

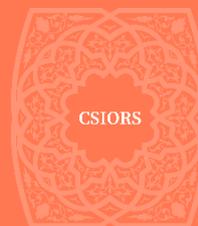
Federalism between realism and minorities in Syria

2022

27.10.2022

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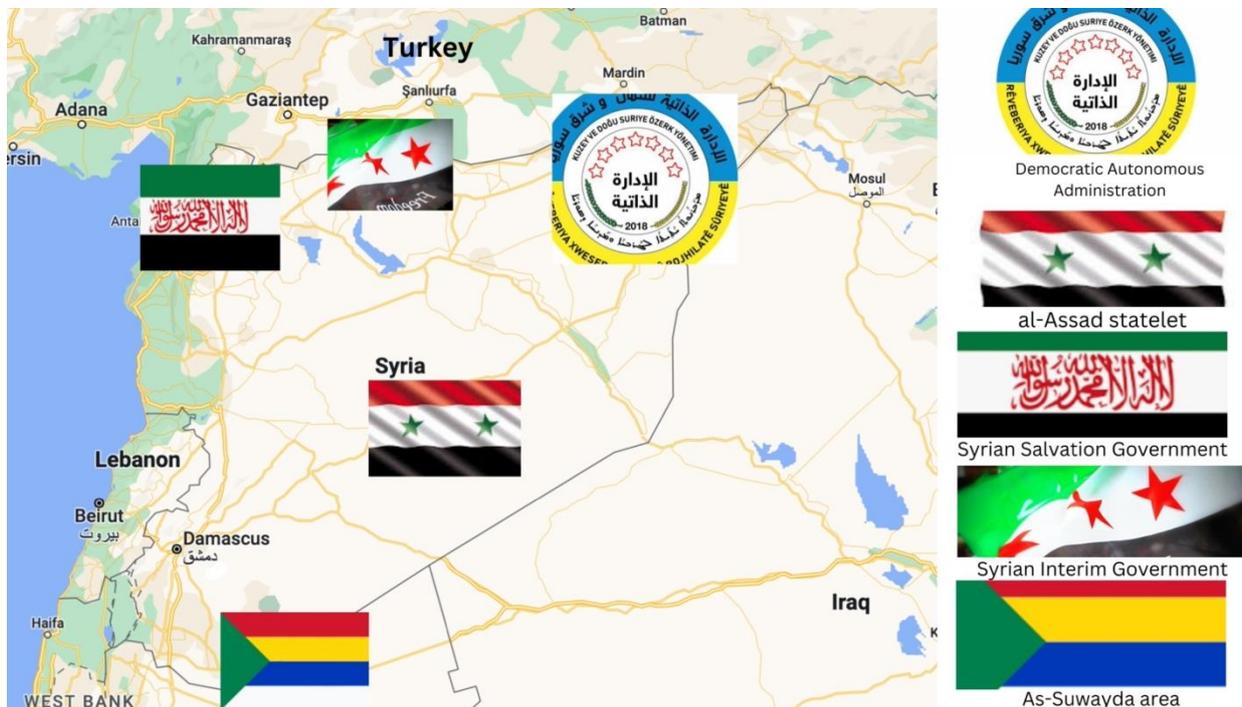
By *Issam Khoury*

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Introduction

The Syrian Arab Republic is a country divided in influence. After the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011, and its transformation in 2012 according to the classifications of the Red Cross¹ into a civil war, this country was divided into several states.



In 2022, it became five states with different administrations, and within each of them we see concentrations of Sectarian and nationalist influence and dominance over the rest of the existing components of the single state, and these statelets² are:

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2012/7/15/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9>

² A statelet, is a small independent state, especially one that until recently was part of a larger country.



The al-Assad statelet

This mini-state includes the governorates of (Daraa, Quneitra, Damascus, Tartous, Homs, Hama), in addition to parts of the governorates (Lattakia, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa, Aleppo). Previous service institutions were not affected by the devastation of the war.

