Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies

An independent non-profit research institution that produces studies and research on the ongoing Syrian conflict, from its political, societal and intellectual aspects, and on its evolution scenarios. The institution strives to improve the performance of civil society, and to promote awareness about democracy, equal citizenship and human rights. It is one of the institutions of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha.

Harmoon Observatory:

Harmoon Observatory hires field monitors that report the most important changes in the actual conflict in Syria, from political, military, economic and societal aspects, from different regions and perspectives, in order to create an up-to-date knowledge for researchers and to provide decision makers with an image of the most significant development.
Harmoon Observatory
October 2021 Report

Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies
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Executive Summary

Politically

- Political and economic events reveal the underlying dynamic of a situation and of the parties involved in it. Therefore, Harmoon Center works to take stock of the most notable developments, on the political, military, economic and humanitarian levels, by relying on a network of sources, inside and outside Syria, in order to draw conclusions on these developments, and thus clarify their process. The following points are key points in the monitoring report for the month of October 2021.

- October’s course of events shows that the Syrian regime has not abandoned his obstructionism, especially when it comes to impeding the work of the Constitutional Committee. This prompted the United Nations to admit, via its envoy Geir Pedersen, the failure of the sixth round of talks held in the Swiss capital, Geneva.

- Admitting the failure of the “Constitutional Committee” coincided with the International Community’s issuing of explicit warnings about Syria not being safe for the return of refugees. These warnings act as an international pressure on Assad whose attempts to market Syria as a safe place fell through, and carry a warning message to specified countries that want to return refugees to Syria under the pretext that security was restored.

- The international community went even further, as it ranked Syria “the worst globally, with regard to organized violence, and the worst regionally with regard to community safety”, according to the “Women’s Peace and Security Index”. Syria also ranked third in the list of the most fragile states in the world, according to the “Fund for Peace” rating organization.

- In the same vein, Western countries and UN organizations continued their pressure on the Syrian regime regarding its chemical program, as Britain reiterated its refusal to fund Syria’s reconstruction before reaching a political solution, and as the European Union extended its sanctions for a whole year on the Syrian regime, due to the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian.

- In the same political context, October 2021 witnessed Arab political moves towards the Syrian regime, as two phone calls were made by Bashar al-Assad with both Jordan’s King Abdullah II and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin
Zayed Al Nahyan. This step confirms al-Assad’s continuous efforts to seek international support by relying on international partners and allies, especially those who have maintained an ambiguous posture in the Syrian case.

- The United States renewed its opposition to normalization with the Syrian regime, and stated that it did not give the Arab countries the green light to re-establish their ties with the regime, but that it will not otherwise stand against them. A position some interpreted as a new shift towards “refloating”/supporting Assad, or as a new approach to a political solution.

- During the month of October, many countries described as major actors in the Syrian file made further movements in this regard. As a matter of fact, Turkey stated, through its National Security Council, that targeting civilians and damaging Syria’s security may cause instability in the region, and block the way to a permanent solution to the conflict.

- As Russia’s support to Syria continued, it has been leading an effort to lift the sanctions imposed on the Syrian regime. In this regard, Russian President Vladimir Putin asked Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, for assistance in having the sanctions reduced, during the latter’s visit to Moscow on October 22. On a different note, Moscow confirmed through its Foreign Ministry that on October 22, the Russian envoy to Syria, Alexander Lavrentiev, and the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergey Vershinin, met with the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, in Damascus and discussed with him economic cooperation between the two countries, and the fate of the Syrian Constitutional Committee.

- As for Iran, it has intensified its meetings with officials of the Syrian regime, in order to develop relations between Tehran and Damascus, according to previous statements by Iranian Foreign Minister Hussein Amir Abdollahian.

- Iran continued to focus on Syria’s reconstruction, and declared its willingness to actively participate in it, as announced by Iranian Minister of Tourism, Ali Asghar Shalbavian.

**Militarily**

- On the military front, Russia started taking measures to expand its military influence in the “Syrian Democratic Forces / SDF”-controlled areas in Al-Hassakah, amid news of Turkey preparing to launch a military operation, in northern and eastern Syria.
The most significant event last month was the bombing carried out in mid-October by Russian warplanes which targeted, with nine raids, the headquarters of the 23rd Division of the Syrian National Army in the village of Qah, 3 kms away from the Turkish border. Also recorded was the concentration of Russian fighter jets (Sukhoi) for the first time at Qamishli Airport, eastern Syria.

Daraa governorate, South of Syria, is still a military landscape. Actually, after the conclusion of the settlement agreement between the governorate and the Syrian regime under Russian auspices, Russia started dismantling the “Eighth Brigade” of the Russian-backed Fifth Corps, and transferred its commander Ahmed al-Awda to Jordan. However, their departure coincided with the regime deploying its forces in several areas of Daraa and its countryside. This proves that the Russians aimed to return the entire south to Al-Assad, and to get to a consensus with the factions, just in order to dismantle them.

ISIS has also escalated its attacks in the Syrian desert. The organization’s attacks against regime forces and militias coincided with a decline in the frequency of clashes and bombings between « Syria democratic forces » and the « National Army », and with an increase in the frequency of air strikes by both the Syrian regime and Russian forces on the opposition-controlled areas.

Moreover, Israel’s raids on Syria sites became frequent, compared to the past three months. In fact, Israeli army bombed several sites in Syria, in a total of four attacks.

During October, we observed an increase in Iranian’s military reinforcements in areas of influence in the eastern desert of Homs and Al Mayadeen farms in Deir-Ez-Zour countryside. Military build-up included dispatching trucks filled with raw materials for the manufacture of explosives. The trucks pass through Al-Kaem crossing in the city of Al-Bukamal.

Iranian militias set up a double military base inside the headquarters of “Ahl Al-Haq Brigades” faction near the Euphrates River in Alsouayah village, in order to launch surface-to-surface rockets on the international coalition bases in SDF-controlled areas.

**The Situation in the Regime-controlled Areas**

According to Harmoon monitors in the area, the security situation has deteriorated there during the month of October. In fact, dozens were killed and wounded on Wednesday, October 20, as a result of the explosion of two explosive devices targeting a bus for the Military Housing Establishment at the Ra’is Bridge.
• On Thursday October 21, the regime authorities executed 24 persons accused of involvement in starting wildfires last summer.

• Meanwhile, unsolved assassinations of army officers continue to be reported. Last month, Harmoon monitors recorded the death of 4 officers under mysterious circumstances, most notably Brigadier General Mustafa Qassem (Deputy Police Commander of the governorate of Tartus); and Brigadier General Pilot Youssef Al-Hassan, and Brigadier General Rajab Ali Muhanna (Republican Guard), all from Tartus.

• Kidnappings at gunpoint, mainly in Tartus, Lattakia, Daraa and Damascus countryside, continue as part of the continuous security chaos in the area. Harmoon monitors also recorded 3 grenade attacks, including a bomb attack in Al-Dahadil neighborhood in Damascus, during a conflict between members of the “National Defense” militia. The attacks resulted in civilian casualties.

• Health wise, cases of infections and deaths from the Corona virus continue to rise for the third month in a row, and hundreds of infections with the “delta” mutant were recorded, alongside the infections in “black fungus”.

• The increase in Migration from regime-controlled areas has been evident and has coincided with the establishment, by influential parties close to the regime, of travel offices for immigration applications, in the Syrian coast, Aleppo and As-Suwayda.

