

Transnational challenges in the Mediterranean in times of fragile States and regional power projection, with a focus on Syria

TRACHMED project Kickoff meeting, February 21, 2025



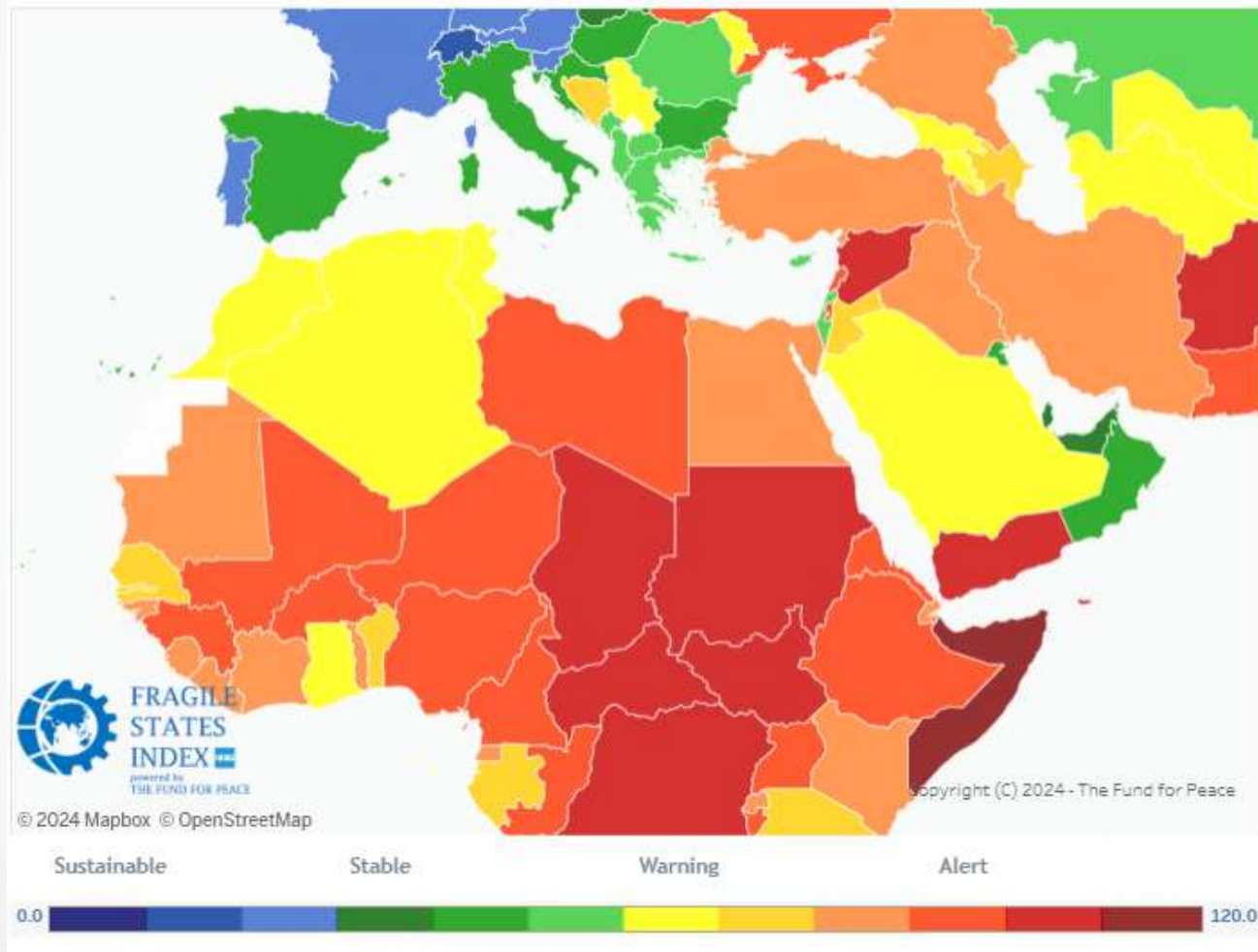
Samir AITA

President of the « Cercle des Economistes Arabes »

**How to address transnational
challenges in times of States'
fragilization and other States'
projection of power?**

The Fragile States

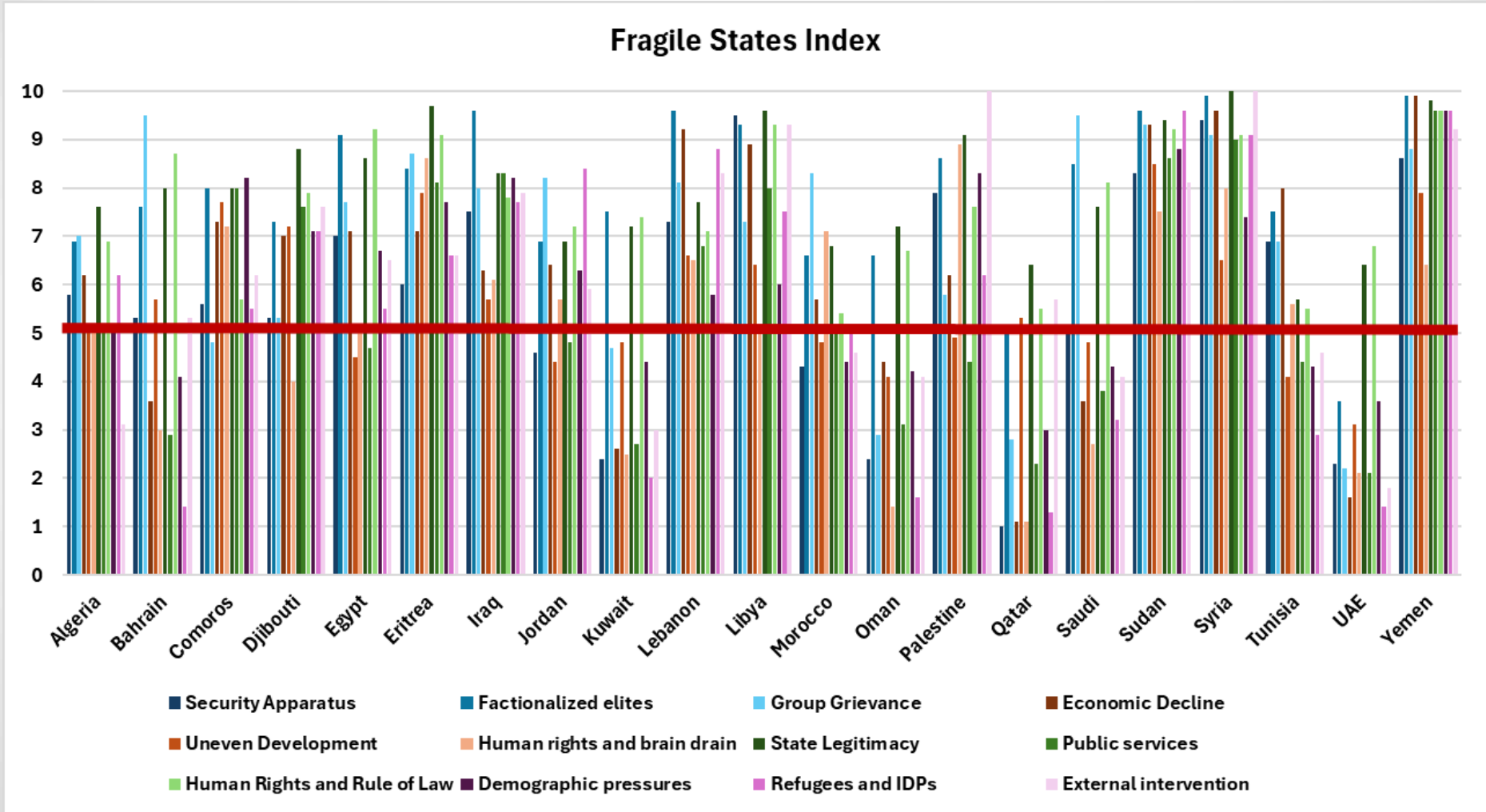
- The Fragile States Index



See: Samir AITA: [Fragile States in the Middle East and North Africa, AFD, March 2024](#)

Fragile States index 2033

Major issues: State legitimacy, Factionalized elites, Human rights and Rule of Law, Group grievances,...



