

# NEGOTIATING

## A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN SYRIA



OPINION SURVEY

# Negotiating a Political Solution in Syria

THE DAY AFTER (TDA)



## **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction

In the period between 30 March-19 May, 2015, The Day After (TDA) conducted a survey with the goal of understanding Syrians' attitudes towards negotiations between the regime and the opposition, as well as views on proposed UN-backed initiatives. The survey focuses on all aspects of negotiations: participants' overall attitudes, prerequisites for its success, participants' political representation, guarantees in order for the process to succeed, priorities of topics to be discussed, duration of implementation, and the attitudes towards proposals from the United Nations special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.

TDA conducted this survey using a non-representative sample, which included 2,767 respondents<sup>1</sup> (1741 men, 1026 women) inside Syria as well as those displaced in refugee camps in neighboring Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. It is important to note the survey should not be considered to be representative of the Syrian population as a whole. However, some significant trends can still be identified by comparing various critical demographic groups, to produce 'indicative samples'. A trained research team of 40 individuals distributed in different regions of Syria conducted the survey, as is illustrated in table 1. The sample includes areas under regime control as well as areas under opposition control.

Province	Sunnis	Shias	Alawites	Ismailies	Druze	Yazidies	Christians	No Answer	Total %	Number of Responses
Hassakah	38.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	5.5	55.3	100	217
Deir Ezzor	94.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	100	183
Aleppo	83.7	1.5	3.9	0.9	0.6	0.9	5.1	3.3	100	332
Idleb	94.4	0.0	0.0	.00	0	0.0	2.3	3.3	100	479
Latakia	78.5	0.0	8.9	3.8	1.3	0.0	2.5	5.1	100	79
Tartous	9.1	2.7	46.4	35.5	0.0	0.0	3.6	2.7	100	109
Homs (Rastan)	88.9	1.2	1.2	2.9	0.0	0.0	1.2	4.7	100	171
Damascus Suburbs	71.5	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.7	0.7	22.2	100	144
Damascus	23.5	4.9	12.3	11.3	3.9	0.5	11.8	31.9	100	204
Swaida	11.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.6	0.0	0.0	50.0	100	132
Quneitra	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100	2
Hama	88.5	0	5.7	2.6	0.0	0.4	2.6	0.0	100	227
Deraa	92.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	100	245
Jordan Camps	99.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	110
Turkey camps	95.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	100	98
Lebanon Camps	54.3	0.0	0.0	14.3	5.7	0.0	8.6	17.1	100	35
<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>2028</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>362</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2767</i>
<i>Total %</i>	<i>73.3</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>13.1</i>	<i>100</i>	

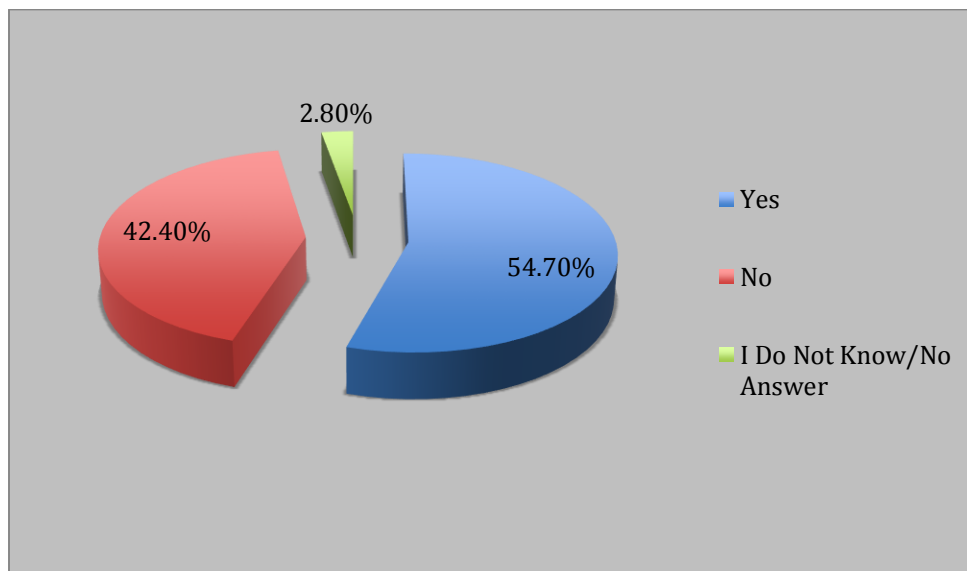
Table 1: Number of surveys per region included in the sample.

<sup>1</sup> 2767 respondents answered the first question regarding their views on negotiations as a tool to solve the conflict. The respondents who answered in the affirmative to this question (1514 respondents) were then asked to complete the survey regarding the format of negotiations.

# 1.

## Syrian attitudes towards a negotiated settlement

Since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in March 2011, calls have continuously been voiced for negotiations between the regime and the opposition in order to find a political solution to the conflict. Survey respondents were first asked if they support negotiations to reach an end to the conflict in Syria. Results reveal more than half of the respondents support resorting to the negotiating table (54.7%), whereas 42.5% reject negotiations as a solution (graph 1). The respondents who answered affirmatively (1514 individuals) were then invited to respond to a further series of questions regarding the process. The goal of this was to determine respondents' expectations about the nature of the negotiations, along with what form they would take, their content, and the conditions for their success.

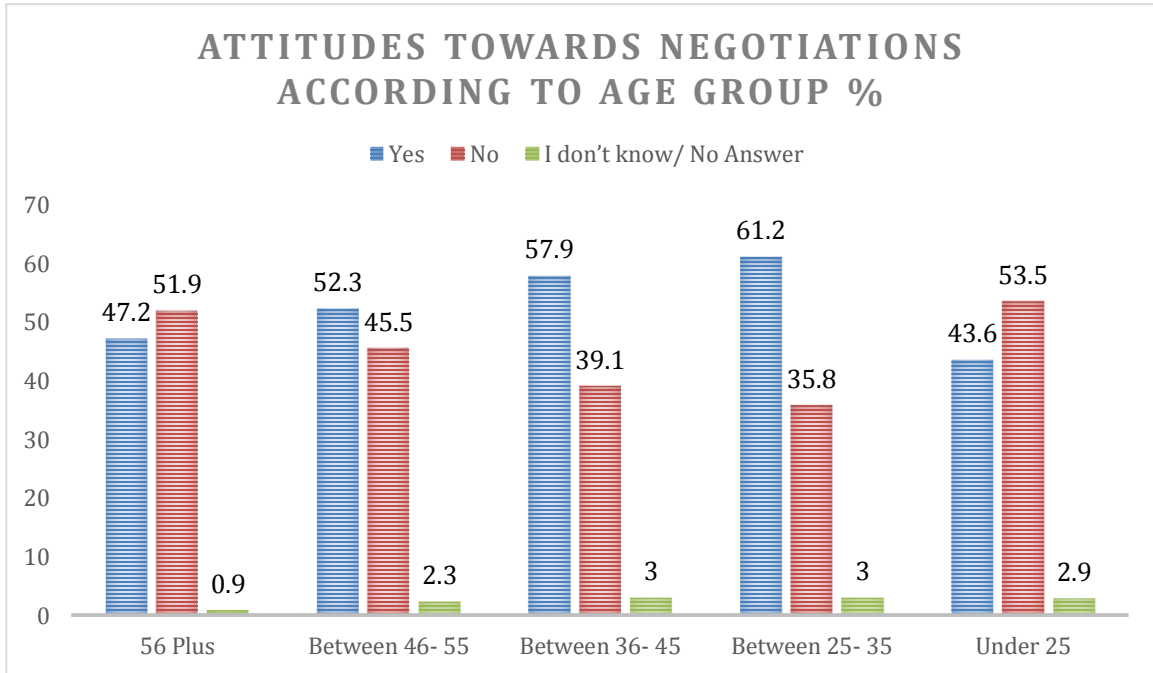


Graph 1: Do you support undertaking negotiations to find a political solution to the conflict in Syria?

Below are results based on a number of demographic and social distinctions. Men and women do not differ significantly in their views on negotiations in our sample. However, interesting differences appear when comparing other characteristics.

### *Age:*

It is apparent that respondents under the age of 25 years old tend to refuse the prospect of negotiations, while a larger proportion of those who do support negotiations lies between the ages of 26 and 45, and (to a lesser degree) between 46 and 55. On the other hand, it appears the elderly (over 56 years old) are less enthusiastic regarding the concept of negotiations, while 51.9 percent of those aged over 56 years old expressed their rejection of negotiations, as opposed to 47.2 percent who viewed negotiations as a positive step (Graph 2).



Graph 2: Attitudes towards negotiations according to age group.

*Monthly income:*

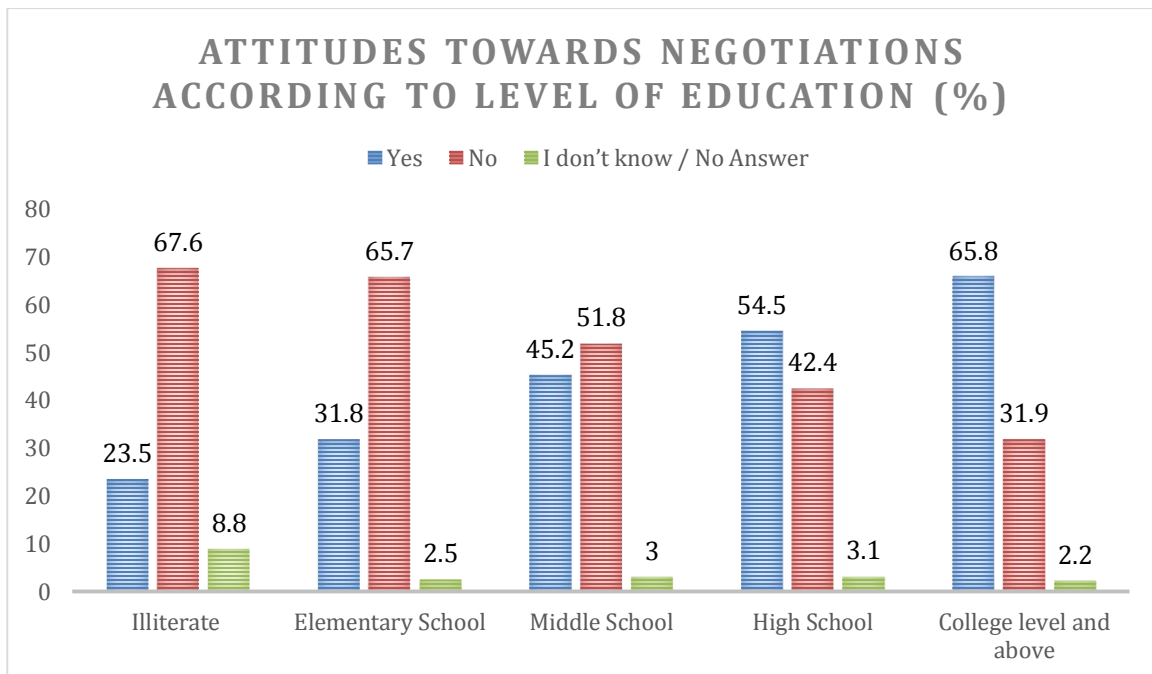
Respondents who receive a lower average income (less than 25,000 Syrian pounds per month) are roughly divided on the prospect of negotiations, (48.6 percent ‘Yes’ and 48.3 percent ‘No’), while opinions of those situated within a higher income bracket (between 25,000-75,000 Syrian pounds per month) differed significantly. A large proportion of respondents who claimed to earn 75,000+ Syrian pounds per month (69 percent) supported negotiations, as opposed to 28-29 percent against (Table 1).

