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MPC - MIGRATION PROFILE

Syria

The Demographic-Economic Framework of Migration
The Legal Framework of Migration
The Socio-Political Framework of Migration

Report written by the

MPC Team

on the basis of CARIM South database and publications

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The Demographic-Economic Framework of Migration

Starting in 2011, the on-going Syrian civil war has seen large numbers of Syrian nationals fleeing to neighbouring states. As of 23 April 2013, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1,387,806 Syrian nationals fled the country and reached neighbouring (and more distant) countries. These have included Jordan (32.0%), Lebanon (31.2%), Turkey (22.6%), Iraq (9.8%), Egypt (3.6%) and other North African countries (0.7%). 84.4% of these forced migrants registered with UNHCR. The highest registration rates were observed in Iraq (100%), Turkey (89.4%) and Jordan (87.6%). It is worth mentioning that these outflows increased strikingly in the last 6 months: 23 October 2012, registered refugees were 'only' 281,144, confirming a further recent escalation of violence in Syria and a consequent aggravation of the refugee crisis.

Historically, Syria experienced several waves of emigration due to socio-political events, economic fluctuations and high rates of unemployment. Most outward flows have been directed towards other Arab countries, despite the Syrian emigrant profile often differing according to destination country, the type of move envisaged and the period of emigration. At the end of the 1950s, a first wave of emigration was observed among the Syrian elite – including entrepreneurs and professionals – aimed at avoiding the rigid regulations implemented by the socialist regime at home and benefiting from job market opportunities in certain Arab countries and, to a lesser extent, in the US. In the mid-1970s, expanding economic opportunities in the Gulf as well as the labour shortages created in Lebanon as a result of the civil war (1975-1989) resulted in a second big wave of emigration, this time of low skilled Syrians. While outward flows to the Gulf slowed in the 1980s after the implementation of policies limiting Arab immigrants, Syrian unskilled emigration to Lebanon continued in large numbers until 2005. In that year, the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister ~~Rifa~~ Hariri and the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanon undermined the already precarious living conditions of Syrian workers in Lebanon, so that large numbers of returned home (Mehchy and Mahadi Doko, 2011; Kawakibi, 2009; Fargues, 2009), though many are believed today to be back in Lebanon (Fargues, 2009).

As to immigration patterns, despite the absence of reliable and official statistics, Syria was considered an important receiver until the civil war broke out in 2011. Immigrants in Syria could be grouped into three main groups: refugees; labour migrants; and transit migrants. Refugees were by far the largest group. Labour migrants include *domestic workers*, originating mainly in Southeast Asia and *highly-skilled employees*, who started to arrive in concomitance with the economic and legal reforms accompanying the recent transition of Syria to a social market economy in 2005. Finally, there are transit migrants who enter Syria, mainly from Asia.