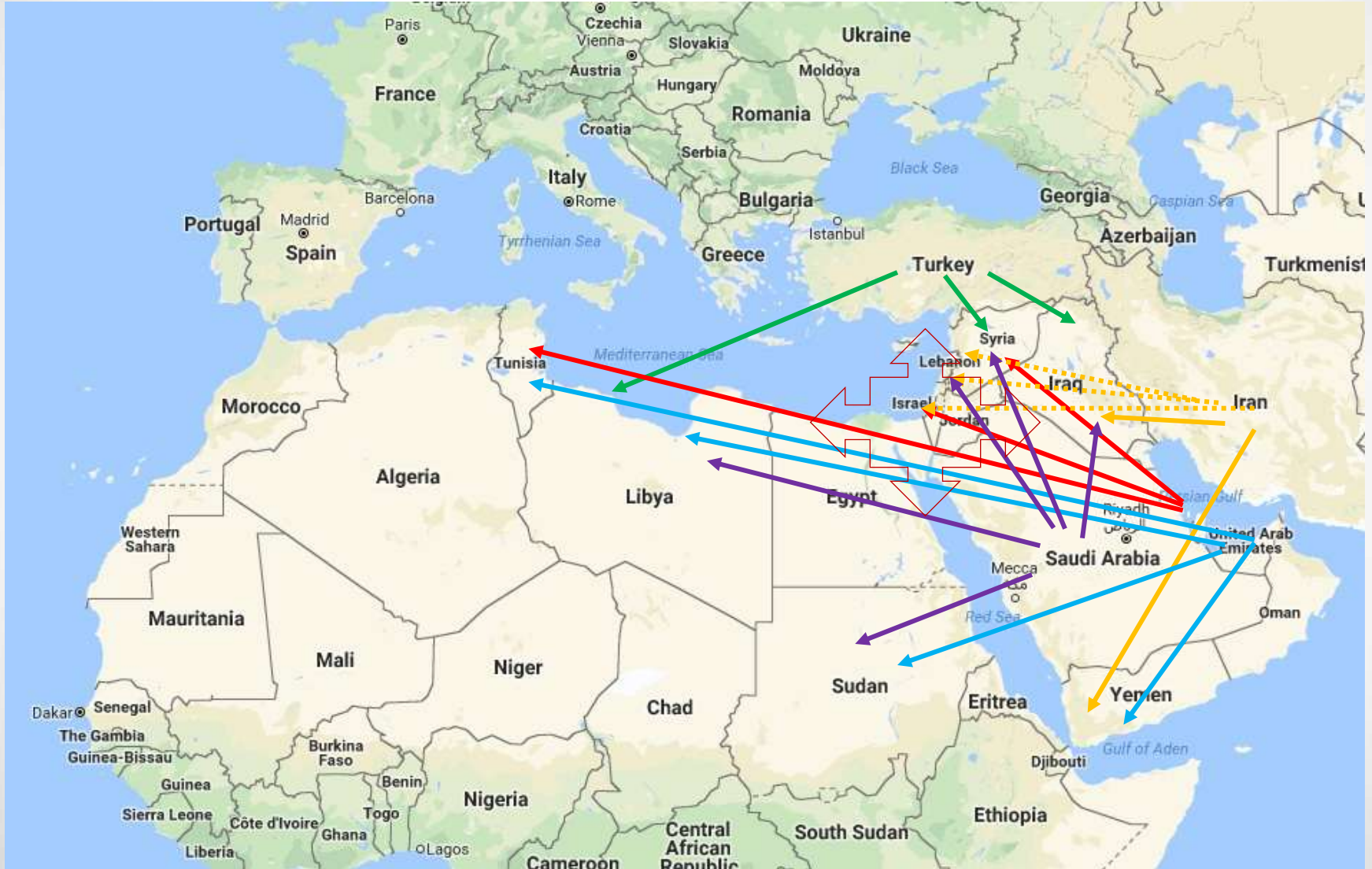
The new Geopolitics of the Middle East

- The **conflicting regional powers** and the **Fragile States**
- The **Conflicting Regional Powers:**
 - Israel
 - Türkiye
 - Iran
 - Saudi Arabia
 - UAE
 - Qatar
 - Morocco
- The **No Power States:**
 - Egypt
 - Algeria
- **Outsiders:**
 - Oman
 - Jordan
- The **Fragile States:**
 - Lebanon
 - Syria
 - Iraq
 - Yemen
 - Libya
 - Sudan
 - Tunisia
 - Palestine

