

Selection or Election

An Analytical Reading of the Formation of the People's Assembly

Introduction

Following the fall of the regime, talk of filling the constitutional vacuum began, culminating in the Victory Conference on 29 January 2025, attended by the military factions' commanders. As a result of the Conference, Mr Ahmed al-Sharaa was appointed President for the transitional period, giving him the mandate to form a temporary legislative council. This authority was given a constitutional basis through the Constitutional Declaration issued on March 13, 2025, which outlined the rules governing the formation of the legislative council.

While recognizing that holding general elections requires the necessary infrastructure and a national consensus on an electoral law, the formation of a People's Assembly during this stage was expected to complete the establishment of state institutions and their legislative and oversight powers, and to constitute a step on the path towards national accord.

We are therefore not dealing with a conventional election of the People's Assembly under the rules of general elections in which the entire electorate participates. Rather, we are before producing a legislative council whose members are selected through mechanisms intended, as much as possible and within the circumstances, to be participatory and to reflect the political, ethnic, and religious diversity of Syrian society, thereby ensuring sound representation and equality between Syrian women and men in rights and duties, and equal citizenship, as stipulated by the Constitutional Declaration. Consequently, this process cannot be evaluated against the standards of general elections; it is a process of selecting and forming a council, led by the transitional authority pursuant to the Constitutional Declaration. This paper assesses the process from that vantage point. In effect, it is an election conducted by electoral bodies that were themselves formed by a committee appointed by the President of the Republic.

It must also be noted that the electoral process took place amid complex domestic and regional circumstances, particularly the national fissures following the events in the coastal region and al-Suwayda, and the grave and widespread human rights violations that accompanied them; the absence of any progress on integrating the areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into the central government as provided for in the 10 March 2025 Agreement; and the failure to complete the national dialogue process. The combined result was the exclusion of the governorates of al-Suwayda, al-Hasaka, and al-Raqqa from the process of forming the People's Assembly.

First: The Legal Framework Governing the Formation of the Legislative Council

The Constitutional Declaration begins by defining the functions of the People's Assembly in Article 30, which states:

The People's Assembly shall assume the following functions:

- Proposing and enacting laws.
- Amending or repealing previous laws.
- Ratifying international treaties.
- Approving the State's general budget.
- Approving a general amnesty.
- Accepting or rejecting the resignation of any of its members, or lifting a member's immunity, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure.
- Holding hearings for ministers.
- The People's Assembly shall take its decisions by a majority.

Other provisions of the Constitutional Declaration stipulate that the term of office of the Assembly is thirty months, renewable, and that within one month of its first meeting, the Assembly shall adopt its Rules of Procedure. The Declaration also stipulates that a member of the People's Assembly may not be removed except with the approval of two-thirds of its members, without specifying grounds for removal.

Although the Declaration states that the Assembly's decisions are taken by majority, it grants the President of the Republic authority to raise the threshold to a two-thirds majority. Article 39 provides: *"The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws approved by the People's Assembly. He may object to them by a reasoned decision within one month from the date of their receipt from the Assembly, which shall reconsider them. Laws shall not be approved after objection except with the approval of two-thirds of the People's Assembly; in that case, the President of the Republic shall promulgate them ipso jure."*

As to the formation of the People's Assembly, Article 24 of the Constitutional Declaration lays out the following mechanism:

1. The President of the Republic shall form a High Committee to select the members of the People's Assembly.
2. The High Committee shall supervise the formation of subsidiary electoral bodies, and those bodies shall elect two-thirds of the members of the People's Assembly.
3. The President of the Republic shall appoint one-third of the members of the People's Assembly to ensure fair representation and competence.

Pursuant to this Declaration, President Ahmed al-Sharaa issued Decree No. 66 of 2 June 2025, which provides inter alia:

1. A committee shall be formed under the name “High Committee for the People’s Assembly Elections”.
2. The High Committee shall supervise the formation of subsidiary electoral bodies, and those bodies shall elect two-thirds of the members of the People’s Assembly.
3. The People’s Assembly shall consist of 150 members, distributed among the governorates according to population, under the two categories of notables and professionals, and in accordance with conditions set by the High Committee for Elections.
4. One-third of the members shall be appointed by the President of the Republic, and two-thirds shall be elected through recognized electoral committees distributed across the governorates.

