

or destroyed, Syrians were to appear in person carrying their real estate documents within a period of 30 days (Fisk 2018). As technical and logical as this might seem in the first place, it is crucial to reflect on the practicality of these requirements. According to the UNHCR, more than 11 million Syrians have been internally or externally displaced during the war, of which 70 percent lack basic identification papers, because they were either burned or lost as a consequence of flight (ibid.). For refugees living abroad the time constraint of 30 days is only one obstacle that makes it unachievable to forward their claims. Many of the refugees living abroad face arrest if they step foot on Syrian ground, as many of them were opposing the regime in some way. While the law provides property holders with the right to provide relatives or lawyers to prove claims within the same 30 days, security clearance is needed for proxy authorization is needed to prove the appointed representative is not on a „wanted“ list (ibid.). For journalists and Assad’s opponents alike it is clear that the law has been put in place to facilitate „mass property expulsion in those areas of the country which rebelled against the Syrian government after 2011“ and the relocation of the seized properties to groups close to the regime, such as the Alawite minority, Shia Muslim allies, and Iranian businesses (ibid.). To underpin this assumption, the article gives a quote from Assad from last year: „It’s true that Syria has lost the best of its youth and its infrastructure, [...] but on the other hand it has gained a more healthy and more homogenous society“ (Assad 2017, quoted in Fisk 2018).