Foreign military bases in the Middle East

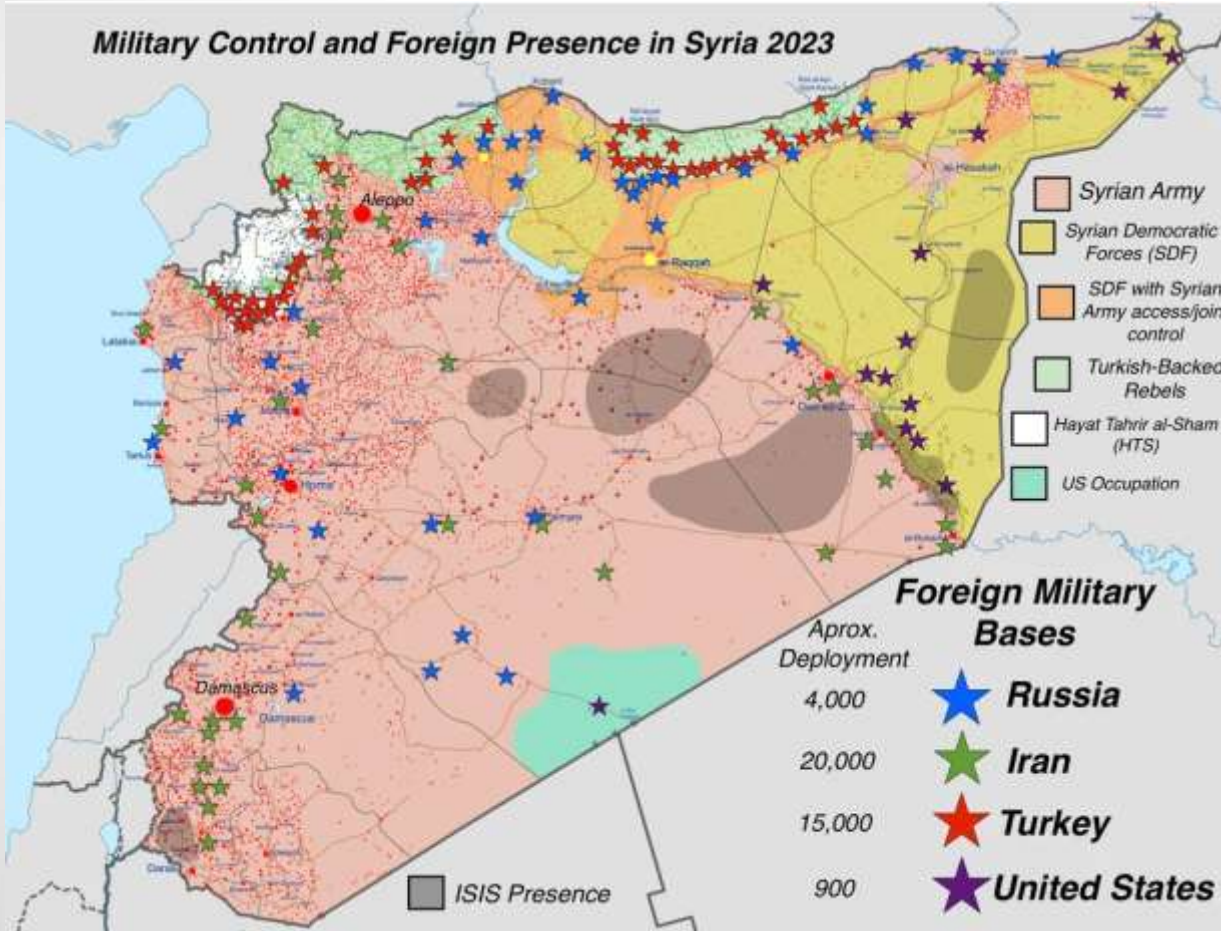


Projection of regional powers in the Mediterranean



Syria as a Fragile State and at war

- 597 points of foreign presence
- Turkey: 122, US: 28, Russia: 114, Iran: 333



<https://jusoor.co/en/details/foreign-forces-points-in-syria-end-of-2021-and-beginning-of-2022>

● https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/10wvrwx/syria_foreign_bases_and_military_control/

Transnational Migrations and Fragilization

- **The Demographic aspects**
 - The Youth bulge
 - Rural-Urban migrations
 - → the Youth Tsunami

- **The labour opportunities and social protection**
 - The labour force high growth rates and the low employment growth rate
 - The large **informal** employment
 - → Why they migrate? Even if no conflict

- **Social, regional, and urban development**
 - Informal employment and **informal urbanization**
 - Regional social and economic development gaps

- **Transnational migrations**
 - **Seasonal** labor migrations
 - The important role of **remittances**
 - **Conflict-generated migrations**
 - Internally displaced population (IDPs) and refugees
 - The social impact of refugees on **hosting countries**... and the national policies... Very different in cases of fragilization...

The YOUTH TSUNAMI as a factor of fragilisation

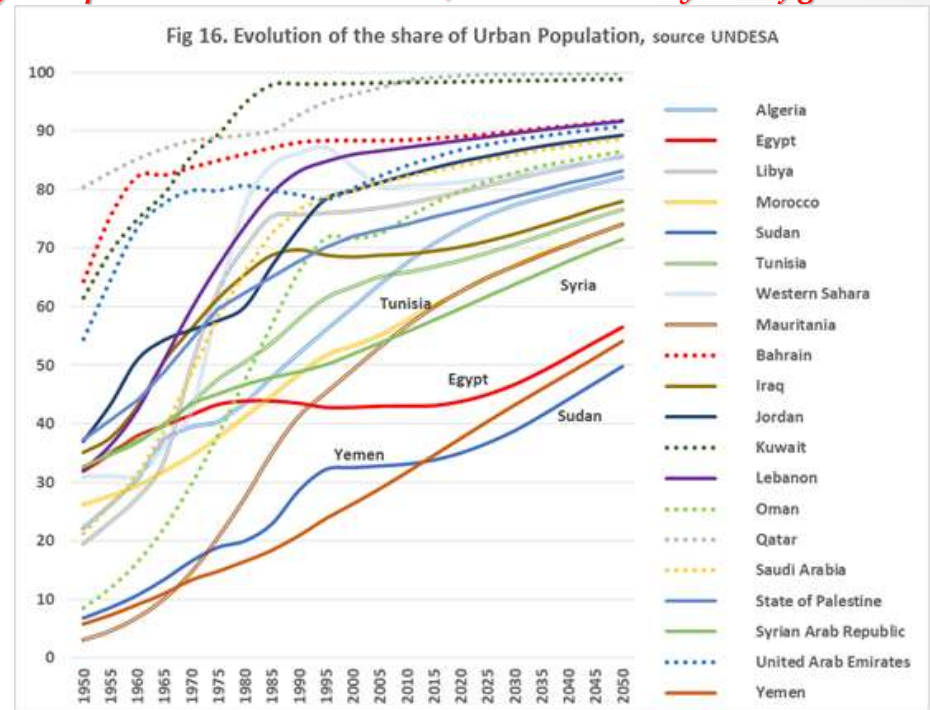
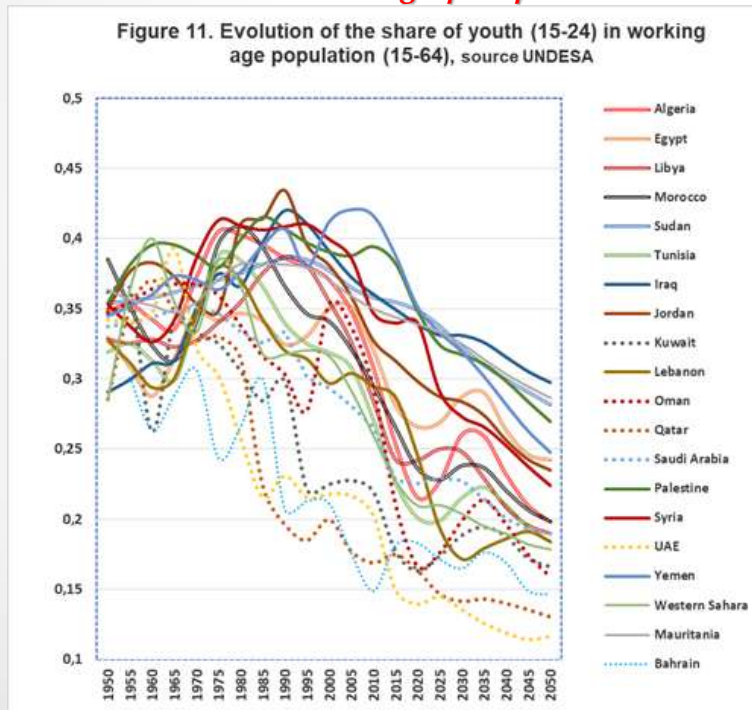
A *"baby boom"* because of the improvement of health

→ 20 years later: A *"Youth bulge"* in the early 2000s

+ In addition to an acceleration of the rural-urban migration

→ A *"youth Tsunami"* in urban areas (> +8% yearly)

A similar demographic phenomena to that of Europe between 1945 and 1970, without the 30 years of growth