Outward migration	Inward migration																																																																																																																																																					
<p>Stock</p> <p>Today, there are 1,643,747 Syrian nationals abroad, most of them having fled from the current civil war. Indeed, 1,387,806 Syrians fled the war to local neighbouring countries: Jordan (444,268), Lebanon (433,467), Turkey (313,679), Iraq (135,842), Egypt (50,498) and other north African countries (10,052).¹ Other Syrian migrants reside in European Union countries (8.0%) and in other parts of the world (7.6%).</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Syrian emigration stocks by country of residence, most recent data (c. 2012/13)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Country of residence/asylum</th> <th>Definition (a)</th> <th>Reference date</th> <th>Source</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="6">Local neighbouring countries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jordan</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>23/04/2013</td> <td>UNHCR</td> <td>444,268</td> <td>27.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lebanon</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>22/04/2013</td> <td>UNHCR</td> <td>433,467</td> <td>26.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Turkey</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>23/04/2013</td> <td>UNHCR</td> <td>313,679</td> <td>19.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Iraq</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>22/04/2013</td> <td>UNHCR</td> <td>135,842</td> <td>8.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Egypt</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>22/04/2013</td> <td>UNHCR</td> <td>50,498</td> <td>3.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other north African countries</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>23/04/2013</td> <td>UNHCR</td> <td>10,052</td> <td>0.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6">European Union</td> </tr> <tr> <td>of which Germany</td> <td>(B)</td> <td>2012</td> <td>Reg. foreigners</td> <td>34,229</td> <td>2.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sweden</td> <td>(A)</td> <td>2012</td> <td>Pop. 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Census</td> <td>19,405</td> <td>1.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Main total</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1,643,747</td> <td>100.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(a): Syrian migrants are defined according to the country of birth (A) or country of nationality criterion according to countries of residence.</p> <p>(b): "Other countries" include other European countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine), Palestine, Canada, US, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Japan, Mexico and Israel.</p> <p>Sources: UNHCR: national statistics (Population Censuses, population registers, registers for foreigners, etc.)</p> <p>Without taking the recent events in Syria into account, there are two main reasons why these estimates are not able to explain the whole phenomenon and why interpretations must be made with caution.</p> <p>First, numbers for Syrian migrants living in the Gulf countries are not available. Syrian statistics cannot help here, since no estimate of Syrian citizens living abroad is given out by the authorities.</p>	Country of residence/asylum	Definition (a)	Reference date	Source	Number	%	Local neighbouring countries						Jordan	(B)	23/04/2013	UNHCR	444,268	27.0	Lebanon	(B)	22/04/2013	UNHCR	433,467	26.4	Turkey	(B)	23/04/2013	UNHCR	313,679	19.1	Iraq	(B)	22/04/2013	UNHCR	135,842	8.3	Egypt	(B)	22/04/2013	UNHCR	50,498	3.1	Other north African countries	(B)	23/04/2013	UNHCR	10,052	0.6	European Union						of which Germany	(B)	2012	Reg. foreigners	34,229	2.1	Sweden	(A)	2012	Pop. Register	22,357	1.4	France	(A)	2009	Pop. Census	15,510	0.9	UK	(A)	2012	APS	11,000	0.7	Other countries (b)						of which US	(A)	2011	ACS	71,394	4.3	Canada	(A)	2006	Pop. Census	19,405	1.2	Main total				1,643,747	100.0	<p>Stock</p> <p>According to census data, in 2004, 102,396 foreign nationals resided in Syria, or 0.6% of the total population. The majority of these were other Arab nationals (86.5%) and non-Arab Asian nationals (9.4%).</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Foreign nationals residing in Syria by country of citizenship and sex, 2004</caption> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Country of citizenship</th> <th rowspan="2">Males</th> <th rowspan="2">Females</th> <th colspan="2">Total</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Other-Arab Countries</td> <td>46,167</td> <td>42,399</td> <td>88,566</td> <td>86.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Europe</td> <td>1,165</td> <td>1,915</td> <td>3,080</td> <td>3.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-Arab African Countries</td> <td>356</td> <td>200</td> <td>556</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-Arab Asian Countries</td> <td>4,364</td> <td>5,274</td> <td>9,638</td> <td>9.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oceania</td> <td>28</td> <td>19</td> <td>47</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>America</td> <td>250</td> <td>259</td> <td>509</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>n.a.</td> <td>102,396</td> <td>100.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">% on the total resident population</td> <td colspan="2">0.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: 2004 Syrian population census</p> <p>Such figures, however, did not include either Palestinian or Iraqi refugees. Immigrants in Syria can, in fact, be categorized into three main groups: refugees; labour migrants; and transit migrants.</p> <p>The first category is by far the more relevant from a quantitative perspective. Among refugees, Palestinians and Iraqis form the largest groups. According to estimates made by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics and Natural Resources of Damascus, in 2009, there were 467,956 Palestinians, the vast majority being, however, not migrants but second and now third generation Palestinian refugees, refugees in relation to 1948.²</p> <p>Until the on-going civil war, the socio-economic conditions of Palestinians in Syria were relatively better than in Lebanon and Jordan as confirmed by a 2001 <i>ad hoc</i> survey (see note 1). This allowed the detection of various aspects of Palestinians' living conditions in Syria,³ as well as in Jordan and Lebanon.</p>	Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total		Number	%	Other-Arab Countries	46,167	42,399	88,566	86.5	Europe	1,165	1,915	3,080	3.0	Non-Arab African Countries	356	200	556	0.5	Non-Arab Asian Countries	4,364	5,274	9,638	9.4	Oceania	28	19	47	0.0	America	250	259	509	0.5	Total	n.a.	n.a.	102,396	100.0	% on the total resident population			0.6	
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¹ Data refer to 23/04/2013.

² According to a survey managed by the Fafo Foundation and the Damascus-based Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2001 only 27,000 first-generation Palestinian refugees were living in Syria (Tiltnes, 2007).

³ Palestinians in Syria either live in camps or outside of camps. Among the latter, they can be distinguished as those living in 'gatherings' – clusters of households – and those who live isolated from others. The survey focused on Palestinians living in camps and in gatherings of more than 25 Palestinian refugee households, the other group being nearly impossible to reach.