Monthly Income	Yes	No	no answer	Total
Less than 25,000 SYP (100 \$)	48.6	48.3	3.2	100
Between 25,000 – 75,000 SYP(100-300 \$)	69.0	29.0	2.0	100
More than 75,000 (300 \$)	69.9	28.1	2.1	100
I prefer not to answer	46.3	50.4	3.3	100

Table 1: Attitudes towards negotiations according to monthly income (%)

*Education:*

It appears a correlation exists between respondents' stance towards negotiations and their level of formal education. It is also evident that the proportion of respondents in favor of negotiations increases with regard to their level of formal education. Surprisingly, only 23.5 percent of those classified as having 'no formal education' supported negotiations, whereas the proportion increased to 65.8 percent among those with a bachelor or post-graduate qualification. Similarly, it is worthy to note the proportion of those who do not support negotiations ranged from 67.6 percent (those without no formal education), to 31.9 percent for those with a bachelor or post-graduate degree (Graph 3).

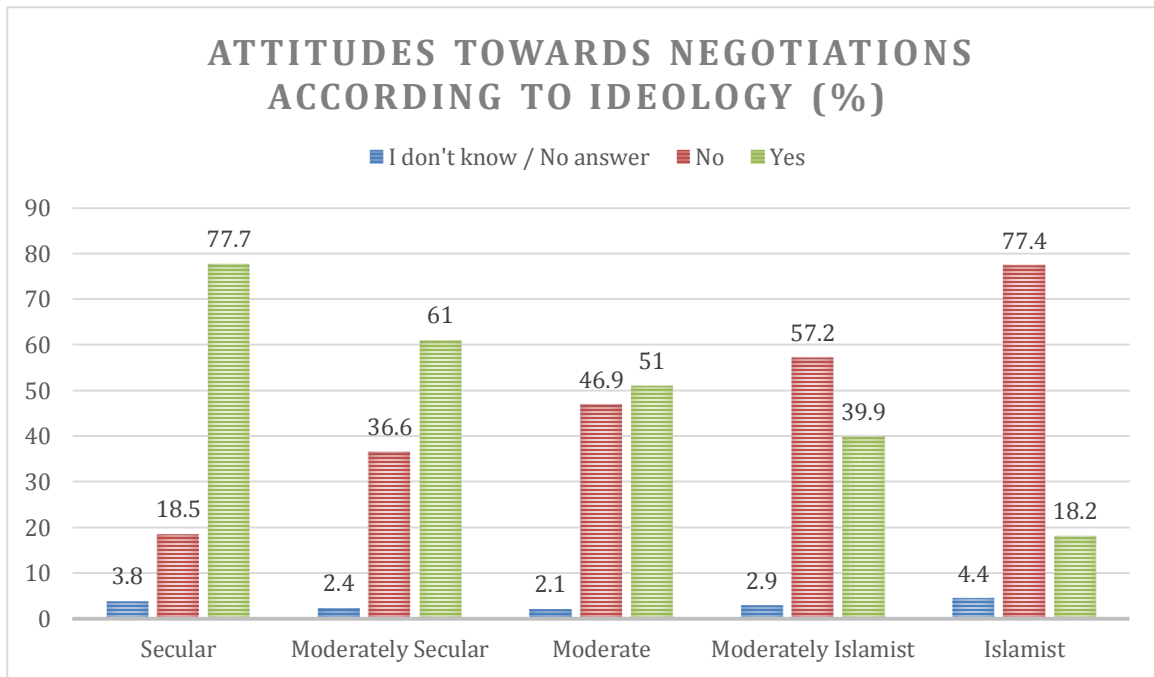


Graph 3: Attitudes towards negotiations according to level of education (%)



*Ideology:*<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the impact of religion towards negotiations, respondents who consider themselves to hold secular views largely favor the prospect of negotiations, while those who identify with Islamist ideology hold significant reservations towards the idea of a negotiated settlement. As shown in Graph 4, the proportion of respondents who answered ‘Yes’ decreases from 77.7 percent among those who identify as ‘secular’, to only 18.2 percent among those who identify as ‘Islamist’. Unsurprisingly, the figures are reversed among those who rejected negotiations: from 18.5 percent among secular respondents, to 77.7 percent among those who identify as Islamist.



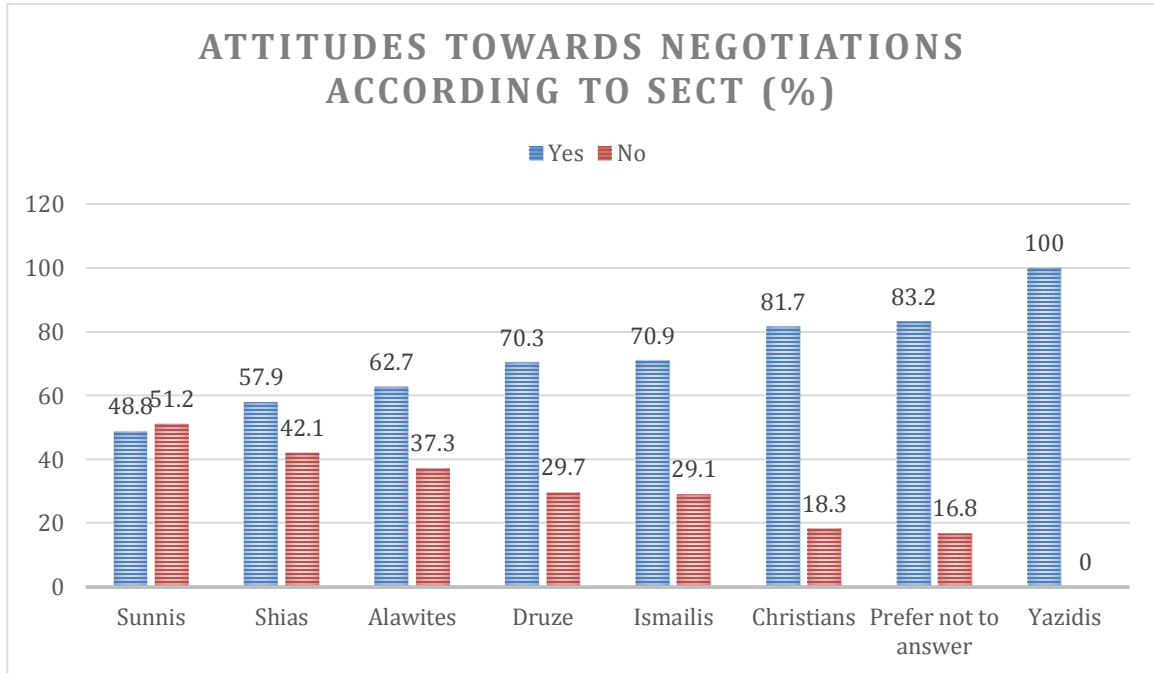
Graph 4: Attitudes towards negotiations according to ideology (%)

*Sect:*

Survey results suggest that Sunni respondents are relatively divided on the prospect of a negotiated settlement (47.4 percent ‘Yes’, 49.7 percent ‘No’) while Alawis surveyed appear to largely support negotiations – 62.7 percent responded positively, as opposed to 37.3 percent who voiced reservations against the proposal. Responses amongst Isma’ili and Druze respondents are similar, with a large number (around

<sup>2</sup> To define ideology, we asked about the most appropriate form of governance for the future of Syria, presenting a series of numbers beginning with 0 (a secular state) and ending with 10 (an Islamic caliphate). TDA requested respondents to specify the extent of their proximity to these two choices. Afterwards, we reorganized the answers in the following way: 0 being ‘secular’ (578 respondents), 1-3 being ‘moderately secular’ (623 respondents), 4-6 being ‘moderate’ (835 respondents), 7-9 being ‘moderately Islamist’ (554 respondents), and 10 being ‘Islamist’ (159 respondents).

two-thirds) in favor of negotiations, while only just over 29 percent rejected the proposition. Furthermore, it appears there is a near-consensus among Christians surveyed regarding the necessity of negotiations.<sup>3</sup>



Graph 5: Attitudes towards negotiations according to sect (%).

*Location<sup>4</sup>:*

On the whole, there appears to be a relative uniformity of attitudes towards negotiations in areas where respondents were interviewed. Table 2 reveals a list organized according to the proportion who answered in the affirmative, where we can see how the majority rejected negotiations in the Jordanian refugee camps, Homs, Idlib, Lattakia, and Dara’a, whereas the proportion was reversed in favor of supporting negotiations in the Turkish and Lebanese refugee camps, Aleppo, Deir al-Zour, Hama, Damascus, Damascus Countryside, Suweida, Tartous, and Hassakeh. In accordance with previous findings, respondents in areas with a higher concentration of minorities are more in favor of negotiations. It should be noted that the sample from Idlib was taken *after* the takeover of the city by the opposition group Jaish Al-Fateh.

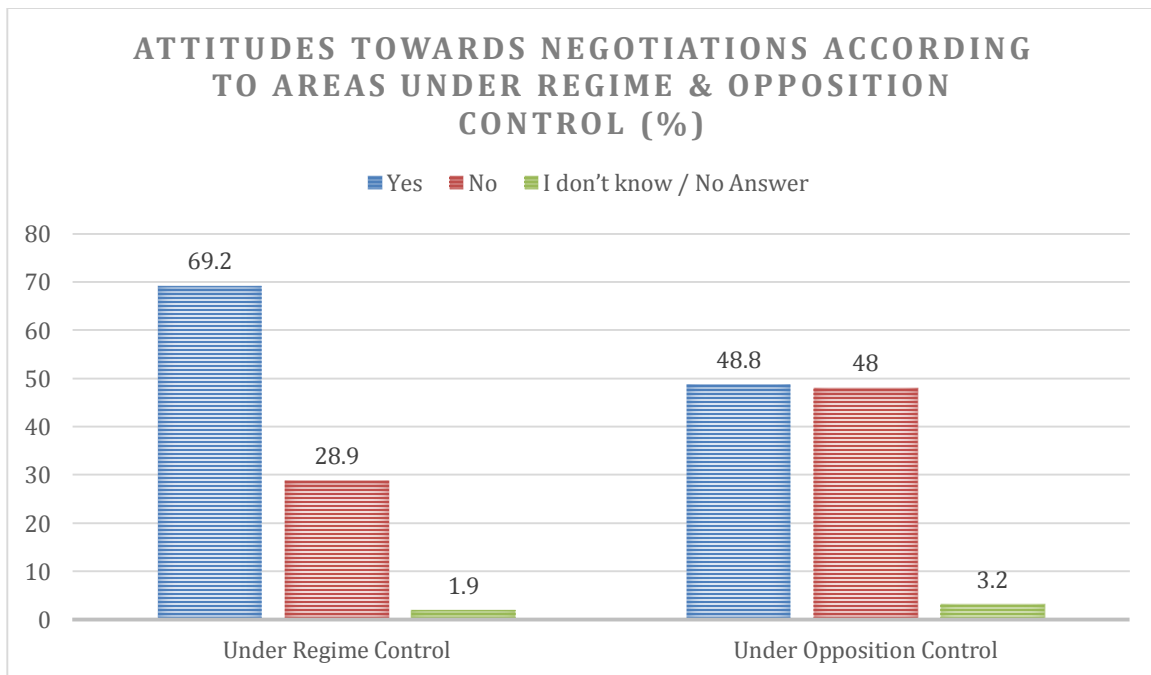
<sup>3</sup> The Yazidi sample is small and the result can therefore be misleading.

<sup>4</sup> The location of the respondent at the time of the interview.

Location	Yes	No	Total
1 Camps in Jordan	12.8	87.2	100
2 Homs (Al-Rastan)	33.7	66.3	100
3. Idlib	39.3	57.6	100
4 Lattakia (Jabal Turkman)	45.5	54.5	100
5. Dara'a	46.1	53.9	100
6 Camps in Turkey	52.1	47.9	100
7 Aleppo (Regime- and opposition areas)	55.0	45.0	100
8. Deir Ezzor	53.5	46.5	100
9. Hama (Regime- and opposition areas)	64.0	36.0	100
10 Camps in Lebanon	68.6	31.4	100
11 Rural Damascus	70.7	29.3	100
12 Damascus	78.4	21.6	100
13 Suweida	79.2	20.8	100
14 Tartous	79.8	20.2	100
15 Hassakeh	88.6	11.4	100

Table 2: Attitudes towards negotiations according to location (%).

When comparing results obtained from areas under regime control to those from areas outside its administration, we find there is a division of opinion in opposition-controlled areas towards the concept of negotiations. Conversely, respondents in areas under regime control were largely supportive of a negotiated settlement to the conflict (69.2 percent ‘Yes’, 28.9 percent ‘No’). It must also be recognized that specific regions under regime control are home to a number of different sects, whereas regions outside regime control consist of a predominant Sunni majority, in which no respondents claimed to belong to an Alawi community (Graph 6 and Table 3).



Graph 6: Attitudes towards negotiations according to regime and opposition control (%).

	Opposition controlled Area	Regime Controlled Areas
Sunnis	87,2	38,9
Shias	0,1	2,4
Ismailis	0,6	9,5
Druze	0,2	7,9
Yazidis	0,1	0,9
Christians	1,4	6,9
Alawites	0,0	14,0
No Answer	10,5	19,5
Total	100	100

Table 3: Distribution of sects in areas under regime control and opposition control (%)

The following table shows the attitudes towards negotiations according to area of origin. Respondents from Dara'a in our sample reject negotiations, and to a gradually decreasing number, so do respondents from Idlib and Homs. Respondents from Deir Ezzor and Lattakia are relatively divided. In the remaining areas, respondents favor negotiations, in particular from Hassakeh and Raqqa.

Area of Origin	Yes	No	Total
1.Dara'a	37.4	62.6	100
2.Idlib	40.5	59.5	100
3.Homs	42.7	57.3	100
4.Deir Ezzor	52.1	47.9	100
5.Lattakia	53.0	47.0	100
6.Aleppo	55.9	44.1	100
7.Hama	62.9	37.1	100
8.Tartus	74.7	25.3	100
9. Damascus Suburbs	75.6	24.4	100
10.Suwaida	76.9	23.1	100
11.Damascus	77.8	22.2	100
12.Raqqa	84.6	15.4	100
13.Hassakeh	86.2	13.8	100

Table 4: Attitudes towards negotiations according to area of origin (%)

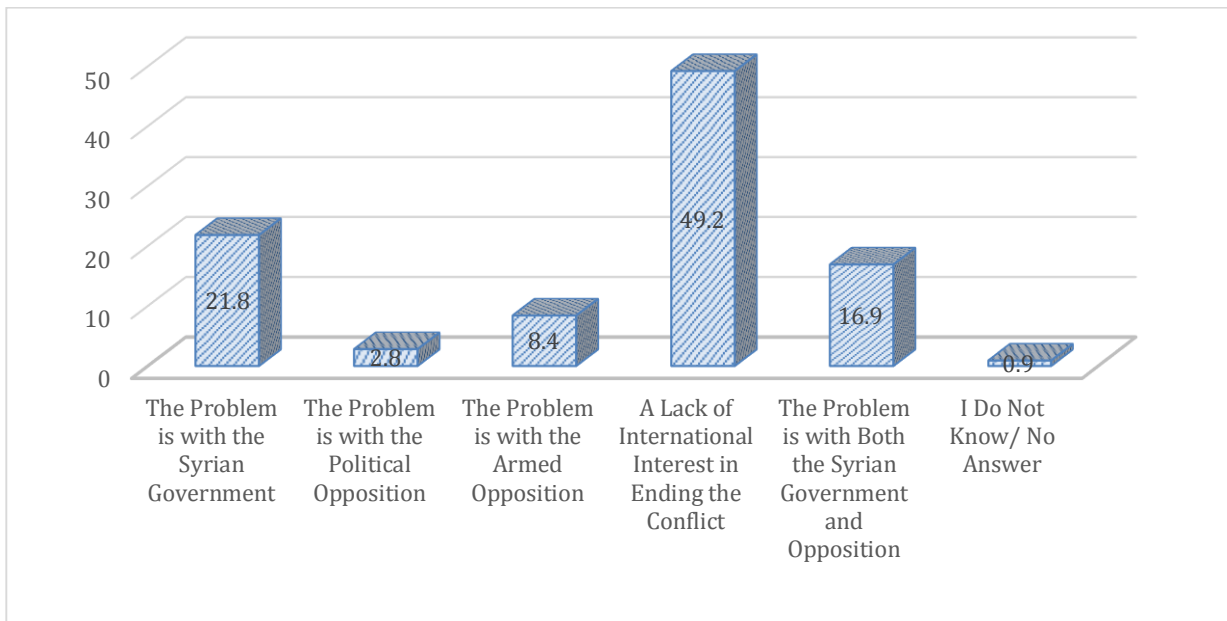
## 2.

### Prior to negotiations

#### 2.1 Accountability for failed negotiations

All previous efforts – Arab, regional and international – to reach a political solution in Syria guaranteeing a peaceful transition of power have been met with failure. The Geneva conferences, (I and II) and the Moscow-held intra-Syria talks (I and II) all concluded with similarly disappointing results, while the same problems continue to haunt the ongoing Geneva III initiative. To determine the opinions of Syrians on the reasons behind these failures, survey respondents were questioned on their perceptions on the problems' source.

The results indicate that a number of respondents (around half) believe the main reason lies in the international community's wavering desire to see an end to the conflict, while the Syrian government was considered second most accountable for the failure of previous negotiations (around 21.8 percent). Of the respondents, around one in ten considered the opposition accountable for the failure of the negotiations; the majority of these respondents chose specifically to blame the armed opposition, while only 2.8 percent blamed the political opposition (Graph 7).



Graph 7: What have been the obstacles impeding a negotiated solution until now?

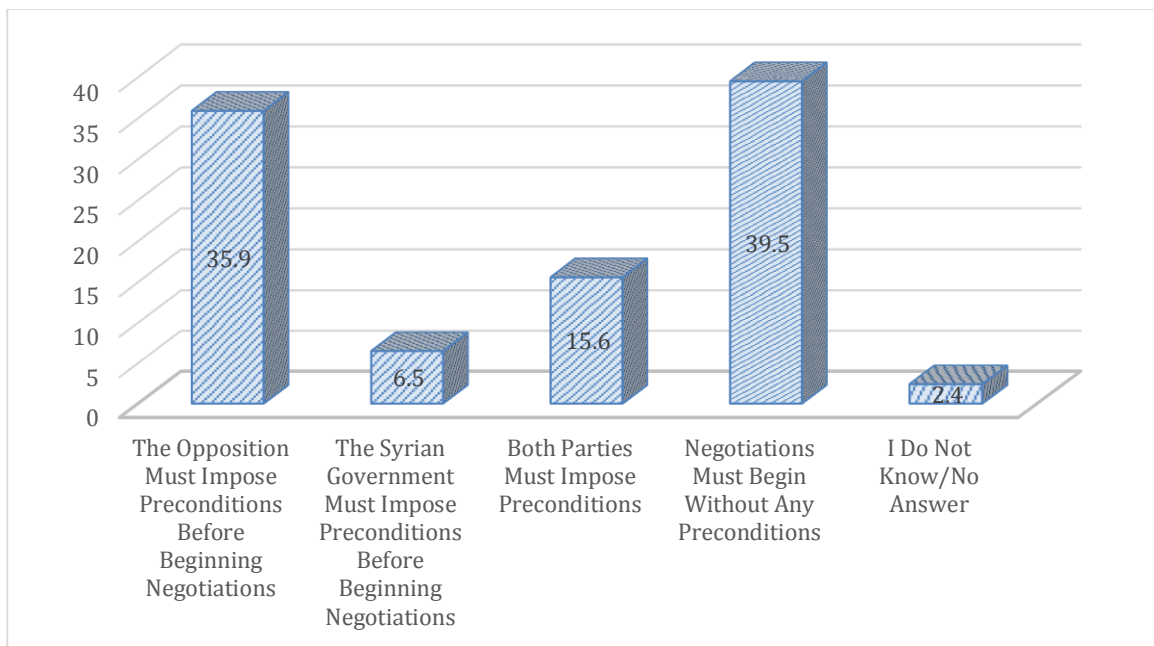
When comparing results between regime held versus opposition held areas, it appears both groups put primary responsibility on the lack of international interest in ending the conflict at 49.19% and 51.95% respectively. In opposition held areas, 24% blame the Syrian government, with 18% blaming both the Syrian government

and the opposition. In regime held areas, 18.13% of respondents blame the armed opposition but nearly as many, 17.78% blame the Syrian government. Only 4.4% in regime held areas blame the political opposition for impeding negotiations.

*2.2 Should preconditions be imposed and who should impose them?*

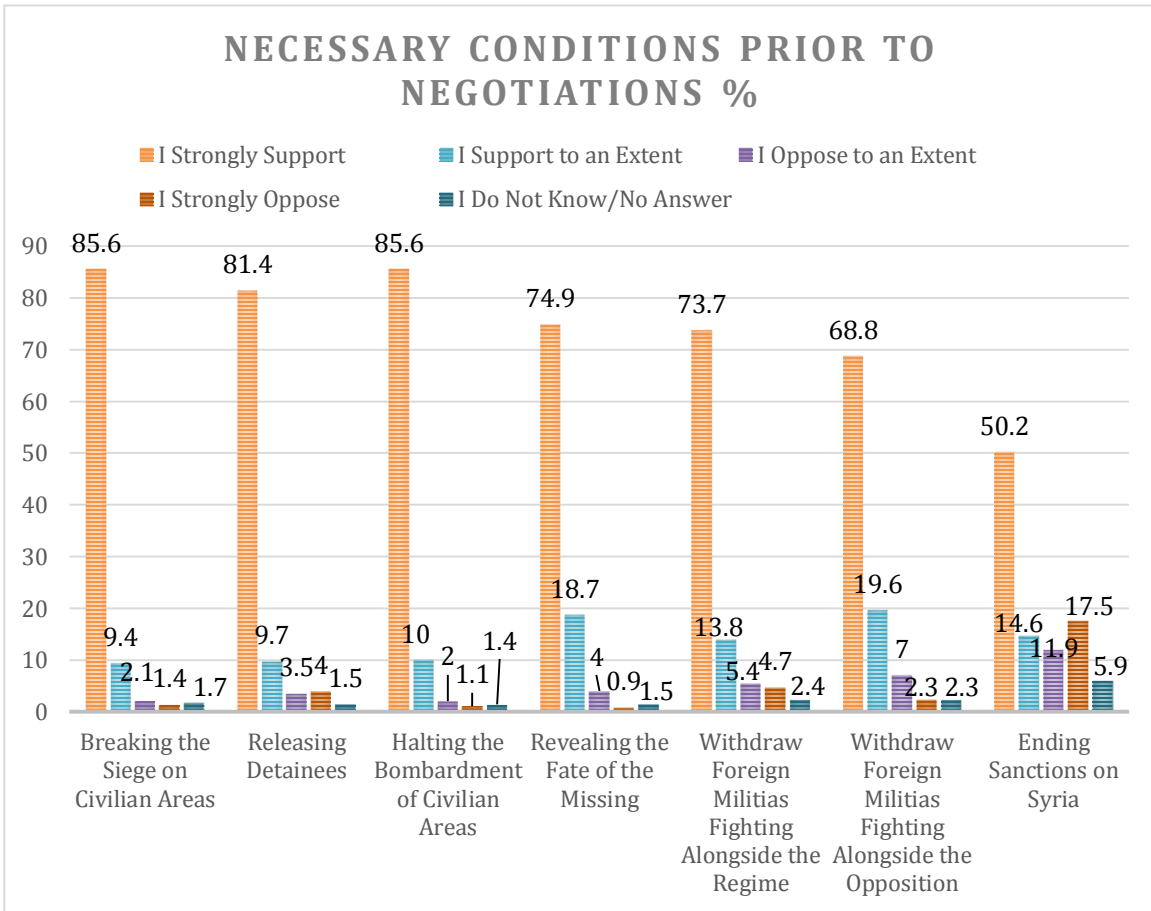
There has been much discussion from all parties on the necessity of conditions prior to engaging in a negotiation process. There are those within the opposition and the regime who argue preconditions are necessary to a successful intra-Syrian dialogue. Popular examples of these conditions include: ending the siege of civilian areas, the release of political detainees, and ceasing the bombardment of civilian areas. However, there are also those within both camps with the strong belief that negotiations should begin immediately without preconditions. In order to shed light on this subject from a common Syrian perspective, respondents were asked if they believed that preconditions were necessary to a successful negotiation process, and who (the opposition, the regime, or both) should be responsible for enforcing the agreed upon conditions.

Of those who believed preconditions were essential to the process, over half stated the opposition should be held responsible for imposing the conditions (35.9 percent), while just over 15 percent felt it was necessary for both parties to hold an equal measure of responsibility. A very small number (only 3.8 percent) stated they believed the regime should impose preconditions, while the proportion of those who supported negotiations without preconditions outweighed all individual categories at 39.5 percent (Graph 8).



Graph 8: Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?

Respondents who stated preconditions should be imposed by one or both of the factions were invited to rank a list of the most essential provisions being discussed among the opposition and regime. An analysis of the results indicates a near-consensus on the following preconditions: breaking the siege on civilian areas, the release of political detainees, ending the bombardment of civilian areas, revealing the fate of the missing, and the withdrawal of regime and opposition-backed foreign militias, with a lower proportion in favor of ending sanctions on Syria as a precondition for participation in negotiations. By contrast, only 17.5 percent of respondents claimed to strongly oppose the removal of sanctions prior to the brokering of a settlement (Graph 9).

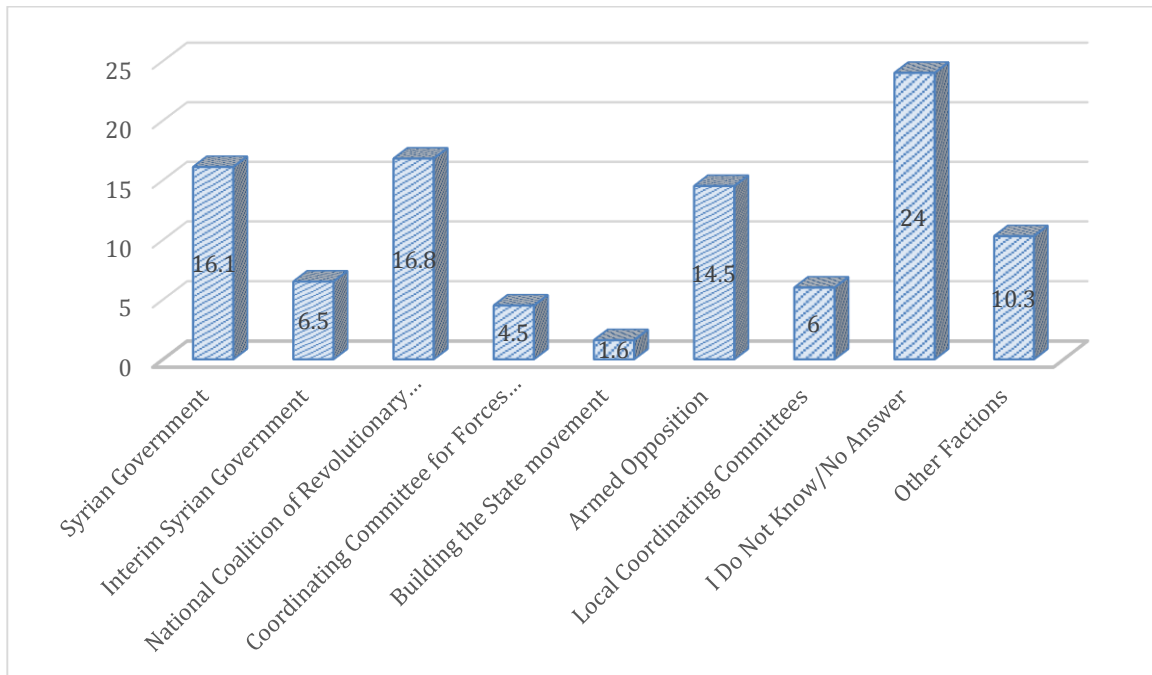


Graph 9: Necessary conditions to be implemented prior to negotiations (%)

### 2.3 Political representation

Political representation is at the heart of the issue of negotiations - who are the factions that must participate in the negotiations? What is the size of their presence on the Syrian street? Respondents were questioned on a list of the most prominent political factions inside Syria, namely those that have participated – or now participate – in negotiating a political solution. Results portray an alarming picture, showing nearly one quarter of respondents questioned (24 percent) did not find any of the mentioned political bodies represented their interests.

Worthy of note is the significant proportion who considered the armed opposition to best represent their interests (14.5 percent). Those respondents who claimed that “other parties” best represented their interests revealed diverse answers, most prominent of which were Kurdish political entities. The opposition’s National Coalition received a similar response to that of the Syrian government (only around 16 percent each), while the National Coordinating Committee for Democratic Change was met with no more than 4.5 percent of the vote., The lowest percentage of respondents (1.6 percent) claimed the Building the Syrian State movement best represented their interests (Graph 4). It should be noted that these results only reflect the opinions of those who supported the concept of a negotiated political settlement.



Graph 10: Which of the following factions do you consider to represent you and your interests in negotiations? (%)

If we analyze attitudes towards political representation in areas outside regime control, “unsure/no answer” and the National Coalition occupy the top of the list, followed closely by the armed opposition, with the Coordination Committee for Democratic Change and Building the Syrian State taking bottom place. However, in



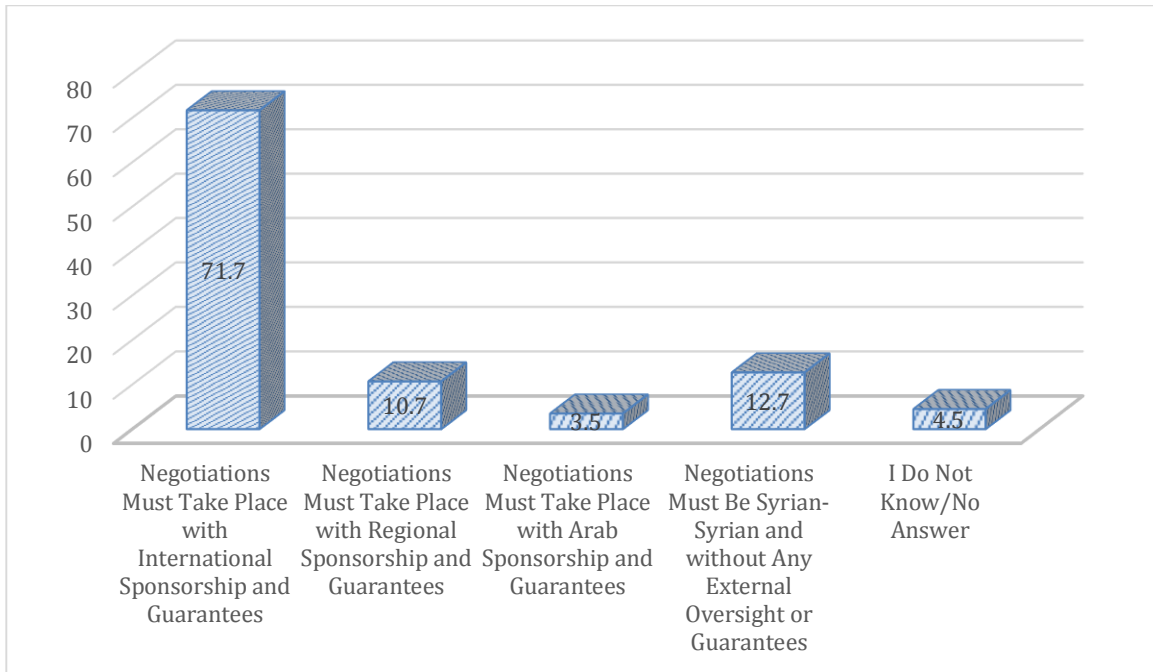
areas under regime control, we find that “unsure/no answer” and the Syrian government top the list, while the Syrian Interim Government and the Building the Syrian State place last, respectively. It is noteworthy that more than 60% of respondents in areas under regime control do not think the “Syrian Government” represents them.

