

# Reality and Challenges of Transitional Justice in Post-Assad Syria:

## A Community Approach





اليوم التالي  
لدعم الانتقال الديمقراطي في سوريا



THE DAY AFTER  
Supporting Democratic Transition In Syria

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## Introduction

Transitional justice in communities emerging from armed conflict is one of the most complex and sensitive issues, as it directly relates to rebuilding the state and reproducing legitimacy at political, social, and security levels. Communities exposed to high levels of violence and violations are not only faced with the challenge of remedying past crimes and violations but also the challenge of rebuilding trust between the community and institutions, redefining the state-citizen relation, and formulating a new social contract that prevents a return to past patterns of violence and tyranny. In this context, transitional justice is no longer understood as a mere legal accountability mechanism but as an overarching sociopolitical framework that overlaps with institutional reform, civil peace, reconstruction, national identity, development, and the management of collective memory.

The specificity of the Syrian case in this context is attributed to the complexity of the conflict the country has witnessed since 2011 and the large-scale violations, killings, arrests, forced disappearances, displacement, and systematic destruction of social, urban, and economic structures. This specificity is further accentuated by the geographic fragmentation, both political and military; multiplicity of local, regional, and international actors; and the overlap of military and security tracks with sectarian, regional, and economic structures. With the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, Syria ushered in a new transitional period in which the question of justice was no longer associated with accountability for the past, but also with the very management of political transition and the new state's ability to build a different legitimacy, reproduce more acceptable and effective institutions and prevent the resurgence of violence in new forms.

In this context, transitional justice has emerged as one of the most prominent issues in the Syrian community and in political debates, especially amid the growing debate on accountability, truth, security institution reform, victims' rights, property rights and return, guarantees of non-recurrence, and the justice-stability nexus. This Syrian debate, however, remained largely elitist, legal, or political, with few field studies identifying the attitudes of Syrian society itself towards transitional justice, especially after the major political transformations the country has undergone since late 2024.

This is where the significance of this study lies: as it offers an in-depth analysis of Syrian community attitudes towards transitional justice, based on a large-scale survey of more than 2,400 participants from diverse geographic, social, economic, ethnic, and sectarian backgrounds. The study's significance can be seen at various intertwined levels. First, it sheds light on genuine community attitudes towards accountability, institutional reform, reconciliation, and truth seeking. Second, it helps to understand the relation between justice and stability in Syrian consciousness. Third, it provides crucial indicators for decision-makers, transitional institutions, and local and international actors on the community's priorities and existing gaps in the Syrian transitional setting.

The study is all the more significant given that the Syrian community in the post-Assad era no longer addresses transitional justice as an abstract, symbolic, or legal question, but as an entry point for building both the state and society. The survey's preliminary findings indicate a clear correlation in the community's perceptions among justice and security, institutional reform and civil peace, and truth-telling and economic stability, making it essential to understand these perceptions for any sustainable transitional process.

Accordingly, the main problem in this study is to answer the following question:

**How does Syrian society perceive transitional justice after the fall of the Assad regime, and what interrelations do Syrians perceive among accountability, institutional reform, reconciliation, civil peace, and stability during the transitional period?**

Several sub-questions emanate from the above central question:

01

What are the Syrian community's perceptions of accountability and criminal prosecutions?

02

How do Syrians view the relationship between transitional justice and security and political stability?

03

What is the level of societal trust in transitional institutions, especially the transitional justice commission and the judiciary?

04

What are the priorities of Syrians in reparations, compensation, and truth seeking?

05

How do direct or indirect exposure to violations affect people's attitudes towards justice?

06

What is the relation between the social, economic, and political characteristics of participants and their attitudes towards transitional justice?

07

What are the main obstacles that Syrians believe obstruct the transitional justice process?

08

To what extent do Syrians believe social reconciliation is feasible after years of war?

09

How do Syrians view security reform and restructuring of security and military institutions?

10

What is the relation between transitional justice, reconstruction, and economic stability in Syrian collective consciousness?

In terms of the literature and existing studies, the present study benefited from several theoretical and practical approaches to transitional justice in post-conflict settings at the international and Syrian levels. From a theoretical point of view, the study relies on classical transitional justice literature, which examined the experiences of South Africa, Rwanda, Bosnia, Colombia, and Iraq. In particular, it relied on studies linking transitional justice to rebuilding legitimacy, institutions, and civil peace, including the work of Ruti Teitel and Priscilla Hayner, as well as reports from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and the UN Development Program (UNDP).

The study further benefits from literature on fragile and post-conflict settings, which assert that transitional justice does not succeed in isolation from institutional reform, economic development, and rebuilding societal trust. In the Syrian context in particular, the study relies on reports and outputs of Syrian and international organizations which have worked on transitional justice, missing persons, memory and accountability, in addition to studies which have tackled post-2011 Syrian socio-political transformations, especially those which focused on issues of displacement, communal violence, institutional disintegration and state rebuilding.

However, unlike many previous studies, the present study is not confined to legal or political approaches to transitional justice. Rather, it attempts to explore the direct societal dimension of justice by analyzing Syrian public opinion perceptions and linking them to the new transitional context after the fall of the regime.

Methodologically, the study employed a descriptive-analytical approach, using both qualitative and quantitative analysis tools. The study's main tool was a large-scale survey that targeted various strata of Syrian men and women and included questions on accountability, institutional reform, truth-seeking, reconciliation, national identity, socio-economic justice, and guarantees of non-recurrence. The study analyzed descriptive statistics to identify general trends and examined the relationships among social, political, and economic variables to understand their mutual impacts. Interpretive analysis was also used to understand the social and political implications of the findings in light of the Syrian transitional context, linking them to the broader transformations Syria is witnessing after the fall of Assad.

Also, the study used comparative analysis to compare findings from the Syrian case with experiences in other countries which have undergone different transitional justice processes, to understand the peculiarities of the Syrian case and the extent to which international experiences can be useful. The contextual approach was also used to link the survey findings to the current political, security, and social transformations in Syria, enabling a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of Syrian societal attitudes towards transitional justice.

# Transitional Justice: Overview of Country Experiences

Transitional justice is one of the most complex legal and political concepts in post-conflict settings, as it is no longer understood as merely a set of legal mechanisms for punishing perpetrators. Rather, it constitutes an overarching framework for managing political and social transformation and rebuilding the state, legitimacy, and public trust. Recent literature indicates that the success of transitional justice is associated with its ability to balance accountability and stability, justice and reconciliation, institutional reform and maintenance of state cohesion. In this context, scholar Ruti Teitel, in her book *Transitional Justice*, asserts that transitional justice is "justice associated with the political transformation moment," i.e., it differs from conventional justice because it operates in fragile and precarious settings where political, security, and social consideration overlap (Teitel, 2000).

Based on that, four major experiences were selected for comparative study. The selection was based on the diversity of transitional justice management patterns. South Africa represents the model of negotiated transition and reconciliation, while Rwanda followed the model of post-genocide justice and rebuilding the central state. Bosnia highlights the limitations of transitional justice in ethnically divided societies, while Iraq offers a model similar to the Syrian state in terms of state collapse, the collapse of security agencies, external interventions, and the complexity of rebuilding institutions.

## 01

## First: South Africa

### Truth as a gateway for rebuilding legitimacy

The experience of South Africa is one of the most commonly cited transitional justice experiences in contemporary literature as it was associated with the end of the Apartheid system in 1994 and the attempt to build a multi-ethnic state without slipping into civil war or waves of collective revenge. The “Truth and Reconciliation Committee” was established in 1995 and chaired by Bishop Desmond Tutu. It adopted the principle of ‘truth for conditional amnesty’ whereby some perpetrators were pardoned in exchange for a public and complete confession of the crimes committed during the Apartheid era.

In her book *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth*, researcher Priscilla Hayner explained that this experience aimed at rebuilding national legitimacy and preventing societal collapse more than focusing on large-scale punishment (Hayner, 2011). The committee succeeded in exposing thousands of violations and producing a relatively inclusive national narrative while helping mitigate potential retaliatory violence.

The South African experience, however, was widely criticized for the weak criminal accountability and the persistence of an imbalanced economic structure inherited from the Apartheid system. Mahmood Mamdani, in his book *When Victims Become Killers*, shows that focusing on symbolic reconciliation without profound socio-economic reform has limited transitional justice's ability to establish genuine equality in society (Mamdani, 2002). This is particularly important for the Syrian case, as the present survey's findings show that Syrians associate justice not only with accountability but also with restitution and socio-economic redress.

## 02

**Second: Rwanda****Justice between state rebuilding and collective memory regulation**

Rwanda's experience constitutes a different and more complicated model as transitional justice followed one of the most violent genocides in modern history in 1994, in which around 800 thousand people were killed in less than 100 days. After the genocide, the Rwandan state faced a challenge given the enormous number of victims and perpetrators, in addition to the almost complete collapse of institutions and social structures.

Rwanda adopted a multi-level approach including the International Special Tribunal for Rwanda, national courts, and traditional "Gacaca" courts, which were based on local community justice. In his book *The Gacaca Courts: Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, researcher Phil Clark explains that these courts aimed to expedite prosecutions and promote community recognition of the truth and local participation in justice (Clark, 2010).

Although Rwanda succeeded in stabilizing and rebuilding state institutions relatively quickly, the experience has sparked considerable debate about the relationship between justice and political power. Filip Reyntjens indicated in his book *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda* that the Rwandan state managed to enforce stability while simultaneously imposing tight control over the political sphere and collective memory, sometime associating transitional justice with the official national narrative (Reyntjens, 2013).

The significance of this experience for Syria lies in the challenges of managing collective memory amid the multiplicity of narratives about the war and violations, as well as the need to balance political stability with the preservation of multiplicity and community openness.

## 03

## Third: Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Limitations of international justice in divided societies

The experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina offers an important model for understanding the limitations of transitional justice in ethnically and religiously divided contexts. After the Bosnian war (1992-1995) and the genocide and ethnic cleansing crimes committed, the International Special Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was established to prosecute perpetrators of war crimes.

ICTY contributed to combating impunity and constituted a significant precedent in international criminal law. However, researcher Jelena Subotic clarified in her book *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans* that judicial justice in Bosnia remained largely separate from efforts to rebuild a common national identity, so ethnic and political divisions persisted even after the war (Subotic, 2009).

Sumantra Bose, in his book *Bosnia after Dayton*, pointed out that the Dayton Accord ended the war but reinforced the political structure based on ethnic allocation, enshrining division into the very nature of the political system itself (Bose, 2002).

This experience demonstrates that prosecutions alone are not enough to achieve reconciliation or rebuild trust, especially when the socio-political structure continues to be based on identity division. This is particularly important for Syria, as sectarian and regional tensions persist, with the risk of becoming a permanent feature of the new political system.

## 04

**Fourth: Iraq**

## Transitional justice between disintegration and chaos

The experience of Iraq is one of the closest experiences to Syria given the similarity of some elements of the transition ensuing the fall of a centralized authoritarian regime, extensive external interventions, and the disintegration of security and military institutions.

After 2003, the new Iraqi authorities -with US backing- adopted policies like 'de-Baathification' and dissolving the army and security agencies, in addition to founding the Higher Iraqi Criminal Court to prosecute officials of the previous regime. These policies, however, gave rise to complex outcomes, including a massive security vacuum, marginalization of broad social strata, and escalation of sectarian violence and insurgency.

In this context, the ICTJ report *A Bitter Legacy: Lessons of De-Baathification in Iraq* explains that extensive exclusionary and non-gradual policies contributed to the undermining of state institutions and to the reproduction of division rather than stabilization (Sissions & Al-Saiedi, 2013).

This experience carries crucial connotations for Syria, especially against the backdrop of current discussions of restructuring security and military institutions, dealing with the cadres associated with the former regime, and managing integration and accountability issues. The Iraqi experience shows that if transitional justice is managed with complete exclusion or disorganized dismantling, it may reproduce violence and instability.

The four experiences show that transitional justice does not follow a unified transferable model. Rather, it is a complex process shaped by the nature of the conflict, state structure, and socio-political factors. These experiences further demonstrate that the success of transitional justice is linked to its ability to strike a delicate balance between accountability and stability, justice and reconciliation, and institutional reform and the maintenance of a minimum level of state cohesion.

These comparative experiences affirm that ignoring the societal dimension of justice or reducing it to prosecutions alone may lead to the failure of transition or the reproduction of violence in new forms. Hence, the significance of the present study lies in its not being restricted to a legal or political approach. Rather, it attempts to explore Syrian community perceptions of transitional justice and link them to the new transitional context in the post-Assad Syria.

## Key Survey Findings

**90.26%**

of participants supported holding major trials during the transitional period, including trials in absentia for senior officials who have fled, reflecting an unprecedented and broad societal consensus for judicial accountability.

**81.68%**

demanded that accountability cover “all parties” and not just the Assad regime, which is an important indicator of a societal tendency to favor comprehensive and non-selective justice.

**81.06%**

Despite the importance of reconciliation, 81.06% affirmed that civil peace or reconciliation cannot be achieved without genuine progress in transitional justice, demonstrating that society does not view justice as an obstacle to stability but as a prerequisite for stability.

**69.93%**

The survey revealed that 69.93% believe that “weak popular political awareness” is the greatest obstacle to transitional justice, ranking even above the absence of political will and foreign interference, a striking result that reflects a societal recognition of the crisis in political education and civic participation.

The findings revealed that Syrians do not place “financial compensation” as their top priority for reparations. Instead, they prioritized “recovering rights and property,” followed by “psychological and social rehabilitation,” reflecting an advanced understanding of transitional justice that goes beyond the financial dimension alone.

**97%**

Nearly 97% supported giving women who have lost their breadwinners priority in compensation and economic support programs, one of the highest agreement rates in the study, reflecting high awareness of the gendered impacts of the conflict.

**90.55%**

considered hate speech one of the most dangerous obstacles to reconciliation and civil peace, an important indicator of Syrians' awareness of the danger of societal division and sectarian and media incitement.

**65.33%**

Despite divisions and the protracted war, 65.33% believed that societal reconciliation is still possible, reflecting relative social readiness to move beyond the conflict if justice and guarantees are provided.

**73.91%**

supported granting civil society organizations the right to monitor the new security institutions, indicating a clear desire to break the closed security model and strengthen community oversight.

Statistical relationships revealed that groups most exposed to violations tend to prioritize the security file and accountability, while lower-income groups tend to accept reconstruction even before documentation is complete, illustrating how personal and economic experiences shape attitudes toward transitional justice.

## Analysis of Survey Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of the sample are the primary entry point for understanding societal attitudes toward transitional justice in Syria after the fall of the Assad regime, as positions on accountability, reconciliation, or institutional reform cannot be read in isolation from the social, economic, and political composition of the participants. This sample is particularly important because it largely reflects the transformed structure of Syrian society after more than a decade of war, displacement, division, and institutional disintegration.

The data reveals that the sample not only reflects traditional demographic characteristics but also offers deep indicators about the nature of Syrian society after the war, a relatively young society affected by displacement and violations, suffering economic fragility, yet at the same time possessing a high degree of interest in public affairs and a desire to participate in shaping the future of the transitional period.

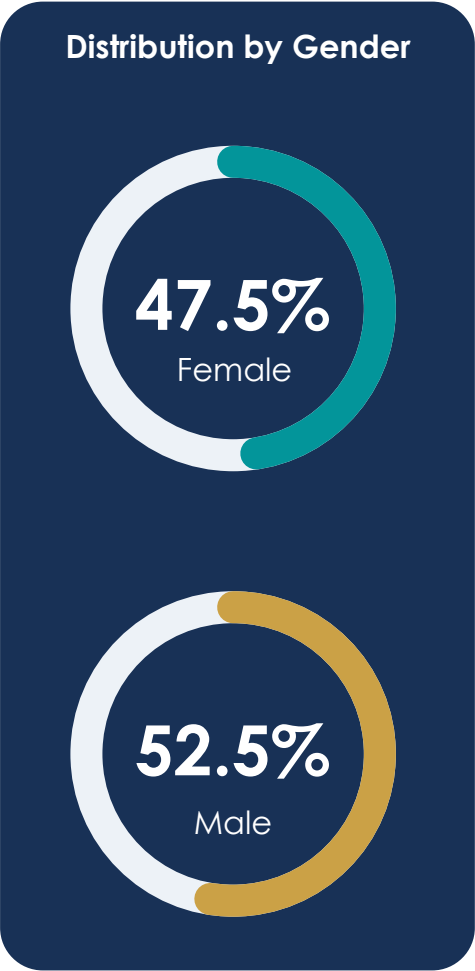
The findings also show that transitional justice in Syrian consciousness is no longer an abstract legal file but has become linked to the daily experience of Syrians: displacement, loss of property, violations, collective memory, economic security, and rebuilding trust in institutions.

# First: Distribution by Gender:

Female participants constitute 52.47% of the sample, compared to 47.53% for males, indicating a relative balance and providing the study with an important dimension for understanding the gendered representation of attitudes toward transitional justice.

This balance is particularly important in the Syrian context, where women during the war years played complex roles that transcended traditional social roles, whether by bearing new economic and social responsibilities, engaging in civil, human rights, and relief work, or by experiencing multiple patterns of violations, displacement, and loss.

Transitional justice literature also indicates that women often have approaches to justice and reconciliation that differ from men, as their priorities are more closely linked to community security, stability, services, and social and psychological reparations, rather than solely to criminal accountability.



## Distribution by Gender

| Gender | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|--------|------------------|----------------|
| Female | 1,277            | 52.5%          |
| Male   | 1,157            | 47.5%          |
| Total  | 2,434            | 100.0%         |

## Second: Distribution by Age Group:

---

The majority of participants were young and middle-aged, with the 25–34 age group accounting for 36.57%, followed by the 35–44 age group at 28.84%. These results reflect that the most engaged groups are those who lived through the largest portion of the conflict years directly, whether as students, activists, workers, displaced persons, or breadwinners. Consequently, their stances on transitional justice do not stem merely from theoretical frameworks but from lived experiences of violence, displacement, economic collapse, and political transformations.

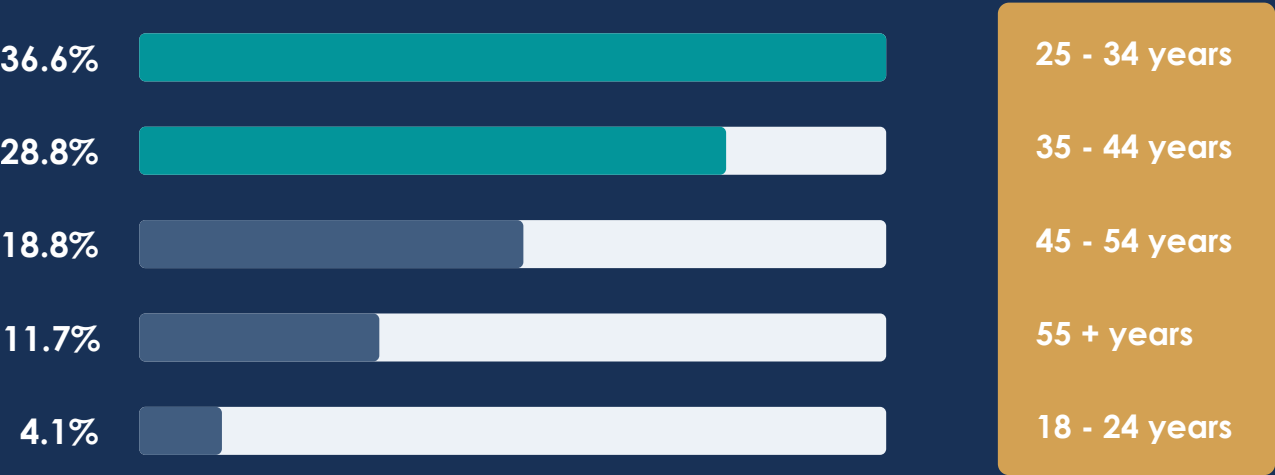
The findings also reveal that the generation most represented in the sample is the one whose political and social consciousness was formed during the years of the revolution and war, lending the study an important interpretive dimension for understanding the high level of interest in accountability, institutional reform, and guarantees of non-recurrence.

From a sociological perspective, younger and middle-aged groups are generally more sensitive to issues of political participation, justice, and institutional reconstruction, which are most closely linked to the state's future, job opportunities, and stability.

Distribution by Age Group

| Age Group     | Percentage (%) | Description                                  |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 25 - 34 years | 36.6%          | Highest representation                       |
| 35 - 44 years | 28.8%          | Generation of experience and responsibility  |
| 45 - 54 years | 18.8%          | Accumulated experience and supportive role   |
| 55 + years    | 11.7%          | Country's memory and witnesses of the era    |
| 18 - 24 years | 4.1%           | Building future and beginning of the journey |
| Total         | 100.0%         | —                                            |

Distribution by Age Group



## Third: Geographic Distribution and Place of Residence:

---

The results showed a concentration of participants in the governorates of Idlib (17.3%), Aleppo (17.17%), and Damascus countryside (14.09%). This reflects a significant presence of regions that witnessed waves of displacement, conflicts, and extensive military and political transformations during the years of conflict.

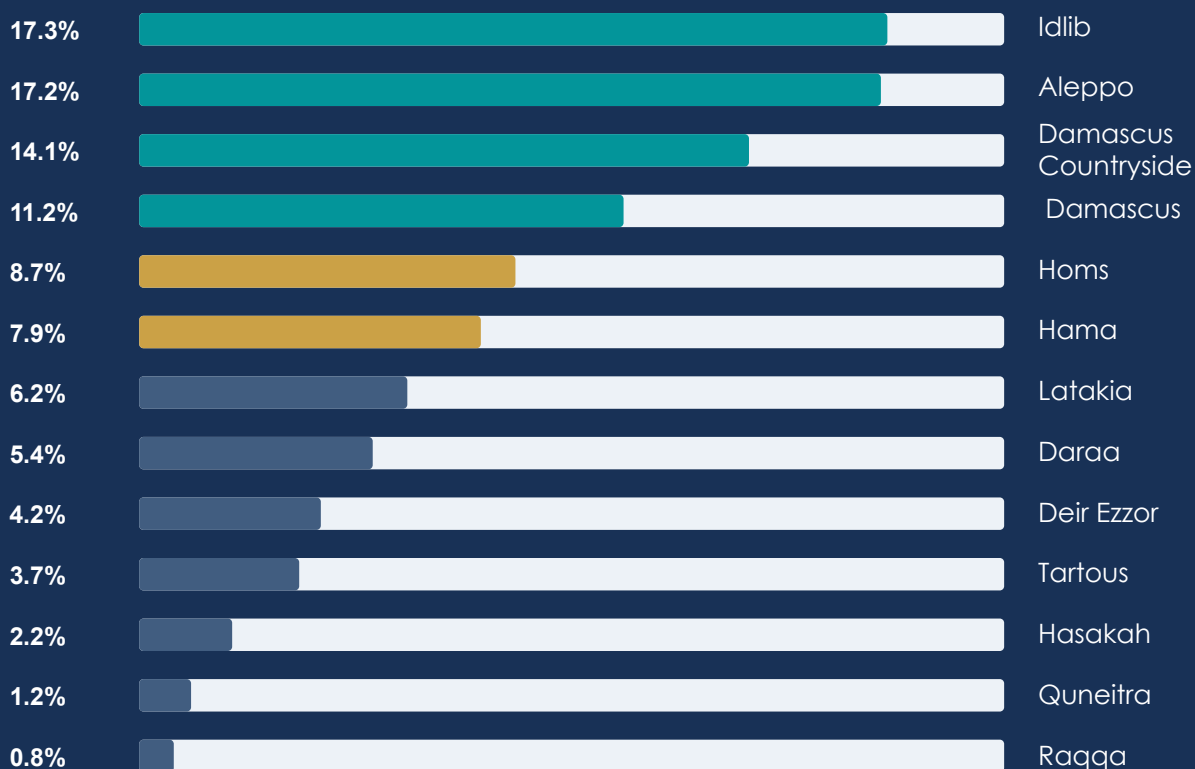
The data also reveal that residents of Idlib and Aleppo together constitute approximately 34% of the total sample, an important indicator of the presence of environments that have experienced rapid shifts in authority, military, and social spheres in recent years.

This geographical composition reflects that a substantial portion of the sample has firsthand experience with internal displacement, security violations, military shifts, administrative and institutional changes, and the collapse of services and infrastructure.

The distribution by governorate of origin also shows that Idlib and Aleppo were among the largest blocs within the sample, alongside central governorates such as Homs, Hama, Damascus, and Tartous, reflecting the continued effects of the demographic reshaping that Syria experienced during the war years.

## Distribution by Current Place of Residence

| Governorate          | Percentage of Participants (%) |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Idlib                | 17.30%                         |
| Aleppo               | 17.17%                         |
| Damascus Countryside | 14.09%                         |
| Damascus             | 11.20%                         |
| Homs                 | 8.73%                          |
| Hama                 | 7.88%                          |
| Latakia              | 6.19%                          |
| Daraa                | 5.42%                          |
| Deir Ezzor           | 4.20%                          |
| Tartous              | 3.70%                          |
| Hasakah              | 2.15%                          |
| Quneitra             | 1.17%                          |
| Raqqa                | 0.80%                          |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>100%</b>                    |



## Fourth: Current Housing Situation:

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The results indicate that the experience of displacement continues to have a clear toll on Syrian society, even with a relatively high proportion of those who have settled in their current places of residence.

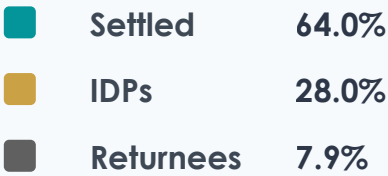
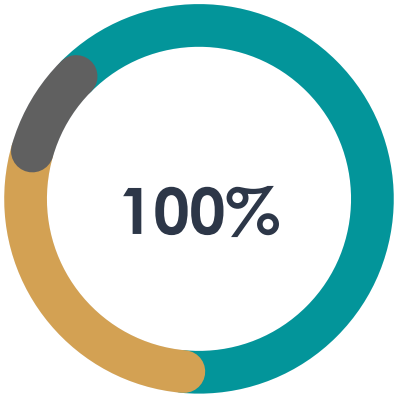
These findings reveal that the Syrian war not only produced a temporary displacement movement but also reshaped the demographic, social, and economic map of the country. Furthermore, the continuation of displacement or residential instability reflects persistent security concerns and low confidence in long-term stability.

The limited representation of refugees abroad compared to IDPs within Syria also shows that the societal center of gravity in the transitional period remains inside the country, and that issues of services, property, and reconstruction are directly linked to the reality of residents in the country.

Current Residence Status

| Residence Status | Percentage (%) | Description and Details                                                     |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Settled          | 64.0%          | Individuals living in their homes in relative stability                     |
| IDPs             | 28.0%          | Individuals internally displaced within Syria living in temporary residence |
| Returnees        | 7.9%           | Individuals who have returned to the country partially or completely        |
| Total            | 100.0%         | —                                                                           |

Sample  
Distribution by  
Residence  
Status



# Fifth: Ethnic and National Background:

The results showed that Arabs constituted the majority at 88.7%, followed by Kurds at 7.27%, then Assyrians/Syriacs and Turkmen at lower proportions.

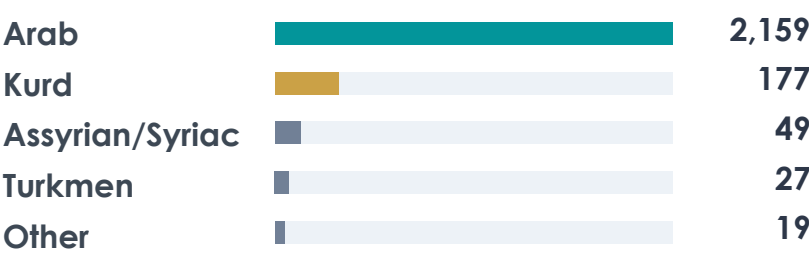
These percentages reflect the general demographic composition of Syrian society, but they also indicate representation from multiple national components, which is of great importance in studying transitional justice in a society that witnessed, a rise in sub-identities and regional and ethnic divisions during the years of conflict.

This also demonstrates that transitional justice in Syria cannot succeed through a unilateral or narrowly centralized approach but requires acknowledgment of social and cultural pluralism and the rebuilding of the concept of citizenship on the basis of equal partnership and inclusive rights.

