



UNIT 5.2

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF THIRD COUNTRIES NATIONALS



Unit 5.2 - Syria

Learning Objectives

After this unit the trainees will be able to:

- Know the demographics of Syria (population, fertility, workforce, migration), in comparison with the E.U. and its member-states.
- Learn about important indexes of growth (Gross Domestic Product – GDP, per capita GDP, per capita income, Corruption Perception Index, Poverty, Syria's Debt as percentage of the GDP, importations-exportations).
- To know the most important monuments of world heritage of Syria.
- To deepen their knowledge regarding History, International Relations and the political transformations of Syria in various historical periods.
- To know the cultural and social manifestations of Syria and the basic religious groups of the country.
- To learn and deepen their knowledge into contemporary security issues of Syria, particularly about the current events concerning the civil war.



(Keywords)

Fertility index, workforce as percentage of the total population, Gross Domestic Product – GDP, Per Capita GDP, Per Capita income, Corruption Perception Index, Poverty, Syria's Debt as percentage of the GDP, balance of trade, Mohenjo-Daro, Lahore.



Educational Material

Synopsis/ Reminders:



Bibliography / Sources/ Useful Links Training Methodologies

METHODOLOGY	UNITS			
	5.1			
Brainstorming	x			
Roundtable	x			
Lecture (mini lesson)	x			
Work in Pairs				
Case Study				
Debate	x			
Demonstration				
Traveling				
Individual Practice				
Panel Discussion				
Discussion Group				
Dialogue Group	x			
Problem Solving				
Creating Maps / Charts / Matrices	x			
Project	x			
Quiz / Test	x			
Role Playing	x			
Dramatization	x			
Story	x			
Diary				
Analysis				
Sparing – Partner				
Pyramid				
Reporting	x			
Presentation	x			
Questionnaire				
Overview of the material	x			
Action Plan				
Guided Fantasy				
Associations				
Mentorship				
E-Learning				
Game	x			
Double Grouping				

Geography - Demographics

Syria is a country in the Middle East, that expands between the Euphrates River, the Arabian Desert and the Mediterranean Sea.

Borders Turkey to the North, Iraq to the East, Jordan to the South, Israel and Lebanon to the Southwest, and it is washed by the Mediterranean Sea. The capital is Damascus.



Image 1. - Syria and neighboring countries

In the coastline of the country the climate is Mediterranean, but with very warm and dry summers. The climate in the coastline is better in terms of human survival and agricultural development.

The climate varies from the humid Mediterranean coast, through a semiarid steppe zone, to arid desert in the east. In the Great Desert of Syria the area is covered by various plants when it rains in the spring

The area is 185.180 square kilometers and the population is 17.070.135.

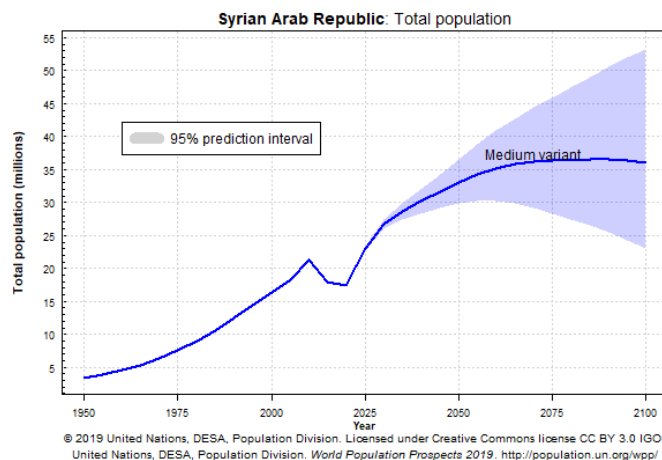


Image 1. - Syrian population and Predictions

The number of births is expected to continue its stable and positive increase until 2050. After 2050 the number of births is expected to be reduced and the number of deaths is expected to rise.

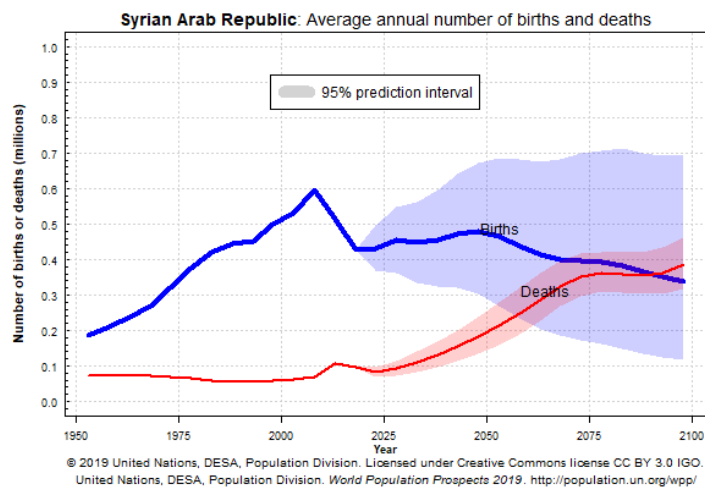


Image 1. - Average Birth and Death Number

Source: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/DemographicProfiles/Line/760>

Food for Thought	Notice the age pyramids of the countries: Belgium, Greece, Syria, Romania in 2013. What differentiates Afghanistan in comparison with the three (3) european countries? Why is the european population getting older?
Belgium	<p>Population pyramid for Belgium in 2013. The chart shows a relatively stable population distribution across age groups, with a slight tapering at the top. The x-axis represents the percentage of the population, ranging from 0.0% to 3.0% for both males and females. The y-axis lists age groups from 0-4 to 99+.</p>
Greece	<p>Population pyramid for Greece in 2013. The chart shows a population distribution that is slightly wider in the middle age groups (20-40) compared to the younger and older groups. The x-axis represents the percentage of the population, ranging from 0.0% to 3.0% for both males and females. The y-axis lists age groups from 0-4 to 99+.</p>
Syria	<p>Population pyramid for Syria in 2013. The chart shows a young population with a significant proportion in the younger age groups (0-19). The x-axis represents the percentage of the population, ranging from 0.0% to 5.0% for both males and females. The y-axis lists age groups from 0-4 to 100+.</p>
Romania	<p>Population pyramid for Romania in 2013. The chart shows a population distribution that is wider in the middle age groups (20-40) compared to the younger and older groups. The x-axis represents the percentage of the population, ranging from 0.0% to 4.0% for both males and females. The y-axis lists age groups from 0-4 to 99+.</p>
Source: https://www.populationpyramid.net/	

Answer- Why is the population of Europe getting older?

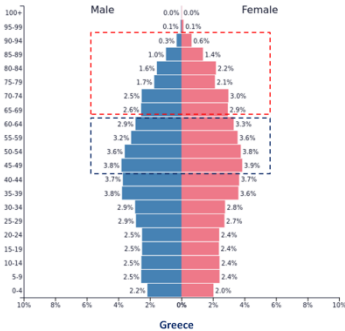
During the 60s the net migration (the difference between the entrance of immigrants and the emigration to a region in a certain period) was balanced. Since 1992 and especially after 2007, the migrant population that enters the E.U. contributes to the population increase of the member-states.

The relative ratio of the European population with regards to the global population will be reduced from 15% that it is today to 5% in 2050. Why? Because Europe is getting older.

Social and economic factors, as well as scientific achievements that increase the life expectancy have led to the aging of the population. For instance: *low fertility percentages, baby boomers' retirement, low birth rate due to the high cost of living, difficulties of working women to find balance between professional and private life, reduction of marriages and increase of the divorces, contraception, late pregnancy, etc.*

But mainly, the aging of the European population is a result of three (3) demographic tendencies:

- *Low birth rate,*
- *Reduction of fertility*
- *Increase of life expectancy.*

Tendencies	Rate	Result
Birth rate (average child number per woman)	1,57 child per woman (2011)	The lowest rate of the index is 2.1, in order to be stabilized the population and avoid the need of immigrants. The lowest rate is called "replacement-level fertility"
Reduction of fertility		The reduction of fertility has to consequences: (1) increases the participation of the ages 45-65 in the age pyramid (2) the baby boomers' retirement (born after the WW2) increases the percentage of the elderly that are being supported by a decreasing number of workers
Life expectancy	Greece: 81,59 Belgium: 81,29 Romania: 74,96 Syria: 70,09	The increase of the number of people age 80-90 (retired for many decades)

Which is the fertility rate of Syria?

The fertility rate is 3.0, higher than the rate of the E.U. The fertility rate combined with the lower life expectancy and the increase of the population contributes to the rise of the population groups of the country age (25-45), capable of labor.

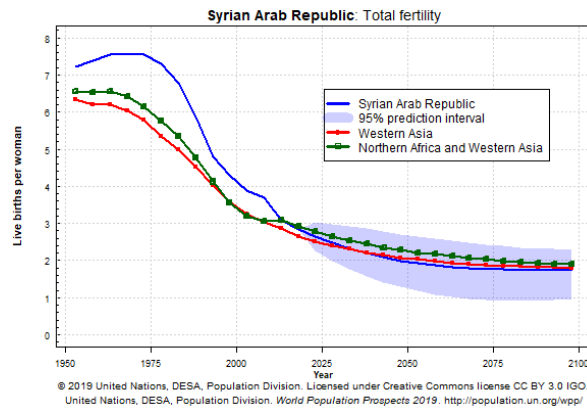
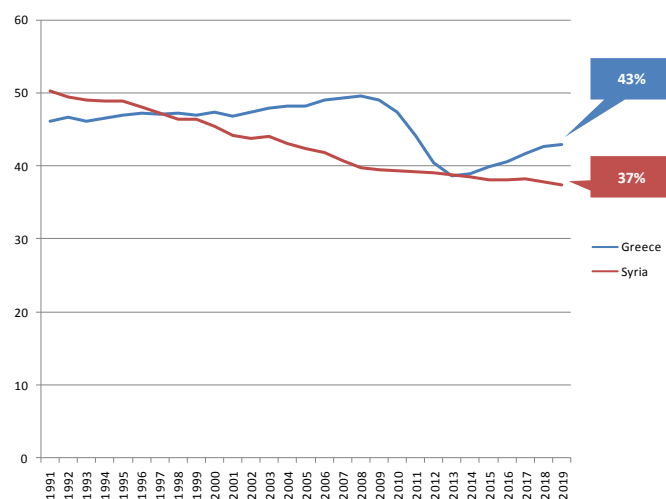


Image 1 – Fertility rate of Syria

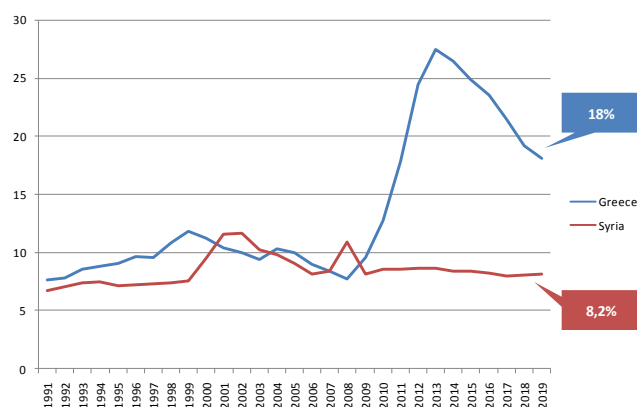
(Source: World Bank: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/DemographicProfiles/Line/760>)

Workforce-Unemployment

The workforce of the country makes only the 37.4% of the total population



The unemployment in Syria is in a very low level in comparison with the unemployment of Greece, Romania and Belgium, and in the last years is approximately 8%.



