Political Consciousness and Engagement
in Northern Syria

Thematic report

On paper, the political system looks like a democracy, but Syria has been ruled by a secure grip, and the Assad family has monopolized Syria for more than 50 years. It allowed political action only through the ruling Baath Party and allied parties. After the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011, no priority was given to supporting political awareness.

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Acronyms

ACU	Assistance Coordination Unit
IMU	Information Management Unit
NWS	North-western Syria
NES	North-eastern Syria
SOC	National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces
HNC	High Negotiating Committee
SCC	Syrian Constitutional Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
SLP	Syrian Legal Platform
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces

First

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01

First: Executive Summary

1. Executive Summary

The executive summary provides a snapshot of the most important findings of the study. Further details can be found in the sections of the report.

2. Methodology

To produce this report, a survey was developed based on a set of indicators in collaboration with political experts. Work on the report started in July 2022; the final version was released in January 2023. The ACU enumerators faced a range of challenges listed in the report. They reached out to network coordinators for technical support and to suggest the best solutions.

3. Political life in Syria before the ongoing war

On paper, the political system looks like a democracy, but Syria has been ruled by a security grip, and the Assad family has monopolized power in Syria for more than 50 years.

In 1963, the Baath Party seized power through a military coup known as March 8 Revolution. In 1970, Hafez Assad seized power in Syria with the support of the Syrian Army a year after his coup against the then-president.
After the death of Hafez Assad on 10 June 2000, the People's Assembly met in an extraordinary session. The constitution was amended to reduce the age required to stand for the presidency from 40 to 34, the age of Bashar Assad, the son of then-President Hafez Assad, who was nominated by the Country Leadership of the Baath Party and ratified by the People's Assembly as the sole candidate for the presidency.

The Syrian revolution started in 2011 after peaceful demonstrations demanding reforms, including the implementation of democracy in Syria and the fight against corruption, but the regime and its security services confronted these demonstrations brutally, which led to civilian casualties and the arrest of thousands of civilians, Then, the demands of the demonstrators expanded to include the overthrow of the existing regime and its security services.

4. General characteristics of the sample

The study was conducted across all areas outside the control of the regime in northwestern Syria within the governorates of Idleb, Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh, and Deir ez-Zor, and the number of participants in the study was 803 respondents: males accounted for 57% (454 respondents) and females constituted 43% (346 respondents). People with disabilities accounted for 3% (22 respondents) of the total respondents.

5. Political Awareness

- The majority of respondents follow local news stories about their communities and their country in general, with 49% reported that they follow local news daily. 41% of them follow international news daily or semi daily. The most common sources of news are Arab news channels such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and local opposition-linked news channels. The majority of respondents (61%) believe their sources of news are reliable, and 22% believe they are highly reliable.
- The majority of respondents (52%) are tr to develop their political knowledge, and 18% want to develop their political knowledge, but they do not know how to do so. Half of the respondents feel responsible for incidents such as changing political positions. Half of those who feel responsible for political incidents (50% of respondents) discuss the new situation with their friends and co-workers, and some (26% of respondents) post their positions on social media platforms. The majority of respondents (70%) have a critical perception of reality and try to change it.
- The difficult living conditions of the community (21% of the respondents), the society's distance from political work (18% of the respondents), the security situation, and the restriction of freedoms (18% of the respondents) were identified as obstacles that prevent the development of political awareness into practice in the reality of the Syrian revolution, which is to be manifested in effective and influential civil political institutions.

6. Political Participation

- The vast majority (92%) of respondents never joined political parties or movements after 2011. They identified the main reasons for not joining as the disbelief in political activity under the current circumstances (25%) and the lack of time to join (22%).
- The vast majority (78% of respondents) did not participate in any elections after 2011. 45% of respondents stated that there were no elections in their regions, and 23% said the elections lacked transparency. The majority of the respondents (68%) are not ready to stand for elections in an appropriate electoral process, and 34% of them justified their unwillingness to stand for elections by their lack of experience to manage and represent the affairs of others.

7. Raising community awareness and political participation

- Respondents identified greater freedom to express opinions (31% of respondents) and support for forming political parties and groups within specific criteria and frameworks (27% of respondents) as key activities that promote political awareness and participation in society.
- Respondents identified the key actors responsible for raising political awareness in community as the politically educated class (33% of respondents see this), local authorities (27% see this), and community leaders including local and tribal leaders (25% see this).
- The main barriers to developing political awareness in society are the restriction of freedoms (23% of respondents) and the ignorance of society about the importance of political awareness (19% of respondents).

8. Political Participation of Women

- Almost half of the male respondents (44%) reported that women in their families do not participate in elections. The most prominent obstacles to women's participation and candidacy for elections include the idea that women's primary responsibility are to care for the family and children (according to 36% of the respondents), the culture of the society that women should not participate in elections (according to 27% of the respondents), and the lack of awareness of the role of women in society (according to 24% of the respondents).
- The majority (76%) of males reported that women in their families do not stand for elections, while nearly half of the respondents (45%) expressed acceptance of having a female representative to elect. The vast majority of females (82%) prefer to have a female political representative.
- According to the respondents, the best ways to improve women's political participation are to ensure more freedom for women to express their views (according to 28% of female respondents), hold political symposiums for women (according to 27% of females), and activate and support the establishment of political parties and gatherings for women within specific criteria and frameworks (according to 23% of females).

9. Awareness of the Political Process in Syria

- The majority of respondents (63%) in northern Syria stated that they had heard of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC) but did not know it well, and the majority of respondents (60%) who had knowledge of or heard of it believed it needs urgent restructuring.
- About half of the respondents (52%) who know the SOC believe its performance is poor. Respondents identified the distance of the SOC from people inside Syria (according to 23% of respondents) and the lack of seriousness of the influential countries the Syrian case to support any opposition political entity (according to 20% of respondents) or to support any real political process (according to 19% of respondents) as the main reasons behind the SOC's poor performance.
- About half of the respondents (55%) said that they heard of the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), and about half of them (47%) have heard about the Syrian Constitutional Committee (SCC), but they do not know it well. More than half of the respondents (53%) who know or have heard of the Syrian Constitutional Committee believe it performs poorly. According to the respondents, the main reasons behind the SCC's poor performance are the lack of seriousness of the UN in supporting the SCC's work (according to 35% of the respondents) and the lack of seriousness on the part of the SCC's members affiliated with the regime (according to 22% of the respondents).
- Only 17% of respondents said they knew the UN resolutions on the war in Syria well, and more than half (58%) said they had heard of them but did not know them well. More than half of the respondents (57%) believe that all UN resolutions were in the interest of the Syrian people but were not binding,

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rendering them useless. 33% believe that all decisions were in favor of the regime and its supporters and gave them opportunities to commit more massacres.

- The majority of respondents (77%) believe that the controlling forces in their regions did not engage in political action properly and did not allow participation in political action properly.

10. Recommendations of the Study

The study lists a set of recommendations based on the main findings. The recommendations focus on supporting the building of an independent political personality for young people, urging them to rush towards society, interacting with its issues positively, working within the collective forms of community forces, and actively contributing to any political process by all groups of society and women in particular.

Second

METHODOLOGY

02

Second: Methodology

1. Assessment Sample

The study was conducted in all areas outside the control of the regime in northern Syria within the governorates of Aleppo, Idleb, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor. It included 67 sub-districts, including 29 sub-districts in eastern Syria under the control of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and 38 sub-districts in north western Syria under the control of the opposition. The number of participants in the study reached 803 respondents, including 568 respondents in northwestern Syria and 235 respondents in northeastern Syria. Females accounted for 43% (346 females) of the total respondents.

The following map provides detailed information about the areas covered in the study.

Map 1 Coverage of the study

2. Study tools

To produce this report, a survey was developed based on a set of indicators developed in collaboration with political experts:

- Information on local and international news and political programs
- Development of political knowledge and methods
- A sense of responsibility towards political positions and developments
- Critical perception and desire to develop.
- Political participation through the election, standing for elections, and affiliation with political parties and groups.
- Women's political participation through women's participation in elections and allowing them to stand for elections and join political parties and gatherings.
- Knowledge of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces and assessing its performance
- Knowledge of the High Negotiations Committee and assessing its performance
- Knowledge of the Syrian Constitutional Committee and assessing its performance
- Knowledge of the Cairo Platform and Moscow Platform and assessing their performance
- Knowledge of United Nations and UN Security Council resolutions related to the war in Syria.
- Assessing the political practices of the controlling powers

The study included surveys conducted with people from diverse backgrounds, taking into account females, IDPs, and people with disabilities, including the different ages of the respondents and the diversity of educational levels and professions.

3. Training of Enumerators

The enumerators were trained on 14 October 2022; for two days by the network coordinators using Skype for Business software. The training sessions were recorded and sent to the enumerators to use as a reference in case they needed to refer to any of the information presented during the training. The number of enumerators who attended the training reached 101 distributed within the governorates of Aleppo, Idleb, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh, and Deir ez-Zor, in addition to the IDP camps.

4. Data Analysis and Management

The enumerators filled out the questionnaires electronically using Kobo Toolbox software. The coordinators of the network of enumerators followed up on the receipt of electronic data for the study and integrated the shared data into a database on Excel. Information management officers worked to clean and verify data to find extreme and missing values and correct or update them in conjunction with data collection. After data cleaning was over, the IMU team started displaying the data and creating tables and charts about it. Software and tools such as Dax, Query Editor, ArcGIS, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, and Adobe Photoshop were used to visualize the collected data.

5. Timeline

Figure 1 The timeline for completion of the report

Work on drafting this report started in July 2022, with the questionnaire designed and sent to a group of political experts who added suggestions to the questionnaire, and IMU applied all suggestions. The enumerators were trained on 14 October 2022 for two full days. Data collection began on 20 October 2022 and ended in November 2022.

The data and analysis officers then started to extract the outliers and missing values, and they reviewed them with the enumerators to begin the data analysis process. After completing the analysis process, the report was drafted in Arabic, and then it was translated into English. Quality assurance standards were applied internally and externally in the preparation and content while writing the report in both languages. The report was designed then, and the final version was released in January 2023.

6. Difficulties and Challenges

1. The enumerators faced a range of difficulties, including having to collect data confidentially, as all controlling parties opposed conducting such questionnaires.
2. Some respondents refused to participate in this study because they were not aware of the importance of political awareness, as they believed there was no point in conducting such studies, forcing the researchers to search for other respondents.
3. It was difficult for researchers to reach female respondents and conduct the study with them, and IMU hired a group of female researchers to conduct interviews with female respondents.

Third

POLITICAL LIFE IN SYRIA BEFORE THE ONGOING WAR

03

Third: Political life in Syria before the ongoing war

On paper, the political system looks like a democracy, but Syria has been ruled by a secure grip. The Assad family has monopolized power in Syria for more than 50 years.

Democratic elections in Syria: The Syrian Arab Republic witnessed democratic elections in 1843, November 1949, September 1954, partial elections in May 1957, and elections in December 1961.

The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party seizing power: In 1963, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party (Known as Bath Party) seized power through a military coup known as the March 8 Revolution. The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was banned by the party.

Assad family sizing power: In 1970, Hafez Assad seized power in Syria, backed by the Syrian Army, a year after he overthrew and imprisoned then-President Noureddine Atassi. Assad established several intelligence services (Military Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, State Security, and Political Security) linked to the Baath Party's National Security Bureau, creating a powerful Baathist regime that relied on the security grip locally. The 1973 constitution issued by Assad guaranteed broad powers to him and the Baath Party. Article 8 stipulated that the Baath Party is the "leading party of the state and society," which transformed its doctrines and ideas into part of the Syrian state institutions, curricula, the monopoly of high positions, and a series of other privileges for Baathists and not other Syrians, with a near absence of political and economic freedoms and civil society organizations.

Massacre of the Muslim Brotherhood: In the 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood, considered an opposition group, was subjected to bloody crackdowns by the Baath Party regime, which accused the Muslim Brotherhood of armed rebellion in Hama. The Baath regime carried out a massacre in the city of Hama in which the Syrian Army led by Rifaat Assad, brother of President Hafez Assad, bombed the city of Hama with aircraft, artillery and tanks, causing tens of thousands of deaths. The Baath Party government also passed a law to execute any Muslim Brotherhood member or supporter, leading to the arrest of hundreds of thousands and the remaining Muslim Brotherhood members fleeing Syria.