## Ethnic/National Background

| Ethnic Component | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Arab             | 2,159            | 88.7%          |
| Kurd             | 177              | 7.3%           |
| Assyrian/Syriac  | 49               | 2.0%           |
| Turkmen          | 27               | 1.1%           |
| Other            | 19               | 0.9%           |
| Total            | 2,431            | 100.0%         |

## Ethnic and National Distribution



# Sixth: Religious and Sectarian Background:

Sunnis constituted the largest percentage of participants at 75.43%, while the remaining participants were distributed among Alawites, Christians, Druze, and other groups.

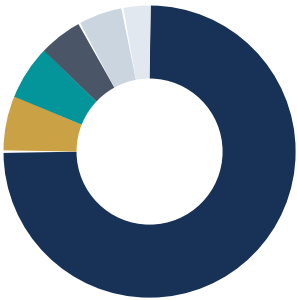
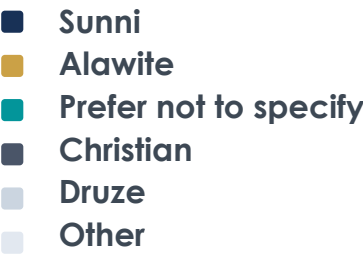
This composition reveals the presence of sectarian diversity within the sample, which is fundamental to understanding Syrians' perceptions of transitional justice in a society that witnessed high levels of sectarian and political polarization during the war years.

This also shows that transitional justice in Syria cannot be separated from issues of civil peace and rebuilding trust among societal components, especially since a large portion of Syrians has come to view justice as a tool for preventing the reproduction of violence and division.

## Stratification by Religion

| Religious Component   | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Sunni                 | 75.0%          |
| Alawite               | 6.0%           |
| Prefer not to specify | 6.0%           |
| Christian             | 5.0%           |
| Druze                 | 5.0%           |
| Other                 | 3.0%           |
| Total                 | 100.0%         |

Distribution of Religious Components



# Seventh: Educational Status:

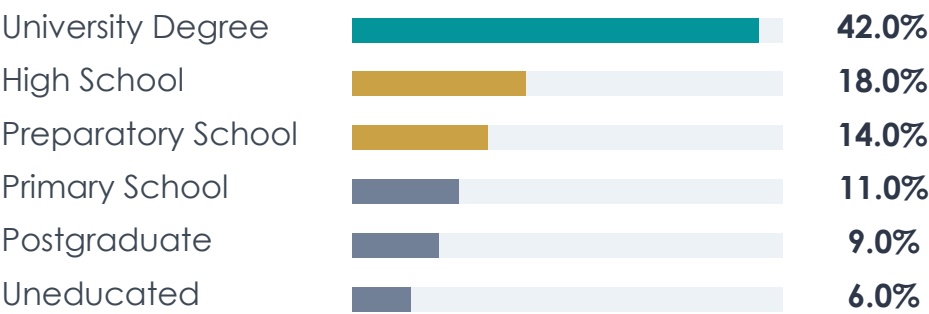
The results showed a high level of education within the sample, with university graduates accounting for 42.44%, and 8.79% holding postgraduate degrees.

This high level of education lends the study an important interpretive dimension, as higher educational attainment is generally associated with greater interest in public affairs, rights, justice, and political participation.

These results also indicate that a broad segment of participants possesses greater capacity to understand concepts related to transitional justice, such as accountability, institutional reform, and guarantees of non-recurrence.

## Participants by Education

| Educational Level  | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|----------------|
| University Degree  | 42.0%          |
| High School        | 18.0%          |
| Preparatory School | 14.0%          |
| Primary School     | 11.0%          |
| Postgraduate       | 9.0%           |
| Uneducated         | 6.0%           |
| Total              | 100.0%         |



## Eighth: Economic Status and Income Level:

---

38.25% reported that their income is barely enough, while 19.35% indicated they have no income or insufficient income, compared to only 11.26% who have a good income.

These results reflect the depth of the economic and social crisis Syrians are experiencing in the aftermath of the war years and reveal that the current transitional environment remains highly fragile.

From a transitional justice perspective, the continuation of economic deterioration may weaken trust in transitional institutions and increase the fragility of civil peace, especially if individuals feel that justice is not reflected in their daily lives or economic opportunities.



# Ninth: Employment and Primary Source of Income:

"Self-employment" ranked first at 29.95%, followed by government employment at 16.6% and wage labor at 14.95%, while unemployment rate was 12.57%.

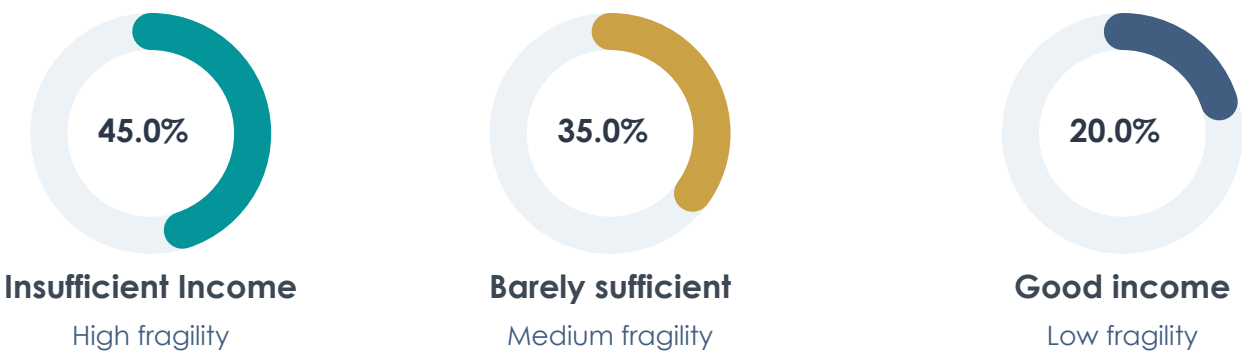
These results reflect the dependence of a broad segment of Syrians on unstable economic activity and freelancing and wage labor, revealing the fragility of the labor market and weak job security after the war years.

The results also indicate a decline in the public sector's capacity to play its traditional role as a primary source of socio-economic stability, alongside a rise in reliance on individual, flexible, and unstable economic activity.

## Economic Status and Fragility

| Income Status     | Percentage (%) | Level of Fragility and Implications                  |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Insufficient      | 45.0%          | High fragility: Does not cover basic needs           |
| Barely sufficient | 35.0%          | Medium fragility: Barely covers needs                |
| Good income       | 20.0%          | Low fragility: Easily covers needs and makes savings |
| Total             | 100.0%         | —                                                    |

## Economic Status of Sample



## Tenth: Personal Experience with Violations:

---

This variable shows that the Syrian war has become a comprehensive collective experience, and not merely an individual experience confined to direct victims. The following was reported:

**%50.94**

stated that they  
“witnessed  
violations.”

**%33.2**

stated that a  
family member  
was a victim.

**%18.57**

stated that  
they were  
direct victims.

This indicates that violations in Syria are no longer understood as individual events but have become part of the community's collective memory.

Contradictions in responses also reveal the complexity of the concept of “victim” in the Syrian context, where an individual may not consider themselves a direct victim despite having lived through the effects of war, witnessed violence, or lost family members.

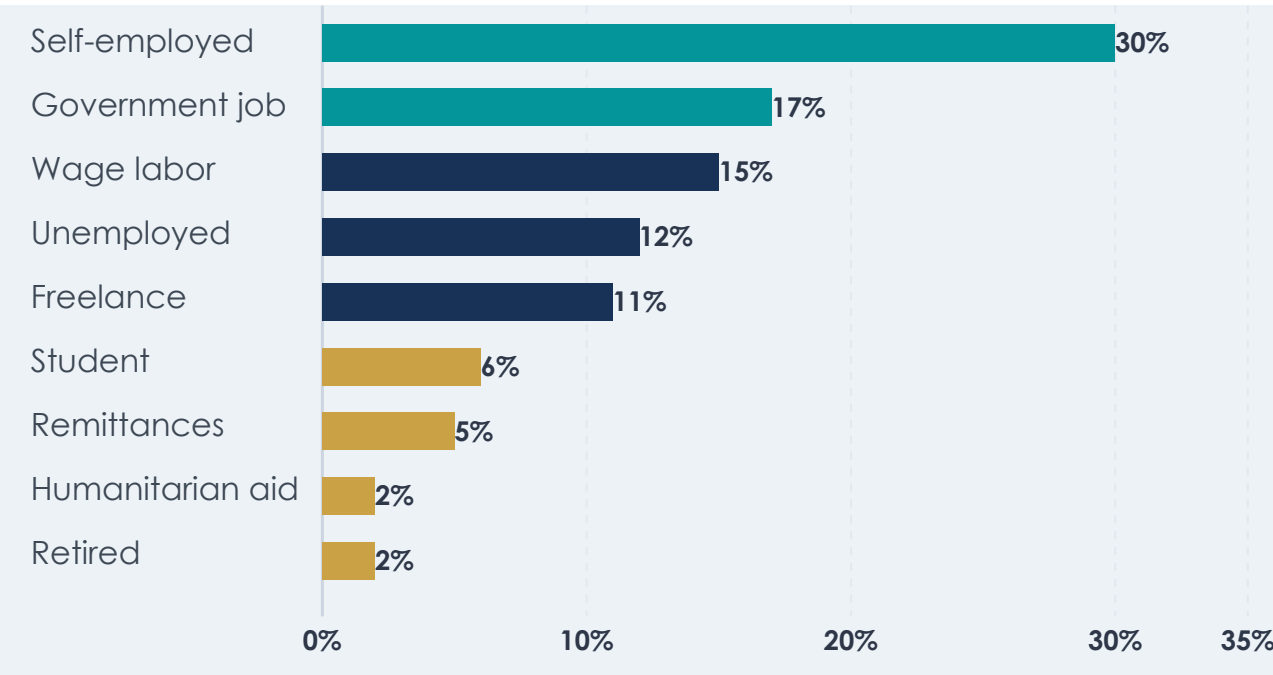
This finding is of great importance for transitional justice, as it reinforces the need for an approach that addresses “societal harm” rather than only individual harm.

Sample Modes of Employment

The percentage reflects the distribution of participants by current mode of employment

| Mode of Employment | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Self-employed      | 30%            |
| Government job     | 17%            |
| Wage labor         | 15%            |
| Unemployed         | 12%            |
| Freelance          | 11%            |
| Student            | 6%             |
| Remittances        | 5%             |
| Humanitarian aid   | 2%             |
| Retired            | 2%             |
| Total              | 100%           |

Sample Mode of Employment



## Eleventh: Political and Civic Participation:

61.42% of participants were interested in, followed, or participated in public affairs, compared to 24.4% who were not interested.

The percentage of civil activists was 19.88%, compared to only 2.83% for political activists.

These results reflect the continued weakness of trust in traditional partisan and political work in Syria, which is linked to the long legacy of security and political repression over the past decades.

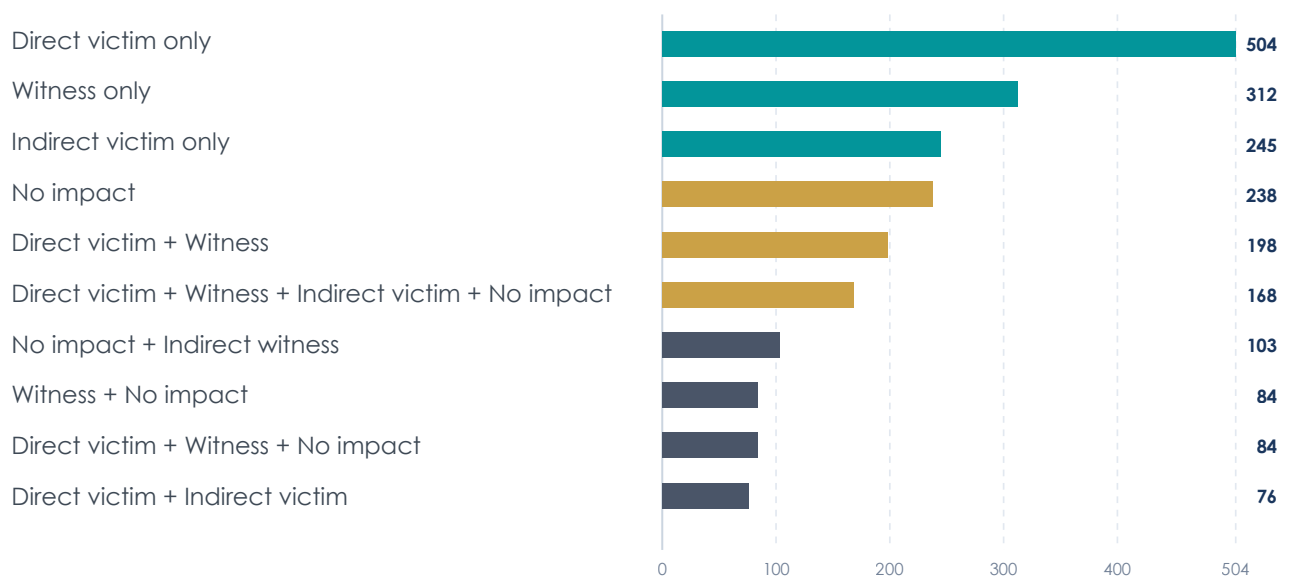
At the same time, the results reveal a growing importance of civil and community work as a more accepted and less polarizing space for Syrians.

### Sample Experience with Violations

*Numbers reflect number of individuals in each category or intersection thereof (levels of impact)*

| Category/Level of Impact                              | Number |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Direct victim only                                    | 504    |
| Witness only                                          | 312    |
| Indirect victim only                                  | 245    |
| No impact                                             | 238    |
| Direct victim + Witness                               | 198    |
| Direct victim + Witness + Indirect victim + No impact | 168    |
| No impact + Indirect witness                          | 103    |
| Witness + No impact                                   | 84     |
| Direct victim + Witness + No impact                   | 84     |
| Direct victim + Indirect victim                       | 76     |

### Distribution by levels of intersection and violations

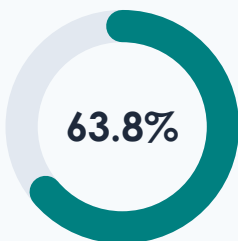


### Forms of Political and Civic Engagement

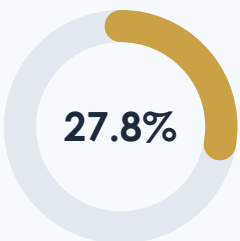
The data show the diversity of forms of participation with general interest as the most common form.

| Form of Participation                                                                                   | No. Participants |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| I'm interested/ I follow/ I participate (following, being interested or participating in public events) | 1,298            |
| Not interested (no interest, no following or no participation)                                          | 566              |
| I'm interested/ I follow/ I participate in civil activity (associations/ organizations)                 | 159              |
| I'm interested/ I follow/ I participate in political activity (parties/ commissions)                    | 8                |
| I'm interested/ I follow/ I participate in civil + political activity                                   | 4                |

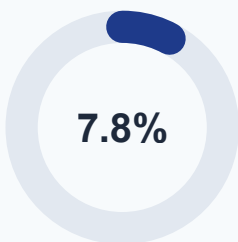
Number and Percentage of Participants by Form of Engagement



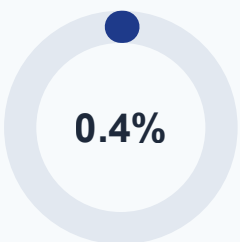
**I'm interested / I follow / I participate**  
(following, being interested or participating  
in public events)  
Count:1,298



**Not interested**  
(no interest, no following or  
no participation)  
Count:566



**I'm interested / I follow / I participate  
in civil activity**  
(associations / organizations)  
Count:159



**I'm interested / I follow / I participate  
in political activity**  
(parties / commissions)  
Count:8



**I'm interested / I follow / I participate  
in civil + political activity**  
Count:4

## Twelfth: Region of Displacement and Asylum:

---

The results showed that 45.65% are settled in their home areas, while 36.77% were displaced or fled from areas that were under regime control. These results reveal that displacement in Syria was not merely a population movement but has become a central part of the collective Syrian experience.

They also indicate that areas under the former regime were the largest source of displacement, reflecting the scale of violence and security and economic pressures that drove people to flee.

Regarding the timing of return or displacement, the results showed that 34.88% had been displaced for many years, while only 14.95% had returned after December 2024.

These results indicate the persistent caution and uncertainty despite recent political shifts. Return remains relatively limited compared to the scale of prolonged displacement. The results also reflect that a large portion of Syrians still links return decisions to multiple factors, including security, economic stability, legal guarantees, the future of institutions, and trust in the transitional period.

Place of Displacement/Return  
by Controlling Party

| Status/Control                      | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Settled in my home area             | 45%            |
| Displaced from regime-held area     | 37%            |
| Displaced from opposition-held area | 12%            |
| Displaced from SDF-held area        | 6%             |

Areas of Displacement  
and Return by  
Controlling Party



- Settled in my home area
- Displaced from regime-held area
- Displaced from opposition-held area
- Displaced from SDF-held area



In conclusion, the sample characteristics reveal that Syrian society after the fall of Assad is still living through a complex transitional state in which the effects of war are mingled with aspirations for rebuilding the state. The sample reflects a young, war-affected society that is diverse in terms of geography, sect, and ethnicity, burdened by displacement and violations, economically fragile, yet at the same time engaged in public affairs and in redefining its relationship with the state.

The results also show that transitional justice in Syrian consciousness is no longer merely an elitist or legal issue, but has become directly linked to questions of security, property, return, trust, institutional reform, civil peace, and economic stability. Consequently, any approach to transitional justice in Syria that does not take into account this complex social structure will face significant difficulties in achieving sustainable stability or rebuilding legitimacy and public trust.



# Community Perception of Elements of Transitional Justice in Syria

## I. Criminal Accountability and Prosecutions

The findings under this theme reveal that criminal accountability continues to occupy a central position in Syrian collective consciousness after the fall of the Assad regime. The findings also show that Syrians have become more sensitive to the idea of “selective justice” or “unconditional settlements,” and that they tend toward an approach that views justice and stability as complementary rather than contradictory.

In the Syrian context, these trends cannot be separated from the nature of the historical experience that Syrians have lived through since 2011, where widespread violations accumulated and security, military, sectarian, and economic dimensions became intertwined, making the demand for accountability transcend a rights-based demand to become a political, societal, and moral demand linked to redefining the state itself. Furthermore, the fall of the regime in December 2024 opened space for the debate to shift from the question of “the possibility of justice” to “how to implement justice,” a deeply important shift in environments emerging from conflict.

# First: The Relationship Between Judicial Accountability and National Reconciliation

The findings showed that the majority of participants reject the approach that separates justice from reconciliation, emphasizing the need to combine accountability with societal stability, reflecting a relatively advanced awareness of transitional justice as a complex process that is neither based on revenge nor on silent settlements.

This indicates that Syrian society has come to recognize that reconciliation not grounded in truth and accountability becomes a temporary truce susceptible to explosion, while punitive justice divorced from societal considerations produces new cycles of tension and violence. Therefore, the general mood within the sample appears to lean toward a model of “restorative justice conditioned on accountability” rather than “blanket amnesty” or “total retribution.”

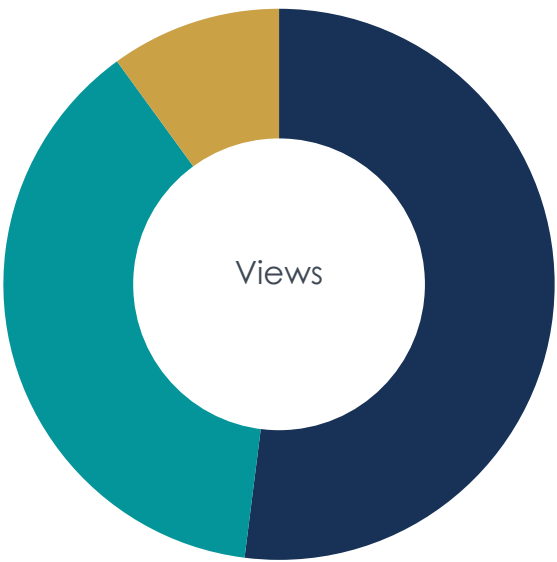
This indicator is particularly important in the Syrian case because the long war years created high levels of violent memory and local divisions, meaning that any reconciliation process that bypasses accountability will be interpreted socially as a reproduction of impunity, which threatens the legitimacy of the transitional period itself.

## Relation Between Judicial Accountability and Reconciliation

*The findings indicate significant community awareness of the importance of balancing justice and reconciliation to achieve stability and build a sustainable and just future*

| View                                                                  | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| The two tracks must be separated and initiated in parallel            | 52%            |
| Judicial accountability must be prioritized                           | 38%            |
| National reconciliation takes precedence over judicial accountability | 10%            |

Relation Between Judicial Accountability and National Reconciliation



|                                                                                     |                                                                       |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
|  | The two tracks must be separated and initiated in parallel            | 52% |
|  | Judicial accountability must be prioritized                           | 38% |
|  | National reconciliation takes precedence over judicial accountability | 10% |

## Second: Inclusion of all Parties in Accountability Mechanisms

---

The findings on the question of including all parties involved in grave crimes in accountability mechanisms reveal one of the most important political and social indicators in the study, with the majority expressing clear support for non-selective justice that encompasses all parties involved in violations.

This finding reflects an important shift in Syrian consciousness, as a broad sector of society no longer accepts the idea of “victor’s justice,” but links the legitimacy of justice to its ability to treat violations as criminal acts regardless of the perpetrator. This also reflects societal fatigue stemming from the political and military divisions that characterized the war years.

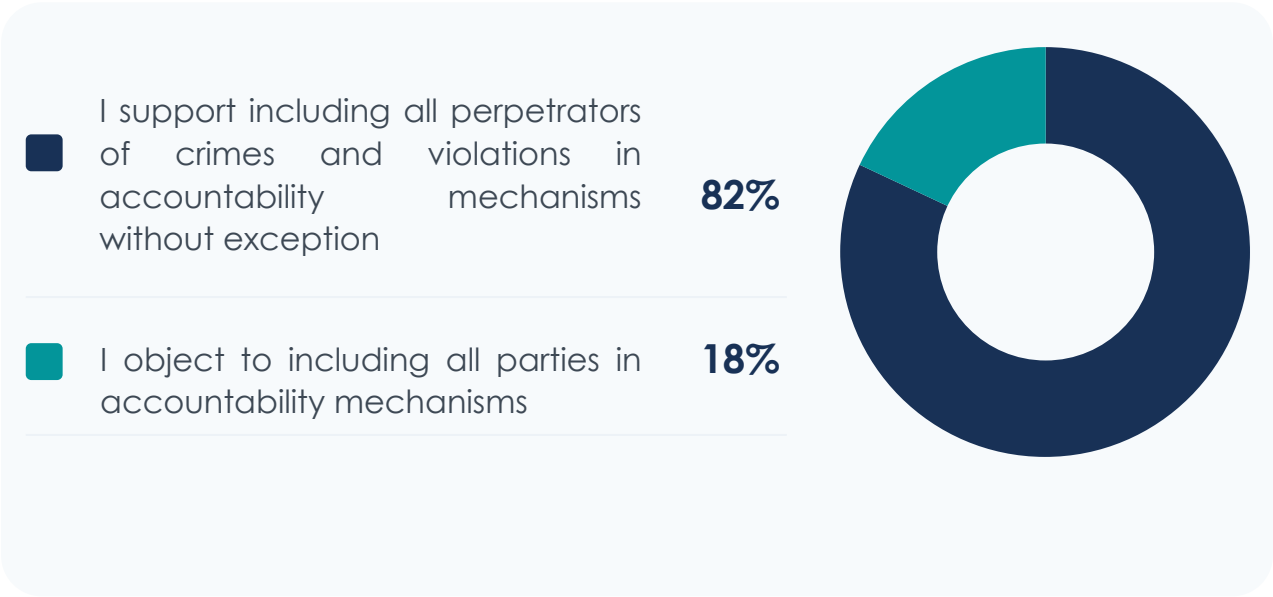
The results also indicate a growing recognition that if transitional justice becomes a tool for the political settling of scores, it will lose its capacity to produce stability and may even contribute to the reproduction of grievance and violence. The demand for comprehensive justice, therefore, appears linked to a desire to rebuild the concept of an impartial state and a non-politicized judiciary.

From a political standpoint, this indicator poses a direct challenge to the institutions of the transitional period, as it means that any clear bias in accountability mechanisms may lead to a decline in societal trust in the entire transitional process.

Sample View of Including All Parties in Accountability

The findings indicate a broad tendency to comprehensive, non-selective justice and awareness that transitional justice loses its legitimacy if it is biased

| Position                                                                                                     | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| I support including all perpetrators of crimes and violations in accountability mechanisms without exception | 82%            |
| I object to including all parties in accountability mechanisms                                               | 18%            |



## Third: Expanding the Mandate of Transitional Justice to Include Violations Related to the Coast and Suwayda

---

The results showed that 75.18% of participants support expanding the mandate of transitional justice to include violations related to events in the Coast and Suwayda, a highly significant finding because it reveals that society does not want to reduce transitional justice to crimes of the former regime alone but wants to build a continuous mechanism capable of addressing any new violations during the transitional period.

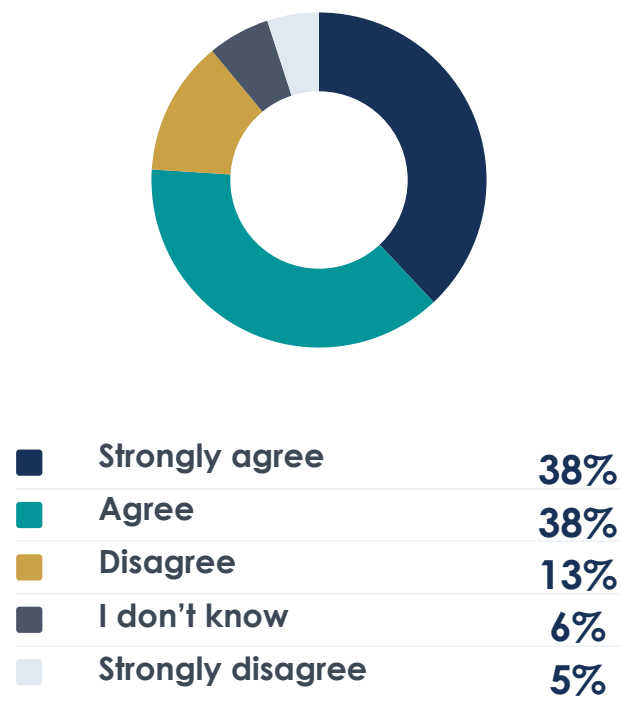
This indicates that Syrians have become more sensitive to the idea of “durability of justice,” meaning that justice is not an event confined to the past but a permanent framework for protecting the public sphere and preventing the recurrence of violations. The results also reflect an awareness that the transitional period itself may produce new violations if effective oversight and accountability mechanisms are not put in place.

This finding is highly sensitive in the current Syrian context because the events of the Coast and Suwayda were linked to complex security, societal, and sectarian tensions, meaning that ignoring them or excluding them from justice mechanisms could be interpreted as a double standard.

**Sample View on Expanding Transitional Justice Mandate to Include Violations in the Coast and Suwayda**

*The majority of participants (75.18%) believe it is necessary to expand the mandate of transitional justice to include violations in the Coast and Suwayda (agree+ strongly agree)*

| View              | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree    | 38%            |
| Agree             | 38%            |
| Disagree          | 13%            |
| I don't know      | 6%             |
| Strongly disagree | 5%             |



## Fourth: Support for International or Hybrid Courts

---

The study findings show that 78.55% of participants support establishing international or hybrid courts to prosecute perpetrators of grave crimes, a high percentage reflecting a clear crisis of trust in the domestic judiciary acting alone.

This indicator does not appear to be linked to a rejection of the national judiciary so much as to fear of the continued influence of old political and security networks within judicial institutions, in addition to concern about potential political pressures on the course of prosecutions.

This finding also reflects societal awareness that the crimes committed during the Syrian war are broad, complex, and cross-border, and that addressing them requires standards of integrity and independence that may not be fully available in local institutions at present.

