January 2019, https://syriadirect.org/news/life-after-reconciliation-east-ghoutans-who-stayed-behind-face-delayed-settlement-papers-disappearances/
[128] Interview with former Irbeen Resident, February 2019.
[129] Interview with former Ghouta resident in Idlib, February 2019.
[130] *Syria Direct*, 'With dark humor and codewords, East Ghoutans unlearn vocabulary of the revolution as Assad reasserts control', 31 July 2018, https://syriadirect.org/news/with-dark-humor-and-codewords-east-ghoutans-unlearn-'vocabulary-of-the-revolution'-as-assad-reasserts-control/
[131] Interview with former Ghouta resident, January 2019.

Approximately 40 men were arrested while passing through regime checkpoints in Eastern Ghouta, according to the Sout al-Asima website.[132]

Many of these detentions were designed to force men to carry out their mandatory military service—in violation of Russian guarantees of a 6-month grace period following reconciliation. Some of those detained were tortured and killed, while the fate of others remains unknown.[133] Locals reported that a number of individuals were arrested from Harasta and killed under torture in prison; their bodies were returned 15 days after their arrest.[134]

Several residents of the towns of Sabqa, Kafr Batna, Jesrin, Duma, Harasta and Zamalka in Eastern Ghouta have reportedly been arrested on various charges and pretexts, such as being a deserter and communicating with relatives in the north.[135] The ongoing detentions occurred both at checkpoints set up inside Eastern Ghouta and during raids of their houses that may have been targeted based on specific intelligence. The detainees were sent to the Air Force Intelligence branch in Harasta, after which some of them were transferred to the National Security branch in al-Khateeb neighbourhood to continue investigating them.[136] In some cases, the intelligence services have sent a letter requesting that people visit a specific security branch as part of an unspecified investigation; no safeguards were provided to protect people from subsequent detention or arrest.[137]

Some arrests in Ghouta have occurred as a result of informants providing information about an individual, at times for payment of up to 200,000 SYP according to local interviewees.[138] For example, a woman in Ghouta was arrested after a homeowner returned to find her living in their property as she had not found other suitable accommodation. The homeowner falsely accused her of stealing their furniture, and despite her claiming innocence she was arrested and tortured for 4 months before being released.[139] Local sources also stated that some of the individuals who have been arrested worked as money changers, or other activities the interviewees believed would not have aroused suspicion or allegations of supporting the opposition.[140]

In Eastern Ghouta, people have also been arrested due to accusations of involvement with humanitarian aid, relief work, local councils, rescue teams and civil defence when the area was under the control of opposition armed groups. Several individuals who served in the White Helmets have reportedly been summoned by the security services, which investigated them and later returned them to Eastern Ghouta without allowing them to leave again.[141] The fate of at least one former White Helmet volunteer who was arrested is still unknown.[142] HRW reported that media and aid workers and their families were being targeted for detention and harassment in Eastern Ghouta, as well as in other areas of the country.[143]

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[132] *Halab Today*, 'After the encirclement: The regime is carrying out a campaign of arrests in Eastern Ghouta', 20 March 2019, https://halabtodaytv.net/archives/68008

[133] Siege Watch, 'Tenth Quarterly Report Part 1 – Eastern Ghouta: February-April 2018', https://siegewatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/pax-report-siege-watch-10.pdf

[134] Interview with Eastern Ghouta resident, February 2019.

[135] SOHR, 'In conjunction with a security operation in central Damascus, regime's intelligence arrests 26 citizens men and women from the Eastern Ghouta', 5 November 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106005; SOHR, 'On charges of their relatives belong to ISIS, regime's security arrest more than 10 people including a woman in Rif Dimashq towns', 12 November 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106506; SOHR, 'Despite all the Russian guarantees and promises, Assad's intelligence and security branches arrest about 350 civilians in less than 2 and a half months in several areas in Syria', 13 November 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106616; SOHR, '15 new arrests carried out by regime's security branches within the series of arbitrary arrests in areas of reconciliation and settlement', 14 November 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106668; https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/253554 24/9/2018

[136] *Enab Baladi*, 'Eastern Ghouta under the duress', 2018.

[137] SOHR, 'In the Eastern Ghouta, regime's intelligence arrest 45 people and informs about 100 others that they must check with their security branches in Damascus', 17 October 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104830

[138] Interview with former Ghouta resident, February 2019.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

[141] SOHR, 'The regime authorities wrap around the first reconciliation and open new centres for settlement following an innovating technique to arrest those who remained in the Eastern Ghouta and to question them', 16 October 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104765

[142] STJ, 'The regime's security services arrest former civil defence volunteers', 27 September 2018, https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/791

[143] HRW, 'Syria: Detention, Harassment in Retaken Areas,' May 2019, https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/21/syria-detention-harassment-retaken-areas

As has happened in other reconciled areas, government forces have been carrying out constant raids to arrest and detain people for military conscription.[144] Government security forces have also summoned local activists and others known for opposition activities—such as the head of Douma Local Council, Khalil Aybour—to security branches and investigated them for long periods.[145]

Returns and Freedom of Movement

Residents of Eastern Ghouta must obtain approval from the security services to travel outside the enclave to Damascus. This process requires undergoing the reconciliation process and a subsequent investigation, which includes questions about their relatives and whether they remained in Ghouta or went to northern Syria or abroad during the conflict. Local interviewees reported that government forces have prevented individuals who worked in the medical and relief fields, or who have been involved with parties opposed to the regime in Eastern Ghouta, from leaving the area.[146] Residents are also prevented from entering specific neighbourhoods and areas of Eastern Ghouta, in particular those that are located near intelligence services[147] or tagged for redevelopment, like Jobar, or Mleiha, which is occupied by Iranian-backed militia.[148]

Arrests of returnees to Eastern Ghouta have been reported, in particular those returning from northern Syria, who have been arrested at checkpoints in Damascus and its suburbs, particularly the al-Qteifeh checkpoint. Local sources reported that some of these arrests were made because individuals returned without undergoing the reconciliation process and receiving government permission; those individuals were later brought to the Air Force Intelligence branch in Harasta city.[149] Yet returnees from northern Syria have also been arrested despite having received reconciliation guarantees.[150] Adnan Boidati received promises of non-arrest but was taken into custody after returning from al-Bab city in late July 2018. He died in prison and his body was later delivered to his family.[151] Other young returnees have been forcibly conscripted into the military.[152]

Regional Case Study: Homs Northern Suburbs

The SNHR documented the government's arrest of at least 156 individuals, including 17 children and 12 women, from Homs northern suburbs from May 2018 until the end of the year. The arrests were mostly concentrated in the cities of al Rastan and Talbisa, and targeted former members of armed opposition factions in that area who had reconciled according to the settlement agreements and favoured staying in the area. According to Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) reports and investigations, more than 160 people have been detained in northern Homs since July 2018, in violation of the reconciliation deal and its 6-month grace period which was supposed to end in December 2018. According to open-source information, dozens of people (and perhaps more) have been arrested or detained in northern Homs since the end of the hostilities.

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[144] SOHR, 'After the false pardon, increase in number of people wanted for regime's reserve, a list of about 700 persons arrive in Harasta at the Eastern Ghouta after other lists reached other areas', 7 December 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=108528; SOHR, 'At the same time: 20 fighters arrested in Douma City, 70 young men recruited from the compulsory and reserve services, and lists arrive for about 5,500 people wanted for both services', 24 December 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=110223; SOHR, 'The provinces of Damascus and Rif Dimashq witness the issuance of lists of more than 15,000 people wanted for reserve service and the regime intensifies its patrols in search of wanted for the compulsory recruitment', 6 January 2019, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=111652; SOHR, 'More than 1,500 people are wanted to serve in regime's reserve service their names reach al-Ghouta and arrests in areas east of the capital', 13 January 2019, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=112293; STJ, 'Syrian security services arrest civilians in Duma and recruit young men. In December 2018, three security services conducted raid and arrest operations, targeting civilian men and women, purportedly to search for weapons', 3 January 2019, https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/1128
[145] STJ, 'In Contravention to the Agreement', 2018.
[146] Interview with Irbin resident, February 2019.
[147] SOHR, 'The Eastern Ghouta, between royalties imposed by Tiger forces, theft of the 4th division, arrests of the intelligence and a new displacement due to violations and practices', 2 February 2019, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=115738
[148] Interview with Eastern Ghouta resident, February 2019.
[149] SOHR, 'The regime's intelligence arrests citizen women and a child coming back from the Syrian north months after they have been displaced from the area according to deals reached with the factions operating in it and the dignitaries', 21 October 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=105098; SOHR, 'After recruiting hundreds and arresting more than 700 of the returnees to its controlled areas, regime's intelligence arrests a family from Ghouta and prevents its students from reaching their universities', 19 November 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=107000
[150] Interview with a former resident of Eastern Ghouta, February 2019.
[151] STJ, 'Arrest of returnees from Northern Syria to Eastern Ghouta and one dies in custody. Nineteen persons arrested including 11 women despite promises of non-exposure', 14 August 2018, https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/687
[152] SOHR, 'Arrests a family from Ghouta and prevents its students from reaching their universities", 19 November 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=107000

Northern rural Homs is a collection of towns in the northern countryside north of Homs city, including Talbiseh, Ar-Rastan, and Houla, which have a combined pre-war population of around 300,000 people. By 2017 the population had fallen to 250,045.

Widespread protests occurred in the area early in the uprising, and fighting took place in Ar-Rastan from 2011 to May 2012, by which time the area was mostly under armed opposition control. That same month a massacre in Houla killed more than 100 people. Later UN findings suggested they were summarily executed by government-aligned forces and militias.[153] A later offensive took control of the areas around Talbiseh.

The area was subject to access restrictions and siege from then until 2018. In 2017 it was named one of the four so-called de-escalation areas, along with Eastern Ghouta, Daraa, and Idlib. Following the offensive in Eastern Ghouta, the government of Syria turned its attention to northern rural Homs, and after an increased siege and military campaign a reconciliation and evacuation deal was reached. Despite early negotiations including a list of around 1,000 names the government wished to forcibly replace to Idlib, the agreement did not feature a named list of 'irreconcilables'.

Box 3: Reconciliation Deal

On 1 May 2018, the Syrian opposition factions in the northern Homs and South Hama countryside reached a deal with the reconciliation centre in Hemimim on the fate of the towns and villages in the area. The agreement stipulated:
1. The transfer of all armed opposition fighters, and their families who refused to stay, to Jarablus in east Aleppo and Idlib province.
2. Armed opposition to deliver heavy weapons and some of their medium weapons and ammunition within three days of signing the agreement.
3. Russia pledged to withdraw the heavy weapons from the government-held villages in northern Homs countryside.
4. Beginning the reconciliation process and settlement of the status of the armed opposition fighters who were willing to stay in the area.
5. Issuing a presidential amnesty for defected military officers and soldiers.
6. Provision of a grace period to excuse men from compulsory service, and a pledge not to arrest those wanted for military service, for a period of 6 months to 3 years after the agreement.
7. Allowing individuals who want to stay to keep their small weapons for a period of 6 months to 3 years.
8. The armed opposition groups agreed to hand over all maps of the tunnels and mines in the area and to indicate the location of the ammunition depots and explosive materials.
9. The Syrian government pledged to return to the region, along with all institutions and government departments.
10. Organizing access to educational facilities, including universities and schools for residents.
11. Open the international road from Homs to Hama, and secure it within 3 days of signing of the agreement.
12. RMP enter the region to ensure the implementation of the terms of the agreement.
13. The Syrian security forces are prevented entry to the area throughout the period of RMP presence, which will remain for 6 months or more after the signing of the agreement.
14. All of the approximately 250 fighters of the Hayyet Tahrir al-Sham, who are in Deir Fuol area, will be allowed to go to northern Syria in return for revealing the fate of 200 missing persons. If not, the safety of the HTS fighters will not be guaranteed.
15. Factions in Houla will be allowed to go to northern Syria in exchange for revealing the fate of 120 missing persons; if they do not do so, the Russians will not ensure their safety.

Governance and Security

According to the reconciliation agreement, the RMP was to remain in northern Homs for a 6-month period. The reconciliation office responsible for handling individuals' settlement or reconciliation applications opened just after the departure of the last rebel groups.[154] Local interviewees reported that many of the workers in the reconciliation office were members of various security branches, including the police.[155] The offices did not conduct arrests of their own, but were involved in summoning individuals to the security branches for further investigation or to settle their status.[156]

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[153] BBC, 'Syria crisis: Most Houla victims "were executed"', 29 May 2012, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18249413
[154] Interview with a 'community focal point' from northern countryside, currently living in Idlib, February 2019.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.

During this period, Russian forces trained police forces comprised of former armed opposition fighters from Jaysh al-Tawhid and an additional 2,000 young men who applied to join the force.[157] However, Iranian-backed militias opened a recruiting centre in al-Farhanye during the same period and received more than 5,000 applications due to the higher salary they were offering as well as the chance for applicants to serve in their area of origin.[158] Despite Russian efforts to increase recruitment, their local forces failed to build influence and never opened a headquarters or controlled a checkpoint.[159] As a result, northern Homs countryside returned to Syrian security sector control after the premature withdrawal of Russian forces.[160]

While the RMP was present in Northern Homs, the Syrian government set up a security point in each area, which functioned as a security branch.[161] Initially, a Military Security branch was set up, which was later replaced by state security agencies.[162] This move was done in defiance of the reconciliation agreement, which stated that only the RMP and its affiliated local police force could enter the area during the initial 6-month period. According to interviews with locals, when the RMP was present the security situation was calmer, and fewer violations were reported than were observed after their departure.

In some areas, Syrian forces and militias entered villages almost immediately after the reconciliation agreement.[163] Despite Russian protection guarantees, in late May 2018 pro-regime militias shot at a group of civilians travelling to a government reconciliation centre in southern Hama. At least seven people died and another four were injured.[164] In another incident, two young men from Zaafaraneh near Talbiseh were attacked by pro-government militias.[165] Additionally, there have been ongoing reports of civilians being detained, including individuals from the reconciliation committees.[166]

The Syrian government refused the reconciliation applications of around 400 people in Northern Homs based on various claims, including outstanding retaliatory lawsuits filed against them by civilians from nearby Alawite areas for alleged crimes committed after 2011. The lawsuits are related to the sectarian-driven tensions in the area, which include tit-for-tat kidnappings and murders.[167] In one such case, around 20 men from al-Ghanto who were arrested following a lawsuit filed by the Hilal family which stated that the men killed their relatives during attacks on their villages after 2011.[168] These lawsuits characterize the impact of citizens informing on each other, particularly when such lawsuits can only be brought by government supporters against former armed opposition supporters; similar allegations could not be made against the government or its allied militias.

A number of departments affiliated with the Syrian government turned down applications filed by employees who had previously been dismissed for involvement with the opposition. Such refusals violate the terms of the reconciliation deal, which mandates the rehiring of dismissed employees at

[157] *Enab Baladi*, 'Russian Military Police withdrew from Homs northern countryside', 15 October 2018, https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/259001?so=related
[158] Interview with a 'community focal point' from northern countryside, currently living in Idlib, February 2019.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] *Qasioun News*, 'Regime forces preparing to attack Homs countryside, May 2018, https://www.qasioun-news.com/ar/news/show/145855/
[164] *Geiroon*, 'Civilians killed by regime militias', 23 May 2018, https://geiroon.com/archives/118870
[165] *Horriya Press*, 'Security chaos in Homs northern countryside', 29 May 2018, https://horrya.net/archives/63445
[166] *Nedaa Syria*, 'Security campaign by the regime and detention of medical staff', 11 June 2018, https://nedaa-sy.com/news/6652; *Syrian Observer*, 'Figures from reconciliation committees north of Homs arrested', 3 September 2018, https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/46199/figures_from_reconciliation_committees_north_homs_arrested.html; *Smart News*, 'Syrian government forces arrest reconciliation promoters in Homs', https://smartnews-agency.com/en/wires/321417/syrian-government-forces-arrest-reconciliation-promoters-in-homs; SOHR, 'Weeks after the end of displacement process from central Syria, northern Homs witnesses the first assassination of member of the reconciliation committees', 8 June 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=94670
[167] *Enab Baladi*, 24 September 2018, https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/253584.
[168] *Aldorar*, 25 October 2018, https://eldorar.com/node/127289 ; STJ, 'Homs: illegal detentions based on personal claims. The Syrian security services arrested more than 40 persons, in August 2018, on allegations made by pro-regime claimants', 19 September 2018, https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/763

government departments, and re-enrolling university students, within 6 months of the local reconciliation deal.[169]

In late October 2018, the RMP began leaving its posts in the Homs countryside 2 months prematurely. After the RMP's withdrawal the Syrian military police took over security in Northern Homs, while Jaysh al-Tawhid played a small role in collaborating with regime forces. The Military Intelligence (Branch 239) remained in charge of dealing with army defectors, while the National Security Branch is responsible for dealing with locals' reconciliation paperwork.[170] Air Force Intelligence set up five checkpoints in Talbiseh in June 2018 in defiance of the reconciliation agreement.[171] Additionally, government forces set up checkpoints in Ar-Rastan city to guard the houses of local regime officers, which upset residents.[172]

As in other areas, phones are searched at checkpoints in Northern Homs.[173] The area has also suffered from kidnapping and the murder of people from wealthy families and businessmen. Several locals attributed responsibility for these crimes to government-affiliated gangs.[174] In al-Houla, wealthy traders have been kidnapped for ransom. According to locals, government authorities do not intervene because they consider such kidnappings to be false accusations.

