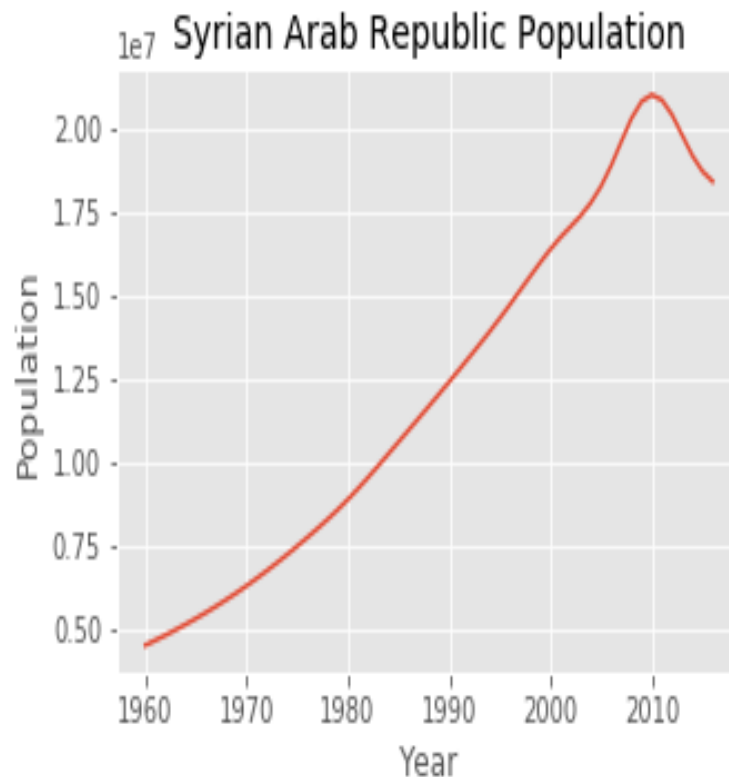


Syrian Arab Republic



Coordinates: 35°N 38°E / 35°N 38°E / 35; 38 Syria (Arabic: **سُورِيَا** **Sūriyā**), officially known as the Syrian Arab Republic (Arabic: **جُمْهُورِيَّةُ ٱلْجُمْهُورِيَّةِ ٱلْعَرَبِيَّةِ ٱلْسُوْرِيَّةِ** **al-Jumhūrīyah al-ʿArabīyah as-Sūriyah**), is a country in Western Asia, bordering Lebanon and the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east, Jordan to the south, and Israel to the southwest. The western two-thirds of Syria's Golan Heights are since 1967 occupied by Israel and were in 1981 effectively annexed by Israel, whereas the eastern third is controlled by Syria, with the UNDOF maintaining a buffer zone in between, to implement the ceasefire of the Purple Line. Israel's 1981 Golan annexation law is not recognised in international law. The UN Security Council condemned it in Resolution 497 (1981) as “null and void and without international legal effect.” Since then, General Assembly resolutions on “The Occupied Syrian Golan” reaffirm the illegality of Israeli occupation and annexation Syria's capital and largest city is Damascus. A country of fertile plains, high mountains, and deserts, Syria is home to diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Syrian Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, Circassians, Mandeans and Turks. Religious groups include Sunnis, Christians, Alawites, Druze, Isma'ilis, Mandeans, Shiites, Salafis, Yazidis, and Jews. Sunni make up the largest religious group in Syria.