The Syrian People's Assembly (Parliament): The Baath Party and the parties loyal to it form the so-called National Progressive Front. It holds two-thirds of the seats in Syria's 250-member parliament, the People's Assembly, and the remaining 83 seats are reserved for independent parliament members. However, independent members, who were to be elected by the people, were selected by the security services of the Syrian regime. The elections held to choose the members of the People's Assembly who were supposed to be independent were nominal and not transparent. There is no transparent electoral process for the Syrian president, but a referendum on the same president is held once in seven years, and he succeeds in that referendum, as claimed by the Syrian regime, by more than 95%. Syria has been living under a state of emergency since 1963.

The Constitution of 13 March 1973 also gave the Ba'ath Party the role of the leading party. The Ba'ath Party occupies the majority of seats in the Syrian Parliament. The constitution also gives the president broad powers. The President of Syria combines the positions of Secretary-General of the Baath Party and Chairman of the National Progressive Front and has the right to nominate the Prime Minister, declare war and a state of emergency, issue decrees, and appoint staff and army officers.

Transferring power from father to son: After the death of President Hafez Assad on 10 June 2000, the People 's Assembly met in an extraordinary session, and the constitution was amended to reduce the age required to run for president from 40 to 34, the age of Bashar Assad, the son of then-President Hafez Assad, who was nominated by the country leadership and ratified by the People's Assembly as the sole candidate for the presidency. A referendum was held in which the security services ruling the country claimed 97% of the participants supported it.

Damascus Declaration for Democratic National Change: A name was given to the document signed by prominent civil society figures and Syrian Islamists and liberals in 2005. The document calls for ending the Assad family's 35-year rule of Syria and replacing it with a democratic system. The Damascus Declaration document is the umbrella document for the national opposition forces of change in Syria and includes basic items that outline the process of democratic change in Syria, how to end the totalitarian security system that restricted freedoms

and prevented opposition movements, and played a role in spreading corruption. The Damascus Declaration was the first opposition declaration issued by Syrian opposition parties inside Syria after these statements were made by the opposition abroad. The charter also emphasizes the need to find a just solution to the Kurdish issue, although it did not address it. The signatories of the Damascus Declaration justify that they do not yet have a mandate from the Syrian people to discuss such issues with the Kurdish minority, negotiation will solve every problem after holding democratic elections and getting rid of the Syrian security system. However, the Syrian security agencies arrested and prosecuted all statement signatories.

Political life under the Assad family rule: Syria's history shows that the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, led by the Assads, has taken away the political freedom of society for more than 50 years. The Assads have ruled Syria with an iron fist, and individuals have not been allowed to practice political life except through the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party or parties affiliated with it. Children enrolled in the school at the age of six were forcibly affiliated with the Ba'ath Vanguard Organization, or as it defines itself, the Syrian National Organization for Childhood. Moreover, as children began the preparatory stage (at the age of twelve), they were forcibly enrolled in the so-called Revolutionary Youth Union, an organization affiliated with the Ba'ath Party ruling in Syria. It works to educate young people in the preparatory and secondary school stages about the ideology of the Ba'ath Party and prepare them to be members. After that, young men join the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party and climb the ranks from supporters to active members. Government jobs and privileges are often enjoyed and got only by active members of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party.

The Syrian Revolution (**2011**): The Syrian revolution erupted in 2011 after peaceful demonstrations demanding reforms that include the application of democracy in Syria and the fight against corruption. But, the regime and its security agencies dealt with these demonstrations brutally, resulting in civilian casualties and the arrest of thousands of civilians. This led to raise the level of the demonstrators' demands to overthrow the existing regime and its security agencies. After the regime used the army to suppress the demonstrations, officers and members of the Syrian army and its security agencies began defecting, refusing to kill civilians. Moreover, defecting officers, army members, and members of the opposition formed the Free Syrian Army. Iran and Russia have sent militias to fight alongside the regime.

With the beginning of the peaceful movement in Syria, several political bodies were formed, starting with the Syrian National Council, whose formation was announced on October 2, 2011. These bodies began to represent the politically rebellious people in regional and international forums and convey the suffering of the Syrian people from the brutality of the Syrian regime and its security agencies. They also worked to discuss a solution to the Syrian crisis in cooperation with the Arab countries and the Group of Friends of the Syrian People.

The sequence of events shows the regime's arrest and enforced absence of politicians for more than 50 years (during the rule of the Ba'ath Party led by the Assads). Political life in this period was limited to joining the ruling Ba'ath Party and the group of parties affiliated with it. At the start of the revolution, no initiatives or entities clearly raised the people's awareness politically (these initiatives may exist, but they do not operate clearly or openly. Yet it is detached from reality of the in-country people). Therefore, this study measured consciousness, political engagement, and the role of women in northern Syria.

Fourth

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

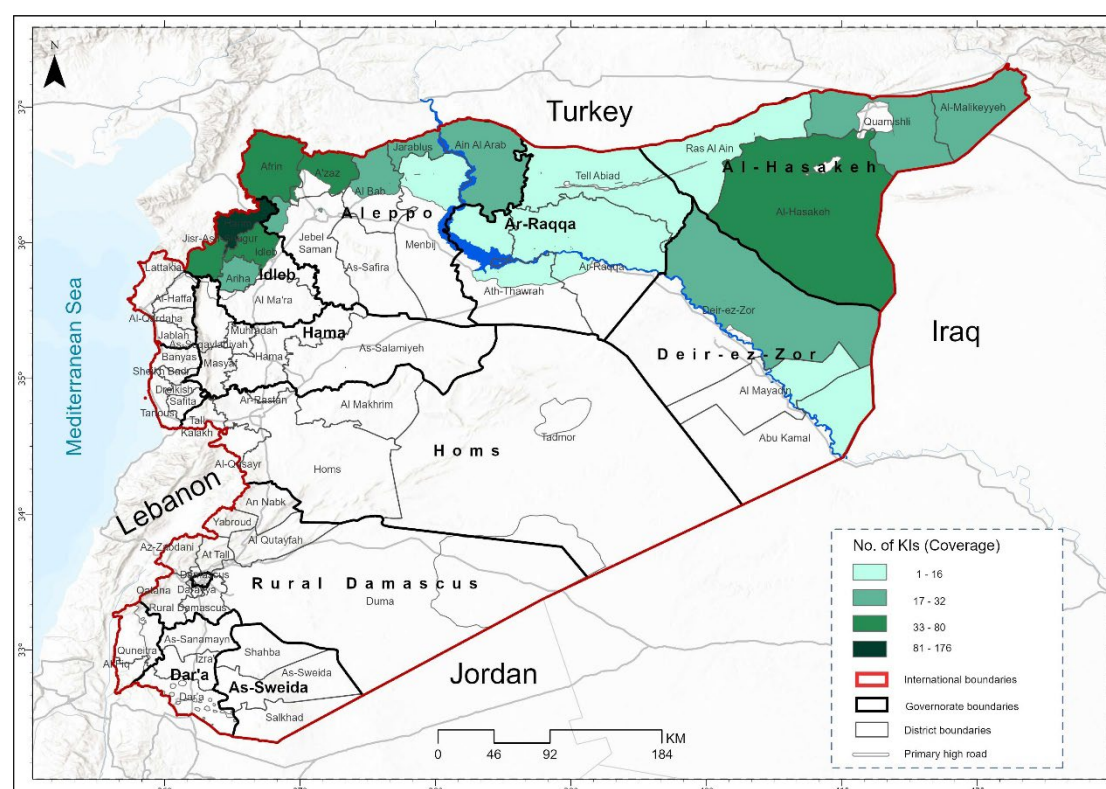04

Fourth: General Characteristics of the Sample

1. Demographic information of respondents

The study was conducted in all areas outside the control of the regime in northern Syria within the governorates of Aleppo, Idleb, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor. It included 67 sub-districts, including 29 sub-districts in eastern Syria under the control of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and 38 sub-districts in western Syria under the control of the opposition.

IMU enumerators conducted 803 questionnaires. Males accounted for 57% (457 male respondents) of the respondents and females accounted for 43% (346 female respondents) of the total respondents. The largest number of respondents was in Idleb governorate, with 368 respondents (including 148 females), followed by the northern countryside of Aleppo, with 112 respondents, and Al-Hasakeh governorate, with 112 respondents.

Figure 2 The number/percentage of respondents by gender - district level

The study results showed that the age group 31-40 was the largest segment of the respondents, accounting for 39% (313 individuals) of the total number of respondents. The second largest age group is young people aged 18-30, with 27% (216 individuals). People with disabilities accounted for 3% (22 individuals) of the total number of respondents.

Figure 3 The number/ percentages of respondents according to age groups

2. Education Level and Profession of the Respondents

In terms of the educational qualification of the respondents, it was found that the largest part of the respondents hold a university degree at 35% (284 people), followed by people with a high school diploma or less at 33% (268 people). The percentage of people who completed an intermediate college was 20% (161 people). Persons with post-graduate studies accounted for 3% (24 people), and illiterate people constituted 8% (66 people).

Figure 4 The number/ percentages of respondents according to age groups

Number	Percentage	Category
161	20%	Intermediate Institute
66	8%	Illiterate
284	35%	A university degree
24	3%	Postgraduate studies (Diploma, Master, PHD)
268	33%	Secondary school or below

Regarding the professions of the respondents, 21% (169 people) of the respondents are teachers, 15% (120 people) of the respondents are employees, 12% (100 people) of the respondents are unemployed, 7% (58 people) work in handicraft production, and 7% (56 people) are self-employed.

Figure 5 The number/Percentage of respondents by profession

Number	Percentage	Profession
169	21%	Teaching
120	15%	employed
100	12%	Unemployed
58	7%	A handicraft
56	7%	Freelancers
54	7%	Trade
47	6%	Agriculture
46	6%	Engineer
38	5%	Pharmacist
25	3%	A member (Local Council Officer)
22	3%	Student
18	2%	Industry
14	2%	Doctor
10	1%	A fighter within the military factions (not affiliated with the regime)
8	1%	A police officer (not affiliated with the regime)
8	1%	Other professions
6	1%	A housewife
4	0%	Nursing

Fifth

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

05

Fifth: Political Consciousness

The report adopted a definition of political awareness as "the knowledge and understanding of political issues, events, and processes and the ability to think critically about them."

1. Following the local news

Following local news can help to increase political awareness by providing information about what is happening in the community and allowing people to stay informed about issues that may affect them directly. For example, if a local election or a new policy is being implemented by the city council, following local news can help people understand the candidates or the policy and its potential impacts. In this way, following local news can help people make informed decisions about how they want to engage with politics, such as by voting in elections, participating in protests, or other forms of civic engagement. Overall, following local news can be an important way for people to stay informed about what is happening in their community and to participate in the political process.

The respondents were asked if they followed the local political news throughout the study. 49% (397 people) of the respondents reported following the news daily. 24% (191 people) said they follow the local news once in two or three days. 8% (68 people) said they follow the local news semi-daily (4-6 days a week), and 11% (88 people) follow the local news every week. 7% (59 people) of respondents reported not following local news.

Figure 6 The number/percentage of respondents by their follow-up of the local news

The study found that most people who do not follow local news are young, accounting for 12% of the youth. In addition, 10% of older people aged 51-60 do not follow local news.

Figure 7 The numbers/percentages of respondents following local news by age groups

Of the respondents who reported not following the local news, 27% attributed the reason to their preference to follow entertainment channels. Instead, 22% think their follow-up of the news would not change a thing in reality, and 21% said they do not prefer to watch the news due to the war and stress resulting from it. On the other hand, 13% said they do not have time to watch the news because they work for long hours, 8% said that there are no trustworthy sources for the news, 6% do not have the technical means like TV or a mobile phone to access the news, and 4%, do not know where to find trustworthy local news.

Figure 8 The numbers/percentages of respondents who do not follow local news according to the reasons

29	27%	I prefer to follow entertainment channels
24	22%	Following the local news will not change anything
23	21%	I prefer not to follow the news because of the war conditions and the pressures...
14	13%	I do not have enough time to follow the news (long working hours)
9	8%	There are no reliable sources that report local news
6	6%	I do not have the technical means to access the news (TV - Internet - Mobile phone)
4	4%	I don't know where to find reliable local news

2. Following the international news reports

Following international news can help increase political awareness by providing information about events and issues outside of one's local community or country. This can help people to understand the broader context of global politics and how events in different parts of the world may be interconnected.

For example, following international news can provide information about conflicts or disasters occurring in other countries and the actions of governments and other international actors. This can help people to understand the motivations and implications of these events and to consider how they may be affected by or connected to events happening in their own country or community. Overall, following international news can be an important way for people to stay informed about the world and participate in global discussions and debates about issues that may impact them and others worldwide.

