

COLONIAL LEGACIES AND AUTHORITARIAN RESTRUCTURING: A STUDY OF SYRIAN SOVEREIGNTY, PEACEBUILDING, AND THE IMPACT OF SANCTIONS BEFORE AND DURING THE ASSAD REGIME.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the complex historical, political, and social factors that have shaped Syria's trajectory, with particular attention to the effects of colonialism, authoritarianism, and sanctions. In the evaluation of the French colonial period (1916-1946) and the subsequent Assad regimes (1966-2024) this research clearly states the complex nature of Syria's sovereignty, peacebuilding, and economic development. The research discusses the terrible effects of the Syrian Civil War, including humanitarian crises, foreign interventions, and the subsequent collapse of the Assad regime. The study also investigates the post-conflict challenges, including sectarian tensions, economic hardship, and demands for justice and accountability. providing insights into Syria's sovereignty, peacebuilding, and economic growth. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of Syria's history, politics, and society.

Keywords: Syria, political history, Assad regime, French colonial rule, Authoritarianism, Syrian civil war, Post-conflict challenges, Syria's sovereignty, International sanctions.

INRODUCTION:



The Syrian Arab Republic, commonly referred to as Syria, is a Western Asian nation situated in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant. It shares borders with Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east, Jordan to the south, Israel to the southwest, and Lebanon and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Damascus serves as the country's capital and largest city. Syria's population is predominantly Arab and Muslim, with a notable presence of ethnic and religious minorities, including Kurds, Armenians, Shias, Christians, and Druze. Syria gained independence from French colonial rule in 1946, Syria has undergone significant political transformations, including the control of the Ba'ath Party and the prolonged rule of the Assad family. the Syrian conflict started in 2011 when the government violently cracked down on peaceful protests. The conflict has grown into a prolonged and complex civil war, generating extreme instability in Syria and the broader region with no evident solution due to unpredictable factors like military power, sectarian tensions, foreign interventions, and internal political issues. The causes of the uprising are rooted in decades of authoritarian rule and economic mismanagement under the Assad regime. Since the 1970s, Syria's economy and politics have been highly controlled, with state institutions serving to reward those loyal to the regime. This led to a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy, rampant inequality, and restricted economic opportunities for a large portion of the population. Decades of authoritarian rule and economic mismanagement under the Assad regime created deep-seated issues in Syrian society. Although economic reforms were implemented during Bashar al-Assad's rule in the 2000s, liberalization primarily advantaged a small politically connected elite, worsening social divides. This unbalanced system produced deep resentments among average Syrians, particularly those excluded from political and economic power.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As one of the greatest power French wanted to save its centuries old ties with the Catholics of Syria and for that French started a cheap supply of cotton and silk to gain a strategic and financial base in eastern Mediterranean which includes parts of Turkey, Cyprus, and the countries of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. In 1916, the alliance powers France and Britain signed a treaty named Sykes-picot which was named after British politician and a French Diplomat. This agreement was made to divide Levant region (Bilad al-Sham \ historical administrative unit of Syria under the Ottomans) between two powers in the celebration of a defeat of Ottoman Empire where Levant was divided into southern which was taken over by British and northern was taken over by French. New four territories came into being from this division which includes Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The two former regions, Palestine and Jordan, now divided by a British-drawn border along the Jordan River, were placed under British control as assigned territories by the League of Nations. On the other hand, Syria and Lebanon were assigned to France. League of nations made this decision to diminish the political maturity and the power of getting independent state from local population and made them believe that they're not capable of it.

Eventually, on April 24-26, 1920, Syria was divided into two French mandates of Lebanon and Syria by the supreme council of the league of Nations. French troops attacked on Damascus and defeated Arab forces under Youssef al-Azma at the Battle of Maysalun, a day later French army captured Damascus and expelled the leader Faisal from Syria, Syria became the French authority. Syria was further divided into small regions by French, so that they can make exclusive bond with the local people of Syria and religious minorities. They expected that people would turn loyal to French leaders by imposing an effective system of divide and rule in order to control Sunni Muslim majority. The Sunni Muslims who were in majority were excluded to join armed forces which was being controlled by French.