This statelet is formally subject to a constitution³ that was approved in 2012, but it is not being implemented. For example, the emergency law was abolished on April 21, 2011⁴, which had been in force since September 22, 1963⁵, based on Legislative Decree No. 51⁶, however, the prisons of the al-Assad Statelet are overcrowded. Thousands of detainees were arrested without any judicial arrest warrants, and many of them forcibly disappeared, and there is insufficient information about the number of those who died or were killed due to physical torture or poor health care.

The Alawites in the Assad Statelet are distinguished by high executive powers, benefiting from the fact that most of the workers in the security and army institutions are members of the Alawite sect, and this is what the late President Hafez al-Assad sought to establish throughout Syria since he took power. The Alawite sect to which he belongs, and he offered limited positions to the members of the Alawi Haidari clans so that the members of the Haidari sect feel the social inferiority of the Al-Kalazi.

The rest of the sects in the Assad state were politically marginalized, and the state of political marginalization during the civil war against the Muslim Sunni sect turned into a clear state of hostility, as the Alawites sought, through the security institutions to try to impose a general feeling of exclusion towards the Sunnis, by branding them all as supporters of terrorists and radical extremist groups.

And some massacres were exploited between the Alawites and the radical extremist groups for the purpose of uniting the "Kalazin and the Haidrin" in a unified row against the Sunni sect, and the security circulated with all its media and popular energies a mobilizing discourse on the necessity of uniting all minorities alongside the Alawites to confront the opposition Sunnis on the grounds that they are terrorists!

The Sunni Muslims loyal to the Syrian regime were required to declare their loyalty to the ruling authority, and to accuse any Sunni opposition of working abroad.

³ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Syria_2012.pdf?lang=ar

⁴ <http://arabic.people.com.cn/31662/7359082.html>

⁵ [https://www.marefa.org/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A6_\(%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7\)](https://www.marefa.org/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A6_(%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7))

⁶ <http://www.cdf-sy.org/paper/rdif.htm>



This matter led to the division and fragmentation of the one Sunni family, especially inside any family several young men and girls demonstrated against the ruling regime.

The same thing was repeated in the minority community, such as the Christian, Druze, or Ismaili opposition, where opponents were charged with serious charges, the most famous of which is the charge of “undermining the prestige of the state and weakening national sentiment and weakening the psychology of the Nation”⁷ which carries the death penalty.

Within this harsh security reality, we see an unofficial sectarian division, but it is very clear to all observers of the Assad statelet:

Citizenship level	Sect
First-Class Citizen	An officer, or a relative of an official of the Alawite sect
Second-Class citizen	Alawite
Third-Class citizen	loyal to minorities (Druze, Ismaili, Christian)
Fourth-Class citizen	Sunni pro for al-Assad
Fifth-Class citizen	Moderate exhibitions of "Alawite"
Sixth-Class citizen	Moderate opposition from minorities "Christian, Ismaili, Druze"
Seventh-Class citizen	A moderate Sunni opponent, or critic of some practices
lack of the citizenship	An opponent who is openly critical of the president, or criticizes first-class citizens

This assessment was reached through an in-depth analysis of the reality of Syrian detainees and prisons, and you can learn its details in a narrative way through the novel “Me and Assad”⁸.

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<https://alrai.com/article/192074/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%88>

⁸ <https://assadandme.com/>



In fact, this harsh reality contradicts Constitutional Article No. 33⁹, which states in the second item (All people are equal in rights and duties, and there is no discrimination between them in This is because of gender, origin, language, religion, or creed).

The ruling regime in Damascus repeatedly claims that its army is ideological, but this army used Shiite sectarian militias to support it, which transformed the military conflict in Syria from a civil war into a sectarian conflict, and this certainly gave the Alawite and Shiite officers unparalleled influence, Which made the popular name for this state in the name of "The Alawite State" This statelet receives broad support from the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has always sought to spread Shi'ism in Muslim-majority countries¹⁰ based on the rhetoric of the Khamenei revolution¹¹.