**Economically**

• On the economic level, regime-controlled areas witnessed price increases in basic materials, despite stability in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound with 3,500 pounds to the dollar. The regime’s economic policy and the subsequent increase in prices resulted in further deterioration of the population’s standards of livings, amid shortages of raw materials and lack of services.

• Meanwhile, Iranian-backed militias have intensified their activity in acquiring Syrian real estate, whether with money or by property seizure, especially in the Qalamoun region in Damascus countryside and Deir ez-Zor, at a time when the real estate sector is still witnessing hyperinflation.

**Numbers of Victims and Violations**

• Deir Ez-Zor governorate topped the list of Syrian regions in the number of casualties, with 28 victims, followed by Idlib with 24, Aleppo with 16, Daraa with 15, five victims from Damascus and its countryside, 5 from Homs, 4 km from
Raqqa, and 3 from As-Suwayda. Unknown parties killed the largest number of victims, as their number reached 57, including a civilian who died as a result of torture.

- The Harmoon Observatory reviewed the most prominent security and military developments in areas controlled by: the jihadist factions, the “Syrian Democratic Forces”, and the armed opposition factions. They also monitored the living conditions in the areas controlled by the Syrian opposition, and everything related to asylum, and displacement during the aforementioned period.
Monitoring Report for the Month of October 2021
1. Political and Military Report:

**United Nations:**

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, called for the identification of all those who used chemical weapons in Syria, and for their accountability.

- The United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, described in a press conference on the 22nd of (October), the round of talks of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, as a “great disappointment”.

- In a virtual session before the Security Council, that was held on October 27 in New York, to discuss relevant developments in Syria, UN envoy to Syria, Geir Pedersen, urged state members to keep in mind the suffering of more than 12 million Syrians, who are still displaced (refugees or internally displaced), amid poverty levels close to 90 percent, and he said in his briefing: “The current course of events in Syria is very worrying, and we have to get out of this dynamic.”

- The head of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Syria, Paulo Pinheiro, warned the international community that Syria is not safe, and refugees cannot return to their homes, as violence keeps escalating. He also called on the authorities of the Syrian regime to allow detainees to contact their families and receive visits from independent monitors, and to release sick, infirm and elderly prisoners.

- Stephane Dujarric, a United Nations spokesman said on the fifth of the month: “Five million people are affected by the ongoing water crisis in north and northeastern Syria and need a multi-sectoral response plan, worth $251 million, of which only $51 million has been received”.

- On October 20, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Ted Chaiban, referring to the killing of four children and a teacher while on their way to school in Ariha, Idlib, stressed that ongoing violence in Syria is a reminder that the war is not over yet. Civilians, especially children, continue to bear the brunt of the decade-long brutal conflict.

- Syria ranked third in the list of the most fragile countries in the world for 2021, according to the organization Fund for Peace”. Since 2011 the fragility index in
Syria kept increasing, as it ranked fourth during the past three years, after it had ranked 48 before 2011.

- Syria ranked last in the “Peace and Security Index for Women” WPS” report issued by the Georgetown Institute on Women, Peace and Security and by the Brio Center for Gender, Peace and Security at the United Nations. According to the index, Syria is the worst globally in terms of organized violence, and the worst regionally in terms of community safety.

- In a report issued on the occasion of the International Girl’s Day on the 11th of this month, the International Rescue Committee said that Syria is one of the five most difficult places for a girl to grow up, and that 70% of girls, women and underage wives are increasingly at risk of domestic violence.

- Human Rights Watch said in a report it issued under the title “Life Like Death: The Return of Syrian Refugees from Lebanon and Jordan”, that Syrian refugees returning to Syria from Lebanon and Jordan, between 2017 and 2021, faced massive human rights violations and persecution at the hands of the regime forces and their militia. The report documented 21 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, 13 cases of torture, three cases of kidnapping, five cases of extrajudicial killing, 17 cases of enforced disappearance, and one case of alleged sexual violence.

- **United States:**
  
  - US President Joe Biden extended the state of emergency in Syria for a full year, starting October 14, 2021.
  
  - Ezra Zia, the US Under-Secretary of State for Civil Security, Democracy and Human Rights, stressed that Washington will not normalize relations with the Syrian regime, unless progress is made in the political process.
  
  - The United States of America called on the UN Security Council to take “firm measures” against the Syrian regime for using chemical weapons against its citizens.
  
  - A former US official in Syria, criticized President Joe Biden administration, because of its “unclear” policy in Syria, demanding him to continue the pressure on the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.
  
  - The Pentagon spokeswoman, Jessica McNulty, said that the United States will keep about 900 soldiers in northeastern Syria, working with the Syrian Democratic Forces / SDF.
- A senior US official in President Joe Biden’s administration said that Washington did not give the green light to Arab countries to normalize with the Syrian regime.

- A US State Department spokeswoman confirmed that the report issued by the United Nations Special Commission of Inquiry on Syria confirms that “the war against the Syrian people continues unabated.”

- The United States urged the United Nations, and the UN envoy to Syria Geir Pedersen as well as the “OCHA” organization to intensify their efforts to release the Syrian detainees.

**Militarily:**

- Powerful explosions resounded on October 20 at the Al-Tanaf military base in which American forces affiliated with the international coalition are located. The explosions resulted from unknown marches targeting the base, and did not cause any casualties among the Americans. Republican Senator Marco Rubio (Deputy Chairman of the US Intelligence Committee in Congress) accused Iran of being behind the attack.

- US deployed new reinforcement troops to its military sites in the countryside of Al-Hasaka, northeast of Syria, which included vehicles and military equipment coming from Iraq.

- Media sources revealed that the international coalition forces conducted joint military exercises with the SDF in Al-Hasakah province.

- The Central Command of the American forces announced the assassination of “Al-Qaeda” organization, Abdul Hamid Al-Matar, with an air strike in northwest Syria.

**European Countries**

- Western countries have called on the Syrian regime to allow OPCW inspectors to enter its territory, and accused Damascus of violating its obligations regarding chemical weapons.

- The United Kingdom reiterated its refusal to finance Syria’s reconstruction, before reaching a political solution in the country in accordance with UN resolutions, most notably Resolution 2254. It also affirmed its determination to hold the Syrian regime accountable for its repeated use of chemical weapons, as well
as to confront attempts to normalize with it.

- The European Union announced the extension of its sanctions against the Syrian regime for an additional year, due to its use of chemical weapons against its civilian citizens.

- The Danish judiciary announced the start of the trial of Banker holding and Dan Bankering companies, both involved in violating European sanctions against the Syrian regime by supplying it with aviation fuel in 2015 and 2017.

**Turkey**

- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan restated his accusation to the United States of providing military support to organizations in northern Syria that his country classifies as terrorist, stressing Ankara’s impatience with hotbeds of terrorism in northern Syria, and its determination to eliminate the threats emanating from those areas.

- Ibrahim Kalin, advisor to the Turkish president, stressed that “Turkey will continue its battle against the militias that threaten its borders and Syria’s territorial integrity, including the US-backed (SDF) forces”.

- The Turkish National Security Council announced that targeting civilians and harming stability in Syria disturbs the stability in the region and prevents a permanent solution to the conflict.

- Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar announced the killing of 5 Kurdish “Popular Protection Units” fighters, in immediate operations launched by his country’s forces in response to the killing of one of its soldiers in the “Euphrates Shield” operation area, north of Aleppo.

- The Turkish Ministry of Defense said that Ankara is expecting that the countries with which it has signed agreements on northern Syria, abide by them.

**Militarily:**

- The Turkish forces established a new military point on the international road linking the provinces of Lattakia and Aleppo.

- Turkish soldiers were killed, in shelling by SDF forces targeting a Turkish military base in the northern countryside of Aleppo. Also, a Turkish soldier and members of the Syrian National Army were killed when an explosive device ex-
ploded in a Turkish military vehicle, in Idlib Governorate, northwest of Syria.

- Kurdish organizations continued to target Turkish territory, and a number of these attacks focused on the Karkamish region in the Turkish state of Gaziantep.

- Harmoon monitors recorded the entry of the Turkish army’s military units into Syrian territory, with ongoing Turkish military reinforcements to their bases, in Idlib Governorate, northwest of Syria.

- The Turkish Parliament approved the presidential memorandum regarding the extension of President of the Republic’s mandate, in order to send troops to Iraq and Syria, for an additional two years.

**Russia:**

- The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed that the talks of the Russian envoy to Syria, Alexander Lavrentiev, and the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergey Vershinin, with the President of the Syrian regime, Bashar al-Assad, in Damascus on the 18th of this month (October), focused on economic cooperation and on the Syrian Constitutional Committee progress.

- Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed, with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Benet, assistance in easing sanctions imposed on the Syrian regime, during the latter’s visit to Moscow on the 22nd of this month.

**Militarily:**

- Harmoon monitors recorded the presence of Russian fighter jets Sukhoi, for the first time, at Qamishli Airport in eastern Syria, on the 27th of this month, as part of Russia’s efforts to expand its influence in the region, amid news of Turkish preparations to launch a military operation against SDF forces in the region.

- In the middle of this month, Russian warplanes bombed, with nine raids, the headquarters of the 23rd Division of the Syrian National Army, in the village of Qah, 3 km from the Turkish border.

- Russian planes launched attacks on “ISIS” area, deep in the Syrian Badia.

- Militias backed by Russia withdrew from the vicinity of the 93rd Brigade in the northern countryside of Reqqa, towards the back lines near the city of (Ain Issa), which is under the control of the SDF.
• The Russian center at the Hmeimim base said that “Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham” carried out 8 attacks, in the de-escalation zone in Idlib, northwest of Syria.

• The Russian-backed “Fifth Corps” militia sent military reinforcements to the Tabqa military airport in the western countryside of Raqqa, amid news of a Russian attempt to impose its influence on the area controlled by Iranian militias.

• Local sources reported that the Russian forces withdrew suddenly, in the middle of this month, from the Zajal and Shaer oil fields, east of Homs Governorate, in central Syria, towards the military airport in the city of Palmyra. The reasons remained unclear.

Iran:

• On the ninth of this month, Hussain Amir Abdullahian, Iranian Foreign Minister met in Damascus with Bashar al-Assad and his Syrian counterpart, Faisal al-Miqdad.

• Ali Asghar Shalbavian, the Iranian Minister of Tourism, announced during his meeting with the Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, in the Syrian pavilion at Expo Dubai 2020, his country’s readiness to actively participate in the restoration of the archaeological and touristic areas in Syria, and to invest in tourism, by building and equipping new hotel facilities.

• Tanker Trackers website said that a third Iranian vessel loaded with fuel arrived at Baniyas port in Syria in the middle of this month, in preparation for transporting its cargo to Lebanon, after transporting the cargo of two tankers, last month.

• At the end of September, the Ministry of Industry announced, the offering of 38 industrial facilities for investment, “with the participation of companies and individuals from the national private sector and friendly countries”.

• These facilities are, as stated in the Special Conditions Book No. 2449/pg. 2/15040000 dated 26/09/2021, 9 textile facilities, 8 food companies, 8 chemical companies, 6 engineering companies, 5 cement companies, and 2 sugar companies. 21 of these facilities are completely destroyed, 2 partially destroyed, 11 stalled facilities, and one operating facility; in addition to the land allocated to (Tamico) in the Umm al-Zaytoun Industrial Area in As-Suwayda Governorate. Leaks from the Ministry of Industry indicate that Iranians will get to invest in
these companies.

**Militarily:**

- On the 25th of this month, the Iranian-linked Harakat al-Nujaba militia seized a number of agricultural lands belonging to civilians in the countryside of Raqqah, and on the 26th of the same month, it also seized two humanitarian aid trucks belonging to the Syrian Red Crescent, which were coming from Homs to Raqqah.

- Members of the “Iranian Revolutionary Guards” militia and the “National Defense” militia were wounded, as a result of fighting between the two parties, east of Deir Ez-Zor.

- The Iranian militias have brought military reinforcements to their areas of influence, in the eastern desert of Homs and in Al-Mayadin farms in the countryside of Deir Ez-Zor, including trucks filled with raw materials for the manufacture of explosives, through the Al-Qaim crossing in Albukamal.

- The International Coalition and unidentified drones bombed in separated raids sites belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard militia on the outskirts of the “Imam Ali” base in Al-Salibi border area in Al-Bukamal desert, east of Deir Ezzor, as well as sites of the Afghan (Fatimiyoun) militia in the Sabkha desert, east of Raqqah.

- The Iranian militias prevented a number of the displaced people of Deir Ez-Zor, returning from the SDF-controlled areas, from entering their towns east of the city, despite their “consensus” with the Syrian regime.

- The Iranian Revolutionary Guard evacuated a number of its headquarters in the (Imam Ali) base in Al-Salibi area in the city of Al-Bukamal.

- Members of the Afghan “Fatimiyoun” militia were killed, after unknown persons attacked the militia’s movements, near the third station (T3) located in the vicinity of Palmyra, east of Homs.

- The Iranian militias have set up a double base loaded with surface-to-surface missiles, inside the headquarters of the “Asa‘ib Ahl al-Haq” faction, near the Euphrates River in the village of Al-Suway’iya, and directed the missiles towards the bases of the international coalition in the SDF-controlled areas.

*Arab countries*
On the 20th of this month, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed, discussed with the President of the Syrian regime, Bashar al-Assad, ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides, in a call he received from al-Assad.

On the 3rd of this month, the Syrian, Bashar al-Assad, made a phone call to Jordan’s King Abdullah II, the first of its kind since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution, during which they discussed relations between the two countries and ways to enhance cooperation between them.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry confirmed that his meeting with his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Miqdad, in New York, was aimed at exploring how Egypt helped Syria escape the crisis and return to its “Arab fold.”

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, revealed in a television interview that Syria may return to the League during the next summit, in the event that “Arab consensus occurs on the draft resolution.”

The leader of the Iraqi National Coalition, Iyad Allawi, called on the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, to launch a “serious dialogue within the framework of real national reconciliation in Syria”, aimed at achieving unconditional national reconciliation, coupled with clear constitutional amendments. Allawi stressed, in a letter he sent to Assad, the need to form a government that includes opponents and ministers, who were not contributors to corruption and attacks on citizens.

A Lebanese military court sentenced four Syrians to death, and a fifth to life imprisonment with hard labor, on charges of murders and attempting to kill members of the Lebanese army.

An official Jordanian decision specified the categories of Syrians who are allowed to enter Jordan, through the Nassib border crossing, without the approval of the Jordanian Ministry of Interior. This includes a Syrian married to a Jordanian woman, or a Syrian woman married to a Jordanian woman.

Jordan and the Syrian regime agreed on the return of the Royal Jordanian Airlines to operate its flights to transport passengers between Amman and Damascus, starting on October 3. This decision has not been implemented so far.

Egypt announced that it will start pumping Egyptian gas to Lebanon via Jordan and Syria, starting early 2022.
**Israel**

- The Israeli warplanes bombed a site of Iranian militias near T-4 Airport, in the eastern countryside of Homs, on the 8th of this month.

- On the 25th of this month, an Israeli plane targeted military sites of the regime forces and pro-Iranian militias on the outskirts of “Al-Baath” city, and of the village of al-Kroum in the Quneitra governorate, in southern Syria. No information was received about the losses caused by the bombing.

- On the 30th of this month, Israeli warplanes bombed locations used by the Syrian Army for advanced weapons storage in the Damascus countryside near the Lebanese border, while the weapons were being sent to Lebanon. The event resulted in the killing of 5 members of the Lebanese “Hezbollah” and of the armed factions loyal to Iran.

**Syrian Regime:**

- Bashar al-Assad issued an administrative order to end the measures of retaining soldiers and recalling reserve officers to his force, starting 1-12-2021.

- On the 17th of this month, Faisal Miqdad, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian regime, discussed in Damascus with the High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, areas of cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

- On Thursday, October 21, the Syrian regime authorities executed 24 people they accused of being involved in setting fires to forest areas last summer, and imposed penalties against 20 other people, including five juveniles. Their sentences ranged from ten years’ imprisonment up to life imprisonment.

- Rifaat al-Assad returned to Syria with the approval of Bashar al-Assad, to avoid imprisonment in France after a court ruling being issued against him. He would have spent more than thirty years in Europe.

- The Syrian regime handed an official arrest warrant to Interpol, against the head of the Lebanese Forces Party, Samir Geagea, after a number of charges were directed against him.
Syrian Opposition:

- The Syrian Constitutional Committee concluded the work of its sixth round, without serious results. Hadi al-Bahra, head of the opposition delegation, said that the regime refused to agree on any proposals in the committee, even on proposals submitted by himself.

- The Syrian opposition coalition considered that the United States’ failure to assume its responsibility towards the regime “makes its position seem unclear.”

- The head of the Syrian National Coalition, Salem Al-Maslat, received the Canadian government’s condolences and condemnation for the killing of 13 civilians, including children and a teacher, in artillery shelling by the Syrian regime forces, near an elementary school in the city of Ariha in Idlib countryside.

- The Syrian National Coalition sharply criticized the statements of the Maronite Patriarch in Lebanon, Bechara Al-Ra’i, in which he called for the forcible return of Syrian refugees in Lebanon to their country.


- A group of Syrian civil and media activists met the leader of the Turkish opposition, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, in Istanbul, in a move to distance the Syrians from the Turkish political conflicts. Attendees quoted Kılıçdaroğlu as saying that he would “never throw the Syrian refugee to death again.”

- The Syrian Civil Defense condemned the silence of the international community regarding the continuous attacks launched by the regime forces and Russia on the areas of northwestern Syria. It also warned against the persistence of military escalation and its danger to millions of Syrians in these areas.

Autonomous-Administration - SDF:

- Media sources revealed to the Harmoon Observatory that Russia is overseeing negotiations between the “Autonomous-Administration” that controls areas in north and east Syria, and the Syrian regime. The negotiations began in the mid-
dle of this month (October) with the aim of reaching a solution about the fate of areas controlled by the “Autonomous-Administration”, and the future of the “Syrian Democratic Forces / SDF».

- The areas surrounding the city of Ain Issa, north of Raqqah, are witnessing an exodus of dozens of families towards the villages of Khneiz and Tal al-Saman, after the SDF raised the military readiness of its forces.

- A member of the Presidency of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) militia Saleh Muslim revealed that the militia received a request from Russia and the Syrian regime, to hand over the city of Manbij, in the eastern countryside of Aleppo, to Turkey, claiming that Moscow and Damascus threatened them with military action, if they did not hand the city over to Turkey.

- The detainees of Al-Sina’a Prison in the Ghweran neighborhood, south of Al-Hassakah, began a protest against the practices of the prison administration, which is held to the SDF, supported by the International Coalition.
2. Military and Security Monitoring

**Syrian Regime:**

- An unknown group, calling itself “Qasioun Regiments”, announced its responsibility for the bombing of a bus for the military housing institution, at the Ra’is Bridge in downtown Damascus, on the 20th of this month (October). The explosion killed 14 people, including soldiers. Military experts questioned the regime’s allegations about the bombing, which they considered orchestrated and aimed at marketing the Syrian regime as a fighter against terrorism.

- The Syrian regime announced that Israel had assassinated the released prisoner Medhat Al-Saleh, while he was in a town adjacent to the occupied Syrian Golan.

- The Syrian regime’s security committee completed settlement operations for dozens of wanted persons in the cities of Al-Harak, Ankhil, Jasim, and the towns of Al-Harak, Alma, and Al-Sura in Daraa, in the presence of Russian elements and officers.

- The Syrian regime forces sent large military reinforcements to the town of Dibsi Afnan, in the western countryside of Raqqah, which included armored vehicles and about 150 members of the “Fourth Division” and “Republican Guard” forces.

- The unsolved killings of army officers continue, as Harmoon monitors recorded the death of 4 officers in October under mysterious circumstances, most notably Brigadier General Mustafa Qassem, Deputy Commander of Tartus Police, Air force Brigadier General Youssef Al-Hassan, and Brigadier General in the Republican Guard, Rajab Ali Muhanna, all of them from Tartus.

- The Harmoon monitors recorded clashes in the vicinity of the (Assal al-Ward) city in western Qalamoun in Damascus countryside, on October 9, between the regime’s “Military Security” and the Lebanese “Hezbollah” militia, against the backdrop of the arrest of a Hezbollah member by the “Military Security” in the city of Yabroud. The arrest occurred after a night raid inside the city, carried out by members of the Military Security, during which they arrested “Fouad Jadid” of the “Hezbollah militia”, and another person from the people of Fleita called “Muwaffaq Houriya”, on several charges, including smuggling and trafficking illegal goods. They were transferred to the Military Security branch in the capital,
• Unidentified gunmen attacked the headquarters of the “Anti-Terrorism Force” faction, with RPGs and hand grenades, at the entrance to the town of Al-Raha near As-Suwayda, resulting in two injuries.

• Local sources said that the regime forces withdrew from a number of security points in Daraa al-Balad, after concluding a settlement agreement with the residents of the neighborhood.

• The regime forces sent military reinforcements to the areas of the SDF militia located on the lines of contact with the “Syrian National Army”, in the countryside of Aleppo and Reqqa, northern Syria.

• The Syrian regime and Russian forces continued their mobilization and bombardment of areas in Idlib, in Hama countryside and in Lattakia countryside, in a continuous escalation that has lasted for more than two months now.

• Security chaos continues in several areas of the Syrian regime, and Harmoon recorded several kidnappings at gunpoint, most of which were concentrated in Tartus, Lattakia, Daraa and Damascus countryside. Also, 3 attacks with hand grenades were recorded, including a bomb attack in Al-Dahadil neighborhood in Damascus, against the background of a conflict between members of the “National Defense” militia. The attack resulted in civilian casualties.

• The people of the village of (Hajar Al-Abyad) blocked the Tartus-Homs highway with burning tires, in protest of the death sentence issued against one of the villagers, due to the murder of a bakery branch manager in Homs.

• The regime forces have strengthened their presence on the fighting fronts in the southern countryside of Idlib, by directing military convoys from the Al-Safira district in the southeastern countryside of Aleppo, in conjunction with moving other heavy military vehicles, from the “Assad Military Academy” in the Hamdaniya neighborhood, west of Aleppo city, to the same area.

• A civilian was kidnapped in the city center of As-Suwayda, on the 10th of this month, from a place very close to the security circle. Two separate kidnappings preceded this, on the 9th of this month, west of the town of Arra, near the village of Jubayb in Daraa governorate.

• An officer and a number of soldiers from the “Engineering” division of the Syrian regime forces were injured in the Jisr Umm Al-Mayadin area, in the southeastern countryside of Daraa, when an explosive device planted by unknown
persons detonated during the settlement processes in the area.


- A report by the “Working Group for Palestinians of Syria” documented the Syrian regime’s arrest of a number of Palestinians while they were trying to cross from the regime-controlled areas to northern Syria, passing through the SDF-controlled areas.

- An explosive device targeted a vehicle belonging to the Russian Military Police, on the Daraa-Damascus highway, near the town of Umm Al-Mayadin in the eastern countryside of the province.

- Al-Assad’s forces brought military reinforcements to the “Tal Rifaat” area in the northern countryside of Aleppo, “in anticipation of any attack” by the “Syrian National Army”, according to published articles in (Al-Watan newspaper), a newspaper close to the regime.

- On the 23rd of this month, the Syrian regime forces handed over the body of a young man to his family, four days after his arrest, in the town of Sahem al-Golan in the western countryside of Daraa.

- The eastern countryside of Aleppo witnessed, on the 26th of this month, tensions between groups affiliated with the Iranian militias, and groups affiliated with the Russian-backed General Intelligence Division, in the vicinity of the Jibreen base near the Nairab military airport.

**Jihadi Factions:**

- Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham launched an attack on the 25th of this month, targeting the “Jund Allah” group led by the independent “Abu Fatima al-Turki”, as well as the “Junud al-Sham” faction, led by Muslim al-Shishani, and the Sultan Abdul Hamid group, which is a small independent group stationed in the Turkmen Mountains in Lattakia countryside.

- The purpose of the attack was to dismantle these groups, which the HTS describes as extremist groups, and to hand over wanted persons to the security forces. The operation resulted in the departure of the leader of the “Junud al-Sham” faction, Muslim al-Shishani, from Jabal al-Turkman, after an agreement with the HTS in the presence of mediators; in addition to handing over
the wanted persons to judicial bodies affiliated with the HTS. The HTS also arrested leaders of Chechen nationality.

- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham announced the arrest of an official in the Ansar Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Brigade, a group that had claimed responsibility for operations against Turkish force in Idlib.

- The Public Security Service of the “Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham” in Idlib arrested a cell that it accused of being responsible for detonating a car bomb in Afrin, north of Aleppo, in which about 30 people were killed and wounded, last month.

- The government of National Security related to “Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham” opened a “military college” in Idlib.

- On October 10, groups of ISIS fighters attacked the regime forces, the “National Defense” militias, the Russian-backed “Al-Quds Brigade”, the “Baqir Brigade” militia, and the “Fatimiyoun” (Afghan) Brigade from Iran, all of whom were stationed in the fields of Al-Alaw, Al-Halul, and Al-Rajoum, south of the Rusafa desert, west of Reqqa Governorate.

- In the middle of this month, ISIS fighters launched several attacks on 3 positions of the regime forces and their loyal militias, in the Al-Rasafa area in Reqqa countryside; also in the Sabkha desert and the road between Maskana and Deb-si Afnan in Reqqa. The attacks caused deaths and injuries in the regime forces’ ranks.

- The Islamic State (ISIS) announced that it carried out 28 military operations, between October 13 and 22, and indicated that more than 300 people were killed, the majority by the Syrian army.

**Autonomous-Administration - SDF:**

- The “Autonomous Administration” militants, affiliated with the Democratic Union Party (PYD), arrested a civilian Omran Aleiko, after his minor daughter escaped from the party’s recruitment camps.

- Local sources announced that gunmen launched a violent attack on a gas station in the Hasaka countryside, and blew up parts of it, thereby killing a number of SDF members.

- Four members, including SDF leaders, were killed, when Turkish warplanes targeted a military vehicle on the Ain Issa-Ain al-Arab road, in the eastern coun-
• Civilians from the village of (Nes Tal) in the “Tal Barak” district, north of Hasakah, were killed and others wounded, after they came under fire from SDF members, after the people protested against the SDF transferring a transformer of electricity from the village.

• On the 16th of this month, Turkish forces targeted, with heavy artillery, SDF military positions in the vicinity of Ain Issa in Reqqa countryside.

• A vehicle official in the “Women’s Protection Units” YPJ was killed, on the 24 of this month, in an attack carried out by unknown persons in Raqqah.

• The western countryside of Deir Ez-Zor is witnessing a popular upheaval and calls for demonstrations, against the attempt of the Russian forces to cross from the area towards Raqqah governorate. Newspapers mentioned that people from Al-Hsan city went on the streets on the 22 of October, in order to protest against the mere presence, or even the passage of Russian forces, in east of the Euphrates.”

• The SDF police arrested 90 young men in the western countryside of Deir Ez-Zor, which is under their control, 24 hours after it issued a circular about launching a new forced conscription campaign, in northeastern Syria.

• An official in the People’s Protection Unit YPG, who holds the Iranian citizenship, was killed with one of his companions, on the 27th of this month, after a military vehicle they were traveling in was targeted on the Ayed farm road, south of Tabaqa city, west of Raqqia.

The Opposition National Army Factions in Northern Syria:

• Unidentified persons targeted the office manager of (Mulham Volunteer Team) in the city of Al-Bab, Muhammad Abu Al-Fotouh, in an assassination attempt with an explosive device placed under his car. A civilian who was in the area was injured. The “Syrian Liberation Front” announced the arrest of a number of drug dealers, and the seizure of about half a million Captagon pills, on the 12th of this month.

• The regime forces and the Russian forces continued their missile and artillery bombardment of areas in Idlib and Jisr al-Shughour, which resulted in civilian casualties, most of whom fell in massacres in Ariha and Idlib.
• SDF forces continue to target areas controlled by the National Army. The Unified Command Room - Azm announced thwarting an infiltration attempt by SDF forces in Aleppo countryside, on the 17th of this month, coinciding with the Syrian Liberation Front announcing its raise of military readiness to fight SDF.

• Civilians, including children and a teacher, were killed on their way to a nearby school, and dozens were wounded, as a result of artillery shelling targeting the city of Ariha, south of Idlib.

• Local sources reported that the “Syrian National Army” shot down a Russian reconnaissance plane, on the front lines in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

• Dozens of displaced civilians from Tal Rifaat, Meneh, Ain Digna, Deir Jamal, Kafr Naya and Kafr Nasih demonstrated, on the 22nd of this month, at the Sejo Roundabout in the countryside of Azaz, north of Aleppo, to demand the liberation of their villages from PYD_PKK militias and from the regime forces.

• Members of the “Syrian National Army” were killed, on the 25th of this month, in an air strike from a drone that targeted their headquarters in the western countryside of Ras al-Ain, northwest of Hasakah.
Military Development Index

- There is an intensity of military movements in the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib, whereas stability returned to Daraa governorate, south of Syria.