The Syrian independence movement was a constituent part of the widespread anti-colonial mobilizations that characterized the Middle East and other regions during the mid-20th century. Like many other colonized nations, the Syrian people aimed to reclaim their sovereignty and establish self-rule. By decades of struggle and demonstrations against French colonial domination Syria finally gained independence, internationally accepted as a sovereign nation.

After independence of Syria in October 1946, when France controlled Syria it tried to create a balance of power by making different local groups check on each other. For this, French divided the Syrian authorities into other sub smaller regions based on ethnic and religious groups such as Alawite, Druze, Northern (around Aleppo), and Southern (around Damascus) states which caused long lasting conflicts between the Syrian people. Meanwhile, this plan of French did not get the success and they had to face rebellion against their rule. The biggest rebellion was “Great Syrian Revolt” which lasted from 1925 to 1927 which started from Druze and spread towards other part of Syria before French were finally able to crush it. This regime was considered as an illegitimate and unstable which lead to multiple revolts in the 1920s which was brutally repressed by French forces. France also exploited Syria’s economy because they controlled trade, finances also revenue generating institutions by prioritizing their own interest over Syrian development. French also controlled Education by promoting the French language and culture by repressing Arab and Islamic identity. Most of the higher education was run by foreign ministries, aimed to weak the national identity of Syria.

After World War II France recognized the independence of Syria, and withdrew its forces in 1946. This French era had a profound impact on shaping modern Syria’s territorial boundaries, and administrative structure. This period marks an important historical example because policies that were made by the French encouraged the ethnic and religious divisions in the roots of civilians of Syria. The country experienced significant political instability after gaining independence in 1946. There were many revolution, short era of governments and conflicts between many sects, including people from the military, nationalists, an Arab national faced by the Syria. Many economic challenges were faced by Syria which includes poverty and underemployment. This period led to the rise of military intervention in politics.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON SYRIA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY:

Beginning with the human rights approach, the outcome of the Syrian war has been devastating. The prolonged war has displaced millions of people both within Syria and beyond its borders, giving rise to one of the most severe humanitarian crises in recent history. The forced

displacement of Syrians from their homes has led to profound suffering and loss, as many seek refuge in neighboring countries or become internally displaced within Syria. The conflict has also resulted in an alarming loss of life, including civilians, humanitarian workers. In addition, the widespread destruction of essential infrastructure including schools, health care facilities, and basic public services has directly affected the health and livelihoods of the Syrian people fostering long-term hardship and reliance on humanitarian aid.

Moreover, the attempts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict have been made more difficult by international interference. The involvement of external actors with diverging interests and agendas has often hindered diplomatic efforts and negotiations, prolonging the conflict and deepening the suffering of the Syrian people. The interference has also increased the risk of escalation and additional destabilization in the region, with potential implications for neighboring countries and beyond. Syria's lost sovereignty has lasting consequences for its future stability and the prospects of post-conflict reconstruction and which led to the lost national sovereignty of Syria which further led to major consequences across various domains including humanitarian, geographical and long term consequences. The conflict has resulted in massive displacement, loss of life, and destruction of infrastructure, fueled regional power struggles, complicated diplomatic efforts, and posed challenges for post-conflict recovery. The weakening of the Syrian government's authority and legitimacy has made it increasingly difficult to establish sustainable peace and effective governance. The fragmentation of territory and the control exercised by various armed factions have further hindered the processes of national reconciliation, infrastructure rebuilding, and restoration of state institutions. Rebuilding infrastructure, restoring essential services, and addressing the complex social, economic, and political challenges. The conflict has resulted in massive displacement, loss of life, and destruction of infrastructure, fueled regional power struggles, complicated diplomatic efforts, and posed challenges for post-conflict recovery. It is crucial to respect Syria's national sovereignty and support efforts towards a peaceful resolution and sustainable reconstruction for the well-being and future prospects of the Syrian people.

