

6. Syria's refugee crisis

Acronyms and abbreviations

AFAD—Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

AKP—Turkish social conservative Justice and Development Party

DDM—Iraq's Department of Displacement and Migration

FSA—Free Syrian Army

IDP—Internally displaced persons

INGO—International non-governmental organization

KRG—Kurdistan Regional Government

PFLP-GC—Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command

PKK—Kurdistan Workers' Party

UNHCR—United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Glossary

Alawi: A prominent minority religious group based in Syria with close ties to the Shi'a branch of Islam. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is a member of the Alawite community.

Hafez al-Assad: President of Syria from 1971 until his death in 2000. He was a participant in both the 1963 coup that brought the Ba'ath party to power and the 1966 coup that installed Salah Jadid as leader of Syria.

Al-Nusra Front: The group announced its formation in January 2012, after Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi sent operative Abu Muhammad al-Julani to Syria to organize jihadist cells in the region. Al-Nusra rose quickly to prominence among rebel organizations in Syria for its reliable supply of arms, funding and fighters.

Arab League: An organization that consists of independent Arab States in the territory of northern and northeastern part of Africa and southwest Asia. The Arab League

has been active in helping the Arab world grow economically and culturally, while finding solutions to resolve conflicts both within the league and outside of it.

Arab Spring: A revolutionary phenomenon in the Arab world that began with a 2010 Tunisian protest and spread to other countries, such as Libya and Egypt, which have since witnessed mass demonstrations and pro-democracy social movements. Protests and revolutions in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen led to the ousting of leaders. Uprisings and protests also erupted in Bahrain and Syria as well as Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Sudan.

Bashar al-Assad: The son of previous Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, Bashar, a member of the Alawite Muslim community, took office in 2000.

Ba'ath Party: An Arab political party founded in Syria. Its ideology mixes Arab nationalism, socialism and anti-imperialism and calls for the Arab world to form a single state.

Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD): Established in 2009 to ensure the necessary measures are taken for emergency management and civil protection issues in Turkey. The presidency conducts pre-incident works such as preparedness, mitigation and risk management, during incident works such as response, post incident works such as recovery and reconstruction.

Emergency Law of 1963: Syrian law that permitted the government to make preventive arrests and override constitutional and penal code statutes. The law barred detainees who hadn't been charged from filing court complaints or from having a lawyer present during interrogations.

Free Syrian Army (FSA): A moderate group of Syrian rebels founded by defectors of the Syrian Armed Forces and one of the earliest organized militias in the Syrian Civil War.

Hezbollah: (Arabic: *Hizb Allah*, meaning “Party of God.”) A Lebanese organization formed in the 1980s after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Hezbollah is a Shi’ite militant group with a political wing funded largely by Iran and Syria. Its goals include the creation of a Shi’ite theocracy in Lebanon, the eradication of Western influence in the region and the collapse of Israel. The U.S. classifies Hezbollah as a foreign terrorist organization. According to analysts and observers, Hezbollah has been trying to reinvent its image from that of a militia to a more traditional political movement. It’s had a strong influence supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government in its civil war.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS): Also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or simply Islamic State (IS). ISIS is a transnational Sunni insurgent group based in Iraq and Syria, and is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The group has been widely labeled as a terrorist organization, including by the UN, EU, U.K., U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

Ahmad Jibril: The founder and leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, a Palestinian nationalist militant group, and a supporter of the Assad regime in Syria.

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): The governing body of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. The government is set up as a parliamentary democracy. The parliament consists of 111 seats, and a prime minister is selected by the majority party.

Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK): Founded in 1974 dedicated to Kurdish autonomy from Turkey. The organization contains an armed wing known as the People’s Defense Force and is seen as a terrorist organization by countries such as the U.S.

Kurds: An ethnic group in the Middle East, mostly inhabiting a region known as Kurdistan, which spans adjacent parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. The Kurds number about 30 million, the majority living in West Asia, including significant Kurdish diaspora communities in the cities of western Turkey outside of Kurdistan.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC): A leftist Palestinian nationalist group that formed after the Six Day War of 1967 and organized terrorist strategies in the early 1970s. The group lost influence in the 1990s after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

Shi’a: The second largest denomination of Islam, constituting 25–30% of the world’s Muslim population and 40% of the Middle East’s entire population. Divided with Sunnis over the proper successor of Muhammad. Today, there is still great tension between the two denominations.

Sunni: The largest religious denomination for any religion in the world. In the schism from Shi’ism, Sunnis argued that the leaders of the Muslim community didn’t have to come from Mohammed’s lineage. Sunnis accepted Abu Bakr as the first caliph after Mohammed.

Syria Accountability Act of 2004: A bill the United States Congress passed in 2003 with a stated purpose to end what the U.S. called Syrian-supported terrorism and its presence in Lebanon.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR): The United Nations General Assembly established in 1950 UNHCR to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide, and its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees.