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Middle East Summit (MES)
Topic 2: Syria's Political Transition
YUNMUN XXXVII

Our second topic will examine Syria's political transition following the fall of Bashar al-Assad, focusing on equal rights, security, reconstruction, and the impact of these challenges on regional stability.

On December 8, 2024, Bashar al-Assad's government fell, ending decades of Assad family rule. In January 2025, Ahmed al-Sharaa was appointed transitional president, and in March, a temporary constitutional framework established a five-year transition period.[1] However, forming a new government does not guarantee lasting peace. Syria continues to face challenges involving political representation, security, and rebuilding public trust, all of which have implications for neighboring countries and the international community.

One major concern is whether Syria's diverse communities, including Kurds, Alawites, Druze, and Christians, will receive equal rights and meaningful political representation.[2] Discrimination and violence against minority communities can deepen divisions and threaten long-term stability. While Syria's political future must be determined by Syrians, other countries have a shared interest in preventing violence and encouraging respect for fundamental rights.

Security is another key challenge. Extremist organizations, such as the Islamic State (ISIS/Da'esh), along with other armed groups, pose risks to Syria's recovery and regional security.[3] Cross-border violence and other security threats can affect neighboring states, making

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[1] Philip Loft, *Syria after Assad: Consequences and Interim Authorities 2025* (House of Commons Library, July 23, 2025), https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10161/.
[2] European Union Agency for Asylum, "Separation of Powers and Government Formation," *Syria: Country Focus* (2025), https://dip-aws.euaa.europa.eu/coi/syria/2025/country-focus/1-state-structure-and-governance/11-separation-powers-and-government-formation.
[3] United Nations, "Situation in Syria 'Extremely Fragile', UN Envoy Tells Security Council," April 25, 2025, https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16049.doc.htm.

regional cooperation important. At the same time, efforts to address these threats must protect civilians and respect human rights.

Rebuilding Syria will also require significant international and regional support. In October 2025, the World Bank estimated reconstruction costs at approximately $216 billion.[4] Restoring essential services, rebuilding infrastructure, and addressing the needs of displaced populations will be crucial to Syria's recovery. Countries may contribute funding, expertise, and humanitarian assistance, while also considering their own economic and security interests.

For delegates in the Middle East Summit, Syria's transition raises important questions about how countries can work together despite competing priorities. Delegates should consider how cooperation can promote stability, protect equal rights, address extremist threats, and support reconstruction without overlooking their own national interests.

Some questions for delegates to consider:

- How can regional partners support Syria's reconstruction and political transition while respecting its sovereignty and promoting stability?
- What responsibility should regional countries have in accepting Syrian refugees, and should neighboring states be expected to take in and support refugees fleeing Syria?
- In what ways can countries cooperate against extremist organizations and cross-border security threats while encouraging equal rights and political inclusion in Syria?
- How can regional powers balance their competing national interests to prevent further conflict and build a more stable Middle East?
- Should reconstruction funding for Syria be provided only once there's been proven commitments to political inclusion, human rights, and accountable governance?

[4] World Bank, "Syria's Post-Conflict Reconstruction Costs Estimated at $216 Billion," October 21, 2025, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/10/21/syria-s-post-conflict-reconstruction-costs-estimated-at-216-billion.

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These questions are intended to guide, not limit, your research. Please remember to stay true to your country's stance when researching, writing, and debating. All papers must include citations, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. AI use must not exceed the UG1 maximum, and papers flagged for improper AI usage will not be eligible to win awards. If you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns (or just want to say hi), feel free to reach me at tnaggar@mail.yu.edu. I look forward to an incredible conference!

Sincerely,

Talya Naggar

Chair, Middle East Summit

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