It is apparent that this Decree followed the parameters of the Constitutional Declaration, producing a legislative authority derived from the will of the head of the executive authority, in line with the Victory Conference’s delegation to the President of all powers.

Subsequently, Decree No. 143 of 19 August 2025 was issued, establishing the temporary electoral system of the People’s Assembly and setting out all the parameters of the process accompanying the Assembly’s formation. Its principal features include:

- The People’s Assembly shall comprise 210 members/seats, one-third of which are appointed by the President of the Republic and two-thirds elected in accordance with this Decree.
- Electoral districts shall be formed at the level of administrative areas, with a district consisting of one or more areas.
- The electoral body shall comprise a maximum of 50 members per seat and no fewer than 30.
- In each electoral district, the High Committee for Elections shall establish subsidiary electoral committees.
- Subsidiary committees shall be formed at the governorate level to organise the People’s Assembly elections at the level of the electoral district; their decisions shall not take effect unless approved by the High Committee.
- Eligibility criteria for membership of the subsidiary electoral committees are defined, largely mirroring those for membership of the electoral bodies, including: not being a supporter of the former regime or of terrorist organizations; not holding the office of minister, governor, or the deputy of either; commitment to the Constitutional Declaration; having reached twenty-five years of age; and being civilly registered in the electoral district or having resided therein for five years before 2011.

- Subsidiary electoral committees shall engage effectively with local communities and civic actors to ensure the broadest possible participation in selecting the members of the electoral body; each subsidiary committee shall propose an initial list of electoral-body members to the High Committee.
- The Decree establishes appeals committees at the level of each governorate, composed of judges chosen by the Minister of Justice, to consider appeals concerning the selection of subsidiary committee members, members of the electoral bodies, and the results of the electoral process.
- The Decree sets eligibility conditions for membership of the electoral body, including not being a supporter of the former regime or terrorist organisations; being registered in the civil register of the electoral district or having resided therein for five years before 2011; being at least 25 years old; and not being a member of the armed forces or security services, in addition to other conditions.
- The Decree regulates how to compile the rolls of electoral-body members through lists prepared and approved by the subsidiary committees and submitted to the High Committee for Elections. As far as possible, the lists should aim for 70% professionals/competent persons and 30% notables, and for women's representation of no less than 20%, while taking into account the representation of families of martyrs, the wounded of the revolution, persons with disabilities, and survivors of detention (men and women).
- Once the members of the electoral bodies are approved, nominations are opened within those bodies; the Decree requires that electoral campaigning be confined to those bodies only.
- The Decree also provides for doubling the penalties for electoral offences, and stipulates that vacancies, whether among appointed or elected members, shall be filled by the President of the Republic.

Second: Legal Analysis of the Electoral Process within Its Constitutional and Legal Framework

1) The name of the Council between the Victory Conference and the Constitutional Declaration.

The President of the Republic was appointed pursuant to the decisions of the Victory Conference and was vested with a number of powers, including the formation of a temporary legislative council. The Constitutional Declaration, however, refers to the body as the "People's Assembly". We consider the designation used by the Victory Conference to be more accurate and more reflective of the council's situation, since its mission is to fill the legislative vacuum, its primary role being to enact legislation during the transitional period and to prepare the legal environment for moving from the

temporary to the permanent order under a new constitution, without exercising oversight over the executive authority. By contrast, the title “People’s Assembly” does not fit a situation in which the council is appointed by the President, with the assistance of a committee appointed by him, since this is not an electoral process in which the people participate; it departs from the general principle whereby the people delegate their authority to institutions they elect.

2) The inconsistency between the two Decrees establishing the High Committee and the temporary electoral system

Decree No. 66 set the number of members of the Assembly at 150, formed at the level of governorates, and the Decree specified the number of seats for each governorate. The Decree establishing the temporary electoral system, however, raised the number to 210 and provided that the distribution of seats would be based on administrative areas rather than governorates, without offering a justification or an explanation for this change.