- It is noticeable that there is activity of the “ISIS” organization against the regime forces in central and northeastern Syria, for the second month in a row.
For the second month in a row, Idlib remains at the forefront of the Syrian governorates that witnessed security incidents, during the current monitoring month, knowing that there is a relative decrease in the number of security in-
cidents occurring there, compared to last month (almost at the same pace of security incidents recorded in June 2021), the most obvious of which is the almost absence of aerial bombardment in the governorate, in addition to a 17.6% decrease in artillery shelling.

- There is an increase of more than 30% in the security incidents recorded in the governorate of Aleppo, during the month of October, compared to the previous month, we also noted that artillery shelling has doubled.

- The governorates that witnessed a decline in the security events index, during the current month, are: As-Suwayda, Hama, Deir Ez-Zor and Daraa, with rates of 45%, 39%, 39%, and 32%, respectively.
We notice an increase in the number of demonstrations that were recorded during the current month (10) compared to one event recorded last September.

Also noted is the number of landmine explosions that has halved, in all parts of Syria, in the current month, compared to the previous month.

Two-thirds of the arrest cases recorded during the current monitoring month are concentrated in SDF-controlled areas, a high percentage for the second month in a row in these same areas.

There is a decrease of more than 80% in the recorded cases of aerial bombardment in the areas controlled by the armed opposition factions, for the current month.

Artillery shelling is still the most recorded security event in all Syria, knowing that the areas under the control of the armed opposition recorded more than 48% of the total cases of artillery shelling for the current month.
The armed opposition factions topped the index of the parties responsible for the security incidents in Syria, for the first time in five months, amid a relative decrease in the number of recorded cases.

There is a decrease in the number of civilian sites targeted during the current monitoring month: 247 buildings, or about 20%, compared to 308 civilian sites targeted during the previous month.

Idlib governorate is still the most vulnerable in terms of civilian sites targeted.
there, with 40 percent of the total civilian sites targeted during the current monitoring month, while Aleppo is the province with the most targeted military sites with 25% of the total military targeted sites recorded during the current month.
• There is an increase of approximately 13% in the percentage of the regime forces targeting military sites, during the current month. It is worth noting that approximately 99% of the regime forces’ targeted sites are civilian.

• There is an increase in targeting military sites, by the armed opposition factions, in the current month.

• The percentage of the SDF has declined (from 8.9% to 1.15%) and the regime forces (from 24% to 0.7%) in terms of responsibility of targeting military sites, during the current month of monitoring.
- It is worth noting that about 70% of the civilian sites targeted during the current monitoring month (October) were within the opposition factions’ control areas.

- We also note that 95% of the targeted sites in the areas controlled by the opposition factions are civilian, while in the areas controlled by the regime, this percentage drops to 16.8%, and to 28.3% in the areas controlled by SDF forces.
• A decrease of 17.4% is observed in the total security events recorded during the current month, it somehow returned to the level recorded in August, while in general the trend line continues to show slight increases from one month to another.

![Comparison of Number of Targeted Sites by Type during the Last Four Months Throughout Syria](image)

• The observatory recorded a general decrease in the percentage of targeted sites, in all parts of Syria, during the current month, compared to the previous months, as the total number has returned approximatively to what it was in August. With that said, the percentage of targeting civilian sites from the total events increased from 21.2% in August to 46% in October.

Victims and Violations:

• The Violations Monitoring Team at Harmoon Center recorded the killing of at least 101 Syrians, including 97 civilians, in the current month of (October), including 23 children, 5 women, and 5 victims of torture.

• Unknown parties killed the largest number of victims, as their number reached 57, including a civilian who died as a result of torture. 27 of them, including 13 children and two women, died in the explosion of booby-traps and remnants of battles from shells and mines, while the rest, including two children, died in kidnappings and shootings. The documentation/monitoring team was unable to identify the responsible party.
• The documentation team recorded the killing of 29 civilians at the hands of the regime forces. The victims included 6 children, 3 women and 4 people who died torture, in addition to a detainee who died as a result of neglecting health care, while 4 civilians, one of them a child, died in a joint bombing by the regime and Russian forces in Idlib countryside.

• The “Syrian Democratic Forces” killed 7 people, including 6 civilians, while the Turkish forces killed 3 civilians. One civilian died at the hands of ISIS.

• The victims are distributed according to the governorates to which they belong. 28 victims from Deir Ez-Zor, 24 from Idlib, 16 from Aleppo, 15 from Daraa, 5 from Damascus and its countryside, 5 from Homs, 4 from Raqqa, and 3 from As-Suwayda.
The observatory recorded an increase in the number of civilian casualties (97) recorded during the current month, compared to 71 victims during the previous month, an increase of 36.6%.

Deir Ez-Zor governorate continues to lead the death toll index with 26 casualties during the current month, followed by Idlib with 24, then Aleppo and Daraa with 16 and 15, respectively.
• The number of casualties increased in the current month, in Idlib, Daraa and Aleppo governorates, with rates of 71.4%, 66.6%, and 45.5%, respectively.

• There is an increase of more than the double number of victims in the city of Homs, in the current month.

• There is a clear decrease in the number of victims who died as a result of missile-air bombardment, in all parts of Syria, by more than 68%. This is also accompanied by a decrease in the number of air and missile bombing cases recorded in the Security Events Index, this month.
The number of casualties among the civilian men category increased all over Syria in the current monitoring month (October), compared to the previous month.
There is a clear increase in the percentage of responsibility for causing casualties by the regime forces and Russia, from 19% last month to 33% this month.

There is an increase this month in the total number of victims, after a general decrease recorded in September, but the general indicator predicts an upcoming decrease compared to the previous months of monitoring.
3. Economic and Living Standards Report

Living Conditions in the Opposition Areas in Northern Syria:

- The Harmoon Center monitoring team recorded a slight increase in the number of UN humanitarian relief truck convoys, across the Turkish border into northern Syria, compared to the past three months, when only about 500 relief trucks entered during October.

- On October 4, the “Syrian Interim Government” affiliated with the National Coalition imposed a lockdown in northern Syria for a period of 15 days, to limit the spread of Coronavirus, after the high number of infections with the virus.

- The medical and civil defense authorities announced that Coronavirus has caused 163 deaths, and 13,139 infections, in the opposition areas in northern Syria, in October, with 8,193 infections found in Idlib and the refugee camps in it. Hospitals suffer from a severe shortage of oxygen supply, and a complete occupancy rate for beds, especially in intensive care, noting that the proportion of those who received the vaccine is about 3% of the population.

- Teachers in Al-Bab area and the towns of Bazaa and Qabasin, east Aleppo, protested about their low monthly salaries and the “sad reality” of education. They declared a partial strike before receiving threats of termination of employment, by the local councils of Bazaa and Qabasin. At the time of the report, the teachers are still on strike and they claim that their move aims to improve the reality of education.

- The city of Idlib witnessed, on the 15th of this month, popular demonstrations against the “Syrian Interim Government” of “Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham”, due to the high cost-of-living and high prices.

- The “Syrian National Army” carried out an extensive security campaign, in mid-October, against a number of wanted persons in the Ghosn-Azzaytoun province in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

- The “Syrian Liberation Front” of the National Army announced the arrest of drug dealers in the Jandiris area of Afrin, in the northern countryside of Aleppo.
• The Turkish Humanitarian Relief Authority announced (İHH), that it has established 16,239 temporary homes, in Idlib Governorate, northwest of Syria.

