

Press Release

Launching of “Syria: Alienation and Violence” Report Impact of Syria Crisis 2014

10th of March 2015

The Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR), an independent not-for-profit think tank based in Damascus launched its report “Syria: Alienation and Violence” as part of series of quarterly based reports on the impact of the crisis on development in Syria. The report covers the conflict during 2014 on quarterly basis. The report is supported by both UNDP and UNRWA.

The report aims to estimate, document and analyse the catastrophic socioeconomic impact of the ongoing armed-conflict. It uses recent quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the impact of the crisis in its economic, social, and institutional aspects. The report concludes:

The economy of violence flourished in 2014 as battles intensified, with reallocation of resources and capital to the machinery of war. This was accompanied with the expansion of black markets, the erosion of sovereignty and rule of law, increasing dependence upon external support, deepening economic exposure and loss of economic security. Under the conflict the Syrian economy suffers from the dominance of the subjugating powers working to institutionalize control through violence. Moreover, as sovereignty has weakened conflict-related transnational networks and criminal gangs emerged to engage in human trafficking and abuse, pillage, smuggling, kidnapping and extortion, recruiting combatants and trading in the objects of national and historical heritage.

Total economic loss since the start of the conflict until the end of 2014 is estimated at USD 202.6 billion, which is equivalent to almost four times the GDP of 2010. Additionally, the GDP contracted by 9.9 per cent in 2014. Public investment continued to retrench, contracting by 17 per cent in 2014 while private investment slightly improved. The combined public and private investment formed just 10.8 per cent of the GDP. This resulted in a position of negative net investment in 2014.

The coverage of exports to imports deteriorated sharply from 82.7 per cent in 2010 to 29.7 per cent in 2014; this is reflected in huge trade deficit, which reached 42.7 per cent in 2014, reflecting the exposure of the economy to the external economies that depends to a large extent on imports that are financed mainly through external loans and financial facilities.

The budget deficit increased to reach 40.5 per cent in 2014. This deficit added another burden to the public debt which continues its increase to unbearable levels, with the public debt increasing substantially relative to current GDP, from 104 per cent in 2013 on average, to 147 per cent by 2014-Q4.

The government adopted additional liberalisation policies to reduce subsidies through increasing the prices of many basic goods and services. These decisions are expected to increase government revenues, yet, they will have major socio-economic impacts on the household welfare, particularly the poor ones, and the cost of domestic production that will increase prices in basic goods such as bread and energy.

The country is plagued by joblessness and unemployment. As the unemployment rate surged to 57.7 per cent by the end of 2014, some 2.96 million people lost their jobs during the conflict, with the loss of income impacting on the welfare of 12.22 million dependents. Unfortunately, an increasing share of Syrian youth are joining various networks to engage in conflict-related enterprise and illegal activities.

Armed-conflict, economic disintegration and social fragmentation have transformed the human geography of Syria. Over half the population were dislodged as they left their homes looking for safer places to live or better living conditions elsewhere. The ruinous descent into inequality and poverty in Syria continued in 2014 when just over four in every five Syrians lived in poverty. Almost two-thirds of the population lived in extreme poverty where they were unable to secure the basic food and non-food items necessary for the survival of the household. As poverty became increasingly prevalent, 30 per cent of the population fell into abject poverty, where they were unable to meet the basic food needs of their households.

Under these conditions human development is rapidly regressing, with the HDI of Syria estimated to have lost 32.6 per cent of its pre-conflict value, while falling in global ranking from 113th to 173rd out of 187 countries. Moreover, education is in a state of collapse with 50.8 per cent of all school-age children no longer attending school during the 2014-2015, with almost half of all children already losing three years of schooling. The loss of schooling by the end of 2014 represents a human capital debit of 7.4 million lost years of schooling. Furthermore, 6 per cent of the population were killed, maimed or wounded during the conflict. Equally horrendous is the silent disaster that has reduced life expectancy at birth from 75.9 years in 2010 to an estimated 55.7 years at the end of 2014.

The report diagnoses the phenomenon of alienation as an aggravated reflection of the gap between institutions and human beings, whereby individuals become incapable of real participation in representing their priorities and aspirations in the socioeconomic and political sphere, whereby human subjects are alienated and estranged from the objectives, policies and relations that are being formed under such existing institutions. The people of Syria are now forced to live under a terrible state of exception, estrangement and alienation with a massive social, political and economic chasm dividing them from those involved in violence and the institutions of violence. Most people continue to remain alienated from the subjugating powers that have been able to enrol some people in the machinery of violence, oppression and terror that has already squandered human values, lives and livelihoods of Syrians. While this estrangement and alienation is intensified in form of exclusion, fear, subordination, indifference, hopelessness and despair, there are still people and institutions that refuse violence and the state of alienation. They continue to struggle peacefully against the internal and external powers of subordination and alienation.

End of press release

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In English: [http://scpr-syria.org/att/SCPR Alienation Violence Report 2014 EN.pdf](http://scpr-syria.org/att/SCPR%20Alienation%20Violence%20Report%202014%20EN.pdf)

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