



Country Information Sheet for Return and Reintegration Counsellors



The Syrian Arab Republic





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1. General information



Population

total: 26,5 million¹

Ethnic groups

Arab ~50%, Alawite ~15%, Kurd ~10%, Levantine ~10%, other ~15% (includes Druze, Ismaili, Imami, Nusairi, Assyrian, Turkoman, Armenian)

Languages

Arabic (official), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French, English

Religions

Muslim 87% (official; includes Sunni 74% and Alawi, Ismaili, and Shia 13%), Christian 10% (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and Nestorian), Druze 3%

Population growth rate

4,12%

Government

presidential republic

Capital

name: Damascus

¹ [Syria Population 2026](#)

2. Reintegration partners

About SSSD

IRARA collaborates with Syrian Society Development (SSSD) for the delivery of expert reintegration services in Syria. SSSD has been providing aid and services for displaced Syrian nationals since its inception in 2009 and provides an effective response to the needs and challenges of Syrian people. Working throughout Syria, IRARA and SSSD offer tailored, trustworthy and professional reintegration assistance to individuals and families returning to Syria at putting the needs of the returnee first.

To implement the reintegration assistance, Frontex has concluded another partnership with ETTC which cooperates with the IHSAS Foundation in Syria to ensure the delivery of a high level of support.



Shawkat Al Aedi Street Dar Al Salam Complex Shaalan, Damascus Syrian Arab Republic	+963 962 626 250 +963 958 044 825	Sunday-Thursday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (local time)	syria@irara.org	www.irara.org/returnees
Aleppo: Al-Jalaa, Awqaf buildings, in front of the Al-Jalaa facility	+963 958 045 194			
Daraa: Izraa. Station. New church building near the Green Corner	+963 989 967 024			
Homs: Armenian Quarter, Zaydel Road behind Karim Association, Building No. 19	+963 962 626 286			
Deir ez-Zar: Al-Qusour neighbourhood opposite the former Arab Union High School	+963 966 405 048			
Idlib: Khan Sheikhoun, 200 meters east of Khalid Ibn Al-Walid School	+963 936 958 310			

About IHSAS

IHSAS is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, licensed under Decision No. 2539 in 2023. It is dedicated to supporting returnees and internally displaced persons through rehabilitation services, training programs, and development projects that contribute to their stability and reintegration into society. The organisation also focuses on the rehabilitation of children— especially those with disabilities—and the empowerment of women.



3. Travel documents

3.1 Types, procedure and required documents

Syrians returning to the country must present valid identification, such as a national passport or ID card, to enter. Passports and ID cards issued by the former government are deemed valid. Those without documents, but registered in Syria's civil registries, may still be allowed entry after their identity is verified through the Civil Affairs database at border checkpoints, at which point they are issued a civil record extract for entry.

Additionally, Syrian diplomatic missions abroad are authorised to issue temporary travel documents and passports to facilitate the return of nationals who have lost them. Replacement of lost ID cards can only be done in person inside Syria. UNHCR provides free legal assistance through its partners to IDPs and returnees on issues related to civil documentations including IDs.

Since 8 December 2024, civil registry offices in Syria have suspended the registration of civil events, including births. Under Syrian law, personal status events such as births, deaths, and marriages that occur outside Syria must be

registered in accordance with the laws of the country of residence, provided these do not conflict with Syrian legislation (as outlined in Article 17 of the Civil Affairs Law, amended by Law 13/2021).

The interim authorities in Syria require all children entering the country to present a birth certificate and be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. For children born abroad who have not been registered in Syrian civil records either through diplomatic missions or domestic civil affairs offices, a birth certificate from the country of birth is required. In exceptional cases, hospital-issued birth notifications may be accepted for unregistered children at the border.

However, to acquire a passport, a person can apply directly through the Ministry of Interior's official platform: <https://www.ecsc.gov.sy/home> or approach a Syrian diplomatic mission in the country of residence to issue a replacement of the lost passport or temporary travel documents.²

3.2 Fees

Please consult the diplomatic mission in the country of residence on the appropriate procedures and fees.

