



Syrian Arab Republic

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Submission by:

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I. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

1. For four years, the Rerooted Archive has been working to record the voices of Syrian-Armenian survivors of the Syrian War. To date, Rerooted has recorded, translated, and transcribed over 200 interviews with Syrian-Armenians who have resettled around the world in the wake of the Syrian conflict. For Rerooted, preserving the history, culture, and loss of Syrian-Armenians before and during the conflict is only one prong of the organization's goal; Rerooted also seeks to use survivors' stories to educate individuals around the world about the Syrian-Armenian cultural identity and to assist transitional justice efforts in Syria, including contributing to documentation and case-building efforts.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2. Armenian communities have had a place in Syria for centuries. Most Armenians first arrived in Syria as refugees of the Armenian Genocide, perpetrated within the Ottoman Empire from approximately 1915 – 1923.² Countless Armenians were sent on death marches and perished in the deserts of Northern Syria. For the tens of thousands who survived, many of them young orphans, towns and cities across Syria became places of refuge.
3. In the years following, many Armenians stayed in Syria, building up their communities from refugee camps to thriving neighborhoods. They became citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic and enjoyed cultural autonomy, establishing their own churches, schools, and social organizations (although they, at times, faced barriers assembling politically). The Armenian community of Syria was known as one of the strongest Armenian Diaspora communities in the world, as they were able to preserve the language and customs of their ancestors who fled genocide.
4. It is estimated that Armenians in Syria numbered up to 100,000 before the start of the war.³ 4. However, that number has since been cut by at least half as Syrian-Armenians, like millions of their fellow Syrians, seek safety abroad.⁴ This report will detail many of the harms faced by Syrian-Armenian individuals in the war as well as damages to the community as a whole. The future of the Syrian-Armenian community now is uncertain, threatening not only Armenian cultural preservation but the possibility of maintaining a thriving and diverse Syria.

III. SYRIAN-ARMENIAN PERSPECTIVE

5. While many minority communities have been harmed in the wake of the war, efforts to assess attitudes towards redress and reconciliation of Syria's minority community, including the Armenians, have not been abundant. As efforts for transitional justice interventions in post-conflict Syria begin, the Armenian perspective on redress is a critical piece of the narrative.
6. Rerooted submits this report to support conscious inclusion of Syrian-Armenian voices in transitional justice efforts in Syria by the Syrian government, international actors, and civil society groups. Our focus areas and recommendations are based on interviews and survey responses with Syrian nationals (of Armenian descent), in addition to archival material, reports, and other publicly available secondary sources.⁵ The three main areas of recommendation are:
 - (1) Rebuilding the Community
 - (2) Reinstating Adequate Standards of Living
 - (3) Protecting Minority Rights and Reunifying Syria.

IV. REBUILDING THE COMMUNITY

7. Syrian-Armenian neighborhoods faced significant damage during the war leading to a diminishing population and loss of cultural heritage. In 2016, the Human Rights Council drew attention to the attack, plunder, and destruction of cultural centers, including Armenian cities.⁶ Of Aleppo's 17 Armenian churches, only seven survived the war, and 11 Armenian schools in Aleppo were destroyed.⁷
8. Amongst this indiscriminate destruction, certain historical structures are of note. The Armenian Catholic Cathedral Our Lady of Pity/St. Rita Cathedral was destroyed which is situated in part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Ancient City of Aleppo.⁸ Outside of Aleppo, the Islamic State reportedly destroyed the Armenian Church and Genocide Memorial in Deir ez Zor,⁹ where the Islamic State's last stronghold in Syria was located.¹⁰ In 2017, the mostly Syrian-Armenian cemetery in Deir ez Zor was also struck by a possible Russian or SARG airstrike.¹¹
9. The loss of these structures not only deprives Syria of cultural and architectural diversity, it directly affects the way of life of Syrian-Amenians who fear that their rich Armenian community will be erased. Many fear future generations will not be able to immerse themselves in their culture if these sites are not rebuilt. Zarouhi, an interviewee for Rerooted, articulates her perspective on the future of Armenians in Syria and illuminates why cultural sites are so important to the Syrian-Armenian identity and life:

“Syria can be the best country in the world. It can be the richest country, like it is rich with its history, with its petrol, with its antiquity. We might be unaware of it, me, you, or others might not see, but a new generation might see it, and I think it will be very good again. But will they return? Who will return? I don't know. Everyone has their own problems, their own path and their own decisions. But Aleppo will remain a great place for the Armenian community. We were very rich with our culture, we were rich with our choirs, we were rich with our dance groups from the Shushi group for kids to Sardarabad for adults. So, all of the Armenians of the world wished to see Aleppo, to taste our spices, and experience the culture, the choirs, the dance groups, and our singers.”¹²