At the same time, support for hybrid courts does not necessarily indicate a desire for the complete internationalization of justice; rather, it appears to be a search for “additional guarantees” that enhance confidence in the trials, especially in major cases involving war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On Establishing International or Hybrid Courts

78% of participants support the establishment of international or hybrid courts to prosecute those responsible for crimes and violations (agree+ strongly agree)

| Position          | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree    | 40%            |
| Agree             | 38%            |
| Disagree          | 13%            |
| Don't know        | 4%             |
| Strongly disagree | 5%             |

Establishing International and Hybrid Courts

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree    | 40% |
| Agree             | 38% |
| Disagree          | 13% |
| Don't know        | 4%  |
| Strongly disagree | 5%  |



## Fifth: Obstacles to the Syrian Judiciary's Capacity to Conduct Fair Trials

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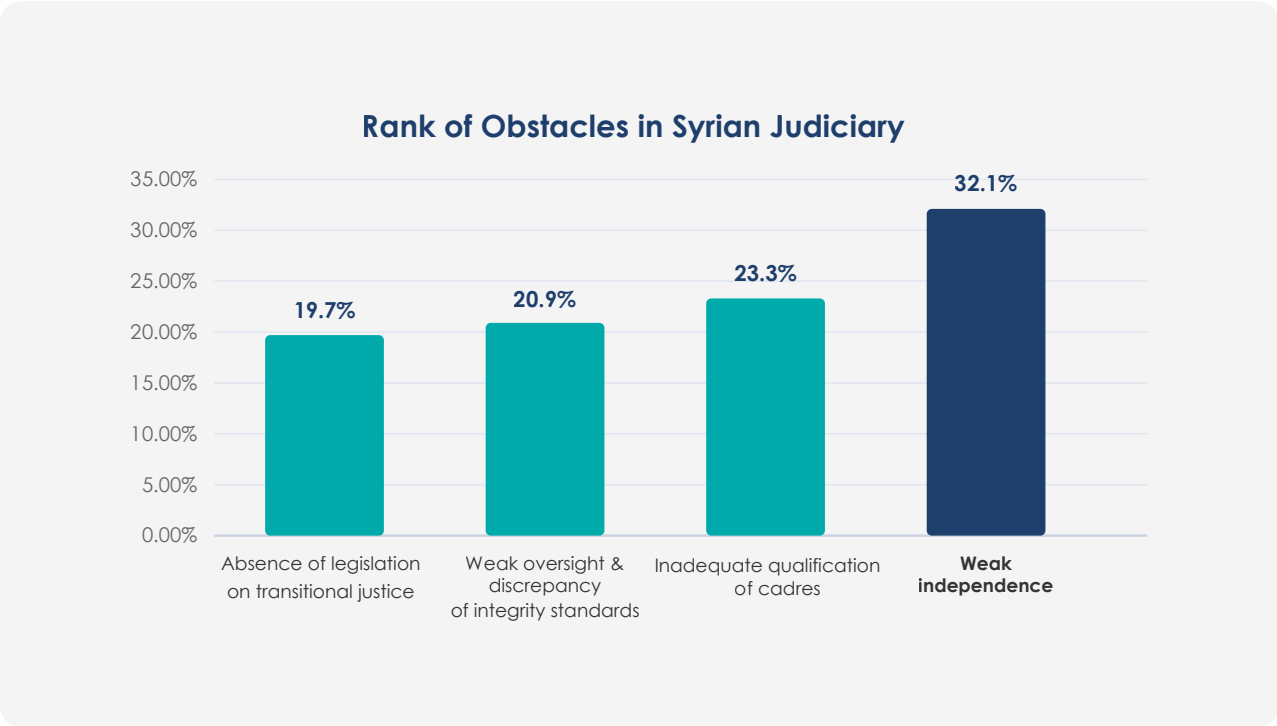
The results for the “first choice” showed that participants considered weak judicial independence the foremost obstacle to fair trials at 32.95%, a highly significant indicator because participants did not place a lack of laws or technical capabilities in first place but instead focused on the political and institutional structure of the judiciary.

This finding reveals that the crisis of the judiciary in Syrian consciousness is not merely a crisis of competence, but a crisis of legitimacy and independence. For decades, the Syrian judiciary was linked to the security apparatus and executive authority, leading to an erosion of trust in its function as a guarantor of rights.

The findings also indicate that Syrians recognize that judicial reform is not limited to amending laws or training judges but requires rebuilding the relationship between the judiciary and political authority, ensuring the independence of public prosecutions and courts, and redefining the role of security services within the justice system.

Rank of Obstacles in Syrian Judiciary

| Rank | Obstacle                                              | Percentage (%) |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1    | Weak independence                                     | 32.1%          |
| 2    | Inadequate qualification of cadres                    | 23.3%          |
| 3    | Weak oversight and discrepancy of integrity standards | 20.9%          |
| 4    | Absence of legislation on transitional justice        | 19.7%          |



This finding also carries an important political implication, as it means that the success of transitional justice in Syria is directly linked to reforming the judicial institution, and not merely to establishing temporary bodies or committees.

# Sixth: Evaluation of Judicial Reform Steps

Although 58.51% agreed that tangible reform steps exist within the judiciary, the fact that approximately one-third of participants were not convinced by these reforms reflects persistent hesitation and societal caution.

This finding reveals that society is monitoring the course of judicial reform but has not yet reached a level of trust sufficient to fully recognize the seriousness of the institutional transformation. It also suggests that current reforms are being read as “initial steps” more than a complete structural transformation.

This is linked to the nature of the transitional period itself, in which state institutions are still being reshaped and some old networks remain within the administrative, and judicial structures, which explains the persistence of popular concern.

## Evaluation of Judicial Reform Steps

| View                         | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Agree (tangible steps)       | 58.51%         |
| Disagree (no tangible steps) | 29.74%         |
| Don't know                   | 11.75%         |

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| ■ Agree (tangible steps)       | 58.51% |
| ■ Disagree (no tangible steps) | 29.74% |
| ■ Don't know                   | 11.75% |



# Seventh: Concerns About Amnesty for Violators

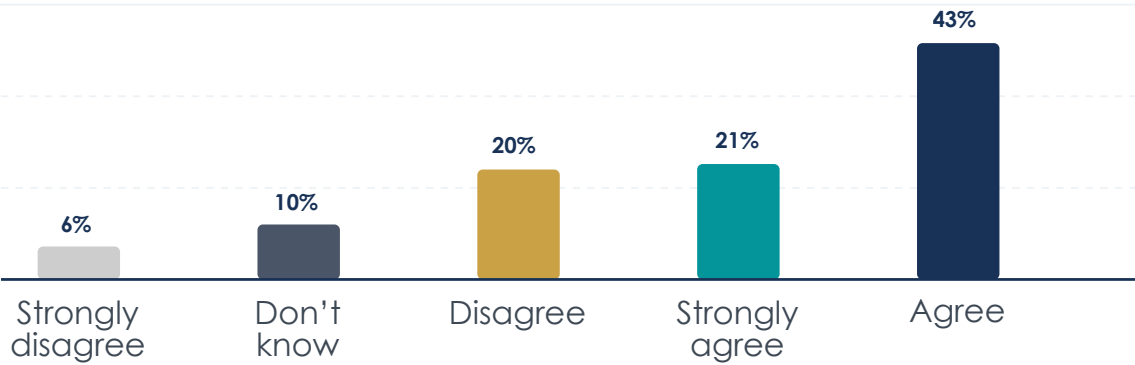
The study findings reveal that 63.85% believe the current government is pursuing a policy of amnesty or settlements with violators, including those implicated in grave crimes. This is an extremely sensitive indicator because it reflects a genuine trust gap between society and the authority in the accountability file.

These concerns appear to be linked to the political and economic context of the transitional period, in which settlements with some security and economic figures associated with the former regime emerged as part of approaches aimed at preserving stability or avoiding institutional collapse.

However, the findings indicate that a broad sector of Syrians views these settlements as a threat to the legitimacy of justice and fears that they may become a gateway to reproducing old networks of influence within the new state.

## Community Concerns about Amnesty for Violators

| Position towards Amnesty                                     | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Agree (threat to justice and reinforcement of impunity)      | 43.0%          |
| Strongly agree (hinders accountability and prevents justice) | 21.0%          |
| Disagree (Not acceptable before justice is achieved)         | 20.0%          |
| Don't know (not sure of implications)                        | 10.0%          |
| Strongly disagree (may help turn the page of the past)       | 6.0%           |



## Eighth: Evaluation of Settlements with Figures Linked to the Assad Regime

56.99% rejected the view that recent settlements with economic or security figures linked to the former regime actually aim to achieve civil peace, reflecting a sharp societal division over the legitimacy of these policies.

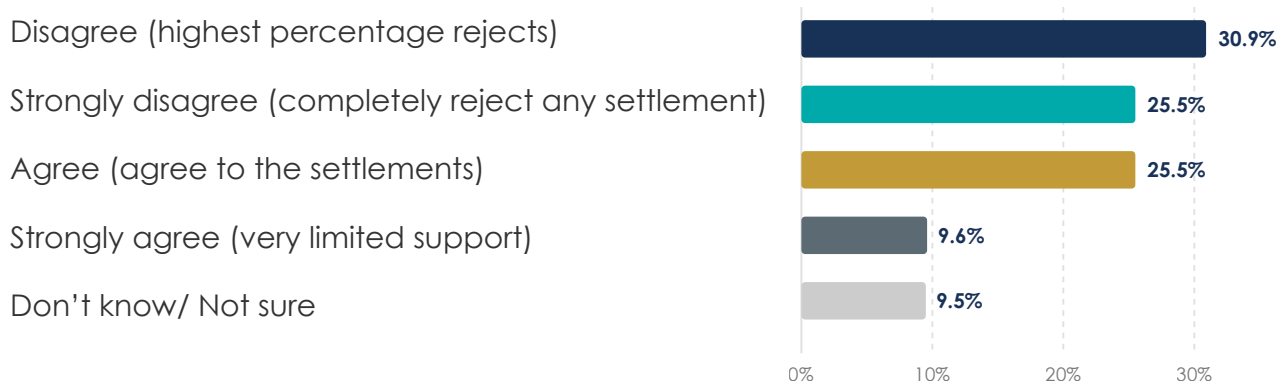
This indicator reveals that the concept of “stability” itself remains contested within Syrian society. While some elites view settlements as necessary to avoid collapse or maintain the economy, a broad sector of society views them as a threat to the course of justice and as a reproduction of the old system.

The findings also indicate that Syrians have become more sensitive to the relationship among money, power, and security, and that they associate economic corruption with the former authoritarian structure rather than merely with financial violations.

### Evaluation of Settlements with Figures Associated with the Assad Regime

| Position towards Settlements                         | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Disagree (highest percentage rejects)                | 30.9%          |
| Strongly disagree (completely reject any settlement) | 25.5%          |
| Agree (agree to the settlements)                     | 25.5%          |
| Strongly agree (very limited support)                | 9.6%           |
| Don't know/ Not sure                                 | 9.5%           |

### Evaluation of Settlements with Figures Associated with Assad Regime Percentage(%)



# Ninth: Broad Support for Major Trials

This question was among the most conclusive indicators in the study, as more than 90% of participants supported holding major trials during the transitional period, including trials in absentia for senior officials who have fled.

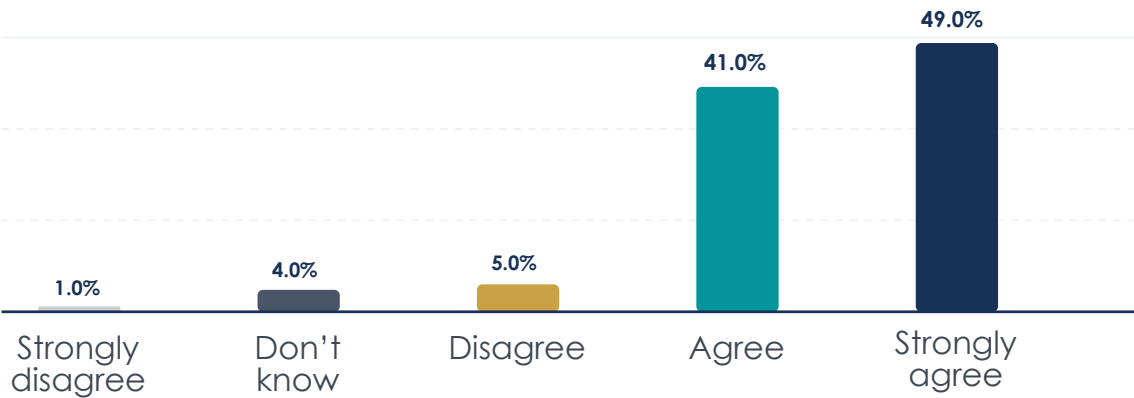
This finding reflects that the demand for accountability remains the “greatest common denominator” in the general Syrian mood, and that society views major trials as a necessary symbolic and political step to declare a break with the era of impunity.

The findings also suggest that society is not content with administrative reform or economic reconstruction alone but also seeks “symbolic justice” that redefines the boundaries of political and moral legitimacy for the new state.

## Holding Major Trials During the Transitional Period as of 2026

| Position          | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree    | 49.0%          |
| Agree             | 41.0%          |
| Disagree          | 5.0%           |
| Don't know        | 4.0%           |
| Strongly disagree | 1.0%           |

## Holding major trials during the transitional period as of 2026 Percentage (%)



## Tenth: The Relationship Between Corruption and the Security File

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The findings showed that 65.94% of participants prefer addressing the security and financial files in parallel, an extremely important indicator because it reflects an interconnected societal understanding of the nature of the former regime and its mechanisms of operation.

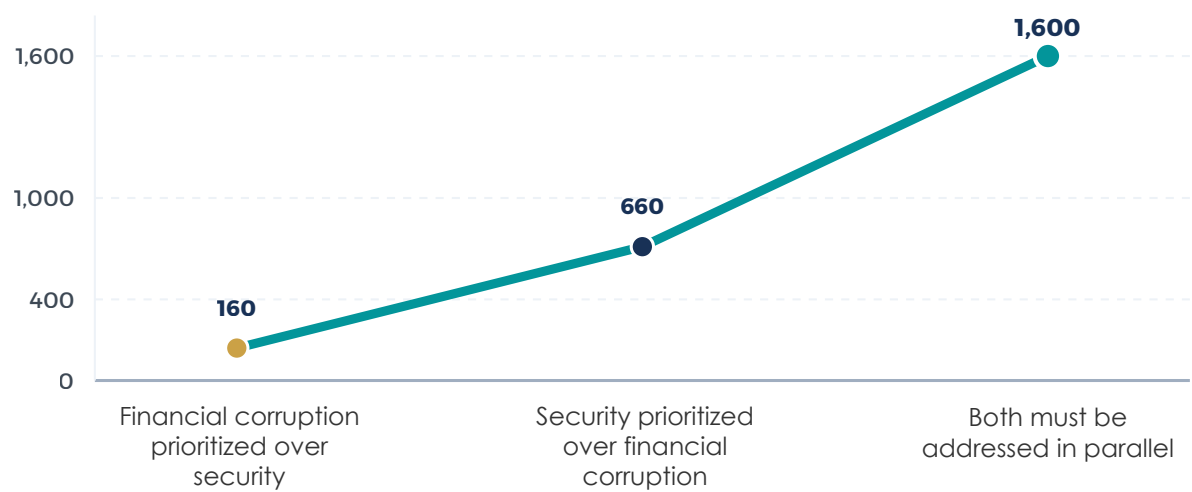
Syrians do not view corruption as a mere administrative malfunction separate from security authoritarianism but consider it part of the authoritarian structure itself. Therefore, a broad sector of society appears convinced that genuine reform requires dismantling corruption networks in parallel with reforming the security service.

This finding also reveals a heightened awareness of the relationship between economic and political justice, a fundamental issue in post-conflict environments, where ignoring the economic dimension of justice often reproduces tensions and instability.

Relation Between Corruption and Security

| Priority                                       | No. Participants |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Both must be addressed in parallel             | 1,600            |
| Security prioritized over financial corruption | 660              |
| Financial corruption prioritized over security | 160              |

Relation between Corruption and Security No. Participants



## II. Truth-Seeking, Memory, and Reparations

The findings under this theme indicate that Syrians do not view transitional justice as a purely judicial path, but as a comprehensive social, political, and moral process aimed at reconstructing truth, restoring collective memory, recognizing victims, and recovering material and immaterial rights. The findings demonstrate that Syrian society explicitly links truth-seeking to accountability, rejecting the reduction of documentation and recognition to symbolic procedures detached from genuine justice.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the experience of prolonged war and its accompanying mass displacement, property confiscation, enforced disappearance, and the collapse of institutional trust has driven Syrians to adopt a broad conception of transitional justice that transcends legal punishment to encompass the restoration of dignity, memory, and socio-economic rights. In this context, issues of property, compensation, documentation, symbolic recognition, and the management of public memory emerge as interconnected elements in society's perception of the meaning of "justice" following the regime's fall.

## First: The Primary Objective of Truth Commissions

---

The findings showed that 86.85% of participants believe the primary objective of truth commissions should be to document violations and advance accountability, which is one of the highest consensus rates in this theme. This result reflects a clear rejection of the dissociation of truth from justice or the treatment of truth commissions as a substitute for judicial accountability.

These data indicate that Syrians do not merely seek to “archive pain”; rather, they want documentation to be transformed into a political and legal tool that prevents impunity and establishes a new legitimacy grounded in recognizing victims and holding perpetrators accountable. It appears that the Syrian society, following long years of official denial and media disinformation, has come to view truth as a public and collective right, rather than a mere technical data collection process.

The results also reflect a growing awareness that the absence of truth not only leads to the loss of victims' rights but also allows for the reproduction of conflicting narratives and societal divisions. Therefore, in the Syrian imagination, truth commissions are envisioned as an integral part of rebuilding a shared national memory, not just a legal instrument.

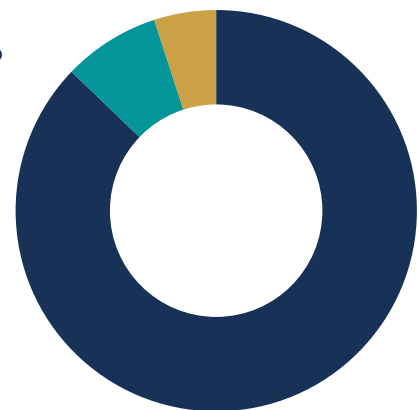
This finding carries additional significance in the Syrian context because a major portion of the violations was linked to enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and the utilization of official narratives to deny or justify crimes. This has rendered “truth-seeking” a prerequisite for rebuilding trust in the public sphere and the new state.

### The Primary Objective of Truth Commissions

| Objective                                                                                | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Documenting violations and narratives and holding perpetrators accountable               | 87.0%          |
| Documenting violations and narratives without focusing on accountability of perpetrators | 9.0%           |
| Don't know/ small percentage did not specify                                             | 4.0%           |

### The Primary Objective of Truth Commissions Percentage (%)

- Documenting violations and narratives and holding perpetrators accountable 87.0%
- Documenting violations and narratives without focusing on accountability of perpetrators 9.0%
- Don't know/ small percentage did not specify 4.0%



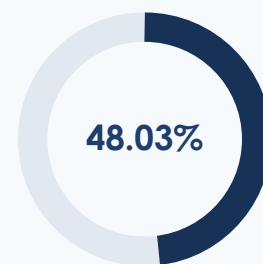
## Second: Official Recognition of Violations Following the Fall of the Regime

The findings show that 48.03% of participants view the official recognition of violations as an important principle for truth-seeking, while 33.57% believe that this recognition requires legal and institutional enactment. This reflects a societal awareness that symbolic recognition alone is insufficient.

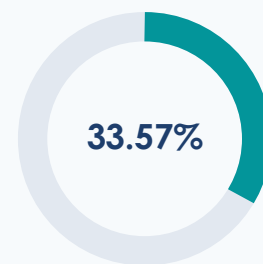
This result reveals that Syrians distinguish between “political recognition” and “genuine justice.” While official recognition is viewed as a crucial step toward breaking historical denial, a significant segment of society sees no real value in it unless it is accompanied by tangible measures, such as trials, institutional reform, victim compensation, and the restitution of rights.

This indicator is particularly important in the Syrian context because the former regime relied for decades on denying or justifying violations, making official recognition carry a highly sensitive symbolic dimension. However, the study's results clarify that Syrian society has moved past being satisfied with mere symbolism and is now demanding that recognition be translated into public policies and legal reforms.

The findings also indicate that Syrians fear official recognition could be used as a tool to “absorb public anger” or as a political discourse that yields no genuine change in the structure of power and institutions.



**Important  
Principle**



**Institutional  
Enactment**

### Official Recognition of Violations After Regime Fall

| Type of Recognition                                                        | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Essential truth-seeking and trust-building principle                       | 48.0%          |
| Political act whose legal and institutional implications must be fulfilled | 34.0%          |
| Mere formality with no value unless accompanied by practical steps         | 18.0%          |

### Official recognition of violations after regime fall Percentage (%)

- Essential truth-seeking and trust-building principle 48.0%
- Political act whose legal and institutional implications must be fulfilled 34.0%
- Mere formality with no value unless accompanied by practical steps 18.0%



## Third: Priorities for Compensation and Reparation Programs

---

The responses to this question reveal one of the most profound findings of the study, showing that the primary priority for Syrians is material compensation (approximately 55%), followed by the restitution of fundamental rights -particularly the return of property and civil and political rights- at 41.62%.

This result indicates that Syrians view the damage left by the war realistically, as an economic detriment coupled with the effects of uprooting, deprivation, and the loss of legal and social status. Therefore, issues of property, return, the restitution of civil rights, and direct financial compensation emerge as central and urgent matters.

Furthermore, psychological, social, and health rehabilitation services ranked high at 34.51%. This is an indicator of critical importance, as it reflects a shift in societal awareness regarding the psychological and social impacts of war, particularly after long years of violence, displacement, and family fragmentation.

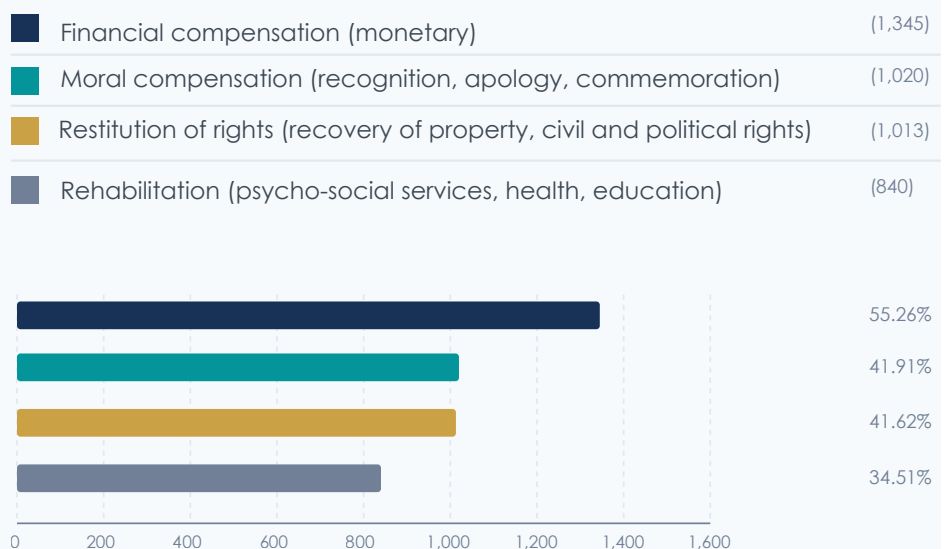
As for moral compensation, such as an official apology and recognition of victims, it ranked in the mid-to-high range. This demonstrates that while the symbolic dimension is important to Syrians, it comes secondary to the restitution of fundamental rights and guarantees of stability.

These findings have significant implications for the transitional phase; they indicate that reparation programs in Syria cannot succeed unless they adopt an approach that couples financial compensation with property restitution policies, the reform of real estate registries, the psychological and social rehabilitation of victims, and guarantees of safe return.

### Priorities for Compensation and Reparation Programs

| Program/Priority                                                         | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Financial compensation (monetary)                                        | 1,345            | <b>55.26%</b>  |
| Moral compensation (recognition, apology, commemoration)                 | 1,020            | <b>41.91%</b>  |
| Restitution of rights (recovery of property, civil and political rights) | 1,013            | <b>41.62%</b>  |
| Rehabilitation (psycho-social services, health, education)               | 840              | <b>34.51%</b>  |

#### Priorities for Compensation and Reparation Programs



## Fourth: Prioritizing Female-Headed Households in Compensation Programs

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The results demonstrate near-universal consensus on the need to prioritize women who have lost their primary breadwinner in compensation and economic support programs, with an approval rate of approximately 97%.

This outcome reflects a broad societal awareness of the gendered impacts of the Syrian war, as vast numbers of women became the primary breadwinners for their families after losing husbands, fathers, or sons to killing, detention, enforced disappearance, or displacement.

The findings also reveal a growing recognition that women who have lost their breadwinners constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in the transitional phase, not only economically, but also in terms of social protection, access to services, employment opportunities, and legal rights.

Moreover, this indicator shows that Syrian society has become more accepting of the concept of “gender-sensitive justice”; that is, justice that accounts for the distinct impact of conflict on women and the most vulnerable groups.

Prioritizing Female-Headed Households in Compensation Programs

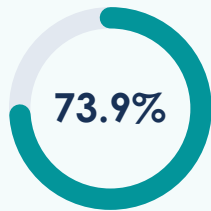
| Participants View | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree    | 1,600            | 66.02%         |
| Agree             | 750              | 30.98%         |
| Disagree          | 40               | 1.65%          |
| Don't know        | 20               | 0.82%          |
| Strongly disagree | 10               | 0.41%          |
| Total             | 2,420            | 99.88%         |

Prioritizing Female-Headed of Households in Compensation Programs

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly agree    | 66.02% |
| Agree             | 30.98% |
| Disagree          | 1.65%  |
| Don't know        | 0.82%  |
| Strongly disagree | 0.41%  |



## Fifth: The National Museum and Collective Memory



A total of 73.91% of participants supported the establishment of a national museum or permanent memorial sites to document the conflict and violations, reflecting the centrality of collective memory in Syrian perceptions of transitional justice.

This result indicates that Syrians not only wish to punish perpetrators but also want to preserve public memory and prevent the erasure of crimes or the selective rewriting of history. For a broad sector of Syrians, memory has seemingly become part of the collective recovery process and the rebuilding of national identity.

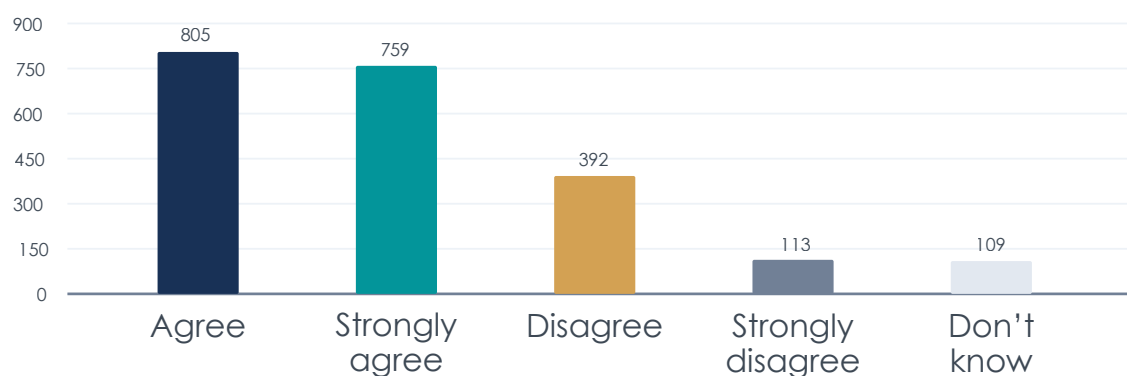
The findings also reflect an awareness that societies emerging from conflict require public spaces for acknowledgment and remembrance, not to perpetuate division, but to prevent recurrence and restore dignity to the victims.

In the Syrian context, this issue is specifically sensitive because the war years witnessed repeated attempts to destroy evidence, alter narratives, conceal graves, and deny crimes, making memory a part of the political and social struggle itself.

### Supporting the Establishment of a National Museum or Permanent Memorials to Document the Conflict and Violations

| View              | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Agree             | 805              | <b>38.04%</b>  |
| Strongly agree    | 759              | <b>35.87%</b>  |
| Disagree          | 392              | <b>18.54%</b>  |
| Strongly disagree | 113              | <b>5.35%</b>   |
| Don't know        | 109              | <b>5.16%</b>   |

### Supporting the establishment of a national museum or permanent memorials to document the conflict and violations



## Sixth: Removing Symbols of the Assad Regime and Symbolic Justice

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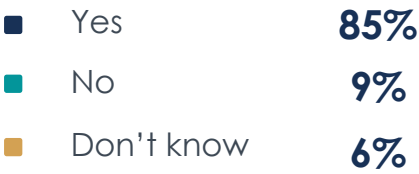
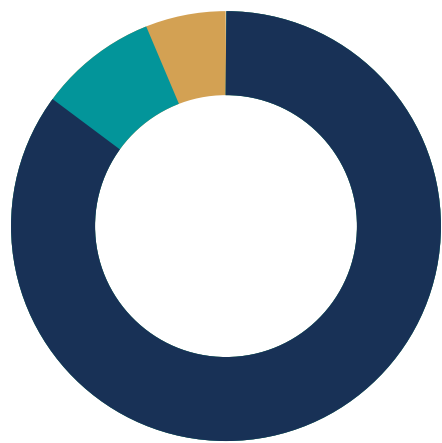
The findings show that 85.5% of participants support removing the former regime's symbols, a high proportion that reflects the importance of symbolic justice for Syrians.

This outcome indicates that statues, slogans, and symbols associated with the regime are not read by society as merely physical objects, but as a symbolic extension of an era of oppression, violence, and impunity. Therefore, the removal of these symbols is understood as a symbolic declaration of the end of an entire political and moral era.

The findings also reflect an understanding that the public sphere serves political and psychological functions; the persistence of the former regime's symbols in public space could be interpreted by victims as a continuation of the old regime's symbolic domination.

At the same time, this finding reveals that Syrians attach great importance to what is termed "symbolic justice," which means those measures that redefine the meaning of authority, legitimacy, and memory.

| View       | Percentage (%) |
|------------|----------------|
| Yes        | 85%            |
| No         | 9%             |
| Don't know | 6%             |



## Seventh: Restitution of Confiscated Property



A total of 66.02% expressed varying degrees of optimism regarding the possibility of fair and swift recovery of confiscated property. This result reflects relative hope in the feasibility of addressing one of the most complex files of the transitional phase.

The issue of property rights is one of the most sensitive matters in Syria because it is directly linked to displacement, demographic change, and the loss of social stability. Consequently, any failure in this file could directly impact the prospects for return, stability, and civil peace.

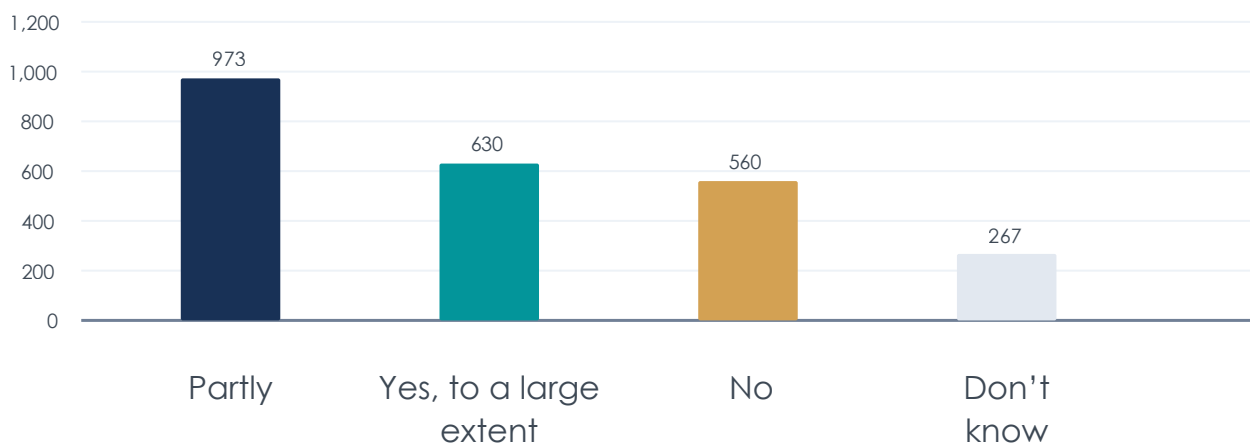
The results also reveal that Syrian society is aware of the complexity of this file, particularly given the existence of corruption networks, discrepancies in real estate registries, and the illegal seizures that occurred during the war years.

The relative optimism among participants appears to be linked to a strong desire to restore stability, a sense of place, and a sense of belonging, yet it remains contingent on the new state's ability to build a reliable legal and administrative system.

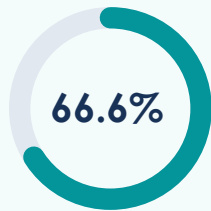
### Supporting Restitution of Confiscated Property to Owners or Heirs

| View                   | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Partly                 | 973              | <b>47.37%</b>  |
| Yes, to a large extent | 630              | <b>30.67%</b>  |
| No                     | 560              | <b>27.24%</b>  |
| Don't know             | 267              | <b>12.72%</b>  |

### Supporting Restitution of Confiscated Property to owners or heirs



## Eighth: Reconstruction Prior to the Completion of Documentation



A majority of 66.6% of participants agreed to start reconstruction before the full documentation of crimes and property ownership is completed. This result reflects the scale of the livelihood and service-related pressures Syrians face after years of war.

This outcome shows a clear tension between the “logic of justice” and the “logic of daily survival.” While Syrians recognize the risks of losing rights or marginalizing victims as a result of unregulated reconstruction, broad sectors among them view the continuation of destruction and the collapse of services as unbearable.

The findings also indicate that Syrian society does not want to postpone reconstruction indefinitely while waiting for legal processes to conclude; rather, it leans toward a pragmatic approach that seeks to combine reconstruction with the simultaneous protection of rights.

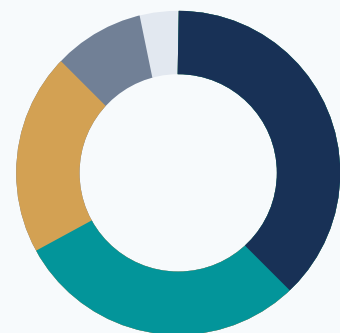
However, this result also gives an important warning: reconstruction that is detached from a clear documentation system may lead to the entrenchment of new grievances or the legitimization of property appropriation.

### Should Reconstruction Be Deferred Until Violations and Damages Are Documented Fully?

| View              | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Agree             | 38%            |
| Strongly agree    | 29%            |
| Disagree          | 20%            |
| Strongly disagree | 9%             |
| Don't know        | 4%             |

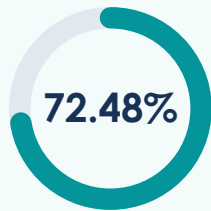
Should reconstruction be deferred until violations and damages are documented fully?  
Percentage

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| ■ Agree             | 38% |
| ■ Strongly agree    | 29% |
| ■ Disagree          | 20% |
| ■ Strongly disagree | 9%  |
| ■ Don't know        | 4%  |



## Ninth: Evaluation of Past Documentation Efforts

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A significant 72.48% of participants believed that past efforts to document violations require further verification or are insufficient, reflecting a clear societal concern over the loss of evidence or the weak professional and legal standards utilized in some documentation processes.

This result reveals that while Syrians recognize the importance of documentation, they simultaneously question the adequacy or reliability of certain previous efforts, especially given the multiplicity of actors, differing methodologies, weak coordination, and the complex security conditions under which these documentation processes took place.

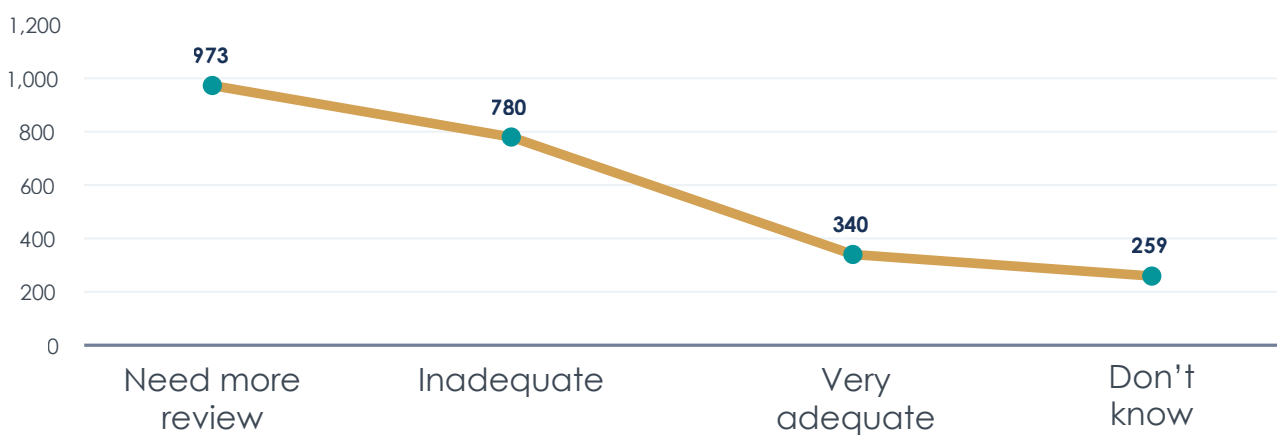
The results also reflect a growing awareness that documentation is not merely a collection of narratives or photographs, but a complex legal and technical process that must meet the standards of judicial proof to support future prosecutions.

These data point to an urgent need to build a unified, more professional national archive, enhance coordination among Syrian organizations and with judicial and international bodies, and develop standards for preservation, documentation, and review.

### What is Your Evaluation of Past Documentation Efforts?

| Evaluation       | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Need more review | 973              | <b>47.37%</b>  |
| Inadequate       | 780              | <b>37.93%</b>  |
| Very adequate    | 340              | <b>16.53%</b>  |
| Don't know       | 259              | <b>12.60%</b>  |

### What is your evaluation of past documentation efforts?



## III. The Transitional Justice Commission

The findings of this theme reveal that the National Commission for Transitional Justice (NCTJ) is still in a stage of “societal and political formation.” While Syrians view it as a necessary institution during the transitional phase, it has not yet established deep-rooted social legitimacy or broad, deep public trust. The results clarify that attitudes toward NCTJ range from cautious optimism and conditional acceptance to skepticism stemming from a lack of clarity, communication, and tangible achievements.

Furthermore, the findings show that Syrians do not evaluate NCTJ merely as a legal or administrative entity but as a real test of the new state's capacity to produce a different model of governance, justice, and transparency from the previous era. Consequently, the evaluation of NCTJ is directly linked to the level of confidence in the transitional pathway itself and to the ability of the new institutions to overcome the heavy legacy of security centralization, lack of transparency, and the absence of community participation.

The findings also reveal that a significant part of the challenges facing NCTJ stems not only from technical or legal performance, but from the nature of the Syrian transitional environment itself. This environment is characterized by high levels of political and social division, low trust in public institutions, multiplicity of narratives, identities, and local and political affiliations, alongside a long legacy of the politicization of the judiciary, administration, and the media.

In this context, NCTJ is called upon to perform roles that extend far beyond procedural or judicial remit to encompass building community trust, managing public memory, expanding participation, enhancing transparency, and creating a national space capable of accommodating pluralism and divisions without reproducing them.

## NCTJ's Role in Transcending Political Divisions

The findings demonstrate that 52.79% of participants believe NCTJ can help to varying degrees, in transcending political and social divisions, compared to 30.28% who expressed clear apprehensions or a belief that it is incapable of fulfilling this role. This outcome reflects a state of "cautious transitional trust" in NCTJ, which is viewed as a national framework capable of helping manage tensions and divisions, though it has not yet become an overarching reference point with broad national consensus.

This finding indicates that Syrians recognize that transitional justice is not limited to trials or legal procedures but is deeply connected to rebuilding a shared national sphere and repairing societal relationships that suffered profound fractures during the years of conflict. Therefore, a segment of participants views NCTJ as a potential tool for regenerating public trust and mitigating political, regional, and sectarian polarization.

However, the persistence of a relatively high rate of skepticism reveals genuine concerns regarding NCTJ's independence, its formation mechanisms, and the nature of its political, regional, and social representation. A portion of Syrians still fears that NCTJ could morph into an institution subject to political balances or authoritarian power struggles, which would strip it of its ability to play an inclusive, neutral role.

The findings also reflect the complex nature of the post-regime Syrian landscape, where political, identity-based, and geographic divisions remain highly pronounced. This places a demand on any transitional institution not only to manage legal portfolios but also to articulate an inclusive national discourse that transcends the binaries of dominance, exclusion, and revenge.

This finding underscores that NCTJ's success in performing an inclusive role will depend not merely on its legal existence, but on its capacity to build incremental trust through professional performance, transparency, balance, and the active inclusion of affected groups and local communities in shaping transitional justice pathways.

### NCTJ's Role in Transcending Political Divisions

| View/How Capable                   | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Yes, to a moderate degree          | 38%            |
| Yes, greatly                       | 29%            |
| I don't believe it has much impact | 18%            |
| Yes, to a limited extent           | 9%             |
| I have significant concerns        | 6%             |

### NCTJ's Role in Transcending Political Divisions

|   |                                    |     |
|---|------------------------------------|-----|
| ■ | Yes, to a moderate degree          | 38% |
| ■ | Yes, greatly                       | 29% |
| ■ | I don't believe it has much impact | 18% |
| ■ | Yes, to a limited extent           | 9%  |
| ■ | I have significant concerns        | 6%  |



## First: Competency of NCTJ's Legal and Administrative Staff

---

The findings show that 44% of participants consider the competency of NCTJ's legal and administrative staff to be "acceptable," while 22.1% view it as weak or very weak, and 25.8% lack sufficient knowledge of the nature or competency level of the personnel.

These results reveal that NCTJ's professional image remains "vague and unstable" in the collective consciousness. An acceptable rating does not necessarily reflect high trust; rather, it indicates anticipation, as a firm conviction has not yet formed among broad segments of Syrians regarding NCTJ's capacity to efficiently manage an issue as complex and sensitive as transitional justice.

The outcome also reflects a clear information gap between NCTJ and the public, given that a large percentage of participants are unaware of the details of NCTJ's administrative and legal structure or the nature of the expertise it on. This indicates that NCTJ has not yet succeeded in presenting itself as a professional institution with manifest competence and transparent criteria for selection and administration.

In the Syrian context, the question of competency carries amplified sensitivity due to the long legacy of weak public institutions and the dominance of political and security considerations over administrative and judicial appointments.

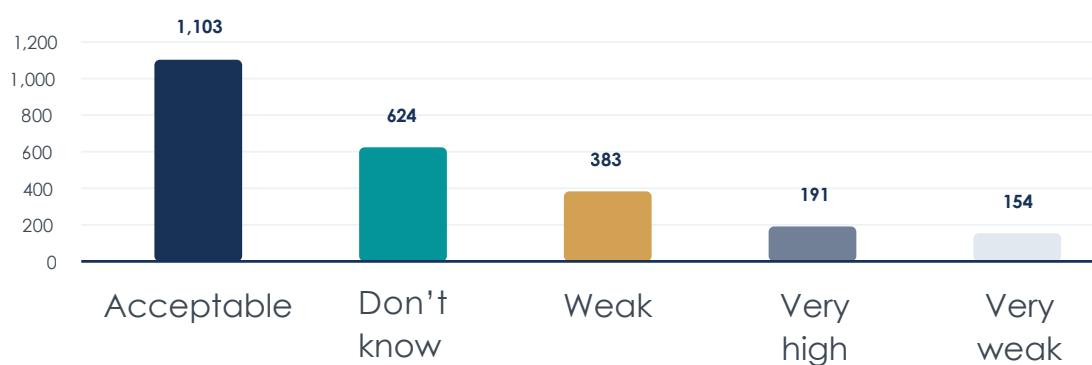
Consequently, a portion of societal skepticism is linked not only to technical expertise but to the fear of reproducing patterns of quota allocation or political allegiances within the new institutions.

Furthermore, the findings reflect a societal awareness that the success of transitional justice requires specialized personnel possessing complex legal, human rights, psychological, and administrative expertise, particularly in issues such as prosecutions, truth-seeking, reparations, memory management, documentation, and institutional reform.

In this regard, there is a clear need to enhance institutional disclosure on staff composition and expertise, highlight the professional standards applied, and expand the presence of independent legal and human rights figures, thereby bolstering public confidence in NCTJ's ability to manage the transitional period professionally and impartially.

### Competency of NCTJ's Legal and Administrative Staff

| Level of Competency | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Acceptable          | 1,103            | 44.0%          |
| Don't know          | 624              | 24.9%          |
| Weak                | 383              | 15.3%          |
| Very high           | 191              | 7.6%           |
| Very weak           | 154              | 6.2%           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>2,455</b>     | <b>98.0%</b>   |



## Second: Clarity of NCTJ's Mandate

---

A total of 43.96% reported that NCTJ's mandate was "partially clear," compared to 32.37% who considered it unclear, and only 10.35% who viewed it as very clear. These results reflect an information and institutional communication crisis between NCTJ and society, as broad sectors of Syrians remain unable to form a clear conception of the nature of its roles, jurisdiction, and operational mechanisms.

This finding indicates that the concept of transitional justice itself remains a novel and complex term for many segments of Syrian society, particularly after decades of human rights suppression and a weak political culture, as well as limited public participation in civic affairs. Therefore, the lack of clarity surrounding the NCTJ's mandate is linked not only to its media performance but also to the nature and complexities of the transitional environment.

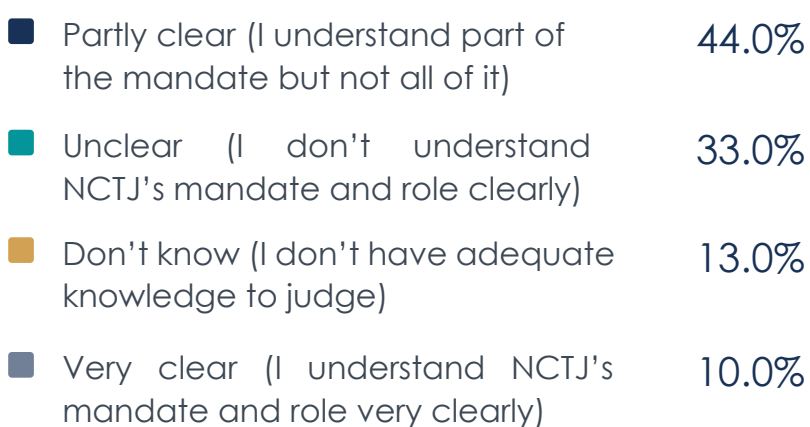
The findings also show that a portion of the participants conflates the roles of NCTJ with those of the judiciary, the government, or the security apparatus, reflecting the absence of a clear, simplified, and explanatory discourse that delineates the boundaries of NCTJ's powers and its function within the broader transitional justice framework.

This result carries important implications for the legitimacy of transitional institutions; institutions whose functions cannot be clearly understood by society find it difficult to build popular trust or secure broad community support.

The outcomes also indicate that NCTJ still relies minimally on community awareness tools and needs to develop a discourse that is closer to the people, linking transitional justice to the tangible, daily issues affecting Syrians' lives, such as rights, property, missing persons, accountability, and reparations.

### Clarity of NCTJ's Mandate

| Level of Clarity                                                  | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Partly clear (I understand part of the mandate but not all of it) | 1,075            | <b>44.0%</b>   |
| Unclear (I don't understand NCTJ's mandate and role clearly)      | 806              | <b>33.0%</b>   |
| Don't know (I don't have adequate knowledge to judge)             | 318              | <b>13.0%</b>   |
| Very clear (I understand NCTJ's mandate and role very clearly)    | 244              | <b>10.0%</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                                                      | <b>2,443</b>     | <b>100.0%</b>  |



## Third: Outreach Channels between NCTJ and Society

---

46.51% of participants considered the outreach channels between the NCTJ and the society to be weak or non-existent, reflecting a manifest crisis in community outreach and the dissemination of information about the NCTJ's work and roles.

This finding reveals that NCTJ has not yet established a broad community presence or built effective communication networks with citizens and affected populations, thereby weakening its capacity to secure stable popular legitimacy.

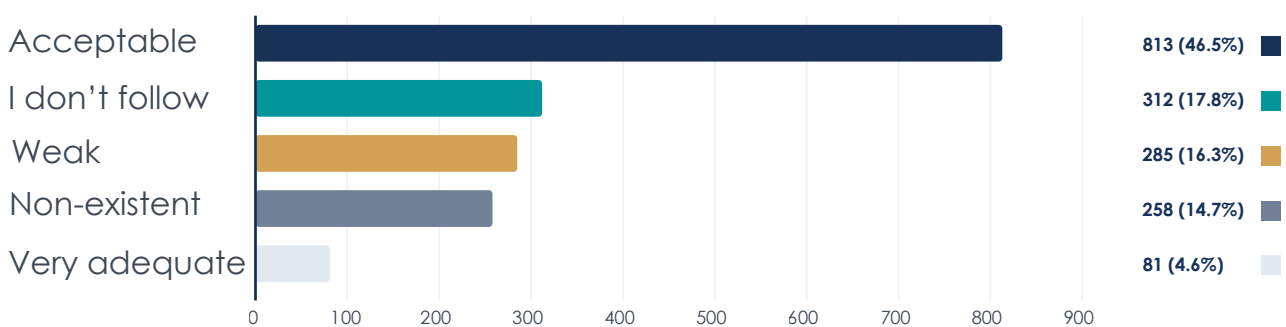
The findings also indicate that Syrian society, following long years of disconnect between the state and the public, has become highly sensitive to access to information and the ability to communicate with public institutions. Thus, weak communication is not read merely as a media failure but as an indicator of deficient transparency and institutional openness.

Moreover, this outcome reflects the fragmented nature of Syrian geography and the varying levels of access to information and services across regions, making the construction of effective communication channels a complex challenge that requires diverse local and community-based approaches.

The findings further show that transitional justice in Syria cannot succeed through a closed, centralized model; rather, it requires a participatory approach grounded in societal dialogue, openness to local communities, and the active involvement of victims, civil society organizations, and local media in the communication and awareness-raising process.

### Outreach Channels Between NCTJ and Society

| Adequacy and Knowledge of Communication Channels | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Acceptable                                       | 813              | 46.5%          |
| I don't follow                                   | 312              | 17.8%          |
| Weak                                             | 285              | 16.3%          |
| Non-existent                                     | 258              | 14.7%          |
| Very adequate                                    | 81               | 4.6%           |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>1,749</b>     | <b>99.9%</b>   |



## Fourth: Media Transparency of NCTJ

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A total of 46.3% viewed NCTJ's media transparency as weak or non-existent, compared to 40.55% who considered it acceptable or very adequate. This result reflects the persistence of the trust crisis associated with media and institutional outreach during the transitional period.

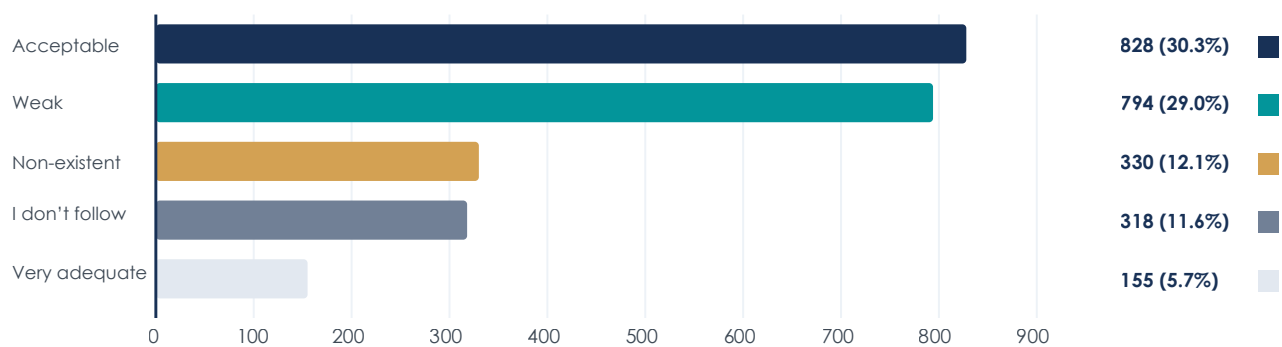
The findings indicate that a large portion of Syrians does not feel there is an adequate flow of information regarding NCTJ's work or clarity in its decisions, plans, and procedures. In a society that lived for decades under security and media restrictions, transparency becomes a primary benchmark for judging the credibility of new institutions.

This also demonstrates that Syrian society is not satisfied with the mere existence of the institution; rather, it demands clear operational mechanisms, periodic reports, and public disclosure of policies, procedures, and outcomes to allow for the incremental building of trust.

The findings also reveal that weak transparency may lead to the spread of rumors and conflicting interpretations, undermining confidence in the transitional pathway itself, especially given the sensitivity of the files NCTJ handles.

### Adequacy of NCTJ's Media Transparency Around its Role and Services

| Media Transparency | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Acceptable         | 828              | 30.3%          |
| Weak               | 794              | 29.0%          |
| Non-existent       | 330              | 12.1%          |
| I don't follow     | 318              | 11.6%          |
| Very adequate      | 155              | 5.7%           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2,425</b>     | <b>88.7%</b>   |



## Fifth: NCTJ's Partnership with Media and CSOs

---

50.37% supported the idea that partnership with the media and civil society organizations is a core principle for NCTJ, while 23.01% opposed this view and 26.62% were unsure. This result reveals that NCTJ's image remains entirely unstable among a broad sector of Syrians.

The findings indicate that Syrian society views partnership with civil society and the media as a fundamental standard for the seriousness of any transitional institution.

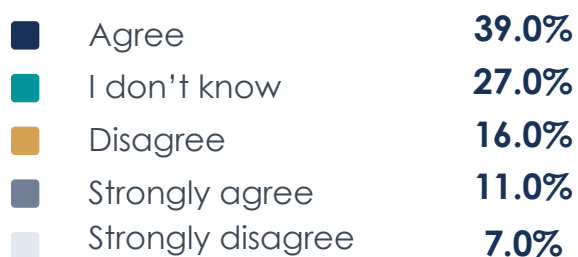
Following decades of state monopoly over the public sphere, openness to civil and media actors has become an indicator of change and democratic transformation.

However, the high percentage of those who "do not know" shows that NCTJ has not yet succeeded in clarifying the nature of its relationships with societal actors or translating this partnership into a clear, visible practice.

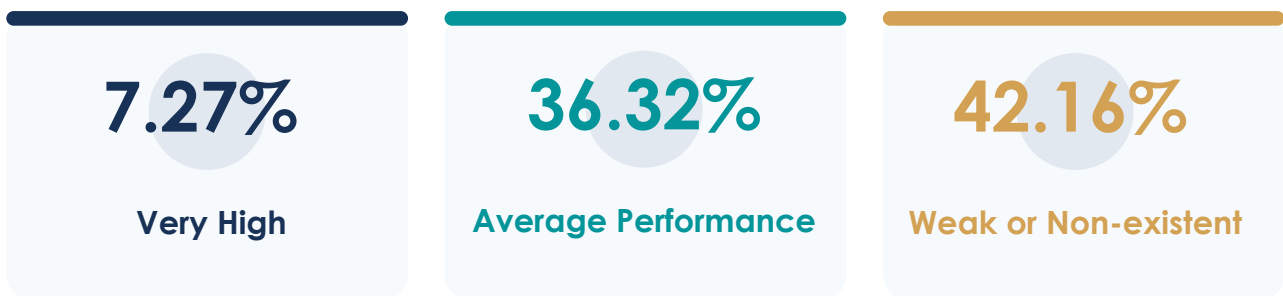
The findings also reflect a growing awareness of the importance of societal and media oversight in preventing the monopoly of truth or the politicization of transitional justice, particularly in a complex transitional environment like the Syrian context.

### Level of NCTJ's Partnership with Media and CSOs

| Level of Partnership and Collaboration                                         | Approximate No. (based on %) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Agree (There is effective partnership and collaboration with media and CSOs)   | 954                          | 39.0%          |
| I don't know (I don't have enough information to judge)                        | 660                          | 27.0%          |
| Disagree (limited or inadequate level of partnership and collaboration)        | 391                          | 16.0%          |
| Strongly agree (very high level of continuous collaboration and partnership)   | 269                          | 11.0%          |
| Strongly disagree (there is no partnership, collaboration almost non-existent) | 171                          | 7.0%           |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                   | <b>2,445</b>                 | <b>100.0%</b>  |



## Sixth: Satisfaction with the Performance of NCTJ



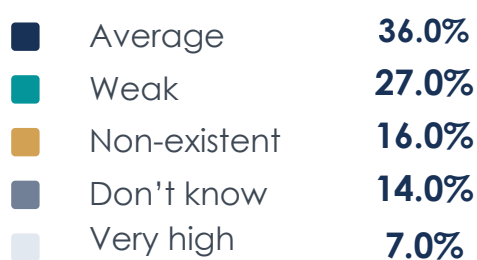
A total of 36.32% evaluated the Commission's performance as "average," while 42.16% rated their satisfaction as "weak or non-existent," compared to only 7.27% who gave a very high rating. These results demonstrate that NCTJ has thus far been unable to build strong community trust or achieve tangible breakthroughs that could convince a broad cross-section of Syrians of its efficacy.