THE BA'ATH PARTY:

The ba'ath party also known as the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party was organized by Amin-al-Hafiz and founded by Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar. The party's name, "Ba'ath," means "resurrection" or "renaissance" in Arabic. This party was arranged to promote Socialism, nationalism, Arab unity, economic development and social justice in 1947. In this party leaders like Gamal Abdel Nasser influenced Syrians to unite with other Arab countries. Ba'ath party led to the creation of United Arab Republic (UAR) with Egypt in 1958. They urged for the creation of a unified state which is free from foreign help and domination. Later this party faced major conflicts because of fundamental differences between different countries. military helped Ba'ath party to gain success, on the other hand caused many problems were caused by military intervention which led to the power struggles for the party. Policies implemented by party aimed. This revolution introduced a new era of authoritarian rule, marked by the military's increased power.

HAFEZ AL-ASSAD'S RISE TO POWER:

Hafez al-Al Assad, member of a minority and a Shia Muslim, Hafez al-Assad advanced through the military ranks to become Defense Minister in 1966. He gradually gained control and eventually seized power in a 1970 coup, known as the "Corrective Movement. The Assad family's long-lasting hold on power in Syria began when Assad used this tactic to overthrow his rivals, impose a dictatorship, and consolidate power under his own leadership. Assad's regime was marked by a strong central government with a focus on stability, while also emphasizing Arab nationalism and the Pan-Arab cause. He remained in power until his death in 2000.

The November 13, 1970, is considered as a turning point in the Syrian history; it is the last one in a long chain of military coups that threatened Syrian political life from 1949 to 1970. After that, al-Assad reached Syrian presidency in 1971 which represents a new phase of political, social and economic stability in Syria and continued all over the period of al-Assad's reign. This stability persisted for the roughly thirty years that al-Assad ruled from 1971 to 2000.

BASHAR AL-ASSAD'S SUCCESSION:



After Hafez al-Assad's death in 2000, his son Bashar al-Assad took over the rule in June 2000 to continue the family's authoritarian rule. Initially Bashar al-Assad's had more transformative figure, and many experts and world leaders doubted his abilities. They saw him as polite but inexperienced, lacking the leadership skills, maturity, and toughness of his father, Hafez al-Assad. The former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, called the talks with Bashar “ghastly,” and a former U.S. official called his speeches “garbage”. Many people believed that he was so soft to handle Syria because of its history, and current situation of harsh political world. Despite this, he stayed in power in his first six years and became so confident and bold. Although Syria faced several internal problems and international pressure, especially from the United States, but Bashar was confident and chose not to back down. He believed that by refusing American demands, he would gain more support from the Syrian people and the Arab world. Bashar thought that the threats to his power were exaggerated and that he could survive and even outlast U.S. pressure. With time his regime became known for its violent suppression especially the Syrian civil war in 2011.

THE CIVIL WAR 2011:

Since Bashar al-Assad came to power in 2000, Syria's economy changed rapidly, widening the gap between rich and poor. The country suffered from a severe famine from 2007-2010, The needy rural communities, already struggling with famine, spells were those most badly impacted because it worsened poverty, increasing tension and frustration among the population. A lot of jobless workers relocated to urban centers, feeling isolated and relying on community support. Disappointed with traditional religious institutions tied to the government, poorer Syrians turned to younger, socially conscious young ministers for comfort and inspiration, many of whom were promoting social reform through a forceful Islamist agenda.

In March 2011, tensions in Syria boiled over as tens of thousands of protesters demanded freedom, justice, and dignity, demanding an end of the Assad regime. The Syrian uprising began with peaceful protests in cities like Damascus, Homs, and Hama.