The army of the Syrian regime is very weak, as this army lost a lot of lands that were under the authority of the Syrian state, and it is now unable to regain those lands, and without the Russian support in 2014 for this regime, the Damascus would have been in the hands of the armed opposition, according to the statements of Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov¹² on January 17 January 2017.

The loyalty of the army of this state is divided into several forces. Many of the army leaders do not dare to violate the decisions of Hezbollah leaders, as there have been several clashes between the two parties due to administrative decisions, and the victory has always been for Hezbollah, which receives its orders mainly from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.¹³

⁹ الفصل الأول "الحقوق والواجبات" المادة ٣٣

https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Syria_2012.pdf?lang=ar

¹⁰ https://strategiecs.com/ar/analyses/%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%B4%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%81%D9%87%D9%88%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1#_ftn5

¹¹ كتاب الحكومة الإسلامية: مجموعة من خطابات روح الله الخميني، مجمع الفكر الإسلامي، عام 1988 م

¹² <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/trends/2017/1/18/%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%81-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA-%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%82%D8%B7-%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7>

¹³ <https://www.annahar.com/arabic/article/407720-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A>



Also, the 25th Division, led by Colonel Suhail al-Hassan, nicknamed the Tiger, receives continuous training from the Russian army. This division has become a Russian security force inside Syria, and several its fighters have recently been brought in to fight alongside the Russians in the Russian-Ukrainian¹⁴ war.

The economic reality in the Assad statelet is very bad, however, most restaurants and hotels are overcrowded with visitors whose origins clearly belong to groups affiliated with first-class citizens. The citizens are below the poverty line, and their main concerns centre on securing the minimum life.

From this reality, the phenomenon of illegal immigration is growing through the escape of young people from this statelet across the seas in order to obtain asylum in European countries, and the cases of drowning, the last of which was in September 2022¹⁵, are repeated, and far from illegal immigration, the phenomenon of Syrian families fleeing from the Christian and Druze minorities is growing, Towards the Kurdistan region of Iraq, with the aim of submitting asylum applications to the embassies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, which made the number of Christians in the state of al-Assad nearly 700,000¹⁶, while their number exceeded two and a half million in 2011.

¹⁴ <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/syria/2022/04/01/%D9%84%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B6%D8%B1-%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>

¹⁵ <https://www.alhurra.com/arabic-and-international/2022/09/23/%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B6%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>

¹⁶ <https://www.dw.com/ar/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AE%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7/a-51778065>



The area of influence of the "Democratic Autonomous Administration" ¹⁷

It is an area controlled by the People's Protection Units, and it has security headquarters for Syrian intelligence (General Intelligence Directorate, Military Intelligence Directorate, Political Security Directorate, and Air Force Intelligence), also there is a Russian military base at Qamishli Airport, and American military bases, and it is noted that there are Russian and American military patrols at the borders This region, and in some cases, a clash occurred between the two patrols, as in January 2020¹⁸, and in other cases, specifically the beginning of October 2022, elements from both patrols were seen taking joint pictures bearing humour¹⁹.

The American army is the most important supporter of the Syrian Democratic Forces. and without American military support, the Turkish forces can occupy that area. President Erdogan has threatened on more than one occasion to carry out Turkish operations against the Syrian Democratic Forces, but the American side sought to prevent this²⁰, which prompted Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. For the statement on October 11, 2019 (We demanded that the United States stop providing material support to terrorists). ²¹

Where this is the Autonomous Administration area, the reservoir of the real economy of Syria because of the cotton, wheat, and Gas it contains, yet it was one of the most neglected areas by the central government in Damascus, and after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution its lands were attacked by the Islamic State, which prompted the Kurdish parties. The most organized" to form an armed resistance in cooperation with the Assyrians, Syrians, and some Arab tribes, and the international coalition to combat terrorism provided air and logistical support to it, which enabled it to achieve victories against this terrorist organization.

