

Challenges and Overcoming Them during the Political Transition in Syria

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With the end of the Assad dictatorship on December 8, 2024, Syrians had a historic opportunity to build an inclusive, pluralistic state that promotes democracy, justice, and social cohesion among all components (groups) of Syrian society.

The Center for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria (CCSD) has worked over the last thirteen years with a broad and diverse group of Syrian men and women, including youth leaders, women leaders, and representatives of local civil society organizations. CCSD launched [a call for partnership](#) on December 8th, 2024, provided [recommendations to ensure meaningful participation of Syrian Women](#) in the political transition, and held first-round consultations with more than 30 local organizations and about 200 people from CCSD's partners. The consultations focused on identifying and prioritizing critical challenges during this pivotal juncture for Syria and how to overcome them. The following table presents a summary of the main points of these consultations.

	Challenges	Overcome the Challenges by
Political Stability and Inclusive Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of a clear vision for the future of Syria and an unknown fate for Syrians. • Political and security instability, increasing human rights violations, and the absence of good governance. • Being ruled by one party, the exclusion of ethnic and religious groups. • Guaranteeing and respecting both women's rights and freedom of belief. • The return of a centralized government and military dominance. • The danger of violent extremism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unifying the national vision and supporting the political process based on international resolutions. • Ensuring women's participation in the political transition process and including more than 30% of decision-making positions for women. • Drafting a constitution that reflects the aspirations of all Syrians and establishes a decentralized government, guarantees the separation between religion and state, power separation and balance, and the independence of the judiciary. • Including women (at least 30%), youth, and civil society participation in the political transition.
Security and the Rule of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of clear mechanisms to hold perpetrators of crimes and grave human rights violations accountable. • Risks of proliferation of weapons and activation of terrorist cells. • Silencing opposing voices and suppression of freedoms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the crimes, reparations, restitution, and guarantees of non-occurrence of human rights violations. • Promoting transitional justice through truth commissions, a reformed, independent judiciary, and the rule of law. • Programs to disarm and reintegrate former combatants. • Ensuring independent security forces that enhance stability. • Guaranteeing human rights, equality for all, and an inclusive transitional justice process, including prosecutions.
Economic Situation and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collapse of infrastructure and local currency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive plans for reconstruction and sustainable development.

<p>Reconstruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of justice in the distribution of resources and services. ● Worsening unemployment and brain drain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening education and vocational training for youth. ● Creating job opportunities for youth and investing in development projects. ● Combating corruption and encouraging local and international investment. ● Building strategic relationships with donors.
<p>Refugees, IDPs, Detainees, and Missing Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Risks of forced return of refugees and IDPs with the lack of safety and security services. ● The absence of truth regarding the fate of the missing persons. ● The destruction and erasing of evidence of arrests and torture within detention centers and prisons. ● The absence of accountability for when human rights violations are committed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving living conditions for IDPs and returnees. ● Providing psychological support to detainees and their families, and the families of the missing persons, especially children. ● Establish a National Committee with the mission of preserving evidence documents and uncovering mass graves, and raise awareness on the importance of this mission. ● Returning homes and personal property to their owners. ● Ensuring a safe, voluntary, dignified, and coordinated return of refugees and IDPs.
<p>Social cohesion and reconciliation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increasing hate speech. ● No political representation of women and minorities. ● Absence of a comprehensive National Conference. ● The lack of trust between Syrian groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Involving all Syrian groups in drafting the constitution and ensuring personal freedoms, including freedom of belief. ● Conducting campaigns to denounce hate speech and promote a culture of dialogue. ● Implement reconciliation initiatives and build trust between communities. ● Supporting youth in promoting social cohesion.
<p>Geopolitical Interests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional and international interventions in Syrian affairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening national sovereignty by strengthening institutions. ● Building international alliances that promote Syrian interests for democracy and pluralism.
<p>Basic Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Severe shortage of healthcare and education opportunities. ● Severe shortage of public services such as electricity, water, and the internet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting health, education, and service sectors. ● Unifying civil society efforts to improve humanitarian response. ● Strengthening partnerships with international organizations and donors.
<p>Corruption and Weak Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widespread corruption and exploitation of the situation to achieve illicit gains. ● Lack of official recognition of some of the Syrian certificates and documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish mechanisms to monitor government performance and ensure accountability. ● Support independent media to combat corruption and spread transparency. ● Institutional reform includes administrative and financial institutions.