The findings reveal that societal expectations of transitional justice are exceptionally high, particularly given the scale of the violations, the number of victims, and the number of outstanding files. Therefore, any slowness, ambiguity, or weakness in delivery is viewed as an indicator of limited efficacy or a lack of political will.

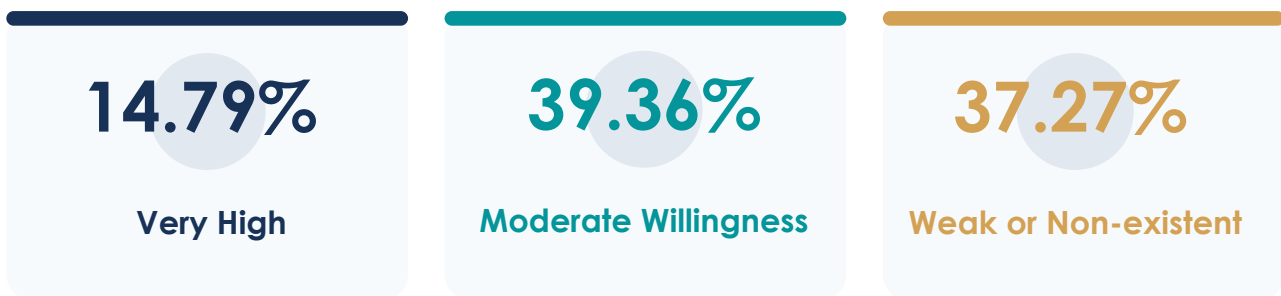
This outcome also shows that Syrian society continues to evaluate NCTJ based on "tangible results" rather than rhetoric or promises, especially in sensitive files such as accountability, missing persons, the restitution of rights, and institutional reform.

### Satisfaction with the Performance of NCTJ

| Level of Satisfaction                                                    | Approximate No.<br>(based on %) | Percentage<br>(%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Average (acceptable performance, needs more improvement and development) | 880                             | <b>36.0%</b>      |
| Weak (less than required, not up to expectations)                        | 660                             | <b>27.0%</b>      |
| Non-existent (not at all satisfied with NSCTJ's performance)             | 391                             | <b>16.0%</b>      |
| Don't know (not sure or not have enough information to judge)            | 342                             | <b>14.0%</b>      |
| Very high (outstanding performance, commendable, over expectation)       | 171                             | <b>7.0%</b>       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                             | <b>2,444</b>                    | <b>100.0%</b>     |



## Seventh: Willingness to Resort to NCTJ



A total of 39.36% expressed a “moderate” willingness to resort to the NCTJ in the event of a transitional justice claim, compared to 37.27% with weak or non-existent willingness, while only 14.79% expressed a very high willingness.

These findings reveal that societal trust in NCTJ remains “functional and limited,” meaning that a large portion of Syrians are not yet fully convinced of its ability to address sensitive issues effectively, fairly, and safely.

The findings also indicate that the decision to resort to the NCTJ is linked not only to legal confidence but also to psychological, security, and social factors, particularly in a society that has long lived in fear of formal institutions and security agencies.

This outcome underscores that building trust in transitional institutions requires time, practical achievements, and explicit guarantees of impartiality, protection, and transparency, as well as NCTJ’s capacity to demonstrate its independence and effectiveness in the most sensitive and complex cases.

### Willingness to Resort to NCTJ if Needed

| Level of Willingness                                | Approximate No.<br>(based on %) | Percentage<br>(%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Moderate (willing to some extent to resort to NCTJ) | 954                             | 39.0%             |
| Weak (unwilling to resort to NCTJ)                  | 587                             | 24.0%             |
| Very high (very willing to resort to NCTJ)          | 367                             | 15.0%             |
| Reserved (limited willingness)                      | 318                             | 13.0%             |
| Don't know (unsure or don't know)                   | 220                             | 9.0%              |
| <b>Total</b>                                        | <b>2,446</b>                    | <b>100.0%</b>     |

**Willingness to Resort  
to NCTJ if needed  
Approximate no  
(based on %)**

|   |            |       |
|---|------------|-------|
| ■ | Moderate   | 39.0% |
| ■ | Weak       | 24.0% |
| ■ | Very high  | 15.0% |
| ■ | Reserved   | 13.0% |
| ■ | Don't know | 9.0%  |



## IV. Institutional Reform and Governance

The findings in this theme reveal that Syrians view institutional reform as one of the essential pillars of the transitional period, rather than merely an administrative or technical process for reorganizing institutions. The findings clarify that Syrian society directly links institutional reform to justice, accountability, and transparency. It maintains that no state-rebuilding process can gain legitimacy or achieve stability if it reproduces the security and political structures associated with the oppression, discrimination, and violations of past decades.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that Syrians' prolonged experience with the security, military, and judicial apparatuses has made trust in new institutions contingent on their ability to demonstrate genuine transformation in function, conduct, structure, and institutional culture, rather than merely changing names or superficial structures. Therefore, in the community's perception, institutional reform is understood not as a bureaucratic modernization, but as a foundational reconstitution of the relationship between the state and society.

The findings also expose a striking paradox: on one hand, there is relative optimism regarding some of the transformations occurring within the new institutions, particularly at the level of discourse and initial measures; on the other hand, societal concerns remain high regarding the potential reproduction of discrimination, deficient transparency, the absence of civilian oversight, or the resurgence of security centralization in new forms.

In the Syrian context, this theme is particularly important because the security, military, and judicial institutions were not merely functional agencies; for decades, they formed the backbone of political power and served as instruments for control, dominance, and the reproduction of loyalties and divisions. Consequently, any discourse on political transition or transitional justice remains incomplete without a profound engagement with institutional reform and a redefinition of the state and its institutions.

# First: Linking Institutional Reform Primarily to the Achievement of Accountability

84.97% of participants supported linking institutional reform primarily to accountability, with 45.73% selecting “agree” and 39.24% selecting “strongly agree.” This result reflects a broad societal conviction that rebuilding the security, military, and judicial institutions cannot be effective or legitimate without holding those responsible for past violations accountable.

This finding demonstrates that Syrians do not want a model of “nominal reform” that alters structures and names without addressing the root causes of violations or holding those implicated accountable. For a wide cross-section of society, new institutions cannot be built upon a legacy of unaddressed crimes and violations, as this would perpetuate mistrust and reproduce a culture of impunity.

The findings also reflect a deep societal understanding of the relationship between justice and institutional reform. Accountability is viewed not as a retributive measure, but as a prerequisite for reconstructing legitimacy and trust in public institutions. Institutions that harbor individuals implicated in violations or that have not undergone vetting and accountability processes forfeit, in the eyes of society, their capacity to transform into neutral and just entities.



## Supported Linking Reform to Accountability

Broad societal consensus across surveyed demographics

45.73%

Level of Agreement

“Agree”

39.24%

Level of Agreement

“Strongly Agree”



Combined Total Agreement

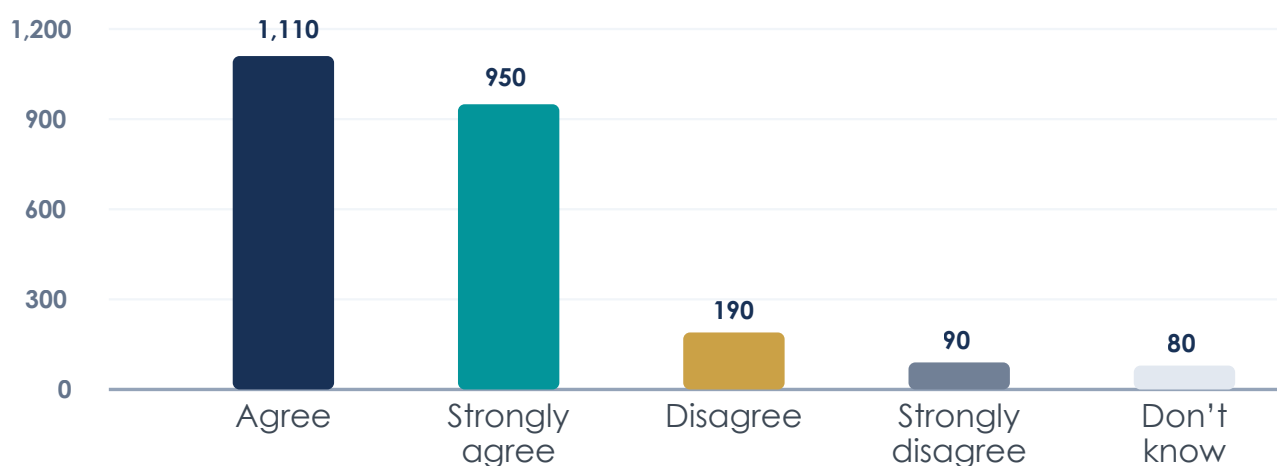
45.73% + 39.24% = 84.97%

Furthermore, the findings indicate that Syrians have become more cognizant of the concept of “institutional guarantees of non-recurrence.” Genuine reform is achieved not merely through legislative changes or restructuring, but by dismantling the networks that enabled violations, holding those responsible to account, and cultivating a new institutional culture rooted in rights, protection, and accountability.

In the Syrian context, this finding is particularly significant because the security, military, and judicial bodies were historically intertwined with political and security domination, making trust in any reform process contingent upon the seriousness of accountability and its capacity to affect a genuine break with the past.

### Linking Institutional Reform Primarily to the Achievement of Accountability

| Level of Agreement | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Agree              | 1,110            | 45.6%          |
| Strongly agree     | 950              | 39.1%          |
| Disagree           | 190              | 7.8%           |
| Strongly disagree  | 90               | 3.7%           |
| Don't know         | 80               | 3.3%           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2,420</b>     | <b>99.5%</b>   |



## Second: Dismantling and Restructuring Former Security Agencies

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A total of 80.28% expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the dismantling of the former security agencies; however, 37.72% expressed reservations or dissatisfaction with the current restructuring process.

This finding reflects broad societal support for the principle of dismantling institutions associated with oppression, alongside clear caution about the nature of the alternative institutions and the mechanisms for their construction.

The findings reveal that Syrian society maintains a complex position toward the security file. While there is near-consensus rejecting the former security agencies due to their association with violations, oppression, fear, and corruption, there is parallel anxiety that a disorganized dismantling process or vague reconstruction could create a security vacuum or produce weak, unprofessional institutions.

The results also reflect societal awareness that successful security sector reform does not stop at erasing past institutions; it requires building new agencies that possess competence, professionalism, and impartiality, and that operate under a distinct security doctrine predicated on protecting citizens rather than controlling them.

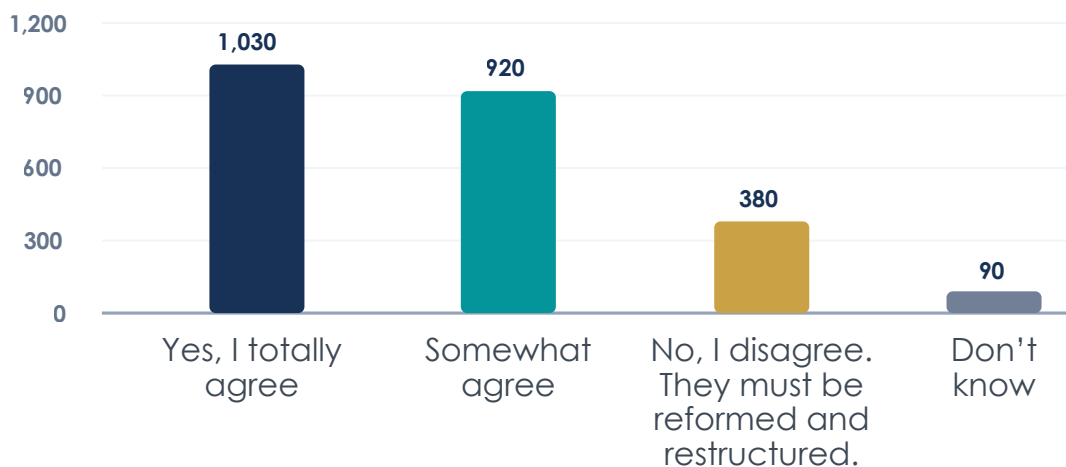
This indicates that Syrians do not reject the concept of robust security institutions, but the model of “authoritarian security” associated with surveillance, repression, and exclusion. Thus, the fundamental challenge for the new state lies not only in restructuring but in redefining the function of security and its relationship to society and the law.

Additionally, the findings reveal that societal concern is partly associated with the slow pace of the reform process, the lack of clarity surrounding criteria for appointment, training, and oversight, and apprehensions regarding the infiltration of political or regional loyalties into the new security architecture.

### Dismantling and Restructuring Former Security Agencies

Q: To what extent do you agree that dismantling the restructuring former security agencies is essential for transitional justice?

| Response                                                | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes, I totally agree                                    | 1,030            | 42.3%          |
| Somewhat agree                                          | 920              | 37.8%          |
| No, I disagree. They must be reformed and restructured. | 380              | 15.6%          |
| Don't know                                              | 90               | 3.7%           |
| <b>Total</b>                                            | <b>2,420</b>     | <b>99.4%</b>   |



## Third:

# Shift in Security Policies: From Oppression to Protection

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A significant 74.94% perceived a positive change in the new security policies, with 46.06% responding “somewhat” and 28.88% “yes, completely.”

This outcome reflects cautious optimism regarding ongoing security transformations, alongside a sustained societal state of anticipation regarding the sustainability and true depth of these shifts.

The findings show that a significant segment of Syrians has begun to sense a relative shift in security discourse and practice compared to the previous era, particularly in the decline of certain patterns of direct oppression, the widening margin for societal movement, and the altered language used by security institutions toward citizens.

However, the fact that the majority responded “somewhat” indicates that this transformation is still viewed as an “incomplete transition.” Broad sectors of society have not yet reached a firm conviction that the security institutions have genuinely transformed into civilian protection institutions grounded in rights and the rule of law.

The findings also reflect the deep psychological legacy associated with security agencies in the Syrian consciousness. Following decades of fear, surveillance, and violations, building trust in security institutions is a long, complex process that cannot be achieved through rhetorical changes alone but through daily practices, transparency, accountability, and respect for rights.

The data show that Syrian society closely monitors the capacity of the new institutions to curb violations, engage professionally with citizens, and prevent the return of old authoritarian behaviors in new forms.

### Shift in Security Policies: From Oppression to Protection

Q: To what extent do you agree that security policies have shifted from oppression to protection of rights and security?

| Response                                                        | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Somewhat (I agree to some extent)                               | 46.0%          |
| Yes, absolutely (I totally agree there is a shift)              | 29.0%          |
| I didn't notice any difference (I can't see a clear difference) | 14.0%          |
| Not at all (I don't agree there is any change at all)           | 8.0%           |
| I disagree (I disagree there has been any shift)                | 3.0%           |

### Shift in Security Policies: From Oppression to Protection Percentage

- Somewhat (I agree to some extent)
- Yes, absolutely (I totally agree there is a shift)
- I didn't notice any difference (I can't see a clear difference)
- Not at all (I don't agree there is any change at all)
- I disagree (I disagree there has been any shift)



## Fourth: The Role of the Women's Police Academy in Developing Security Work and Protecting Women



A total of 71.61% considered that the Women's Police Academy could play a moderate to a significant role in raising the caliber of security work and protecting women.

This result reflects a growing social acceptance of women's participation in security institutions, linking it to enhanced community protection and increased sensitivity toward women's issues and gender-based violence (GBV).

The findings reveal a gradual shift in societal perceptions of women's roles in the security sector, particularly after the war years, which forced women to assume more prominent and expanded social, economic, political, and security roles.

The data indicate that Syrian society has become more cognizant of the importance of having female personnel within security institutions, especially in portfolios related to domestic violence, gender violations, the protection of women and children, and engagement with the most vulnerable groups.

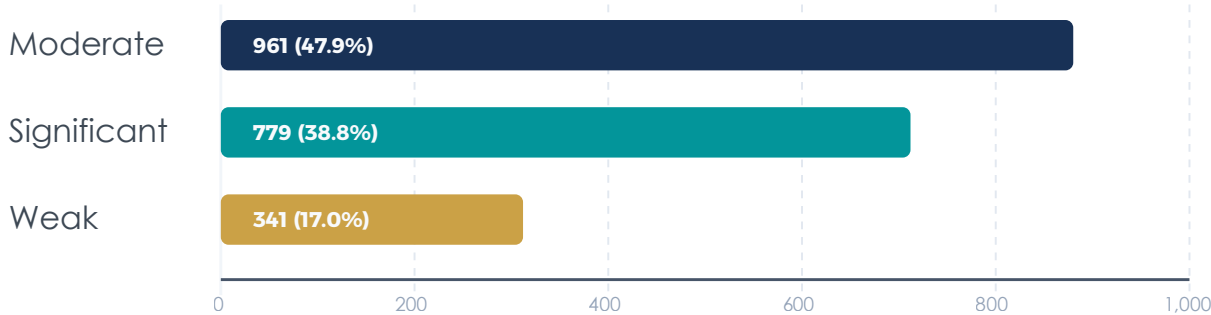
This outcome also carries a symbolic dimension: the integration of women into security institutions is seen as part of the transition from a masculine, authoritarian security model to a more civilian, diverse, and socially sensitive one.

At the same time, the findings show that accepting women's participation does not necessarily entail the complete erasure of all social and cultural reservations; rather, it reflects a newfound awareness that diversity within security institutions can help elevate professionalism and bolster community trust.

**Role of the Women's Police Academy in Developing Security Work and Protecting Women**

Q: How would you assess the role of women's police academy in developing security work and protecting women?

| Evaluation  | No. Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Moderate    | 961           | 47.9%          |
| Significant | 779           | 38.8%          |
| Weak        | 341           | 17.0%          |



## Fifth: Trust in the Impartiality of the New Government Institutions

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A total of 71.48% expressed a moderate or high level of trust in the impartiality of the new government institutions, while 26.05% viewed that trust as weak or non-existent.

These findings reflect relative optimism toward the new institutions, yet it remains conditional, accompanied by clear concerns about the persistence of political, sectarian, regional, or gender-based discrimination.

The findings reveal that Syrian society wants to see institutions that “treat citizens as citizens,” rather than being based on the political, regional, and sectarian affiliations and loyalties that historically characterized the structure of the previous state.

The findings indicate that Syrians have become highly sensitive to the concept of institutional impartiality, particularly after years in which state institutions were used as instruments of exclusion, control, and the redistribution of privileges and resources based on political and security considerations.

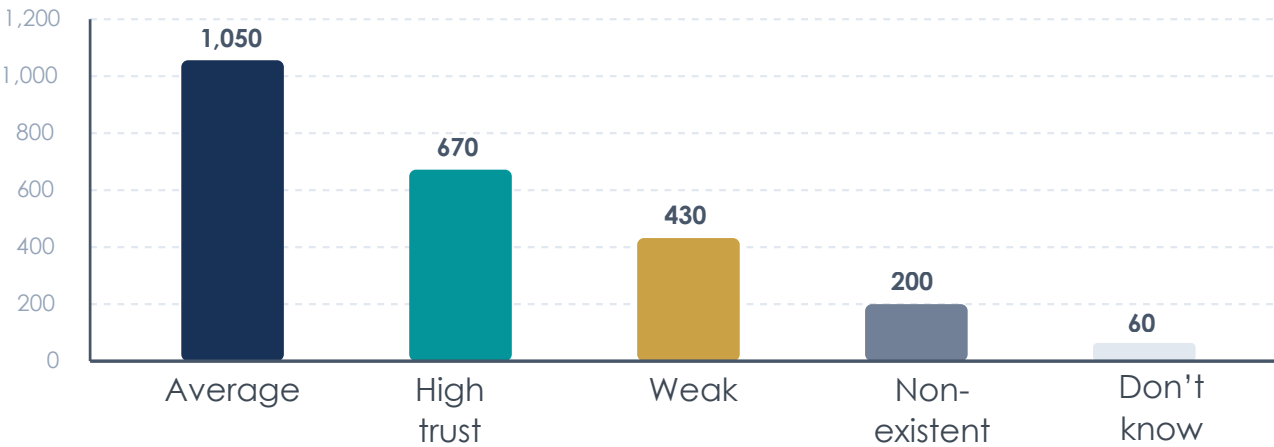
However, the sustained, relatively high rate of skepticism reveals that fears related to the reproduction of discrimination remain strongly present, especially given the complex nature of Syrian society and the divisions deepened by years of conflict.

This reflects that building trust in the new institutions requires more than political rhetoric; it demands explicit policies in recruitment, service delivery, and representation, alongside tangible measures that prevent discrimination and guarantee equal opportunity and equality before the law.

### Trust in the Impartiality of the New Government Institutions

Q: To what extent do you trust that new the new government institutions are dealing with citizens seriously, without bias or discrimination?

| Trust Level  | No. Responses | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Average      | 1,050         | 43.1%          |
| High trust   | 670           | 27.5%          |
| Weak         | 430           | 17.6%          |
| Non-existent | 200           | 8.2%           |
| Don't know   | 60            | 2.5%           |



## Sixth: Government Transparency in Restructuring and Reform Decisions

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50.86% considered the new government's transparency "average," 23.79% "entirely absent," and only 17.91% "very adequate."

These results indicate that government transparency remains a problematic issue in the transitional period.

This finding reveals that Syrian society does not feel there is an adequate flow of information regarding restructuring and reform decisions, or clarity in decision-making mechanisms and public policies.

This finding indicates that Syrian society does not perceive a sufficient flow of information regarding restructuring and reform decisions, nor adequate transparency in decision-making processes and public policies.

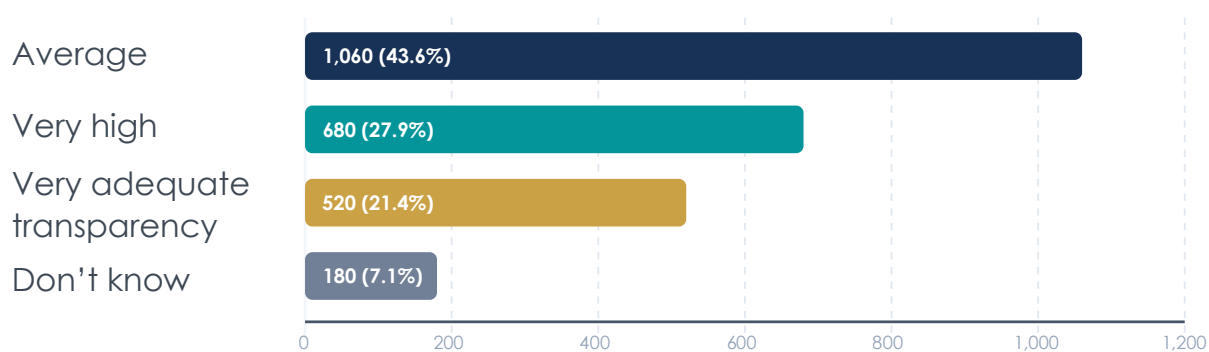
Consequently, public trust in the new authorities is closely tied to their ability to establish a governance model characterized by greater openness, transparency, and disclosure.

The findings also indicate that transparency has become a fundamental societal demand, not only to guarantee oversight and accountability, but also to prevent the spread of rumors and conflicting interpretations, particularly regarding sensitive issues related to security and institutional reform.

## Government Transparency in Restructuring and Reform Decisions

Q: To what extent do you believe restructuring and reform decisions in government institutions are taken transparently and are clear for the public?

| Transparency Level         | No. Responses | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Average                    | 1,060         | <b>43.6%</b>   |
| Very high                  | 680           | <b>27.9%</b>   |
| Very adequate transparency | 520           | <b>21.4%</b>   |
| Don't know                 | 180           | <b>7.1%</b>    |



## Seventh: Civilian Oversight of Security and Policing Institutions

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A total of 73.91% supported granting civil society organizations the right to monitor and evaluate the performance of the new security and policing institutions, compared to 15.37% who rejected this proposition.

This result reflects a significant societal desire to strengthen civilian oversight of security institutions as an essential guarantee against the recurrence of violations.

The findings reveal an important shift in Syrian political and social consciousness: security is no longer viewed as a closed domain or an area insulated from societal oversight, but as an integral part of the public sphere subject to accountability and civilian monitoring.

The data indicate that Syrians have become more convinced that the absence of oversight over security institutions was a primary reason for their past transformation into tools of oppression and domination, and that building professional security institutions requires independent mechanisms for tracking, evaluation, and accountability.

This outcome also reflects the growing importance of civil society and the media as partners in constructing democratic governance, rather than merely peripheral actors or opponents of authority.

In the Syrian context, this result represents a significant indicator of the gradual shift in the relationship between society and the state, where new conceptions are being formed that see true security as achieved not through absolute secrecy or unfettered power, but through a balance among force, accountability, transparency, and respect for public rights.

### Civilian Oversight of Security and Policing Institutions

Q: To what extent do you agree with having effective civilian oversight over security and police institutions to ensure transparency and protection of rights and freedoms?

| Response       | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|----------------|
| Yes            | 46.0%          |
| Yes, very much | 28.0%          |
| No             | 15.0%          |
| Don't know     | 11.0%          |

### Civilian Oversight of Security and Policing Institutions Percentage

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| ■ Yes            | 46.0% |
| ■ Yes, very much | 28.0% |
| ■ No             | 15.0% |
| ■ Don't know     | 11.0% |



## V. Community Reconciliation and Non-Recurrence

The findings of this theme reveal that Syrians view community reconciliation as a complex, multidimensional process that cannot be reduced to political settlements or symbolic rhetoric, but is directly linked to achieving justice, rebuilding trust, addressing the effects of violence and division, and providing conditions for economic, social, and political stability. The findings clarify that Syrian society has a relative willingness to open up to reconciliation and coexistence, but links this to a set of fundamental conditions, foremost among which is justice, accountability, institutional reform, and security control.

The findings also indicate that Syrians have become more aware of the compound nature of the Syrian conflict, and that the divisions left by the war are not limited to the political or military sphere, but extend to the social, cultural, psychological, and economic spheres, which makes reconciliation a long-term process requiring the rebuilding of relationships and trust within society, and not merely the ending of armed confrontations.

The findings further reveal that Syrian society does not embrace a romantic or simplistic conception of reconciliation but recognizes that genuine civil peace requires a just institutional and legal environment, as well as addressing hate speech, improving economic conditions, and promoting education and political awareness, in addition to the introduction of guarantees that prevent the recurrence of violations in the future.

In the Syrian context, these findings are especially significant because the war not only produced material destruction but also reshaped relationships, identities, and affiliations and created unprecedented levels of fear, mistrust, and polarization, making the issue of reconciliation and prevention of recurrence one of the most sensitive and complex files in the transitional phase.

# First: Prospects of Community Reconciliation Despite Disagreements over the Past



65.33% of participants believed community reconciliation is currently possible despite ongoing disagreements about the past, with 50.33% responding "Agree" and 15% "Strongly agree."

This result reflects the existence of relative social willingness to move beyond the conflict and its divisions, despite the ongoing wounds and the heavy memory associated with the years of war and violations.

The findings reveal that a significant portion of Syrians has begun to recognize that the continuation of division and conflict is no longer sustainable, and that coexistence and rebuilding, at least to a minimum level, of social trust constitute an existential prerequisite for restoring stability and public life.

However, this result does not necessarily mean that actual reconciliation has been achieved, but points to the existence of a "preliminary willingness" or "social prospect" for reconciliation, which remains conditional on achieving justice, improving living conditions, and the existence of guarantees that prevent the recurrence of violations or the reproduction of exclusion and discrimination.

The findings also reflect that Syrians have increasingly come to distinguish between "political disagreement" and "the possibility of social coexistence," meaning that the existence of different narratives about the past or differing political positions does not necessarily render shared life or the rebuilding of social relationships impossible.

At the same time, the findings reveal that reconciliation in the Syrian context is not merely a centralized political process but is linked to daily life and local economic and social relationships, which explains the importance of community and local approaches in managing this file.