3) Absence of the Constitutional Court

Article 47 of the Constitutional Declaration provides that:

1. The existing High Constitutional Court shall be dissolved, and a new High Constitutional Court shall be established.
2. The High Constitutional Court shall be composed of seven members appointed by the President of the Republic from among persons of integrity, competence, and experience.
3. Its working procedures and jurisdiction shall be regulated by law.

To date, the High Constitutional Court has not been formed, even though its establishment does not require the same procedures as those applicable to the People’s Assembly. Although the Declaration states that the Court’s procedures and jurisdiction shall be set by law, which would require legislation by the People’s Assembly, the same Declaration provides in Article 51 that “*the laws in force shall remain applicable unless amended or repealed.*” Accordingly, the Law on the Constitutional Court and the Electoral Law remain in force unless and until amended or repealed, insofar as they do not contradict the Constitutional Declaration.

In the absence of the High Constitutional Court, its essential role in the election of members of the People’s Assembly is missing a role defined by Electoral Law No. 5 of 2014, notably in the consideration of appeals concerning elections to the People’s Assembly. As a result, the High Committee for Elections will operate without judicial oversight of its actions.

It would have been preferable to appoint the members of the High Constitutional Court and to define its powers and jurisdiction in accordance with the laws in force, insofar as these do not conflict with the Constitutional Declaration, so that it could review the constitutionality of the High Committee for Elections' actions and receive appeals relating to these elections.

4) Absence of any judicial participation in the High Committee for Elections

Under Syrian law, which, pursuant to the Constitutional Declaration, is presumed to remain in force, the High Committee for Elections consists of seven judges appointed by the Supreme Judicial Council. In Decree No. 66, these standards were not followed, and no judge was appointed to the Committee. This might be acceptable insofar as we are speaking of a special committee provided for in the Constitutional Declaration; however, in that case, the Decree should have adhered to the constitutional text, which refers to a "High Committee to select the members of the People's Assembly," that is, it uses the term selection, not election.

Bestowing the title "High Committee for Elections" upon a group of persons appointed by the President to select the members of the People's Assembly during the transitional period is inconsistent with the Declaration's stipulation that existing laws continue to apply.

Third: The Electoral Process and Its Conformity with the Governing Legal Framework

1) Vagueness of the criteria

Decree No. 143 set out a set of criteria for selecting the members of the subsidiary committees and the members of the electoral bodies. It is notable, however, that no criteria were set for the composition of the High Committee for Elections itself; rather, its members were named, and they were then tasked with establishing the criteria for the remaining committees and bodies. Therefore, there was no opportunity to object to naming them or file an appeal against them, or object to the decisions they made.

Moreover, a number of the criteria were couched in broad or non-measurable terms, such as *not being a supporter of terrorist organizations* without the Decree defining which entities constitute *terrorist organizations* and *commitment to the provisions of the Constitutional Declaration*, a standard that cannot be objectively measured, or it can be interpreted by excluding anyone who opposes what the authority approved in the Constitutional Declaration. Even the requirement of *residence within the electoral area*

for five years before 2011 cannot be verified in the absence of an official authority capable of confirming such residence.

2) Absence of safeguards for selecting members of the electoral bodies

Article 13 of Decree No. 143 imposes upon the subsidiary committees a duty to engage effectively with local communities and civic actors to ensure the widest possible participation in selecting members of the electoral body. The subsidiary committees did not carry out this role as required. Instead, they took a different course by opening nominations to anyone wishing to seek membership of the electoral bodies, which happened in some subsidiary committees but not others, in a manner that is not supported by the executive instructions. Then, candidate lists were published and appeals opened to anyone wishing to contest them without specifying who had standing to appeal. Thereafter, they published final lists, excluding some names and retaining others without stating the standards or reasons for exclusion. This created room for the inference that the subsidiary committees excluded whom they wished, even in the absence of any appeal, an inference effectively confirmed by the High Committee when it stated that certain candidates had been excluded without any appeal having been lodged against them. The failure of the subcommittees to carry out the required consultations is confirmed by the short period between the decision to form the subcommittees and the decision to form the electoral bodies, which lasted no more than five days. In practice, most regions did not conduct real consultations with the community.