¹⁷ Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), also known as Rojava

¹⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUPd3Cr_wcU

¹⁹ <https://www.alkhaleej.ae/2022-10-09/%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D9%88%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8D-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85/%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9>

²⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.net/opinions/2022/9/5/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%A3%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A>

²¹ https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu_nun-new-york-times-gazetesinde-yayinlanan-makalesi-11-10-19.en.mfa



Politically, there is a representation for all ethnic and racial components, but the effective decision is in the hands of the Democratic Union Party²², which has more than excellent links with the Kurdistan Workers' Party which is an organization listed on the US and Turkish terrorist lists, and is considered the most dangerous military and political organization for the Turks²³, as Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated on October 11, 2019 (Turkey will not accept a corridor run by a terrorist group on its borders)²⁴ referring to the Democratic Union Party and the PKK behind it.

Hence, Turkey does not want this region to have its own independence, or even the right to be called a region, as it is. The situation in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, if this happens, the two regions may unite and seek in the future to incite the Kurds of Turkey in the Anatolian region to obtain a third Kurdish region within the Turkish state, and this is what Turkey sees as a threat to its own national security.

Far from the war on terrorism and Kurdish-Turkish disputes, the residents of this region live in a clear national conflict, and this conflict escalated into a state of armed violence in the events of the Qamishli Stadium in 2004, when the Arab clans clashed with the Kurdish forces and currents, and then the security and the Syrian army supported the Arab clans, Which led to the designation of those events at the time the Kurdish revolution.

Despite the passage of more than 18 years since these events, the spirit of the Arab-Kurdish dispute continues, and the Autonomous Administration government has sought to try to involve the various nationalities and religions in the administration for the purpose of alleviating societal tension, but the Syrian regime and the Turks are trying to destroy the chances of the success of this project. By coaxing the Arab tribes into their ranks, by accusing the Kurds of being racist nationalists towards the Arab component, and many members of the Arab tribes repeat this, based on the Kurdish discourse of some Kurdish right-wingers who call for an independent state for the Kurdish.

Of course, the Assyrians and Syriacs who were the first residents of the main cities in the Syrian Jazeera region (Qamishli, Al-Hasakah, Derik, Tal Tamr), and did not forget the stories told by their ancestors about the massacres they were subjected to at the hands of the Turks, in the Christian massacres at the beginning of the last century. So, they did not respect the Turkish discourse, but at the same time, they are afraid Of the Kurds, especially most of those massacres it made by the Kurds under the direction of the Turks at that time.

And from a religious point of view, these nationalities who embrace Christianity feel that they have been deprived of their history, as they were the founders of the majority of the main cities in the Syrian Jazira region, but due to the culture of economic marginalization of Jazira areas by the Syrian regime, the majority of

²² <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-53067339>

²³ <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-54694904>

²⁴ https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu_nun-new-york-times-gazetesinde-yayinlanan-makalesi-11-10-19.ar.mfa



them travelled to Europe, specifically to the Scandinavian countries, which turned them into a minority Residents in this area, where the beholder can see several churches in some villages, without any Christian parish, as in the city of Amuda and Darbasiyah.

Also, within the Christian minority, there is a state of ethnic rivalry between the Syriacs and the Assyrians, but it has never reached a state of armed conflict. Both ethnic seek to gather the Armenians and Chaldeans to their side to form a balanced Christian audience in the face of the Kurdish and Arab population growth in this region.

The Autonomous Administration region is subject to the constitution of the Syrian regime, with amendments commensurate with the Marxist ideology that the Kurdish parties tend to, the most prominent of these amendments (the Women's Protection Law: a law that gives equality between men and women and prohibits polygamy)²⁵ and in fact, many Muslim families do not abide by what is stipulated The law is based on polygamy, and it is difficult to punish those who fail to do so because they are simply able to justify this marriage, by calling that it took place in the areas of the Syrian regime, but this decision is consistent with the personal status law that affects Christians, which makes the Assyrians, Syriacs, Chaldeans and Armenians welcome.