² [4.1. Administrative requirements | European Union Agency for Asylum](#)



4. Airports

- After a prolonged period of conflict and flight restrictions, Syria's two major international gateways, Damascus International Airport (DAM) and Aleppo International Airport (ALP) have resumed full operations.
- Qamishli International Airport (KAC)- currently closed to civilian flights as of July 2025

5. Emergency contacts

Ambulance: 110; Fire 113; Police: 112

6. Health-care

6.1 Overview

As of May 2025, data available to UNOCHA indicates that only 57% of hospitals and 37% of primary healthcare centres in Syria are fully operational, while over 452 health facilities that previously received formal support are now threatened by funding cuts, risking closure and potentially leaving over 5 million people without access to critical medical care.

Syria also faces a critical shortage of health workers, exacerbated by low salaries, which significantly hinders access to health services. It is estimated that 50-70% of the health workforce has left the country.

Consequently, eight out of Syria's 14 governorates fall below the international minimum threshold for the availability of health workers per 10 000 population. There is a persistent shortage of specialists in areas such as trauma and emergency care, intensive care, orthopaedics, psychiatry, anaesthesia, oncology, and prosthetics.

In Deir Ez-Zor, Hasaka and Raqqqa only one out of 16 hospitals are fully functional because of full reliance on humanitarian partners who are lacking funds.

Many areas, especially Dar'a, Latakia, and Damascus, receive only two to six hours of electricity daily, affecting up to 75% of communities. The situation is even worse in other governorates, with most communities reporting less than two hours of electricity per day. This includes Deir Ez-Zor (74%), Hama (77%), Homs (62%), and Rural Damascus (69%).³

As of December 2024, only 57% of the hospitals and 37% of its primary healthcare facilities in Syria were fully functional, while the rest are either partially or completely out of service. In areas like Damascus and Aleppo hospitals remained largely non-operational. In Damascus, 34% of health centres (29 out of 86)

were affected by underfunding, with an impact on approximately 712 000 individuals.⁴

Health services are provided by the public, NGOs and private sectors, and are led by the Ministry of Health which is the main provider of health services that cover all levels of health care.

- Primary health care is provided through 1296 Ministry of Health centres and mobile clinics/teams, NGO centres supported by UN agencies, and private polyclinics. Ministry of Health clinics are offering free of charge national package of health services that focus on health promotion, disease prevention, disease management, and rehabilitation.
- Primary health care services consist of mother and child health services, communicable and non-communicable diseases management including mental health and psychosocial services, elderly, youth, dental and nutrition services, in addition to medical investigation and medicine services. Some of the centres offer specialized services such as Thalassemia services, and 24/7 emergency services.
- Secondary and tertiary health care is provided through 98 Ministry of Health and Department of Health hospitals and specialized centres, 12 university hospitals, NGO and private hospitals. Available care includes a wide range of medical and surgical interventions for elective and emergency cases that cover all specialty areas. Care at Ministry of Health hospitals is generally against a charge. Hospitals affiliated with the Department of Health are free of charge.
- Rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, including assistive devices and artificial limbs, are provided through clinics, workshops and hospitals, NGO run workshops for artificial limbs, the SARC artificial limb centres in rural Damascus and Aleppo, UNHCR supported community centres, and Ministry of Health rehabilitation centre in Damascus.

³ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities (January to December 2025), 24 July 2025

⁴ 3.7. Health care | European Union Agency for Asylum



A Syrian citizen can access all levels of care at the standard rate set by the Ministry of Health.

Syrians can access any public primary health centre to receive the package of primary health care services free of charge. Some NGO centres offer services for flat rates.

Fees and required documents:

- No legal documents are required in public primary health care centres of the Ministry of Health or the Department of Health, except if specialized or medicine services are provided. In that case the ID card should be presented.
- Hospital services in autonomous hospitals of the Ministry of Health, university hospitals and NGO hospitals are generally charged at a national rate for

Syrians in addition to the cost of medical supplies, if required. While non-autonomous hospitals affiliated with Departments of Health are free of charge except for the cost of medicines, medical supplies and devices.

- Emergency services/departments in hospitals receive patients for life saving services free of charge regardless of their identity and nationality, up to the stabilization phase.

7. Education

7.1 Overview

The education sector in Syria was severely impacted by the 14 years of conflict as well as the 2023 earthquakes and other climate related emergencies.

Official estimates indicate that there are about 2.5 to 3 million children out of school. Additionally, more than 8 000 schools (40 per cent of the country's education infrastructure) are damaged and require urgent rehabilitation or reconstruction. The highest numbers of non-functional schools are in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Idlib and Homs.