Detentions
The majority of detentions and arrests in Northern Homs involve civilians being detained while crossing checkpoints on their way to Homs city. The checkpoints were not meant to be operating in the area during the 6-month period following reconciliation.[175] The security apparatus, including the Military Security branch, the NSB, and the Political Security branch, released the majority of those detained after they completed an investigation or paid a bribe—the latter occurred in around 80 per cent of cases, according to local interviewees.[176] These bribes ranged between 100,000 and 1.5 million SYP, depending on the accusations.[177] Residents have been forced to sell their properties to pay the bribes, which has led some to flee to Aleppo or the Idlib countryside.[178] Government forces stationed at checkpoints have also arrested and detained several young men despite them having valid reconciliation papers, stating that they were instead required to possess a 'cancellation of arrest' paper[179] despite the fact that such papers had not yet been issued to locals and requesting them was in defiance of the local agreement.[180] During this 6-month period, regime forces also targeted former White Helmet members, who were questioned and released after a couple of days.[181] Additionally, they questioned local residents such as school teachers and aid workers about their work during the period of opposition control.[182] In September 2018, regime forces arrested important local figures, such as members of Sharia Courts and those related to Jaysh al-Tawhid. Air Force Intelligence also arrested 22 defectors from the army and transferred them to Branch 239 (Officers Affairs of the Military Intelligence branch).[183] Although their fate remains unknown, the regime told the family of Captain

[169] STJ, 'The Syrian government refuses to rehire dismissed employees in northern rural Homs, contrary to settlement deal's terms', 8 November 2018, https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/942; SOHR, 'After the displacement of 35,000 towards the north, residents of northern Homs and south Hama fear that the regime would prevent the return of 2,500 civilians to their jobs as it recruits hundreds of employees of its families' casualties', 17 September 2018, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102701
[170] *Enab Baladi*, 'Most important incidents happened in Homs countryside', 2 October 2018, https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/255161?so=related
[171] *Enab Baladi*, 'An evacuation agreement ends northern rural Homs' siege', 10 May 2018, https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2018/05/an-evacuation-agreement-ends-northern-rural-homs-siege/
[172] *Al Ayyam*, 'Russia revokes the Homs countryside agreement by bringing tanks to the cities of Rastan and Talbisa', 6 June 2018, https://ayyamsyria.net/archives/220882
[173] Interview with with a community focal point from northern countryside, currently living in Idlib, February 2019.
[174] *Eqtsad*, 'Arrest for ransom in Homs northern countryside', 14 December 2018, https://www.eqtsad.net/news/article/23119/
[175] 7al, 'Due to arrest warrants Homs northern countryside residents don't go to Homs city, al-Hal', 2 July 2018, https://7al.net/2018/07/01/بسبب-الاعتقالات-تحذيرات-لأهالي-ريف-حم/
[176] Syria TV, 'Assad regime arrested local figures who promoted reconciliation', 2 September 2018, https://www.syria.tv/content/نظام-الأسد-يعتقل-شخصيات-روّجت-لـ-المصالحة-في-حمص/
[177] Interview with a 'community focal point' from northern countryside, currently living in Idlib, February 2019.
[178] Ibid.
[179] 7al 2018.
[180] *Ibid.*
[181] Interview with a 'community focal point' from northern countryside, currently living in Idlib, February 2019.
[182] Ibid.
[183] *Enab Baladi*, 2 October 2018, https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/255161?so=related

Ibrahim al-Obeid, a defector who chose to stay in al-Rastan and was later arrested, that he died in custody [184].

After the RMP left, the security forces continued arresting locals for various reasons, such as lawsuits filed by people close to the government, and even arrested those who negotiated the reconciliation and the de-escalation agreement in 2017 between the local community and the Syrian government and Russia, like Dr Kamal Bahboh.[185] The security services also arrested individuals working at local exchange offices, and released them after they paid a bribe.[186] In February 2019, regime forces arrested and detained more than 50 children aged 13–16 for 5 days after anti-regime slogans and leaflets were found in al-Rastan, Talbise and al-Dar al-Kabire in Homs northern countryside.[187]

Returns

Many of the locals who have returned to date are state employees and army or police officers who were displaced in government-held areas. For instance, army officers (mostly high ranking, such as generals and colonels) from ar-Rastan came back. These individuals do not have to fear their security situation when returning, and are not subject to the reconciliation process.

Each community in Northern Homs has set up its own civilian committee to communicate with the authorities in the post-reconciliation period. The committees are composed largely of former local council members who decided to stay in the area after the reconciliation. The committees manage the situation of forcibly displaced residents who want to return to the area after witnessing the poor living conditions in northern Syria. The civilian committees collect lists of individuals who want to return and submit them to government authorities in Damascus for vetting.[188] Some of those who remained in the area after the reconciliation agreement have helped their relatives come back from Idlib or Aleppo countryside. Around 1,000–1,500 civilians returned to the area from northern Syria within the first month after the forcible displacements during the reconciliation.[189] Each registered their names and information at security centres and went through the reconciliation process.

There are a limited number of reported refugee returns from neighbouring countries.[190] Anyone returning from neighbouring countries must register their name with local security centres and complete the reconciliation process.[191] In July, there were reports that some of those who had returned to Homs from northern Syria were targeted by pro-government militias for detention and extortion upon their return.[192]

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[184] *Nedaa Syria*, 'A defector officer who reconciled with regime was killed under torture in al-Rastan', 15 March 2019, https://nedaa-sy.com/news/12340

[185] *al-Modon*, 'Russian military police withdrew from Homs northern countryside', 27 October 2018, الشرطة-الروسية-تنسحب-من-ريف-حمص-الشمالي/https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/10/27

[186] *Enab Baladi*, 'The most prominent events Homs northern countryside after the settlement agreement', 2 October 2018, https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/255161?so=related

[187] *al-Modon*, 'Assad regime release children arrested in al-Rastan', 3 March 2019, النظام-يفرج-عن-أطفال-الرستن/https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2019/3/3

[188] Siege Watch, 'Tenth Quarterly Report Part 2 – The culmination of Surrender or Die: February- May 2018', https://siegewatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/PAX-report-Siege-Watch-10b.pdf

[189] *Ibid.*

[190] Interview with a 'community focal point' from northern countryside, currently living in Idlib, February 2019.

[191] Ibid.

[192] *Smart News*, 'Regime militias arrest civilians who came back to Homs countryside, 11 July 2018, https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/306497