During the study, the respondents were asked about the frequency of their follow-up of international news. 29% (236 people) reported that they do that daily. 25% (199 people) said they do that once in two or three days, and 12% (99 people) on a semi-daily basis (4-6 days a week), while 19% (151 people) reported that they follow global news every week. 15% (118 people) of the respondents said they do not follow up on international news stories.

Figure 9 The numbers/percentages of respondents by their follow-up of international news reports.

236	29%	Daily
199	25%	Once in a few days (2-3 days a week)
151	19%	Weekly
118	15%	I don't follow the news
99	12%	Semi-daily (4-6 days a week)

The study found that the higher the respondent's educational level, the more interested they are in following up on international news stories. For example, 67% of the respondents with postgraduate degrees and 39% with university degrees follow up on international news daily. In contrast, 50% of illiterate respondents said they do not follow up on international news.

Figure 10 Percentages of the respondents' frequency of following up on international news stories by education

Legend: I don't follow the news | Once in a few days (2-3 days a week) | Daily | Semi-daily (4-6 days a week) | Weekly

When asked about the reasons for not following international news stories, of the 232 respondents who do not follow up on international news, 28% (64 respondents) said that their follow-up would not change a thing of the reality, and 23% (53 respondents) preferred to follow entertainment channels. At the same time, 16% (38 respondents) said they do not do that due to the war conditions and the stresses resulting from it, and 15% (35 respondents) do not have time for that because they work long hours.

Figure 11 The numbers/percentages of respondents who do not follow international news according to reasons.

Number	Percentage	Reason
64	28%	Following the international news reports would not change anything
53	23%	I prefer to follow entertainment channels
38	16%	I prefer not to follow the news because of the war conditions and the pressures.
35	15%	I do not have enough time to follow the news (long working hours)
16	7%	There are no reliable sources that report international news
15	6%	I do not have the technical means to access the news (TV - Internet - Mobile…
11	5%	I don't know where I can find reliable international news reports

3. Sources of News and Programs

When asked about the news sources they relied on, each respondent selected several sources. The most followed sources were Arabic news channels, according to 19% of the respondents ([1]Al Jazeera-Al Arabiya[2]). At the same time, 15% of the respondents reported that they depended on local channels affiliated with the opposition (such as Syria[3] TV- Aleppo [4]Today and other channels), and 14% depended on Facebook pages for figures they knew. 10% of the respondents depended on WhatsApp or Telegram groups established by figures they know, while 9% depended on WhatsApp or Telegram groups established by people they do not know.

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[1] https://www.aljazeera.net/

[2] https://www.alarabiya.net/

[3] https://www.syria.tv/

[4] https://halabtodaytv.net/

Figure 12 Numbers/percentages of respondents according to the news sources on which they rely

515	19%	Arabic channels (Al-Jazeera, Al Arabiya... etc)
403	15%	Local channels affiliated with the opposition
385	14%	Facebook/ Twitter Pages of people I know
323	12%	Facebook/ Twitter pages of people I don't know
278	10%	WhatsApp/ Telegram groups (managed by people I know)
252	9%	WhatsApp/ Telegram groups (managed by people I don't know)
130	5%	Facebook/ Twitter Pages with Fake Names
118	4%	Newspaper websites affiliated with the opposition
117	4%	Websites of Arabic newspapers
108	4%	Local channels affiliated with the regime
107	4%	Websites of opposition political bodies
19	1%	Newspaper websites affiliated with the regime
7	0%	None
1	0%	Official pages of the controlling parties

The study found that 61% (488 respondents) think the sources for news are somehow trustworthy, and 22% (177 respondents) think they are highly trustworthy. In contrast, 8% (64 respondents) think the sources for news stories are not trustworthy.

Figure 13 Numbers/percentages of respondents by their trust of news sources they rely on

488	61%	I think my sources of news are somehow reliable
177	22%	I think my source of news is highly reliable
74	9%	I don't know
64	8%	I think my news sources are unreliable

Respondents chose several sources when asked about the programs they watch to get the news. 32% of the respondents reported that they watch news programs, 22% watch political dialogue programs (such as The Opposite Direction Program on Al Jazeera), and 12% watch the daily news bulletins (The daily news bulletins provide a summary of all news and events at the end of the day). At the same time, 11% of the respondent watch weekly news bulletins (The weekly news bulletins provide a summary of all news and events at the end of the week). Meanwhile, 11% of the respondents watch critical political shows (such as Al Jazeera's Beyond Authority program), and 11% watch sarcastic political videos.

Through the study, it was noticed that a large number of respondents rely on political dialogue programs that host personalities of different orientations and these personalities exchange accusations. Sometimes, the dialogue may include insults and may lead to fights with hands. One party often resorts to falsifying facts to overcome the other. Watching these programs requires political awareness from viewers so that they are not dragged into falsifying facts from one side.

Figure 14 Numbers/percentages of respondents according to the programs they follow to get the news.

596	32%	News bulletins
407	22%	Political talk shows
231	12%	Daily news bulletins
213	11%	Weekly news bulletins
213	11%	Critical political shows
205	11%	Sarcastic Political Videos
12	1%	None

4. Improving the political knowledge

The study showed that 52% (421 respondents) stated that they try to develop their political knowledge. 18% (142 respondents) want to improve their political knowledge but do not know how. In contrast, 30% (237 respondents) do not try to improve their political knowledge.

Figure 15 Number/percentages of respondents according to their desire to improve their political knowledge

421	52%	I try to develop my political knowledge
237	30%	I do not try to develop my political knowledge
145	18%	I want to improve my political knowledge but don't know how to start

The researchers asked respondents who wanted to improve their political knowledge about the methods they follow to improve their knowledge, and each of the respondents chose a combination of methods. 23% of the respondents watch the news and political shows to improve their political knowledge. 12% follow political figures on social media, and 12% follow trustworthy political pages on social media. 11% of respondents reported that they follow Facebook pages for figures they know who published the information, mentioning the source, and taking responsibility for the credibility of the information. 8% of the total respondents follow Facebook pages for people they do not know who share the news with stating the resources. Around 7% of the respondents depend on interacting with people with political experience, and 7% depend on dialogue to improve political awareness. 6% read political books and articles. 6% rely on self-learning by reading newspapers and following up on events, and 5% attend political symposiums. Only 2% of the respondents depend on joining political parties.

Figure 16: The ways that respondents use to improve their political knowledge.

Value	Percentage	Category
545	23%	Following news bulletins and political shows
300	12%	Following political figures on social media
284	12%	Following reliable political websites on social media
276	11%	Facebook/ Twitter Pages of people I know
195	8%	Facebook/ Twitter pages of people I don't know
179	7%	Interacting with political experts
176	7%	Dialogues to raise the political awareness
136	6%	Reading political books and articles
134	6%	Self-learning by reading newspapers and following events
120	5%	Attending political symposiums
50	2%	Affiliation with a political party, group, or movement
18	1%	None/Not Interested

5. Feeling of responsibility for incidents

When asked if they felt responsible for incidents like changes in political positions, military situation or disasters, about 50% (404 respondents) of the respondents said they felt responsible for incidents, and 50% (339 respondents) reported that they did not. The study found a difference between males and females regarding feeling responsible for incidents. 59% of the male respondents reported feeling responsible for the incidents, in contrast to 41% who feel they do not. At the same time, only 38% of the females reported feeling responsible for the incidents, while 62% did not.

Figure 17: Percentage of respondents who feel/ do not feel responsible for incidents by gender.

The study also found that the higher their education level, the greater their sense of responsibility for the incidents in their communities. The study found that 83% of the respondents with a post-graduate education, 59% with university degrees, and 50% with intermediate institutes' certificates feel responsible for the incidents. The percentage drops to 44% for respondents with a high school diploma or below and 21% for uneducated people.

Figure 18 Percentage of respondents who feel/ do not feel responsible for incidents by education level.

The researchers asked respondents who did not feel responsible for the incidents about the reasons that prevented them from doing, and each respondent mentioned a set of reasons. 41% of respondents attributed this to feeling they could not change anything about the ongoing incidents. 38% think their feeling of responsibility will not change the course of incidents, and 21% do not feel responsible for disasters.

Figure 19 Numbers/ percentages of respondents who feel/ do not feel responsible for incidents by reasons.

Respondents who reported feeling responsible for the incidents were also asked about their actions, and each respondent identified a set of actions. 50% (343 respondents) said they discuss the new situation with their colleagues and friends, and 26% (181 respondents) said they post their positions on social media platforms. 16% (110 respondents) reported discussing the new situation with experts in political affairs. 4% (29 respondents) indicated that they call for demonstrations and peaceful action after getting approvals from the competent authorities, and 3% (22 respondents) call for demonstrations and peaceful action without seeking approval from the competent authorities. The results show that the majority of respondents who feel responsible about the ongoing incidents have taken thoughtful positions that do not harm them. All the positions taken were peaceful and do not lead to violence.

Figure 20 Actions taken by respondents who feel responsible for incidents.

343	50%	I discuss the new situation with my colleagues and friends
181	26%	I post my attitude on social media (Facebook - Twitter)
110	16%	I discuss the new situation with experienced politicians
29	4%	I call for demonstrations and peaceful movement (after coordination and obtaining approval from the competent authorities)
22	3%	I call for demonstrations and peaceful movement (without coordination or obtaining approvals from the competent authorities)

All respondents were asked about considering the consequences of any positions before taking them. 53% (427 respondents) reported always considering any position's consequences before taking them. 33% (263 respondents) indicated that they sometimes do that. In contrast, 14% (113 respondents) confirmed engaging with the society action cycle without considering the consequences.

Figure 21 Numbers/percentages of respondents according to the measures they take before taking action.

427	53%	I always consider the consequences before taking any position
263	33%	I sometimes study the consequences before taking any position
113	14%	I engage with the community's reaction without studying the consequences

6. Having a critical perception of the reality

The study tried to identify whether the respondents have a critical perception of reality by asking them whether they criticize, or try to, the conditions they live under and link it to the incidents to understand their reality. 70% (560 respondents) said that they do that, while 30% (243 respondents) said they do not.

Those who do not criticize their conditions and do not try to change reality were asked about the reasons for that. 72% reported feeling that criticism will not change anything in their circumstances. In contrast, 28% said it is not their responsibility to criticize the conditions.

Figure 22 Numbers/percentages of respondents by having a critical perception of the reality.

560	70%	I criticize the circumstances I live in and try to change reality
243	30%	I do not criticize the circumstances I live in or try to change the reality

Respondents with critical perceptions were asked if they had the desire to change their political reality. 80% (491 respondents) wanted to change their political reality. On the other hand, only 3% (18 respondents) reported that they do not want to change their political reality, and 9% (51 respondents) were not sure about this.

Figure 23 Numbers/percentages of respondents with a critical perception of reality according to their desire for political change.

491	88%	I want to change the political reality that I live in
51	9%	I don't know
18	3%	I do not want to change the political reality I live in

7. Development of political consciousness

The study asked the respondents why political consciousness has not developed into reasonable practices in the reality of the Syrian revolution and was not manifested in effective civil institutions that impact their opinion. Each respondent identified a set of reasons. 21% of the respondents reported that it was due to the difficult living conditions of the community, which remain an obstacle to the practice of political work. 18% reported the reason to be the community's distance from political work. 18% also reported the reason to be the security situation and restricted freedoms. 14% of the respondents attributed that to the political weakness in society, manifested in the Baath Party and the parties affiliated with the regime before 2011 (one-party policy). The same percentage of 14% of the respondents said that they are unable to express their opinions in politics.

Figure 24 Numbers/percentages of respondents by reasons that prevented the development of political awareness into logical practices.

502	21%	The difficult living conditions of the community remain an obstacle to the practice of political work
438	18%	Due to the community's staying away from political work
429	18%	Because of the security situation and restricted freedoms
349	14%	Due to the political weakness in society, which was manifested in Baath Party and the parties allied with the regime before 2011
340	14%	Because of the inability to express an opinion on politics
272	11%	Due to the absence of political parties and gatherings that attract society
100	4%	Multiple nationalities that are active only for the benefit of their nationalities
3	0%	I don't know

8. Forms of Political Expression

The enumerators asked the interviewees about the forms of political expression from their point of view. So, each respondent provided several forms of political expression that he considered appropriate from his point of view. Some respondents (21%) identified social media as the best form of political expression. 20% said that individual freedoms are one of the forms of political expression, and 15% believe that the establishment of parties and civic groups is one of the forms of political expression. Also, 15% consider peaceful demonstrations a form of political expression.