In practice, then, the subsidiary committees selected whomever they wished, given their power and discretion to exclude candidates without giving reasons or criteria. Transparency was likewise entirely lacking regarding the receipt and adjudication of appeals: neither the High Committee nor the subsidiary committees published any information on the number of appeals, or on how the veracity of the matters raised therein was verified, all within a very compressed timeframe that did not allow proper verification. It should also be noted that the High Committee failed to comply with its own decisions as to the duration of appeal periods.

3) Changing the lists and failing to adhere to basic criteria

The subsidiary committees issued lists and opened the door to appeals, then subsequently issued supplementary lists and again opened appeals, and finally published definitive lists, excluding a large number of individuals who met the criteria.

This approach placed many candidates in an embarrassing position: their exclusion implied that the conditions did not apply to them, and, given that formal conditions were met, the inference was that the reason for exclusion was association with the former regime or support for terrorist organizations.

At the same time, we observed that when issuing the lists, certain subsidiary committees accepted applications from persons born in 2004 and 2005, even though the instructions set the minimum age for candidates at 25 years. This indicates that the subsidiary committees did not scrutinize applications properly: if they could not verify the age criterion, how could they have dealt with the other conditions that require documents and verification?

4) Disregarding the selection criteria and categories

Article 23 of Decree No. 143 provides that the subsidiary committees shall submit the initial list of electoral-body members for their district, divided into two lists: notables and professionals/competent persons. In practice, the subsidiary committees did not adhere to this requirement; they submitted the lists of all electoral-body members without dividing them into the two categories or observing the required proportions. The elections thus proceeded without clarification as to who belonged to the notables category and who to the professionals category.

Article 24 of the same Decree stipulates that women's representation should be no less than 20%. The subsidiary committees did not comply with this requirement, and several committees submitted lists with less than 20% women, even though they excluded many women in clear contravention of the Decree. The same article requires representation of families of martyrs, the wounded of the revolution, persons with disabilities, and survivors of detention (women and men); the safeguards for ensuring such representation were compromised during the selection of electoral-body members.

5) Excluding judges from membership of electoral bodies and from standing as candidates

Article 21 of Decree No. 143 sets the criteria for selecting members of the electoral bodies, including the categories ineligible to stand. It clearly stipulates that candidates must not be military personnel or members of the security forces, and must not hold the office of minister, governor, or deputy to either. Thus, the Decree unambiguously defines the categories barred from membership of the electoral bodies. The subsidiary committees, however, contravened the Decree by barring judges from membership without any legal basis. The Aleppo subsidiary committee appears to have been the only

one that accepted judges' applications, reasoning that the text does not prohibit judges from such membership; yet those judges accepted in Aleppo were later asked not to stand as candidates. Beyond its lack of legality, excluding judges also weakens the Assembly, particularly with respect to its core function of enacting laws.

6) The High Committee's failure to observe the time limits it set

Under the executive instructions for the electoral process issued by the High Committee for Elections, there is a three-day period for appeals against the results, commencing the day after the publication of the lists of successful candidates. In practice, the High Committee did not observe these periods: it published the lists of successful candidates on the same day the electoral process ended vote counting in Aleppo concluded at around 7:00 a.m. and, in Decree No. 66 issued on the day on which all counting ended, it limited the appeals period to the same day, thereby reducing the appeals period from three days to less than three hours. The Committee even posted the announcement of the appeals window on its Facebook page after close of business, and, as of the end of business on 6 October 2025, it had not posted on its official website any notice indicating the reduction of the appeals period.

By doing so, the Committee deprived those with valid challenges of their right of appeal and contravened both the Decree regulating its work and its own decisions.

On the other hand, the terms were too short and insufficient for the subcommittees to carry out their tasks, yet the terms were shortened in several cases.