Classrooms are overcrowded and there is a significant shortage of school furniture, teaching supplies and operational WASH facilities. In Ar-Raqqa specifically, the Classroom to Pupil Ratio (CpR) is (187:1), followed by Al-Hasakeh (85:1) and Deir-ez-Zor (56:1).

The lack of electricity further hampers learning and results in high absenteeism, especially during extreme weather conditions. Further, the worsening socioeconomic conditions have affected the availability of qualified teachers. High transportation costs, irregular payment of low salaries and limited accreditation pathways reduce teacher motivation and accessibility, particularly in rural and hard to reach locations. As a result, the number of out-of-school children is increasing, and the total PiN for

the education sector has increased by 8 per cent from 7.2 million in 2024 to 7.8 million.

As of January 2025, there were 2.4 million children out of school in Syria and an additional million at a risk of dropping out. Since the end of November 2024, schooling for around 230 000 children was interrupted in northeast Syria due to ongoing conflict.

A report by UNOCHA of January 2025 states that over 5 200 schools are damaged and lack equipment. While the education is free, some families have prioritised negative coping mechanism affecting children's school attendance.

In December 2024, the UN reported that while schools have reopened across Syria, 'volatile security situation' affected school attendance in some areas. Access to schools was hindered by unexploded remnants of war.

Approximately 68 000 children in Aleppo and other governorates were unable to attend school, as many schools were being used as collective shelters for displaced persons.⁵

The war destroyed or severely damaged nearly 50 percent of the country's schools, leaving millions of children without access to education.⁶

7.2 Education system structure

The Law on Education 32 of April 7, 2002 implemented free and compulsory basic education that includes the primary (6-year program) and preparatory (3-year program) levels.

Kindergarten education is offered to children aged 3 to 5. This fee-paying education is not compulsory and lasts 3 years.

Primary education is compulsory and free for children aged 6. The primary program lasts 6 years.

Divided into two cycles:

- Grades 1– 6 (age 6-12) and
- Grades 7–9 (age 12-15)
(Certification: National Examination).

At the end of the stage in Grade 9, students sit a general examination. Successful students are awarded a Basic Education Certificate (al-Shahâda al-Dirasat al-Iddiyya al'Amma; also known as al-Kafa'a or Brevet).

Secondary education is free but it is not compulsory. Students can choose to study 1 of 3 streams: general secondary, technical secondary and vocational secondary

⁵ <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-syria-country-focus>

⁶ <https://wenr.wes.org/2025/03/rebuilding-syrias-education-system-navigating-challenges-and-embracing-opportunities>

education. All streams are 3 years in length (Grades 10 to 12).

In the general secondary education stream, students take general subjects in Grade 10 and follow the literary or scientific section starting Grade 11. At the end of Grade 12, students sit a final examination.

Technical secondary education comprises the following branches: technical industrial, agricultural, commercial, and technical education for girls.

The vocational secondary education branch comprises industrial and vocational education for girls. Vocational programs lead to a Vocational Secondary Education Certificate (al-Shahâda al-Thânawiyya al-Mihaniyya). Graduates receive a skilled-worker designation on completion.

The religious education stream is 6-year program, including 3-year preparatory and 3-year secondary levels. It is administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Students receive a Religious Secondary Education Certificate (al-Shahâda al-Thânawiyya al-Shar'iyya) which does not allow access to higher education. There are specific intermediate institutes for graduates of this stream.⁷



Children are up to
6 Years
behind in school.



59%
of 6th, 7th, and 8th
graders are unable
to do 2nd grade math.



1 in 3
school-age children
is out of school.



1 in 3
schools has been
destroyed or damaged.



5.8 Million
children have been denied
a quality education.



50.3%
of 6th, 7th, and 8th
graders are unable to
read at 2nd grade level.

⁷ [Age-Wise Education System in Syria \(2026 Guide for Parents & Students\) – AUBSP](#)

7.3 Enrolment procedure for public education

The Ministry of Education has opened its schools to all children and has shown flexibility by accepting late school registration for any students. The document of last grade studied must be submitted to the Education Directorate of the governorate the child is residing in.

The Ministry of Education recognizes high school certificates from other countries.

An elementary/preparatory school student can pursue his education in the Syrian schools after taking a knowledge

test, administered by the school Knowledge Testing Panel, in the following subjects: Arabic, mathematics, foreign language, and biology to determine the educational level according to the age group accepted in the basic education classes.