Figure 25 Number/Percentage of respondents according to their opinions about the forms of political expression

7%	Academic and educational institutions
10%	Official media channels
12%	Political symposiums
15%	Demonstrations
15%	Forming civil parties and associations
20%	Individual freedoms
21%	Social media

9. Public Opinion and Its Importance

The enumerators asked the respondents about the importance of public opinion from their point of view. 47% (375 respondents) believe that public opinion can be a means to achieve change and influence the existing authorities or the regional or international situation in the current state of Syria (in the war conditions). Moreover, 25% (202 respondents) believe that public opinion can achieve change and influence the existing authorities or the regional or international position, but not in the current state of Syria (and not in the conditions of war). 16% (97 respondents) believe that public opinion cannot be a means of achieving change and influencing the existing authorities or the regional or international position in all circumstances.

Figure 26 Numbers/Percentages of respondents according to their views on public opinion and its importance

Number	Percentage	View
375	47%	It can be a means to achieve change and influence the existing authorities or the regional or international position in the current situation in Syria (in war conditions)
202	25%	It can be a means to achieve change and influence the existing authorities or the regional or international position, but not in the current situation in Syria (not in war conditions)
129	16%	It cannot be a means to achieve change and influence existing authorities or regional or international positions in all circumstances
97	12%	I don't know

Sixth

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

06

Sixth: Political Engagement

Political engagement refers to the participation of individuals or groups in the political process. This can take many forms, such as voting in elections, advocating for specific policies or candidates, participating in protests or demonstrations, or running for public office. Political engagement can also involve less formal activities, such as discussing politics with friends and family, following political news and events, or supporting causes through donations or volunteering. The goal of political engagement is typically to influence the decisions and actions of governments, political parties, and other organizations that have the power to shape public policy and the direction of society.

1. Joining political parties or gatherings

Before 2011, membership of political parties was limited to the ruling Socialist Baath Party and its affiliated parties, and any member. Any other party or current affiliated with the ruling party is subject to security prosecution and arrest.

The enumerators asked respondents whether they were affiliated with any political party, current or group after the war in Syria since 2011. The study found that 92% (735 respondents) across all covered areas have never joined a political party or movement after 2011. Only 8% (68 respondents) reported that they did. It was found that the percentage of respondents who joined a political party, current, or group after 2011 in eastern Syria is 12%, which is higher than their percentage in western Syria by only 7%.

Figure 27 Numbers/percentages of respondents by affiliation with political parties or movements after 2011

The study examined the reasons for not joining any political party or movement. 25% of the respondents reported that they do not believe in political work under the current conditions. 22% thought joining groupings and parties requires free time, which they do not have. 20% said that they do not know any political party or gathering. 11% did not know how to join parties and gatherings. Whereas 12% reported that they do not believe in political work, and 7% think that political parties are limited to society's elite, like intellectuals and community leaders. 11% of respondents said that females were not allowed to join political parties.

Figure 28 Numbers/percentages of respondents according to the reasons why respondents do not join political parties.

Number	Percentage	Reason
274	25%	I don't believe in political action under the current conditions
238	22%	Joining groups and parties requires free time, which I do not have
219	20%	I don't know any political party or group
130	12%	I totally don't believe in political action
125	11%	I do not know how to join parties and groups
82	7%	Political parties are limited to the elite class (intellectuals - those with a high degree of education - community leaders)
13	1%	Females are not allowed to join political parties
10	1%	There are no parties that reflect all components of society, as they work for certain entities only
5	0%	There is no political activity or political parties in the region
1	0%	Do not know

2. Continuation of the Political Process

The enumerators asked respondents who joined political parties and gatherings after 2011 whether they continued in these parties or left them, 51% of respondents who joined political parties after 2011 are no longer members of those parties or gatherings, while 48% are. The reasons for leaving varied between the party or gathering is no longer effective (27%), prosecution by local authorities or any other party (18%), the lack of transparency in the work of the party (17%), and because decisions are limited to the elite members who established the party.

Figure 29 Numbers and percentages of respondents who joined a political party then left.

Number	Percentage	Reason
35	51%	I am no longer a member of this group, current or party
33	48%	I am still a member of that group, current, or party
1	1%	There are no parties that reflect all components of society, as they work for certain entities only

The study tried to investigate the reasons that pushed respondents who joined political parties or gatherings to leave them. Respondents identified the most important of these reasons, foremost of which is that the political party or gathering is no more active, as mentioned by 27% of those respondents. 18% of those respondents reported that they left their parties due to prosecution by the local authorities or other parties. The lack of transparency in the work of the political party or gathering was indicated by 17% of the respondents. Moreover, 15% attributed the reason for leaving to the monopoly of the decisions of the political party or gathering by the elite or those who established them. 11% attributed the reason to a change in the party's position and the principles on which it was founded.

Figure 30 Numbers/percentages of respondents by reasons that pushed them to leave parties they joined after 2011.

Number	Percentage	Reason
18	27%	The party or group is no longer active
12	18%	Prosecution by local authorities or any other party
11	17%	There is no transparency in the work of the group
10	15%	Decisions are monopolized by the elite (Those who founded the group, party, or influential figures)
7	11%	There has been a change in positions and principles of the party/ group
6	9%	Corruption in the work of the party/ gathering
2	3%	Because I am female and consistently marginalized

3. The Most Common Parties and Gatherings

The enumerators asked the respondents, who were affiliated with political parties or gatherings after 2011 and still affiliated with them, about the names of these parties. 23% (8 respondents) are affiliated with Syria Future Party, 17% (6 respondents) are affiliated with the Political Body in Idleb, and 17% (6 respondents) are affiliated with the Kurdish National Council.

Figure 31 Numbers/ percentages of respondents who are still affiliated with political parties by party name

Number	Percentage	Party
8	23%	Future Syria Party
6	17%	The Political Entity in Idleb
6	17%	Kurdish National Council
3	9%	Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekîtî)
2	6%	Muslim Brotherhood Party
1	3%	Free Syrian Council
1	3%	Syria Turkmen Bloc Party
1	3%	Syrian Turkmen Renaissance Party (Suriye Türkmen Kalkınma Partisi)
1	3%	The Kurdish Reform Movement - Syria
1	3%	Conservatives Party
1	3%	Liberation Party
1	3%	PYD
1	3%	Syrian Council for Change
1	3%	The Syrian Fate Current
1	3%	Syrian Democratic Union

4. Participating in elections

The study asked the respondents whether they participated in elections after 2011. 78% (623 respondents) said they did not participate in any elections after 2011. On the other hand, 5% participated in elections during the past year, 7% during the past three years, and 5% during the past five years.

Figure 32 Numbers/percentages of respondents by their participation in any elections after 2011

623	78%	I did not engage in any electoral process after 2011 and the war in Syria
53	7%	I participated in an electoral process during the last three years
44	5%	I participated in an electoral process during the past year
43	5%	I engaged in an electoral process after 2011 and the war in Syria
40	5%	I participated in an electoral process during the past five years

The respondents who said they did not participate in elections after 2011 were asked why. 45% of the respondents said no elections were held in their local areas after 2011. 23% reported the reason for not participating in elections for the lack of transparency. 13% of the respondents attributed the reasons to the lack of trust in the election candidates, and 11% because the election process is limited to the elite, which is specific classes of society or influential people. Moreover, 5% reported the reason to be the fear of prosecution by the Syrian regime, and 3% said that females are not allowed to participate in the election process.

Figure 33 Numbers/percentage of respondents who did not participate in any election process by reasons

391	45%	No elections were held in my area
197	23%	There is no transparency in the elections
117	13%	No candidate deserved to be elected (I do not trust him to represent me)
97	11%	The electoral process is monopolized only by the elite (specific classes of society or influential people)
43	5%	Fear of security prosecution by the regime
23	3%	Females are not allowed to vote

The respondents who reported participating in elections after 2011 identified several types of elections. 51% reported participating in local council elections, 20% in neighborhood councils, and 14% in political party or movement elections after 2011. At the same time, 9% participated in elections for student unions and 6% in elections for student parents.

Figure: 34 Numbers/percentages of respondents who participated in elections after 2011 by type of elections

132	51%	local council
52	20%	Neighborhood committee
37	14%	Party/ group/ movement
24	9%	Students association
15	6%	Student Parents' Council
1	0%	Elections to the People's Assembly of the regime

5. Electing representatives

The respondents were asked whether they accept to elect a political representative or a representative in a service entity. 87% (698 respondents) said they do, while only 13% (105 respondents) did not.

Figure 35 Numbers/percentages of respondents who accept to elect representatives.

698	87%	I accept having a representative to elect
105	13%	I do not accept having a representative to elect

The respondents who refused to elect representatives identified the reasons to be not believing in political representation (51%), the lack of knowledge of the candidates and their political agendas (19%), the older members of the family or clan representing them, and those come to position be inheritance (17%), the political figures do not have any convincing electoral programs (13%).

Figure 36 Reasons identified by respondents for not electing representatives.

71	51%	I don't believe in political representation
27	19%	We don't know the politicians who stand for elections, and we don't know their electoral programs
24	17%	I am represented by the eldest person in the family, clan, or tribe (sheikh of the clan), who reaches his position hereditarily
18	13%	Politicians do not have convincing election programs

6. Standing for Elections

The study asked the respondents if they were willing to stand for a proper electoral process neighborhood committee, student parents council, local council, etc.). 68% said they were unwilling to do it. In comparison, only 32% said they were.

Figure 37 Numbers/percentages for respondents willing to stand for elections.

550	68%	I am not ready to stand for any proper electoral process
253	32%	I am ready to stand in a proper electoral process

When asked about the reasons for not being willing to go for the elections, 34% of the respondents attributed the reason to lacking experience in administration or representing others. 18% think that it is impossible to satisfy people. 18% also thought that going to the elections and representing others would put them under accusations of corruption. 15% said that the lack of resources would disable the capacity to change, making them representatives without any achievements. 14% were concerned about confronting the de facto authorities in case they win elections. Moreover, 2% think that women are not allowed to stand for the elections.

Figure 38 The reasons respondents are unwilling to stand for the elections.

335	34%	I don't have the experience to manage or represent other people's interests
179	18%	I believe in the saying, "pleasing people is a goal you won't achieve."
176	18%	I think standing for election and representing others will make me subject to accusations (of corruption - embezzlement)
149	15%	Lack of resources leads to the inability to change, which would make me a representative without any achievements or feasibility
135	14%	If I win the elections, I would face the de facto authorities
24	2%	Females are not allowed to stand for elections
2	0%	I don't have enough time

Seventh

RAISING POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

07

Seventh: Raising Political Awareness and Engagement

The study asked the respondents about the best methods to improve political awareness in the community from their point of view. 31% (527 respondents) said that providing more space for freedom to express opinions would improve political awareness in society. 27% (448 respondents) think activating and supporting forming political parties and gathering within specific standards and frameworks would improve political awareness and engagement. 22% (373 respondents) think that holding political symposiums, and 15% (253 respondents) believe that publishing political essays on trusted websites would improve political awareness in society.

Figure 39 The best ways to improve political awareness and engagement, according to the respondents.

527	31%	More space for freedom to express opinions
448	27%	Activate and support the establishment of political parties and groups within specific standards and frameworks
373	22%	Conducting political symposiums
253	15%	Publishing political articles on trusted websites
80	5%	I don't know

The respondents were asked about the parties responsible for raising political awareness in society from their point of view. 33% identified the politically literate class as responsible for raising society's political awareness. 27% identified the local authorities to be responsible for this. 25% identified the community leaders like local leaders, tribal leaders, and others as responsible for this role. 12% identified family members and friends as responsible for other family members and friends taking this role.

Figure 40 Numbers/percentages of respondents by their views on the entity responsible for raising political awareness in society.

587	33%	The politically literate class is responsible for raising political awareness in society
478	27%	Local authorities
447	25%	Community leaders (local leaders, clan sheikhs, etc.)
216	12%	Family members, relatives, and friends
38	2%	I don't know

The study looked at the barriers to improving political awareness in society from the respondents' point of view. 23% of the respondents referred to restriction of freedom as the first barrier. 19% identified society's ignorance of the importance of political consciousness as another barrier. 17% of the respondents identified the migration of the intellectual and political class and the lack of an entity that supports raising the community's political consciousness. 13% of the respondents identified the educated political class detachment from the members of society (they have their gatherings away from the community members). Moreover, 9% referred to restrictions imposed on women weakening their political engagement.