To illustrate the haste with which the task was carried out, and the violations committed, the following table sets out the most significant decisions and related observations:

| Status / Observations | Legal dates | Stage |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Receipt of nominations for subsidiary committees. | 23–25 August 2025 (Decision No. 2) | Receipt of nominations for subsidiary committees |
| On 27 August, one day later than the timeline set by the High Committee on 23 August, the High Committee announced the initial lists of proposed members of the subsidiary committees. | 26 August 2025 (Decision No. 2) | Announcement of proposed members of the subsidiary committees |
| On 29 August, i.e., one day after the original deadline for objections, the High Committee extended the deadline from 28 August to 31 August without stating a reason or updating the earlier timeline. | 27–28 August 2025 (Decision No. 2) | Receipt of objections to proposed committee members |
| In an attempt to expedite the process, the High Committee reduced the statutory three-day period for deciding objections to one day only. | 30 August 2025 (Decision No. 2) | Decision on objections |
| On 1 September, the High Committee issued Decision No. 26, announcing changes to the subsidiary committees in seven electoral districts across some governorates, and introduced a new round of objections to be submitted within two days to the judicial committee in each governorate, granting the judicial committees 24 hours only to decide the appeals. | 31 August 2025 (Decision No. 2) | Issuance of the final names of subsidiary-committee members |
| The issuance of final names was delayed due to the second round of objections. The committees were appointed on 3 September. | 1 September 2025 (Decision No. 2) | Start of the subsidiary committees' tasks (receiving applications and selecting members of the electoral college) |

| Status / Observations | Legal dates | Stage |
|---|---|---|
| Formal appointment of subsidiary committees and oath-taking. | 3 September 2025 (per High Committee announcement) | Formal appointment and oath |
| Training was held on 6–7 September. According to the executive instructions, training must precede the commencement of work (Executive Instructions 2.7). | 6–7 September 2025 (as announced by the High Committee) | Training of subsidiary-committee members |
| Instead of holding consultations, the High Committee launched an application form on the night before the process began. This period was extended to 13 September without any official announcement. | 8–11 September 2025 (Circular No. 3 of 6 September 2025) | Consultations by subsidiary committees with communities and official bodies to select voters. The size of each electoral college ranges from 50 to 700 members per subsidiary committee, depending on the seats allocated to the district, with an additional 20% of names to handle contingencies. |
| Subsidiary committees submit the initial lists of electoral-college members to the High Committee. | <i>(same stage)</i> | Submission of initial lists to the High Committee |
| In Circular No. 3, the High Committee skipped this stage in substance, deciding to return the approved lists automatically one day after receiving them from more than 50 subsidiary committees, comprising over 6,000 names. | High Committee to review proposed lists (>6,000 voters), make amendments, or return lists for revision. | Review of proposed lists |
| Publication was late on 18 September (five days late). | 13 September 2025 (Circular No. 3 of 6 September 2025) | The High Committee approves lists and returns them to subsidiary committees for publication. Subsidiary committees publish initial lists of electoral-college members. |
| In practice, publication occurred on 18–19–20 September. | 14–16 September 2025 (Circular No. 3 of 6 September 2025) | Deadline for objections (law requires 3 days under Decree No. 143). |

| Status / Observations | Legal dates | Stage |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| <p>On 24 September, the High Committee issued Decision No. 45 (introducing 473 new replacement names). On 25 September, it issued Decision No. 46 (adding 17 further names). The two decisions provided only two days for appeals, one day for objections, and one day for judicial review. The timeline was extremely tight: Decision No. 46 was issued after midnight, with the objections period commencing the very next morning. This compressed schedule also conflicted with earlier statements by the High Committee’s spokesperson that nominations were initially set for Friday, 26, and Saturday, 27. In effect, Decisions 45 and 46 postponed the start of nominations from Friday, 26 to Saturday, 27.</p> | <p>21–25 September</p> | <p>Second round of objections</p> |
| <p>Final lists were supposed to be announced on 25 September, but were announced on 26 September, and some lists on the morning of 27 September.</p> | <p>Due on 25 September</p> | <p>Announcement of final lists</p> |
| <p>Nominations took place on time (27–28 September, after approval of the final voter lists) but contravened the electoral system, which stipulates that the nomination period must be five days long.</p> | <p>27–28 September (after final voter lists)</p> | <p>Nomination period</p> |
| <p>Campaigning occurred on time (29 September–3 October) but contravened the electoral system, which stipulates that the campaign period must be seven days.</p> | <p>29 September–3 October</p> | <p>Electoral campaigning period</p> |
| <p>Electoral silence was observed on time.</p> | <p>4 October</p> | <p>Silence period</p> |
| <p>Polling day took place on time.</p> | <p>5 October</p> | <p>Polling day</p> |
| <p>The appeals period ought to have been 79 October. The High Committee’s decision to limit appeals to three hours</p> | <p>6 October – three hours only</p> | <p>Objections</p> |

| Status / Observations | Legal dates | Stage |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| only on 6 October violates the law granting three days for lodging objections. | | |
| The law provides up to five days to decide appeals after submission, but this was not applied by the High Committee. | Not applied | Decisions on appeals |
| Final results were announced. | 6 October | Announcement of final results |