Second, these figures do not include a significant group, Syrian migrants working in Lebanon who, despite the absence of statistical data on back-and-forth mobility, are known to move on a circular or temporary basis. Also before the Lebanese Civil war (early 1970s), Syrian workers were estimated at more than 200,000 (Fargues, 2009). During the Civil War (1975-1989) their numbers peaked due to the presence of labour shortages left open by hundreds of thousands Lebanese emigrants and given too Syrian control of Lebanese territory and the Lebanese border which eased Syrian entries and exits (Fargues, 2009). After the war, these movements continued and flourished, pushed up by reconstruction works and thanks to visa facilitation agreements. Syrian workers in Lebanon have never been counted and estimates range from 300,000 to 500,000 individuals (Mehchy and Mahadi Doko, 2011); i.e. from 5.5% to 9.2% of the working age population living in Syria in 2010. According to a recent study conducted by Infopro in 2008, these migrants tend to be male, poorly educated and employed in low skilled and scarcely protected jobs: three out of four Syrians in Lebanon work in the construction sector, while the rest are employed in agriculture and cleaning services. Family migration seems, instead, to be related to concierge jobs, for which housing is guaranteed free of charge (Balanche, 2007).

Overall, in OECD countries (years around 2006), Syrian emigrants have an intermediate skilled profile: respectively 30.1%, 33.7%, and 36.1% hold a low, medium and high level of education. As to their occupational profile, Syrian emigrants tend to be employed at high occupational levels: 53.9% are employed in highly-skilled jobs – such as legislators, managers, professionals, etc (OECD.stat).

Flows

UNHCR data on registered Syrian refugees in local neighbouring countries reflect the deterioration of the situation in Syria within the last six months as refugee numbers passed from 281,144 as of 23 October 2012 to 1,171,230.

Selected socio-economic indicators of Palestinians residing in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, years around 2000

Country of residence	Poverty rate (*)	Unemployment rate	Labour market participation rate		
			Males	Females	Total
Syria (2001)	23.0	9.0	75.0	21.0	48.0
Jordan (2001)	31.0	10.0	<70.0	13.0	n.a.
Lebanon (1998)	35.0	10.0	<70.0	16.0	n.a.

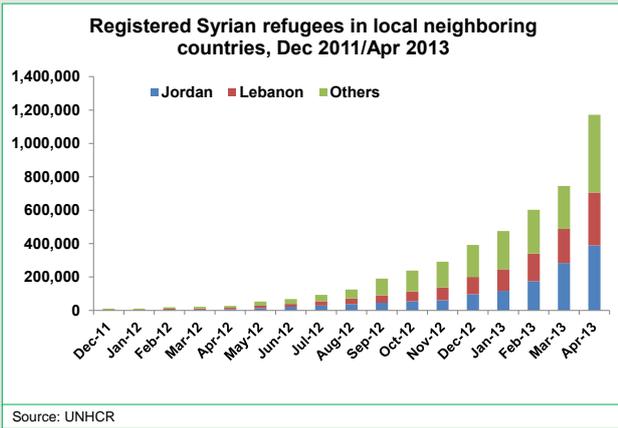
(*) The poverty rate is defined as the percentage of households earning less than 2 US dollars per day.
Source: Fafo surveys (cited in Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen, 2007, and Egset and al-Madi, 2007).

At that time, poor households, defined as families who earn less than 2 US dollars per day, represented 23% of Palestinian households in Syria, vs. 35% and 31% in Lebanon and Jordan, respectively. Extremely poor households, for whom the poverty threshold is fixed at 1 US dollar per day, accounted for 5% of all Palestinian households in Syria vs. 15% and 9% respectively in Lebanon and Jordan (Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen, 2007). So, despite Syria being, generally speaking, poorer than Lebanon and Jordan, Palestinians tended to perform better because they were more likely to be included in the labour market: the adult labour force participation rate was 48%, i.e. 75% for males (vs. less than 70% both in Lebanon and Jordan) and 21% for females (vs. 16% in Lebanon and 13% in Jordan). As to employment performances, differences were, instead, not so pronounced: the unemployment rate ranged, indeed, from 9% in Syria to 10% in Lebanon and Jordan. Nevertheless, if we consider only refugees living in the camps, Palestinians in Syria registered an unemployment rate of 9%, vs. 13% in Jordan and 17% in Lebanon. These positive outcomes were largely the result of indiscriminate access conditions to employment enjoyed by Palestinians in Syria, including access to its large public sector in which around 36% of Palestinians were employed (Egset and al-Madi, 2007).

The current civil war has, however, increasingly threatened the lives of Palestinians in Syria. As of 30 April 2013, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) estimated that approximately 235,000 Palestine refugees have been internally displaced in Syria⁴. They include around 130,000 persons displaced from the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria, where, at the time of writing, 20,000 Palestinians 'remain and are trapped in the area amid fighting between the opposition and government forces'⁵.