There was no considerable outside help given to the protestors in the face of international outrage over human rights violation. Assad responded to the first outbreak of protests with vicious authority, detaining activists immediately to stop an insurrection. Even when the security forces attacked peaceful protesters with brutality, many civilians continued to take to the streets. However, small groups of fighters began to establish themselves as the genuine leaders of the uprising, such as Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria) and Daesh (ISIS). Many of these groups adopted Islamist ideologies, using religious language and symbols and many followed to an extremely conservative ideology. Daesh by recruiting extremists, quickly spread across Syria's poor rural areas and the underdeveloped outskirts of major cities creating a new threat. Armed rebel groups took control of numerous towns and villages across wide areas of Syria. As of May 2012, the suburbs of Damascus and certain areas of Homs (an important commercial hub) had fallen to rebel control. In response, President Assad and his government labeled both the peaceful protesters and the rebels as terrorists, claiming themselves as defenders of a secular Syria against a possible Islamist threat, gaining support from Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia. Within months, the uprising had erupted into extreme civil war. Syria's conflict proved to be a great power proxy war, with major powers involved. The US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar supported the Free Syrian Army, while Russia provided military backing to the Assad regime and Iran, Hezbollah provided continuous support to Assad.



By 2013, the regime used chemical weapons and blockades to defeat opposition, leading to the formation of armed groups like the Free Syrian Army (FSA). The regime arrested and tortured thousands of Syrians, but they could not stop the growing wave of rebellion. The regime and its allies, including Iranian, Iraqi, and Hezbollah fighters, launched relentless bombardments on rebel-held areas in Damascus, Homs, and other regions. A common tactic used was siege warfare, applied in several areas, but especially harsh in eastern Ghouta. The siege lasted for years, which entangled hundreds of thousands of civilians in the middle of constant air raids, famine, and lack of basic necessities. Entire neighborhoods were destroyed, and basic supplies were only allowed in through regime checkpoints, often controlled by war profiteers. In general, Syria's war increasingly became an extremely localized, regional and international conflict which did nothing but fueled instability and opposition.

The Assad regime sustained a complex and oppressive state security system, made up of multiple, overlapping intelligence agencies including those for the military, air force, and state security. Each operated its own network of informants and often acted independently, with little coordination. Due to the lack of clear jurisdiction for these agencies, they would often detain and torture individuals, release them, only for them to be arrested again by another branch. However, the war's trajectory shifted with Russia's intervention in September 2015. The Russians intervened, bringing massive firepower. Following this intervention, the regime launched major offensives and began to regain territory, gradually pushing rebel forces into retreat. In these war years, the government army was extremely divided. Some units worked almost like militias, obeying the commands of rogue officers who were local warlords, using their checkpoints to extort, traffic in drugs, and pillage neighboring communities. These commanders often used military checkpoints for blackmail, drug smuggling, and looting villages. Other units consisted of

civilian volunteers, alongside fighters from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. The Russians attempted to impose order.



By the year 2016, the ongoing conflict in Syria had caused the deaths of around 250,000 people and forced nearly 11 million Syrians to leave their homes. Russian military forces began to withdraw after the Assad regime secured important territorial victories with their support. In the meantime, Daesh (ISIS) was swiftly losing territory, caught between the Kurdish YPG forces and the Assad regime. In response, Daesh launched international terror attacks to deter global support for anti-Daesh efforts. The Free Syrian Army (FSA) was still trying to remove the Assad regime but was gradually losing attention and support due to the global focus on defeating terrorism. A glimmer of hope emerged in March 2016 with the Geneva III peace talks, which produced a temporary ceasefire between the FSA and the Syrian regime. However, this ceasefire broke down during the summer, and the violence resumed.

By 2018, military operations had advanced to a zone where the Turkish army had set up an observation post, revealing an international agreement defining territories. The military has arrived at its assigned location, and you cannot move ahead any further. This agreement was signed between Turkey, Iran, and Russia, effectively divided Syria.