Religiously, all sects can worship freely in this region, but the Autonomous Administration government did not include an educational system for the Yezidi sect, and this sect is still listed in the administrative regulations as a Muslim sect, and the same is true for the Sabeian-Mandaean people.

Economically, the salaries of the citizens of this region are much better than those of the Syrian regime, "the Assad state." The electricity and water services are also better, but this did not prevent the youth and families of this region from the adventure of illegal immigration, as most of the adventurers have relatives in Europe, which encourages them to leave this region. In their opinion, the Autonomous Administration region is in turmoil, and it will continue to be in turmoil because of the Turkish neighbour who opposes any Kurdish dream of independence. From here, we see that most of those fleeing to Europe are Kurds, despite the fact that they have the most important authority in that region.

²⁵ <https://aawsat.com/home/article/226766/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%82-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86>



Peace Shield area

It is an area where the National Army, of the Syrian Interim Government “political opposition” is deployed, and the Turkish intelligence has a wide influence there, and it is threatened by the Syrian regime and militias affiliated with the Autonomous Administration areas, and there is no special constitution in it.

Religiously, this region has a unified identity, so no cases of violations against sects were recorded. The clear violation in it bears a nationalistic "Ethnic" orientation, and it is an extension of the old conflict between Arabs and Kurds, where many Kurdish properties were seized and those properties were handed over to Syrian Arab immigrant families, under the supervision of the opposition forces Syrian backed intelligence and the Turkish army.

The armed opposition forces in this region were subjected to wide criticism from the Syrian opposition spectrum, and the result was the dismissal of some leaders, perhaps the most prominent of whom was the head of the Sultan Suleiman Shah Division (Mohammed Al-Jassem, nicknamed “Abu Amsha”²⁶) in February 2022, thus becoming the National Army²⁷ "It was establishment in January of 2017" the strongest military formation in this region.

Of course, this army is working directed by the Turkish intelligence, where we see in its headquarters the presence of the flag of the Syrian revolution, with the Turkish flag next to it, and sometimes pictures of Turkish President Erdogan.

Idlib region

It is an area subject to the Salvation Government "formerly Al-Nusra", and the Turks have great influence in it, and it is threatened by the Syrian regime, and it relies on Islamic law and Sharia courts, which had caused great harm towards the Christians and the Druze in it.

Please review our report: “The Muslim treasury and minorities” Aug, 2022

²⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/548580>

²⁷ <https://www.noonpost.com/content/29734>



As-Suwayda area

It is an area in which the forces of the Syrian regime are present, but the regime does not exercise its full constitutional authority there, because of the Druze majority that refuses to fully engage in the army and armed forces, and this area is threatened by the Syrian regime, which insists on a policy of centralizing power to Damascus over As-Suwayda Governorate, from here, Every period of time, clashes arise between the Syrian security forces and the people of As-Suwayda Governorate.

As the people of As-Suwayda decided not to send the youth of the Druze community to perform compulsory service outside the province of As-Suwayda, in a clear justification from them that they need the youth of this community to protect the borders of this province, which has been attacked in more than one incident by radical extremist groups, the most prominent of which was in the year 2018²⁸.

The general economic inflation in Syria to increase the poor, especially in As-Suwayda area, because the majority of people are employed in the government, obliged to organize several protests against high prices and poor salaries, which made them in a state of conflict with the Syrian security, so clear protests emerged calling for the overthrow of the Syrian regime after 9 years of the Syrian revolution²⁹, i.e. specifically in January The first is 2020, which made this governorate unique from the governorates under the authority of the Syrian regime in the Assad statelet.

The Druze are historically centered in the As-Suwayda region, “Jabal al-Arab.” There are 7% of Christians and 3% of the Sunni community, but the majority are 90% of the Druze³⁰.

Christian-Druze relations are good in the As-Suwayda region, and they were not affected by the Christian-Druze dispute that caused the massacre of Christians in Damascus³¹ and Mount Lebanon in 1960. However, there is a case of rejection by both parties of mixed marriages, and matters may reach the Druze to kill a girl married to a non-Druze³², as happened In September 2005.