UNDESA

Informal employment as a factor of fragilization

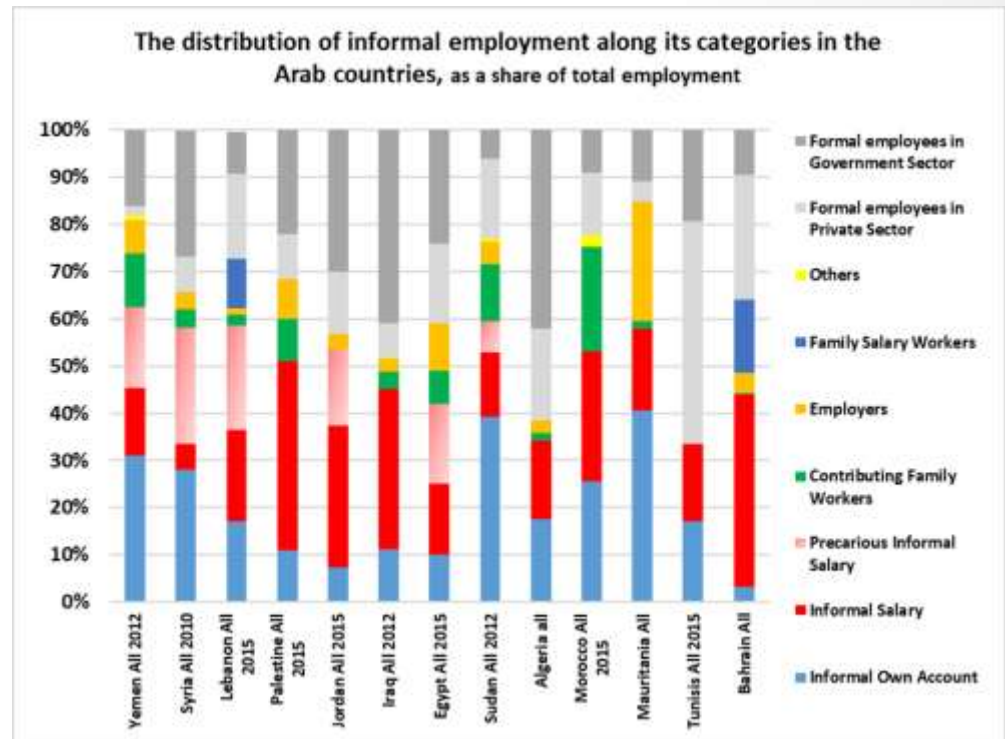
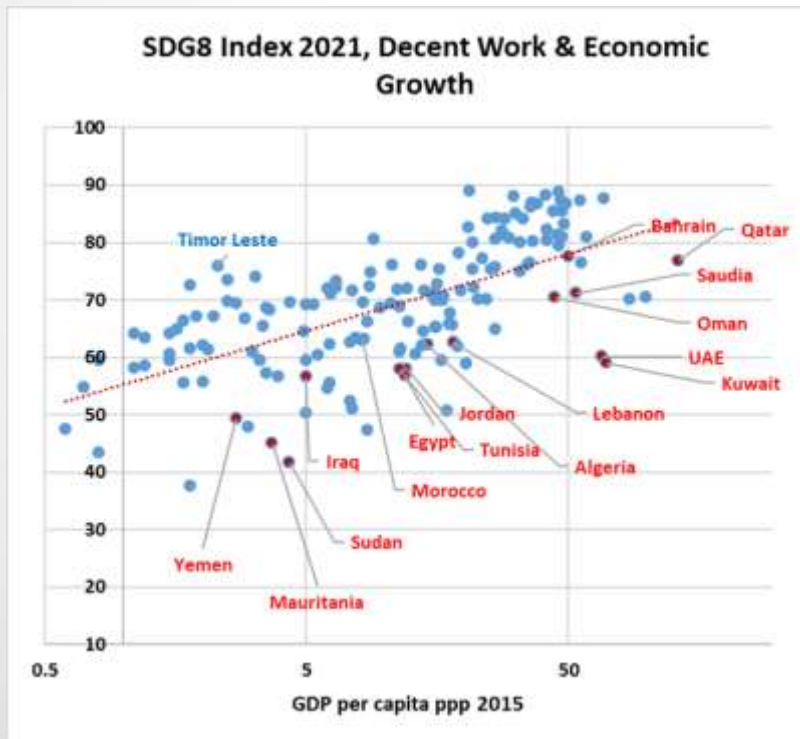
The Palestinian refugees: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, ... Kuwait, Kuwait

The Sudanese refugees: Egypt

The work migration to the Gulf: Arab States and Indian continent

The Syrian refugees: Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq... Egypt

The African refugees ... on the road to Europe



The fragilization as an urban phenomenon



Migrations as a factor of fragilization

The Palestinian refugees: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, ... Kuwait, Kuwait

The Sudanese refugees: Egypt

The work migration to the Gulf: Arab States and Indian continent

The Syrian refugees: Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq... Egypt

The African refugees ... Tunisia, Libya, ... on the road to Europe

And now Lebanese refugees

And large internal displacement

Fig 2. Average growth rate of population 1950-2015

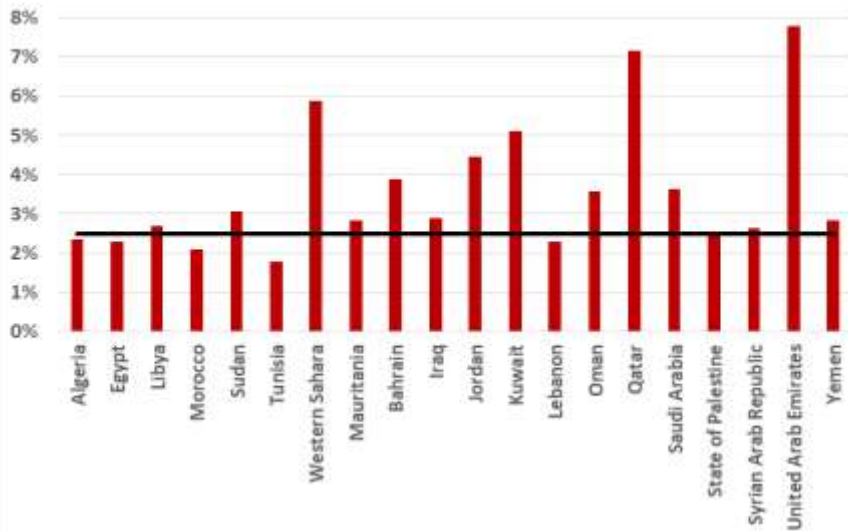
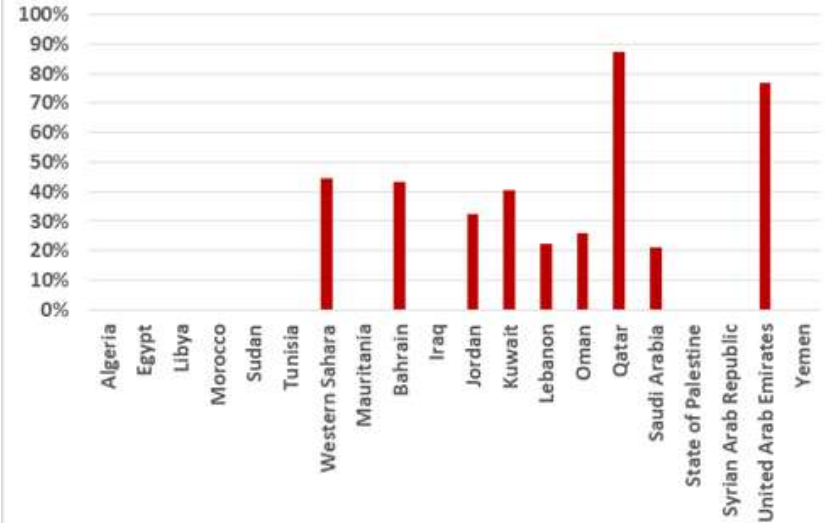


Fig. 1 Percentage of migrant population in the Arab countries 2015, source UN population division



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Syria IDPs and returnees since Dec 8, 2024



CORE

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview

As of 09 February 2025

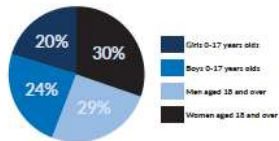
Key Figures

As of the end of June 2024, Syria has one of the largest number of internally displaced people (IDPs) globally, with over 7 million individuals displaced across the country. These IDPs are living in both communities and IDP sites. Recent events in the country have led to further displacements, with 617,047 new IDPs recorded.