• Harmoon monitors recorded a noticeable increase in the activity of North Syria’s local councils, in terms of securing services and development projects in the cities, towns and villages of areas under the control of the opposition factions. Most of the projects focused on restoring sewage systems, tap water, and roads.

• On October 21, the local council of Azaz, in Aleppo countryside, issued a decision to close the “polygamy\Taadod al Zawjat” association, which was announced to open a few days earlier, and which was met with widespread condemnation in Syrian circles. The council justified its decision by saying that “the dignity of women and their right to marry, build a family, and achieve a decent life does not stem from the work of such an association that violates the values, principles, and customs of our society.”

• The Civil Registry Department in the local council in Azaz city and its countryside started issuing family books/certificates and replacing damaged or lost ones.

**Monitoring the living Conditions in the Regime Areas**

• The price of the Syrian pound maintained relative stability, during the current month, as the exchange rate of the Syrian pound at the beginning of the month reached about 3510 SP for one dollar, and 3520 SP at the end of the month.

• As prices continue to raise, the purchasing power of salaries declines, In fact, wages do not cover the basic living needs of a Syrian family. This situation translated into protests and complaints among the people as tens of civilians blocked the road of Zarat in Homs-Tartus with burning tires in protest against the poor living conditions. Meanwhile, calls for civil disobedience against the reduction of fuel allocations to the people failed in As-Suwayda.

• 1200 people got poisoned in the countryside of Damascus with contaminated drinking water, days after hundreds of similar cases occurred in Kanaker and its neighborhoods.

• Most governorates suffer from a delay in distributing the first batch of domestic diesel. The quantity does not exceed 50 liters and is not sufficient, especially with the electricity rationing, and the absence of any other means of heating.

• The “Syria Trade Organization” halls witnessed severe overcrowding, at the beginning of October, due to the unavailability of tea and sugar. The citizens wait-
ed for long hours in order to obtain them, which prompted some to buy sugar from the markets at a price exceeding 3,000 Syrian pounds per kilogram.\(^{(1)}\)

- On October 29, the Director of the Emergency Office in the Ministry of Health, Tawfiq Hassaba, announced that the regime-controlled areas had reached their peak with the number of covid infected cases and that hospital beds are filled with infected people. The number of coronavirus infections has increased in the Syrian regime-controlled areas, and the total number has reached 41,515, as of the 26th of this month, of which 25,716 cases have been cured, 2504 cases have died, and there are still 13,295 infected cases in the country.

- As of October 26, the number of people infected with (black fungus) has reached 15, with no deaths recorded.\(^{(2)}\)

- The Traffic Management Directorate announced the occurrence of 6,426 overall incidents, since the beginning of the year until the end of last month, in which 300 people were killed, and 3,327 were injured, while the number of accidents reached 7404, killing 424 people and injuring 3,992.

- Media loyal to the regime reported news of a decision that the Syrian regime government is seeking to take, to gradually reduce electrical energy subsidies for various economic sectors, as well as to reduce the segments of domestic consumption that exceeds 1500 kilowatt-hours per cycle, in order to provide financial liquidity, and to motivate subscribers to rely on renewable energy sources to cover part of their consumption.

- The Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection in the regime’s government raised the price of industrial and commercial fuel oil to 1,700 pounds per liter, after its price was 650 pounds.

- The Ministry of Higher Education raised the fees for university courses in the open education system, for new and old students. A few weeks ago, the ministry raised the fees for parallel education by 50% over last year’s fees.\(^{(3)}\)

- Vegetable, fruits, eggs, meat and oils, in Damascus, Aleppo and Homs, saw general price increases, due to their insufficient availability in the markets. Differences emerged in sales and prices between one store and another, within the same city, as well as between one governorate and another.

\(^{(1)}\) [https://alwatan.sy/archives/275852](https://alwatan.sy/archives/275852)

\(^{(2)}\) [https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/521607](https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/521607)

\(^{(3)}\) [https://2u.pw/Y7q8T](https://2u.pw/Y7q8T)
## Analysis of Living Conditions and Price Index

### In Various Areas of Control - October 2021

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Monitoring the Regime’s Economy:

- The Supreme Council for Economic and Social Planning, in the regime’s government, approved the initial appropriations as shown in the general budget draft for the year 2022.

- The appropriations amount to 13.325 billion Syrian pounds, equivalent to about 4.4 billion dollars, compared to 8,500 billion pounds for the 2021 budget. That is an increase of 57%, an increase considered illogical, as the expenses amounted to 85% of the appropriations, while appropriations for investment expenditures amounted to only 15%.

- An amount of 5529 billion Syrian pounds was allocated for subsidies, equivalent to 41.5% of the budget appropriations, most of which were allocated to subsidizing oil derivatives and flour. The expected revenues amount to about 9,200 billion Syrian pounds, while the budget deficit was estimated at 4,118 billion Syrian pounds, or about 31% of the appropriations. In other words, the actual expenditures are much less than the announced amount. But the government does not release the actual figures, after the year ends.

- The controversy over the “Qaboun Industrial Zone” has re-emerged. After four years of unresolved argument, the industrialists of the region are fearfully watching as their properties and factories are threatened with demolition. In fact, they spent millions to restore their factories that escaped the destruction of the war, and today they are falling into the trap of a “restoration” driven by the greed of both real estate dealers and high-ranking officials.

- A report published by the Guardian newspaper on October 21, entitled “The Syrian regime drains millions of aid by manipulating the value of the Syrian currency,” revealed that the regime’s government acquired half of the aid in 2020, by forcing the United Nations organizations to deal at a low exchange rate. According to the report, the Central Bank of Syria has already acquired about $60 million in 2020, by collecting $0.51 from every dollar aid sent to Syria, thus turning the United Nations contracts into one of the largest resources for the Syrian regime and its government, according to researchers from the Center Strategic and International Studies, and from Operations and Policy Center Research Center, and from Operations Analysis and Research Center.

- The Central Bank of Syria’s management committee issued a decision in which imported goods were subjected to prior surveillance, instead of ex-post control. The importer is required to provide proof of the transactions to the Central
Bank first, so as to obtain a license allowing customs clearance.\(^{(4)}\)

- In a step towards further economic normalization, the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade in the regime’s government issued a decision to form the “Syrian-Emirati Business Council,” according to a previous agreement between the two parties, in order to energize the private sector and allow the UAE to contribute to Syria’s reconstruction through joint investment projects.\(^{(5)}\)

- A member of the “Committee of Traders and Exporters of Vegetables and Fruits” in Damascus, Muhammad al-Akkad, revealed that Syrian vegetables and fruits exports to the Gulf countries and Iraq have decreased by more than 60 percent, since the regime’s government issued a decision to stop the export of potatoes, last month.

- The Director General of the General Corporation for Railways, Najeeb Al-Faris, stated that the cost of damages to the railway network, from 2011 till now, exceeds 2.185 trillion Syrian pounds. The losses in the electricity sector, from 2011 to 2020, amounted to one hundred billion dollars, and in the oil sector to 95 billion dollars, according to the pro-government newspaper Al-Watan, citing government officials.