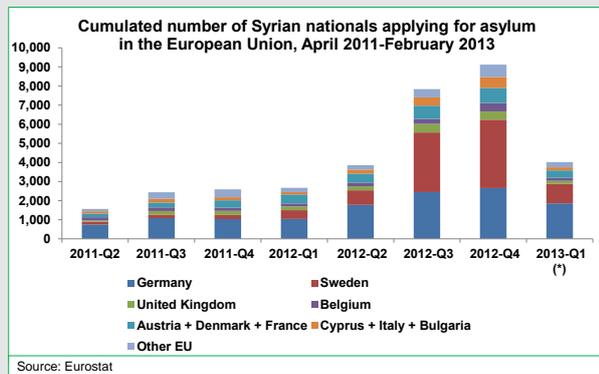
⁴ UNRWA, "UNRWA condemns mass displacement of Palestine refugees in Syria", 30/04/2013, available at <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=1735>

⁵ Press conference with Filippo Grandi, Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), March 11, 2013, available at <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/2013/03/un-palestinians-in-syria/>, (date of access: 30/04/2013).



This growth occurred in all local neighbouring countries, confirming a recent escalation of violence in Syria and a consequent aggravation of the refugee crisis.

A continued rise in Syrians' asylum applications has been observed in the EU, especially from the third quarter of 2012.



Since April 2011, the main recipient countries have been Germany and Sweden.

Furthermore, large numbers are trying to reach neighbouring countries. However, reception attitudes vary, dramatically, according to destination. The Jordanian authorities, which claim to have provided assistance to around 5,000 Palestinians fleeing Syria – recently declared that the country can no longer accept Palestinians. Palestinians fleeing to Turkey and Iraq have faced additional challenges as no UNRWA office operates there. Another 32,000 Palestinians have fled Syria to Lebanon, where life conditions for Palestinians are already very difficult.

Despite Syria being considered the most significant receiver of Iraqi refugees, they have never been properly counted. Estimates range from 103,200 (UNHCR estimates) to 480,000 (Syrian government's estimates) in 2013: these figures are, of course, controversial. Like their true size, the living conditions of Iraqis are largely unknown. Nevertheless, unlike Palestinians, they are not permitted to work or open their own business so they are dependent on external financial support, including their savings, remittances and humanitarian assistance, and participation in informal market activities (Mehchy and Mahadi Doko, 2011).

As a consequence of the Syrian civil war, UNHCR estimates that – as of 19 September 2012 – 37,358 Iraqis fled the country to return to Iraq.⁶

In 2013, other refugees registered with UNHCR included 2,400 Somalis and 1,740 Afghans (source: UNHCR). Moreover, Syria hosts around 300,000 stateless Kurds who have been living without Syrian citizenship, and, thus, without fundamental civil rights, since 1962 (Mehchy and Mahadi Doko, 2011).

The second group of immigrants living in Syria includes *highly-skilled employees* and *domestic workers*. As to the former, they have recently been attracted by the need for foreign experts in the Syrian economy especially in certain sectors (telecommunications, banking, insurance, etc.) a result of the rise of foreign and local investments following the transition to a social-market economy. Their employment status is specifically regulated by a recent labor law 17/2010, according to which they are 1. required to have specific expertise that is not available among Syrians and 2. to train Syrian workers in order to make them rapidly obtain the

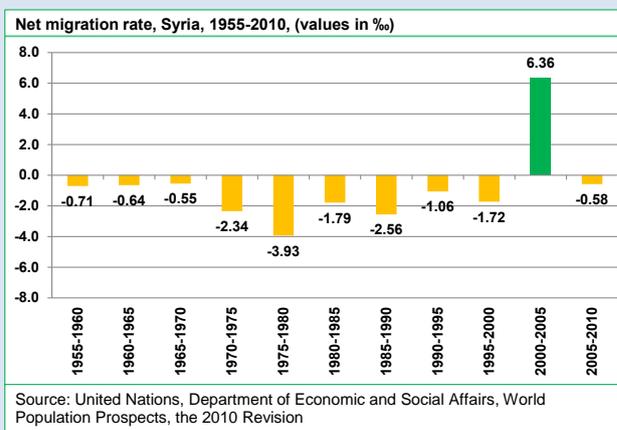
⁶ UNHCR. 2012. Syria Region: focus on enrolling refugee children in schools, Iraq border crossing opens at Al Qaem, UNHCR Briefing Notes, 21 September 2012, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/505c46759.html> (date of access: 30/04/2013)

necessary experience. Following these legal provisions, the Syrian authorities started in 2010 to record foreign employees. In June 2010, their number was estimated at 995 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL), despite there being a general consensus that larger numbers of foreign experts, particularly from Russia, have long been living in Syria with their families. The press estimates from 5,000 to 7,500 foreign workers (see Mehchy and Mahadi Doko, 2011).