### Prospects of Community Reconciliation Despite Disagreements Over the Past

Q: To what extent do you believe community reconciliation is feasible in our country despite disagreements over the past?

| Response          | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Agree             | 50.0%          |
| Disagree          | 22.0%          |
| Strongly Agree    | 15.0%          |
| Strongly Disagree | 8.0%           |
| Don't Know        | 5.0%           |

### Prospects of Community Reconciliation Despite Disagreements over the Past Percentage

|   |                   |       |
|---|-------------------|-------|
| ■ | Agree             | 50.0% |
| ■ | Disagree          | 22.0% |
| ■ | Strongly Agree    | 15.0% |
| ■ | Strongly Disagree | 8.0%  |
| ■ | Don't Know        | 5.0%  |



## Second: Hate Speech as an Obstacle to Reconciliation and Civil Peace

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90.55% of participants considered hate speech one of the most prominent obstacles to reconciliation and civil peace, among the highest consensus rates in the study.

This result reflects broad societal awareness of the dangers of incitement and of social, media-driven, and sectarian division, and of their profound impact on the prospects for rebuilding national trust.

The findings reveal that Syrians have become more aware of the role that incitement rhetoric played during the years of conflict in deepening divisions and reproducing fear, hatred, and mutual demonization among communities, regions, and political and social affiliations.

The findings also indicate that Syrian society does not view reconciliation as merely political or security agreements; rather, it considers addressing language, discourse, and public culture to be a fundamental condition for rebuilding coexistence and civil peace.

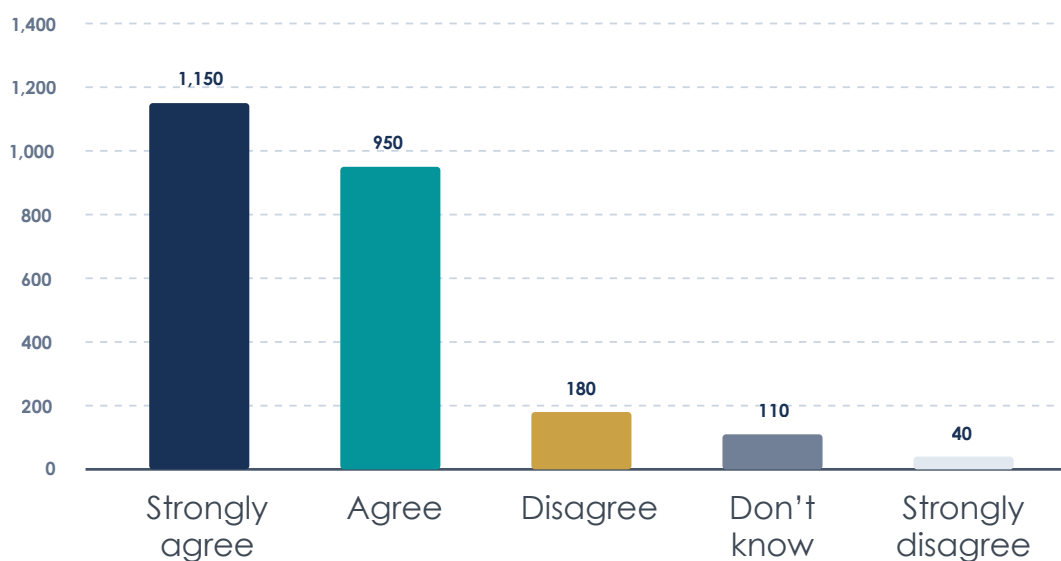
This result also reflects a growing awareness of the danger posed by media outlets and social media platforms in entrenching or alleviating divisions, particularly amid the spread of incitement content, retaliatory narratives, and sectarian and regional mobilization during the years of war.

In the Syrian context, hate speech carries a particularly sensitive dimension because it was linked not only to political incitement but also to justifying violence, violations, and collective exclusion. Therefore, addressing this discourse is an essential part of measures to prevent recurrence and of rebuilding the political and social culture in the post-conflict phase.

## Hate Speech as an Obstacle to Reconciliation and Civil Peace

Q: To what extent do you believe hate speech hinders reconciliation and civil peace in our country?

| Response          | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree    | 1,150            | <b>46.9%</b>   |
| Agree             | 950              | <b>38.8%</b>   |
| Disagree          | 180              | <b>7.3%</b>    |
| Don't know        | 110              | <b>4.5%</b>    |
| Strongly disagree | 40               | <b>1.6%</b>    |



## Third: The Priority of Local Reconciliation Before National Reconciliation

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82.86% of participants supported focusing on local reconciliation before comprehensive national reconciliation, with 50.9% responding “Agree” and 31.96% “Strongly agree.”

This result reflects a societal conviction that building trust must begin from small local communities and directly affected regions before moving on to broader national settlements.

The findings reveal that Syrians view reconciliation as a “bottom-up cumulative process,” meaning that rebuilding daily relationships within villages, cities, and neighborhoods represents the true gateway for any sustainable national stability.

The findings also reflect an awareness of the heterogeneous ways the Syrian division, formed across regions and local communities, where the nature of violence, violations, and social experiences differs from one region to another, making local reconciliation better able to address the specificities of each local context.

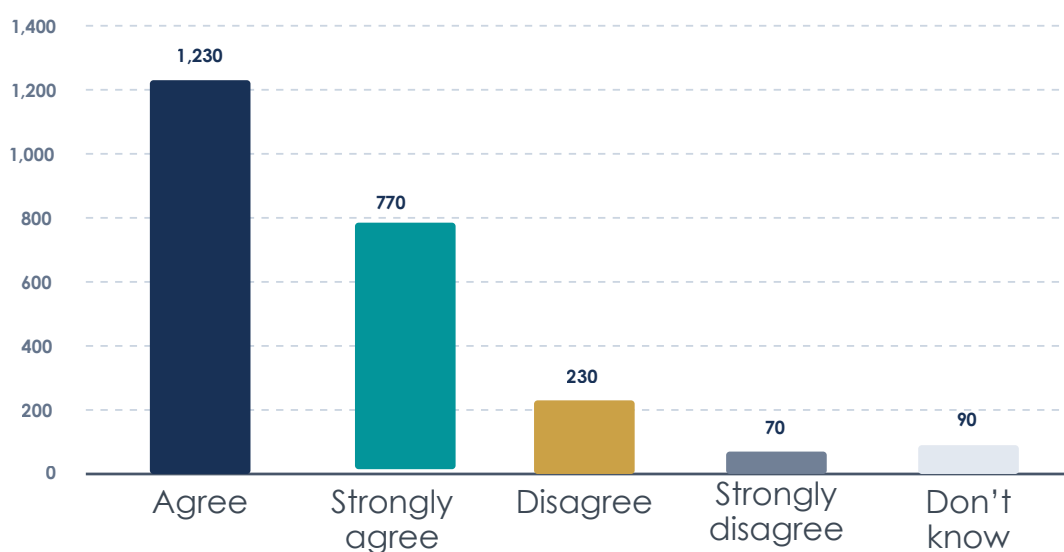
The findings also indicate that Syrian society harbors some skepticism toward rapid or symbolic centralized national solutions and instead tends toward gradual approaches that address divisions at the level of local communities and daily relationships.

In the Syrian context, this is especially significant because the war has reshaped social geography and created high levels of tension among local communities, making any national reconciliation not linked to deep local and community-level work vulnerable to fragility or collapse.

### Priority of Local Reconciliation Before National Reconciliation

Q: To what extent do you believe local reconciliation must be prioritized before comprehensive national reconciliation?

| Option            | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Agree             | 1,230            | 50.6%          |
| Strongly agree    | 770              | 31.6%          |
| Disagree          | 230              | 9.5%           |
| Strongly disagree | 70               | 2.9%           |
| Don't know        | 90               | 3.7%           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>2,390</b>     | <b>98.3%</b>   |



## Fourth: Incorporating Transitional Justice Principles into Educational Curricula

---



85.62% affirmed the importance of incorporating transitional justice principles into new educational curricula, with 47.12% responding “very necessary” and 38.5% “partially important.”

This result reflects a growing societal awareness of the importance of education in building a new rights-based culture and preventing the recurrence of violations.

The findings reveal that Syrians have come to recognize that transitional justice is not limited to the judiciary or politics but also encompasses rebuilding awareness, public values, and national memory, making education one of the most important tools for societal transformation in the post-conflict phase.

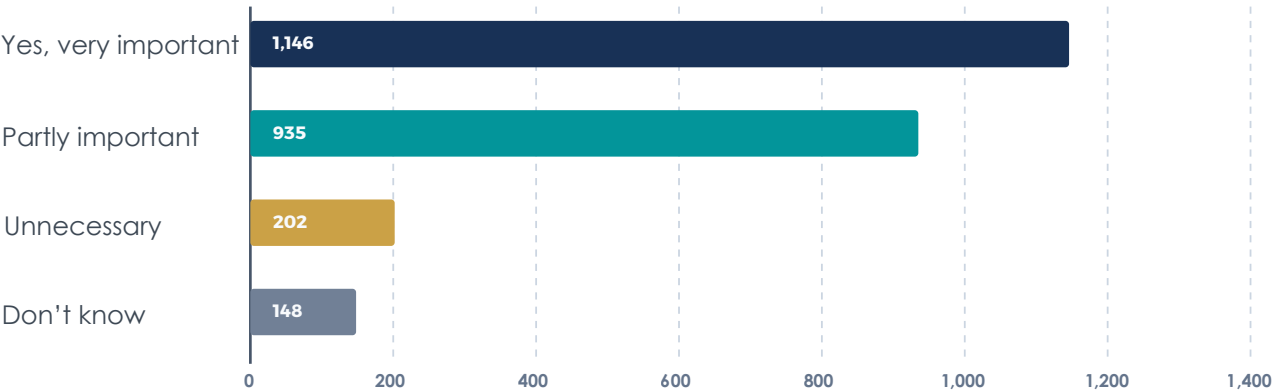
The findings also indicate a growing recognition that part of the causes of violence and division stem from the absence of civic and human rights education and the dominance of authoritarian and exclusionary discourse within educational institutions over the past decades.

This result also reflects a societal desire to raise new generations that are more aware of the values of citizenship, pluralism, human rights, and diversity, thereby limiting the reproduction of a culture of violence and exclusion in the future.

In the Syrian context, education is one of the most important arenas for rebuilding the state and society, particularly after years of geographic division, politicization, and disparities in curricula and educational experiences across regions.

Incorporating Transitional Justice Principles into Educational Curricula

| Option              | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes, very important | 1,146            | 44.8%          |
| Partly important    | 935              | 36.6%          |
| Unnecessary         | 202              | 7.9%           |
| Don't know          | 148              | 5.8%           |



## Fifth: Economic Empowerment as Prelude for Stability and Reconciliation

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91.95% supported the idea that economic empowerment and the provision of job opportunities are the best means of achieving stability and reconciliation, the highest consensus rate in this theme.

. This result reflects the strong interconnection in Syrian societal consciousness between the economy and civil peace.

The findings reveal that Syrians do not view reconciliation as merely a political or symbolic process but link it directly to improving living conditions and alleviating poverty, unemployment, and economic fragility that have worsened during the years of war.

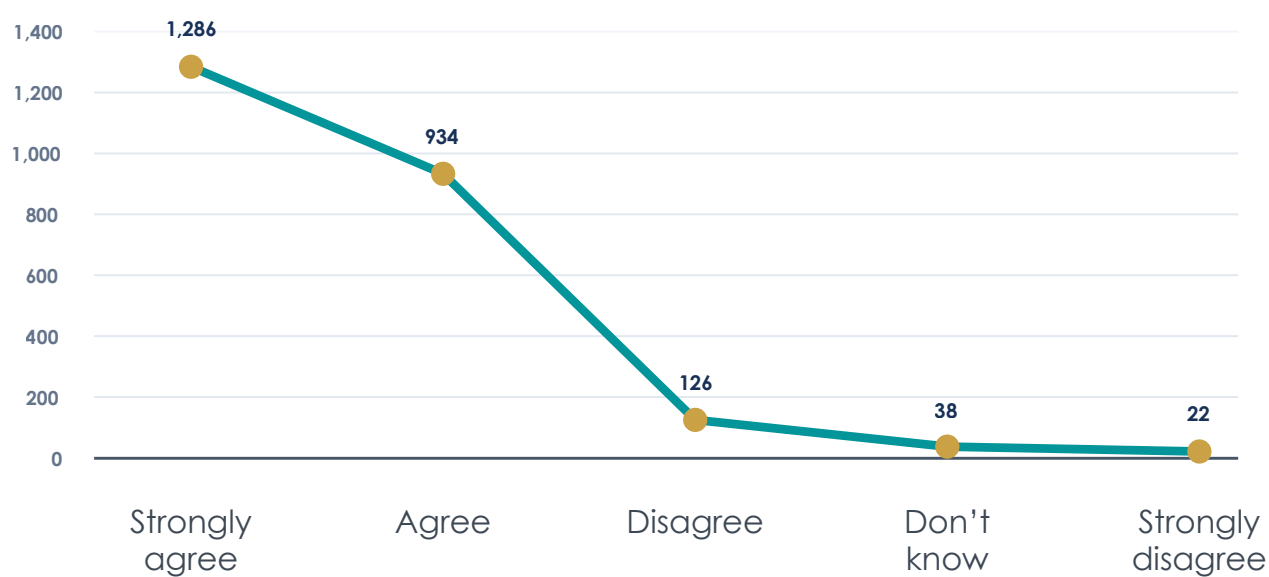
The findings also indicate broad recognition that economic crises may become a permanent source of tension, violence, and the reproduction of divisions, particularly in conflict-affected environments where job opportunities, services, and stability are declining.

This result reflects that Syrian society has become more aware of the relationship between social justice and political stability, and that the absence of development and job opportunities may threaten any reconciliation or political transition process, however advanced it may be at the legal or political level.

In the Syrian context, this issue is of exceptional importance due to the enormous scale of economic destruction, the disintegration of markets, the breadth of poverty, and the high rates of unemployment and displacement, which make rebuilding the economy inseparable from building civil peace.

### Economic Empowerment as Prelude for Stability and Reconciliation

| Option            | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree    | 1,286            | 51.4%          |
| Agree             | 934              | 37.3%          |
| Disagree          | 126              | 5.0%           |
| Don't know        | 38               | 1.5%           |
| Strongly disagree | 22               | 0.9%           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>2,406</b>     | <b>96.1%</b>   |



## Sixth: Societal Acceptance of Diversity and Inclusion



67.75% considered that Syrian society shows acceptance of diversity and inclusion “to some extent” or “to a great extent,” while 32.25% considered that exclusion still prevails or continues.

These findings indicate that Syrian society is living through a transitional state between the desire for openness and coexistence and the persistence of the effects of social and political divisions and conflicts.

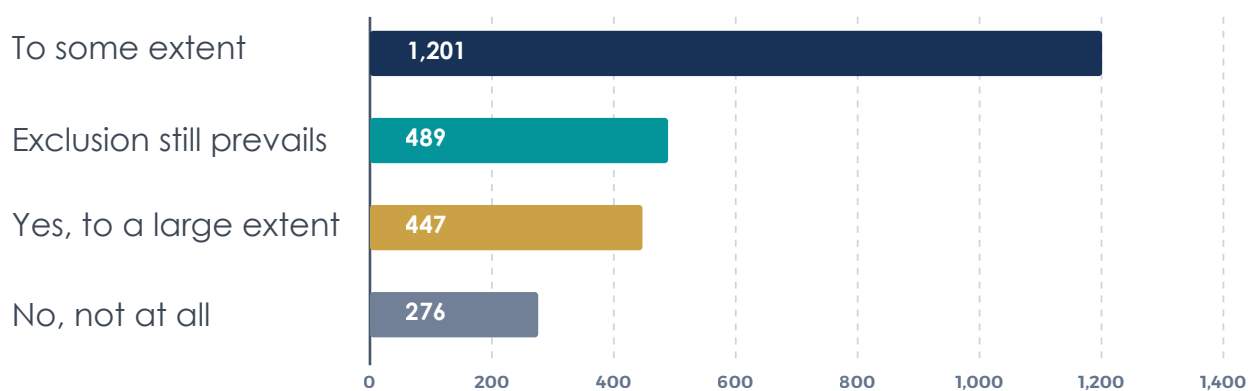
The findings reveal that the years of war, despite the polarization and division they brought, simultaneously pushed segments of Syrians to reconsider questions of identity, diversity, and coexistence.

However, the persistence of a relatively high rate of skepticism reveals that the tensions and anxieties associated with discrimination and exclusion are still present, particularly given the heavy legacy of violence and sectarian, regional, and political divisions.

The findings also indicate that Syrian society is still in a genuine testing phase of its capacity to transition from “anxious tolerance” to “actual acceptance of diversity,” a process that requires time and long-term educational, cultural, and institutional policies.

### Societal Acceptance of Diversity and Inclusion

| Option                   | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| To some extent           | 1,201            | <b>46.0%</b>   |
| Exclusion still prevails | 489              | <b>18.7%</b>   |
| Yes, to a large extent   | 447              | <b>17.1%</b>   |
| No, not at all           | 276              | <b>10.6%</b>   |



## Seventh: The Relationship Between Reconciliation and Transitional Justice

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81.06% of participants supported the idea that reconciliation and civil peace cannot succeed without achieving tangible progress in transitional justice.

This result reflects a broad societal conviction that reconciliation cannot be built on ignoring or forgetting or on superficial settlements.

The findings reveal that Syrians are increasingly rejecting approaches that separate civil peace from justice or view stability as achievable by deferring accountability or by bypassing violations without addressing them.

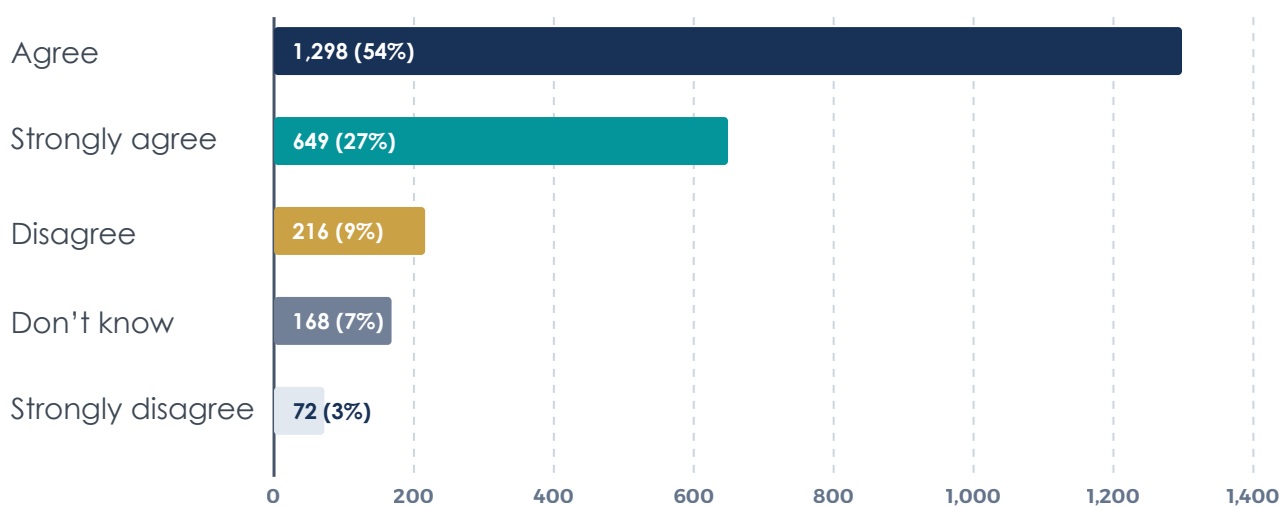
The findings also indicate that Syrian society has come to recognize that the absence of justice may lead to the accumulation of anger and grievances, and to a loss of trust, threatening any long-term stability.

In the Syrian context, this finding is crucial because it reflects a societal rejection of the idea of “peace for silence,” and affirms that justice has become part of the public conception of stability and future legitimacy.

### Relationship Between Reconciliation and Transitional Justice

| Option            | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Agree             | 1,298            | 54.0%          |
| Strongly agree    | 649              | 27.0%          |
| Disagree          | 216              | 9.0%           |
| Don't know        | 168              | 7.0%           |
| Strongly disagree | 72               | 3.0%           |

### Relationship Between Reconciliation and Transitional Justice No. Participants



## Eighth: Political Obstacles to Transitional Justice



The findings reveal that “weak public political awareness” emerged as the greatest political obstacle to the transitional justice process, with nearly 70% of respondents

indicating a widespread sense that Syrian society still lacks adequate knowledge of transitional justice concepts, political participation, and mechanisms of accountability and reconciliation.

This finding indicates that the success of any transitional process depends not only on institutions and laws but also on the existence of a society with political and human rights awareness that can support and participate in democratic transformation.

“Regional and international interventions” came second at 48.73%, reflecting societal awareness of the extent of external influence on the Syrian file and the fear of the instrumentalization of transitional justice within regional and international power struggles.

As for “the impact of transitional justice on civil peace,” it received 39.65%, which is an important indicator of concerns that accountability or opening files on violations may reignite tensions and divisions, particularly in a society that has experienced acute polarization and prolonged violence.

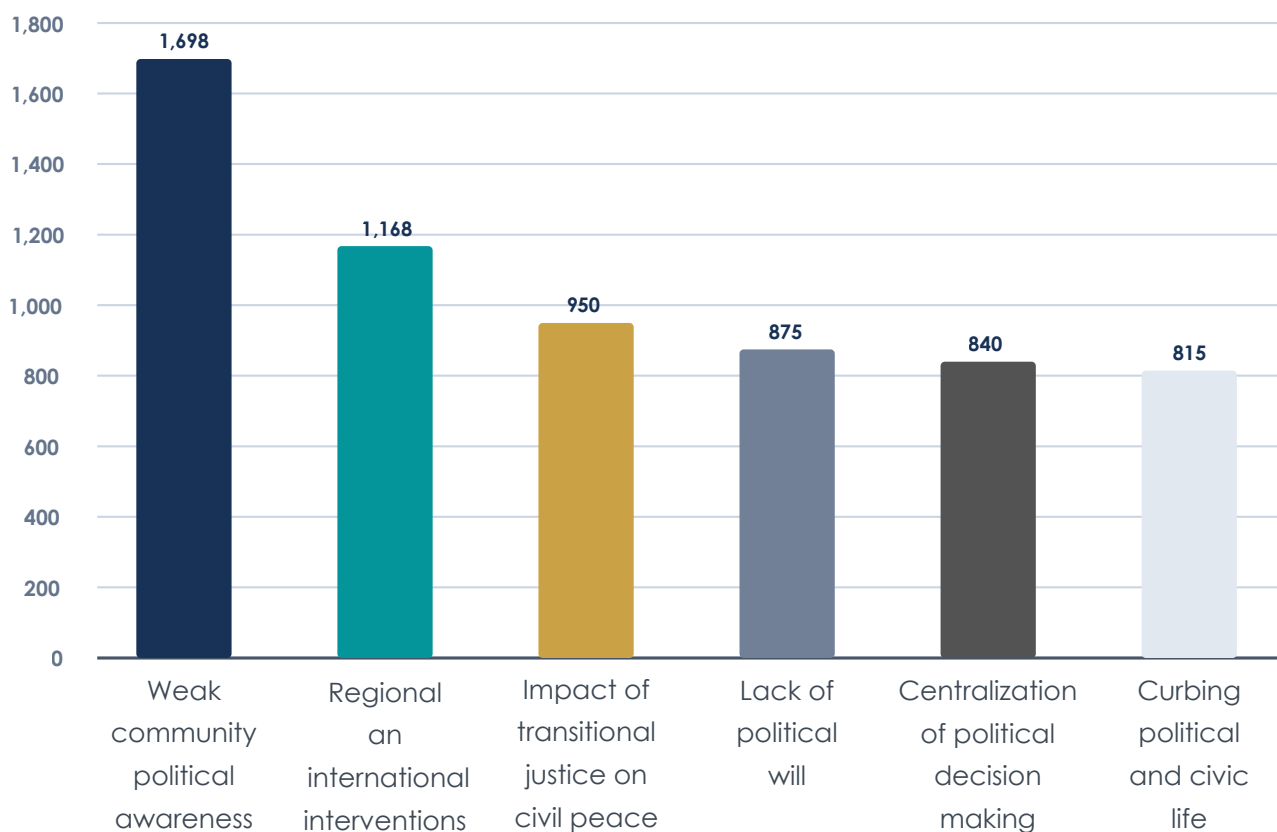
At the same time, 36.73% believed that “the absence of the authority's political will” is a major obstacle, reflecting persistent doubts about the current authority's seriousness in pursuing a comprehensive, deep transitional justice process.

The findings also showed that the centralization of political decision-making and the weakness of civic and political life remain among the structural challenges that affect the prospects for transitional justice.

In general, the findings reveal that political challenges in Syria are not limited to the legal system or institutions but also to political culture, weak societal participation, internal divisions, and complex regional and international entanglements.

### Political Obstacles to Transitional Justice

| Political Obstacle                            | No. Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Weak community political awareness            | 1,698            | <b>28.9%</b>   |
| Regional and international interventions      | 1,168            | <b>19.9%</b>   |
| Impact of transitional justice on civil peace | 950              | <b>16.2%</b>   |
| Lack of political will                        | 875              | <b>14.9%</b>   |
| Centralization of political decision making   | 840              | <b>14.3%</b>   |
| Curbing political and civic life              | 815              | <b>13.8%</b>   |



## Ninth: Security Obstacles to Transitional Justice

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The findings revealed that “the difficulty of security control and unregulated arms” was the greatest security obstacle to transitional justice, at 69.39%,

%, reflecting a broad recognition that the absence of a formal monopoly on arms and the persistence of security chaos threaten any process of stabilization or effective accountability.

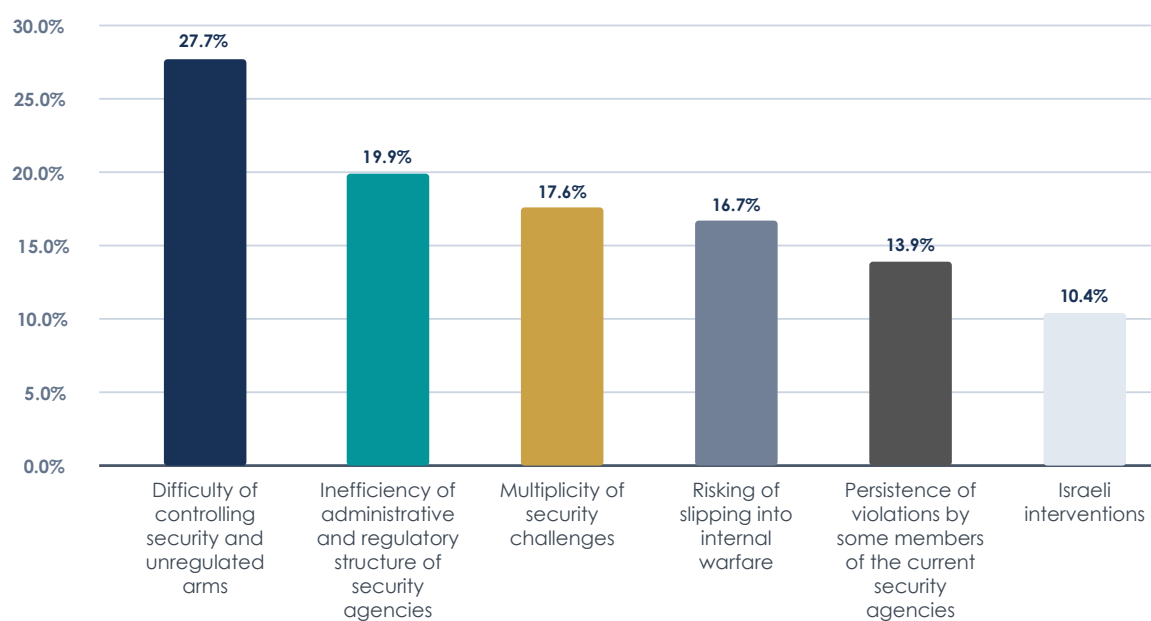
The findings indicate that Syrian society still views security as a central priority in the transitional phase, and that precarious security may lead to disruptions in prosecutions, weakening trust in institutions, and exposing victims and witnesses to danger.

The findings also reflect a growing awareness of the close relationship between justice and security, as an effective justice system cannot be built in an environment dominated by the proliferation of arms, multiple centers of power, or weak rule of law.

In the Syrian context, this challenge has compounded dimensions due to the proliferation of armed factions, the multiplicity of security and military reference points, and the overlap among the local, regional, and international dimensions of the security file.

## Security Obstacles to Transitional Justice

| Security Obstacle                                                            | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Difficulty of controlling security and unregulated arms                      | 27.7%          |
| Inefficiency of administrative and regulatory structure of security agencies | 19.9%          |
| Multiplicity of security challenges                                          | 17.6%          |
| Risking of slipping into internal warfare                                    | 16.7%          |
| Persistence of violations by some members of the current security agencies   | 13.9%          |
| Israeli interventions                                                        | 10.4%          |



## Tenth: General Challenges to the Implementation of Transitional Justice

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The proximity between the top three options carries important implications, as “leniency in comprehensively addressing and initiating the accountability file” received 57.03%, “difficulty of peaceful coexistence after violations” received 53.94%, and “unpreparedness of the legal and constitutional environment” received 53.78%.

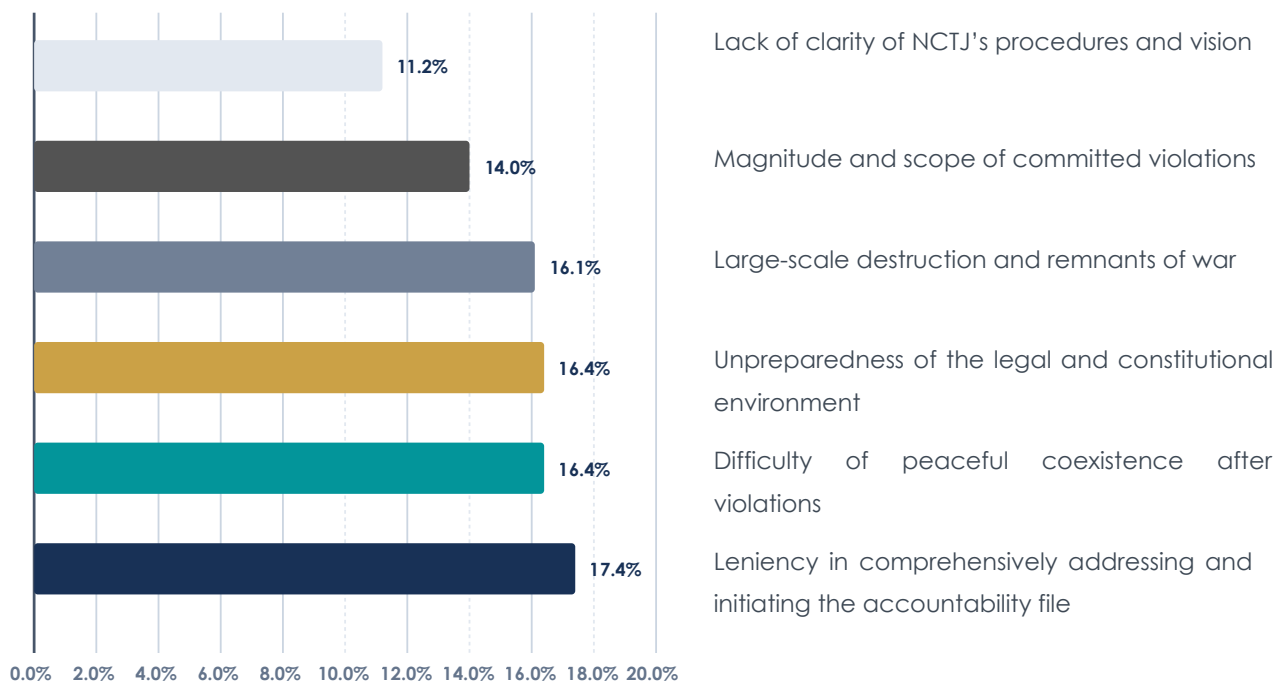
This clear convergence indicates that participants do not view the challenges of transitional justice as separate, but as interconnected, mutually reinforcing factors.

The absence of accountability weakens prospects for coexistence and civil peace, just as the weakness of the legal and constitutional environment limits the possibility of achieving fair and effective accountability.

The findings reveal that Syrians have come to recognize the complex and multidimensional nature of transitional justice, and that its success requires parallel efforts to address judicial, social, political, and institutional levels, rather than focusing on a single aspect.

### General Challenges to the Implementation of Transitional Justice

| General Challenge                                                             | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Leniency in comprehensively addressing and initiating the accountability file | <b>17.4%</b>   |
| Difficulty of peaceful coexistence after violations                           | <b>16.4%</b>   |
| Unpreparedness of the legal and constitutional environment                    | <b>16.4%</b>   |
| Large-scale destruction and remnants of war                                   | <b>16.1%</b>   |
| Magnitude and scope of committed violations                                   | <b>14.0%</b>   |
| Lack of clarity of NCTJ's procedures and vision                               | <b>11.2%</b>   |



## Eleventh: The Role of International Institutions in Supporting Transitional Justice

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85.78% of participants considered the role of international institutions in supporting transitional justice essential or somewhat important, compared with 14.22% who rejected this intervention.

The findings reflect a broad societal recognition of the difficulty of achieving local success in transitional justice without international support, expertise, and guarantees.

The findings reveal that Syrians, despite their sensitivity toward external interventions, distinguish between “political intervention” and “human rights and institutional support,” where international institutions are viewed as a source of expertise, pressure, and guarantees in complex files.

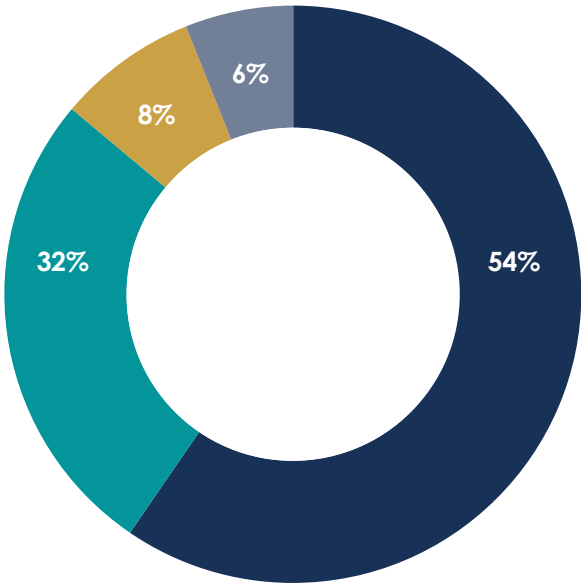
This result also reflects the scale of doubt in the capacity of local institutions alone to manage the transitional justice process in an independent and impartial manner, particularly given the fragility of the current legal and political environment.

### Role of International Institutions in Supporting Transitional Justice

| Option              | NO.          | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Very important      | 1,307        | 54.0%          |
| Partly important    | 775          | 32.0%          |
| Shouldn't intervene | 194          | 8.0%           |
| Unnecessary         | 146          | 6.0%           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>2,422</b> | <b>100.0%</b>  |

Role of International Institutions in Supporting Transitional Justice NO.

- Very important
- Partly important
- Shouldn't intervene
- Unnecessary



## Twelfth: Transitional Justice and Long-Term Stability

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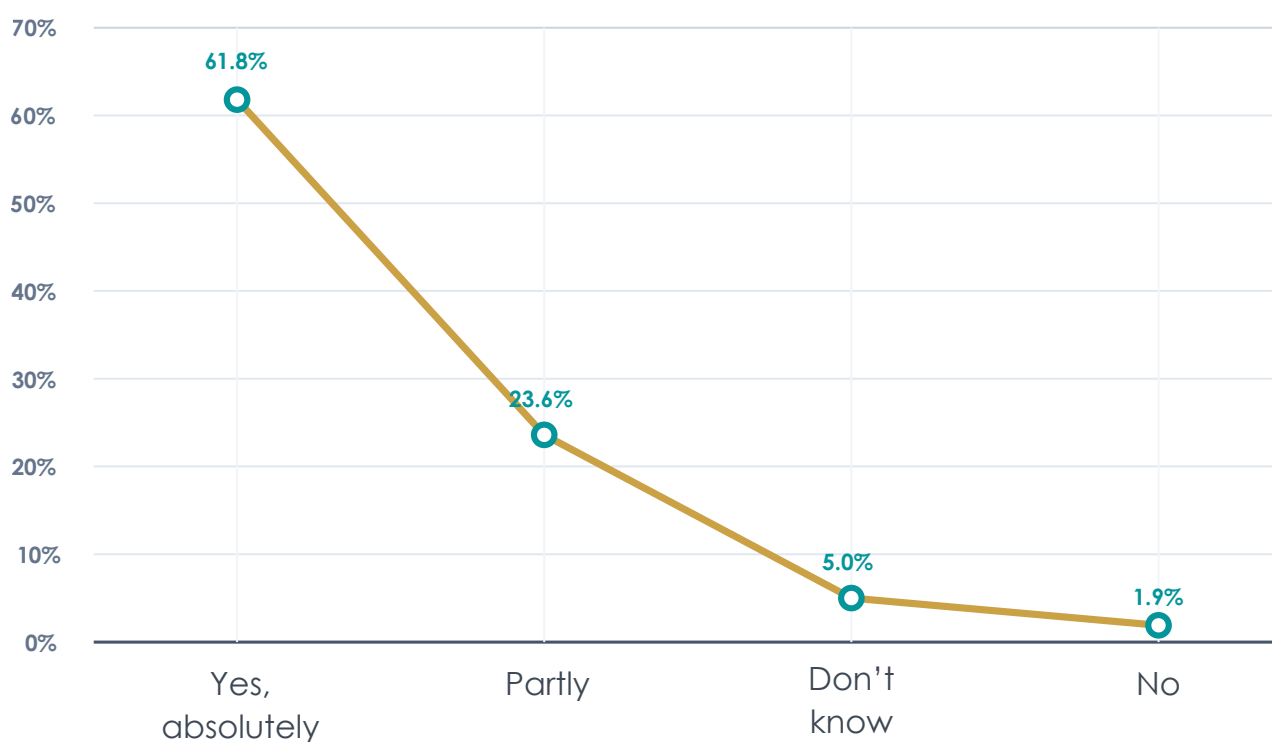
91.99% of participants believed that implementing transitional justice through its five mechanisms would contribute to achieving long-term stability in Syria, with 66.72% responding "yes, completely" and 25.27% "partially."

This result reflects a broad societal conviction that transitional justice is not merely a human rights or moral demand but a fundamental condition for rebuilding the state and society and for preventing the recurrence of violence and collapse in the future.

The findings also reveal that Syrians have come to view transitional justice as a comprehensive project to re-establish the relationship between the state and society, build more legitimate and impartial institutions, and achieve civil peace and long-term political and social stability.

### Transitional Justice and Long-Term Stability

| Level of Agreement | NO.          | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Yes, absolutely    | 1,620        | 61.8%          |
| Partly             | 620          | 23.6%          |
| Don't know         | 130          | 5.0%           |
| No                 | 50           | 1.9%           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2,420</b> | <b>92.3%</b>   |



## Analysis of Interrelations Between Indicators

The statistical relationships in this report were selected based on methodological and statistical criteria to ensure that the correlations are scientifically significant and genuinely explanatory, rather than mere random associations between variables. The analysis was based on measuring the strength of the relationship between indicators using correlation coefficients appropriate to the nature of the data, such as Spearman's rho for ordinal variables and Cramér's V for categorical variables. This approach was used because most questionnaire items relied on ordinal or categorical options rather than continuous numerical data.

Furthermore, the focus was placed exclusively on relationships that demonstrated clear statistical significance, as indicated by p-values, confirming that the relationships between variables are not the result of statistical chance but rather represent an actual pattern in the data. In addition, the selection of relationships did not rely solely on the numerical strength of the correlation but also on its analytical significance and its capacity to explain the behavior and attitudes of participants toward transitional justice issues, such as the relationship between exposure to violations and the demand for accountability, or the relationship between economic status and attitudes toward reconstruction.

## First: The Relationship Between Political/Civic Participation and Satisfaction with NCTJ

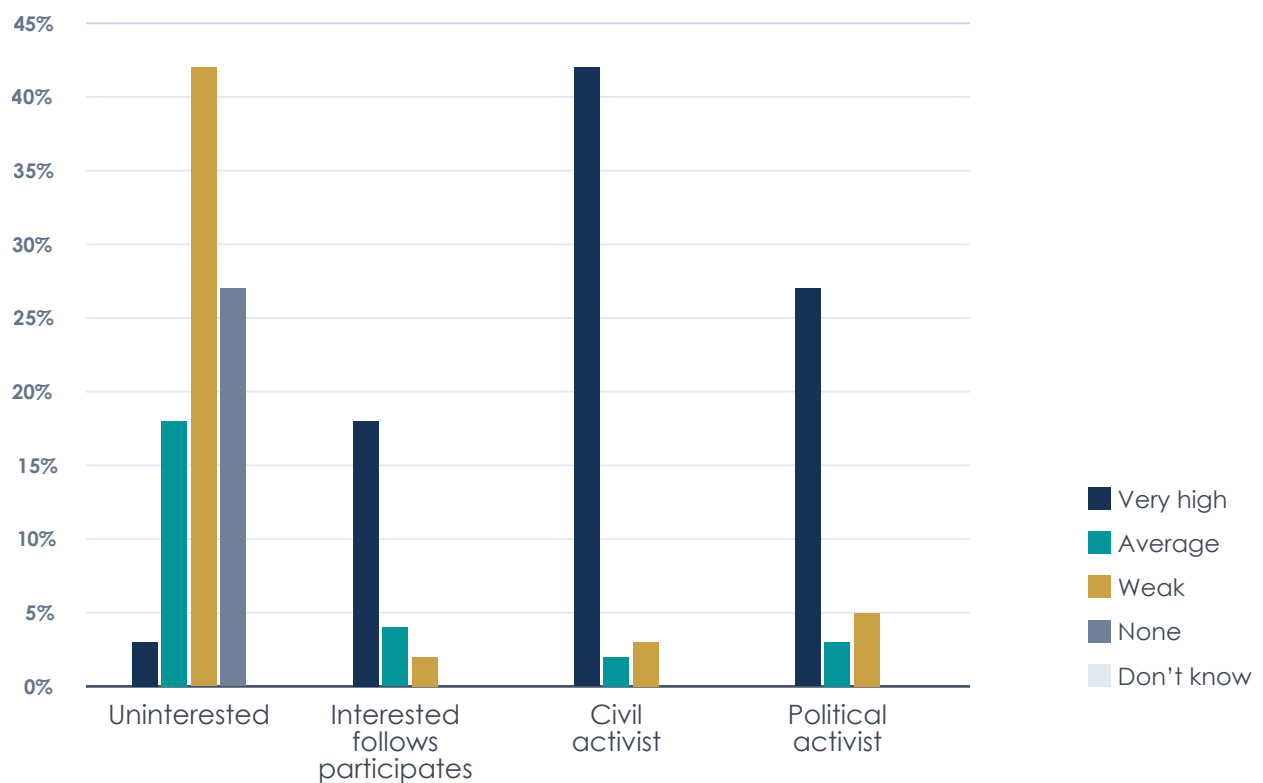
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The results of the statistical analysis revealed that the strongest correlation in the study was between the “degree of political/civic participation” and the “level of satisfaction with NCTJ.” Spearman’s rho reached approximately 0.63 with very high statistical significance, indicating a relatively strong direct relationship between the two variables.

This relationship implies that individuals who are more interested in and attentive to public affairs, or those engaged in civic and political activism, were more inclined to evaluate the NCTJ’s performance positively or moderately, compared with those less interested or politically inactive.

## Relationship Between Political/Civic Participation and Satisfaction with NCTJ

| Level of Participation          | Very High | Average | Weak | None | Don't Know |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|------|------|------------|
| Uninterested                    | 3%        | 18%     | 42%  | 27%  | 0%         |
| Interested follows/participates | 18%       | 4%      | 2%   | 0%   | 0%         |
| Civil activist                  | 42%       | 2%      | 3%   | 0%   | 0%         |
| Political activist              | 27%       | 3%      | 5%   | 0%   | 0%         |



## Second: The Relationship Between Educational Level and Support for Establishing International/Hybrid Courts to Prosecute War Criminals

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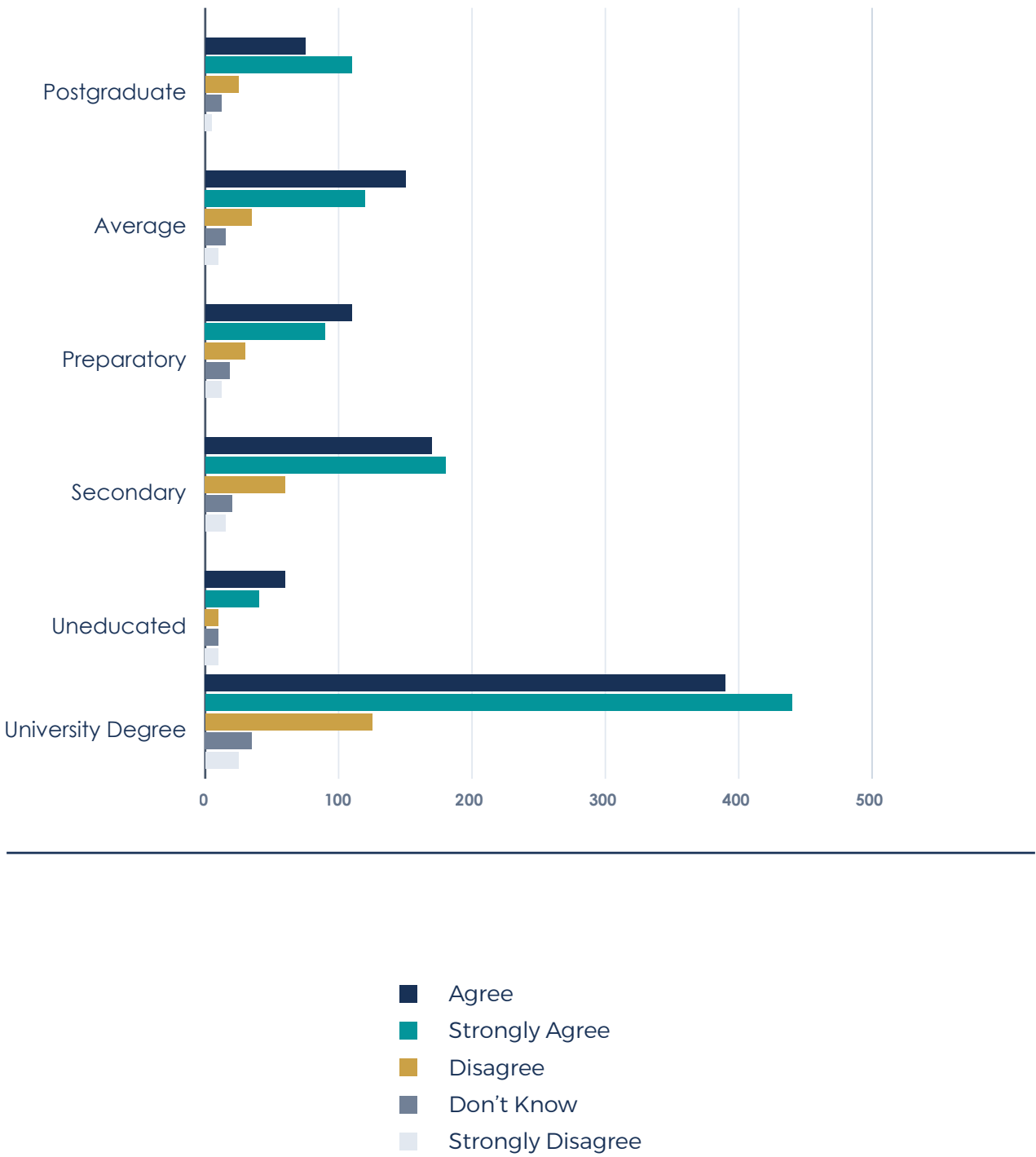
The results of the correlation between educational level and support for establishing international/hybrid courts indicate that approval for these courts rises markedly with participants' educational attainment. The proportion of supporters ("agree" + "strongly agree") reached 87.85% among postgraduate degree holders and 82.58% among university graduates, compared to only 56.76% among uneducated participants. These findings indicate that highly educated groups place greater trust in international judicial mechanisms, viewing them as a stronger guarantee of integrity and independence in prosecuting perpetrators of violations.

Conversely, the percentages of "do not know" and "disagree" were relatively high among less educated groups; the proportion of those uncertain or opposed among uneducated participants reached approximately 45.95%, compared to only 12.15% among postgraduate degree holders. This reflects a clear correlation between education level and legal and political awareness regarding concepts of international justice and hybrid courts.

### Relationship Between Educational Level and Support for Establishing International/Hybrid Courts to Prosecute War Criminals

| Education Level   | Agree      | Strongly Agree | Disagree   | Don't Know | Strongly Disagree | Total No. Participants | Level of Agreement |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Postgraduate      | 75         | 110            | 25         | 12         | 5                 | 227                    | <b>81.5%</b>       |
| Average           | 150        | 120            | 35         | 15         | 10                | 330                    | <b>81.8%</b>       |
| Preparatory       | 110        | 90             | 30         | 18         | 12                | 260                    | <b>76.9%</b>       |
| Secondary         | 170        | 180            | 60         | 20         | 15                | 445                    | <b>78.7%</b>       |
| Uneducated        | 60         | 40             | 10         | 10         | 10                | 145                    | <b>69.0%</b>       |
| University Degree | 390        | 440            | 125        | 35         | 25                | 1,015                  | <b>81.8%</b>       |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>955</b> | <b>980</b>     | <b>285</b> | <b>110</b> | <b>77</b>         | <b>2,422</b>           | <b>79.9%</b>       |

Relationship Between Educational Level and Support for Establishing International/Hybrid Courts to Prosecute War Criminals



## Third: The Relationship Between Ethnic/National Background and Attitudes Toward Dismantling Former Security Agencies

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The results of the statistical analysis showed a clear relationship between “ethnic/national background” and “attitudes toward dismantling and restructuring former security apparatuses,” with a correlation coefficient of approximately 0.54 and statistical significance.

The findings reveal distinct differences between Arab and Kurdish participants in their evaluations of the process of dismantling and restructuring security agencies, indicating that attitudes toward security reform are shaped by differing political and security experiences during the years of conflict.

Arab participants demonstrated the highest percentage of total support for the dismantling process, with the proportion of “yes, completely satisfied” reaching 44.67%, compared to only 23.16% among Kurds. This result indicates that a significant portion of Arab participants view the dismantling of the current security agencies as a positive and acceptable step on the pathway to institutional change.

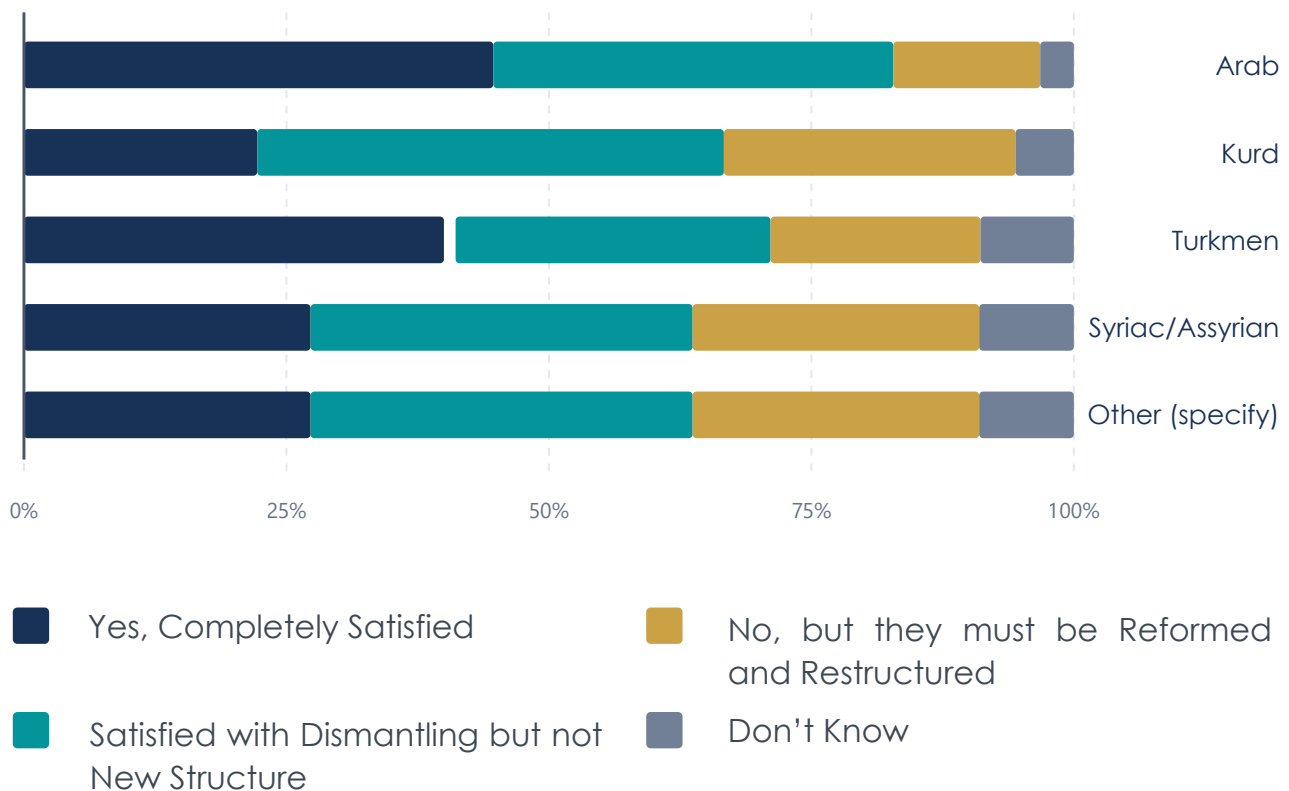
By contrast, Kurdish participants recorded the highest percentage in the category “satisfied with the dismantling but dissatisfied with the manner of restructuring,” at 42.37%, compared with 37.81% among Arabs. This reflects a more reserved position toward the form of rebuilding current security institutions, rather than toward the principle of dismantling itself.

Furthermore, the results showed that the percentage of Kurds who believed that “the agencies should have been reformed and restructured” was 29.94%, more than double the percentage among Arabs (14.04%). This gap demonstrates differences in perceptions of the nature of the required security reform and in the level of trust in the new security institutions and the mechanisms for their reconstruction.

### Relationship Between Ethnic/National Backgrounds and Attitudes Toward Dismantling Former Security Agencies

| Ethnic/National Background | Yes, Completely Satisfied | Satisfied with Dismantling but not New Structure | No, but they must be Reformed and Restructured | Don't Know | Total No. Participants |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Other (specify)            | 30                        | 40                                               | 30                                             | 10         | <b>110</b>             |
| Syriac/Assyrian            | 15                        | 20                                               | 15                                             | 5          | <b>55</b>              |
| Turkmen                    | 20                        | 15                                               | 10                                             | 5          | <b>50</b>              |
| Arab                       | 960                       | 820                                              | 300                                            | 70         | <b>2,150</b>           |
| Kurd                       | 40                        | 80                                               | 50                                             | 10         | <b>180</b>             |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>1,065</b>              | <b>975</b>                                       | <b>405</b>                                     | <b>100</b> | <b>2,545</b>           |

### Relationship Between Ethnic/National Background and Attitudes Toward Dismantling Former Security Agencies



## Fourth: The Relationship Between Personal Experience with Violations and the Prioritization of the Security File Over Financial Corruption

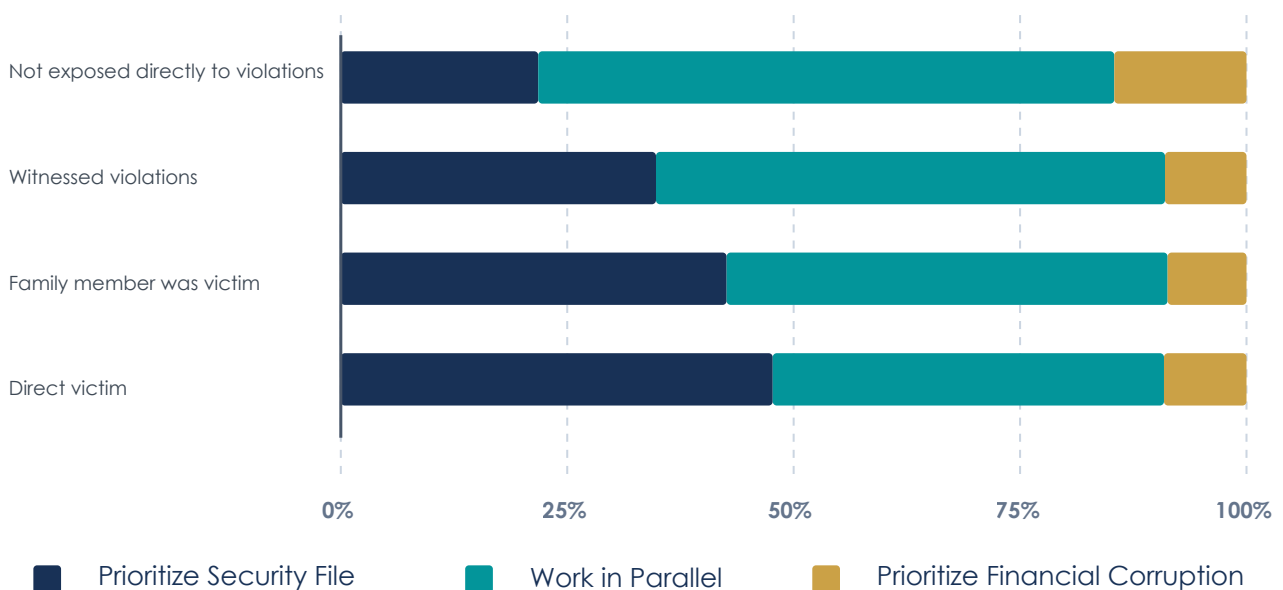
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The results of the statistical analysis revealed a clear relationship between “personal experience with violations” and “identifying priorities between the security file and financial corruption.” Spearman’s rho reached approximately 0.49 with statistical significance. This relationship indicates that individuals who were exposed to direct violations, or who have family members who were exposed to violations, tend to a greater degree to consider the security file a priority over financial corruption files during the transitional period.