Appendix 1: Status of Return Situation

UNHCR Threshold		Current Status
Significant and durable reduction of hostilities.	🟧	In some areas of the country there has been a reduction in immediate conflict-related violence. It remains to be seen whether this is durable. In other areas, there remains an ongoing threat of conflict-related violence, such as in northeast, northwest, southern, and some areas of central Syria.
Conclusion of a formal agreement with the government, host countries, and other actors as required, to receive returnees.	🟥	Agreements have not been reached, nor do the conditions exist for these to be appropriate to enter into.
The government / actors in control of the return area provide genuine guarantees that returnees will not face harassment, discrimination, arbitrary detention, physical threat or prosecution on account of originating from an area previously or currently under de facto control of another party to the conflict; for having left Syria illegally; for having lodged an asylum claim abroad; or on account of any (individual or family) diversity characteristic.	🟥	Currently not being met in any location in Syria. Discrimination based on ethnic and political persuasion continues, as does discrimination based on which area of control or country someone resided in during the conflict. Arrests and detentions are occurring across all areas.
Every individual's decision to return is informed and genuinely voluntary, without any coercion.	🟥	No formal or independently verified information is currently available on the status of security conditions in areas for return; refugees rely on scarce informal networks. Reports of UNHCR failing to inform refugees that they lack the required access and information to counsel them on conditions for return.
Acceptance by the government / entity in control of the return area of returnees' free choice of destination and place of residence and right to freedom of movement.	🟥	Government not willing to allow freedom of movement to all within areas under their control; it is also rejecting the return requests of some prospective returnees.
The physical, legal, and material safety of refugees and returnees is ensured.	🟥	No. Physical, legal, and material safety is not guaranteed anywhere in the country. Arrests and detentions, opaque and unfair trials, and property dispossession are occurring in all areas.
Measures are in place to meet the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys, and to ensure that SGBV is prevented and responded to, that access to assistance is safe and dignified, and that protection, care and assistance are provided throughout all phases of the return and reintegration process. Refugees and returnees with specific needs (including, but not limited to, older persons and persons with disabilities) receive protection and support, through age- and gender-sensitive approaches.	🟥	No consistent humanitarian access to people in need, IDPs, and returnees, so it is impossible to ensure these needs are being met as a matter of course.
Identified unaccompanied or separated children are not returned prior to tracing family members and formal best interests of the child determinations have been undertaken.	🟥	Women and children are routinely separated from males, with reports of families being separated during arrests made during the return process which leave children unaccompanied. In other cases, children are given return permission without parents.
The principle of family unity is upheld, including the right to enter and remain for dependents who are not Syrian citizens.	🟥	Permission to return is not guaranteed for an entire family group, with permissions given in some cases to some family members and not others. Families of those who were forcibly evacuated during so-called reconciliations report being asked to disavow their family members in order to be allowed to return.
Refugees and returnees can effectively participate in the planning and implementation of the return and reintegration process.	🟥	Returnees are not able to participate in the planning of when and how they return, and in some cases are not able to return to their area of origin.
Activities by any entity that impede the informed, voluntary, safe and dignified return of refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin or of choice are prevented and	🟥	There is currently no baseline information about the conditions for return or the security situation in potential areas for return. Therefore it is impossible to state whether

addressed.		the activities that impede return are being addressed or, indeed, to address them.
Returnees fully benefit from an amnesty in Syria, except for those who are charged with a serious violation of international humanitarian law, a crime against humanity, a crime constituting a serious violation of human rights, or a serious common crime involving death or serious bodily harm, committed prior to or during exile. The amnesty includes those who evaded compulsory military service or reservist service, have deserted from the armed forces, have joined a non-state armed group, and who left Syria illegally and/or lodged an asylum claim abroad.	■	No such amnesty exists in Syria. Forced conscription continues across the country, even within the 6-month periods of reprieve negotiated during reconciliations or returns. Informing on others has continued and increased both formally and informally, including through returns and reconciliation forms.
The government of Syria commits to recognizing changes in returnees' personal/civil status that occurred during the conflict, including in displacement and abroad (e.g. births, deaths, marriages, adoptions, divorces, custody – including the extension of Syrian nationality to returnee children born abroad and residence status with the possibility of naturalization for non-Syrian spouses). All returnees have access to affordable civil registration and documentation and validation of education certificates obtained abroad. Documentation issued by a competent authority indicating such changes is validated or re-issued.	■	Documentation and its recognition remain concerns inside and outside the country. Gaining formal government-issued documentation from abroad is prohibitively expensive for refugees. Documents issued in areas not under government control are not recognized. Women in particular struggle to access documentation if their male relatives or partners have died or been detained. Civil documentation offices and systems are closely linked to the security apparatus.
Appropriate evidentiary value is given to civil documentation issued by non-state entities and in non-government-controlled areas by local actors (e.g. birth attestation), and legitimate documentation issued by the competent Syrian authorities is recognized. For those not holding identity documentation, alternative forms of evidence are accepted. Documentation from UNHCR or other internationally mandated organizations is recognized.	■	There has not yet been any movement on the government of Syria's position regarding its lack of recognition of documents issued in areas outside its control during the conflict.
Legislative measures allow for the issuance of documents necessary to establish identity, family composition and nationality. To prevent statelessness, legislative measures are undertaken to ensure refugees born to a Syrian parent—female or male—are considered citizens of Syria, and birth certificates are issued to refugee children who are not in possession of such documents.	■	Documentation and its recognition remain concerns inside and outside the country.
The equivalency of academic/professional/vocational diplomas/certificates/degrees acquired during displacement is recognized by the government of Syria, as appropriate.	■	There has not yet been any movement on the government of Syria's position regarding its lack of recognition of educational achievements at all levels issued in areas outside its control during the conflict.
The government sets up efficient, accessible, and affordable mechanisms to address housing, land and property (HLP) issues and to provide for property restitution and compensation in line with international law. Particular attention needs to be paid to the rights of returnee women heads of households and the rights of secondary occupants of refugees' property.	■	The government of Syria continues to issue discriminatory HLP legislation and fails to rescind similarly concerning recent and historical laws. Many Syrians cannot assert their HLP rights due to land zoning, titling, and lack of documentation. Destruction of property is widespread, as is secondary habitation. Access to some neighbourhoods, towns, or properties is arbitrarily blocked by the government of Syria. No mechanism within or outside the country exists to address HLP issues.
Returnees enjoy free access to law enforcement bodies, courts of law, competent administrative authorities and other relevant entities.	■	Accessing the legal system is prohibitively expensive and opaque for many. In some areas, returnees report that law enforcement do not take their complaints seriously and fail to investigate them.
UNHCR's supervisory responsibility, which includes (but is not limited to) monitoring the voluntariness of the repatriation, the reintegration of returnees, and all interventions aimed at ensuring repatriation in safety and dignity are respected.	■	UNHCR does not have access to all areas of the country, nor does it enjoy uninhibited access to communities to monitor conditions or to follow and monitor or protect returnees throughout the return process.

Both Syria and host countries take all appropriate steps to ensure the security and safety of UNHCR staff and all other personnel engaged in the repatriation process.	🟥	UNHCR does not have access to all areas of the country, nor does it enjoy uninhibited access to communities to monitor conditions or to follow and monitor or protect returnees throughout the return process.
Removal of/marking of areas contaminated by landmines and other unexploded ordnance on main routes of return and in return areas is ensured. Mine awareness programmes are established in affected areas.	🟥	Mine removal work is ongoing but incomplete.
UNHCR is granted free and unhindered access to all refugees and returnees to monitor the conditions of reception and reintegration. Similarly, all refugees and returnees, wherever they are located, including in detention centres and prisons (in liaison with the International Committee for the Red Cross/Red Crescent), have access to UNHCR.	🟥	UNHCR does not have access to all areas of the country, nor does it enjoy uninhibited access to communities to monitor conditions or to follow and monitor or protect returnees throughout the return process.

Note: This table analyses the status of fulfilment of the 22 thresholds identified in UNHCR, *Protection Thresholds and Parameters for Refugee Return*, February 2018.

Appendix 2: UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation Form

UNHCR
VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION FORM

Linked Cases:

Family/Group No.:

Address/Location in Camp:

Identity/Ration Card No.:

	Family Name	First Name	Sex	Y O B	Place of Birth	Relationship PRA	Skills	Special Needs
01								
02								
03								
04								
05								
06								
07								
08								
09								

Intended Departure Date: Reception Centre:

Intended Destination:

District   Admin. Post   Location

I, the undersigned principal applicant, declare that I (and my dependants) after due consideration wish to be repatriated to _____

Applicant: _____ Date: __/__/__ Witness: _____ Date: __/__/__

Syrian Government 'Return Form':
Headed 'Information Bulletin', the above form asks the following:

Name and Surname, Father, Mother, Date of birth
Place and number of register, National ID number
Previous address, Current address
Cell phone number, Landline
Brief of your life
Political orientation
Current job, Previous job
Sentences and arrests
Have you ever raised a gun against the SAA?
Have you ever committed a crime against innocent civilians or had blood on your hands?
Have you travelled outside the country?
Do you have any relatives detained during the current events?
Date: --/--/2018
Name and signature
Left thumb fingerprint

Government of Syria form for reconciling affairs:
Syrian Arab Republic
General Command of the Army and Armed Forces
Record of [Full name] Statement

On [day] taking place on [--/--/2018], of [month, 2018], by [detective] and [editor], and as part of the ongoing settlement in the northern countryside **text missing**, the General Command of the Army and Armed Forces calls for [Full name] to answer the following:

State your identity and personal information

State your role in the current events and your involvement in the protests, riots, and armed terrorist activities

State what you know regarding armed terrorist groups, their commanders, command centres, and positions

State what you know regarding weapons warehouses, ammunition, explosives, or any material set to be used in terrorist activities

State what you know regarding the use of chemical weapons by armed terrorist groups against civilians and [Government of Syria] GoS forces, as well as their storage

Detective, Editor, and Statement owner

Page (--)

Continued [Full name] Statement

State the details of your relatives' involvement in the current events

State in detail what you know regarding the funding of armed terrorist groups and their funding methods **text missing** in areas under GoS control

State in detail what you know regarding non-Syrian terrorists, their names, and their positions

State in detail what you know regarding the locations of civilian and military abductees

State in detail what you know regarding the locations of non-Syrian officers and intelligence agents that **text missing** armed terrorist groups

State in detail what you know regarding the locations of tunnels

State your cell phone numbers and internet accounts

Q. Do you have anything to add?

A. No, and this is my full statement with my signature and left thumb fingerprint

- I (detective) read him his statement which he signed with signature and left thumb fingerprint

Detective, Editor, and Statement owner

The government of Syria pledge form:

Headed 'Written Pledge', Dated --/--/201-

I, the undersigned, son of [father and mother's names], born on [date of birth], [place and number of register], hold the national ID number [number], pledge, with my full mental and psychological strength, that I have not committed or were involved in any activities that violate the law or participated in riots and vandalism or those that led to riots or vandalism, or any activities that affect homeland and citizens' security, and I am fully prepared to cooperate with the relevant authorities to preserve the safety of the homeland and to report anything that is suspicious or affecting security.