The presence of domestic workers has been, instead, on the rise since 2001, following the legalization of foreign nationals as domestic workers. It peaked after 2006, as a result of the organization of work under specific manpower agencies. In 2010, Syrian manpower agencies estimated their number at around 75,000-100,000 individuals mainly women from Indonesia, the Philippines and Ethiopia. According to many experts, they represent a particular vulnerable group since they are *de facto* excluded from Syrian labour law and subjected to poor working conditions and abuse.

Finally, a third group of immigrants includes transit migrants, who mainly originate in Asia and the CIS countries (Sørensen, 2006).

Flows



No official statistics are currently available on legal inward migration flows entering Syria. According to the United Nations Department of Social Affairs, the net migration rate was substantially negative in the period 1955-2010, except for a five-year period 2000-2005, when, they estimate, a positive rate was observed, due to the massive influx of Iraqis following the US invasion in 2003.

References: Balanche F. 2007. *Les travailleurs syriens au Liban ou la complémentarité de deux systèmes d'oppression*, *Le Monde Diplomatique – Editions Arabe*; Egset W. and al-Madi. 2007. Work and working conditions, in Tiltne A.A. (eds.), *Palestinian Refugees in Syria: Human Capital, Economic Resources and Living Conditions*, Fafo Report 514; Fargues P. 2009. Work, Refugee, Transit: An Emerging Pattern of Irregular Immigration South and East of the Mediterranean, *International Migration Review*, Volume 43, Number 3: 544-577; Government of Turkey. 2011. Report:

We continue assisting the Syrian citizens without interruption, available at <http://reliefweb.int/node/456068>; Hanssen-Bauer J. and Jacobsen L.B. 2007. Living in provisional normality: the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in the host countries of the Middle East, in Brynen R. and El-Rifai R. (eds.), *Palestinian Refugees. Challenges of Repatriation and Development*, International Development Research Centre, New York; Kawakibi S. 2009. *Syrie: la dimension politique et sociale des migrations*, in *Mediterranean Migration, 2008-2009 Report*, Fargues P. (eds.), Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, San Domenico di Fiesole; Mehchy Z., Mahadi Doko A. 2011. General overview of migration into, through and from Syria, CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2011/41. Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, San Domenico di Fiesole; Sørensen, N.N. 2006. *Mediterranean Transit Migration and Development: Experience and Policy Options*, in Sørensen, N.N. (eds.), *Mediterranean Transit Migration*, Danish Institute for International Studies; Tiltne A.A. 2007. *Keeping Up. A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria*, Fafo Report 2007:13; UNHCR. 2011. *Lebanon Update. Situation in North Lebanon. December 23 – December 30, 2011*; UNICEF. 2011. *Displaced Syrian children in Jordan show signs of distress*, available at <http://reliefweb.int/node/467365>.

The Legal Framework of Migration

The conditions for aliens to enter, stay, and exit from the country were defined in a presidential decree of 1970, and some ministerial decisions complement and fill out its provisions. Arab nationals are favoured as regards access to the territory, to work and to nationality. A recent regulation tends to frame and protect the most vulnerable migrants - mainly domestic workers, as well as a decree against trafficking in persons.

No overall law deals with Syrian emigration but a series of measures adopted since the beginning of the 2000s aim at enhancing links with expatriates. Notably, the conditions for exemption from military service have been progressively relaxed to remove what was an obstacle to the return – temporary or more long-lasting – of Syrian emigrants and their descendants. Regarding domestic workers, the Syrian Interior ministry has regulated their recruitment with a special agency. For domestic workers, it imposed the contracting of accident insurance, days off, holidays, and suitable living conditions. These regulations strictly forbid marriage between a Syrian and a foreign domestic, in order to limit trafficking in women. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour adopted a law (n°2040, February 6th 2007) to 'organise the agencies specialized in the recruitment and employment of foreign labourers and domestics'. This law strengthens the domestic's rights and insists that the salary be written into the contract and that there be suitable housing. It entitles the domestics to medical care, it defines a set of sanctions in cases of violence or discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, or gender. Moreover, the law restricts the creation of new agencies, imposes the payment of significant taxes, limit the agencies' fees (a percentage of the domestic's salary), and notes that the agencies have the responsibility of repatriating the domestics in cases of problem.