Source:

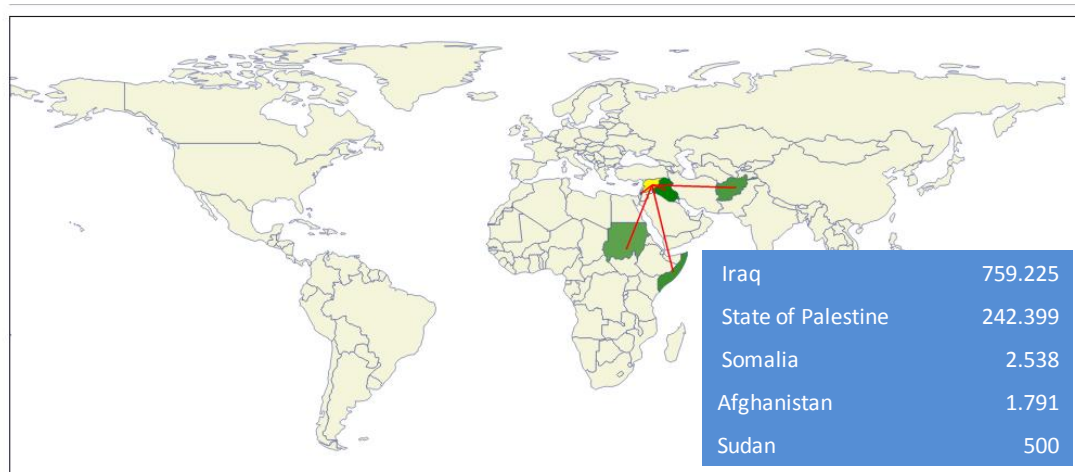
https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&Id=b450fd57&tbar=y&dd=y&inf=n&zm=n&country=SYR

Syria and Emigration towards Europe

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war March 15, 2011, the Syrian crisis is still one of the largest and most complex globally. Over 11 million people are still in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including 5.7 million people who have been displaced, many of them multiple times. In addition, there are over 5.6 million registered Syrian refugees, including 2.6 million children, in a region faced with deepening economic, social, and development challenges. Large numbers of refugees have cross into the EU after the Syrian crisis. By the end of 2015, an estimated 500,000 Syrian refugees have entered Europe, 80 percent arrived by sea, and most land in Greece. About 60.000 is estimated to be in Greece by the end of 2016.

Syria as destination country towards Africa and Middle East

Syria has been a destination country for migrants-refugees due to war, civil conflicts, environmental causes and prosecutions from countries such as:

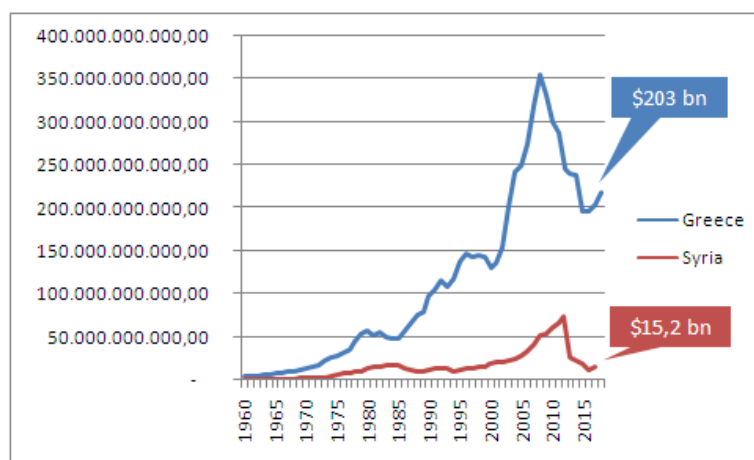


Source: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/migrants-stock-origin/en/syrian-arab-republic/2013/>

Gross Domestic Product - GDP

The economy of Syria according to the World Bank is in the 122nd place in terms of Gross Domestic Product. The GDP of the country in 2013 marked a significant fall of 26.3% (from \$73.7 bil. to \$27.0 bil.) because of the civil war, and maintained its falling tendency up until 2016. In 2017 the GDP was increased for the first time to 1.9% (\$15.18 bil.)

Source: <https://countryeconomy.com/countries/syria>



Per capita GDP – Per capita income

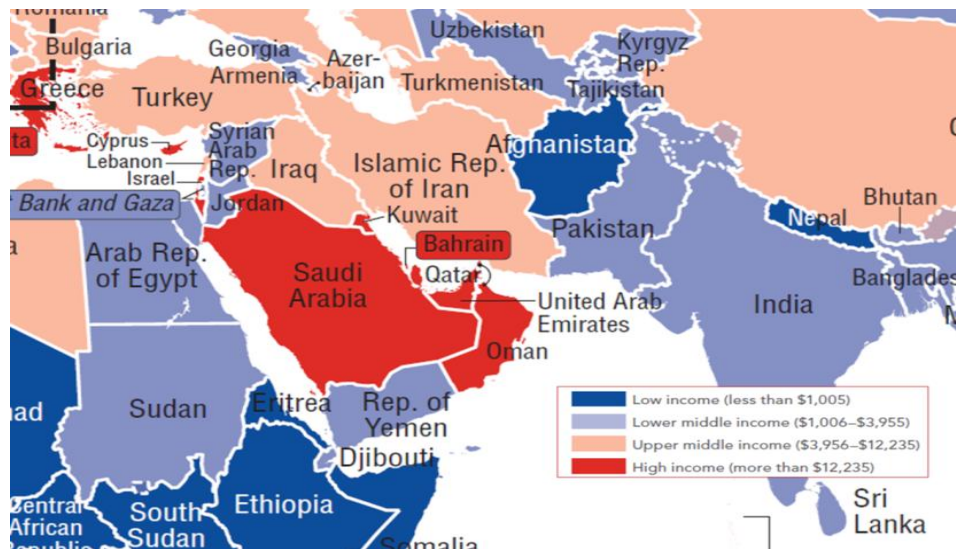
(The World Bank) classifies the economies based on their income in 4 categories:

- Low
- Lower-middle
- Upper-middle
- High income

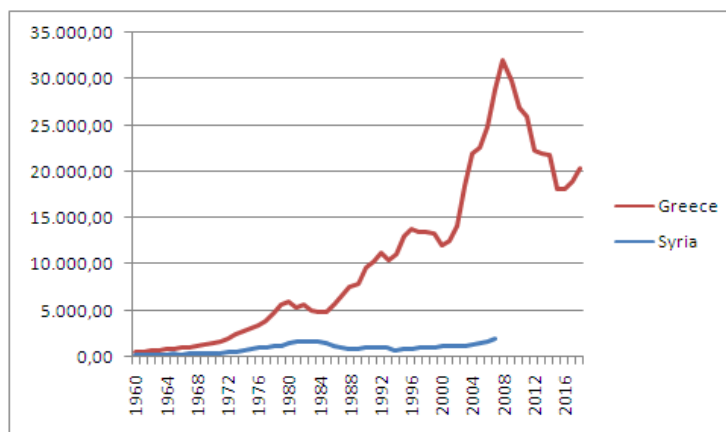
Based on this classification Syria belongs to the “lower-middle” group, as the annual Gross National Income – GNI) was on average \$1.970 in 2018.

(Source: World Bank

https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&Id=b450fd57&tbar=y&dd=y&inf=n&zm=n&country=SYR)



This fact can be confirmed by the following graphs which demonstrate the per capita GDP of Syria (\$2.032 annually in 2007) in comparison with Greece (\$28.827 annually in 2007)



Syria's Debt as percentage of the GDP

The ratio of the debt to the GDP was 31.21% in 2009.

(Source: <https://countryeconomy.com/countries/syria>)

Importations-Exportations

According to the Economic Complexity Index Syria is the 157th exporting country in the world

(Source: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/syr/>)

Specifically, the exportations of Syria amounted to 622 million dollars in 2017 and the importations to 4.4 billion dollars, resulting in a great trade deficit of 3.78 billion dollars.

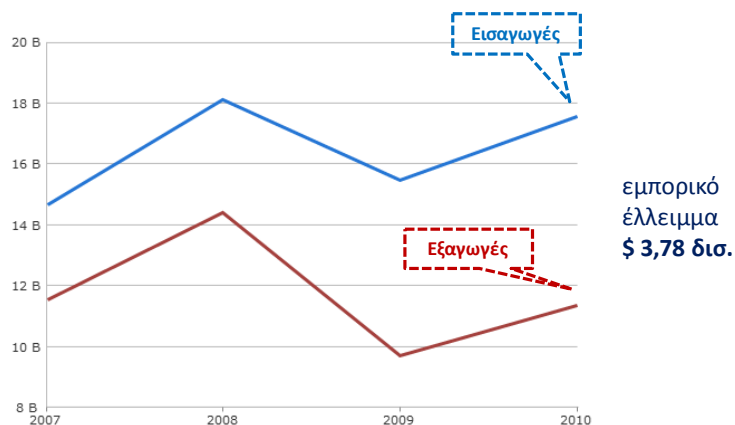


Image 1 – Trade Balance

Source: World Bank – WITS World Integrated Trading Solution
<https://oec.world/en/profile/country/syr/>

Looking into the profile of the syrian exportation, it is obvious that the biggest part consists of spice seeds, pure olive oil, fruits and and nuts.

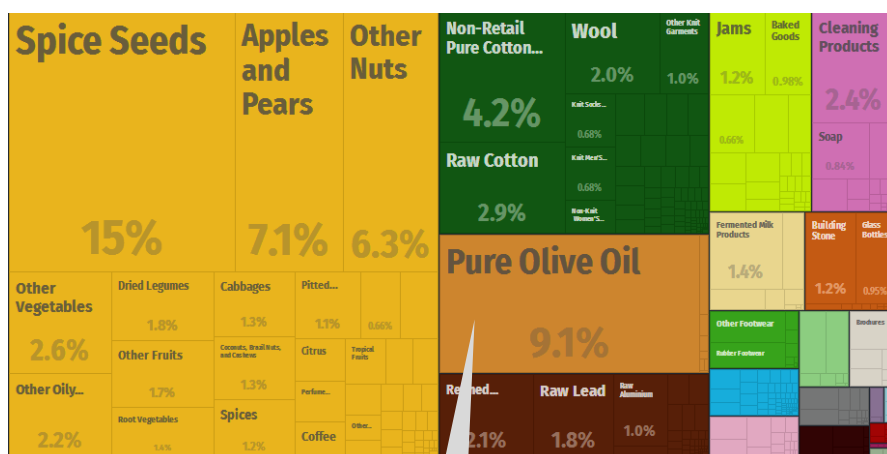


Image 2 - Exportations of Syria

Source: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/syr/>

The biggest part regarding imports are the raw sugar and the wheat flours.