I pledge that I have not committed any activities that violate the settlement agreement and I have not had blood on my hands. I take full legal responsibility should I have concealed information that violate the settlement agreement, in which case my settlement will be null and void.

I pledge that I do not own any weapons, and if weapons are discovered in my possession, I take full legal responsibility and my settlement will be null and void.

I pledge that I have settled my security situation on my own, without pressure or coercion, and I have not been subject to extortion or otherwise. I pledge that I am fully prepared to report any similar cases.

Current address

Cell phone and Landline

Full name and Signature

Appendix 3: Open-Source Security Incidents in Eastern Ghouta since the End of Hostilities

April 13, 2019 - regime announces seizure of properties of 137 people from Eastern Ghouta for participating in terrorist actions; all people left Ghouta including rebel commanders, local council members, media activists, aid workers and activists with civil organizations https://ayyamsyria.net/archives/237911

April 6 - in 2 days, regime forces arrested more than 50 young men from Saqba, Hamourya, Kafr Batna, Ayn Tarma and other towns in Eastern Ghouta https://www.baladi-news.com/ar/news/details/43648/النظام-يعتقل-أكثر-من-شابا-في-الغوطة-الشرقية

April 4 – 'Regime Arrests Mother and Her Four Daughters Over Phone Call With Rebel Relative in Idlib', https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/49573/regime-arrests-mother-and-her-four-daughters-over-phone-call-with-rebel-relative.html

March 21 - regime forces set up checkpoints inside Eastern Ghouta towns and arrested more than 40 young men for military service https://www.sy-24.com/news/و-الغوطة-الشرقية-تحاصر-النظام-مخابرات/

December, 2018 - STJ report on arrest campaign by regime forces against civilians in Eastern Ghouta https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/1128

December 24 - thousands of young men arrested by the regime for military service http://www.shaam.org/news/syria-news/الغوطة-الشرقية-وبلدات-مدن-في-بالألاف-واعتقالات-منتشرة-حواجز.html

December 22 - 4,500 men in Douma wanted for military service. About 50 arrested in raids and taken to military service http://damascusv.com/archives/5422

December 12- collective execution in Sedanaya of former commanders of Barzeh rebel groups who reconciled with the regime https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/12/12/%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86-%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7 and http://damascusv.com/archives/5221 and https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2018/11/22/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82%D9%8A

December 11 - regime sentenced 40 rebel commanders to death for participating in mortar shells on Damascus, all commanders are in Idlib https://arabi21.com/story/1143867/النظام-السوري-يصدر-أحكاما-بالإعدام-بحق-قادة-فصائل-معارضة

December 8 - over 20 people have been arrested in Saqba and Mleiha in the past week for speaking on the phone with their relatives residing in the rebel-held north. They were taken to

Branch 251 belonging to Aman al-Dawla, which is apparently responsible for detaining people for phone conversations http://damascusv.com/archives/5289

December 8 - dozens of former rebels in Barzeh were arrested for military service and forcible conscription into militias run by former rebel commanders. Hundreds of men are wanted for military service in the neighbourhood. Various mukhabarat raiding homes to arrest them http://damascusv.com/archives/5279

December 8 - regime forces arrested dozens of civilians for talking with relatives in Idlib https://hadiabdullah.net/2018/12/08/اعتقال-العشرات-من-أهالي-الغوطة-والسبب/

December 6 - dozens of former rebels who reconciled with the regime now face criminal cases and cases launched by relatives of fallen regime soldiers around Damascus, including Qudsiyeh and Hameh
https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/12/6/%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AD%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%BA%D9%85-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%87%D9%85

December 4 - regime arrested ex-rebel fighters from Eastern Ghouta who were at the shelters https://www.alsouria.net/content/من-مراكز-الإيواء-لفروع-المخابرات-النظام-يعتقل-مقاتلين-سابقين-بالغوطة-بعد-الوشاية-بهم

November 28 - regime preventing entry of medical supplies into Ghouta, those seeking to leave for specialized medical care in Damascus often arrested at checkpoints, residents of Ghouta rely on private generators, no street cleaning. Republican Guard in charge of Zamalka and Ein Terma increase limitations on freedom of movement, closing off entire neighbourhoods in those towns, declaring them to be military zones http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=107664

November 27 – Air Force Intelligence carries out arrests in raids and checkpointsin Ghouta: Zamalka, Beit Sahem, Ein Terma, Saqba and Hamouriya. At least 10 ex-rebels who joined the regime arrested. Three former commanders of Jaysh al-Islam (JaI) who underwent the reconciliation process were arrested in Beit Sahem also former members of Faylaq al-Rahman arrested for holding personal weapons https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/97639/ SOHR. The three JaI detainees did taswiyeh in May http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=107428

November 26 - Russia removed five checkpoints in Ghouta and arrested six regime personnel manning them for abuses against civilians http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=107466

November 26 - Arrest of about 80 youth from the Adra 'aid centre'. They were interrogated regarding locations of hidden weapons and bodies of regime fighters killed in Ghouta http://nedaa-sy.com/en/news/9998 and http://damascusv.com/archives/5237

November 25 - Assad regime begins preventing men wanted for military service (enlistment and reserve) from leaving Ghouta toward Damascus. Started with Douma and spread elsewhere https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/265479. Another source says this covers men aged 12–50 http://nedaa-sy.com/news/9957

25 November - regime forces blocked young men from travelling to Damascus https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/265479

November 21 - former commander of Liwaa al-Awwal escaped to Hama via smuggling after the regime placed him under house arrest (restricted to Barzeh alone). His name is معاوية البقاعي, aka Abu Bahr. Regime intelligence (no branch mentioned, استخربرات) arrested another former Liwaa al-Awwal commander أبو أنس سريحة after carrying out an armed raid on his home. Regime forces also raided the home of another Liwaa al-Awwal commander, "عمار حيبا" المعروف باسم "الزبيق", who now works with the Iranian Republican Guard Corps, but he escaped Barzeh along with a commander from Liwaa al-Awwal, "أبو أمير غبور". Arrests are being carried out non-stop and former commanders and fighters of Liwaa al-Awwal who have gone through taswiyeh are escaping en masse to avoid arrest. http://damascusv.com/archives/5206 and http://nedaa-sy.com/news/9862

November 21 - al-Aman al-Siyasi arrests of women and children returning to Qudsiya from northern rebel-held Syria without coordinating with the reconciliation committees http://damascusv.com/archives/5082

November 20 - four former commanders with Jaysh al-Awwal (FSA) in Barzeh called in for questioning by Air Force Intelligence and taken to Air Force Intelligence headquarters in Harasta. They were apparently arrested after a former commander, سمير الشحرور "المنشار, arrested last month, ratted them out for ferrying weapons to Ghouta via tunnels. Sameer was arrested for criminal complaints. http://damascusv.com/archives/5202 more sourcing https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/11/17/%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%87%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1
More on the October arrest of سمير الشحرور https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/94596/

November 18 - About 10 per cent of Marj's residents have returned. Regime forces not only looted homes, but also chopped down electricity poles and stole sewer covers. There is no electricity, there are about four checkpoints per town, there is no running water and people dig wells; there is no public transport or medical point in the town https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/11/18/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9

November 18 - regime closed down a hospital in Kafr Batna and confiscated its equipment and medicine http://nedaa-sy.com/news/9825