Syria is the country where the situation of Palestinians is reputed to be the most favourable. Palestinian issues are ruled by Law n°260 of 10 July 1956 dedicated to those Palestinian refugees from the 1948 exodus. It is stipulated that Palestinians who reside in the country when the law is promulgated will be considered as Syrian citizens of origin as regards employment, work, trade and military service. Palestinians are thus granted the same rights and duties as national citizens, with the exception of political rights and access to real estate. Unlike other Arab nationals, Palestinians do not need a work permit. They are constrained to compulsory military service in the Palestine's Liberation Army created in 1964, they can work in the public service, occupy a political position and travel with a Syrian laissez-passer valid for six years, just as national citizens can.

The Palestinians who came from the 1956 and 1967 wars were registered with a service created in 1949 and were granted the same rights as the 1948 refugees, with some exceptions: they are hired on the basis of temporary work contracts, they cannot benefit from hierarchical advancement in the public services and they do not carry out military service. All the Palestinians are assimilated to nationals regarding access to work (Law n°17 of 2010) and passport issuance (Law n°42 of 1975). Though they are considered as Syrian citizens by the law of 1956, Palestinian refugees resident in Syria are not given the right to be naturalised as people with Arab origin can be, which means with privileges stipulated in the nationality law. As in Egypt, Syria invokes its solidarity towards the Palestinian people's fight. This policy has resulted in abandoning many Palestinians to statelessness in the name of preserving their future.

Kurds are also affected by statelessness. Decree n°93 of 23 August 1962 called for an exceptional census in the province and tens of thousands and maybe hundreds of thousands of Kurds were deprived of their Syrian nationality as a result. Nothing was done till a Presidential decree dated 7 April 2011, which granted citizenship to over 100,000 of them.

Syria has no law on refugees except for Constitutional mention prohibiting extradition of political refugees. UNHCR deals with refugee-status determination procedure and their protection, while UNRWA is in charge of Palestinian refugees. On 26 February 2012, the State approved a new constitution adopting all articles regarding migration within the previous 1973 Constitution. However, the 2012 version includes new stipulations such as the right for every citizen to leave the country, to return to the country, as well prohibiting the extradition of any citizen to any foreign entity.

Legal Framework	Outward migration	Inward migration
General Legal References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012 Constitution of Syrian Arab Republic ⁷ • 2010 Presidential decree n°3 against trafficking in persons⁸ • 2010 Law n°17 and 2004 Law n°50 (employment of foreigners)⁹ • 1975 Law n°42 on passport issuance¹⁰ • 1970 Presidential decree n°29 related to aliens' entry, stay, and exit¹¹ • 1970 Presidential decree n°1623 regulating Syrians' exit and entry¹² • 1969 Legislative decree n°276 on the Syrian Arab nationality¹³ 	
Entry and Exit	<p>The emigration of civil servants is subject to authorisation and an exit visa.</p> <p>A wife should generally follow her husband in emigration (family code, 1953) and can be prevented from emigrating alone by her husband (decision n°876 of 1979).</p>	<p>A medical certificate indicating the absence of contagious disease should be presented at entry.</p> <p>Decision n°1350 of 15 August 1984: entry without visa for nationals from all Arab states, from the Gulf, from the Emirates and from the Sultanates.</p> <p>Entry visa requirement re-established for Iraqis in 2007 (decision n°30 of 2007).</p> <p>Decision n°205 of 24 April 1972: Definition of entry and exit points.</p> <p>Exit visa for aliens. Presidential decree n°67 of 2005 related to the exit tax for foreign and national citizens.</p>
Irregular Migration	<p>Irregular exit: 3 months in prison and/or 500 Syrian pounds (Law n°42 of 1975).</p> <p>Human trafficking: 7 years in prison, 1 to 3 million Syrian pounds (Presidential decree n°3 of 2010 against trafficking in persons).</p>	<p>Decree n°29 of 1970:</p> <p>Irregular entry: 3 months to 1 year in prison and/or 500 to 1,000 Syrian pounds. 2 to 5 years in prison and/or 2,000 to 4,000 Syrian pounds if the alien is a national from a country at war with Syria.</p> <p>False documents at entry: 2 years in prison and/or 300 to 2,000 Syrian pounds.</p> <p>Irregular stay: 3 months in prison and/or 100 to 500 Syrian pounds.</p> <p>Work without permit: 6 months in prison and/or 500 Syrian pounds.</p>

⁷ SANA. (18 February 2012). *Draft Constitution for the Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved from <http://sana.sy/eng/337/2012/02/18/401178.htm>

⁸ CARIM. Legal Database – Syria. Retrieved from <http://www.carim.org/index.php?callContent=400&callCountry=2470>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