Opposition Controlled Area		Regime Controlled Area	
I Do Not Know/No Answer	26.6	The Syrian Government	39.1
The National Coalition	21	I Do Not Know/No Answer	19.4
The Armed Opposition	18.9	The National Coalition	9.2
Other Factions	11.7	Other Factions	7.7
The Interim Syrian Government	7.8	The Armed Opposition	6.5
Local Coordinating Committees	6.0	Local Coordinating Committees	6.2
The Syrian Government	3.4	Coordinating Committee for Democratic Change	5.5
Coordinating Committee for Democratic Change	3.4	The Interim Syrian Government	4.2
Building the State Movement	1.2	Building the State Movement	2.3
Total	100	Total	100

Table 5: Political representation in areas under and outside of regime control (%)

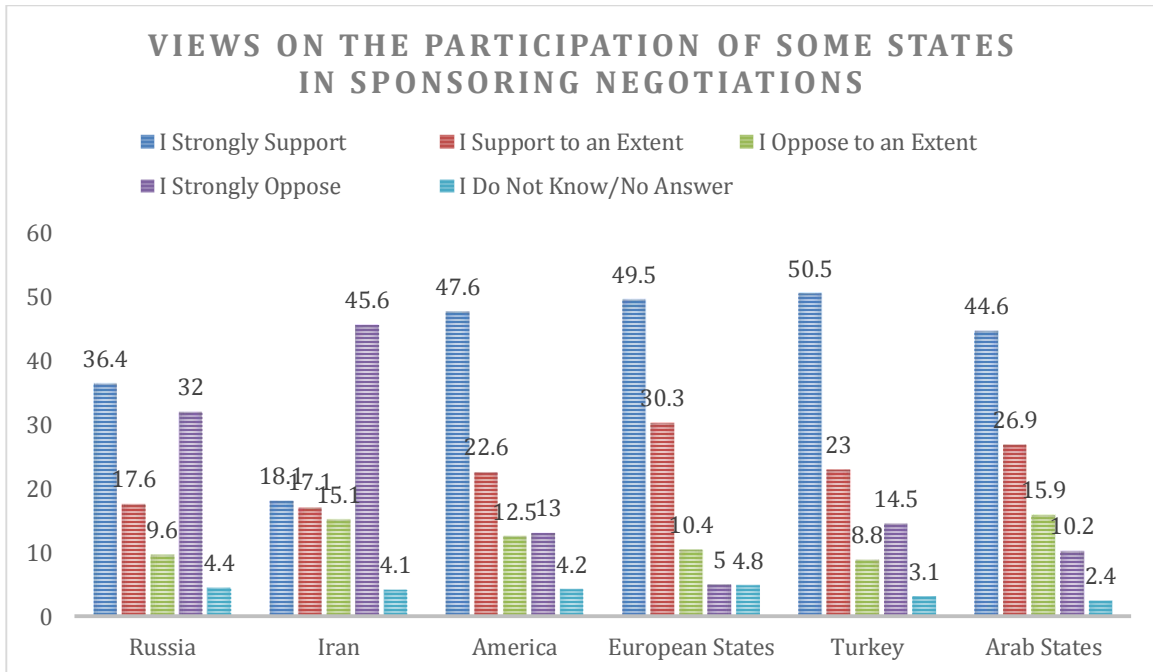
### 2.3 Guarantees and guarantors

Much debate exists around which states or bodies would be expected to act as guarantors in the event of a political settlement, particularly in light of significant regime support on behalf of countries like Russia and Iran. We first asked respondents if they thought it was necessary to include other states in the process, or if these negotiations should remain strictly between Syrians themselves. An analysis of the results reveals a vast majority of those surveyed believe negotiations should have international guarantors and sponsors (71.7 percent), compared to only 12.7 percent who stated that the negotiation process should be exclusively Syrian-Syrian. Remaining responses were distributed between those who believed regional sponsorship and Arab sponsorship was essential to the process, with the latter receiving no more than 3.5 percent of the vote (Graph 11).



Graph 11: Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion (%)

To arrive at a detailed understanding of respondents' positions, those surveyed were provided with a list of states including Iran, Russia, USA, and Turkey, and were asked to rank their position on the participation of each state as sponsor. Survey results revealed 54 percent of respondents who support political negotiations as a solution to the conflict were in favor Russian participation to some extent, whereas 32 percent of those surveyed strongly opposed Russian involvement all together. Just over 60 percent of respondents rejected the prospect of Iranian participation, with a significant proportion (45.6 percent) "strongly opposed" to Iranian involvement. Out of those surveyed, only 18.1 percent stated that they strongly supported Iranian participation in the negotiation process. As for European states, there was near-consensus on participation to some extent, while results also revealed strong support for the participation of the United States, Arab states, and Turkey (Graph 12).



Graph 12: Attitudes towards the participation of certain states in sponsoring negotiations (%).

Survey results would suggest that respondents’ position towards Iranian and Russian involvement is not a reflection of their attitudes toward the Assad regime alone, as Table 6 confirms a difference of opinion exists among the Syrian opposition. However, the majority of regime opponents do appear to reject the participation of Russia, with a greater number refusing to accept the involvement of Iran in the negotiation process (at 55.4 percent and 72.2 percent, respectively).

	Russia			Total
	Oppose Participation	Support Participation	No Answer	
Regime Supporters	3.2	96.2	0.5	100
Regime Opponents	55.4	39.0	5.6	100

Table 6a: Views on Russia according to stance toward the regime (%)

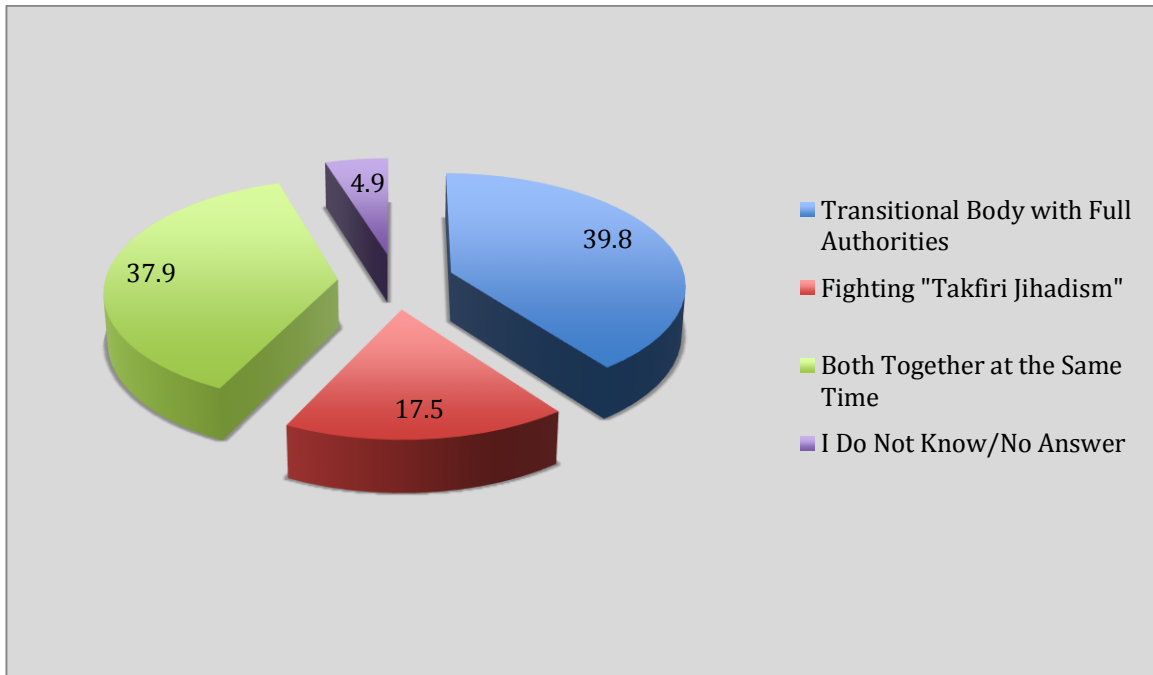
	Iran			Total
	Oppose Participation	Support Participation	No Answer	
Regime Supporters	7	92.5	0.5	100
Regime Opponents	72.7	22.2	5.2	100

Table 6b: Views on Iran according to stance toward the regime (%)

### 3. Negotiations and outcomes

#### 3.1 Organizing priorities

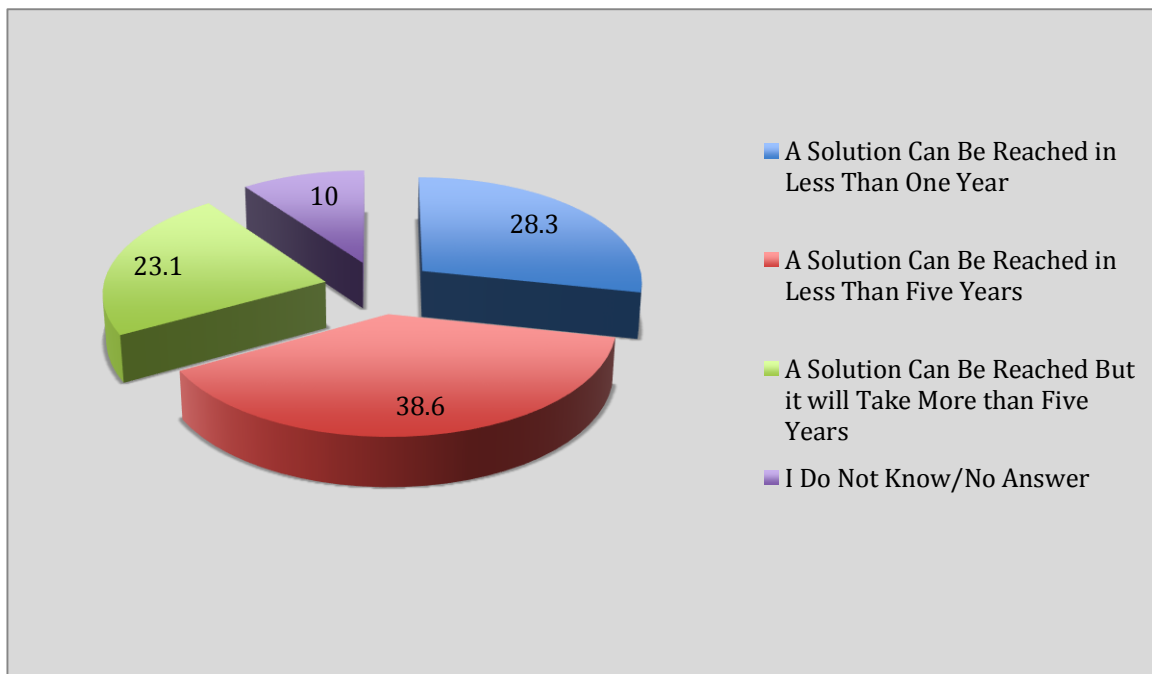
The first Geneva talks failed to produce positive results largely due to the regime and opposition’s refusal to agree on priorities for a successful political settlement. The opposition was steadfast in its belief that the primary topic of discussion should be the formation of a transitional governing body with full executive powers, whereas the regime refused to cooperate without first addressing the fight against terrorism. In order to better understand how Syrians saw this issue, respondents were asked about how they rated these priorities, with the additional choice of discussing the two issues jointly or in parallel – as was the suggestion of United Nations and Arab League envoy Lakhdar al-Brahimi. Responses were distributed in the following way: resolving the opposition’s request for a transitional body with full executive powers (39.8 percent), dealing with the two issues jointly at (37.9 percent), followed by fighting terrorism (17.5 percent) (Graph 13).