Depending on the test results, the child can be enrolled in the school after being referred by the Education Directorate of the government in which he resides.

Documents:

- The test result, along with a letter of the Education Directorate, a copy of the Family Booklet, and a medical report from the School Health [Department] of the Syrian Arab Republic to the nearest school to which the person was referred by the Education Directorate. If no Family Booklet is available, an individual extract of the civil record is accepted.
- In case of a secondary school student, he will be admissible only based on documents proving that he attended the previous grades along with a document of passing the ninth grade or a basic education certificate.

Education fees

There are no registration fees applied in public schools except for the school card fee and stamps (Financial stamp – Teachers Union).

The fee for the equivalency of the secondary education certificate for the Syrian student is (SP 25 000) twenty-five thousand Syrian pounds, after verifying its validity,

in addition to the fee for the supplementary subjects' exam for the equivalency of the secondary and basic education certificates issued according to the foreign educational curricula granted to Syrian students, which is (SP 50 000) fifty thousand Syrian pounds. – There is no fee applied for the equivalency of a basic education certificate.⁸

⁸ <https://help.unhcr.org/syria/where-to-find-help/education/>

8. Economy

The crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is extending into its fourteenth year – with more people than ever sliding into deeper poverty and 16.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The Syria situation remains one of the largest displacement crises in the world, with a **2025 projection of 7.2 million internally displaced people** (IDPs), and **6.2 million refugees**, primarily hosted in the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye.

On 20 May 2025, following a Foreign Affairs Council meeting, **the European Union announced the political decision to lift its economic sanctions on Syria**. This decision is reversible and conditional. The easing of sanctions is crucial to improve access to essential services and support for vulnerable populations across the country as well as for the return of displaced populations including refugees.

The cost of living, as measured by the minimum expenditure basket (MEB), rose by 21% in one year and more than tripled over two years. The minimum wage

now covers only 16% of the food component of the MEB, underscoring the severe strain on households. Female-headed households and other vulnerable groups, including women, adolescent girls, and persons with disabilities, are disproportionately affected, facing heightened risks of gender-based violence and reliance on negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage, child labour, and sexual exploitation. Hostilities in southern Syria have worsened food security in Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus, which in June 2025 recorded the country's highest MEB costs, highlighting severe strain on household purchasing power.

One in four Syrians lives in extreme poverty on less than USD 2.15 a day, while 67% fall below the lower middle-income poverty line of USD 3.65. Since Assad's fall, Syria has faced a severe liquidity crisis from cash shortages and disrupted currency circulation. Economic activity has further declined amid insecurity, oil supply disruptions, and tight liquidity. Inflation has eased somewhat due to fewer checkpoints and cheaper Turkish imports.⁹

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS:

- Unemployment rate: 13%
- Youth unemployment rate: 31,5%
- Inflation rate: Syria's annual inflation rate plummeted to 6,4% in January, down from 119% in the same month last year, driven by an improved local supply chain. According to the latest Directorate of Economic

Research, General Statistics, and Planning report at the Central Bank of Syria, the overall inflation rate from February 2024 to January 2025 stood at 47%.

- Currency: Syrian Pound (SYP)

⁹ [World Bank Document](#)

9. Labour market

9.1 Overview

The Syrian labour market is marked by widespread informality—over 83% of employment lacks protection or regulation. MSMEs (Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises), which account for 92% of enterprises, are severely constrained by restricted credit, inflation, and policy uncertainty.

Labour force participation among women is below 15%, hampered by discriminatory norms, care burdens, and insecurity. Gaps in labour law enforcement, outdated social security systems, and weak institutional coordination exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and returnees.¹⁰

More women are seeking work, but barriers keep female unemployment high at 24%, compared to 5% for men. Gender norms, legal restrictions, and lack of civil documentation, especially for widows and divorced

women, further limit women's economic participation and property rights.

The availability of job opportunities may vary depending on the locations and business sectors across Syria. General high-demand fields include healthcare, construction, education, agriculture, and skilled labours.

You can also refer to online platforms such as the UN ESCWA Skills Monitor (<https://skillsmonitor.unescwa.org/analytics/countryprofiling>) to get an overview of the most in-demand jobs in Syria.