Figure 41 Numbers/percentages of respondents by barriers to improving political awareness

Number	Percentage	Barrier
518	23%	Restriction of freedoms
428	19%	Society's ignorance of the importance of political consciousness
388	17%	Migration of the intellectual, political class
380	17%	Nobody provides support to raise the political awareness in community
290	13%	The educated political class detachment from the members of society (they have their gatherings)
201	9%	Restrictions imposed on women weaken their political engagement
41	2%	I don't know
1	0%	Clan and tribal intolerance
1	0%	Interruption of activities concerned with promoting political awareness

Eighth

WOMEN'S POLITICAL AWARENESS

08

Eighth: Women's Political Awareness

In this chapter, the study focuses on women's political awareness and engagement in NS. The questions were asked to both male and female respondents to get a comprehensive perception from both sides. The questions varied depending on the gender of the respondents.

1. Women's Participation in Elections (Male's Perception)

The male respondents were asked whether women participate in elections in their families/households. 44% (202 male respondents) reported that women in their families do not participate in elections. In contrast, 44% (199 male respondents) reported that women in their families participate in elections. 12% (56 male respondents) preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 42 Numbers/percentages of male respondents who reported that women in their families do/ do not participate in elections

202	44%	Women in our household/ family do not elect
199	44%	Women in our household/ family participate in elections
56	12%	Prefer not to answer

The male respondents who reported that women in their families do not participate in elections were asked why. 36% think women's primary responsibility is caring for the family and children. 27% think that depending on society's culture, women should not elect. 24% attribute the reason to the lack of awareness of the role of women in society. 12% think that participating in elections is limited to men only.

Figure 43 Numbers/percentages of male respondents by the reasons for women's lack of participation in elections

116	36%	Women's primary responsibility is to take care of the family and children
86	27%	Depending on society's culture, women should not elect
78	24%	Lack of awareness of the role of women in society
40	12%	Participation in elections is limited to men
2	1%	There are no elections in the area

2. Women's Standing for Elections (Male's Perception)

The male respondents were asked whether women in their families are nominated for elections. 76% (346 male respondents) reported that no women in their families stand for elections, and only 13% (62 male respondents) reported that women in their families stand for elections. 11% (51 respondents) preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 44 Numbers/percentages of male respondents with women in their families standing/ not standing for elections

346	76%	Women in our household/ family do not stand for election
60	13%	Women in our household/ family stand for election
51	11%	Prefer not to answer

The male respondents who reported that women in their families do not stand for elections were asked about the reasons that hinder their participation. 33% think women's primary responsibility is caring for the family and children. 29% attributed the reason to the society's culture, which prevents women from standing for elections. 23% attributed that to the lack of awareness of the role of women in society. Yet 14% think that standing for elections is limited to men only.

Figure 45 Numbers/percentages of male respondents whose household women do not stand for elections according to reasons

Number	Percentage	Reason
201	33%	Women's primary responsibility is to take care of the family and children
179	29%	Depending on society's culture, women should not stand for election
140	23%	Lack of awareness of the role of women in society
85	14%	Standing for elections is limited to men
2	0%	Women in my family don't have the political knowledge to stand for elections
1	0%	There are no elections in the area

3. Do males accept to be politically represented by females?

Male respondents were asked if they accept having a female representative to elect. 45% (207 respondents) of the male respondents agreed to have a female representative. In contrast, 39% (179 respondents) reported not accepting having a female representative. 16% of the male respondents preferred not to answer this question.

This shows the contradiction in the opinions of male respondents and their lack of awareness of the role of women politically, as 76% of male respondents stated that women in their families do not stand for elections. In contrast, 45% of male respondents agree to elect a female representative. Several factors can be behind this contradiction. Practically, there is real representation for women, which is the first part of their responses, and more specifically in their households. However, in case there is a women in the political life can stand for elections, bears the responsibility and is trustworthy, they have no problem about it. The community view also affects their opinions; as they might not accept women in their households to stand for elections for fear of society criticism and their reputation since political activity is associated with lots of difficulties, busy times, presence in community events. The society considers women who do these this as moving out of the societal frameworks, which is not accepted by the males in the household. Moreover, women in their households lack political awareness; so they are more open to accept women who can better represent them politically.

Figure 46 Numbers/percentages of male respondents who do/ do not accept to elect female representatives.

Number	Percentage	Response
207	45%	I accept having a female representative to elect
179	39%	I do not accept having a female representative to elect
71	16%	Prefer not to answer

The male respondents who said they do not accept to elect of female representatives were asked about the reasons for their refusal. 25% think women rely on their emotions rather than logic to make decisions. 24% do not believe in the role of women in leadership positions. 21% think that women's opinions can be easily influenced within our community. 19% do not believe in the presence of women capable of representing society's views. 10% think women are marginalized, even if they reach leadership positions.

Figure 47 Numbers/percentages of male respondents by the reasons for their refusal of having a female representative

104	25%	Women rely on their emotions to make decisions
99	24%	I don't believe in women's roles in leadership positions
87	21%	In our community, women's opinions can be easily influenced
77	19%	I don't believe there are women capable of representing society's views
43	10%	Women are marginalized in our society, even if they reach leadership positions

4. Do females prefer to be represented politically by a male or a female?

Female respondents were asked if they prefer having a male or female representative to elect. 82% (283 female respondents) preferred a female political representative. In contrast, 14% (48 female respondents) preferred having a male representative. At the same time, 4% (15 female respondents) preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 48 Numbers/percentages of female respondents who prefer/do not prefer having female representatives.

283	82%	I accept electing a female representative
48	14%	I prefer to have a male representative elect
15	4%	Prefer not to answer

The female respondents who reported preferring to have female representatives were asked about their reasons. 40% of them think women represent women's views, which is what society needs today. 34% think that women can meet and consult with other women. Moreover, 26% think the role of women in leadership positions must be activated.

Figure 49 Numbers/percentages of female respondents by the reasons why they prefer having female representatives.

241	40%	Women represent women's views, which is what society needs today
208	34%	Women can meet and consult with other women
160	26%	The role of women in leadership positions must be activated

Female respondents who reported preferring male representatives were asked about the reasons for their preference.26% of women rely on emotions rather than logic to make decisions. 10% of the female respondents think women are marginalized, even if they reach leadership positions. 23% think that women's opinions can be easily influenced within our community. Moreover, 14% do not believe in the presence of women capable of representing society's views. 13% do not believe in the role of women in leadership positions.

Figure 50 Numbers/percentages of female respondents according to the reasons why they prefer male representatives.

28	26%	Women rely on their emotions to make decisions
25	24%	Women are marginalized in our society, even if they reach leadership positions
24	23%	In our community, women's opinions can be easily influenced
15	14%	I don't believe there are women capable of representing society's views
14	13%	I don't believe in women's roles in leadership positions

5. Improving Women's Political Participation

Female respondents were also asked about the best ways in their opinions to improve women's political participation. 28% of the female respondents think that providing more space of freedom for women to express their views would improve their political engagement. 27% think holding political symposiums for women would improve their political engagement. 23% think activating and supporting the establishment of political parties and gatherings for women within specific standards and frameworks would improve their engagement. 17% said that activating and supporting the establishment of political parties and gatherings with higher representation of women within specific criteria and frameworks would improve their political engagement.

Figure 51 Numbers/percentages of female respondents' views on improving women's political engagement.

208	28%	More space of freedom for women to express their views
201	27%	Conducting political symposiums for women
169	23%	Activate and support the establishment of political parties and group within specific standards and frameworks
128	17%	Activate and support the establishment of political parties and gatherings in which there is a high representation of women within specific criteria and frameworks
28	4%	I don't know

Ninth

AWARENESS OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN SYRIA

09

Ninth: Awareness of the Political Process in Syria

1. Awareness of the[5] Syrian Coalition of Opposition Forces

According to the statute of the National Coalition, the Syrian Coalition of Opposition Forces (SOC) is a national coalition of political and revolutionary forces and figures that aims to achieve a political transition by overthrowing the existing regime with all its symbols and pillars by all available means. It is the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. It adopts the reconstruction of the government's executive, military, and security institutions to achieve the aspirations of the Syrian people in building a democratic and pluralistic state and to hold accountable all those involved in the crimes committed against Syrians. It is committed to the goals and principles of the Syrian revolution through participatory and comprehensive national dialogue, preserving the unity and independence of Syria's land and people, and rejecting partition and division".

The respondents were asked if they had heard of the SOC, and 29% (232 respondents) responded that they had heard of the SOC and knew it well.63% (506 respondents) reported that they had heard about the SOC but did not know it well. Only 5% (42 respondents) of the total number of respondents did not know the SOC and never heard of it before.

Figure 52 Numbers/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the SOC

506	63%	I heard about SOC, but I do not know it well
232	29%	I know SOC well
42	5%	I do not know SOC; I have not heard of it
23	3%	Prefer not to answer

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[5] The Syrian Coalition for of Opposition Forces, The bylaw, Chapter one, Article 2, P1-2 https://www.etilaf.org/

The respondents who knew SOC well and those who had only heard of it were asked whether they knew its components. 62% of respondents reported not knowing the SOC components, while only 38% said they did.

Figure 53 Numbers/percentages of respondents who knew SOC's components

182	12%	Syrian Tribal Council
169	12%	Muslim Brotherhood - Syria
162	11%	Military Representation
157	11%	Local Councils of Northern Syria
150	10%	Independent figures
133	9%	Local councils (governorates representatives)
125	9%	Turkmen Council
121	8%	Kurdish National Council
87	6%	Association of Independent Syrian Kurds
84	6%	National Future Current
79	5%	Syrian National Current
17	1%	Assyrian Democratic Organization

The respondents who reported that they knew SOC's components were asked to list the ones they knew of. 12% mentioned the Syrian Tribal Council, 12% mentioned Muslim Brotherhood-Syria, 11% mentioned military representation, 11% mentioned Local Councils in NS, 10% mentioned independent figures, and 9% listed the provincial councils. 9% mentioned Turkman Council, and 8% mentioned the Kurdish National Council. Other components include the Association of Independent Syrian Kurds, National Future Current, Syrian National Current, and Democratic Assyrian Organization.

The respondents were asked about which components they listed truly represented the component, i.e., the military figures represent the military, and local council block represents the local councils on the ground. 18% of the respondents reported that the local councils bloc of northern Syria represents the local councils in real terms. 17% of the respondents believe that the bloc of the Council of Syrian Tribes and Clans represents the Syrian tribes and clans in real terms. 13% pointed to the bloc of provincial councils representing the provinces in real terms. 12% of them mentioned the military representation bloc representing the military councils and factions in real terms, 12% reported that the independent figures bloc represents the independent political figures in real terms, and 11% reported that the Muslim Brotherhood-Syria bloc represents the group in real terms.

Figure 54 The number/percentages of respondents by their views on the representation of SOC's blocs

101	18%	Local Councils of Northern Syria
99	17%	Syrian Tribal Council
74	13%	Local councils (governorates representatives)
71	12%	Military Representation
70	12%	Independent figures
65	11%	Muslim Brotherhood - Syria
29	5%	Turkmen Council
24	4%	Kurdish National Council
15	3%	Association of Independent Syrian Kurds
13	2%	Syrian National Current
7	1%	National Future Current
5	1%	Assyrian Democratic Organization

Respondents who reported that they knew SOC were asked whether they thought it is restructured. More than half of respondents (440) believe that the SOC needs to be urgently restructured. 35% (258 respondents) believe it should be restructured when the conditions are suitable. Only 5% (40 respondents) believe the SOC does not need restructured.

Figure 55 The number/percentage of respondents who know SOC according to their views on its need for restructuring

440	60%	It needs urgent restructuring
258	35%	It needs to be restructured when conditions permit
40	5%	It does not need to be restructured

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the SOC's performance. 52% (385 respondents) of respondents rated the SOC's performance as poor, and 30% (219 respondents) rated its performance as average. 15% (110 respondents) of the respondents believe that the SOC's performance is average, and only 3% (23 respondents) believe that it is good.

Figure 56 Number/percentages of respondents according to their satisfaction with the SOC's performance

385	52%	Poor performance
219	30%	Average performance
110	15%	Average performance
23	3%	Good performance
1	0%	An excellent performance

Respondents who believed the SOC's performance as poor were also asked about the reasons that led to its poor performance from their point of view. 23% of the respondents attributed the reason to the distance of the SOC from the people inside Syria. 20% attributed the reason to the lack of seriousness of influential countries in the Syrian case in supporting any opposition political entity. 19% believe that the reason is the lack of seriousness of the influential countries in the Syrian case in supporting any real political process. While 16% of respondents believe the SOC needs continuous restructuring to include new components and figures. 15% believe that the reason is that the work of the SOC is limited to a specific geographical area, not all areas outside the control of the Syrian government. 5% believe that the SOC does not have the necessary financial resources.

