Political Scene and Humanitarian Aid Delivery Overview

Key Messages:

- Regarding Arab normalization with the Syrian regime, there are expectations of negative impacts according to the majority of respondents. These include it being a catalyst for international normalization, hindering the political transition, escalating violence by the regime and pro-regime militias, worsening arbitrary arrests, hindering knowledge of the fate of detainees and missing persons, perpetuating the suffering of displaced people, and loss of property and rights.

- In terms of the impact of Turkish elections on the Syrian situation, approximately one-third of respondents anticipate negative consequences. These likely include rising racism towards Syrians, accompanied by violence and riots against them. It may even lead to the deportation of Syrians residing in Turkey under the temporary protection status.

- There is a clear negative assessment of governance within Syria among respondents residing in diaspora countries, while half of the respondents inside Syria view the level of governance as moderate.

- Most respondents' opinions indicate a moderate level of humanitarian response by organizations, especially in western Syria, and a lower level in eastern Syria. A quarter of respondents stated that there is discrimination in the work of some humanitarian organizations.

- According to respondents, there are several areas in the humanitarian sector that need improvement. For example, in the health sector, there is a need to support hospitals, healthcare staff, and supplies. In education, there is a need to support teachers' salaries, curricula, examinations, and certifications. In shelter, there is a need to provide adequate housing and shelter materials, as well as assess the damaged residential buildings from the February 6 earthquake. In livelihoods, there is a need to provide job opportunities for youth, small financial grants for starting projects, securing markets for products, and attract foreign investment. Finally, in the water and sanitation sector, there is a need to repair water and sewage networks, establish new networks, ensure the quality of drinking water, and support wastewater treatment for agriculture.

Methodology:

This assessment was conducted using a Key Informant (KI) methodology. A total of **1,379 KIs** were interviewed, with 95% residing inside Syria and the rest residing in diaspora countries. A total of **336 communities** (villages/towns/cities) in areas outside the control of the Syrian regime in five governorates in northern. **Data collection took place between the 26-29 April 2023.** On average, four KIs were interviewed for each community. Female respondents accounted for 33% of the total KIs. The age range of 65% of respondents was between 26 and 50 years old. The study sample was diverse, including respondents with various educational backgrounds. University students and graduates constituted the largest proportion of the sample, at approximately 70%.

Findings are indicative rather than representative and should not be generalized to the population and the region.

Context and Rationale:

The peaceful movement began in several Syrian cities in mid-March 2011, demanding freedom, releasing political prisoners, and lifting the state of emergency, igniting the war in Syria. Twelve years of devastating war have resulted in immense destruction and damage to infrastructure and governance at all levels. In the absence of a political solution, the emergence of new developments in the issue of normalization with the regime and weak international recognition of Syrian opposition entities, an estimated 13 million Syrian refugees, including 3.5 million in Turkey. Also, 2.7 million have been forced to be internally displaced to northern Syria. All these conditions have exacerbated the suffering of Syrians. Additionally, there is a lack of coordination between local and international humanitarian organizations. With the imminent non-renewal of cross-border aid operations, the needs in northern Syria have worsened, and there are calls for the voluntary return of refugees. We hope this report provides insights into the political and humanitarian reality and contributes to guiding the actors in the Syrian response and the international community in formulating effective solutions to the Syrian crisis.

*70 additional KIs from diaspora countries were interviewed, with the majority from Turkey.*
### Consequences of Arab Normalization with the Regime

#### The Impact of Normalization on the Syrian People
- **Positive**: 8%
- **Negative**: 4%
- **I do not know**: 88%

#### The Negative Consequences of the Normalization Process
- The ongoing suffering of displaced people in camps due to their inability to return to their homes which the regime and its affiliated militias have seized: 19%
- Lack of accountability for war criminals leading to escalating violence by the regime and its affiliated militias: 12%
- The loss of properties and rights due to the control of regime militias and Shia militias over properties and their subsequent sale: 11%
- The unknown fate of the missing and victims, with no one to demand justice for them: 14%
- Hindering the political transition process and its regression to be limited to the regime only: 14%

#### Will Arab normalization lead to international normalization?
- It will pave the way for international normalization: 75%
- It will not pave the way for international normalization: 25%

### The Impact of Turkish Elections on the Situation in Syria

#### Security
- The escalation of racism against Syrians: 35%
- Violence and riots targeting Syrians: 25%
- The Deportation of Syrians under temporary protection: 25%
- The Deportation of Syrians holding tourist and work residency permits: 9%
- No impact: 4%
- I do not know: 2%

#### Governance
- More than 75% of the evaluators outside Syria believe that the assessment of governance in Syria is poor.
- Regarding the opinions of residents in northern Syria:
  - Eastern Syria: 45%
  - Western Syria: 46%

### Available Methods to Confront Normalization

#### At the political level
- Raising public awareness about the dangers of normalization and engaging in it: 18%
- Enhancing communication bridges between the political opposition and the Syrian people: 15%
- Demanding additional sanctions on the regime to restrict communication with those who engaged in normalization and preventing the countries that normalized with it: 23%
- Engaging with friends of the Syrian people and increasing political communication: 20%
- Restructuring political bodies to expand political representation, encompassing all components, to confront the growing normalization efforts: 24%

#### At the military level
- Establishing laws within military courts to confront any betrayal or alignment with the regime at the individual or factional level: 26%
- Unification of military opposition factions from all components: 40%
- Military preparedness for any military confrontation with the regime: 33%

#### At the civil level
- Increasing popular representation within political bodies (election of representatives from the people within political entities): 32%
- Organizing civil activities that raise awareness about the dangers of normalization: 34%
- Enhancing communication bridges between the political opposition and the Syrian people: 34%
At the forefront of the health sector’s priorities was the support of hospitals, then the provision of medicines, the support of medical staff, the provision of medical devices, the entry of critical cases to Turkey for medical treatment, in addition to the restoration of hospitals damaged by the earthquake.

**Health Sector**

8% Supporting the entry of critical cases to Turkey for medical treatment
10% Providing medical devices
11% Providing medicines and supporting medical personnel

**Shelter Sector**

At the forefront of the shelter sector’s priorities was the provision of decent shelter for camp residents that protects them from harsh weather factors and provides them with privacy, in addition to providing heating materials, assessing and restoring earthquake-damaged residential buildings, and improving the work environment.

14% Improving the camp environment
15% Provide heating materials
23% Provide decent shelter

**WASH Sector**

At the forefront of the priorities of the WASH sector was support for the operation of water stations by providing operating expenses, in addition to conducting periodic maintenance of stations and repairing sewage networks.

22% Repair of sewage networks
23% Repairing water networks
25% Supporting the operation of water stations

**Education Sector**

At the forefront of the education sector’s priorities was support for teachers’ salaries, in addition to providing school textbooks, recognition of educational certificates, heating materials, support for the examination process, restoration of earthquake-affected schools, and support for non-formal education.

13% Recognition of educational certificates
13% Providing textbooks
20% Support for teachers’ salaries

**Livelihoods Sector**

At the top of the priorities for the livelihood sector was the provision of small grants for the population to start projects that help them secure income sources, in addition to establishing markets for promoting and selling local products and attracting capital to develop projects and provide vocational education.

13% Providing markets for selling products
19% Providing job opportunities for the youth
23% Providing small grants

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