10. In addition to the reestablishment of Syrian society, rebuilding can function as an incentive for many to return to their communities and cultural life. Calls from Syrian-Armenians who fled to other countries, prioritize the restoration of schools, religious, and cultural institutions, and see that as a path to return.¹³ One Rerooted Archive interviewee Jirair describes,

“We had already built a motherland in Aleppo. We have our churches, theatres, schools, everything. I'd like to go back to Aleppo, I've missed Aleppo very much--the environment, my friends, I really miss it. If Aleppo were the Aleppo it used to be, I wouldn't stay in Armenia for a minute. I'd take my children and leave.”¹⁴

11. Efforts to rebuild are already underway. Since 2016, some Syrian-Armenian churches have reopened their doors for services.¹⁵ International efforts have helped restore Syrian-Armenian

churches and allow Syrian-Armenian students to return to school.¹⁶

12. Even in conflict, the Syrian government is compelled to protect cultural heritage from harm under both national and international law. Under customary international law, unless there is imperative military necessity, the seizure and destruction of cultural property such as historic, religious, and educational buildings and monuments is forbidden.¹⁷ Additionally, under Syria's ratification of the 1954 Hague Convention, 1970 UNESCO Convention, 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 1949 Geneva Convention, and the Geneva Convention Additional Protocol I, there are numerous requirements for protecting cultural heritage that should be followed during both active armed conflict and in peace. One requirement is that in non-international armed conflict, each warring party must respect Article 4 of the 1954 Hague Convention and refrain from using cultural property and its surroundings in a way likely to expose it to damage or directing any acts of hostility against such property.¹⁸
13. Domestically, the Syrian Government passed the Antiquities Law in 1963. This law protects manmade, movable and immovable properties over two hundred Christian years old, and allows for properties from a later date to be considered antiquities if they possess historical, artistic, or national characteristics as decided by the Ministry of Culture.¹⁹

Recommendations

14. Based on this legal background, we make the following recommendations to the Syrian Government and other involved actors and INGOs to help facilitate the rebuilding of the Syrian-Armenian community:
 - Continue and strengthen efforts to rebuild valuable cultural heritage sites, so that Syrian-Armenians have the ability and safety to go to their schools, churches and other cultural activities. Reconstruction plans should be made in accordance with the wishes and input of the community.
 - Investigate attacks on cultural heritage sites should determine if they fit the definition of indiscriminate attacks on the Armenian community. Ratifying the Rome Statute could provide a mechanism for accountability for any future destruction of Syrian-Armenian cultural heritage.
 - Incorporate an easily accessible database with the Director General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) website of conservation efforts to help increase transparency and provide needed information on how cultural heritage is being protected.²⁰
 - Reform the Syrian Antiquities Law and strengthen international obligations to protect cultural heritage. Laws against looting and stopping continued looting could continue violence would benefit Syrian-Armenians and Syrians in general.²¹

V. REINSTITUTING ADEQUATE STANDARDS OF LIVING

15. Beyond access to cultural spaces, Syrian-Armenians emphasize the need for adequate standards of living within their own communities and for all Syrians. This includes access to safe housing conditions, healthcare, and sufficient employment.