For two years, the frontlines remained stable and most of the active fighting ceased. As of 2020, the area under rebel control had reduced to a small area in the northwestern part of Idlib

which is one of Syria's poorest provinces even before the conflict where millions were packed into refugee camps. After nearly a decade of war, few believed Assad's regime would be overthrown. It was the lowest point for morale of all Syrians. A lot of Syrians thought that the war has been ended. At this time, for soldiers and civilians under regime control, the economic situation was worsening day by day. Soldiers were no longer receiving regular salaries, and basic necessities became increasingly unaffordable. This phase can be described as being worse than the war itself, noting that many people were struggling to earn enough to feed their families. Facing severe resource shortages, the Assad regime turned to various methods to extract money from the population. Those who were sufficiently wealthy were able to purchase an early release from military duty for \$12,000. Fines could be paid by traitors in order to legalize their status. A common practice, "tafyish," allowed officers to pocket soldier's salaries and demand \$150-\$200 monthly bribes. In exchange, soldiers, who faced mistreatment, inadequate pay, and insufficient food, were allowed to go back to their hometowns and take on civilian employment. The officers, themselves poorly rewarded, attempted to have as many bribing soldiers under their command as their rank and authority effectively turning parts of the Syrian army into a forced labor system. To these officers, the value of the soldiers involved in tafyish was a sort of commodity, guarding or trading them to higher-ranking officers for personal gain.

In December 2024, the final stage of the Syrian war when the government forces were strongly exhausted leading to large-scale withdrawals, internal conflicts, and rising frustration among troops due to food, pay, and basic supplies shortages. Morale collapsed, and many soldiers began defecting as rebel forces advanced. The fall of Damascus marked the end of the regime's control, and military units disbanded nationwide. After the regime's collapse, former prisons were searched by civilians for evidence of missing detainees, but most were found dead or never found at all. The capital city Damascus was left in ruins, plagued by poverty, inflation, and lasting war impacts and sanctions. Though fighting diminished, the population continued to face emotional trauma, economic hardship, and ongoing grievances. Sectarian tensions continued, and demands for justice and accountability grew louder in the post-conflict period.



The final opposition offensive, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, began on November 27. Aleppo fell first, then Hama, and in a blink of an eye, Damascus. On the morning of 8th December 2024, When the forces of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Islamist and opposition group entered Damascus at the end of the war. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad fled to Moscow and was granted political shelter by the Russian government. And just like that, after more than 13 years of devastating conflict and over 600,000 lives lost, the Assad regime collapsed, marking the end of an era in Syria's history. Damascus, city that appeared old and tired, having endured years of war violence, economic and international sanctions. The Ottoman and Mamluk architectural aspects of the city were blackened by the exhaust of outdated cars and buses. Residents, dressed in worn clothing, waited in long lines for bread, stretching along the sidewalks. Inflation had reached alarming levels. Street Vendors openly sold smuggled Lebanese fuel, and exchanged dollars on the street, activities that, in earlier years, could have led to arrest under the regime's strict laws.



Following the fall of Damascus, Marjeh Square, also known as Martyrs' Square, became a central site of remembrance for the approximately 150,000 people who had gone missing during the war. Families posted photographs and names of the disappeared. Unlike other post-conflict situations, the city itself was largely unharmed public buildings were robbed, and life returned to normal within weeks. Military checkpoints disappeared, streets were lined with empty uniforms and people celebrated in public. Numerous young men came back to the city after hiding for years from enlistment. Former civil servants continued working under a newly formed administration made up of officials appointed by the rebels, particularly from Idlib. The new administration dismantled the remaining Assad regime structures, though they were surprised by the poor conditions in Damascus slow internet, low salaries, and an overwhelmed bureaucracy. However, for many residents, the focus remained on survival amid difficult living conditions and uncertainty about the future even after the war ended.