²⁸ <https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/article/2018/11/08/sana-syrian-army-frees-kidnappers-swaida-isis>

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLSmn4jwd1I>

³⁰ <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/aldrwz-walryys-alsad-hlfa-astratyjywn>

³¹ <https://ghassankeriaky.wordpress.com/2013/07/10/article19/>

³² <https://ar.qantara.de/content/hml-swry-dd-jrym-lshrf-r-lqtl-gsl-llr>



There are no disputes or clashes between Christians and Druze, but there are clear differences between some Druze and Bedouin neighbouring the As-Suwayda Governorate, specifically at the borders of Daraa Governorate, most notably ³³the clash that took place in November 2020.

The Syrian constitution is the enemy of minorities

There are 17 sects in Syria, yet the 2012 Syrian constitution provides in the Article Three:

(The religion of the President of the Republic is Islam, and Islamic jurisprudence is a major source of legislation. The state respects all religions and guarantees the freedom to perform all their rituals, if this does not violate public order. The personal status of sects is safeguarded and observed)³⁴

At the beginning of this text, there is a differentiation idea that Muslims are of a higher status than other religions, and that is why they are entitled to the position of President of the Republic. Also, the legislator did not clarify the meaning of (that this does not violate the public order).

Also, the constitution did not clarify who is a Muslim? For example, the Alawite sect religiously is very far from Islam, because it believes in a triple-holiness, while in Sunni Islam (God is One : "God has no partner in power)" also, the Alawites are not obligated to perform the five daily prayers, while in Sunni Islam it is a religious obligation.

The same thing you see with the Druze, the Druze, as he is the Alawite, believes in the renewal of souls, while in Islam this is considered a blasphemy of the heavenly message, which believes that "human is from dust, and it will dust returns", and the soul is mortal on this earth.

Away from the sects that are classified as a split from the Shiites (such as the Druze, the Ismailis, and the Alawites) and their number is close to three million, there is the Yazidi sect, which has a believers of 13 million people, and this sect does not accept the challenge of Satan, because he is one of God's creation, however Students from this sect are required to study the Islamic religion in schools, which adopt phrases offensive to Satan, such as (I seek refuge in God from the accursed Satan), and many students are subjected to severe beatings by teachers for refusing to repeat this phrase.

³³ <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2000/11/28/%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%88-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D9%81%D9%8A>

³⁴ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Syria_2012.pdf?lang=ar



We also see the Morshidiya sect, “a split from the Alawite sect,” and believes in the divinity of a person called “Salman al-Murshid³⁵” yet it is Muslims “written in the religion field as part of their identification papers or IDs that they are Muslims”.

Many non-religious figures live in Syria, and many of them formed families through marriages of different religious origins, and unfortunately they are subjected to social bullying, and after the war and because of witnessing the killing of children and the destruction of homes, many Syrians became increasingly convinced that God is just a myth because he does not help them against Bashar’s injustice Assad, but they cannot declare this because of the state of social repression, especially in religiously extremist areas such as Idlib province, which is controlled by the Salvation Government.

Recommendations

Since Syria is divided into areas of influence, it is impossible to quickly achieve a fair and unified administrative system between these areas, so we suggest a transitional period of up to (7 years, i.e., from the year 2023 to the year 2030) so that each administrative region separately makes improvements in its areas in preparation for Achieving a federal system that combines the five regions.

Hence, we list the recommendations for each region separately:

1. Recommendations for the Syrian Regime’s “Assad statelet”

- Seeking to achieve a sense of citizenship among Syrian nationals, through:
 1. Adoption of the separation of religion from the state.
 2. Abolition of racial constitutional articles such as Article 3 of the 2012 Constitution.
 3. Civil marriage is permitted.
- A guarantee of freedom of the media.
- Drafting a modern constitution in which various political forces and currents participate, if it includes the following constitutional articles:
 1. Ensuring the representation of women in the Syrian Parliament by more than 40%.
 2. Preventing any person from obtaining the position of the Presidency of the Republic for more than two electoral terms.
 3. Separation of the three powers “legislative, executive, and judicial”.