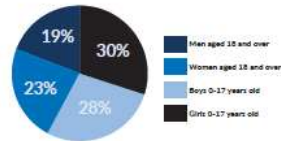
However, with the change of regime, a return trend is being observed in various governorates. Since November 27, 2024, approximately 829,490 IDP returnees have been tracked. This map illustrates the concentration of IDPs and IDP returnees at the governorate level as of 09 February 2025.



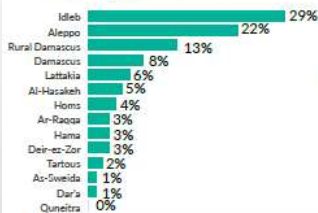
IDPs age and gender breakdown
(Estimated using standard Syria SADD*)



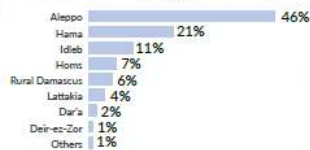
IDP returnees age and gender breakdown
(Estimated using standard Syria SADD*)



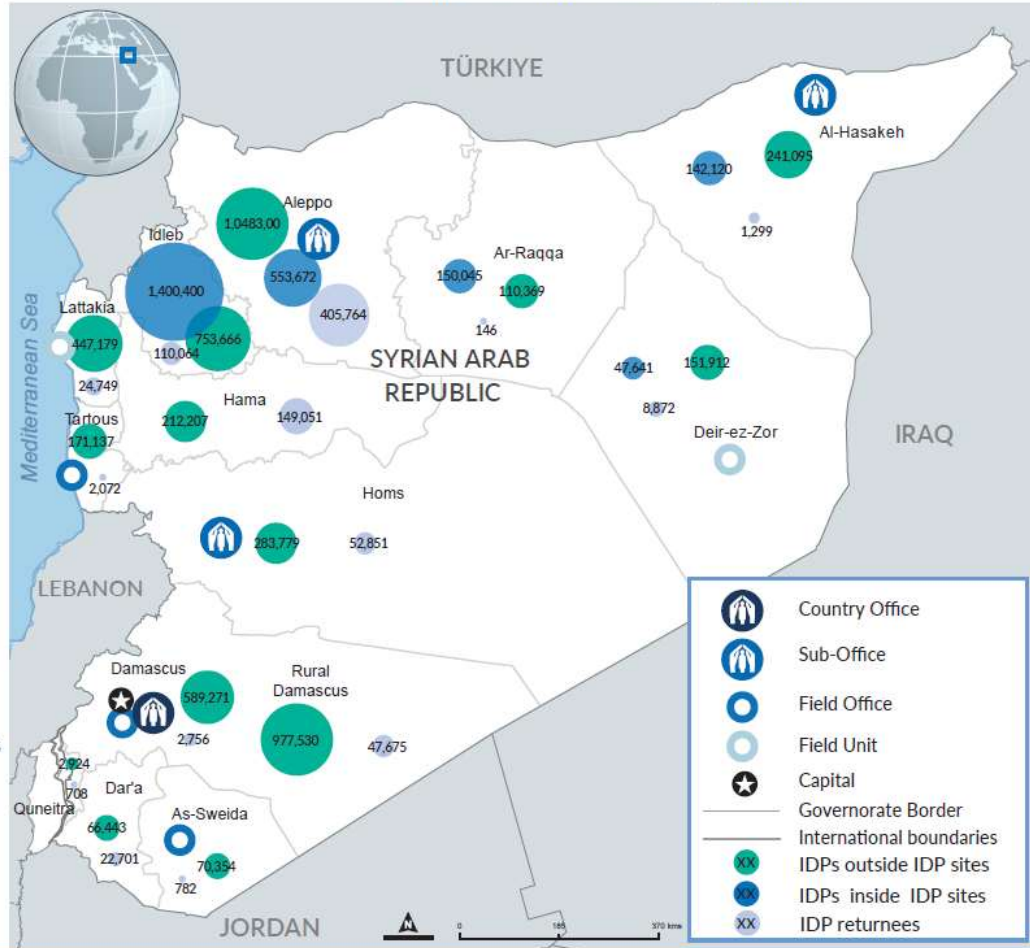
% IDPs by governorate



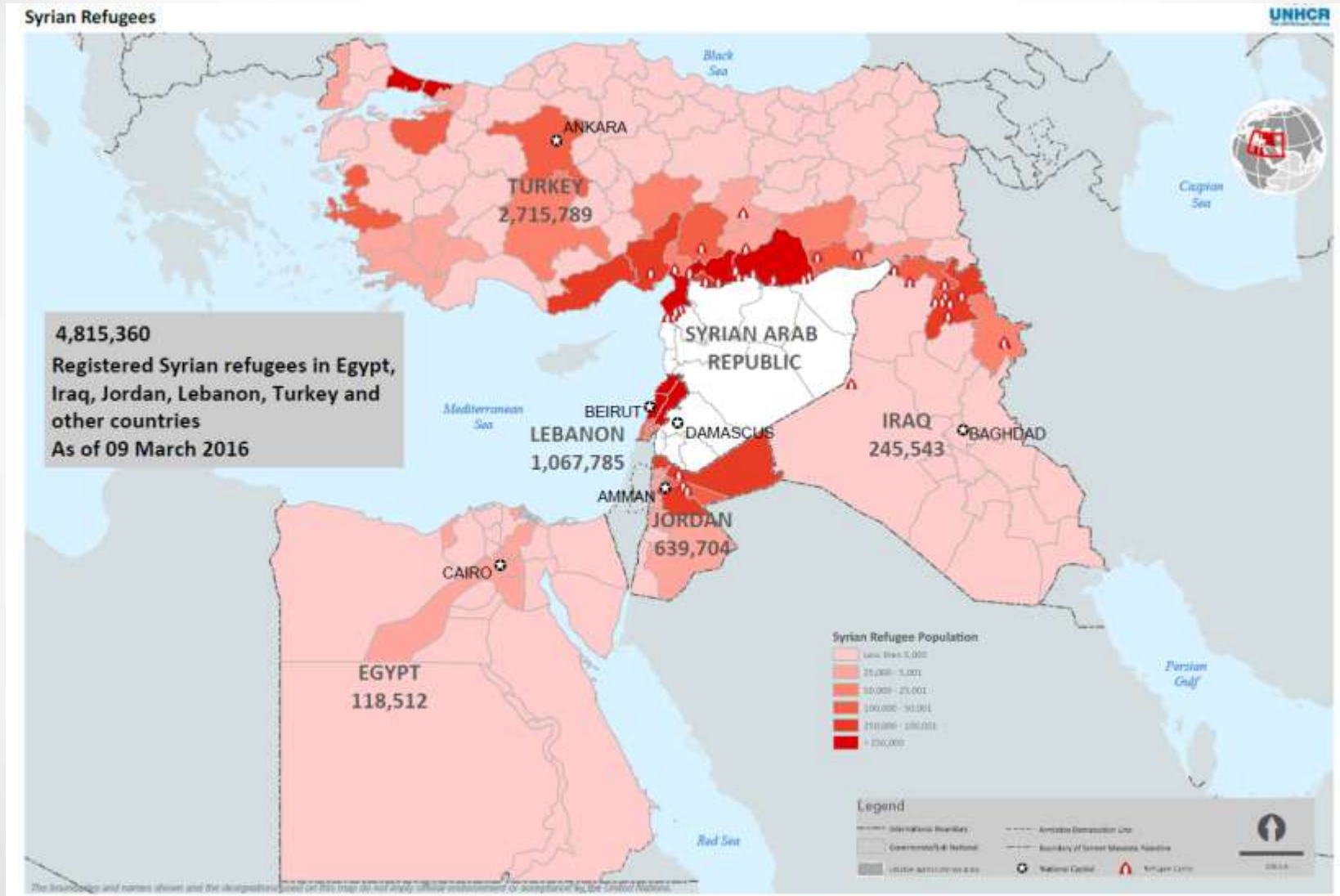
% IDP returnees by governorate



Locations of IDPs and IDP returnees by governorate



Syria Refugees and returnees since Dec 8, 2024



Syria Refugees and returnees since Dec 8, 2024



SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC Syria governorates of return overview

As of 13 February 2025

Key Figures

This map is prepared using data from population movement reporting and border monitoring tool. It also includes the movements of Syrians who returned from Lebanon to Syria under duress following the escalation of hostilities on 23 September 2024, primarily through the border crossing points of Jdaidat Yabous, Al-Dabousiah, and Jousieh.