Graph 13: What is the first issue that should be discussed and agreed upon by both parties in order for negotiations to continue? (%)

### 3.2 Predicted timeframe

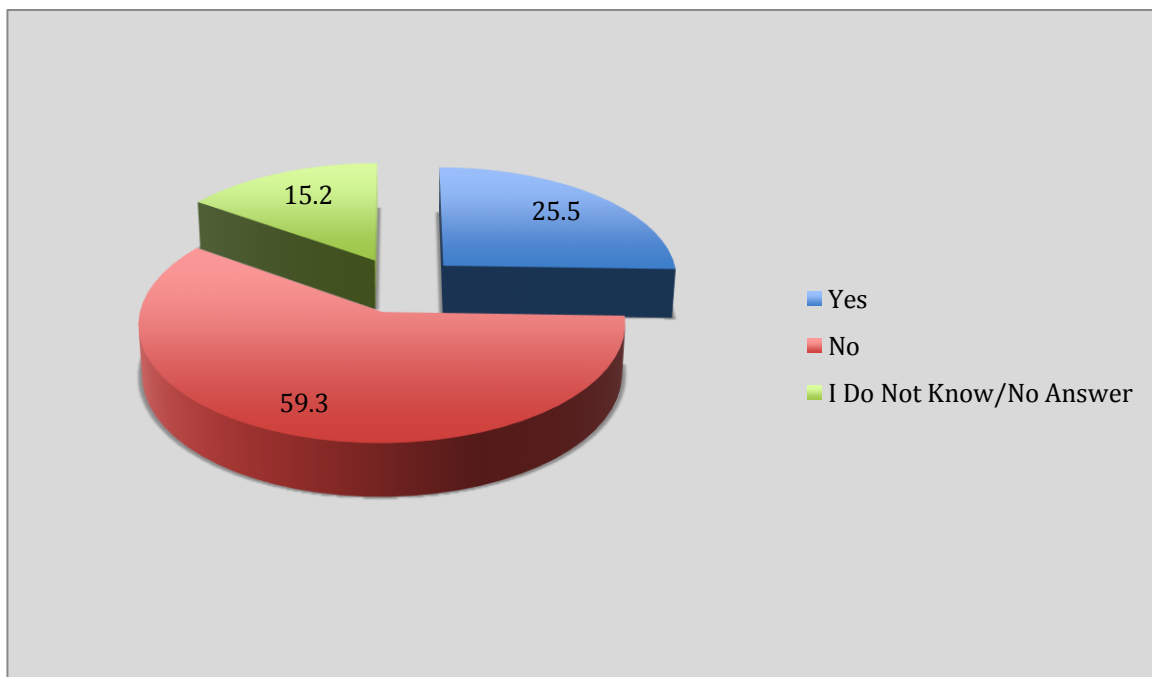
As the Syrian conflict proceeds to claim large numbers of casualties while forcing millions more to flee their homes, there remains major uncertainty as to when a peaceful solution can be reached. Respondents were surveyed about the anticipated timeframe for successful negotiations, with the results distributed in the following form: a plurality of those questioned (38.6 percent) believe a solution can be reached in less than five years, just under a third of respondents (28.3 percent) were confident a resolution would take less than a year, while 23.1 percent stated that a successful solution is possible, but would require more than five years to be realized.



Graph 14: What is the view closest to your perspective about the possibility of arriving at a solution to the conflict in Syria through negotiations? (%)

### 3.3 How would a successful settlement be implemented on the ground?

Doubts have been raised as to the extent of the relationship between the political opposition and the armed brigades operating inside Syria. With a large number of these armed opposition factions holding conflicting ambitions for the future of Syria, the question must be asked: to what extent can the political opposition guarantee these forces will uphold the contents of any agreement? Only around one quarter of respondents believe the political opposition is capable of ensuring the armed brigades adhere to a negotiated settlement. A significantly larger proportion of those surveyed (59.3 percent) were unconvinced of the political opposition's influence on the ground, while 15.2 percent of respondents were either unsure or did not provide an answer (Graph 15).

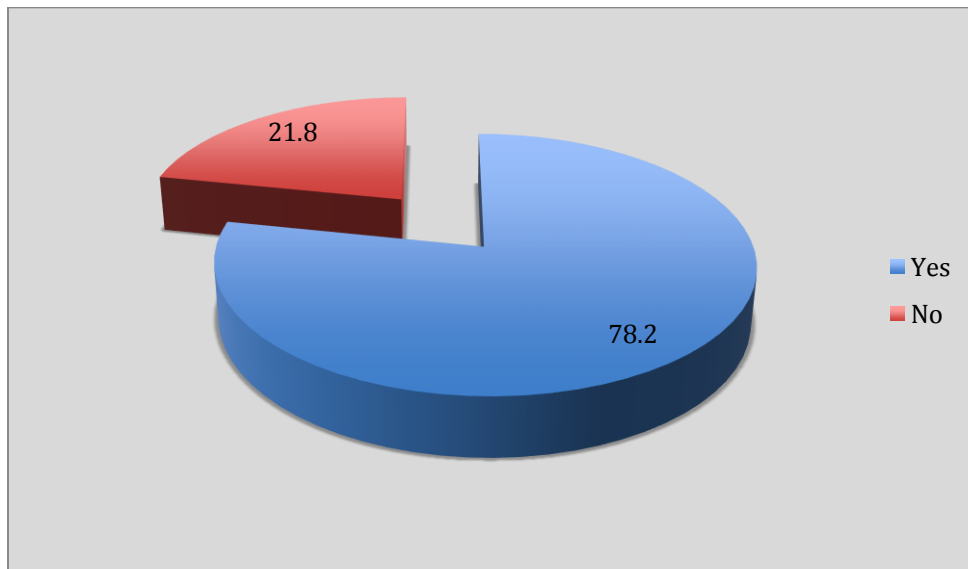


Graph 15: If an agreement is reached, will the political opposition be able to hold armed brigades to it? (%)

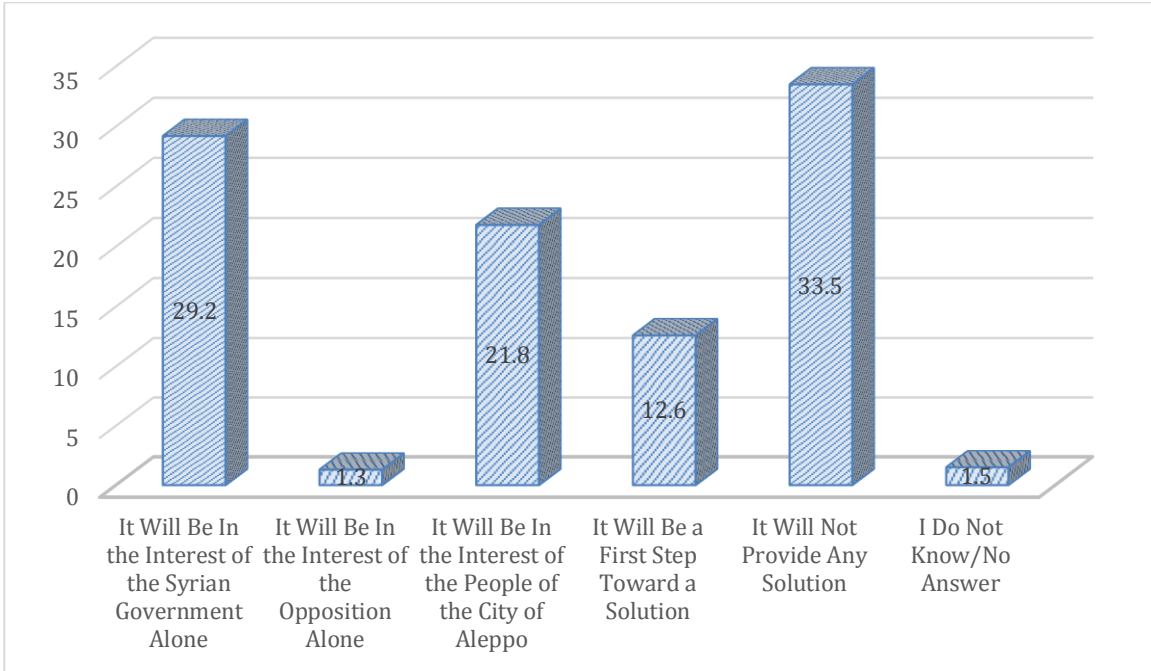
## 4. The de Mistura plan

Following his appointment as UN special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura set forth his ideas for a Syrian solution through an initiative informally known as the ‘de Mistura plan’, consisting of an initial proposal to “freeze fighting” in the city of Aleppo. Following high-level consultations, de Mistura claimed President Bashar al-Assad had expressed his commitment (in principle) to the proposal. However, the National Coalition expressed reservations towards the plan’s success, while many armed opposition groups rejected it all together.

When questioned on de Mistura’s plan, most respondents claimed to have been aware of the initiative at some level, with only 21.8 percent having never heard of the proposal prior to questioning (Graph 16). To better understand the opinions of those who were aware of the plan, respondents were offered a series of statements that best reflected their personal stance towards the UN envoy’s strategy. Surprisingly, results show only 1.3 percent of those questioned believe the “freeze” would be in the interest of the opposition, while the proportion of those who believed the plan would actually benefit Aleppo’s residents reached no more than 21.8 percent. The majority of respondents (62.7 percent) said they thought the proposal would be in the interest of the regime alone, or that it would not provide a solution at all (Graph 17).



Graph 16: Have you heard of the de Mistura plan?



Graph 17: In regards to the de Mistura plan, which of the following statements best reflects your perspective? (%)

When considering respondents’ political attitudes, it would appear a lack of enthusiasm exists among opposition supporters for a temporary ceasefire in the city of Aleppo (Table 7). Furthermore, 75.3 percent of opposition supporters believe such a proposal would either be in the interest of the regime alone, or it would not assist any solution, while only 13.7 percent of opposition supporters stated it would likely benefit the people of the city of Aleppo. Regarding those who identify themselves as regime supporters, it appears that slightly over half of the respondents were inclined to support the plan, with 53.4 percent stating it would either be in the interest of the people of Aleppo, or would be the first step towards a successful solution. Although, a significant proportion of those questioned (43.7 percent) said the plan would only benefit the opposition, or were unconvinced it would lead to any solution at all.

	<b>Regime Supporter</b>	<b>Regime Opponent</b>
It Will Be in the Interest of the Syrian Government Alone	2.9	44.1
It Will Be in the Interest of the Opposition Alone	6.8	0.3
It Will Be in the Interest of the City of Aleppo	38.8	13.7
It Will Be a First Step Toward a Solution	14.6	10.8
It Will Not Provide Any Solution	36.9	31.2
Total	100	100

Table 7: Attitudes towards the de Mistura plan according to views of the regime (%)



It would appear that residents of Aleppo<sup>5</sup> are also skeptical that a de Mistura's ceasefire plan would be in the interest of those still residing inside the city. Interestingly, only 8.6 percent of respondents claimed to be optimistic about the proposal, while 83.8 percent said such a plan would either be in the interest of the regime alone, or would not provide any solution at all. Only 6.7 percent believed the move would be in the interest of the people of Aleppo (Table 8).

	Aleppo is Home Province	Aleppo is Current Province
It Will Be in the Interest of the Syrian Government Alone	44.3	37.8
It Will Be in the Interest of the Opposition Alone	1.6	1.8
It Will Be in the Interest of the City of Aleppo	8.6	6.7
It Will Be a First Step Toward a Solution	5.4	6.7
It Will Not Provide Any Solution	39.5	45.1
No Answer/I Do Not Know	0.5	1,8
Total	100	100

Table 8: Attitudes of the people of Aleppo (place of origin) towards the de Mistura plan (%)

When comparing results from areas under and outside of regime control, it would appear that a majority of respondents (75.6 percent) in the opposition-controlled areas believe a ceasefire would either: only advance regime interests, or not provide any solution at all. By contrast, a mere 0.4 percent believed that such a move would be in the interest of the opposition alone, while 11.6 percent claimed it would be in the interest of the people of the city of Aleppo – this proportion increases to 39.11 percent in the areas under regime control (Table 9).

Observing survey results from areas of Aleppo city under and outside regime control, 45.1 percent did not believe a solution lay within in the de Mistra plan, as opposed to 13.4 percent who believed the 'freeze' would either benefit those living inside Aleppo city, or would be the first step towards a solution.