Fourth: General Observations

1) Absence of three governorates from representation in the Assembly

Given the Government's inability to conduct the electoral process in the governorates of al-Suwayda, al-Raqqa, and al-Hasaka, it was decided to postpone the designation of their representatives. The High Committee then decided to hold elections in two areas in al-Raqqa (Ma'dan and Tall Abyad) and one area in al-Hasaka (Ras al-Ayn), before subsequently deciding to postpone the elections in these areas until 20-10-2025. It should also be noted that elections were not held in Ayn al-Arab/Kobani in Aleppo governorate.

The inability to hold elections in these governorates justifies their postponement, while addressing this absence and restoring it is crucial to implement the March 10 Agreement, complete the national dialogue, and address the repercussions of the violations that occurred.

In all events, insofar as the legislative council will enact laws applicable to all Syrians, the absence of representatives from the three governorates creates an imbalance in the Assembly's composition that undermines its legitimacy in legislating.

2) Electoral campaigning

Article 28 of Decree No. 143 provides that electoral campaigning is confined exclusively to the electoral body, and Article 29 prohibits the use of state-owned means and facilities for campaigning.

In practice, candidates did not adhere to these rules: they campaigned beyond the electoral body, and most disseminated their materials via social media, without any action being taken by the High Committee. Conversely, and in contravention of Article 29, certain state media outlets such as al-Ikhbariyah al-Souriyah (the official Syrian television) provided a platform to some candidates to appear and present their programs, again without the High Committee taking action against these violations.

3) Election observation

Article 50 of Decree No. 143 states: *"The Chair of the High Committee may invite diplomatic missions and offices of international and governmental organizations to the polling centers to review the conduct of the electoral process."* However, no provision is made for election observation. By contrast, the executive instructions for polling day, issued as Decision No. 65 by the High Committee for Elections, provide that *"the candidate or their agent, and the media, have the right to observe the electoral process and attend the counting of votes."*

Accordingly, there is no reference to any role for civil society organizations in election observation, understood not merely as polling day, but as monitoring the entire process from the outset. The Day After (TDA) sought to observe the elections, but members of the High Committee informed us that this was not possible. It should be noted, however, that TDA's role was accepted as one of the organizations that trained subsidiary committees in explaining the electoral system and clarifying the duties and functions of those committees.

4) Harsher penalties for electoral offences

Article 43 of Decree No. 143 provides: *“Any offence committed during, or because of, the electoral process shall be punishable by double the penalties stipulated in the Syrian Penal Code.”*

This amounts to an amendment of the Penal Code. Since, under the Constitutional Declaration, the President of the Republic is not empowered to enact or amend laws, this article is beyond the President's authority in issuing decrees.

5) Adding presidential powers to “repair” membership of the People's Assembly

The Constitutional Declaration does not set out a mechanism for filling vacancies where a member loses the conditions of membership. Under general principles governing the separation of powers, filling vacancies should fall within the competence of the Assembly itself, whether by awarding the seat to the unsuccessful candidate with the highest number of votes, or by re-opening nominations within the member's district for the specific vacancy. Contrary to these general rules, Decree No. 143, issued by the President, adds to the President the power to appoint a replacement in the event of a vacancy.

Article 45 of the Decree provides: *“In the event of the death of any member of the People's Assembly, whether elected or appointed, or their resignation, or the loss of membership, a replacement shall be appointed by the President of the Republic.”*

Fifth: Conclusions

- The manner in which the People's Assembly was formed resulted in most members being of a single affiliation, aligned with and supporting the government's political orientation. Balanced representation was absent. We were not witnessing direct elections that reflected the true orientations of society, nor were we witnessing a direct formation process through appointments that reflected the diversity of Syrian society. The absence of this balanced representation undermined the principle of equal citizenship enshrined in the Constitutional Declaration.