After the fall of Damascus, many former regime soldiers and loyalists, particularly Shia communities, faced growing insecurity and fear of revenge. Although the new authorities initially tried to prevent retaliation. Tension rose, particularly in mixed sectarian areas. Rural areas saw more kidnapping and violence turned against Shia's. A major turning point occurred in March, when clashes between loyalist, rebels and new government troops led to a brutal crackdown resulting in the killing of over 1,200 Alawite civilians. Many of them executed at home, further opening up sectarian fault lines. Displaced people began returning to their homes, often encountering those responsible for past abuses, further complicating efforts at reconciliation. Though the new administration encouraged legal justice, emotions ran high and stability remained fragile. Former regime affiliates struggled economically and socially, feeling betrayed by both the old and new regimes Some former officers worked with the new government's security forces for survival or protection, while others lived in fear and uncertainty.

INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS ON SYRIA BEFORE:

Some international sanctions were made to end the violence, to change political leader and to end Assad's regime. But it did not lead to a change of leadership but left a huge impact on Syria's economy. The Syrian currency collapsed, oil revenues fell, inflation rose, and many skilled workers left the country. Numerous skilled workers left the country, investment from foreign countries stopped, and basic necessities like food and fuel was very hard to get. Although

humanitarian goods were released, banks and companies were often too afraid to deal with Syria, making aid delivery difficult. Humanitarian efforts and recovery was much harder, especially with strict laws like the Caesar Act that punish even third parties who help Assad's regime.

The United States imposed the strongest and most persistent sanctions on Syria particularly after the civil war started in 2011. These include freezing the assets of Syrian government officials and banning the export of U.S. goods, especially anything that could be used for military purposes, prohibiting the import of Syrian oil, and restricting American investments in Syria. The US has also targeted individuals and companies, including those from Russia and Iran, that support the Assad regime. The US used executive orders and 13582 which froze assets and prohibited transactions with Syrian regime. The Caesar Act (2020) expanded these sanctions to include foreign businesses working with Syria's military or involved in certain projects and energy with in Assad held territories.

The European Union (EU) has also implemented similar sanctions, which included travel bans and asset freezes for over 300 individuals and 70 organizations, prohibiting the import of Syrian oil, investment in Syria's electricity and oil industries, and banning the export of technology that could be used for repression or surveillance. The goal of these sanctions is to weaken Assad's grip on power and prevent European companies from supporting his government.

The United Nations did not officially sanction Syria, due to the fact that Russia and China, both influential members of the UN Security Council, prevented all proposals for sanctions from moving forward. Instead, the UN has focused on condemning human rights abuses and providing humanitarian aid to affected civilians.

In 2011, the Arab League also acted by suspending Syria's membership and proposing travel bans, asset freezes, and the termination of flights and financial connections with the Syrian Central Bank. Yet eventually, nations like UAE and Egypt resumed their relations with Syria, and in 2023 Syria was welcomed back formally by the ARAB league.

Canada and Australia have imposed targeted sanctions. They froze the Syrian official's assets, prohibited exporting weapons and ban on financing Assad regime. The goal was to hold human rights violators accountable and diminish the regime's military strength.

INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS ON SYRIA AFTER ASSAD REGIME:

As of 2025, many international sanctions on Syria have been eased by several key countries and organizations. In May 2025, the United States, which had implemented the most extensive sanctions since 2011, lifted a significant number of its economic restrictions, including permitting transactions with companies and banks owned by the Syrian government. Nevertheless, some controls still apply, especially concerning military, surveillance, and dual-use technologies. The European Union also relaxed many of its measures, removing travel bans and asset freezes for numerous individuals and permitting investments in Syria's energy and infrastructure sectors. Nations such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom did the same by removing numerous restrictions but maintained specific measures for individuals associated with human rights violations. The United Nations never imposed full sanctions due to vetoes by Russia and China in the Security Council, but continued humanitarian assistance through its agencies. While restrictions related to military dealings and international law violations remain, the lifting of sanctions has helped Syria reintegrate into parts of the global economy, but political reform and human rights concerns continue to be at the forefront of future international relations.

HOW IS SYRIA DOING RIGHT NOW AFTER MOST OF THE INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS GOT REMOVED:

Syria's caretaker government made a significant move in February 2025, announcing a 400% increase in public sector wages, resulting in average monthly salaries of approximately \$100. Though it remains under 50% of pre-conflict earnings, this amount surpasses the poverty line. The goal is to reduce corruption by enabling workers to meet basic needs. The government cut the public sector workforce by 400,000 individuals to control costs, eliminating "ghost workers" and initiating the privatization of state-owned enterprises that were operating at a loss. However, this move also led to the dismissal of many temporary workers who were doing valuable jobs, resulting in criticism. These measures were essential due to the government's limited financial resources. The transitional government that was established in March 2025 is currently concentrating on security, electricity, and encouraging private sector and civil society participation.

because the government cannot revive the economy by itself they're going to need the cooperation of all segments of society. Syrians are eager to rebuild, but they still require support and relief to move forward. Syria's economic situation remains dire, with the country facing enormous challenges, including a massive decline in economic output, sharp falls in real incomes, and high poverty rates. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) stresses that Syria needs sensible economic policies, help to build its capabilities, and significant support from the international community to overcome its challenges.

RESULTS:

Post Assad Syria- A New Beginning

With the end of the Assad regime (1966–2024), Syria has entered a new phase of hope and change. After decades of authoritarian rule, characterized by political repression, civil war, and economic stagnation, the country is transitioning to democratic governance, offering citizens the chance to participate in free elections, express themselves freely, and contribute to shaping a government that represents their diverse communities and interests. One of the most important results of this change is that basic human rights and essential services are being restored. People who once had difficulty finding food, shelter, and medical care can now start to rebuild their lives with dignity. Humanitarian aid is reaching communities more effectively, and the revival of agriculture and trade is stabilizing food supplies. Foreign partners and organizations are currently cooperating more openly with the new government, without the limitations of the old regime or sanctions policy, and at a faster pace for recovery and development. This is helping the country recover faster with the lifting of international sanctions and a commitment to peace and reform. Syrians can now travel abroad, pursue education and employment opportunities, and engage in global dialogue, marking a new chapter in the country's history.

This global openness will not only be profitable for individuals but will also be beneficial to the social, cultural, and economic renewal of the nation's economy, culture, and society. The removal of international sanctions has generated mixed but notable outcomes for the country's economy and society. A major outcome is Syria's reintegration into the global financial system, which encompasses access to the SWIFT international payment network. This has facilitated

smoother international banking, trade, and investment transactions. Reforms have been initiated by the Syrian Central Bank, including efforts to stabilize the Syrian pound, assist small and medium enterprises, and rebuild public trust in the financial sector. Investment from abroad, especially from Gulf countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, is increasing. The reopening of the Damascus stock exchange marks a change towards financial normalization and economic restoration. International organizations like the IMF and World Bank are providing technical assistance and financial guidance to support Syria's long-term development. Even with these developments, problems continue. Poverty rates remain high, inflation affects the cost of living, and reconstruction needs in war zones are huge. Basic services like electricity, healthcare, and education are still limited in many regions. Moreover, while sanctions were suspended, long-term recovery requires sustaining political stability, strong governance, maintaining peace, ensuring good leadership, and staying committed to reforms and transparency.

