

Population, Agricultural, and Economic Consequences of the War In Syria

Liane Barghouthi, Audrey Booher, Anoushka Gupta,
Richa Bhattacharya, Noah Wadhwani, Steffany Wong

CONTEXT OF THE WAR

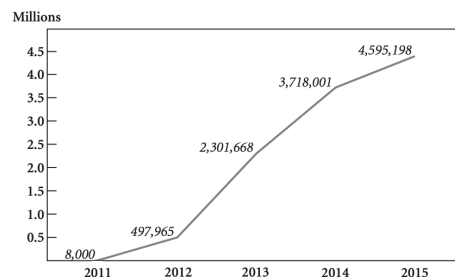
There have frequently been ongoing tensions in the Middle East. This particular war was instigated when Syrian protestors spoke out against the arrest and torture of young children who painted antigovernment graffiti in public. Presidents Bashar al-Assad killed and prisoned several demonstrators. The war began on March 15 2011 and still has outlasting repercussions until today.

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Refugees

The countries that have been taking in the most refugees by far have been Turkey and neighboring countries Jordan and Lebanon. Just from the period of 2011-2015, the number of Syrian refugees had exponentially increased from 8000 to about 5 million. Today, almost 60 million Syrians have been displaced due to this conflict.

FIGURE 1-2. *Number of Syrian Refugees, 2011-15*



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Syria Regional Refugee Response."

Displacement

UN Commission of Inquiry found that fear of sexual violence has been a trigger for displacement, stating that "fear of rape is a driving motivation for families fleeing the violence." On top of civil unrest, key factors in the active displacement of Syrians include ISIS rule, fear of airstrikes by the US/Russia and Syrian government.

Vulnerable Minorities

As a Muslim dominated country in the Middle East, about 65% of the population consists of Arab Sunni Muslims. The remaining percentage of the population remains a mix of Ismailis, Druze, Alawites, Christians, and more. Unfortunately, violent

sectarianism has heightened as a result of the and Christians and Alawites are considered to be the groups most vulnerable.

ECONOMY

As the Syrian population decreased due to both war casualties and displaced refugees, the Syrian GDP fell. The GDP consistently fell until 2012 and 2013, when it was at an all-time low of about 35% since 2010. The inflation rate had also risen by over 300% and the overall economy shrunk by almost 60% of its pre-war value.

Employment

“In March 2015 the United Nations Development Program reported that 80 percent of Syrians inside the country were living in poverty, life expectancy has plunged by 20 years, and the economy had lost \$200 billion since the conflict began.” Furthermore, in 2015, it was recorded that as a result of the war there were at least over 3 million Syrians rendered jobless. The unemployment rate, previously held at ~15% had jumped to ~60 by 2014 itself.

Education

By 2014, about half of the population of children in Syria stopped attending school. Another driving force is displacement is thought to be the lack of educational opportunities for children. Young girls were at a higher risk of early marriage as a form of sexual slavery. An estimated total of over US \$10 billion in human capital has been lost due to the lack of education during the war.

Furthermore, a good portion of funding for education in Syria already came from external funding, which has continuously decreased every year since 2010. Furthermore, neighboring countries were struggling to manage so many students and even attempted setting up double-shift educational systems in hopes of accommodating more students. Steps were taken in hopes of rectifying this, including John Kerry declaring US \$1 billion toward to Syrian crisis from which at least 30% was to be delegated towards education in refugee-dominated countries Jordan and Lebanon. This was taken one step further in 2016 upon the announcement of the Education Crisis Platform and Breakthrough Fund.

FERTILITY

Solely within 2005-2010, the fertility rate in Syria and neighboring countries Jordan and Lebanon has drastically declined by over 50%. In fact, within the entire Arab region itself, it was predicted that by 2050 the total fertility in the entire region would fall to 2.1 children.

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