³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpL42kelK3A>



- Acceptance of a federal system in managing the provinces inside Syria to ensure a fair distribution of wealth.
- Unifying the security services into one security apparatus and linking executive security decisions to judicial decisions.
- The necessity of activating the transitional justice project, with the aim of achieving national reconciliation, and this certainly requires the presence of:
 1. A just legal system, under the supervision of the international community.
 2. Activating the principle of accountability, based on the covenants related to war crimes.
- The departure of all foreign forces from Syria, and their replacement during the transitional period by forces under the supervision of the United Nations.
- Updating educational curricula and removing controversial subjects such as "religious education, national education, and some racist subjects in the history curriculum."
- The release of all political detainees, and the announcement of the fate of the missing and those killed in prisons.

Certainly, the Syrian regime and Iranian partner will oppose these recommendations, but the international community must push the Russian side to exert pressure on the Syrian regime, so that it is clearly forced to implement these provisions, in preparation for the political transition stipulated in the UN Security Council "No. 2254"³⁶.

2. Recommendations for Idlib regions

1. Linking the legal system in the Salvation Government, with a fatwa body affiliated to the transitional government, and under the supervision of a well-known jurisprudence complex such as Al-Azhar.
2. Returning all stolen or occupied property of the "Christian, Druze, Alawi" minorities.
3. Ensuring freedom of worship, movement, and work for all citizens of that area.
4. Ensuring the existence of coordinating offices for the relationship between each minority, with the legal system of the Salvation Government.
5. Permission for political activity and the establishment of parties, including non-religious parties.
6. Unifying the military forces into a unified military body, under the administration of the Salvation Government, and under the overt and clear supervision of the Turkish government, which will coordinate its action steps with the international coalition to combat terrorism.
7. Organizing political meetings between the leaders of the Salvation Government and UN advisors with the aim of achieving administrative, security and political development that will gradually transform the policies of that government to become acceptable to the international community.
8. Ensuring the adoption of the updated educational curriculum in Damascus as a basis for children's education.

³⁶ <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2015/12/243432>



9. Improving the conditions of education, with the application of the policy of compulsory education.
10. Supporting the health sector and providing permanent vaccinations.
11. Allow non-civil organizations to operate freely.
12. Allow freedom of information and prevent the arrest of journalists.

In fact, the experience in Idlib may be similar to the experience of the state of Aceh in Sumatra, which relies on the Islamic legal system, or it may be like the Sultanate of Brunei, which accepts the legitimate rule of Muslims, and the civil rule for the non-Muslims.

Certainly this proposal will not be favourable to non-Muslim minorities, but it guarantees that they will not be liquidated or displaced, and in fact it is a major change in the Islamic legal mentality from which the Salvation Government draws from its teachings, and it will certainly pave the way towards producing an administrative system capable of developing in the future to reach a state of coordination with the rest of the regions Syria upon the establishment of the Syrian federal state in the year 2030.

3. Recommendations for Peace Shield areas

1. Developing the region administratively by organizing the administrative institutions and unifying their orientations in accordance with the decisions of the transitional government.
2. Allow the Kurds to return to their homes from which they were expelled.
3. A guarantee of achieving equality between Arabs and Kurds in rights and duties.
4. Removing all Turkish symbols from official headquarters and adopting the Syrian flag.
5. Ensuring the adoption of the updated educational curriculum in Damascus as a basis for children's education.
6. Building new settlements to host a section of the Syrian refugees residing in Turkey.
7. Seeking to find job opportunities in the agricultural, service and security fields for the refugees coming to this region.
8. Allow freedom of information.
9. Assigning the Ministry of Justice in the opposition government to draw up the structure of the judicial body.
10. Linking all militias to a professional army system, like the regime's army, to be supervised by defected Syrian officers.