Part A: Housing and Basic Needs

16. Despite the government asking Syrian-Armenians to return to their homes, current housing infrastructure and legislation does not support a large-scale reentry to Syria.²²
17. For the majority of Armenians living in urban areas, they face issues of repairing damaged homes, maintaining their basic needs and determining their property rights, as houses have been destroyed, looted, or illegally occupied.²³ One Rerooted interviewee, Anjel Iranian, describes how her daughter was forced to flee once the violence escalated in Kessab. She packed her children and left all of her belongings behind. Once gone, the house was invaded and eventually destroyed. Anjel stated, “The house was emptied in a matter of 3 months. They stayed for 3 months, they ate, drank, destroyed, threw everything there was down the balcony, they threw it all down, my daughter had to reconstruct the whole house.”²⁴
18. Making habitable an average Syrian-Armenian home in Aleppo can cost \$2,000-3,000, a sum that is unaffordable to many.²⁵ Even when government aid is available, it is difficult to receive, does not cover all costs, and it is unknown how long it will take to receive compensation.²⁶ Armenian communities in smaller rural areas face greater destruction and barriers.²⁷
19. Then there is the issue of property rights for those who have had to leave their homes. In 2018, the Syrian Government passed Law No. 10 (2018) which creates redevelopment zones for reconstruction.²⁸ However, in redevelopment zones, if the property is not listed with a local real estate authority, the law requires property owners to submit proof of ownership in one year (revised from 30 days).²⁹ If ownership proof is not submitted, the owner can lose their property.³⁰ For some communities, property owners cannot return because of their affiliation with different groups in the conflict.³¹ Large informal settlements have formed that do not include proper ownership documentation.³² The international community has raised concerns about the state of property law in Syria and how it will affect the ability of Syrians to return to their property. This is worrisome to the protection of all Syrian’s rights to their homes.
20. The right to adequate housing, which has been interpreted to include protection from forced eviction and due process rights for anyone affected by a potential eviction, is guaranteed by international law.³³ Similarly, the Arab Charter on Human Rights urges that no one ‘under any circumstances be arbitrarily or unlawfully divested of all or any part of their property.’³⁴
21. Adequate housing also includes proper living conditions. The UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights further defines the right to proper living conditions as including “safe and potable water and adequate sanitation, an adequate supply of safe food, nutrition and housing, healthy occupational and environmental conditions.”³⁵ Syrians must also be able to access basic needs and services in their homes. Yet, in Syria, access to safe drinking water remains limited.³⁶ Both intentional actions³⁷ and changing weather patterns³⁸ have left many regions in Syria without access to adequate drinking water. Increased levels of food insecurity, exacerbated by discriminatory policies,³⁹ have led to measurable nutrition deficits in children.⁴⁰ Access to sufficient food, too, is limited, exacerbated by discriminatory policies.⁴¹ Electricity access is returning after the peak of the conflict; however, many in rural areas still have limited access.⁴² As these inadequate living conditions are challenging for those who remain in the Syrian-Armenian communities of Syria, and pose barriers to return for many Syrian-Armenians who have fled but wish to return, addressing this should be a priority for the Syrian government and all

other actors working to address the Syrian conflict.

Part B: Healthcare

22. In 2021, more than 12.4 million people (out of the total estimated population of 20 million) in Syria require health assistance.⁴³ Furthermore, healthcare access across Syria is unevenly distributed within the country, leading to large subsections of the population without access to sufficient clinicians.⁴⁴ Hospitals, especially emergency and general care practices, remain below optimal functioning.⁴⁵ Most of the country's physicians fled during the conflict and have not returned.⁴⁶ Access to care is limited by both physician limitation (availability) and realistic, lasting fear. Many, including pregnant women, remain too afraid to access healthcare facilities.⁴⁷ Availability of primary care remains limited, hindered today by destruction from the conflict and the overwhelming urgency of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴⁸ Vaccine rates in Syria are low.⁴⁹ Children, too, are particularly vulnerable to negative psychological outcomes from exposure to extended armed conflict.⁵⁰ After nearly a decade of conflict, both physical⁵¹ and mental⁵² disabilities require urgent care. The medical system remains ill equipped to properly address the lasting impact of those injuries.⁵³ As efforts to vaccinate, globally, against Covid-19 continue, Human Rights Watch has warned of a discriminatory distribution plan for Covid-19-related health equipment and vaccines in Syria.⁵⁴
23. Armenian interviewees report leaving the country in search of healthcare.⁵⁵ One father reported that there is limited care in Syria for those with disabilities, stating “In Syria, I never heard of anything like that, giving money to disabled children.”⁵⁶ Others noted the lack of access to necessary clinicians: “If there was need for a doctor, there were no doctors there,”⁵⁷ and “Most of them wanted to escape because they lost their trust in the government. Something was wrong. The government used to say one thing and do another. ... If you need a doctor, you can't find one. They were there but they were not specialists. The doctors, others, everyone left.”⁵⁸
24. Syria has a duty to adequately protect its citizens' right to health as assured in international law by the ICESCR,⁵⁹ the CRC,⁶⁰ and the CRPD.⁶¹ Financial hardship cannot shield a state from its obligation.⁶² The highest attainable standard of health is determined by the state's available resources.

Part C: Economy

25. The conflict has left many in economically vulnerable situations. Historically, Syrian-Armenians have been thriving small business owners and artisans; this has all been left in disarray by the war. One interviewee recounts, “I had a pension in Syria that I used to receive but not anymore, I've closed my accounts there during this last year. I closed my clinic and stopped working. I had some insurance, I was receiving a certain amount, but I'm not anymore. My children support me but I can't say how I'm going to plan the coming years. I'm dependent on them.”⁶³ This experience is not uncommon. As another recounts, “Of course everybody had experienced similar things, that's how they left their houses, closed down their shops. They were hurt and scared.”⁶⁴ Another simply, “my business struggled.”⁶⁵ Those fleeing the conflict were forced to abandon property; “We could not sell the house because it was not possible to sell the house during war. Who's going to buy it? We just wanted to save ourselves because we were under such hardships.”⁶⁶
26. As fear of immediate violence recedes, an economic crisis continues to threaten the lives of Syrian citizens. Comprehensive economic sanctions intended to stop terrorist activity in the region, coupled with Lebanon's economic crash, threaten economic success in the country. These

economic sanctions, even those targeted sanctions which attempt to carve out exceptions for necessary food, drugs, and medical equipment, make receiving international aid in the region more difficult.⁶⁷