640,458 *

Estimated individuals who returned to Syria from beginning 2024 until 06 February 2025.

279,620

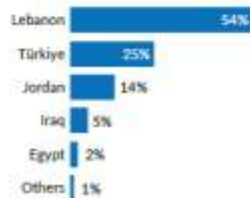
Estimated individuals who returned to Syria since 08 December 2024.

Age and gender breakdown (Estimated)

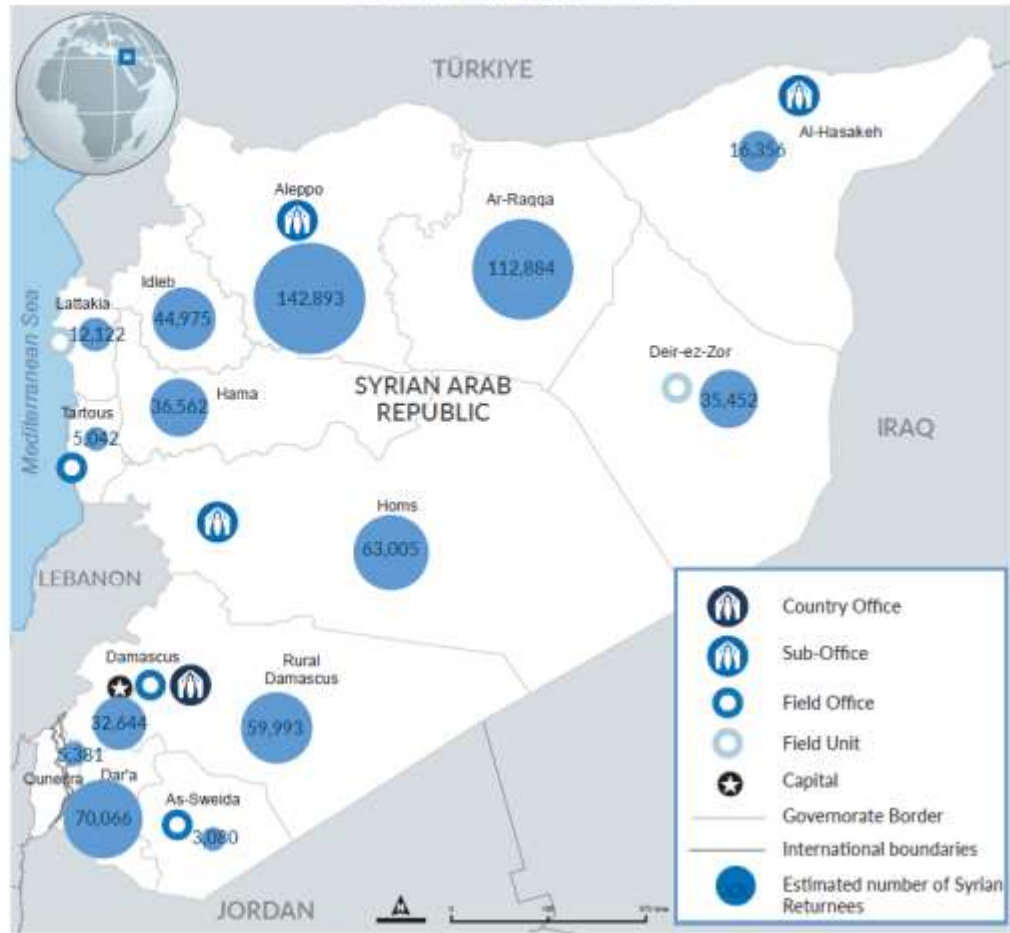
326,633 Male
313,825 Female



Country of departure



Locations of return by governorate



Transnational issues in Energy

- **Transnational political economy of oil and gas**
 - Between resource-rich and resource-poor
 - Oil and gas **pipelines** and routes
 - Oil and gas exploration and **delimitation of territory and maritime zones !!!**

- **Transnational political economy of electricity**
 - Transnational electricity networks and electricity trade
 - **Nuclear power plants** cooperations
 - The solar energy projects and dreams
 - Electricity vs fossil fuel. How about the coming future of **electrical cars?**

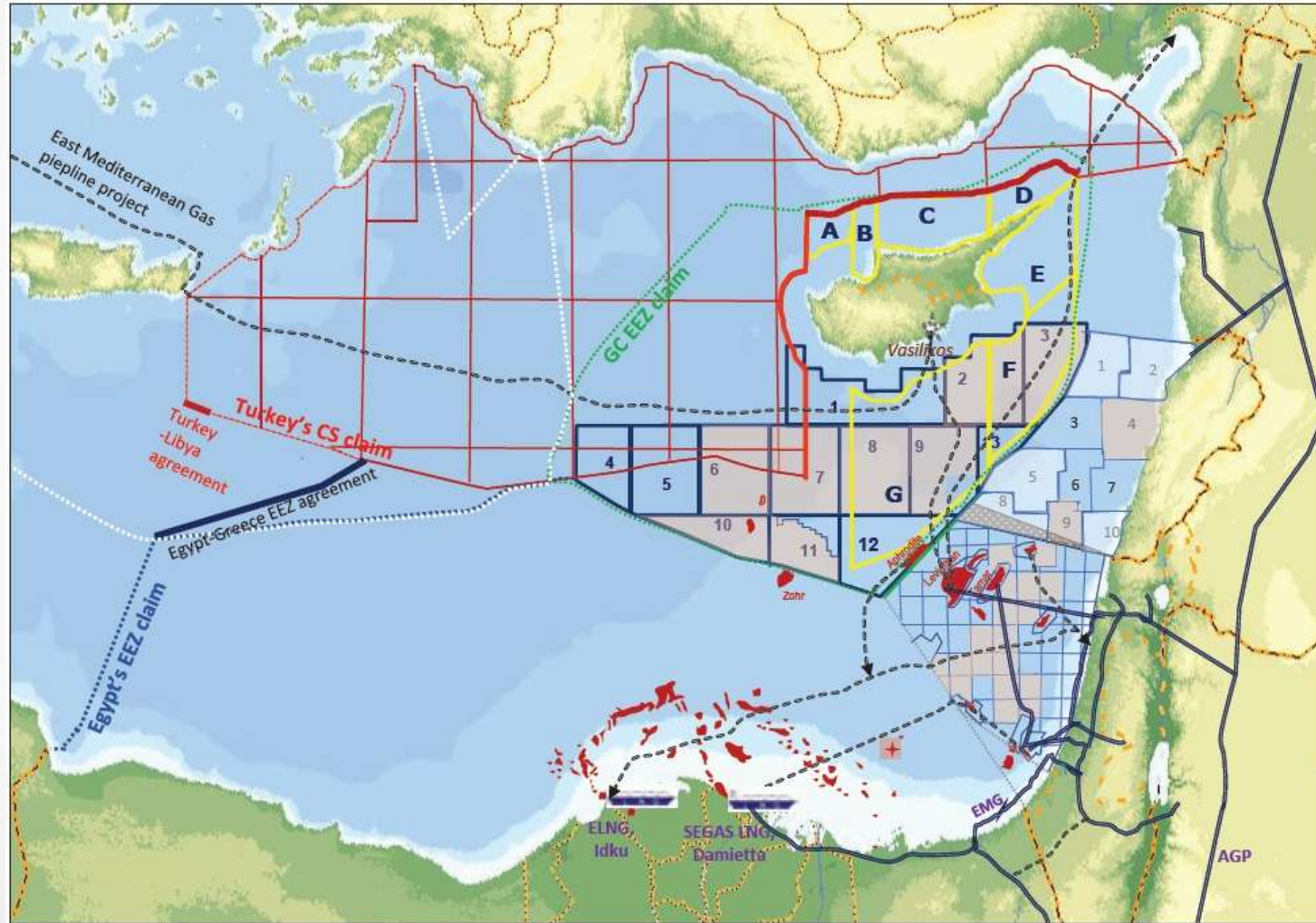
- **Economic production dependency on energy**
 - **Agriculture:** draught, groundwater depletion, ... and pumping fuel prices
 - **Industry:** electricity and fuel prices... and the cost of production
 - **Transportation:** Public vs private cars, regional and local transportation infrastructure
 - energy and drinking water