The findings reveal that participants who experienced direct violations were the most likely to consider the security file a priority, at 48.12%, compared with 21.73% among those who did not. This outcome indicates that the groups most affected by violence and violations view security and accountability as the most urgent need ahead of any other economic or administrative reforms.

## Relationship Between Personal Experience with Violations and the Prioritizations of the Security File Over Financial Corruption

| Personal Experience with Violations | Prioritize Security File | Work in Parallel | Prioritize Financial Corruption | Total No. Participants |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Not exposed directly to violations  | 21.8%                    | 63.6%            | 14.6%                           | 1,250                  |
| Witnessed violations                | 34.8%                    | 56.2%            | 9.0%                            | 980                    |
| Family member was victim            | 42.6%                    | 48.7%            | 8.7%                            | 760                    |
| Direct victim                       | 47.7%                    | 43.2%            | 9.1%                            | 610                    |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>34.1%</b>             | <b>55.0%</b>     | <b>10.9%</b>                    | <b>3,600</b>           |



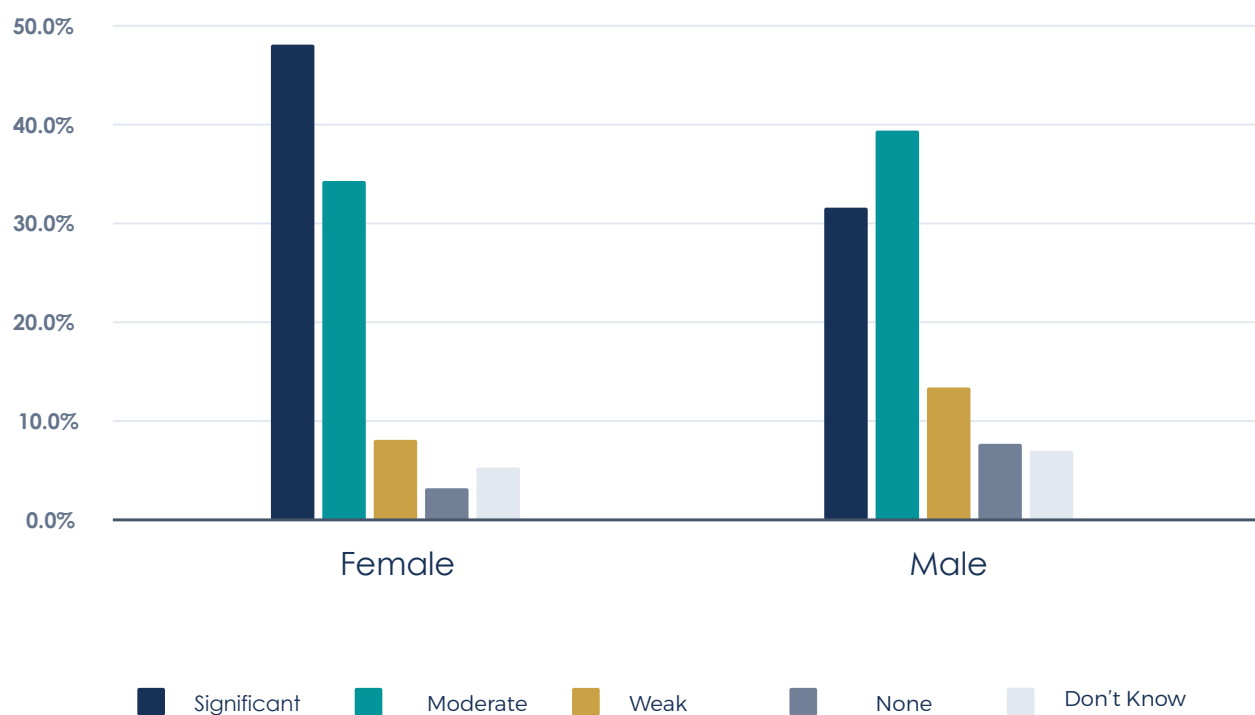
## Fifth: The Relationship Between Gender and Attitudes Toward Establishing a Women's Police Academy

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The results reveal that women showed greater support for the idea of a Women's Police Academy than men. The proportion of those who considered its role "significant" was 48.32% among females and 31.74% among males. Despite this variance, it remains relatively limited and does not reflect a sharp gender division, especially since the majority of males also selected "significant" or "moderate." This outcome points to a general societal acceptance of strengthening women's presence in security institutions, accompanied by growing awareness of women's role in improving community protection and addressing women's issues and gender-based violence within these institutions.

### Relationship Between Gender and Attitudes Toward Establishing a Women's Police Academy

| Gender       | Significant  | Moderate     | Weak         | None        | Don't Know  | Total No. Participants |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Female       | 48.1%        | 34.3%        | 8.1%         | 3.2%        | 5.3%        | <b>1,820</b>           |
| Male         | 31.6%        | 39.4%        | 13.4%        | 7.7%        | 7.0%        | <b>1,774</b>           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>40.0%</b> | <b>36.8%</b> | <b>10.7%</b> | <b>5.4%</b> | <b>6.1%</b> | <b>3,594</b>           |



# Transitional Justice Scenarios in Syria

The survey outcomes, along with the political and social transformations Syria has witnessed following the fall of the Assad regime, demonstrate that transitional justice is no longer merely a human rights or legal issue.

Instead, it has evolved into a strategic nexus linked to the reconstitution of the state, society, and the relationship between the governing authority and the citizen. Given the complexity of the Syrian context, the entanglement of domestic and external factors, and the multiplicity of local, regional, and international actors, the pathway of transitional justice remains open to several divergent scenarios. These range from a gradual success capable of producing sustainable stability to failure or paralysis that could reproduce violence and division in new guises.

The importance of scenario analysis stems from the fact that transitional justice in Syria does not operate in a legal or moral vacuum but within a highly fragile transitional environment where issues of security, the economy, political legitimacy, international balances, societal divisions, and institutional reconstruction intersect. Consequently, the future of transitional justice will not be determined solely by the existence of laws or commissions, but by the capacity of political actors, the new institutions, and Syrian society to manage this portfolio as part of a project to reestablish the state and prevent the recurrence of collapse and violence. Within this context, four primary scenarios can be envisioned for the pathway of transitional justice in Syria in the coming years.

## Potential Transitional Justice Scenarios in Syria

### First Scenario: Comprehensive and gradual transitional justice

#### General Description

Gradual and balanced approach combining accountability, institutional reform, truth seeking and reparations

#### Main Opportunities/Advantages

- Building national legitimacy and trust in institutions
- Sustainable international support for transitional justice process
- Improving social cohesion
- Ending impunity

#### Main Risks

- Resistance by old regime remnants
- Slow process due to complexity and sensitivity
- Pressures of factions and political considerations
- Economic challenges and weak capacities

### Second Scenario: Transitional justice linked to political trade-offs

#### General Description

Partial or selective implementation of transitional justice linked to political trade-offs and alliances

#### Main Opportunities/Advantages

- Avoiding large-scale political clash
- Facilitating management of transitional period through short-term security
- Minimize risks of collapse and all-out conflict

#### Main Risks

- Reinforce impunity
- Weaken societal trust in transitional justice
- Deepen social rifts and tensions
- Potential for renewal of protests and instability

### Third Scenario: Suspending justice in return for stability

#### General Description

Deferring or suspending the transitional justice process to maintain stability, rebuild the state and avoid chaos

#### Main Opportunities/Advantages

- Relative security and stability to start reconstruction
- Speed rebuilding institutions and services
- Improve growth and economic indicators

#### Main Risks

- Deferring truth and meaningful accountability
- Accumulation of grievances and absence of redress
- Risk of re-opening violation files in the future
- Undermine state legitimacy inside and abroad

### Fourth Scenario: Failure of justice and renewal of communal violence

#### General Description

State and institutions fail to manage justice issues leading to loss of legitimacy and increased sense of injustice

#### Main Opportunities/Advantages

- No opportunities (leads to complete breakdown and return to square one)

#### Main Risks

- Collapse of trust in system, state and institutions
- Return of wide-scale violations and violence
- Disintegration of social fabric and spread of hatred
- External interventions taking advantage of chaos and division

# 1

## **Scenario One: Comprehensive and Gradual Transitional Justice**

## TDA

This scenario is predicated on the new Syrian state's success in building an incremental and balanced transitional justice pathway that integrates accountability, institutional reform, truth-seeking, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence within a long-term national vision. This vision takes into consideration the fragility of the transitional period and the complexities of the reality in Syria.

This scenario presupposes the existence of genuine political will within the new authority to pursue a profound reform process, in tandem with building broad societal and political consensus, backed by international and regional support focused on Syria's stability and the sustainable rebuilding of its institutions.

In this path, transitional justice becomes a mechanism for reconstructing political legitimacy, rather than a mere retaliatory process for settling scores. Accountability is handled within a clear legal and institutional framework that distinguishes between individual and collective responsibility, preventing a slide toward collective punishment or societal retribution.

This scenario also assumes the state's success in implementing incremental reform of the security and judicial apparatuses, building a more independent judiciary, strengthening the role of civil society, and opening avenues for community participation in formulating transitional policies.

The primary opportunities in this scenario include a broad societal desire to achieve both justice and stability, potential international support for justice and reform pathways, growing societal awareness of the importance of building legitimate and stable institutions, and societal war fatigue alongside a desire to overcome division.

However, this scenario faces major challenges, most notably the fragility of the security environment, the weakness of economic and institutional capacities, the complexity of issues related to the missing, property, and mass violations, and the risk of conflicting interests between political and military actors.

As for the key actors in this scenario: the new Syrian government, NCTJ, CSOs, the national judiciary, supportive international institutions, local communities, and social elites.

Should this scenario materialize, Syria is likely to gradually build long-term stability grounded in legitimacy and institutional trust, with a lower likelihood of a return to violence or societal disintegration.

# 2

## **Scenario Two: “Selective” Justice Linked to Political Trade-offs**

## TDA

This scenario relies on a partial or selective application of transitional justice, in which accountability and reform hinge on political balances and internal and external alliances rather than on comprehensive legal and institutional standards.

In this pathway, focus may be placed on holding specific figures or networks associated with the former regime, or certain violations, to account, while ignoring or neutralizing other files associated with influential actors or forces possessing political or security influence during the transitional period.

This is one of the most likely scenarios in fragile transitional environments, particularly when the new state is compelled to manage complex balances between the demands of justice and the requirements of political and security stability.

The danger of this scenario lies in its potential to produce a “negotiated justice” that progressively loses its societal legitimacy. Citizens may begin to view justice as a selective political tool rather than a system grounded in equality and the rule of law.

This pathway may also foster a growing sense of discrimination or grievance among certain groups and regions, particularly if victims feel that some perpetrators are receiving political protection or immunity.

The opportunities in this scenario lie in its ability to mitigate direct confrontation with certain centers of power, facilitate short-term political and security management during the transitional period, and reduce the likelihood of a rapid explosion or open confrontation.

However, its long-term risks appear high, most notably the erosion of societal trust in transitional justice, the reproduction of a culture of impunity, the deepening of divisions and conflicting identities, and the weakening of the legitimacy of the new institutions.

As for the most prominent key actors, they are political forces, military and security actors, regional and international powers, and networks of economic and political interests.

At the level of stability, this scenario may achieve relative, temporary stability, but it remains fragile and susceptible to being shaken by any new political or security crisis.

# 3

## **Scenario Three: Freezing Justice in Exchange for Stability**

## TDA

This scenario is based on deferring or freezing the transitional justice process under the pretext of maintaining stability and preventing security or political collapse.

Priority is given to rebuilding state institutions, establishing security, and reviving the economy, while deferring accountability files and deep reform to later stages.

This scenario frequently emerges in post-conflict environments when new authorities or international powers fear that opening violation files will ignite tensions or disrupt state reconstruction.

In the Syrian case, this scenario might find support from certain local or regional powers that prioritize the current phase as consolidating security, stability, and reconstruction, even if it comes at the expense of justice and accountability.

However, this pathway contains a structural paradox: while postponing justice may provide a temporary sense of stability, it simultaneously accumulates anger, resentment, and a sense of injustice among victims and affected communities.

Furthermore, freezing justice may lead to the reintegration of networks of influence and violation within the new institutions without genuine accountability, threatening to reproduce the previous authoritarian structure in different forms.

The opportunities of this scenario lie in reducing the likelihood of a rapid security collapse, accelerating the reconstruction of institutions and services, and attracting international support and investment.

However, its long-term risks appear profound, including the erosion of trust in the new institutions, the entrenchment of impunity, the creation of a collective memory of grievance prone to future explosion, and the weakening of the prospects for genuine reconciliation.

As for key influential actors in it, they are the executive authority, security and military institutions, certain international powers backing rapid stabilization, and economic elites associated with reconstruction.

At the level of stability, this scenario may achieve a temporary de-escalation, but it does not establish sustainable stability because the root causes of the conflict and division remain unaddressed.

# 4

## **Scenario Four: Failure of Justice and Resurgence of Societal Violence**

This scenario represents the most perilous pathway. It is predicated on the failure of the state and transitional institutions to manage the transitional justice portfolio, whether due to weak political will, security collapse, the exacerbation of divisions, or the incapacity of institutions to meet a minimum threshold of justice, accountability, and reform.

In this scenario, transitional justice turns into a paralyzed or delegitimized file, while sentiments of injustice, retribution, and loss of trust escalate. This gradually leads to the resurgence of societal violence or the formation of new patterns of communal revenge and factional division.

Additionally, the absence of justice may contribute to empowering radical groups or extremist rhetoric that capitalize on feelings of exclusion, anger, and a loss of confidence in the state.

The primary indicators of this scenario consist of the persistence of impunity, the slow pace of judicial restructuring and restructuring transitional justice institutions, the escalation of hate speech and divisive rhetoric, and the deterioration of economic and security conditions.

As for its most significant risks, they lie in the return of civil violence, the collapse of trust in the state, the escalation of retributive tendencies, the disintegration of social peace, and the reproduction of the conflict in new forms.

Should this scenario materialize, Syria could enter a new cycle of instability, even if conventional warfare has ceased, because societal and political violence will remain combustible.

# Policy Recommendations to Support Transitional Justice in Syria

The findings of this study, across its various themes related to accountability, truth-seeking, institutional reform, and community reconciliation, indicate that the success of transitional justice in Syria is not merely linked to the presence of new institutions or laws, but to the ability of the state and society to produce a new political and social contract founded on trust, transparency, the rule of law, and preventing the recurrence of violations. In this context, recommendations cannot be viewed as isolated technical measures; rather, they must be treated as part of an integrated strategic vision to rebuild the state and society together following long years of conflict, institutional collapse, and social polarization.

The survey findings reveal that a broad segment of Syrians views transitional justice as a necessary gateway to long-term stability, rather than merely a human rights or judicial file. The findings also reflect a growing awareness of the structural relationship between institutional reform, justice, social peace, and the restoration of trust between the state and society. Hence, there is an urgent need to formulate an integrated policy approach that accommodates the complexities of the Syrian situation and balances the imperatives of stability with the requirements of justice, without sacrificing either.

## Policy Recommendations to Support Transitional Justice and Stability

### ACTIVE STRATEGIC TARGET:

Sustainable Peace &amp; Stability

Non-Recurrence of Violations

Strong Institutions

Community Participation

Justice &amp; Accountability

#### 1 Syrian Government

Judicial reform

Truth seeking law

Protection of witness and victims

Restructuring the security sector

#### 2 NCTJ

Building national databases

Expanding community participation

Promoting transparency and outreach

#### 3 Civil Society

Community awareness

Supporting local reconciliation

Documentation and commemoration

#### 4 International Community

Technical and institutional support

Safeguarding the judicial pathway

Funding and sustainability

### Common Principles

Incrementalism & sustainability | non-discrimination | transparency & accountability  
| partnership | rule of law | victim-centered

### Expected Outcomes

- Long-term stability and secure future
- Protection of human rights and dignity
- Legitimate and empowered institutions
- Mutual trust between state and society
- Economic development and social cohesion

### Actor

- Syrian Government
- NCTJ
- Civil Society
- International Community

### Distribution of Policy Recommendations by Actor

4  
Syrian Government

3  
NCTJ

3  
Civil Society

3  
International Community

## First: Recommendations for the Syrian Government and the People's Assembly

The primary priority for the new Syrian government is to build legitimate institutions capable of restoring societal trust, a shift from the logic of security control to that of a legal and institutional state. In this context, judicial reform is the cornerstone of any successful transitional justice pathway, as the absence of an independent and effective judiciary renders all other pathways vulnerable to politicization or loss of legitimacy.

The process of judicial reform must begin by redefining the relationship between the judicial and executive branches to ensure the judiciary's independence from political and security interventions that characterized the structure of the Syrian state for many decades. It also requires restructuring the Supreme Judicial Council in accordance with standards of independence, competence, and integrity, and removing figures associated with past violations or networks of influence from sensitive positions within the judicial apparatus.

It is also important to establish specialized chambers and courts for war crimes and gross violations, ensuring they are equipped with personnel trained to handle complex crimes linked to armed conflicts and widespread violations. Handling these files through conventional mechanisms may lead to weak procedures, the loss of rights, or prolonged litigation that strips justice of its societal efficacy.

In the context of truth-seeking, Syria needs to enact a specific national law for truth and memory commissions that defines their mandates, operational mechanisms, guarantees of independence, and relationship with the judiciary and official institutions. The absence of a clear legal framework could turn truth commissions into symbolic institutions with limited impact or leave them vulnerable to political polarization.

Furthermore, the right of victims and their families to access information and official archives must be guaranteed, particularly regarding detainees, missing persons, and collective violations. The issue of missing persons represents one of the most sensitive files in the Syrian context, not only because of its scale, but also because it is linked to rebuilding trust between the state and society.

Consequently, creating a unified national database for missing persons and violations is a strategic necessity to consolidate information, prevent data conflicts, and protect evidence and testimony from loss or tampering.

Regarding the protection of victims and witnesses, the success of any accountability process depends largely on the state's capacity to provide a safe environment for participants in transitional justice pathways. Therefore, an integrated witness, victim, and whistleblower protection law must be enacted, encompassing security, legal, social, and psychological protection, especially in environments still experiencing security fragility or sharp societal divisions.

In the security file, the study reveals that Syrians clearly link security reform to the realization of justice. Hence, the restructuring of the security sector must not be confined to changing organizational structures or swapping leadership; it must include redefining the security doctrine itself, so that protecting citizens and their rights becomes the foundation of security institutions, replacing the logic of control and repression that governed their operations for decades.

Security apparatuses must also be subject to effective civilian and judicial oversight, alongside the development of clear accountability mechanisms within security institutions and the adoption of professional and human rights standards in recruitment, training, and promotions.

As for the People's Assembly, it is important that it initiate a pathway to "legislative reform" and play a significant role in "judicial reform." Laws related to the transitional justice pathway must be among legislative priorities, alongside codifying parliamentary oversight of the operations of security apparatuses, enhancing transparency and engagement with local communities, and guaranteeing civil society oversight of parliamentary functions.

## Second: Recommendations for NCTJ

The results of the study reveal that NCTJ still faces challenges related to societal trust, institutional clarity, and communication with citizens. Therefore, enhancing NCTJ's legitimacy requires it to transition from elite or centralized work to broad-based, participatory community action.

One of the most critical priorities is building a comprehensive national digital archive of violations, victims, and missing persons. This archive must rely on unified professional documentation standards and ensure protection of data and testimonies from loss, breaches, or politicization. Documenting methodologies must also be standardized in cooperation with Syrian and international organizations, as the multiplicity of references and methodologies can weaken the legal and human rights value of evidence.

In terms of community participation, NCTJ needs to engage victims and local communities directly in designing transitional policies, rather than relying solely on centralized or elitist approaches. The success of transitional justice is linked to its capacity to address diverse local needs, particularly in a society marked by varied patterns of violations and conflicts.

To this end, it is necessary to establish local NCTJ offices in the governorates and affected areas, a step NCTJ has already initiated, bringing services to closer, facilitating access for victims, and bolstering societal trust.

NCTJ should also develop a more transparent and clear media policy by issuing periodic public reports on its activities and the outcomes of its work, alongside developing media and awareness platforms that explain the concept, goals, and procedures of transitional justice in simplified language accessible to the public.

## Third: Recommendations for Civil Society

Civil society plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of transitional justice pathways, particularly in post-conflict environments where trust in official institutions is limited or precarious. In the Syrian case, there is an urgent need to develop the role of civil society as a bridge between the state and society, rather than merely acting as a human rights or relief actor, while simultaneously exercising oversight roles over the work of both NCTJ and all government institutions.

In this context, extensive community awareness programs should be implemented on the concepts of transitional justice, civil peace, and community reconciliation, given that a significant portion of tensions and divisions is linked to misunderstandings or conflating justice with revenge.

Special initiatives must also be developed to counter hate speech and incitement in media, digital platforms, and community activities, as the persistence of exclusionary and sectarian discourses represents one of the greatest threats to reconciliation and stability.

At the level of local reconciliations, community mediation and local dialogue in affected areas must be supported, with a focus on gradually building trust between local communities and the various affected groups. Reconciliation in the Syrian context cannot be imposed centrally; it requires localized pathways that respect the specificities of each area and its social and political context.

Civil society also bears a major responsibility in documentation and memory preservation by developing unified professional standards for documentation and protecting archives, testimonies, and collective memory from loss, politicization, or selectivity.

## Fourth: Recommendations for the International Community

The transitional justice pathway in Syria cannot be separated from the regional and international environment, given the entanglement of international and regional actors in the Syrian file. Therefore, the international community has an important role in supporting opportunities for justice and stability, provided that it focuses on building national institutions rather than imposing ready-made external models.

In this context, long-term technical and institutional support must be provided to Syrian judicial and administrative expertise, including training, capacity building, and the development of legal and technical systems for documentation, trials, and witness protection.

The international community must also support the independence of the national judiciary and prevent political interference in accountability and in files on violations, as the politicization of justice will undermine the legitimacy of the entire transitional process.

At the economic level, Syria requires sustainable financial support for reparations programs, institutional reform, psychosocial and social rehabilitation, and economic development initiatives linked to preventing the recurrence of conflict. Poverty and economic collapse constitute fertile ground for the reproduction of violence, extremism, and division.

Ultimately, the success of transitional justice in Syria will not depend solely on the number of trials or enacted laws, but on the capacity of various actors to transform justice into an inclusive national project that rebuilds trust and establishes a more legitimate, just, and stable state.

## Conclusion

The results of this study, with its quantitative indicators and qualitative analyses, reveal that Syrian society stands at a highly complex and sensitive historical juncture today. This moment goes beyond mere political transition or reconfiguration of authority, touching upon a deeper question regarding how to rebuild the state and society after one of the most violent and fragmenting experiences in contemporary Syrian history. Following decades of authoritarianism, followed by a protracted war, widespread violations, and deep political, social, and geographical divisions, transitional justice is no longer an abstract legal concept for Syrians; it has transformed into a comprehensive framework for redefining the relationship between the state and society, between the authority and the citizen, and between memory and the future.

The study's findings clarify that, despite the scale of the social, psychological, and economic fatigue left by years of conflict, Syrians still possess a remarkable degree of faith in the possibility of building a new transitional pathway based on justice, accountability, institutional reform, and social peace. The results demonstrated a broad societal consensus on the centrality of accountability and the impossibility of achieving genuine reconciliation without tangible progress in transitional justice. They also showed a growing awareness of the organic link between institutional reform, stability, and the prevention of the recurrence of violations.

At the same time, the study reveals that Syrian society does not adopt a retributive or simplistic conception of justice but instead advances a complex understanding that balances the imperatives of accountability with the requirements of stability and state reconstruction. Syrians, as the results showed, realize that transitional justice cannot be based on punishment alone, nor can it succeed through symbolic reconciliation or political settlements devoid of accountability. Therefore, Syrian societal awareness appears directed toward a more mature conception of justice as a comprehensive process encompassing trials, truth-seeking, reparations, institutional reform, and the rebuilding of societal trust.



Furthermore, the study showed that transitional justice files in Syria are inseparable from the general social, economic, and security context. Syrian society clearly links justice with economic stability, reconciliation with job opportunities, and social peace with the reform of security and judicial institutions. This means that transitional justice in the Syrian case cannot be reduced to a judicial track alone but must be understood as part of a broader national project to rebuild the state, society, the economy, and the public sphere.

The findings also indicate that trust is one of the most sensitive challenges in the transitional period. Despite relative optimism toward certain transformations and new institutions, broad segments of Syrians still harbor fears related to weak transparency, continued centralization, and the potential reproduction of discrimination or impunity. The outcomes also expose a persistent gap between transitional institutions and society, whether in communication, participation, or role clarity. This compels political and institutional actors to recognize that legitimacy is not achieved through official decrees alone, but through the gradual building of trust based on performance, transparency, neutrality, and the capacity to respond to the demands of victims and society.

In the same context, the study confirms that community reconciliation in Syria cannot be imposed from above or reduced to centralized political agreements; rather, it requires a long, incremental pathway that begins within local communities and addresses the effects of violence and division at the social, cultural, and psychological levels. The results also show that Syrian society has become more cognizant of the danger of hate speech and incitement, and more convinced of the importance of education and community awareness in preventing the recurrence of violations and building a new culture rooted in citizenship, pluralism, and rights.



On the other hand, the study reveals that transitional justice in Syria will remain closely tied to the surrounding political, security, and regional environment. External interventions, a weak legal environment, ongoing security fragility, and the multiplicity of local and international actors are all factors that directly affect the prospects for success of any transitional justice process. Therefore, the success of this process requires genuine political will, an inclusive national vision, and responsible international support focused on building institutions, ensuring judicial independence, and protecting the transitional process from politicization or instrumentalization amid regional and international conflicts.

In one of its core dimensions, this study conveys a message about the nature of the transformation that Syrian society is undergoing. Following long years of repression, violence, and division, the results reveal that Syrians have begun to transition gradually from thinking with a logic of “individual survival” to engaging with questions of the state, rights, justice, and a shared future. This shift, despite its fragility and complexities, represents one of the most significant indicators of the possibility of building a new national pathway, provided that the political and institutional will exists to accommodate this transformation and translate it into concrete policies and reforms.

Ultimately, the study confirms that transitional justice in Syria is not a marginal political option or a portfolio that can be indefinitely postponed; rather, it represents a fundamental prerequisite for rebuilding stability and preventing the future recurrence of violence and collapse. Societies that emerge from conflicts without addressing their wounds and violations and reforming their institutions remain vulnerable to reproducing conflict in new guises, even if direct warfare stops. Therefore, the future of Syria will not be determined solely by its capacity to reconstruct or control security, but by its capacity to build a new social contract based on justice, citizenship, human dignity, and the rule of law.

Hence, transitional justice in the Syrian context appears not merely as an end to the conflict, but as a potential beginning for the foundation of a different state; a state built not on fear, exclusion, or security control, but on trust, rights, participation, mutual recognition, and a guarantee that the Syrian tragedy will never again become a permanent destiny for future generations.





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