27. International law requires states to commit the maximum available resources to realize human rights within their territory.⁶⁸ Additionally, efforts towards sufficient economic support must not be discriminatory. Guidelines require more than mere anti-discrimination; they require respect for all groups and, when resources are limited, the State has a duty to take steps to protect those most at risk.⁶⁹ The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has also emphasized that “policies and legislation should not be designed to benefit already advantaged social groups at the expense of others.”⁷⁰

Recommendations

28. We make the following recommendations to improve standards of living equally for all Syrians, as is the duty of the government under international law.
- Provide adequate compensation for rebuilding internally displaced Syrians or returning refugees to rebuilding their residences in a timely manner.
 - Amend or revoke Law no. 10 so it does not threaten without due process the right for property owners to return to their homes.
 - Invest government funding into public infrastructure and health systems that are non-discriminatory and benefit all Syrians
 - Sign optional protocols to the ICESCR and the CRC, and reservations on the CRPD, to allow complaint and enforcement mechanisms built into the law to protect citizens.
 - Work with those countries currently imposing sanctions on the country to ease the humanitarian impact of decreased foreign aid and make all necessary steps to fulfill international obligations to have sanctions lifted.

VI. PROTECTING MINORITY RIGHTS AND REUNIFYING SYRIA

29. Rerooted interviews of the Syrian-Armenian population suggest holistically that any newly established government must work to protect minority rights and unify the factions that have formed as a result of the ongoing war.
30. Manipulation of ethnic and religious groups against one another and for government interest has occurred in Syria since its establishment under the French Mandate. In different forms, it has carried forward until today. One Rerooted respondent stated, “All the world thinks that the regime is helping the minorities, actually, the minorities protected the regime. That’s the truth.”⁷¹
31. What Syrian-Armenians desire and require for a future Syria is the right to express themselves, their culture, and their religion, without constraint in Syria, regardless of the political whims or desires of the government in power. Many fear that a future transitional government may not

provide rights and environment of freedom to minority groups. A Syrian-Armenian respondent to a survey on justice for Syrian-Armenians in Syria stated:

“Justice for the Armenians would be more access and freedom to express the Armenian life. We want Armenians to have the same rights, just like other native Syrians, we are all equal, we should be treated fairly by the government and the whole world. Give Armenians rights, so they can rebuild their homes and communities.”⁷²

32. Not only must Syrian-Armenians and all minority communities have their own rights, but they hope that they can unite across ethnic or religious differences. Many Syrian-Armenians did not feel divided or isolated from non-Armenian Syrians before the war; they co-existed peacefully with minimal conflict. However, the war in Syria led to targeted attacks of the Syrian-Armenian community, creating a lack of unity and trust between ethnic groups. A Syrian-Armenian survey respondent spoke on this division and the importance of reunifying Syria:

“What is democracy? It’s living in harmony with multi-cultures. This is democracy. We used to live in democracy. Syrian people used to live in democracy, breathe democracy, they have democracy in their blood. We lived in multi-culture as one. In Syria we used to live with each other. Muslim, Christian, Alawite. Ten years ago, I used to think of Muslims as brothers. We didn’t have any conflict with them. We used to even celebrate Ramadan with them. If we are thinking about rebuilding the country with multi-culturalism, Orthodox, Muslim, Christian, Alawite, Catholic, Druze, whatever it is, we have to think about the religious relations between them.”⁷³

33. The above quote lays out well the views held by the majority of respondents regarding the perceptions of a previously unified Syria, how the conflict has altered that, and the renewed need for unification and bond-strengthening across many different communities. There can be no justice in Syria without the protection of minority rights and the reunification of diverse groups. It is important to listen to the voices of minority groups in Syria when thinking of how to rebuild and reunify the country.
34. The Syrian government is bound by law to prevent discrimination between different groups in its country. The Syrian government has a responsibility to protect all of its citizens per Article 9 and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which it ratified in 1976. International regulations protecting minority rights guarantee (1) survival and existence, (2) promotion and protection of the identity of minorities, (3) equality and non-discrimination, and (4) effective and meaningful participation.⁷⁴ Equal access to services and even, in cases, disparate treatment to redress past wrongs are codified in international law.⁷⁵ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ general comment No. 21 (2009), ensures the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, and requires States parties to recognize, respect and protect minority cultures as an essential component of the identity of the States themselves.⁷⁶ The Syrian government and other involved actors should ensure that the future of Syria is one in which minority rights are respected and protected indefinitely.
35. In addition to helping to reunify the country amidst the more than 1,000 opposition groups,⁷⁷ and ensure the protection of minority rights in the future of Syria, the Syrian government can work to

restore unity throughout the country through accountability measures. Whether through the creation of its own mechanisms or working with the international community to create hybrid tribunals or to take advantage of external international courts, the Syrian government should examine retributive justice mechanisms to complement its other important transitional justice efforts.