Finally, in opposition-controlled areas, the majority of respondents fear the ceasefire would be in the interests of the regime alone, while the second most prominent choice (at 26.6 percent) revealed respondents felt the proposal would not advance any solution. Most significantly, only a very small proportion (2.8 percent) stated they believed the move would be in the interest of the people of Aleppo (Table 10).

<sup>5</sup> Respondents who stated Aleppo as their province of origin.

	Areas Under Regime Control	Areas under Opposition control
It Will Be in the Interest of the Syrian Government Alone	14.6	38.0
It Will Be in the Interest of the Opposition Alone	2.8	0.4
It Will Be in the Interest of the City of Aleppo	39.1	11.6
It Will Be a First Step Toward a Solution	14.6	11.4
It Will Not Provide Any Solution	26.6	37.6
No Answer/I Do Not Know	2.4	1.0
Total	100	100

Table 9: Attitudes towards the de Mistura plan according to areas under and outside of regime control (%)

By Number A	Aleppo Under Regime Control	Aleppo Under Opposition Control
It Will Be in the Interest of the Syrian Government Alone	1	61
It Will Be in the Interest of the Opposition Alone	2	1
It Will Be in the Interest of the City of Aleppo	7	4
It Will Be a First Step Toward a Solution	10	1
It Will Not Provide Any Solution	26	48
No Answer/I Do Not Know	3	0
Total	49	115

Table 10: Attitudes towards the de Mistura plan according to areas of Aleppo (regime/opposition) (A)

## Summary of results

### Chapter 1.

#### Syrian attitudes:

- 54.7 percent of respondents support negotiations in order to find a solution to the crisis in Syria, while 42.5 percent opposed negotiations.  
A number of demographic, political, and economic factors appear to influence respondents' attitudes towards negotiations, such as:
- Syrians under the age of 25 are more inclined to reject negotiations, while the elderly (56 and above) appear to be divided on the issue. The remaining age groups largely support negotiations.
- Syrians with lower average income (less than 25,000 Syrian pounds) are also divided on the issue, whereas those within a higher-income bracket tend to support negotiations.
- Ideology appears to influence attitudes toward negotiations, as secularists showed to be mostly in favor of a dialogue, while Islamists tended to reject the concept.
- Similarly, sectarian affiliations play an influential role towards respondents' attitudes with the Sunni sample divided on the issue, while those respondents from remaining sects (including Alawites) tend to support negotiations.
- With regard to regional distinctions, the majority of those surveyed in Homs, Idlib, Lattakia, Dara'a and the Jordanian refugee camps rejected negotiations, while other regions supported them.
- Respondents residing in areas under regime control largely support negotiations, while areas outside of regime control are divided on the issue.

## Chapter 2.

### Prior to negotiations:

- Nearly half of respondents<sup>6</sup> surveyed believe the absence of an international interest in finding a solution crisis is the main reason for the continuation of the Syrian conflict.
- Over half of respondents (58 percent) believe in the necessity of imposing preconditions before engaging in negotiations (only 6.5 percent believe the regime should impose these conditions). There is near-consensus among respondents on support for all of the following conditions: ending the siege on civilian areas, releasing political detainees, revealing the fate of the missing, ceasing the bombardment of civilian areas, and the withdrawal of foreign militias. Just over 64 percent of respondents also support the condition of ending the sanctions imposed on Syria, as opposed to 17.5 percent who stated that they strongly oppose the proposal.
- Astonishingly, “unsure/no answer” accounted for the majority of responses to the question of political representation. The response came in first place in opposition-controlled areas, and second place in regime-controlled areas. This reflects a major crisis of political representation, whether in areas under or outside regime control.
- There is near-consensus among respondents on the necessity for negotiations to be internationally guaranteed, with large support for the participation of European and Arab states, the United States of America, and Turkey. Alternatively, the overall stance on Russian and Iranian involvement was less enthusiastic.
- There is strong opposition to the participation of Iran, but as for Russia, the opposition is less, with 54 percent supporting its participation.
- Opposition supporters mostly reject the participation of Russia and Iran, but in different proportions: 55.4 percent for the former, and 72.7 percent for the latter.

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<sup>6</sup> The respondents noted here and hereafter are those who expressed previously their support for negotiations.

### Chapter 3.

#### Negotiations and outcomes:

- Respondents supported the initial preconditions of both the formation of a transitional governing body with full executive powers, and a transitional governing body with full executive powers with the combatting of terrorism, jointly. The regime's demands of only fighting terrorism enjoyed less support (17.5 percent).
- The majority (66.9 percent) believes it is possible to implement a solution in a timeframe of less than five years.
- Respondents did not believe the political opposition is capable of forcing the armed factions to abide by the contents of the agreements that could result from negotiations (only about a quarter believe it is possible).

### Chapter 4.

#### The de Mistura plan:

- Most respondents claimed to be aware of the plan.
- A very small percentage believed the plan would be in the interests of the opposition alone (1.3 percent), as opposed to 62.7 percent who believe the plan would either be in the interest of the regime alone, or that it would not assist any peaceful solution. Only 21.8 percent believe such a proposal would be in the interest of the city of Aleppo.
- The responses differ according to region (opposition/regime-controlled areas) as well as respondents' attitudes toward the regime (supporter/opponent).
- Opposition supporters did not show backing for de Mistura's plan; 75.3 percent said it would either be in the interest of the regime alone, or that it would not assist any peaceful solution. Only a small proportion of opposition supporters (13.7 percent) stated that it would be in the interest of the city of Aleppo.
- Although, regime supporters did voice backing for the proposal: 53.4 percent said that it would either be in the interest of the people of the city of Aleppo, or that it would be a first step towards a peaceful solution.
- In regards to those who stated Aleppo as their place of origin, or those who were living in Aleppo when the survey took place, most respondents said they

did not believe the plan would present any possible solution, or that it would be in the interest of the regime alone (around 83 percent). Only a small proportion believe it would be in the interest of the people of the city of Aleppo (8.7 percent).

- The majority of respondents (75.6 percent) in areas outside regime control believe either the plan would not help in reaching any peaceful solution, or that it would be in the interest of the regime alone.
- For those who were surveyed in the city of Aleppo, 45.1 percent said they did not believe the plan would provide any solution to the crisis, as opposed to 13.4 percent who either stated it would be a first step towards a peaceful solution, or that it would be in the interest of the people of the city of Aleppo. A very small number of regime opponents (2.8 percent) stated the plan would be in the interest of the people of Aleppo.

### Recommendations

Syrians appear to have lost faith in a negotiated settlement, having been represented by political factions that lack significant support inside Syria, and who regularly kowtow to the reckless interests of regional and international powers. The homogeneity of Syrian attitudes and opinions towards the nature of a settlement is a matter of necessity to the success of any agreement. Much like De Mistura's plan to 'freeze' the fighting inside the city of Aleppo, the success of any proposal is impossible as long as it lacks the confidence of all groups who hold a legitimate stake in Syria's future.

It is therefore necessary to complete more surveys (representative samples where possible) to determine the opinions of specific groups and people, and to encourage their participation in the decision-making process of any agreements or conditions likely to affect them – whether on the national or local level. Given the obvious crisis of political representation that emerged from this study, unfortunately, changes need to take place on the ground before popular participation can be achieved.

## Appendix A

Map (1) Distribution of the sample according to the tablet GPS locations



## Appendix B

### Demographics Tables

**Table (a) Distribution of the sample according to the current region of residence, and sect/religion.**

Province	Sunnis	Shias	Alawites	Ismailies	Druze	Yazidis	Christians	No Answer	Total %	Number of Responses
Hassakah	38.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	5.5	55.3	100	217
Deir Ezzor	94.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	100	183
Aleppo	83.7	1.5	3.9	0.9	0.6	0.9	5.1	3.3	100	332
Idleb	94.4	0.0	0.0	.00	0	0.0	2.3	3.3	100	479
Latakia	78.5	0.0	8.9	3.8	1.3	0.0	2.5	5.1	100	79
Tartous	9.1	2.7	46.4	35.5	0.0	0.0	3.6	2.7	100	109
Homs (Rastan)	88.9	1.2	1.2	2.9	0.0	0.0	1.2	4.7	100	171
Damascus Suburbs	71.5	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.7	0.7	22.2	100	144
Damascus	23.5	4.9	12.3	11.3	3.9	0.5	11.8	31.9	100	204
Swaida	11.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.6	0.0	0.0	50.0	100	132
Quneitra	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100	2
Hama	88.5	0	5.7	2.6	0.0	0.4	2.6	0.0	100	227
Deraa	92.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	100	245
–Jordan Camps	99.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	110
–Turkey camps	95.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	100	98
–Lebanon Camps	54.3	0.0	0.0	14.3	5.7	0.0	8.6	17.1	100	35
Number of Responses	2028	21	112	87	67	8	82	362	-	2767
Total %	73.3	0.8	4.1	3.1	2.4	0.3	3.0	13.1	100	



**Table (b) Distribution of the sample according to the current region of residence, ideology, and monthly income**

Province	Ideology (%)					Monthly income (per thousand Syrian Pounds) (%)				Total
	Secular	Moderately secular	Moderate	Moderately Islamist	Islamist	< 25	25 – 75	> 75	Prefer not to answer	
Hassakah	88.5	7.8	1.8	1.4	0.5	37.8	43.8	14.3	4.1	100
Deir Ezzor	16.4	37.2	6.6	32.8	7.1	20.8	15.8	1.6	61.7	100
Aleppo	17.8	20.5	29.8	21.1	10.8	32.2	29.8	10.5	27.1	100
Idleb	14	33.4	9.2	32.2	11.3	51.4	19.8	3.8	25.1	100
Latakia	13.9	39.2	11.4	27.8	7.6	30.4	19	7.6	43	100
Tartous	61.5	31.2	0.9	5.5	0.9	71.6	11	1.8	15.6	100
Homs (Rastan)	7.6	16.4	22.2	31.6	22.2	32.2	11.7	4.1	52	100
Damascus Suburbs	75	16.2	2	5.4	1.5	27.9	52.5	4.4	15.2	100
Damascus	22.9	29.9	16	26.4	4.9	43.8	20.8	2.1	33.3	100
Swaida	66.7	28.8	3	0.8	0.8	40.9	36.4	3.8	18.9	100
Quneitra	50	50	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	100
Hama	13.2	17.6	3.5	59.9	5.7	49.8	43.6	3.1	3.5	100
Deraa	3.7	7.3	45.3	41.6	2	50.6	19.6	3.7	26.1	100
Jordan Camps	18.2	11.8	15.5	31.8	22.7	80.9	13.6	3.6	1.8	100
Turkey camps	1	4.1	14.3	53.1	27.6	60.2	31.6	4.1	4.1	100
Lebanon Camps	54.3	34.3	5.7	5.7	0	34.3	22.9	8.6	34.3	100
<b>Sample (%)</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table (c) Distribution of the sample according to the current region of residence, age range, and level of education**