November 17 - a family from Saqba was arrested at a checkpoint belonging to the General Intelligence Directorate after returning from the rebel-held north without coordinating this with the local reconciliation committee http://damascusv.com/archives/5188 another source http://nedaa-sy.com/en/news/9829?fbclid=IwAR1_5-n1m3p25kVMSOo9iez9Z1bqffaP5JYpqgeJXExRc8lLiON-p3BQ5PY another http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=107000

November 15 - regime sends out a list of 50,000 men wanted for military service to checkpoints. The men are from Eastern Ghouta, Barzeh, Qaboun, al-Tel, the southern outskirts of the city. http://damascusv.com/archives/5161

November 14 - about 25 people, men and women, were arrested in the central sector of Ghouta for various reasons: hiding weapons, communicating with northern Syria, mandatory service, not having

taswiyeh papers http://damascusv.com/archives/5156 11 arrested in Saqba, Kafr Batna, Jesrin, and Zamalka http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106668

14 November - Air Force Intelligence checkpoints arrest more than 30 in Eastern Ghouta https://eldorar.com/node/128010

November 5 - arrest of 26 civilians in Saqba, Zamalka, Arbin, Douma, Misraba, and Ein Tarma http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106005

November 4 - Regime arrested a woman in Misraba, no name. http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/11/06/syrian-regime-forces-arrested-woman-misraba-town-damascus-suburbs-november-4/ SOHR http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106005

October 25 - Regime destroying parts of Harasta and Jobar. In Harasta, destruction focuses on the eastern section (to which the regime is preventing the entry of residents) and near the international highway https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/95552/

October 24 - About 30 young men from Moadamiya who have done taswiyeh, many of whom were former FSA fighters, were recruited into the 4th Division of the SAA http://damascusv.com/archives/5092

October 23 - Regime arresting people in Qudsiyah without taswiyeh'papers who have returned from Idlib to their town. Four women arrested there and a child. The women did not return in a coordinated fashion. Young men were arrested in Madaya despite having taswiyeh papers after returning from the north based on complaints against them by civilians for carrying out acts of violence during opposition control.
Since October 19, Air Force Intelligence and Military Intelligence has arrested about 40 former activists in Saqba, Hamouriyeh, Jisreen.
https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/10/23/%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9 SOHR http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=105049

October 22 - two civilians arrested in Madyara in a raid http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/10/24/syrian-regime-forces-arrested-2-civilians-madyara-village-damascus-suburbs-october-22/

October 21 - four civilians who returned from the rebel-held north to Qudsiya were arrested for not coordinating with the local reconciliation committee http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=105098

October 17 - Over 40 civilians arrested in Madayra. In August there was the most widespread arrest campaign of former rebels and activists https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/258120 SOHR http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104830

October 16 - Good SOHR write-up on freedom of movement restrictions on Ghouta residents. The regime calls in people for a second stage of the taswiyeh. Former White Helmets questioned. Those interested in leaving for Damascus need to get a permit. Former health care workers and White Helmets cannot obtain this permit http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104765

October 13 - Air Force Intelligence attempted to arrest a former FSA commander turned 4th Division commander for drug trafficking. Air Force Intelligence did not coordinate the arrest with the 4th Division, and a firefight ensued. The commander, عايد العبيد, was killed in the clashes. https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/10/13/%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84

October 12 - arrests in Qudsiya of men taken into military service. Those who joined the 101st Brigade of the Republican Guard and told they can serve in Qudsiya were taken to a base far from the town http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104521

October 10 - Weak sourcing. Regime simulating clashes to justify arrests in Ghouta, including women, to avoid Russian interference https://eldorar.com/node/126740

October 10 - Air Force Intelligence and Aman al-Dawla Directorate arrest young men wanted for military service in Jisreen, Saqba, Hamouriyeh. al-Aman al-Siyasi CPs arrest five youth in al-Tel city for military service http://damascusv.com/archives/5078

October 10 - Beginning of taswiyeh process in Kafr Batna, required for everyone aged 16–65. Men are taken into the armed forces. Ein Terma went through this in September. The first to go through tasweiyeh are state employees, civilians and university students https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/256096

October 9 - two arrested in Saqba, including an elderly woman http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104359

October 9 - three residents from Misraba arrested in Douma souq http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104306

October 6 - Influence of Criminal Security (al-Aman al-Janaeni) in al-Qudsiyah growing. They are operating their agents, setting up checkpoints, raiding shops and workshops/manufacturing facilities http://damascusv.com/archives/4997

October 6- regime arrests former Jaysh al-Islam cleric who did taswiyeh and was given a government job http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=104052

October 3 - Over 15 young men arrested for military service in Qudsiyeh by al-Aman al-Askari and the military police http://damascusv.com/archives/4980 SOHR: 18 arrested in largest operations in Qudsiyeh in 2 years. Those carrying out arrests are using a list of at least 100 men wanted for military service http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=103932

October 3 - regime checkpoint attacked by unknown gunmen in Douma http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=103883

October 1 - regime arrests traders who secretly transferred money to/from Ghouta and the rebel-held north. In addition, women arrested for talking on the phone to relatives in the north. Details on the security forces involved and tools used to surveil call: https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/10/1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-

[%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A8](http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=103715) SOHR on arrests of the money changers in Harasta, Douma, Ein Tarma, and Zamalka http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=103715

September 29 - three women arrested at regime checkpoint for talking to relatives in rebel-held north http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=103575

September 29 - travel restrictions on Ghouta residents wishing to travel to Damascus. Regime previously opened crossing from Irbeen to Damascus, leading hundreds to rush to leave [https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/10/15/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%B1-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9](https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/10/15/)

September 26 - two former White Helmets detained, questioned, then released when leaving Eastern Ghouta to a shelter in Adra https://stj-sy.com/en/view/791

September 24 - Regime arrests four people in Irbeen http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=103162

September 23-26 - women arrested in the span of 1 week for talking on the phone with relatives in northern Syria https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/253554 Possibly related: Sep 22-24 women arrested in raids in Irbeen http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/09/24/syrian-regime-forces-arrested-civilians-irbeen-city-damascus-suburbs-september-22/

September 18 - regime arrests about 30 young men in Douma, taken to military service http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102766 Sep 17 - nine civilians arrested in raids in Douma http://sn4hr.org/sites/news/2018/09/18/syrian-regime-forces-arrested-civilians-douma-city-damascus-suburbs-september-17/

September 16- regime arrests five civilians trying to return to Eastern Ghouta from rebel-held north http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102651

September 16 - arrests of female medical sector employees over the past 2 weeks. (ANA Press)

September 13 - regime forces arrested seven former medical workers from Saqba and Hammouriya. 75 additional people arrested across Eastern Ghouta towns. (SOHR)

September 13- regime forces prevent young men from leaving the 'aid centres' to which they fled during Ghouta's capture. Numbers provided: 8,000 IDPs in the 'schools centre', Adra, 19,000 in the 'electricity company centre', Adra, about 40,000 in 'Dweir centre', 50,000 in 'Herjelleh centre', 5,000 in 'al-Nashabiyah centre', 6,000 in 'Najha centre' and 4,000 in 'al-Fayhaa centre'. https://stj-sy.com/en/view/737

September 13 - regime arrests seven female former health employees from Hamouriyah and Saqba and taken to Damascus. In past 72 hours, regime arrested more than 75 people in Douma, Saqba, Hamouriyah, Misraba, Zamalka, Ein Tarma, Hazza and other areas in Eastern Ghouta http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102411

September 10 - threats and arrests of those in Douma communicating with relatives displaced to the north (Assad's violations [page](#))

September 9 - regime raiding Douma searching for those wanted for military service http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=101955 Regime forces arrested young men and detained for a few hours women from Eastern Ghouta who attempted to visit the international fair held in Damascus, despite having papers proving they have settled their status ([al-Hal](#))

September 9 - Raids since September 2 to draft people into military service. Each town is raided in turn as regime forces look for recruits. Number of detained unknown. Report also mentions restrictions on freedom of movement between Ghouta towns ([Enab Baladi](#)) This spike in recruitment is noted by [ACLED](#) too.

September 5 – continuous regime raids on Ghouta, including arrests and search for weapons ([SOHR](#))

September 4 - Ghouta men taken for military service, including students who should be exempt and taken to the Dreij training camp. Some of those taken to serve were men who left Irbeen to the 'aid centres' ([Souriyati](#))

September 2- regime forces conducted sweeping searches and interrogation of hundreds of former rebels and defected soldiers in an effort to find the location of hidden weapons in Ghouta ([Voice of the Capital](#))

September 2- [Zaman al-Wasl](#) report describing living conditions in Ghouta confirming other reports and new info: those who want to open stores need to be pay a bribe of 100,000–300,000 SYP.