36. Regardless of whether the government or non-state actors, such as ISIS or Jabhat al-Nusra, are responsible for the human rights abuses detailed in this report, the Syrian government ultimately has to respond to the violations that occur within its territory. First, as written in General Comment 36 to Article 6 of the ICCPR,

“States parties must also ensure the right to life and exercise due diligence to protect the lives of individuals against deprivations caused by persons or entities whose conduct is not attributable to the State. The obligation of States parties to respect and ensure the right to life extends to reasonably foreseeable threats and life-threatening situations that can result in loss of life. States parties may be in violation of article 6 even if such threats and situations do not result in loss of life.”⁷⁸

37. It is unquestionable that there have been significant threats to life within the Syrian-Armenian community in the form of bombings and other mechanisms of war. Due to the status of the conflict in Syria, the threats to life were foreseeable by the government, especially considering Al-Assad’s labeling of armed opposition groups as “terrorists.”⁷⁹
38. Second, as written in General Comment 35 to Article 9 of the ICCPR: “States parties must protect individuals against abduction or detention by individual criminals or irregular groups, including armed or terrorist groups, operating within their territory.”⁸⁰ Syrian-Armenians have been subjected to targeted “kidnappings” as evidenced through interviews conducted by Rerooted during the course of the conflict.⁸¹ Armenians were further targeted for being Christian, for example, when stopped by extremist groups on their escape out of Syria, often held captive or harmed. While the perpetrators of these acts are not readily evident, the government nonetheless has a responsibility under this treaty to protect its citizens from these acts.

Recommendations

39. We make the following recommendations to protect minority rights and build unity between groups in Syria, as directed under international law.
- Ratify legislation to protect minority communities regardless of who is leading the government in Syria. Syrian-Armenians and all minority groups in Syria should be guaranteed freedoms that are not tied to a particular leader or political agenda.
 - Plan a type of public truth and reconciliation program for Syrians of all backgrounds to hear each other’s experiences during the war as a starting point for rebuilding trust and understanding
 - Investigate how and by whom minorities were targeted and set up measures for accountability for opposition groups who harmed individuals during the conflict.

- The government of Syria should ratify the Rome Statute and enter a declaration under Article 12(3) of the same, permitting the International Criminal Court’s exercise of jurisdiction over crimes committed prior to Syria’s ratification of the instrument. This would be a concrete step towards supporting the fight against impunity.

VII. CONCLUSION

40. Efforts to rebuild community, revitalize standards of living, and protect minority groups in Syria reflect best practices in accordance with international and Syrian law. More than that, they allow displaced persons a chance to return home. For Armenians, a people whose history has been characterized by cycles of diaspora and displacement, these efforts are paramount. By investing in Syrian-Armenian communities and priorities, the Syrian government can demonstrate a commitment to welcoming all diverse minority communities back to the country, and can once again benefit from Armenians as a strong part of the fabric of Syria's diversity.

¹ The Rerooted Archive is the paramount documentation project of the Syrian-Armenian community. This joint report is submitted by Rerooted along with the support of its NGO sponsor, the Pomegranate Foundation.

² *Armenia Genocide (1915-1923)*, Armenian National Institute, <https://www.armenian-genocide.org/genocide.html>.

³ Anoush Baghdassarian, *Assessing Attitudes of Syrian-Armenian Refugees toward Redress and Justice in Post Conflict Syria* (May 6, 2019) (Master’s Thesis), 23 <https://core.ac.uk/download/267804889.pdf> (“70,000 Syrian Armenians have fled during the war, and few will return.”).

⁴ Anush Babajanyan, *The Syrian Refugees Coming Home to Armenia*, Foreign Policy, (March 20, 2017), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/20/the-syrian-refugees-coming-home-to-armenia-migration-syria/>.

⁵ For further reading on the Syrian-Armenian perspective towards justice for Syria, see Anoush Baghdassarian, *Assessing Attitudes of Syrian-Armenian Refugees toward Redress and Justice in PostConflict Syria* (May 6, 2019) (Master’s Thesis) <https://core.ac.uk/download/267804889.pdf>

⁶ Human Rights Council: Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, National Report Submitted in accordance with Paragraph 5 of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21, 1, 13 para. 59 (2016), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/215/69/PDF/G1621569.pdf?OpenElement>.