Additional information on the labour market—including job opportunities, training and vocational guidance, and the most required jobs and skills—can be accessed via the National Labor Market Information Platform – Syria. (<https://lmo.sy/>)



Recruitment agencies/ websites:

[Home - Placement First](#)

[Syrian Elite | The Leading Syrian Recruiting Agency | HR Consultants](#)

[Step Up Agency | Meet Your Best Recruitment Agency in Syria](#)

[Welcome to the online job fair www.job.sy :: Use it...](#)

[Syrian Arab Republic \(Syria\) Jobs | ReliefWeb](#)

[Syria Jobs in the Middle East \(Jan 2026\) - Bayt.com](#)

10. Housing

Fourteen years of civil war have left thousands of homes in ruins. Together with uncertain Housing, Land and Property rights (HLP), this is making it even more difficult for Syrian refugees to return home. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Syrians have either lost their homes or been dispossessed. Some 30 per cent of all homes have been destroyed or damaged in the civil war. The precarious housing situation was exacerbated in February 2023 by a huge earthquake that damaged

and destroyed extensive areas of residential property in the north-eastern parts of Syria.

This widespread destruction, coupled with large-scale displacement, rising housing costs, and restricted access to essential housing, land and property (HLP) documentation, has fuelled the growth of informal settlements. These now account for more than 60% of urban housing, where living conditions are often dire,

¹⁰ [ILOs Programme of Support \(PoS\) for Syria_2 \(002\).pdf](#)

with limited access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity.¹¹

The housing crisis in Syria is one of the most prominent challenges facing the country in the post-conflict phase. The combination of war, displacement, and urban destruction, along with weak housing policies, has created a tragic reality that threatens social and economic stability.

In an official statement made on September 17 2025, the Syrian Minister of Public Works and Housing, Mustafa Abdul Razzaq, revealed that approximately one million homes have been destroyed in Syria and that a quarter of the population lives in informal settlements. This statement reflects the scale of the urban disaster the country is experiencing and raises fundamental questions about the state's ability to address this crisis, given the current political and economic challenges.

House rents in Syria, especially in major cities, are witnessing a continuous rise driven by a range of economic and living factors.

Despite the relative improvement in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the dollar and the decline in prices of some goods in the market, the rental sector continues its upward trend.

This increase is attributed to several main factors, most notably the growing demand for housing due to the

return of some Syrians after the fall of the Syrian regime, the scarcity of available apartments, and the inability of many residents to purchase properties.

Rental prices vary greatly between neighbourhoods within major cities, where factors such as geographic location, availability of essential services, and proximity to the city centre play a crucial role in determining prices.

Rents in upscale areas of the capital range from 7 to 10 million Syrian pounds per month (between 700 and 1000 USD on average), and they can reach up to 100 million pounds when paid annually (about 10 000 USD), noting that prices vary based on location and building modernity.

In middle-class neighbourhoods like Rukn al-Din and Nahr Aisha, prices range from 4 to 5 million pounds per month (approximately 400 to 500 USD), while in popular areas, prices range from 1 to 2.5 million pounds (about 100 to 250 USD).

In rural Damascus, rents in the area start from 1 million pounds per month, the availability of housing was greater during the previous regime, but the return of residents after its fall has led to increased demand against a backdrop of supply shortages.

In Aleppo province, rents range between 15 and 30 million Syrian pounds (between 1500 and 3000 USD), while in some upscale areas, they reach much higher levels, with most properties rented on annual contracts.¹²



Finding accommodation portals:

<https://www.4321property.com/for-rent-syria/>

<https://www.yabaiti.com/en/properties/rent-property/>

<https://sy.opensooq.com/en/property/apartments-for-rent>

11. Security situation

According to the 2025 Global Peace Index (GPI) published by the Institute for Economics and Peace, Syria is ranked 157 out of 163 countries globally, indicating the country remains among the least peaceful nations.

It is very difficult to generalise about the security situation or the current violations in Syria, as security conditions vary significantly – even within the same city or region.

¹¹ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2025-02/undp-sy-seia-final-24022025_compressed.pdf

¹² <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/02/house-rents-in-syria-inflation-without-intervention/>

Different factors impact the security situation in different areas of Syria, including: whether the area in question was previously a stronghold of the Syrian opposition or is perceived as having supported the former government; people's political, religious, and sectarian affiliations; and local conditions and dynamics.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the overall security situation in Syria is nevertheless relatively stable, with fewer security incidents reported in the past months.