Of course, to achieve this, the international community, specifically the United States of America and the European Union, must put pressure on the Turkish government to activate this approach, and in fact Turkey will not be a loser. Turkish companies are the most prepared to implement the reconstruction steps in those areas, and most of the economic products are certainly coming from Turkey. This makes this region and the Idlib region a back market for Turkey inside Syria.



4. Recommendations for the area of Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria

1. Adopting a parliamentary system that brings together all the components of that region.
2. Removing the various security headquarters of the regime and replacing them with a security system affiliated with the Autonomous Administration, and under the supervision of a judicial system.
3. Adopting the divisions of the army and the armed forces of the Syrian regime, in the Autonomous Administration forces, with the aim of unifying both armies into one institution after 7 years.
4. Deploying the army at the administrative borders of the Autonomous Administration areas.
5. Dissolution of the relationship between the Autonomous Administration and the PKK organization until the terrorism feature is removed from the latter.
6. Continuing the administration's cooperation with the anti-terrorism project.
7. Ensuring equality between all religious and ethnic components in this region.
8. Organizing meetings between the leaders of the Autonomous Administration and the Turkish government, under the auspices of the United States of America, with the aim of planting seeds of peace between the two parties.
9. Enhancing economic investment, with the aim of returning some of the Syrian refugees to this region.
10. Abolishing the character of Islam for the Yazidis and Sabeans and allowing them to carry out their rituals freely.
11. Allowing the sale of oil, cotton, and wheat at low prices to all regions of Syria, provided that the latter adhere to the policy of the recommendations listed previously.
12. Establishing a mini parliamentary system in the Autonomous Administration area, considering the representation of all minorities.
13. Determining parliamentary elections under the supervision and control of organizations operating in other Syrian regions.

These recommendations in the Autonomous Administration region are not impossible, but they require a clear policy from Washington towards the people of this region, if it does not differ in the event the US administration changes between Republicans and Democrats.

And from a second angle it is necessary for the fighters Mount Qandil Move away from the Syrian border, as this area is part of the Syrian Federation, which we call to be formed in the year 2030.

5. Recommendations for the As-Suwayda region

1. Strengthening the meetings between the notables of the tribes of Daraa Governorate and the notables of the Druze community.
2. Adoption of a civil marriage system.
3. Preventing young people from participating in the compulsory service of the Syrian army.



4. Adoption of a parliamentary system that grants minorities a representation rate of no less than 15%.
5. Adoption of a parliamentary system that allows women a representation rate of more than 40%.
6. Abolition of the subjects of religion and national education from the educational curricula.
7. Establishing a border crossing between this region and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
8. Strengthening agricultural industries in this region through the use of expatriates and donor institutions.
9. The expulsion of the security institutions affiliated with the state of al-Assad from As-Suwayda, and their replacement by a coordination office affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior in the state of al-Assad.
10. Building a security system based on "police" under the direction of the Suwayda Region Parliament.
11. Enhancing media freedom.
12. Strengthening the role of civil society.

As-Suwayda region will be the first region that will be fused into the federal state project. In fact, this region is poor, and it needs support from the rest of the regions to achieve comprehensive development. From here, the Assad state will not seek to be tough in fighting this project, especially since the argument against terrorism that Bashar al-Assad has always used in the fight against Sunni Syrians, it is an ineffective argument in a region where the majority of the population is Druze.

Certainly, the proposed federal project, does not bear the obligatory character, but it is a proposal that must be considered by international and regional decision-makers after the current state of stagnation in Syria, as this country has caused a refugee crisis of more than 6.5 million refugees.

The security chaos in it also caused the departure of the "Islamic State" terrorist organization, which cost the US treasury millions of dollars, and the same is true for the Russian forces.

Therefore, talking about the protection of religious freedoms in Syria will be a truncated talk, if it is not accompanied by serious and practical steps from the international community to draw a general renaissance strategy for the Middle East, which guarantees the right of diversity, difference and citizenship for the people of this region.