Figure 57 The number/percentages of respondents according to the reasons for the SOC's poor performance from their point of view

Number	Percentage	Reason
262	23%	The SOC's remoteness from the people in Syria
231	20%	The lack of seriousness of the influential countries in the situation in Syria to support any opposition political entity
210	19%	The lack of seriousness of the influential countries in the Syrian case to support any real political process
184	16%	The SCO needs periodic restructuring (engage new components - new figures)
165	15%	SOC's work is limited to a specific geographical area only (Their work does not cover all areas outside the control of GoS)
73	6%	Lack of financial resources for the SOC
3	0%	Other

2. Knowledge of the High Negotiations Committee (HNC)[6]

It is an entity affiliated with the Syrian opposition that emerged from the Riyadh conference held in the Saudi capital in December 2015, with the task of directly supervising the negotiating process with the Syrian regime within the tracks sponsored by the UN. A new version of the HNC was created during the Riyadh II conference in November 2017.

It was agreed that its composition would consist of 32 members, including nine from the SOC, ten from the armed factions, five from the National Coordination Committee, and eight independent figures.

Respondents were asked if they knew about the HNC. Only 16% (128 respondents) of the respondents said that they know the HNC well. In contrast, the percentage of respondents who heard about the HNC but did not know it well was more than half (55%) (438 respondents). Moreover, 25% of respondents said they did not know the HNC and had not heard of it before.

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[6]https://syriancc.org/

Figure 58 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the HNC

438	55%	I heard about HNC, but I do not know it well
203	25%	I do not know HNC; I have not heard of it
128	16%	I know the HNC well
34	4%	Prefer not to answer

When respondents who knew the HNC were asked or at least heard about it, they were asked about the affiliation of the committee. The majority of respondents (74%) reported that the HNC is affiliated with the SOC. In contrast, 19% of the participants in the study do not know the HNC's affiliation. In addition, 5% of the respondents gave the wrong answers when asked about the HNC's affiliation.

Figure 59 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the HNC's affiliation

417	74%	I know the HNC's mission
106	19%	I do not know
30	5%	I do not know the affiliation of the HNC
13	2%	Prefer not to answer

The respondents who reported that they knew or had at least heard of the HNC were also asked if they knew its mission. 78% correctly answered the question about its mission, which is to directly supervise the negotiation process with the Syrian regime according to UN-sponsored tracks. 15% did not know their mission, and 6% answered the question incorrectly.

Figure 60 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the HNC's mission

439	78%	I know the HNC's mission
85	15%	I do not know
32	6%	I do not know HNC's affiliation
10	2%	Prefer not to answer

Respondents who knew the HNC were asked to rate their satisfaction with its performance. More than half of respondents (52%) say it performs poorly, and 31% think its performance is average. 15% believe that the performance of the HNC is somehow good, and only 3% believe that it is good.

Figure: Percentage 61 of respondents who know the HNC according to their satisfaction with its performance

293	52%	Poor performance
174	31%	Average performance
84	15%	Average performance
15	3%	Good performance

Respondents who believed that the HNC's performance was poor were asked why they thought so. 28% attribute the reason to the regime's lack of seriousness in the negotiations. 27% believe that the reason behind this is the lack of seriousness of the influential countries in the Syrian case in supporting any opposition political entity. Yet 27% think the reason is the lack of seriousness by influential parties in the Syrian case to support any real political process. 17% of the respondents believe that the members of the HNC need more political experience in the negotiations.

Figure 62 The number/percentage of respondents who believe that the HNC's performance is poor by reasons

196	28%	The regime's lack of seriousness in the negotiations
192	27%	The lack of seriousness of the influential countries in the situation in Syria to support any opposition political entity
191	27%	The lack of seriousness of the influential countries in the Syrian case to support any real political process
119	17%	The HNC members need more political experience in negotiations
1	0%	I don't know

3. Knowledge of the Syrian Constitutional Committee (SCC)

The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced on 23 September 2019 an agreement facilitated by his Special Envoy for Syria between the Syrian parties regarding the formation of the Syrian Constitutional Committee after a year and eight months of negotiations between the Syrian regime and the opposition.

The draft constitution, which the Constitutional Committee is drafting, is for the stage that comes after reaching a comprehensive political agreement to implement Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and after implementing the following matters of the resolution:

1. Implementing all the confidence-building measures mentioned in Articles 10, 12, and 13, especially about releasing detainees and uncovering the fate of the absentees.

2. Establish credible, inclusive governance that is not based on sectarianism, i.e., forming a transitional governing body.

3. Achieve a secure and neutral environment in which the political transition process can take place to conduct the first free and fair electoral process under the auspices of the UN in response to the requirements of governance, the highest international standards in terms of transparency and accountability, and including all Syrians entitled to participate, including those living in the diaspora, as stipulated in the statement of the international team, dated 14 November 2015. The referendum on the new draft constitution is the first free and fair electoral process that will take place in Syria after achieving a safe and neutral environment.

Composition and structure:

The Constitutional Committee consists of two entities; mini and expanded.

- The expanded body comprises 150 men and women – 50 candidates from the Syrian Government, 50 from the HNC, and 50 from civil society.
- The mini body of the SCC includes 45 men and women – 15 candidates from among the 50 candidates of the government, 15 from among the 50 candidates of the Syrian Negotiations Commission, and 15 from among the 50 candidates of civil society.

- The mini-body shall prepare and draft the constitutional proposals, and the expanded body shall approve them. The expanded body can be convened periodically or in parallel as the mini body continues its work to discuss and approve proposals.

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As the Special Envoy has strongly advocated, nearly 30% of the expanded and mini bodies members are women.

Since it was the first political step towards finding a solution to the Syrian crisis, the study considered the knowledge of the SCC in northern Syria. The respondents were asked whether they knew or have heard of the SCC. Where 12% (100 respondents) reported that they knew the SCC well, and less than half of the respondents, 47% (378 respondents) heard about it but did not know it. More than a third of the respondents, 36% (292), said they did not know the SCC and had never heard of it.

Figure 63 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the SCC

378	47%	I heard about the SCC, but I do not know it well
292	36%	I do not know the SCC; I have not heard of it
100	12%	I know the SCC well
33	4%	Prefer not to answer

Respondents who reported that they knew the SCC well or had heard about it were asked about the components of the expanded body. Only 40% of them know their component correctly. While 43% do not know its components, 16% gave incorrect answers (they gave incorrect components about the expanded body of the SCC).

Figure 64 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the components of the expanded body of the SCC

206	43%	I do not know
192	40%	Stated the components of the expanded body of the SCC
75	16%	Could not state the components of the SCC's expanded body
5	1%	Prefer not to answer

Respondents who reported that they knew the SCC well or had heard about it were asked about the components of the mini body. Only 28% of them know their component correctly. While 53% do not know its components,17% gave incorrect answers (they gave incorrect components about the mini body of the SCC).

Figure 65 The number/percentages of respondents by their knowledge of the components of the SCC's mini body

254	53%	I do not know
134	28%	He listed the SCC's components correctly
82	17%	Could not state the component of the SCC's mini body correctly
8	2%	Prefer not to answer

In addition, respondents who knew or heard about the SCC were asked whether they knew the its main mission. "In the context of the UN-facilitated Geneva process, the Constitutional Committee shall prepare and draft a constitutional reform for public approval, as a contribution to the political settlement in Syria and the implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015)7." About two-thirds of respondents (65%) who knew or heard the SCC answered correctly. In contrast, 24% were unaware of its main mission, and 9% gave the wrong answer.

Figure 66 The number/percentage of respondents who know the SCC by their knowledge of its mission

309	65%	They know the SCC's mission
113	24%	I do not know
43	9%	They do not know the SCC' mission (they gave the wrong answers)
13	3%	Prefer not to answer

Respondents who knew or had heard of the SCC were asked to rate its performance. Only 3% of respondents believe its performance is good, and 15% believe it is somehow good. While 29% believe that the performance of the SCC is average, and more than half (53%) believe it is poor.

Figure 67 The number/percentage of respondents who know the SCC by their assessment of its performance.

252	53%	Poor performance
141	29%	Average performance
73	15%	Average performance
12	3%	Good performance

The reasons for the poor performance of the SCC presented by the respondents varied. More than a third of respondents (35%) believe this is due to the lack of seriousness on the part of the UN in supporting SCC's work (the UN knows the parties blocking the drafting of the constitution but does not take decisive action with them). 22% of the respondents attributed the SCC's poor performance to the lack of seriousness of part of its members (the lack of seriousness of the regime's representatives - they are not decision-makers). 15% think all the SCC lack seriousness (all members lack seriousness in working to achieve a constitution acceptable for the majority of Syrians). Moreover, 13% of the respondents think the members of SCC need more political experience in reviewing/drafting a new constitution. 8% of the respondents attributed the poor performance to the lack of seriousness of the members of the SCC representing the HNC (affiliated to the opposition), and 6% of the respondents attributed the reason to the members of the SCC representing civil society.

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[7] https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/constitutional-committee-0

Figure 68 The number/percentages of respondents who assessed the SCC's performance by reasons.

203	35%	Lack of seriousness on the part of the UN in supporting the SCC's work
125	22%	The lack of seriousness of some SCC members (the regime representatives - they are not decision-makers)
87	15%	Lack of seriousness of the SCC (all members)
77	13%	Members of the SCC need more political experience in reviewing/ drafting a new constitution
46	8%	Lack of seriousness of some SCC members (HNC representatives)
34	6%	Lack of seriousness of some SCC members (civil society representatives)

4. Knowledge of the Cairo Platform

The Cairo Platform is a political platform launched by Syrian personalities in 2014.

One of the most prominent members of the Cairo Platform is Jihad Makdisi, who comes from a Christian family and received his Ph.D. from the American University of London. He began his political career in 1998 when he joined the Syrian Foreign Ministry, where he moved between several positions, and between many embassies, including the Syrian embassy in Washington. Another prominent figure is the Syrian actor Jamal Suleiman.

Some believe that those in charge of this platform have made controversial statements, including the Syrian actor Jamal Suleiman's statement in press interviews, "The *interest of Syria requires looking at things from a national perspective, as it is not a power struggle... If the national interest requires Bashar Assad at the head of power, to remain in power, so be it, and vice versa*."

Another controversial statement was made one of the leaders of the Cairo Platform who stated to a Russian news website October 24, 2016, that "the Cairo Platform adopts an initiative that it *founded on the visit of the Syrian national security adviser Ali Mamlouk to Cairo. It focuses on excluding the opposition that believes in armed solutions and strengthening the opposition that believes in a political solution*."

The study tried to record the extent of respondents' knowledge of the Cairo Platform. Only 8% (61 respondents) knew the Cairo platform well. In addition, more than one-third 33% (268) of respondents had heard of it, but did not know it well. While more than half of the respondents in the study reported that they did not know the Cairo Platform and did not hear about it.

Figure 69 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the Cairo Platform

448	56%	I do not know the Cairo Platform; I have not heard of it
268	33%	I heard about the Cairo Platform, but I do not know it well
61	8%	I know the Cairo platform well
26	3%	Prefer not to answer

Respondents who knew or heard about the Cairo Platform were asked to rate its performance. 59% of the respondents indicated that its performance is poor, and 29% believe that is average. While 11% believe its performance is somehow good, only 1% (3 respondents) believe it is good.

Figure 70 The number/percentage of respondents who know the Cairo platform by their assessment of its performance

195	59%	Poor performance
95	29%	Average performance
36	11%	Average performance
3	1%	Good performance

5. Knowledge of the Moscow Platform

The Moscow Platform was launched by Syrian political figures in 2015. Qadri Jameel is the head of the Moscow Platform, who served as deputy prime minister for economic affairs and minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection within the government of Riad Hijab, and was dismissed "for leaving the country and acting without government permission after meeting with US officials in Switzerland." The platform considers itself as a representative of the in-country opposition (the opponents who are in the regime-controlled areas). It believes that Russia is the cornerstone of the political solution in Syria, and if it were not for Russia's role, there would be no hope for a solution. The platform denies that Russia is an obstacle to any Syrian solution.