However, hostilities continue in some regions, including Israeli operations in southern Syria and incidents in Latakia and Tartous, and the security situation remains fragile.

In various regions outside the capital, the situation remains volatile due to the presence of extremist Islamist groups, particularly in Hama, Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Rural Damascus, and Deir ez-Zor.¹³

Due to potential changes in the security situation, it is strongly recommended to regularly consult updated sources such as [USDOS advisories](#) and [UK FCDO travel advice](#). Additionally, it is advised to verify current information directly with other relevant Ministry of Foreign Affairs or embassy websites.

12. List of official representations in Europe



[List of Syria Embassies and Consulates in Europe](#)

13. Operational details

EURP support in Syria will apply exclusively to Voluntary Returns. Both Post-Arrival and Post-Return packages will be available, depending on the needs of each Member State.

¹³ [Country of Origin Information: Syria: Country Focus](#)

14. Cultural tips



Stand up when someone older than you enters the room and offer them your seat if there are none available. Men also stand for women, especially those with children.



Many Syrians observe a separation between the functions of the hands. This custom is tied to Islamic principles that prescribe the left hand should only be used for removal of dirt and for cleaning. It should not be used for functions such as waving, eating or offering items. Therefore, one should gesture, touch people, or offer items using only the right hand or both hands together. This may not be strictly followed but it is best not to use the left hand unless the action is inevitable.



If the opportunity arises, offer sympathy to the current situation in their home country. Syrians are likely to deeply appreciate the gesture and respond with warmth.



Expect a Syrian to try to get to know as much about you as possible immediately after meeting you. You may find their questions blunt or too forward (e.g. "Are your parents still alive?"), but be courteous and understand that this is the common way of acquainting themselves with people.



Avoid asking questions about a Syrian man's female family members. It is appropriate and appreciated to ask someone about their family's general health, but specific questions into the private lives of females can be mistaken for overt interest or even disrespect by conservative Syrians.



Indirect Communication: Syrians generally communicate in an indirect fashion. One's express point is generally reached in a long, roundabout way. This has the purpose of avoiding embarrassment or offence and respecting the other person in the conversation. The best way of reaching an understanding is to ask open-ended questions that allow them to reach their answer in their own time and give agreeable and accepting responses that do not directly disrupt the speaker's discussion.



Communication Style: Syrians commonly joke and banter during conversation. Men often try to one-up each other with witty insults. The humour is likely to be different to what a Westerner is familiar with, however somewhat easy to engage with.



Raised Voices: Raising one's voice is not immediately interpreted as aggressive in Syria. Speaking loudly and with passion shows one's sincerity and investment in a matter. Such genuine expression often gives leverage and appeal in discussions and is not necessarily a sign of anger or offence.



Refusals: To questions and requests which require a yes or no answer, a Syrian's preoccupation with appearances and politeness automatically requires that they answer "yes" whether it is true or not. A flat "no" can indicate that you want to end the relationship. The polite way to say no is to say something along the lines of, "I'll see what I can do", no matter how impossible the task may be. After the person has been queried several times concerning their success, an answer such as, "I'm still checking" or something similar signifies "no". Such an indirect response also means "I am still your friend/ally, I tried".

Non-Verbal



Personal Space: People often sit and stand closer to each other than the Western norm. Some Syrians may stand at proximities that are slightly uncomfortable for you.



Physical Contact: Syrians are generally very comfortable touching people of the same gender. People often hug and kiss one another, lean on each other and walk holding hands or with linked arms. This display of affection between friends of the same gender or family members is more common in public than that between a husband and wife. However, affectionate conduct between a man and a woman is likely to draw the quick assumption that they are in a romantic relationship.



Feet: Displaying the soles of your feet to someone is considered rude.



Eye Contact: Syrians expect people to maintain eye contact during interaction. It demonstrates respect, attentiveness and confidence. However, devout Muslims may lower their gaze when talking to those of the opposite gender.



Body Language: Syrians may be quite animated when they communicate. They typically gesture largely with their hands and head to emphasise their words. The theatrics of their mannerisms sometimes distract from the conversation, often causing it to digress. To a non-Syrian this body language can make a casual conversation seem quite intense.



Refusals: Tilting one's head back while raising the eyebrows can indicate "no".



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