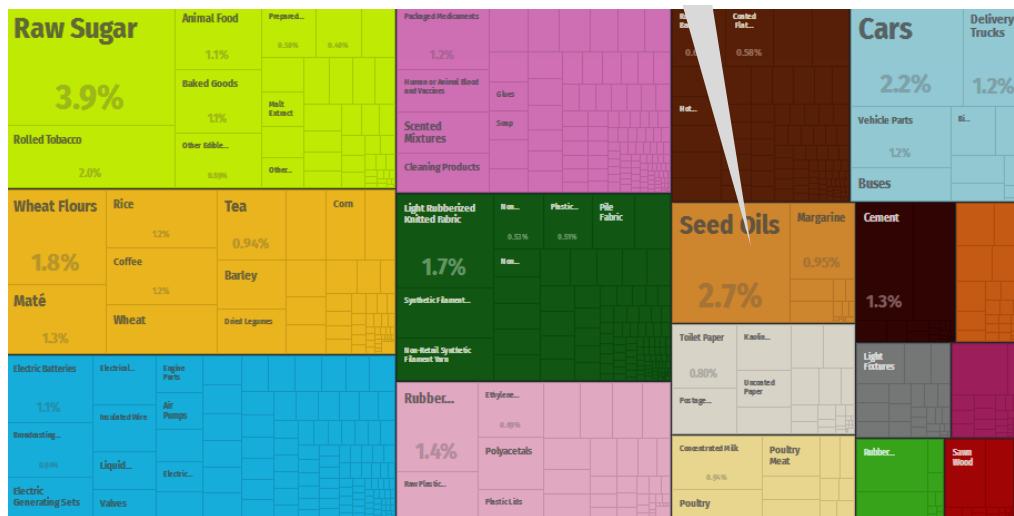


Image 1 – Importations of Syria

Source: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/syr/>

Food for Thought	Which countries do you think are the biggest clients of Syria?												
<p>Lebanon (21,1%)</p> <p>Egypt (17,4%)</p> <p>Turkey (11,3%)</p> <p>Jordan (10,7%)</p> <p>Spain (8,6%)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Country</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Λίβανος</td> <td>21.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Αίγυπτος</td> <td>17.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Τουρκία</td> <td>11.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ιορδανία</td> <td>10.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ισπανία</td> <td>8.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Country	Percentage	Λίβανος	21.1%	Αίγυπτος	17.4%	Τουρκία	11.3%	Ιορδανία	10.7%	Ισπανία	8.6%
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Question	Which countries are the most important suppliers of Syria?												
<p>Turkey (26,1%)</p> <p>China (24,8%)</p> <p>Lebanon (5,6%)</p> <p>Egypt (4,9%)</p> <p>South Korea (4,9%)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Country</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Τουρκία</td> <td>26.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Κίνα</td> <td>24.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Λίβανος</td> <td>5.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Αίγυπτος</td> <td>4.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Νότια Κορέα</td> <td>4.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Country	Percentage	Τουρκία	26.1%	Κίνα	24.8%	Λίβανος	5.6%	Αίγυπτος	4.9%	Νότια Κορέα	4.9%
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Development Index

Despite the economic growth of Syria, which is proved by the annual increase of the Gross Domestic Product, the extremely low per capita GDP brings out specific and serious development problems such as:

- poverty,
- corruption
- illiteracy
- health care
- and terrorism

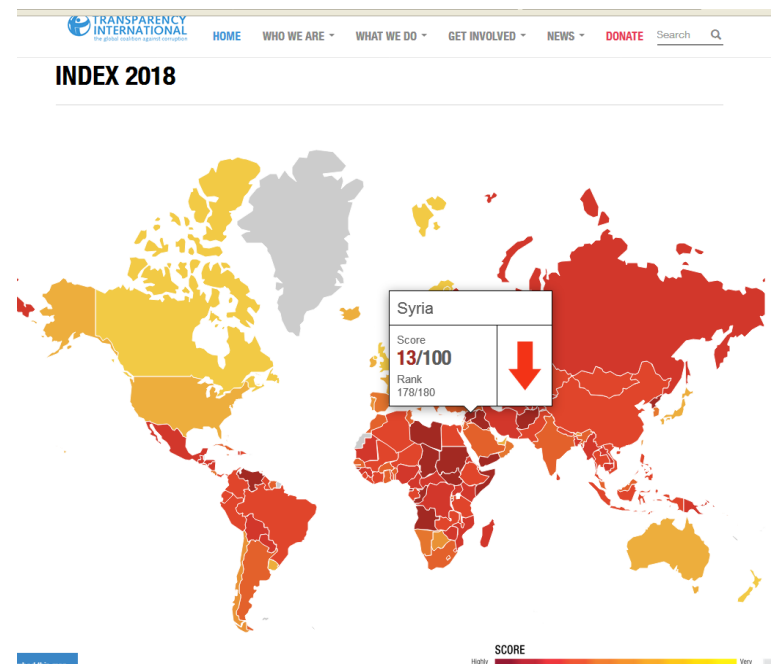
Corruption Perception Index

This index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, uses a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

Source: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

What is being noticed in the next map for 2018 is that:

- Syria marks a very low rank in the corruption perception index and is classified in the 178th position between 180 countries, with a score 13/100.
- **More than 2/3 of the countries in 2018 score 43/100, meaning one score below the basis which is 50/100**

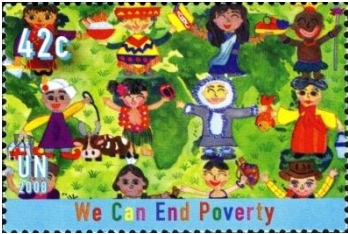


Source: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

Source	Answer
What does the low average score of the corruption perception index reveal?	<p>It shows us that:</p> <p>(a) Most countries have failed to control corruption in the public sector.</p> <p>(b) Corruption leads to crisis of democracy in those countries.</p> <p>(c) Despite the exceptions, most countries do not apply effective anti-corruption policies.</p>

Poverty

Poverty is the number one hindrance to the development of a country. One of the millenium development goals that the United Nations have set is the poverty eradication.

Question - Tip	Answer
<p>Do you know that are the Millenium Development Goals?</p> 	<p>The MDGs are eight goals with countable results and clear deadlines in order to improve the living conditions of the poorest people in the world.</p> <p>For the achievement of those goals and the poverty eradication, the leaders of 189 countries signed the historic Millenium Declaration in the summit meeting of 2000.</p> <p>To this direction the United Nations has developed a series of measurements and indexes.</p>

But because poverty is not one-dimensional, it is not defined olny in terms of income, other means of measurment have been developed.

A relevant method is one of measuring the Multidimensional Poverty.

As about Syria, 7.4% of the population (1.25 million people) are facing multidimensional poverty and 35.2% lives below the national poverty level.

According to the previous data, Syria is in the 154th position between 188 countries with regards to the Human Development Index (0,560) (UNDP, 2019)

In addition, the Multidimensional poverty Index (MDI) has three basic dimensions:

- Education
- Health
- Standards of living

The contribution of each dimension to the multidimensional poverty is different. In the case of Syria, education participates in 49%, health in 49% and the standards of living in 10.2%. Consequently, the lack of health services, the low standards of living or the low participation of young people in education are shaping the multidimensional poverty.

Culture

[World Heritage Sites UNESCO](#)

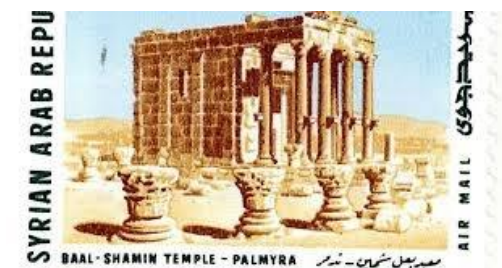
[The Ancient City of Damascus](#)

Damascus is the capital of Syria with a population of 1.7 million. It is built in the Gouta oasis, on the bank of the Baronda River (of Chrysorrhoe, as the ancient Greeks call it) at an altitude of 600-700 meters at the beginning of the desert and at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon.



[The Archeological Site of Palmyra](#)

Palmyra was an important ancient city in central Syria, built in an oasis 215 kilometers northeast of Damascus and 120 kilometers southwest of Euphrates. For centuries it has been a vital staging point for the caravans crossing the Syrian Desert and has been known as the "Desert Bride". The Greek name "Palmyra" is a translation of the original Aramaic name Tadmor, which means "Phoenician city". The modern town, next to the ancient ruins, is again called Tadmor. Its economy is dependent on tourism. In the Bible it is referred to as Tamar or Themidor or Theodmor while in Aramaic Tammor or Tadmor and is said that King Solomon built a caravan station between Syria and Mesopotamia.



[The Ancient City of Bosra](#)

On the outskirts of this historically rich southern city lies a magnificent 2nd century Roman theater, some of the oldest surviving Islamic mosques and Christian ruins as well. The ancient city of Bosra, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980 and added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Danger in 2013, was once the capital of the Roman province of Arabia and was a caravan station on the road to Mecca.

This area of huge cultural importance was bombed by government helicopters in 2015, causing severe damages in the ancient city.



[The Ancient City of Aleppo](#)

Aleppo is one of the oldest cities in the world, with human settlements dating back to the 7th millennium BC [4]. In the 3rd millennium BC It was part of the neighboring kingdom of Ebla and was called Armi, and around 3000 BC. It was named Halpe (for the Greek Halves because it was the largest steel production center in the region).



[Krak des Chevaliers](#)

The Krak des Chevaliers (or Crac des Chevaliers) is a crusader fortress, located in Syria and one of the most important monuments of medieval military architecture in the world. In Arabic the fortress is called Qal'at al-Hiṣn, the word "Krak" which comes from the Syrian karak, which means "fortress". It is located 65 km west of the city of Homs, near the Lebanese border. Knights' Crack was the seat of the Knights of St. John during the Crusades. It expanded between 1150 and 1250 and housed a guard of 2,000 people. The fortress has 30-meter-thick outer walls, with seven towers 10 meters in diameter



[The Saladin Castle](#)

The Saladin Castle is a Syrian castle in the Governorate of Latakia. It is located 7 km east of Al Hafan and 30 km east of Latakia, in the high mountainous terrain on a ridge between two deep ravines and surrounded by forest. In 975 the Byzantine Emperor Ioannis Tsimiskis occupied the area that remained under Byzantine control until about 1108. In the 12th century the Franks crusaders took control of the area and were part of the Principality of Antioch. The Crusaders did an extensive building program, giving the castle much of its current form. In 1188 it fell into the hands of the Saladin forces after a three-day siege. The castle was besieged again in 1287, this time by the Mameluks. In 2006 it was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The Ancient Villages of Northern Syria

The Ancient Villages of Northern Syria, also called "Dead Cities" and "Forgotten Cities" are a group of 700 abandoned settlements in northwestern Syria, between Aleppo and Etnlib. The approximately 40 villages, grouped into eight archaeological parks, give a picture of rural life in Late Antiquity and during the Byzantine period. Most of the villages, dating from the 1st to the 7th centuries, were abandoned between the 8th and 10th centuries. The settlements have well preserved architectural ruins of houses, pagan temples and churches, terns, baths, etc. An important monument is the church of St Simeon of Stylitis. The villages are spread around 20-40 km wide and about 140 km long.



The temple of Bel

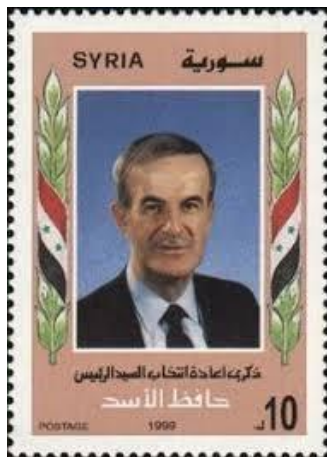
The Temple of Bel, also known as the Temple of Baal-Zeus, was an ancient stone ruin in Palmyra, Syria. The temple was named for the Mesopotamian god Bel, who was worshiped in Palmyra as part of the Trinity with the lunar god Anglibol and the solar god Yarchimbol, and was dedicated in 32 AD. By 2015, its ruins were considered the best preserved in Palmyra. The ruins of the temple were destroyed by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in August 2015.

Source: <https://el.globalvoices.org/2017/09/43471>

History-Politics

Syria, which was under French rule, became independent in 1946. In 1958, it formed Egypt with the United Arab Republic, from which it withdrew in 1961 and became an independent state. In 1967 it was defeated in the Six Day War and Israel occupied the Golan Heights.

Syria has been ruled by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party since 1963. His leadership in the political life of the country is provided by the Constitution. On February 23, 1966, with the coup of General Salah Jeddah, the left wing of the Ba'athist Socialist Party overthrew the moderate Ba'athist Amin al-Hafiz, who had been in power since 1964, and took over. The president was Nour Ad Din Al Atassi, and four days later a Marxist government known as the "Chinese" was formed, due to a Philo-Maoist divergence. The coup marked a hardening of the Syrian faction within the pan-Arab Ba'athist party, with offshoots in Iran, Lebanon and Jordan. The defense ministry in the new government was taken over by Hafez al-Assad, who a few years later seized all power in his hands.



Stamp: Hafez al-Assad

In 1969, the Syrian regime was overwhelmed by the conflict of "nationalists" with "progressives" for control of power. Nationalist-led merger of Syrian, Iraqi and Jordanian military found at the heart of the conflict

The crisis broke out on February 24, 1969, when Israel carried out an air raid on Fatah camps on the outskirts of Damascus, in which the Syrian air force made virtually no resistance.

The difference in capacity was not the only explanation: in his rivals, Defense Minister and Nationalist leader Hafez al-Assad replied that nothing could be done without the creation of a joint top command of the armed forces of the three neighboring Arab states. To make it more persuasive, Assad ordered his faithful forces to encircle government and party buildings, while accusing the progressives of being only active in Moscow. The lines of the confrontation were now clear: on the side of the progressives the whole party mechanism was drawn up, and on the nationalists the armed forces. By the end of March, Assad had banished the most vulnerable of his opponents from the party mechanism and, above all, the faithful to the progressive press. However, neither of the two factions prevailed completely. At the same time, in neighboring Iraq, the shaky regime has promoted its own solution to "unite" the two states, sparking international fears of an intra-Arab war.

Fatally, the only way out for the Syrians was a compromise, which included almost all of Assad's positions except for the West approach. Hafez al-Assad eventually became president from 1971 until his death in 2000. His son Bashar al-Assad was succeeded by him.



Stamp: Election of the President [Basher Al-Assad](#)

In the parliamentary elections held on April 22, 2007, the National Progressive Front won 172 seats, while independents won the remaining 78. Turnout was 56.12% and 30 women candidates were elected, just as in the 2003 elections. Opponents of the government and human rights activists have spoken of fraud and participation of just 10%.

Since 2011 there has been a civil war. It began as a series of demonstrations, part of the Arab Spring, that after their violent repression turned into an armed uprising. According to the UN, over 100,000 are dead, half of whom are civilians. There are tens of thousands of refugees inside and outside the country. Because of the civil war, the city of Homs is now almost completely destroyed.

About 290 sites or monuments in Syria have been destroyed by the ongoing civil war as evidenced by satellite photos, according to the UN Institute for Education and Research (UNITAR).

Source: <https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/سُورِيَا>

International Relationships

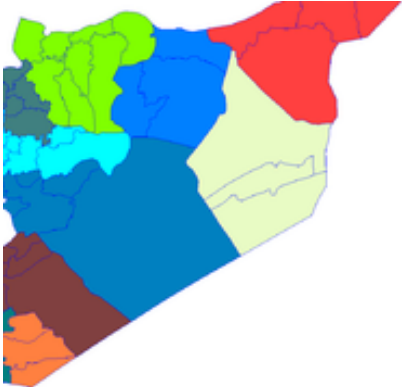
Political System

The Syrian government is a one-party semi-presidential democracy.

Until recently, the Ba'ath party was essentially in power. The other parties recognized Ba'ath's leadership, with whom they constituted the 'National Progressive Front'. President since 2000 is Bashar al-Assad, son of longtime leader Hafez al-Assad. The 2012 prime minister is Wael Nader al-Halki. The civil war began in March 2011, with leaders questioned.

Syria is divided into 14 provinces and in addition to provinces. Governments are as follows:

ΑΛ Χασακά	ΑΛ Χασακά	23.334	1.477.000	63	SY-HA
Αλέππο	Αλέππο	18.482	4.744.000	260	SY-HL
Αρ Ρακκά	Αρ Ρακκά	19.616	921.000	47	SY-RA
Ας Σουγουαύντα	Ας Σουγουαύντα	5.550	417.000	75	SY-SU
Δαμασκός	Δαμασκός	1.599	2.211.042	18.273,07	SY-DI
Ιντλίμπ	Ιντλίμπ	6.097	1.464.000	240	SY-ID
Κουνέιτρα	Κουνέιτρα	1.200	87.000	73	SY-QU
Λατάκεια	Λατάκεια	2.297	991.000	430	SY-LA
Νταράα	Νταράα	3.730	998.000 ^[10]	270	SY-DR
Ντέιρ αλ Ζορ	Ντέιρ αλ Ζορ	33.060	1.202.000	36	SY-DY
ΡΙΦ Ντιμάσκ	Δαμασκός	18.032	2.744.000	150	SY-RD
Ταρτούς	Ταρτούς	1.892	785.000	410	SY-TA
Χάμα	Χάμα	8.883	1.593.000	180	SY-HM
Χομς	Χομς	42.223	1.763.000	42	SY-HO



Society

Violent Displacement

At the end of 2016, Syrians were still the largest population forcibly displaced by 12 million people. In third place is Afghanistan, followed by Iraq and South Sudan.

Looking at the forcibly displaced people as a percentage of the national population, Syria shows that more than 650 / 1,000 people have been forcibly displaced from the country.

Source: <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/>

The chart below shows the countries of origin of most refugees, according to data from the UNHCR for 2016. Syria is the first country by difference, with 5.5 million refugees, followed by Afghanistan, South Sudan and Somalia.

refugees were from Burundi, Iraq, Nigeria and Eritrea.

Where do the refugees come from?