Province	Age range (%)					Level of education (%)					Total
	< 25	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 55	> 56	Illiterate	Elementary	Middle school	High school	University and above	
Hassakah	13.8	41.9	24.9	13.8	5.5	3.2	6.9	17.5	22.6	49.8	100
Deir Ezzor	25.1	48.1	21.3	5.5	0	0.5	1.6	9.3	36.6	51.9	100
Aleppo	27.1	36.4	19.9	12	4.5	2.1	9.3	21.4	28.9	38.3	100
Idleb	20.5	36.1	24.4	13.4	5.6	2.5	6.1	20.9	34	36.5	100
Latakia	25.3	36.7	19	10.1	8.9	3.8	19	15.2	32.9	29.1	100
Tartous	32.1	36.7	22	3.7	5.5	0.9	3.7	12.8	41.3	41.3	100
Homs (Rastan)	31	29.2	21.1	11.7	7	1.8	15.2	22.2	25.7	35.1	100
Damascus Suburbs	13.7	64.7	15.7	2.5	3.4	0	2	5.4	31.9	60.8	100
Damascus	36.8	45.8	13.2	2.1	2.1	3.5	7.6	18.8	17.4	52.8	100
Swaida	26.5	28.8	28.8	12.9	3	3	6.1	19.7	36.4	34.8	100
Quneitra	0	50	0	50	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Hama	17.6	65.2	14.5	1.8	0.9	0.9	2.6	11.9	32.2	52.4	100
Deraa	45.3	29	16.3	9.4	0	0.8	4.9	29	40.8	24.5	100
Jordan Camps	20	31.8	26.4	17.3	4.5	7.3	43.6	20.9	20.9	7.3	100
Turkey camps	24.5	30.6	26.5	13.3	5.1	9.2	17.3	19.4	17.3	36.7	100
Lebanon Camps	22.9	51.4	14.3	8.6	2.9	11.4	20	11.4	11.4	45.7	100
<b>Sample (%)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>100</b>

## Appendix C

### - Questionnaire -

**1. Are you in favor of undertaking negotiations in order to find a solution to the conflict in Syria?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know / No answer

**2. Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The opposition must impose preconditions before starting negotiations
- The Syrian government must impose preconditions before starting negotiations
- Both parties must impose preconditions
- Negotiations must be sought without any preconditions

**3. What are the obstacles that have impeded reaching a solution through negotiations thus far?**

- The problem lies with the Syrian government
- The problem lies with the political opposition
- The problem lies with the armed opposition
- The absence of an international will to put an end to the conflict
- The problem lies with both the Syrian government and the opposition
- I don't know / No answer

**Which of the following are necessary conditions that must be put into effect before beginning negotiations?**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>I don't know / No answer</b>
Lifting the siege of civilian areas					
Release of detainees					
Ending the shelling of civilian areas					
Revealing the fate of missing persons					
Withdrawing foreign militias fighting alongside the Syrian government					
Withdrawing foreign militias fighting alongside the Opposition					
Lifting the sanctions against Syria					

**Which of the following actors best represents you and your interests in negotiations?**

- The Syrian government
- The Syrian interim government
- The National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces
- The National Coordination Committee for the Forces of Democratic Change
- Building the Syrian State movement
- The armed opposition
- Local Coordination Committees
- I don't know / No answer
- Other actors – please mention:

**Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- Negotiations must take place with international sponsorship and guarantees
- Negotiations must take place with regional sponsorship and guarantees
- Negotiations must take place with Arab sponsorship and guarantees
- Negotiation process must be exclusively Syrian – Syrian and without any external oversight or guarantees
- I don't know / No answer

**Which of the following states must be involved in sponsoring negotiations?**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>I don't know / No answer</b>
<b>Russia</b>					
<b>Iran</b>					
<b>United States of America</b>					
<b>European countries</b>					
<b>Turkey</b>					
<b>Arab countries</b>					

**Which is the priority issue that must be discussed and agreed upon by both parties in order to further negotiations?**

- A transitional governing body with full authority
- Fighting 'Takfiri Jihadism'
- Both simultaneously
- I don't know / No answer

**Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion concerning the possibility of reaching a solution to the conflict in Syria through negotiations?**

- It is possible to reach a solution in less than a year
- It is possible to reach a solution in less than five years
- It is possible to reach a solution, but it will take more than five years
- I don't know / No answer

**In case an agreement is reached, do you think the political opposition would be able to hold armed battalions to that agreement?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know / No answer

**Have you heard of the De Mistura plan?**

- Yes
- No

**Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion concerning the De Mistura plan?**

- It will exclusively serve the interests of the Syrian government
- It will exclusively serve the interests of the Syrian opposition
- It will serve the interests of the residents of Aleppo
- It will be the first step towards reaching a solution
- It will not provide any solutions
- I don't know / No answer

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>What is your average monthly income?</b>
<input type="radio"/> Male	-	Single	< 25 000 SYP
<input type="radio"/> Female		Married	25 000 – 75 000 SYP
		Widowed	> 75 000 SYP
		Divorced	Prefer not to answer

<b>Current occupation</b>	<b>Previous occupation</b>	<b>Area of origin</b>	<b>Current residence area</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farmer</li> <li>○ Government employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farmer</li> <li>○ Government employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hassakah</li> <li>○ Deir Ezzor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hassakah</li> <li>○ Deir Ezzor</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employee in a private organization/company</li> <li>○ Combatant</li> <li>○ Self-employed</li> <li>○ Student</li> <li>○ Mid-level manager</li> <li>○ Senior level manager</li> <li>○ Unemployed</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employee in a private organization/company</li> <li>○ Combatant</li> <li>○ Self-employed</li> <li>○ Student</li> <li>○ Mid-level manager</li> <li>○ Senior level manager</li> <li>○ Unemployed</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aleppo</li> <li>○ Idleb</li> <li>○ Latakia</li> <li>○ Tartous</li> <li>○ Homs (Rastan)</li> <li>○ Damascus Suburbs</li> <li>○ Damascus</li> <li>○ Swaida</li> <li>○ Quneitra</li> <li>○ Hama</li> <li>○ Deraa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aleppo</li> <li>○ Idleb</li> <li>○ Latakia</li> <li>○ Tartous</li> <li>○ Homs (Rastan)</li> <li>○ Damascus Suburbs</li> <li>○ Damascus</li> <li>○ Swaida</li> <li>○ Quneitra</li> <li>○ Hama</li> <li>○ Deraa</li> <li>○ Jordan Camps</li> <li>○ Turkey camps</li> <li>○ Lebanon Camps</li> </ul>

**Religion – sect**

- Sunni
- Shia
- Alawite
- Ismaili
- Druze
- Yazidi
- Christian
- Prefer not to answer

**Ethnicity**

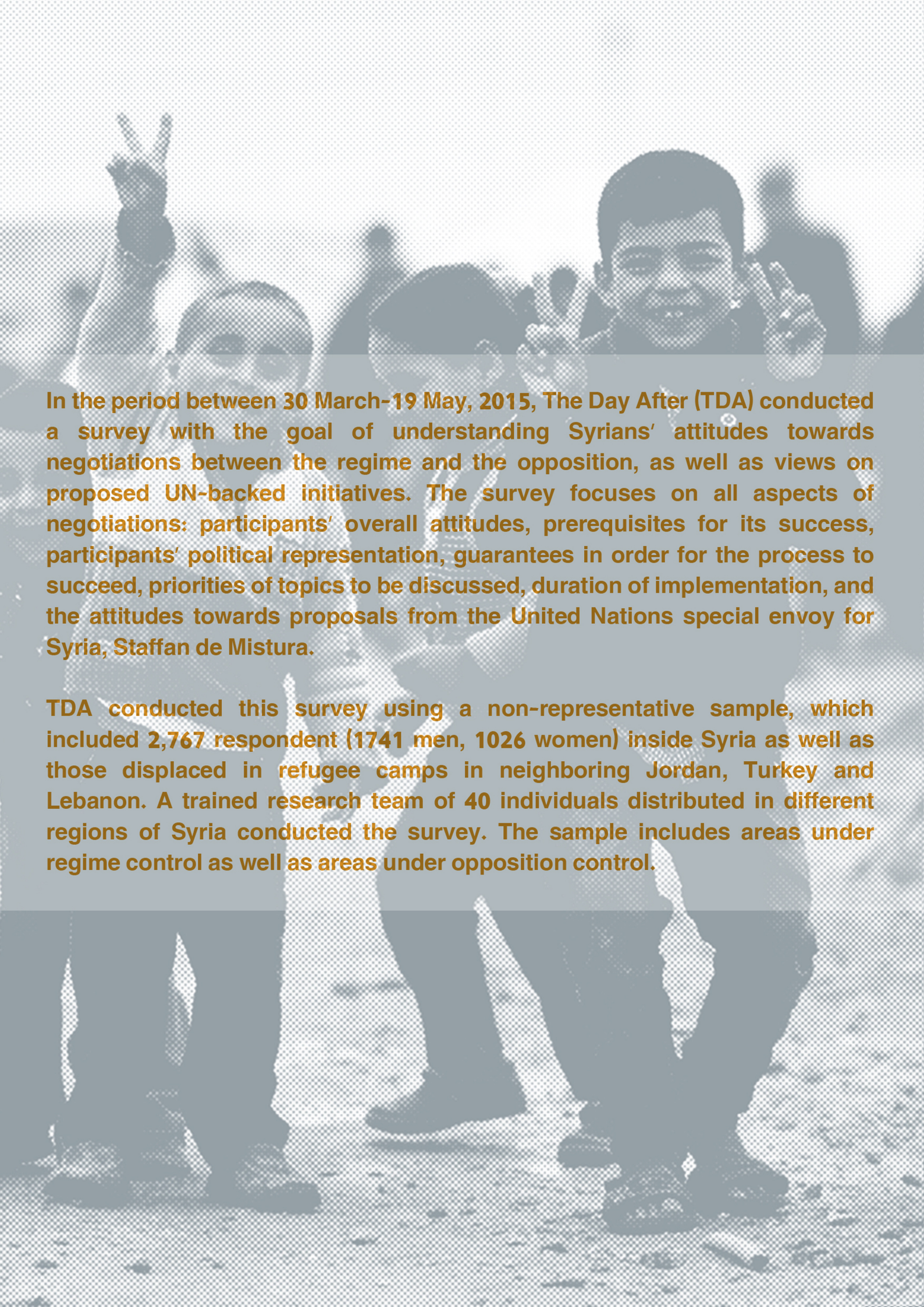
- Arab
- Kurdish
- Armenian
- Assyrian
- Turkmen
- Circassian
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

**Level of education**

- Illiterate
- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- University level
- Postgraduate studies

**On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being ‘secular state’ and 10 being an ‘Islamic Caliphate’, what do you think is the most appropriate form of governance for Syria in the future?**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

A black and white photograph of a group of children, likely in a conflict-affected area, making peace signs with their hands. The image is semi-transparent, serving as a background for the text.

**In the period between 30 March-19 May, 2015, The Day After (TDA) conducted a survey with the goal of understanding Syrians' attitudes towards negotiations between the regime and the opposition, as well as views on proposed UN-backed initiatives. The survey focuses on all aspects of negotiations: participants' overall attitudes, prerequisites for its success, participants' political representation, guarantees in order for the process to succeed, priorities of topics to be discussed, duration of implementation, and the attitudes towards proposals from the United Nations special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.**

**TDA conducted this survey using a non-representative sample, which included 2,767 respondent (1741 men, 1026 women) inside Syria as well as those displaced in refugee camps in neighboring Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. A trained research team of 40 individuals distributed in different regions of Syria conducted the survey. The sample includes areas under regime control as well as areas under opposition control.**