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⁸ Michael D. Manti et al., *Weekly Report 36*, ASOR CHI, 1, 9-18 (April 13, 2015), https://www.asor.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ASOR_CHI_Weekly_Report_36r.pdf.

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²⁰ Syrian Director General of Antiquities and Museums website, <http://dgam.gov.sy/?lang=en>

²¹ Marina Lostal & Emma Cunliffe, *Cultural Heritage that Heals: Factoring the Cultural Heritage Discourses in the Syrian Peacebuilding Process*, The Historic Environment: Policy and Practice 7, 248, 254 (April 26, 2016), https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17567505.2016.1172781?casa_token=NcZgqVz4BFYAAAAA:yhliKXRMkccUecWCLC4H8UMqx6GK4bQm_TW0QgHkFnNfa5GZLFwXLUwrRt7AvxHPxPIQzEqNSMXF.

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²³ Martin Clutterbuck, *Property Restitution in Post-Conflict Syria*, *Forced Migration Review* (February 2018),

<https://www.fmreview.org/syria2018/clutterbuck>.

²⁴ Interview with Anjel Iranian (August 24, 2018) Retrieved from Rerooted Archive

²⁵ Tom Westcott, *In Syria's Aleppo, a Slow Rebuild Begins*, *The New Humanitarian* (January 30, 2019) <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/01/30/syria-s-aleppo-slow-rebuild-begins>.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Tigran R. *Yepremyan, Armenian Migration from War-torn Syria to Europe: From Diaspora to Diaspora or Homeland?*, 192, 202, *EuroTimes* (2017).

²⁸ Q&A Syria's New Property Law, Human Rights Watch (May 29, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/29/qa-syrias-new-property-law>.

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Tom Westcott, *In Syria's Aleppo, a Slow Rebuild Begins*, *The New Humanitarian* (January 30, 2019) <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/01/30/syria-s-aleppo-slow-rebuild-begins>.

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³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ U.N. CESCR General Comment 14 para 9 and 11, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/425041?ln=en>

³⁶ Action Against Hunger, 9 Years Of Conflict: 15.5 Million Syrians Lack Clean Water, <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/story/9-years-conflict-155-million-syrians-lack-clean-water> ("Throughout the country, 15.5 million Syrians lack adequate access to clean water. Northeastern Syria is the area most affected by the water crisis: 27% of households spend as much as one-fifth of their income on water from tankers."); <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/update-water-cuts-syria>

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Turkey/Syria: Weaponizing Water in Global Pandemic?*, March 31, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/31/turkey/syria-weaponizing-water-global-pandemic>

³⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020: The year of the worst water shortage in Hassakeh, Syria, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/2020-year-water-shortage-hassakeh-syria>

³⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Syria: Bread Crisis Exposes Government Failure*, March 21, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/21/syria-bread-crisis-exposes-government-failure>

⁴⁰ Bahodir Rahimov, Tarig Meddawi, and Vilma Tyler, *Dynamics of the nutritional status of children under five years old in northwest Syria*, https://www.enonline.net/attachments/3464/FEX_61_web_version_18-20.pdf ("The nutrition situation in northwest Syria is unique, with high – and, in some areas, increasing – levels of child stunting, alongside declining acute wasting. Reports from NGOs also report increasing rates of child marriage related to the conflict, high levels of which were confirmed in the SMART survey reported here.").



⁴¹ Human Rights Watch, Syria: Bread Crisis Exposes Government Failure, March 21, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/21/syria-bread-crisis-exposes-government-failure>

⁴² The World Bank, Access to Electricity- Syrian Arab Republic, (2019), <https://data-worldbank-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.RU.ZS?locations=SY>

⁴³ Health Sector Syria, *Health Sector Bulletin*, 2 (February 2021), who.int/health-cluster/countries/syria/Syria-HS-Bulletin-Feb-2021.pdf?ua=1

⁴⁴ See Bdaiwi, Y., Rayes, D., Sabouni, A. *et al.*, *Challenges of providing healthcare worker education and training in protracted conflict: a focus on non-government controlled areas in north west Syria*, 14 *Conflict Health* 42 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-020-00287-9> (“A population based survey that was performed in government and non-government controlled areas by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research noted that 31% of the population lived in areas where HCWs were insufficient and 27% live in areas where HCWs are completely absent.”) (footnote omitted).

⁴⁵ See *Id.* at 8. (“By the end of 4th quarter 2020, and out of the 113 assessed public hospitals [MoH & MoHE], 48% (54) were reported fully functioning, 28% (32) hospitals were reported partially functioning (i.e., shortage of staff, equipment, medicines or damage of the building in some cases), while 24% (27) were reported non-functioning 78% (88) hospitals were reported accessible, 8% (9) hard-to-access, and 14% (16) were inaccessible.”).