- The Ministry of Electricity signed a 26-month contract with the Iranian company (Pemaner) to rehabilitate the 576-megawatt “Mohradah” plant, with a value of 99 and a half million euros.\(^{(6)}\)

- The regime’s government raised the annual health insurance premium, from 28 thousand, to 60 thousand Syrian pounds, with the employees paying approximately 35,000 pounds, through a monthly deduction equivalent to 3% of their net salary.\(^{(7)}\)

- The Agricultural Bank stopped selling fertilizers to farmers at the subsidized price, bringing the price of a bag of fertilizer (super phosphate) to 58,850 pounds, urea to 69,200 pounds, ammonium nitrate to 40,400 pounds, and potash sulfate to 90,000 pounds.\(^{(8)}\)

\(^{(4)}\) [https://alwatan.sy/archives/278116](https://alwatan.sy/archives/278116)

\(^{(5)}\) [https://2u.pw/EpBjx](https://2u.pw/EpBjx)

\(^{(6)}\) [http://www.syria.tv/136547](http://www.syria.tv/136547)


\(^{(8)}\) [https://alwatan.sy/archives/276680](https://alwatan.sy/archives/276680)
• The government set the purchase price of the wheat crop from farmers for the season (2021-2022) at 1,500 Syrian pounds per kilogram, instead of 900 pounds. (9)

• The Prime Minister approved the recommendation of the Economic Committee to prevent the export of edible potatoes, from October 1 until next March 15, due to the weak production for this year, as the estimated production of the potato crop was 575,880 tons, while the actual production amounted to 383,920 tons. (10)

• The production of the current season of olives 2021-2022 has decreased. Actually the initial production is estimated at 645,331 tons of olives, and it is expected to give about 102,963 tons of oil. (11) While Syria’s total production of olives last year amounted to 850,341 tons, and of oil about 118,281 tons.

• The head of the Craftsman Association for the Dairy Industry revealed that between 15 and 20 percent of milk producers left work, which has led to a decrease in production. He attributed the increase in the prices of milk and its derivatives to the rise in the price of imported dried milk and fodder, and indicated that prices rose by 25% about a month ago. (12)

• The President of the Scientific Council for Pharmaceutical Industries explained that the lack of production of antibiotics and ointments is due to the high cost of drug production, and the low selling prices, due to the difference in the exchange rate between the actual price and the price set by the Central Bank. This prompts some pharmacists to sell medicines from the black market at double the price.

• With winter approaching, prices for heaters have increased by 40%, compared to last year’s winter. The price of a small and medium-sized heater in Hama ranged between 75 and 125 thousand pounds, and a large size one ranged between 200 thousand and 250 thousand pounds. As for the large fireplace heater, its price ranges from 300-350 thousand pounds. (13)

• Because of the high rate of taxes, the dollar price, and tax wages, the prices of

(9) https://2u.pw/LXRxb

(10) https://alwatan.sy/archives/276112

(11) https://alwatan.sy/archives/277381

(12) https://alwatan.sy/archives/276315

(13) https://alwatan.sy/archives/278276
winter clothes have increased dramatically, with the advent of winter seasons. For instance, the price of one coat in Damascus governorate is 120 thousand pounds.\(^{(14)}\)

**Real Estate**

- The real estate market is still suffering from high inflation in selling and rent prices. According to a field study conducted by the Syrian newspaper Al-Watan, the cost of building and painting a 100-square-meter house with ordinary paint is about 80 million Syrian pounds, knowing that the employee's salary is less than 100 thousand pounds, meaning the employee needs 800 monthly salaries, and 66 years of work, to be able to afford a house.\(^{(15)}\)

- The Minister of Industry denied that the several rise in cement prices this year has to do with the rise in real estate prices. He stated that the issue is linked to the rise in production costs, such as fuel, which rose by decisions of the Ministry of Oil.

- House wages in Lattakia ranged between 75 and 150 thousand pounds, in popular areas, and up to one million pounds in high-end areas in the downtown.

**Drug Industry and Trade:**

- In a resolution on October 10, the US House of Representatives adopts an interagency strategy to disrupt drug networks believed to be operating under the Syrian regime.

- The Jordanian General Command said that it thwarted the smuggling of a quantity of drugs via a drone coming from Syrian territory, on October 21. And on the 5 and the 14 of the same month, the Jordanian army thwarted two attempts to smuggle large quantities of drugs, when a clash broke with the smugglers resulting in the injury of one of them, in the escape of others inside Syria, and in the confiscation of (1055) palms of hashish.

- The “National” newspaper reported that high levels of amphetamine production in Lebanon and Syria, have prompted the United Nations to call for further

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\(^{(14)}\) [https://2u.pw/yJHba](https://2u.pw/yJHba)

\(^{(15)}\) [https://alwatan.sy/archives/276489](https://alwatan.sy/archives/276489)
investigations into the illegal trade that may be linked to corrupt politicians and to the armed group Hezbollah. Thomas Beechmann, an expert at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC said that Lebanon and Syria have become in recent years the largest manufacturers and exporters of amphetamine pills in the region.\(^{(16)}\)
4. Displacement and Asylum

- On October 21, the US State Department issued an official document according to which it classified Syrian citizens on the list of “most displaced nationalities”, along with citizens of other countries, including Russia, due to the absence of a US embassy on the territory of these countries.

- On October 27, the Turkish Ministry of Interior arrested seven Syrians in connection with the “banana videos” campaign, which Syrians published in response to a video clip showing a Turkish citizen saying that he cannot buy bananas, due to economic problems, while the Syrians can. The Turkish police had taken measures against 31 suspects, and arrested 11 Syrians handing them over to the Immigration Department, on charges of “inciting the public to hatred and hostility”. The police are still looking for 11 other suspects.

- On the 2nd of October, Esenyurt Municipality in Istanbul posted on their Twitter account photos of what they said was the “voluntary return” of groups of Syrians to Syria.

- Turkish citizens attacked shops and property of Syrians, in the Turkish city of Izmir, against the backdrop of the murder of a Turkish youth by another Syrian who was stabbed with a knife.

- The Military Court in Lebanon sentenced four Syrians and a Lebanese man to death and life imprisonment respectively, on charges of murdering and attempting to kill Lebanese soldiers in Arsal, on the Syrian border, in 2014.

- The Lebanese lawyer, Muhammad Sablouh, revealed that the General Security in Beirut handed over a Syrian refugee to the Syrian authorities, and revealed that others might be handed over soon.

- Germany announced a grant of 71 million euros to cover the emergency needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan and Lebanon.

- The Kuwait Fund for Development signed a grant agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with a value of $1.9 million to contribute to supporting the project to develop health services for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

- The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution affirming that Syria still lacks a safe environment for the return of Syrian refugees and dis-
placed people.

- On the 19th of this month, activists raised a petition signed by about 52,000 people, calling on the Danish government not to deprive Damascene Syrians, of their residency permits.

- British Member of Parliament, James Clevery, accompanied by the British Special Envoy to Syria, Jonathan Hargeaves, received 24 Syrian students who won the Chevening Scholarship.
5. Families of ISIS

- The head of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria, Paulo Pinheiro, called for attention to the plight of up to 40,000 children in Al-Hol camp and other displacement camps that have been turned into detention centers in northeastern Syria, pointing out that they are illegally deprived of their liberty for years, with most of them being under the age of 12. Pinheiro called on states and local authorities to return their children to their countries.

- During the month of October, a number of delegates from foreign countries arrived in Al-Hasakah to retrieve their citizens detained in the “Al-Hol and Roj” camps. For instance, Sweden retrieved 3 women and 8 children, and Britain three children from “Roj” camp. Ukraine has repatriated a number of women and children from the “Al-Hol and Roj” camps; Germany 23 children and 8 women, and Denmark received 14 children and 3 women.