Major source countries of refugees

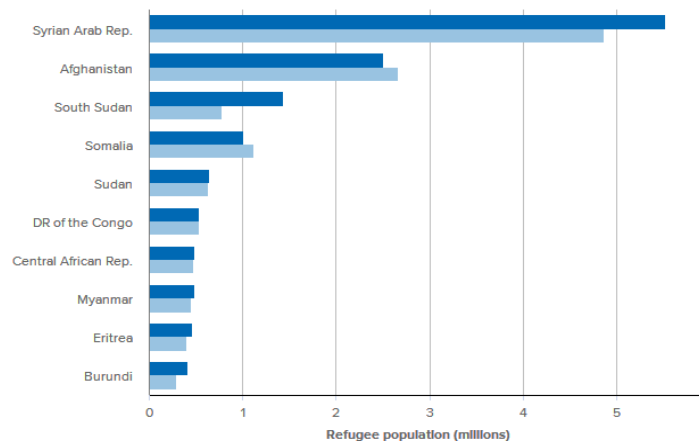


Chart: Refugees' Country of Origin

The chart below shows the countries where refugees apply for asylum. Greece ranks 6th with a four-digit increase in applications since 2015. More than half of the applications come from Syria. Syria also continued to occupy the first place in asylum applications in most countries worldwide (105). Followed by Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan.

Major receiving countries of new asylum claims

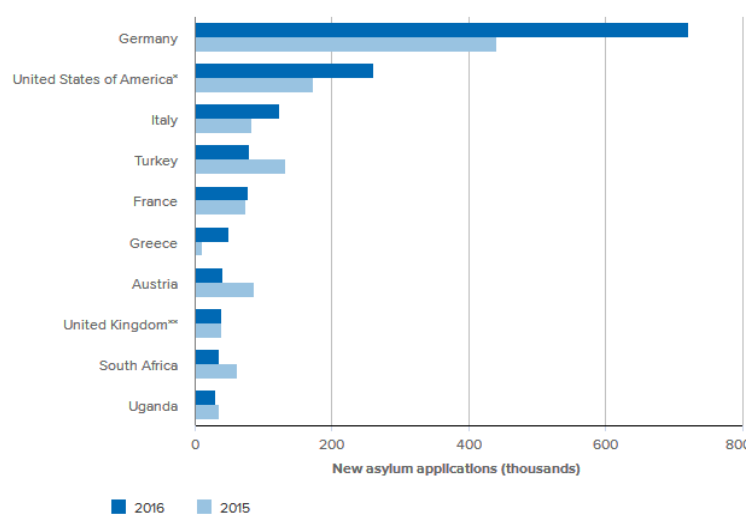


Chart: Countries where refugees apply for asylum

Source: <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/>

Religion

Sunni Muslims make up 69 to 74% of the Syrian population and Sunni Arabs make up 59–60% of the population. Most Kurds (8.5%) and most Turkomans (3%) are Sunnis and are responsible for the difference between Sunnis and Arab Sunnis, while 13% of Syrians are Shiites (especially Alawites, Twelver's- the largest branch of Shiite Islam and the Ismailis but there are also Arabs, Kurds and Turkomans) 10% Christians (the majority are Antiochian Greek Orthodox, while the rest are Syrian Orthodox, Greek Catholic or belong to other Catholic rites, belong to the Assyrian Church of the East, Armenian Orthodox, protestants and other) and a 3% are Druze. The Druze have a population of about 500,000, and are concentrated mainly in the southern region of Jabal al-Druze.

President Bashar al-Assad's family are Alawites, and the Alawites rule the Syrian government and occupy key military positions. In May 2013, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that of the 94,000 people killed during the Syrian Civil War, at least 41,000 of them were Alawites.

Christians (2.5 million), of whom a significant number are in the Syrian Palestinian refugee population, are divided into various doctrines: the Chalcedonian Antioch Orthodox constitute 45.7% of the Christian population, the Catholics (the Melkites, the Armenian Catholics, Syrian Catholics, Maronites, Chaldeans, and Latins) make up 16.2%. The Armenian Apostolic Church is 10.9% while the Syrian Orthodox constitute 22.4%. The Assyrian Church of the East and several smaller Christian churches occupy the remainder. The country also has many monasteries. Many Christian Syrians belong to a high socio-economic class.

Security Status-Violence

The Violations Documentation Centre (VDC) of Syria has reported approximately 166.000 deadly incidents since the beginning of the conflicts from 2001 to May 2019. These are deaths that VDC reported with a high percentage of certainty. The real number is estimated much higher. From the 166.000 deaths, approximately 118.000 victims are defined as civilians and 48.000 as soldiers.

The organization “Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)” classifies the violent incidents in the following 4 categories:

- Battles
- Violence against civilians
- Explosions/remote violence
- Riots
- Demonstrations
- Strategic Development

According to ACLED data there has been a decline in the number of violent incidents for the year 2018.

Terrorist acts and Bombings

According to the Global Terrorism Index, terrorism is defined as the threatened or practiced illegally coercion and violence by a non-state in order to achieve political, economic, religious or social goals through intimidation or coercion.

Bombings and other forms of terrorist attacks have often taken place during the civil war, but their numbers have increased in recent years. The Global Terrorism Index, which analyzes trends in terrorist attacks worldwide, recorded a total of 2,110 deaths in Syria in 2016 and 1,096 deaths in terrorist attacks in 2017, a decrease of almost 50%. The numbers do not distinguish casualties from civilians and soldiers.

In 2017, Syria was ranked 5th in the world in terrorist attacks after Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia.

Arrests, imprisonments and kidnappings

Government security forces, police, the army, militia and security services carried out extensive arrests during the first years of the civil war. Already in 2012, it is estimated that tens of thousands of people were arrested on charges of alleged linking or supporting anti-government groups.

Minefields and Explosive remnants of the war

Minefields, roadside bombs and explosive remnants of war are scattered throughout Syria. According to the United Nations Office on Mine Action (UNMAS) the groups most vulnerable to such explosions are: children picking up dangerous objects from the ground, farmers plowing the land and internally displaced persons who may to enter areas without knowing that there is a risk.

Source: European Asylum Support Office, Syria, Security situation (2019)

<https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EASO-COI-Report-Syria-Security-situation.pdf>