⁴⁶ *Attacks on health care in Syria take ‘catastrophic’ toll*, Al Jazeera, March 3, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/3/attacks-on-health-care-in-syria-take-catastrophic-toll-irc> (“[A]n estimated 70 percent of the health workforce has left the country, leaving just one Syrian doctor for every 10,000 civilians.”).

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ See World Health Organization, Health Resources Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS), Fourth Quarter, 2020 Report, *Turkey Health Cluster for Northwest of Syria*, (October - December 2020), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/herams_fourth_quarter_2020_final.pdf (“[Health Resources Availability Monitoring System] 4th quarter 2020 report consist of 565 Health facilities compared to 577 Health facilities in 3rd quarter report 2020. 423 HFs functional compared to 396 in 3rd quarter 2020. The breakdown of the functioning health facilities is as follows 63 (15%) are Hospitals, 173 (41%) are fixed PHCs, 83 (19.5%) are mobile clinics, 53 (12.5%) specialized care centers**, while 51 (12%) others health facilities***. 51 health partners managing and supporting were reported. Out of total (565) reported health facilities, 423 HFs functioning, 124 nonfunctioning and 18**** with no reports compared to (577) reported health facilities, 396 HFs functioning, 157 nonfunctioning and 24 with no reports in the 3rd quarter 2020. Since Aug 2020, around 25 health facilities resume services in NW-Syria due to the cease fire and decreasing in armed conflict in the area. By the end of Q4 2020 as seen in table 1 above, there was a remarkable increased in the functional health facilities: 12 PHCs and 5 mobile clinics, 2 specialized care centers. Out of total functioning health facilities reported from the North of Syria 236 (56%) of them are in Idleb governorate and 166 (39%) are in Aleppo governorate; while 21 (5%) health facilities reported are from Northeast Syria (Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor) governorates.”).

⁴⁹ de Lima Pereira, et al., *Infectious Disease Risk and Vaccination in Northern Syria after 5 Years of Civil War*, 10 *PLoS currents*, (2 Feb. 2018), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5815631/> (“As a result of the conflict in Syria, the progressive collapse of the health care system in Kobanê has resulted in low vaccine coverage rates, particularly in younger age groups. The repeated displacements of the population, attacks on health institutions and exodus of healthcare workers, challenge the resumption of routine



immunization in this conflict setting and limit the use of SIAs to ensure sustainable immunity to VPDs. We have shown that the risk for several VPDs in Kobanê remains high.”).

⁵⁰ See Oberg, Charles, *The Arc of Migration and the Impact on Children's Health and Well-Being: Forward to the Special Issue-Children on the Move*, 9 *Children* 9: 100 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.3390/children6090100>; Manzoor Ahmad Malik, et. al., *Conflict driven displacement and child health: evidence from Jordan*, <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.11.09.20228148v1> (“Our study concludes that conflict-driven displacement has an immediate effect on child health through access, availability, and affordability of health care services, resulting in more significant health care risks.”); Christopher Jamil De Montgomery, Theoni Stathopoulou, Terje Andreas Eikemo, *Asylum-seeking Parents' Reports of Health Deterioration in Their Children since Fleeing Their Home Country*, 32 *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Special Issue 1, pp. i52–i62, (December 2019), <https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1093/jrs/fez018>; See generally Thabit N and Rasmusson X, *Understanding the Health and Mental Health Impact of the Syrian Civil War through Children's Voices*, 1 *Journal of Community Medicine and Health Research* 2 (2019), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Xeno-Rasmusson/publication/337731040_Understanding_the_Health_and_Mental_Health_Impact_of_the_Syrian_Civil_War_through_Children's_Voices/links/5de74dad92851c83645fdd68/Understanding-the-Health-and-Mental-Health-Impact-of-the-Syrian-Civil-War-through-Childrens-Voices.pdf

⁵¹ Thompson, Stephen, *Disability in Syria*, 3 (2017) (“30,000 people each month are estimated to be injured by the Syrian conflict, many of whom will suffer lifelong disabilities. 30% of trauma cases are estimated to result in permanent disabilities requiring long-term rehabilitative care (WHO 2016 a). One in five Syrians are estimated to have moderate mental health issues. One in every thirty Syrians is at risk of developing severe or acute mental health needs (WHO 2017 a). According to UNHCR, only 1.4% of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon have a disability, yet research in Jordan and Lebanon suggests as many as 22% of Syrian refugees have an impairment and 6% have a severe impairment. 44.2% of impairments recorded in this survey were physical, 42.5% sensory and 13.4% intellectual. 20% of refugees were found to have multiple impairments.”).