The study attempted to measure respondents' knowledge of the Moscow Platform. Respondents in northern Syria were asked if they knew the Moscow platform. More than half (56%) (449 respondents) said they did not know the Moscow platform and had never heard of it before. 32% (253 respondents) said they had heard of the platform but did not know it well. Only 9% (70 respondents) reported knowing the platform well.

Figure 71 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of the Moscow Platform

449	56%	I do not know Moscow Platform; I have not heard of it
253	32%	I heard about the Moscow Platform, but I do not know it well
70	9%	I know Cairo Platform well
31	4%	Prefer not to answer

Respondents who knew or heard about the Moscow Platform were asked to rate their satisfaction with its performance. About two-thirds (65%) of respondents rated the platform's performance poor, and 27% rated it on average. Only 7% rated their satisfaction with the platform's performance as somehow good, and 1% (only 3 respondents) rated it as good.

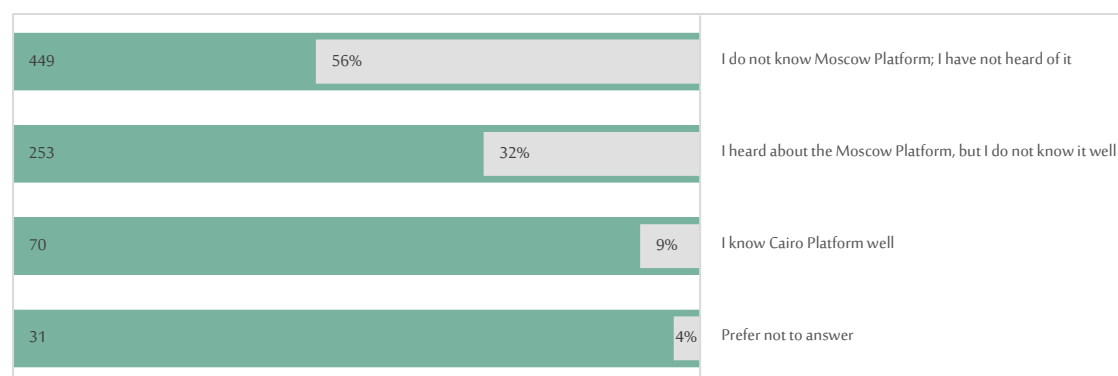Figure 72 The number/percentage of respondents who know the Cairo Platform by their assessment of its performance.

209	65%	Poor performance
88	27%	Average performance
23	7%	Average performance
3	1%	Good performance

6. Knowledge of UN resolutions on the war in Syria[8]

Several United Nations (UN) resolutions have been adopted concerning the war in Syria. These resolutions have addressed various issues related to the conflict, including the protection of civilians, the humanitarian situation, the use of chemical weapons, the promotion of a political solution, and cross-border delivery of assistance. Overall, these UN resolutions have aimed to address the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in Syria and to promote a political solution to the crisis. However, the war in Syria has continued despite these efforts, and the situation remains complex and volatile.

The most prominent resolutions include:

- (2042) Syrian Civil War observer force resolution (14 April 2012)
- (2043) Establishment of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (21 April 2012)
- (2059) Renewing the mandate of the Syrian Observer Mission for 30 days (20 July 2012)
- (2118) Syrian civil war, Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons (27 September 2013)
- (2139) Syrian civil war, access for humanitarian aid (22 February 2014)
- (2165) Syrian civil war, Humanitarian situation in Syria, and the establishment of a monitoring mechanism (14 July 2014)
- (2209) Syrian Civil War, Chemical Weapons in Syria (6 March 2015)
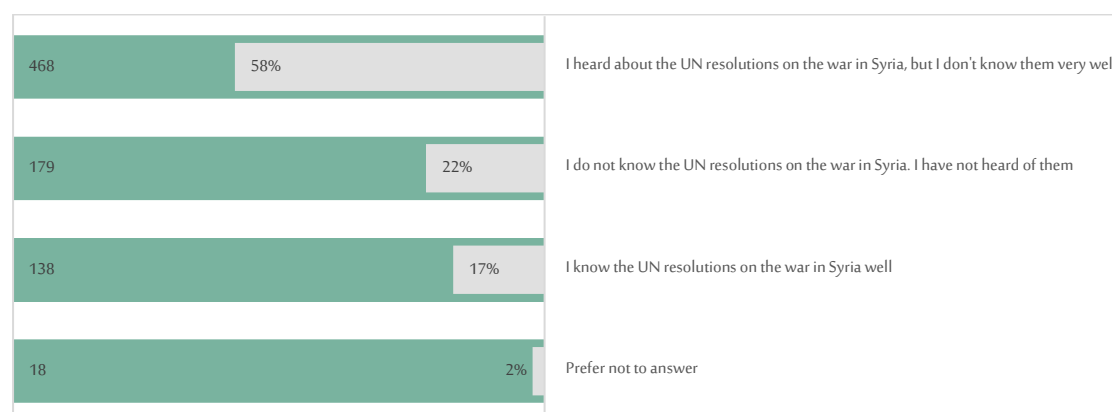- (2254) Syrian Civil War, Ceasefire (18 December 2015)
- (2268) Call for a cessation of hostilities and a grant for access to humanitarian workers in Syria. (26 February 2016)
- (2314) Extending the mandate of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria (31 October 2016)
- (2319) Renewing the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism for a further year (17 November 2016).
- (2328) Demanding Immediate, Unhindered Access for Observation of Monitoring Civilian Evacuations from Aleppo, Syria (19 December 2016)
- (2332) Renewal of the authorization for cross-border aid delivery in Syria until 10 January 2018.

The study tried to measure the extent to which respondents are aware of the UN resolutions related to the war in Syria and the extent of their interest in them in the first place. Respondents were asked whether they had heard of UN resolutions on the war in Syria. 58% (468 respondents) reported that they had heard of UN resolutions on the war in Syria but did not know them well. Twenty-two percent (179 respondents) indicated they did not know these decisions and had not heard of them. In contrast, 17% (138 respondents) of respondents said they know the UN resolutions on the war in Syria and know them well.

Figure 73 The number/percentages of respondents according to their knowledge of UN resolutions related to the war in Syria.

468	58%	I heard about the UN resolutions on the war in Syria, but I don't know them very well
179	22%	I do not know the UN resolutions on the war in Syria. I have not heard of them
138	17%	I know the UN resolutions on the war in Syria well
18	2%	Prefer not to answer

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[8] All resolutions related to the Syrian case can be found on the website of the Syrian Legal Platform
https://legal-sy.org/security-council-resolutions/

Respondents who reported knowing or hearing about UN resolutions related to the war in Syria were asked to list the resolutions they knew. 15% of the participants mentioned Resolution 2254, 11% mentioned to Resolution 2332, 10% mentioned Resolution 2043, 9% mentioned Resolution 2118, while 9% mentioned Resolution 2209. The other resolutions mentioned are as follows:

Figure 74: The UN resolutions related to the war in Syria according to the respondents' knowledge.

Count	%	Resolution
277	15%	(2254) Syrian Civil War, Ceasefire (December 18, 2015)
215	11%	(2332) Renewal of the authorization for cross-border aid delivery in Syria until 10 January 2018.
182	10%	(2043) Establishment of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (21 April 2012)
170	9%	(2118) Syrian civil war, Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons (27 September 2013)
167	9%	(2209) Syrian Civil War, Chemical Weapons in Syria (March 6, 2015)
143	7%	(2268) Call for a cessation of hostilities and a grant for access to humanitarian workers in Syria. (26 February 2016)
128	7%	(2328) Demanding Immediate, Unhindered Access for Observation of Monitoring Civilian Evacuations from Aleppo, Syria (19 December 2016)
117	6%	(2042) Syrian Civil War observer force resolution (14 April 2012)
117	6%	(2139) Syrian civil war, access to humanitarian aid (22 February 2014)
107	6%	(2314) Extending the mandate of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism to…
85	4%	(2059) Renewing the mandate of the Syrian Observer Mission for 30 days (20 July 2012)
81	4%	Could not mention any resolution
69	4%	(2319) Renewing the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism for a further year.
43	2%	(2165) Syrian civil war, Humanitarian situation in Syria and the establishment of a monitoring mechanism (July 14, 2014)
6	0%	Prefer not to answer

The respondents were asked whether they thought the UN resolutions were in the interest of the Syrian people. 57% of the respondents believed that all decisions were in the interest of the Syrian people, but they were not binding, which made them useless. 33% think all decisions were in the interest of the regime and its supporters and gave it opportunities to commit more massacres. Only 6% of the respondents think all the decisions were in the interest of the Syrian people.

Figure 75 The number/percentage of respondents according to their views on the effectiveness of UN resolutions on the war in Syria
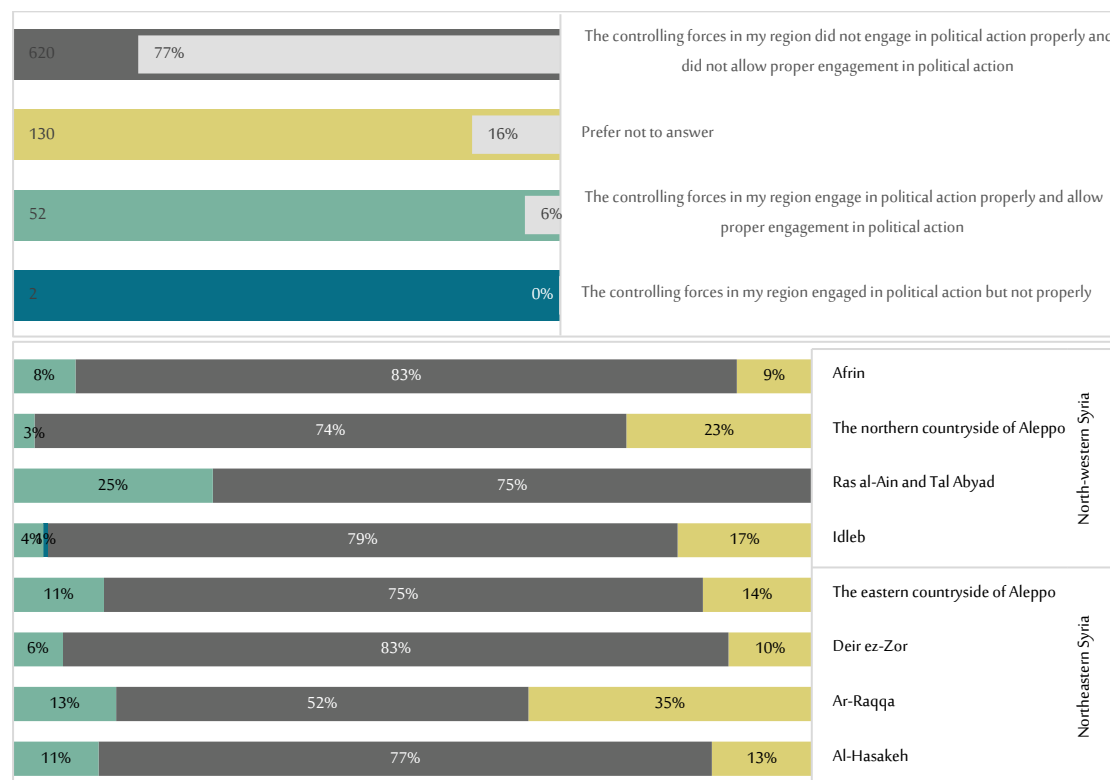

344	57%	All resolutions were in the interest of the Syrian people, but they were not binding, rendering them useless
201	33%	All resolutions were in the interest of the regime and its supporters and gave them opportunities to commit more massacres
38	6%	All the resolutions were in the interest of the Syrian people
23	4%	Prefer not to answer

7. Controlling forces and political action

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked whether controlling forces in their area engage in political action properly and allow proper political action engagement. 77% (620 respondents) answered that the controlling forces in their regions did not practice political work properly or allow political work to be practiced correctly. Only 6% of respondents believe that the dominant forces in their regions are doing political work properly and allowing it to be done properly.

Figure 76 The number/percentages of respondents according to their views on the controlling forces' engagement in political work

620	77%	The controlling forces in my region did not engage in political action properly and did not allow proper engagement in political action
130	16%	Prefer not to answer
52	6%	The controlling forces in my region engage in political action properly and allow proper engagement in political action
2	0%	The controlling forces in my region engaged in political action but not properly

			Region	
8%	83%	9%	Afrin	North-western Syria
3%	74%	23%	The northern countryside of Aleppo	
25%	75%		Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad	
4% 1%	79%	17%	Idleb	
11%	75%	14%	The eastern countryside of Aleppo	Northeastern Syria
6%	83%	10%	Deir ez-Zor	
13%	52%	35%	Ar-Raqqa	
11%	77%	13%	Al-Hasakeh	

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Tenth

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

10

Tenth: Findings of the study

The following points summarize the key findings of the study, and they express the views of the sample of respondents in the study areas.

- The majority of respondents follow local news about their communities and their country in general, with 49% reporting that they follow local news daily, and 24% following the news once in two or three days.

- The majority of respondents follow international news regularly, with 41% following it daily or almost daily, 25% following it once in two or three days, and 19% once a week.

- The most common sources of news are Arab news channels such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and local opposition-linked news channels.

- The majority of respondents (61%) believe they rely on somewhat reliable sources of the news, and 22% believe their sources are highly reliable.

- The majority of respondents (52%) try to develop their political knowledge, and 18% want to develop their political knowledge, but they do not know how to do so.

- Half of the respondents feel responsible for incidents such as changing political positions. The proportion has varied between males and females, with 59% of males and only 38% of females feeling this responsibility.

- The vast majority of respondents with post-secondary education feel responsible for incidents such as changes in political attitudes. This was expressed by 83% of respondents with higher education degrees, 59% with university degrees, and 50% with intermediate institutes.

- Most of those who feel responsible for political incidents (50% of respondents) discuss the new situation with their friends and co-workers, and some (26% of respondents) post their positions on social media platforms.

- The majority of respondents (70%) have a critical perception of reality and try to change it.

- The difficult living conditions of the community (21% of the respondents), the society's distance from political work (18% of the respondents), the security situation, and the restriction of freedoms (18% of the respondents) were identified as obstacles that prevent the development of political awareness into practice in the reality of the Syrian revolution, which is manifested in effective and influential civil political institutions.

- Nearly half the respondents (47%) believe that public opinion can be a means to achieve change and influence the existing authorities or the regional or international position on the current situation in Syria (in the war conditions).

- The vast majority (92%) of respondents were never affiliated with political parties or movements after 2011. They identified the main reasons as the lack of belief in political activity under the current conditions (25% of the respondents), lack of time to join (22% of the respondents), and the lack of knowledge of any political parties or gatherings (20% of the respondents).

- The vast majority (78% of respondents) did not participate in any elections after 2011. Respondents explained that there were no elections in their areas (45% of respondents) and no transparency in the elections (23%).

- An overwhelming majority (87% of respondents) accept the election of a political representative or representative in a service entity.

- The majority of the respondents (68%) are not ready to stand for elections in the event of an appropriate electoral process, and 34% of them justified their unwillingness to stand for elections because they do not have the experience to manage and represent the affairs of others.

- Respondents identified greater freedom to express opinions (31% of respondents), and support for forming political parties and gatherings within specific criteria and frameworks (27% of respondents), as key activities that would promote political awareness and participation in society.

- Respondents identified the key actors responsible for raising political awareness in the community as the politically educated class (33% of respondents see this), local authorities (27% see this), and community leaders from local and tribal leaders (25% see this).

- The main obstacles to the development of political awareness in society are the restriction of freedoms (23% of respondents), and the ignorance of society about the importance of political awareness (19% of respondents). the migration of the intellectual and political class (17% of respondents), and the lack of an entity that supports raising political awareness of society.

- Nearly half of male respondents (44%) reported that women in their families did not participate in the elections, while the same percentage reported the opposite.

- The most prominent obstacles to women's participation and candidacy for elections include the idea that women's primary responsibility is to care for the family and children (according to 36% of the respondents), the culture of the society that women should not participate in elections (according to 27% of the respondents), the lack of awareness of the role of women in society (according to 24% of the respondents), and the idea that participation is limited to men only (according to 12% of the respondents.

- Only 13% of male respondents reported that women in their families could stand for election, while the majority (76%) said they could not.

- Nearly half of respondents (45%) agreed to elect a female representative, while 39% disagreed.

- The vast majority of females (82%) prefer a female political representative, while 14% prefer a male political representative.

- The study found that the optimal to improve women's political participation is to ensure more freedom for women to express their views (according to 28% of female respondents), hold political seminars for women (according to 27% of females), and activate and support the establishment of political parties and gatherings for women within specific criteria and frameworks (according to 23% of females).

- About two-thirds of respondents (63%) in northern Syria said they had heard of the SOC, but did not know it well, while only about one-third (29%) reported that they knew it well.

- About two-thirds of respondents (62%) who reported that they knew or heard about the SOC could not correctly list its components.

- Nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents who know or have heard of the SOC believe it needs to be restructured urgently, and another third (35%) believe it needs to be restructured when circumstances are convenient.

- About half of the respondents (52%) familiar with the SOC believe its performance is poor, and others (30%) believe it is average. Only 3% of respondents believe SOC's performance is good, and 15% believe it is somehow good.

- The respondents identified the SOC's distance from people inside Syria (according to 23% of respondents), and the lack of seriousness of countries influencing the Syrian issue to support any opposition political entity (according to 20% of respondents) or to support any real political process (according to 19% of respondents) as the reasons behind the SOC's poor performance.

- About half of the respondents (55%) reported that they had heard about the HNC, but did not know it well, while only 16% reported that they knew it. While a quarter of the respondents (25%) reported that they do not know it and have not heard of it before.

- About half of respondents (52%) who know HNC assessed its performance as poor. One-third (31%) believe HNC's performance is average, and only 18% believe it is somehow good or good.

- The main reasons for the HNC's poor performance are the regime's lack of seriousness in negotiations (according to 28% of the respondents) and the lack of seriousness of the actors in the Syrian case in supporting any opposition political entity (according to 27% of the respondents) or supporting any real political process (according to 27% of the respondents).

- Almost half of the respondents (47%) had heard about the Syrian Constitutional Committee (SCC) but did not know it well, and only 12% reported that they knew it well. While more than a third of respondents (36%) do not know the SCC and have not heard of it before.

- More than half of respondents (53%) who know or have heard of the SCC believe it performs poorly. While about one-third of them (29%) believe that its performance is average, 18% believe it is somehow good or good.

- The main reasons behind the SCC's poor performance are the lack of seriousness of the UN in supporting the work of the SCC (according to 35% of the respondents), the lack of seriousness on the part of the SCC members affiliated with the regime (according to 22% of the respondents), and the lack of political experience in reviewing and drafting a new constitution (according to 13% of the respondents).

- Only about 40% of the respondents have heard of the Cairo platform or know it well. More than half of the respondents (56%) had never heard of it.

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (59%) who know the Cairo Platform believe its performance is poor, and another third (29%) believe it is average. About 12% believe the Cairo Platform's performance is either good or good.

- About a third of respondents (32%) had heard of the Moscow Platform but did not know it well, and only 9% reported that they knew it well. More than half of the respondents (56%) do not know it and have not heard of it before.

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) who know the Moscow platform well or have heard of it considered its performance as poor. Nearly one-third (27%) rated its performance as average, and 8% rated it as somehow good or good.

- Only 17% of respondents said they knew the UN resolutions on the war in Syria well, and more than half (58%) said they had heard of them but did not know them. 22% of the respondents had never heard of these resolutions.

- More than half of the respondents (57%) believe that all UN resolutions were in the interest of the Syrian people but were not binding, rendering them useless. 33% believe that all decisions were in favor of the regime and its supporters and gave them opportunities to commit more massacres. Only 6% of respondents believe that all UN resolutions were in the interest of the Syrian people.

- The majority of respondents (77%) believe that the controlling forces in their regions did not participate in political action properly and did not allow for participation in political action properly. Only 6% believe that the controlling forces in their regions are properly engaged in politics and allow for proper political participation.

Eleventh

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

11

Eleventh: Recommendations of the study

The following points summarize the most important recommendations of the study based on the results:

- The local community and civil and political structures will lead the country in the post-war and tyranny, so they should be prepared to play their role fully. Therefore, civic engagement projects should be implemented to train civil society politically and strengthen its cohesion.

- it is necessary to work to help young people build an independent political personality that urges them to rush toward society, interact with its issues positively, and work within the collective forms of community forces.

- It is necessary to coordinate between civil society institutions and media institutions, especially those affiliated with the opposition, to prepare media cadres of Syrian youth inside Syria to cover all events with credibility.

- Media institutions should support Syrian youth inside Syria by preparing and managing political talk shows that help them cover the real political incidents and highlight multiple points of view. Those should be facilitated by Syrian youths.

- Social media should be used to open dialogues, discussions, and lectures on concepts, incidents, decisions, and issues related to Syrian affairs in coordination between civil society, media institutions, and Syrian youth inside Syria.

- It is necessary to train members of society to express their views peacefully and in a civilized manner and to send influential messages to the world that can influence world public opinion to make decisions that achieve peace and well-being for society. Malcolm X said, "I have learned that the right is not given to those who are silent about it and that one has to make some noise to get what he wants."

- It is necessary to work on political empowerment programs through civic and political awareness programs provided to Syrians in the study areas because they are important to create and organize political awareness, which contributes to the transition to practice, taking into account the sustainability of these programs so that they result in effective political participation. Currently, civil society should play this role in the absence of effective government institutions.

- Young males and females, especially university students and adolescents, should be integrated into knowledge empowerment programs to invest their energy in the current political aspect and establish a future civil political understanding that helps them in their role in the future Syria. Despite the years of war, Syrian society is still a young society where the proportion of adolescents and youths is high among the population.

- Women should be included in these programs because of their importance in using their energy in the political aspect on the one hand. The fact that women's traditional role is based on caring for the family and children double the importance of their role in political education, which is not without developing their political awareness, which is transmitted through education. It is necessary during the preparation of any political activity or event to raise women's awareness. This increases the proportion of their political representation, especially in issues related to women's rights and duties (elections, work, political representation, party work, etc.). It also provides more space for women's freedom to benefit from it as an important human and human resource in political and social development.

- It is necessary to work with district management, the local community, educational institutions, local authorities, and community leaders, including clan elders and prominent figures in the community. It is recommended to conduct seminars and conferences to discuss the issues and developments of the Syrian reality and research for solutions using dialogue, which reflects on the Syrian society in getting to know each other and understanding the dimensions of the event and its links to Syrian life as it helps them in building a vision for the future Syria.

- British journalist George Orwell said, "*In our time, nothing is named apart from politics; all issues are political issues*." The study counted the existence of 15 political parties and groups in Syria. The study recommends that those in charge of political parties communicate with the local community and publish their programs and ways to join them. It also recommends supporting the formation of political parties and groupings as they are the best means of exercising political action.

- There is a need for concerted efforts of civil society and political institutions to restore confidence in those institutions by building bridges of communication between those institutions, which communicate the voice

of Syrians abroad and at home. They should prepare young people from the in-country to have a real role in the political aspect of the Syrian issue because they are more aware of the reality on the field. The study recommends forming platforms and websites that link Syrians inside Syria with Syrians in the diaspora, which helps them to share views and enhances social cohesion among Syrians wherever they are.

- The study recommends educating the community about the importance of active participation in elections through participation and candidacy. It also recommends preparing young people to stand for elections in the event of any electoral process to integrate the expertise of young Syrians in decision-making.

- The study recommends involving the Syrian society with all its components and whereabouts (in Syria and the diaspora) in any process of restructuring political entities. It also recommends establishing viable mechanisms that include monitoring, evaluation, and accountability in the work of all political entities.

- The study recommends that the United Nations develop a clear timeline for the constitutional process, considering that a political solution is the only way to end the suffering of Syrians, which worsens year after year.

- The study recommends the United Nations adopt binding resolutions for all parties that contribute to ending the war in Syria. If such resolutions cannot be passed, the friends of the Syrian people will move to alleviate their suffering, as happened in the Ukrainian-Russian war, especially in the files of missing persons and detainees, the entry of aid across the border, and the cessation of any military operations by the regime and its allies that may increase the suffering of civilians.

- The study recommends that decision-makers in opposition political entities and countries supporting the Syrian people open negotiation channels with the controlling forces to allow practicing political work within specific and peaceful frameworks. They should put pressure on the controlling forces, not monopolize the decision-making, which may lead to tyranny.

- The study recommends researching the partisan situation and the political movement in the study areas to understand the social, political, and economic context within which that situation interacts. This helps to understand more deeply the mechanism of its work, its challenges, and the organizational situation within its societal framework, considering that the political party is inseparable from the societal and cultural dimension in which it is established and operates.

Political Consciousness and Engagement
in Northern Syria

January 2023

Thematic report

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