CONCLUSIONS:

Syria's journey from civil war to recovery highlights the deep impact of political repression, economic mismanagement, and international intervention. Beginning in 2011 as a nonviolent demonstration, the conflict increased into a terrible war that destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and economy. The aim of international sanctions, especially those imposed by the U.S., EU, and Arab League, was to pressurize the Assad regime to cease violence and to change political leadership. Although the sanctions isolated the government and weakened the economy, they also caused pain to common citizens by raising inflation, reducing access to basic supplies, and delaying the delivery of humanitarian aid. After many sanctions were lifted, Syria has begun to take careful steps toward reconstruction. The country has restored trade and investment ties with regional partners and regained access to international financial systems. Foreign investments and reconstruction efforts, particularly from Gulf states, have begun, and global financial institutions are providing technical support. Most Syrians remain poor, have restricted access to essential services, and face the long-term impacts of conflict. To sum up, the lifting of sanctions has provoked hope for economic progress and enhanced international collaboration. However, lasting recovery in Syria depends on political stability, institutional reforms, inclusive governance, and

addressing the conflict's root causes. To attain peace and prosperity, it is essential to guarantee justice and opportunity for all citizens.

DISCUSSIONS:

An important but often neglected aspect of Syria's recovery after sanctions is the increasing significance of local governance and grassroots initiatives. In many areas affected by war, where the national government is still weak, local people have started forming their own councils, social groups, and volunteer teams to manage essential services like water, healthcare, education, and rebuilding projects. These local organizations have become a crucial power in reestablishing daily life and renewing citizens' trust. Their efforts are helping to create a foundation for democratic participation by involving ordinary people in decision-making and governance, they're laying the groundwork for democratic participation. This positive change has been acknowledged by certain international organizations and donors, who are now directing aid straight to these local structures rather than depending exclusively. This approach has proven more efficient and transparent in many cases. If these local efforts are properly supported and included in the country's larger plans, these grassroots efforts could become a key driver of sustainable peace and development in Syria. They are not just solving today's problems, but represents a symbol of hope and self-reliance among Syrians, showing that recovery can begin from the bottom up.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A sustainable peace in Syria requires understanding its complex political economy, addressing root causes of conflict, and promoting rightful development. Syria is at an important turning point. With appropriate backing, guidance, and dedication to reform, the nation can advance toward enduring peace and development. However, the path forward is difficult, and achieving success will depend on the effective management of these opportunities in the years to come. To achieve a prolonged and inclusive peace in the aftermath of conflict it is required to address the root problems like corruption, inefficient bureaucracy, and widespread inequality and

ensuring the fairness, equitable access to resources, rebuild institutions, and building trust and confidence of civilians of Syria.

Assad regime marks a turning point in Syrian history. The in coming years requires effort, unity and careful governance, but for now, Syrian's have a real chance to live in peace, freedom, prosperity and have a system that respects human dignity and values democracy. It is challenging for Syria to build partnerships due to the complex and multi-faceted nature of negotiations. Syrians must reach agreements on important issues such as the type of government (democratic or non-democratic), the role of Islam (Islamist or secular), and the status of the Kurdish minority (independent, included, or suppressed). While some opposing groups may agree on certain points, but very few of them agree on all conditions

For Syria to have a positive future, it is essential that activists, civil society organizations, and pro-democracy forces believe in the possibility of peace. The war has badly damaged the country's infrastructure and left many people without basic needs. Meaningful political progress can only be made when Syrian civilians feel safe and secure, free from fear for their lives. Maintaining peace in Syria and bringing together independent media, civil society, and other local organizations to support civilian populations. These independent organizations help counter the influence of militarized organizations tied to the Assad regime, Daesh, and the FSA, which exploit civilians for their fighting forces. After years of war, the Syrian people need these peaceful organizations to help rebuild and heal their communities.

Sustained effort, reforms and rebuilding of trust within the nation and global patterns is required for the Syria's full development. International community should be called for awareness and funding should be made from them. As civil societies are making their foundations for new Syria, nonviolent and pro human activist ca also begin their work as soon as possible. Also Humanitarian aid organizations can be given chance to collaborate with independent media to provide fair information.

To prevent Syria from remaining a regional battleground for neighboring countries' interference, Syrians should strive to be as self-sufficient as possible in deciding their country's political future.

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