⁵² Bolton, Laura, *Mental health and psychosocial support in Syria* (2018), https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/14176/423_Mental_Health_and_Psychosocial_Support_in_Syria.pdf?sequence=54

⁵³ Saeed Shahabi, Dimitrios Skempes, Shahina Pardhan, Maryam Jalali, Parviz Mojgani & Kamran Bagheri Lankarani, *Nine years of war and internal conflicts in Syria: a call for physical rehabilitation services*, 36 *Disability & Society* 3, pp. 508-512 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2021.1888283>

(“Despite the substantial increase in the need for medical and rehabilitation services, only half of Syria’s hospitals and medical centers are functioning. The Syrian health sector lacks the capacity to provide comprehensive services for trauma and postoperative rehabilitation across the country. A major proportion of the aforementioned centers do not have enough facilities to provide the services needed by people with chronic diseases and disabilities. According to the Danish Immigration Service report from March 2019, limited access to services for people with disabilities is available in Damascus, but it is not enough to meet the high demand of Syrian people with disabilities.”) (footnotes omitted).

⁵⁴ See generally Human Rights Watch, *Syria: Covid-19 Vaccine Access Should Be Expanded, Fair*, (February 2, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/02/syria-covid-19-vaccine-access-should-be-expanded-fair>

⁵⁵ See *Rerooted Archive* Interview with Sevan Torosian and Taleen Bekerian, in Yerevan, Armenia (August 2, 2017).

⁵⁶ *Rerooted* Interview with Abdullah Haddad, in Yerevan, Armenia (July 25, 2017).

⁵⁷ *Rerooted* Interview with Lucy Bogharian, in Yerevan, Armenia (August 22, 2018).

⁵⁸ *Rerooted* Interview with Ara Boudakian, Decines, France (July 2019).

⁵⁹ U.N. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 12, Dec. 16, 1966, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

; *See also* WHO Constitution Preamble (“the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic, or social condition.”); *See also* Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25 (“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”).

⁶⁰ U.N. Convention on Rights of the Child, *General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration* at 16, https://www2.ohchr.org/English/bodies/crc/docs/GC/CRC_C_GC_14_ENG.pdf

⁶¹ U.N. Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2006, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

⁶² U.N. *Right to Health* Factsheet No. 31, 5, <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/factsheet31.pdf>

⁶³ *Rerooted* Interview with Mayda Chavoushian, Yerevan, Armenia (August 7, 2017).

⁶⁴ *Rerooted* Interview with Salpi Proudian Date, Yerevan, Armenia (August 10, 2017).

⁶⁵ *Rerooted* Interview with Vahram DerOhanian, Yerevan Armenia (August 18, 2017).

⁶⁶ *Rerooted* Interview with Talene, Yerevan, Armenia (August 1, 2017).

⁶⁷ Samir Aita, *The Unintended Consequences of U.S. and European Unilateral Measures on Syria's Economy and Its Small and Medium Enterprises*, (December 2020), https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/syria-unintended-consequences-aita-12-20.pdf

⁶⁸ U.N. Protection of economic, social and cultural rights in conflict, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 9 (2015), <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ESCR/E-2015-59.pdf>

⁶⁹ *See* Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 15 (2003) on the right to water, para. 13.

⁷⁰ *See* Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing, para. 11.

⁷¹ Anoush Baghdassarian, *Assessing Attitudes of Syrian-Armenian Refugees toward Redress and Justice in Post-Conflict Syria* at 88 (May 2019)

⁷² *See id.* at 85.

⁷³ *See id.* at 104.

⁷⁴U.N. *Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation*, HR/PUB/10/3, at 7 (2010),

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights_en.pdf;

⁷⁵ See International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 1;

⁷⁶ U.N. Economic and Social Council, *Right of everyone to take part in cultural life (art. 15, para. 1 (a), of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)*, E/C.12/GC/21 (December 21, 2009), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4ed35bae2.html>

⁷⁷ Kenneth R. Rosen, *There's Been a Global Increase in Armed Groups. Can They Be Restrained?*, The New York Times, August 31, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/18/magazine/armed-groups-increase-sudan-icrc.html>.

⁷⁸ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2019) on the right to life, para. 7.

⁷⁹ Fabien Merz, *Adversarial Framing: President Bashar al Assad's Depiction of the Armed Syrian Opposition* (June 2, 2014), <https://jtr.st-andrews.ac.uk/articles/10.15664/jtr.881/print/>.

⁸⁰ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 35 (2014) on liberty and security of person, para. 7.

⁸¹ Interview with Garpis Arabatlian, et. al. (August 11, 2017), <https://www.rerooted.org/archive/garpis-arabatlian?rq=arabatlian>.