- The composition of the Council reflects the absence of many political forces. Access to the Council did not reflect electoral platforms, and the final form was determined by individual candidates. This paints an inaccurate political map of the reality of society. Furthermore, the absence of political forces will limit the Council's ability to engage in meaningful discussion and propose amendments to draft laws submitted by the executive authority.
- The process was managed by the executive authority, without the independence required of the High Committee for Elections, whether in its composition or its performance. It was evident that the process was prepared in haste, as reflected in the Committee's confused decisions and its failure to adhere to rules it had itself established.
- The formation of the Assembly proceeded without completing the national dialogue, without progress on implementing the 10 March Agreement with the Syrian Democratic Forces, amid tensions and violations in several areas, and without integrating certain factions into state institutions. This led broad segments to abstain from participating and to refuse to engage with the process, thereby affecting the inclusiveness of representation and the absence of various political and social currents' developments that may negatively impact the future of national dialogue and peacebuilding.
- Although the rules require women's participation in the electoral bodies to be no less than 20%, this is a participation quota for bodies, not a quota for seats. In practice, the High Committee did not comply with the percentage: women's participation in the bodies was around 14%, while women's representation in the Assembly itself fell to only 5%.
- Broad segments from both the revolutionary spectrum and those supportive of the authorities participated and expressed satisfaction with their participation and the sense of freedom they experienced, especially compared to their total exclusion under the former regime. However, this sentiment did not extend to other segments within the revolutionary spectrum.

Sixth: Recommendations

- The national dialogue should be completed, the 10 March Agreement implemented, and the repercussions of the violations in the coastal region, al-Suwayda, and other areas addressed through fair, transparent, and inclusive mechanisms that yield national reconciliation, thereby conferring legitimacy on the political architecture of the next phase.
- The Constitutional Declaration should be reformed to guarantee the independence and balance of powers, ensure legislative oversight of the executive, secure the independence of the judiciary, and establish an independent and impartial Elections Commission.

- The Assembly should give particular attention to the Electoral Law, ensuring prior public deliberation with political forces outside the Assembly, civil society organizations, and all societal actors. Likewise, consultations with political and societal actors are essential in drafting a Political Parties Law that creates space for free and protected political activity.
- A quota guaranteeing women's representation in the People's Assembly of no less than 30% should be adopted.
- Civil society organizations should be granted the right to exercise social oversight over the Assembly's work, including access to deliberations and draft legislation.
- All draft laws should be shared with the public through a portal enabling access, the submission of views and comments, and the adoption of clear and transparent mechanisms for considering them.
- The authorities should be open to roles for relevant international institutions in assisting with the design of the Electoral Law.
- Members of the Assembly should address the absence of representation of political forces outside the Assembly and certain social groups by opening channels of communication and establishing mechanisms for engagement and dialogue.
- The Presidential appointment of one-third of the Assembly's members should be used to correct representational imbalances, particularly with respect to political forces and women.

Seventh: Conclusion

In 2022, The Day After published its Electoral Reform Report, a detailed study demonstrating that an electoral process is not merely a booth and a ballot box, but a complex undertaking that must be accompanied by numerous guarantees if it is to achieve its aim of translating society's votes into representative seats.¹

The organization believes that democratic transition is a complex process shaped by domestic, regional, and international conditions. In the present stage, forming the People's Assembly cannot be accomplished through direct elections involving everyone, owing to multiple challenges ranging from flaws in the general electoral register to the safe access of voters to polling centers across Syria, including ensuring the participation of the displaced, both IDPs and refugees.

Despite the many observations arising from our assessment of the Assembly's formation, we consider that major tasks lie ahead for its members, foremost among them the enactment of a body of laws that will facilitate the transition from the temporary to the permanent order. These include foundational laws, in particular those relating to

political parties, elections, local administration, the judiciary, the media, civil society organizations, transitional justice, and others. The success of this undertaking will depend on the extent of cooperation and participation among Assembly members, political and societal forces, and civil society organizations.

¹ TDA - [Electoral Reform and Democratic Transition in Syria report](#)