	<p style="text-align: center;">International agreements regarding irregular migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Palermo Protocols: in 2000, Syria signed both UN Protocols to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (both ratified in 2009). 	
<p>Rights and Settlement</p>	<p>Right to enter for every citizen (Article 38, Constitution).</p> <p>Civil service and emigration (Law n°50 of 2004).</p> <p>Syrian expatriates' associations (Ministerial decree n°16 of 2007).</p> <p>Emigrants' military service: Law n°36 of 2009: payment to be exempted from military service reduced (6,500\$ after 5 years abroad). Law n°30 of 2007: Syrian emigrants with another nationality can avoid their military service in Syria if they do it in their other country.</p>	<p>Right of citizens not to be deported from the country, or prevented from returning to it (Article 38, Constitution).</p> <p>Right of citizens not to be extradited to any foreign entity (Article 38, Constitution).</p> <p>Right to leave the territory of the state for every citizen, unless prevented by a decision from the competent court or the public prosecution office or in accordance with the laws of public health and safety (Article 38, Constitution).</p> <p>Stay permits (3 categories): 5 year-permit for people residing for 15 years, or for 5 years if they are carrying out a useful activity for the country, or for wives of Syrian citizens after 2 years; a 3 year-permit for people born in Syria and living there for 3 years, or aliens residing for 5 years; 1 year-permit in other cases (Decree n°29 of 1970 and decree n°30 of 2007).</p> <p>Access to Employment: Laws n°50 of 2004 and n°17 of 2010: a ministerial authorisation is needed, based on the list of professions open to aliens and if there is reciprocity with the origin country. Work permit required. Arab nationals have facilitated access to most of professions. Decree of the Labour ministry n°2137/2009 of 21/07/2009 modifying article 20 of ministerial decree n°2040/2005: the percentage of foreigners in private financial establishments is limited to 3% provided their qualification is not locally available. The percentage of non-Arab workers in a company not to exceed 10% (and 30% of the payroll).</p> <p>Domestic workers are not covered by the labour law but by a series of decisions since the Prime Minister's decree n°81 of 2006 which imposed a working contract. Decree of the Interior Ministry n°29 (12/03/2007) related to the entry of female migrant workers and their stay as domestics, and Arab and foreign nannies; decree n°62 of 2007 related to sanctions for contract</p>

		<p>violation; decision n°27 of 2009 governing recruitment offices. Artists are governed by decision n°81 of 2008.</p> <p>Civil service open to Palestinians. Jobs there are also open to Arab nationals if the Prime minister considers it a national necessity (law n°50 of 2004).</p> <p>Family reunification: legal silence.</p> <p>Access to public services: access to food aid and public hospitals is not given to aliens. Iraqis have free access to health and education. Other aliens enjoy free access to education and quasi-free access to health services.</p> <p>Access to real estate ownership: excluded with some exceptions.</p>
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bilateral agreements regarding labour migration include: Syria-Lebanon agreement (1995) on mutual employment of their nationals; Syria-Qatar agreements on Syrian workers in Qatar (2003 and 2008); Syria-Tunisia (2004) on labour exchange; manpower agreements with Jordan (2007) and Kuwait (2008); Syria-United Arab Emirates on Syrian workers in the UAE (2008); among others. ➤ International agreements regarding labour migration include the 1990 Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Family, and 49 International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions.¹⁴ 	
Citizenship	<p>Dual nationality is tolerated.</p> <p>Penal sanctions exist in the case of the acquisition of another nationality without authorisation from the Syrian authorities. Authorisation is given only if the military service obligations have been fulfilled.</p>	<p><i>Jus sanguinis</i> through paternal descent. A Syrian mother does not transmit her nationality, unless her child is born in the country without recognised paternity. There is no <i>jus soli</i>. Naturalisation is possible after a five year-residency in the country, unless one has a contagious disease. Arab fellows benefit from a facilitated access to nationality, being emigrants in a third country without any Arab nationality, or immigrants in Syria. Foreign women can obtain the nationality of her Syrian spouse after a two-year marriage and residence in the country or she will become a citizen immediately if she is an Arab. The Syrian women cannot transmit nationality to a foreign husband. (Legislative decree n°276 on the Syrian Arab nationality; Regulation on application for naturalisation, withdrawal, renunciation and forfeit of nationality, decision n°92 of 22 June 1976).</p>

¹⁴ Including conventions C111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation and C118 Equality of Treatment of Nationals and Non-Nationals in Social Security, but excluding conventions C97 concerning Migration for Employment, and C143 concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers.