- **Energy and new technologies**
 - Mediterranean energy and **AI**
 - Cryptocurrencies....

Mediterranean gas networks



East Mediterranean gas potential



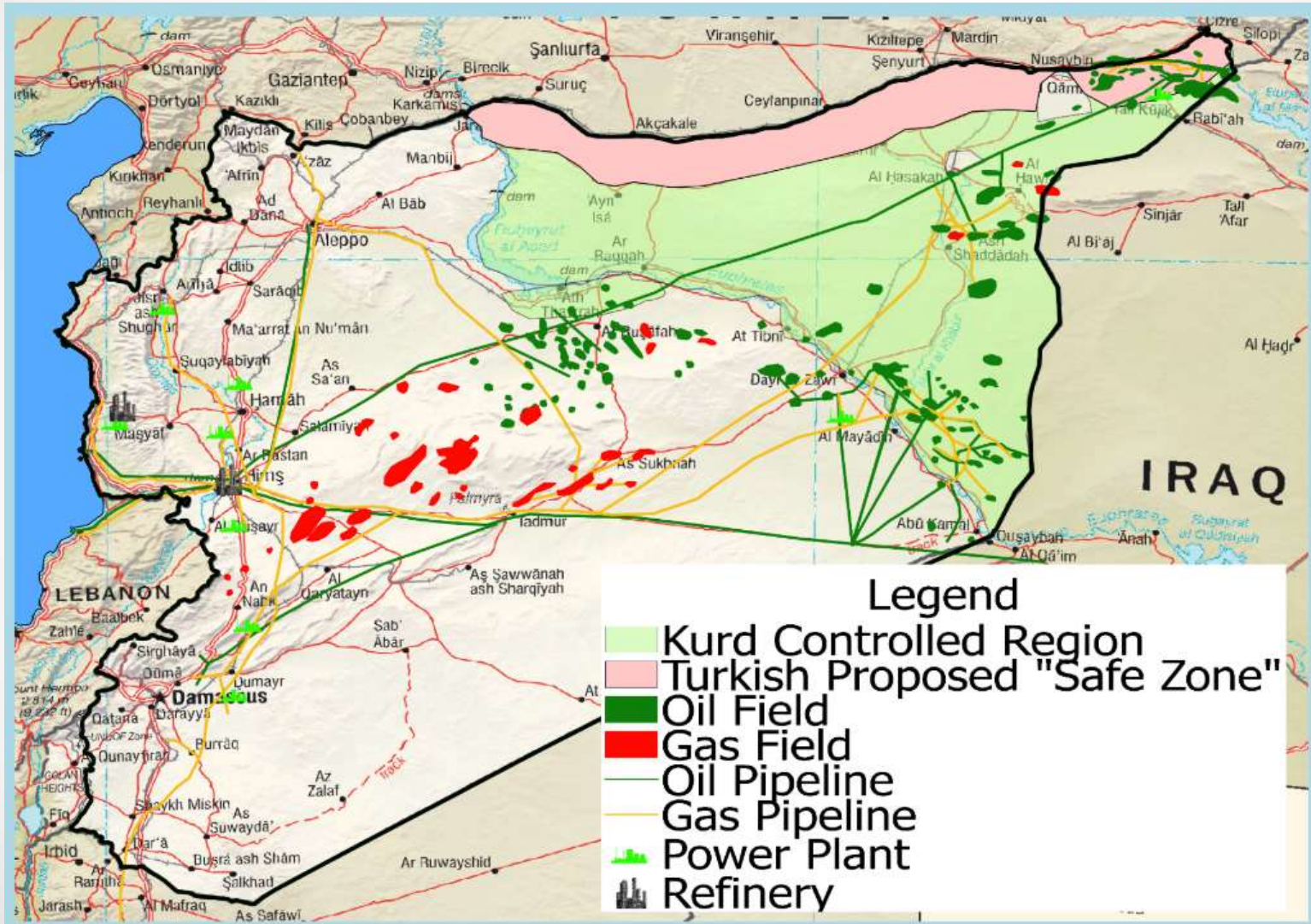
Mediterranean electricity networks



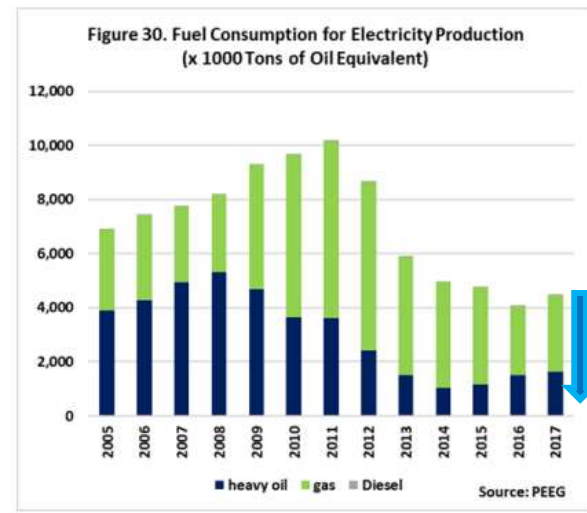
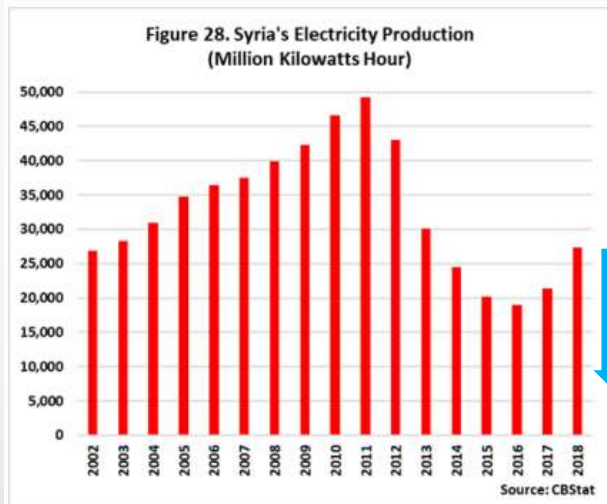
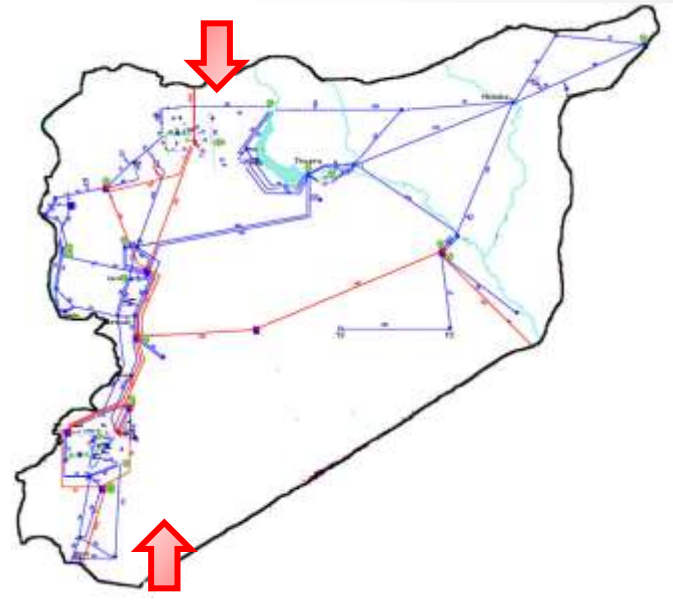
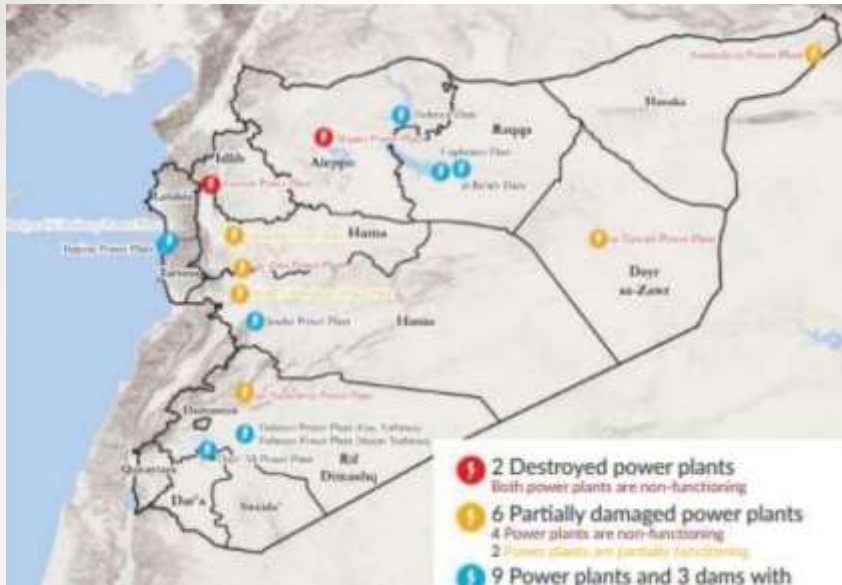
Alternative energies in the Mediterranean



Syria oil and gas networks



Syria electricity situation



Transnational issues in Climate Change