September 2- [Enab Baladi report](#) on the situation in Ghouta. Over 2,000 young men were forcibly recruited out of the 'aid centres' into regime forces. Hundreds were transferred to mukhabarat detention. Describes the internal restrictions on freedom of movement within Ghouta, as towns separated by checkpoints (also confirmed by [Baladi News](#)). Also mentions the detentions of young men who were taken to the al-Dreij training centre.

September 2 - hundreds of former opposition fighters questioned regarding hidden weapons in Barzeh, Qaboun, Eastern Ghouta, south of Damascus, Wadi Barada and other former rebel-held towns around Damascus, and then carried out mass excavation efforts to uncover weapon caches http://damascusv.com/archives/4926

August 31 - regime forces close crossings in/out of Ghouta and Douma in particular as they search for men they can forcibly take into military service ([Enab Baladi](#))

August 27 – [More interrogations](#) of those who buried victims of the 2013 sarin massacre.

August 26- [SOHR](#): about 300 people detained in Eastern Ghouta over the past week.

August 25 - five women arrested in Douma for speaking to relatives https://stj-sy.com/en/view/781

August 25 - dozens of residents of Douma were arrested, including women and the elderly who communicated with family members exiled in the rebel-held north. Fear has spread among the locals after the regime brought in 14 cars capable of picking up SIGINT to monitor civilians' mobile phone communications ([Horrya Press](#)). [Sada al-Sham](#): five women living in the same building in Douma were arrested for talking to their sons in the north.

August 20 - arrest of 10 civilians, including two women, at the Jamea' Taha جامع طه neighbourhood in Douma city, accompanied by raids on homes and looting. (Baladi News) Confirmed by the Facebook page Assad's violations.

August 19 - regime forces arrested 10 civilians in Kafr Batna. SNHR report on August, p. 8.

August 18 - regime forces arrested about 30 people, some of them former local council members (SOHR) Regime forces arrested dozens of people in Kafr Batna, including six former local council members. Regime forces are also questioning former activists with medical NGOs, aid NGOs, local councils and White Helmets (al-Araby al-Jadid)

August 16 to September 2: 10 women arrested on various charges in Hamouriya and Douma https://stj-sy.com/en/view/781

August 16 - three women and 'many' young men arrested in Douma by the 4th Division and Republican Guard https://stj-sy.com/en/view/781

August 16 - extensive Souria Net report: Regime re-established checkpoints in Ghouta and is demanding bribes to allow civilians to bring personal goods through them. (This part confirmed by Zaman al-Wasl report from early September). On 11 August, the regime detained 300 young men and told them they have a month until they have to join the army's 'Special Forces'; 15–30 people were arrested in Douma for military service and for other unknown reasons (dates not mentioned specifically).

August 15 - regime forces present in Ghouta extort residents for money on checkpoints, prevent the entry of cash transfers, aid from SARC distributed according to a list of Air Force Intelligence to 'collaborators', while others are left without aid http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AE%D9%86%D9%82-%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5/

August 14 - arrests across most neighbourhoods of Douma. The arrest campaign was carried out by the Republican Guard and 4th Armoured Division. (Assad's violations FB page)

August 11 – Long report with many details by al-Modon. 'Regime militias' carry out unprecedented wave of arrests across Ghouta towns, particularly in Zamalka following an armed attack there (confirmed by Enab Baladi). Regime forces also arrested those who dug the graves of the sarin massacre victims to uncover their location.

August 10 - arrest campaign by regime militias at 3 AM in Douma, among the arrested were women. (Assad's violations FB page)

August 10 (date of report) - large arrest campaign in Deir al-'Asafir of both young men taken to military service (the 'Driej camp' is mentioned) and others who were apparently held by Air Force Intelligence. Report mentions names of some prominent detainees: Abu Ammar, 55, from Kafr Batna who drove an ambulance (tortured to death); the doctors Ziad Khamis and Ziad Ubayd (later released); engineer Manar Uthman, who was in charge of an aid NGO; and 8 male teachers and 5 female teachers (Syria Inside).

August 9 - 100 young men arrested in Irbin for military service and taken to the Dreij military camp. Enab Baladi reports that dozens of young men in Zamalka, Erbin and Saqba joined the 4th Armoured Division in an effort to be allowed to serve in their towns (Baladi News and Enab Baladi).

August 7 - regime mukhabarat arrests dozens who returned to the 'aid centres' [detention facilities] and those returning to the towns directly from Idlib after regretting their decision to be deported there. Those returning did so through coordination with the Ministry of Reconciliation (Baladi News and Voice of Damascus and SMART and Zaman al-Wasl).

August 5 - arrests of young men in Misraba, despite the presence of Russian forces. (Assad's violations FB page and Baladi News)

August 5 - The regime refused to settle the status of 350–500 Eastern Ghouta residents (Assad's violations FB page and Zaman al-Wasl). According to Zaman al-Wasl, which gave the 350 figure, the men were denied their taswiyeh cards stating that they have settled their status, raising the men's fears that they will be forcibly recruited.

August 5 - A doctor from Mleiha, Mutaz Hatyatani, who decided to surrender to the regime and go to an 'aid centre' was taken out of detention by the secret police and killed in detention (Assad's violations FB page and Elaph and Sada al-Sham).

August 5 and 9 – restrictions on freedom of movement of Ghouta residents (confirmed to me by a local in Douma) (see more below)

August 5 and prior - 19 people (including 11 women) arrested upon returning from the rebel-held north to Eastern Ghouta out of 150 total returnees https://stj-sy.com/en/view/743

August 4 - arrest of 250–300 young men for military service from Douma, Shifuniya, Misraba, al-Marj who were taken to the al-Dreij camp for a 20-day training period. (Assad's violations FB page, Souria Net)

July 31- *Syria Direct* report on the atmosphere in Ghouta (English).

July 30 – *al-Modon* report on arrests of former activists in Ghouta by Air Force Intelligence. No names are mentioned.

July 29 - report by al-Sharq al-Awsat – about 25,000 people remain detained in the 'aid centres' for Ghouta residents.

July 24 - regime forces arrested money changers who sent money to/from the rebel-held north (al-Modon).

July 21 – 21 youth arrested by Air Force Intelligence in an Eastern Ghouta 'aid centre' (the phenomenon in general, not this arrest, was confirmed by Enab Baladi)

July 21 - regime forces arrested 6–7 women in Kafr Batna for speaking to their husbands in northern Syria (Orient TV and Voice of Damascus and Zaman al-Wasl and Baladi News).

July 7 - arrest of nine Douma residents in Damascus city. SNHR report for July, p. 7.

July 5 – *al-Modon* report mentions forcible conscription of people who should not have been drafted.

June 26 and 28 – arrests in Douma (SOHR)

June 21 - arrests of hundreds of men from across Eastern Ghouta for reserve duty (Baladi News).

June 21 - regime checkpoints demand bribes of at least 10,000 SYP to allow residents of Eastern Ghouta to move in/out of Damascus. Men of military age prevented from moving around (Baladi News). A September 2 *Zaman al-Wasl* report confirms some of the details: young men cannot move

around, regime forces at checkpoints extort bribes. *Zaman al-Wasl* also reports that regime fighters verbally abuse locals passing the checkpoints and even beat them.

June 8 - regime forces arrested about 100 young men from Deir al-Assafir out of the 'aid centres'. Detention location is unknown (Baladi News).

June 6- 4 - young men arrested in Kafr Batna (SOHR).

June 5 – former local council officials in Eastern Ghouta arrested (SOHR).

May 27 - SMART News report on the terrible living conditions in the 'aid centres' that rely on foreign aid. Women and the elderly who secure sponsors in Damascus or the countryside can leave, but men and teenage boys cannot, unless they pay a hefty bribes (over 1 million SYP).

May 14 - arrest of Khalil Aybour خليل عيبور the former head of Douma's local council who remained in Douma (Syria TV). Also reported by Qasioun News Agency.

May 14 – young men arrested in Barzeh and Douma (SOHR) 'regime forces carried out a raid in Barzeh neighbourhood, where they closed the roads to the neighborhood for hours, and inspected the houses of citizens in the neighbourhood, arrested two young men'. Three more were arrested in Douma. Identities and reasons for the arrests are unknown. Syria TV confirms arrests of 'dozens' of young men in Douma on that date. Syria TV says some of those arrested are recruited to carry out crimes on behalf of the regime.