<p>International Protection</p>		<p>Political refugees have the right not to be extradited because of their political beliefs or for their defense of freedom (Article 39, Constitution).</p> <p>No national law on asylum or refugee status determination procedure.</p> <p>Palestinian refugees are under UNRWA's mandate. Decision n°1531 of 6 September 1980 governs issuance of stay visas to Palestinian refugees. Non-Palestinian refugees fall under UNHCR's mandate.</p> <p>Syria accepted the 1965 Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States.</p>
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The Socio-Political Framework of Migration

Originally a receiver of refugees, especially Palestinians and Iraqis, Syria has recently become a refugee sending country. Since spring 2011, the violent repression against the protests and subsequent civil war has caused a significant movement of refugees towards neighbouring countries and North Africa, as well as internal displacement. While host governments work with UNHCR and other organisations to provide basic assistance to Syrian refugees, the Syrian government has worked with the Syrian Red Crescent and UNHCR, amongst others, in attempts to provide assistance to internally displaced Syrians and other populations.¹⁵

With the exception of Lebanon, and a series of administrative measures created to limit brain drain, the Syrian regime has not intervened in the management of labour migration. Regarding domestic workers, however, the Syrian Interior ministry has regulated their recruitment with a special agency. In contrast, the Ba'ath party tried to organize and control Syrians abroad for political and economic reasons. Indeed, Syrians abroad, in particular those settled in Europe, have played a significant role in the opposition against the Syrian regime. In 2013, however, the Syrian Government welcomed the opposition, as well Syrian citizens, who have left the country to return in order to participate in a national dialogue to resolve the crisis.¹⁶

Before the 2011 crisis, Syria's international cooperation on migration included membership in several international organisations and regional processes. As a result of the violence and the Syrian regime's unwillingness to abdicate, however, the State's participation in the Arab League as well as bilateral EU-Syrian cooperation programmes have been suspended.

Socio-Political Framework	Outward migration	Inward migration
Governmental Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Security apparatus Syrian Army 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Interior Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour GAPAR (General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees)
Governmental Strategy	<p>Facilitate temporary low-skilled labour migration, in particular toward Lebanon.</p> <p>Limit brain drain.</p> <p>Control the departure of Syrian refugees (since Spring 2011).</p> <p>Engage with Diaspora for their return for dialogue to resolve the crisis (citizens, including the opposition).</p>	<p>Regulate the employment of foreign domestic workers and guarantee their rights (e.g., workers from the Philippines¹⁷).</p> <p>Protecting borders from "terrorist" groups intent on entering Syria.¹⁸</p> <p>Support the rights of Palestinian refugees, while controlling the Palestinian social and political organizations.</p>

¹⁵ UNHCR. (2013). *2013 UNHCR Country Operation Profile – Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486a76.html>

¹⁶ Syrian Ministry of Interior. (24 January 2013). *The Interior Ministry calls on citizens who have left the border to return*. Retrieved from <http://syriamoi.gov.sy/new/index.php?req=5612&nid=455&First=0&Last=308&CurrentPage=1&ARC=&order=1&src=all&>

¹⁷ Syrian Ministry of Interior. (11 October 2012). *Mr. Interior Minister discusses with Mr. Sagios Deputy Interior Minister of the Philippines on developing bilateral relations*. Retrieved from <http://syriamoi.gov.sy/new/index.php?req=5612&nid=433&First=0&Last=308&CurrentPage=2&ARC=&order=1&src=all&>; and Syrian Ministry of the Interior. (4 June 2012). *Foiled infiltration of terrorists from Lebanon to Syria*. Retrieved from <http://syriamoi.gov.sy/new/index.php?req=5612&nid=389&First=0&Last=308&CurrentPage=6&ARC=&order=1&src=all&>

¹⁸ Syrian Ministry of Interior. (9 August 2012). *Mr. Interior Minister during his meeting with the United Nations Under-Secretary for Peace and Security*. Retrieved from <http://syriamoi.gov.sy/new/index.php?req=5612&nid=421&First=0&Last=308&CurrentPage=3&ARC=&order=1&src=all&>

		<p>Coordinate with international organisations and provide humanitarian assistance to needy Syrians within Syria (especially with assistance of Syrian Red Crescent, IOM and UNHCR).</p> <p>Coordinate with international organisations to resettle/repatriate refugees and migrants within Syria (e.g., IOM efforts to resettle Iraqi refugees in Syria).</p>
Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FEARAB (Federation of the Arab Entities) ➤ Opposition groups: Syrian National Coalition; OSDH (Syrian Observatory for the Human Rights) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unions ➤ Human Rights Organizations ➤ Communal Organisations (national, sectarian, ethnic)
International Cooperation	<p>Regarding international cooperation on migration-related issues, since 2011 the Syrian Government's participation in the Arab League as well as bilateral cooperation programs between the EU and Syria (including MEDA/ENPI instruments) have been suspended. Syria is a member of the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Neighbourhood Policy.</p>	