May 5- arrest of three civilians from Eastern Ghouta in Qudsiyeh. SNHR report for May 2018, p. 7

April 25 – *al-Modon* report details the process of reconciliation and conduct of regime forces in the city of Douma. The city is internally divided and movement between the different sectors is restricted. Widespread looting post 'liberation'. The presence of Russian forces is reducing abuses.

March 29 – dozens arrested in Kafr Batna with assistance of Dufdah's men (rebels who switched sides) (*Damascus Voice*)

March 12 - arrest of 22 civilians in Misraba. SNHR March report, p. 7.

March 11 - arrest of 51 civilians from Irbin after they fled to Beit Sawa SNHR March report, p. 7.

Appendix 4: Open-Source Security Incidents in Northern Homs since the End of Hostilities

March 23 - regime forces believed to be Hezbollah arrested Mohanad al-Sallouh, the leader of Jaysh al-Tawheed, which became a local police force under the RMP. He was released a week later https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/102914/

March 19 - Defected Officer Tortured to Death After Signing Settlement https://syrianobserver.com/EN/news/49227/defected-officer-tortured-to-death-after-signing-settlement.html

March 9 - regime arrested 18 people after an attack against a military security checkpoint attack, then released them after a couple of days

March 8 - attack against Air Force Intelligence checkpoint in Hama-Homs highway near al-Rastan

February 26 - regime told the families of three detainees that they died in detention; they were all arrested in 2012 https://www.syria.tv/content/النظام-يبلغ-ذوي-ثلاثة-معتقلين-من-الرستن-أنهم-قضوا-تحت-التعذيب

February 26 - regime arrest 50 children in Rastan after anti-regime leaflets were found in the city https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/366693/

February 25 - Military Security branch arrested more than 40 civilians in Homs Northern countryside who used to work with rebels or relatives of fighters who went to Idlib https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/283813

February 25 - regime forces arrested Othman Bakshin who was in the negotiation committee in Homs northern countryside as well as several civilians https://nedaa-sy.com/news/11976

February 18 - unknown gunmen assassinated a local Ba'ath official called Nour al-Din al-Fares https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/article/101896

January 15 - crimes spread in Homs northern countryside without any reaction from the regime https://7al.net/2019/01/15/حمص-السرقات-مستمرة-وسط-عدم-اكتراث-الأج/

January 12 - locals raised revolution flag in Talbise https://ayyamsyria.net/archives/234921

December 2018 - STJ report on more than 160 arrests in Homs northern countryside between July and November 2018 https://stj-sy.com/en/view/1059

December 2018 - STJ report on properties seized by regime in Homs northern countryside https://stj-sy.com/en/view/1057

December 17 - *Enab Baladi*: 3,000 men called for reserve service in Homs northern countryside; many paid bribes to flee the area https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/270557

December 12 - Syria TV: anti-Assad slogans found in Talbise in Homs northern countryside https://www.syria.tv/content/على-غرار-درعا-عبارات-مناهضة-للنظام-في-بلدة-تلبيسة-بريف-حمص
There were anti-regime slogans written on walls in solidarity with Daraa

December 11 - *Enab Baladi*: The regime registered names of IDPs of the Homs countryside who wish to return https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/269340

December 4 - *el-Dorar*: regime forces arrested close relatives of rebel fighters https://eldorar.com/node/128728

November 20 – STJ: military service branch in northern Homs countryside refused to give university students papers for postponing the service https://www.stj-sy.com/ar/view/989

October 25 - Russian forces withdraw from northern Homs
https://7al.net/2018/10/25/%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-
%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D1-
%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%82-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3/
https://www.qasioun-
news.com/en/news/show/165124/Russian_Forces_Withdrew_Northern_Homs_Countryside

October 10 - regime campaign against Turkish internet in northern Homs
https://eldorar.com/node/126730

September 27 - arrest of 21 men accused of belonging to White Helmets in Rastan
https://www.qasioun-
news.com/ar/news/show/162824/%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%
B8%D8%A7%D9%85_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A_%D9%8A%D9%8
4%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82_%D8%A3%D8%B9%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A1_%D8%A7%D9%84
%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A_%
D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84_%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5 earlier reporting when it was still
8 arrestees
https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/9/14/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D
9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-
%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A-
%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%B1-
%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%85-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A more https://stj-
sy.com/en/view/743 SOHR says 11 http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102435

September 20 - Russia distributed about 50 cards to former rebel commanders to prevent their
arrest by regime forces (*Russia Today*) https://arabic.rt.com/middle_east/971191-
%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-
%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-
%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86-
%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9/ SOHR confirms
http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102940

September 29 - STJ report on illegal detention of 40 people by the regime based on pro-regime
claims https://stj-sy.com/ar/view/764

September 17 - government employees in northern Homs, 2,500 people not given back their jobs. Relatives of regime 'martyrs' get the jobs instead http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=102701

September 12-13 - four former White Helmets and a person who rented him his warehouse were arrested https://stj-sy.com/en/view/743

September 2- Arrest of two men who led negotiations for surrender with the regime in Talbiseh عبد الرحمن الضحيك، والشيخ أحمد جمعة Arrest of eight youth in Taqsis accused of fighting the regime. Invitation for interrogation of former defected officers in Damascus https://www.syria.tv/content/%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%91%D8%AC%D8%AA-%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5 According to *Enab Baladi*, more former negotiators were arrested: الشيخ عبد الرحمن الضحيك، الشيخ أحمد صويص، الشيخ ياسين صويص (كسوم)، جهاد لطوف.

Horraya press gives additional names https://horrya.net/archives/73757
الشيخ "عبدالرحمن الضحيك" و الشيخ "أحمد جمعة" المعروف ب (الجني) -أحمد صويص" وشقيقه "ياسين الصويص" ،
SOHR: Over 10 arrested incl former judges of the factions and courts in north Homs, as well as commanders and members in military formations operating in the same area
http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=101564

August 18 - *EB* reports that the regime summoned 23 former officers for interrogation by Air Force Intelligence. They have not been heard from since https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/249691

During August - over 30 people have been arrested in Rastan based on an apparently false complaint of a regime official. In al-Ghinto the same month, another apparently false complaint led to the arrest of 18 people. Release can be secured through bribes https://stj-sy.com/en/view/763

August 19 - Russia install telecom towers and apparently track residents' online communications. The internet is Turkish. The person responsible for providing the internet equipment, a former Jaysh al-Tawhid commander who now commands a group with Air Force Intelligence, confiscated the internet devices and returned them a few days later. After the confiscation and return of devices, the regime arrested five people and accused them of communicating with terrorists in northern Syria. Russia apparently has metadata but not access to the content of communications via WhatsApp – detainees were questioned about this. https://www.alsouria.net/node/73117

July 27 - arrest of young men with taswiyeh under the pretext that these cards are only valid for 1 month and not 6. Those arrested were involved in revolutionary activities. Arrests by Air Force Intelligence https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/7/29/%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA (See July 20 report)

July 26 - poor living conditions of the displaced from northern Homs push some to return. Five families arrested, at times only the men, and taken to unknown location https://nedaa-sy.com/week_issues/45 another source
https://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2018/7/24/%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-

[%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-
%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-
%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%B1-
%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%84-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9](#)

July 20 - arrest of young men, former activists in Rastan and Houleh; property was confiscated from several who refused reconciliation and were displaced to Idlib
[https://www.syria.tv/content/%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-
%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-
%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%91%D8%A7%D9%86-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AA-
%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9-
%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%83-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%91%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86](https://www.syria.tv/content/%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%91%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%91%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86)

June 30 - regime does not recognize taswiyeh cards as sufficient, so men risk arrest if traveling with them, freedom of movement restricted [https://smartnews-
agency.com/ar/wires/303919/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B0%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-
%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-
%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-
%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-
%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9-
%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A8](https://smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/303919/)

June 13- about 1,500 families displaced to rebel-held north wish to return. Regime conditioning it on return of all members of the family, especially the young men to ensure they fight on the side of the regime https://geiroon.net/archives/120207

June 12 - about 3,000 families that had refused to 'reconcile' registered to return due to horrible living conditions in rebel-held north. Services are gradually being restored and prices of food have gone down.
[http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A9-
%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF-
%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%8B-
%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7/](http://www.souriatnapress.net/)

June 10 - Russian forces deployed in the region, regime forces allowing those with a taswiyeh card to move out of the area to the rest of Homs if they register their name when they come and go
[https://rozana.fm/ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9/%
D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/1/%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%89/34
321/%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B5-...-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-
%D8%A3%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%9F](https://rozana.fm/ar/)

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