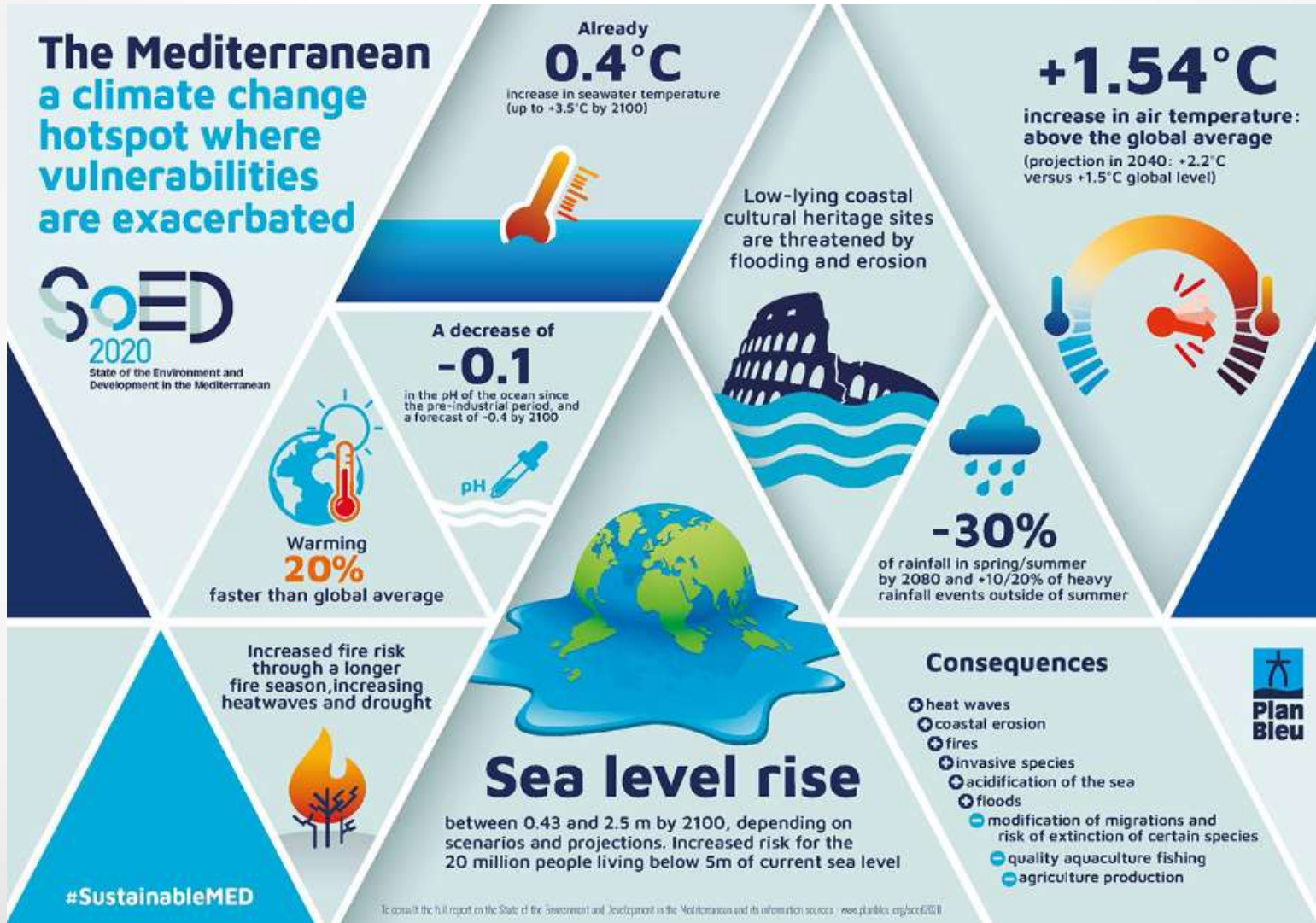
- Draught and **desertification** in the South Mediterranean
 - Rural-urban and transnational **migrations**
 - Translation cooperative management of **water resources** and land cropping
 - Sharing water in the **West Bank**, the Palestinian State, and the regional stability

- Increasing occurrence of **catastrophic** environmental phenomena
 - Major **heat waves**, electricity production, and forest fires
 - Sudden large **precipitations** in cross-border areas
 - Major sea **pollution** waves

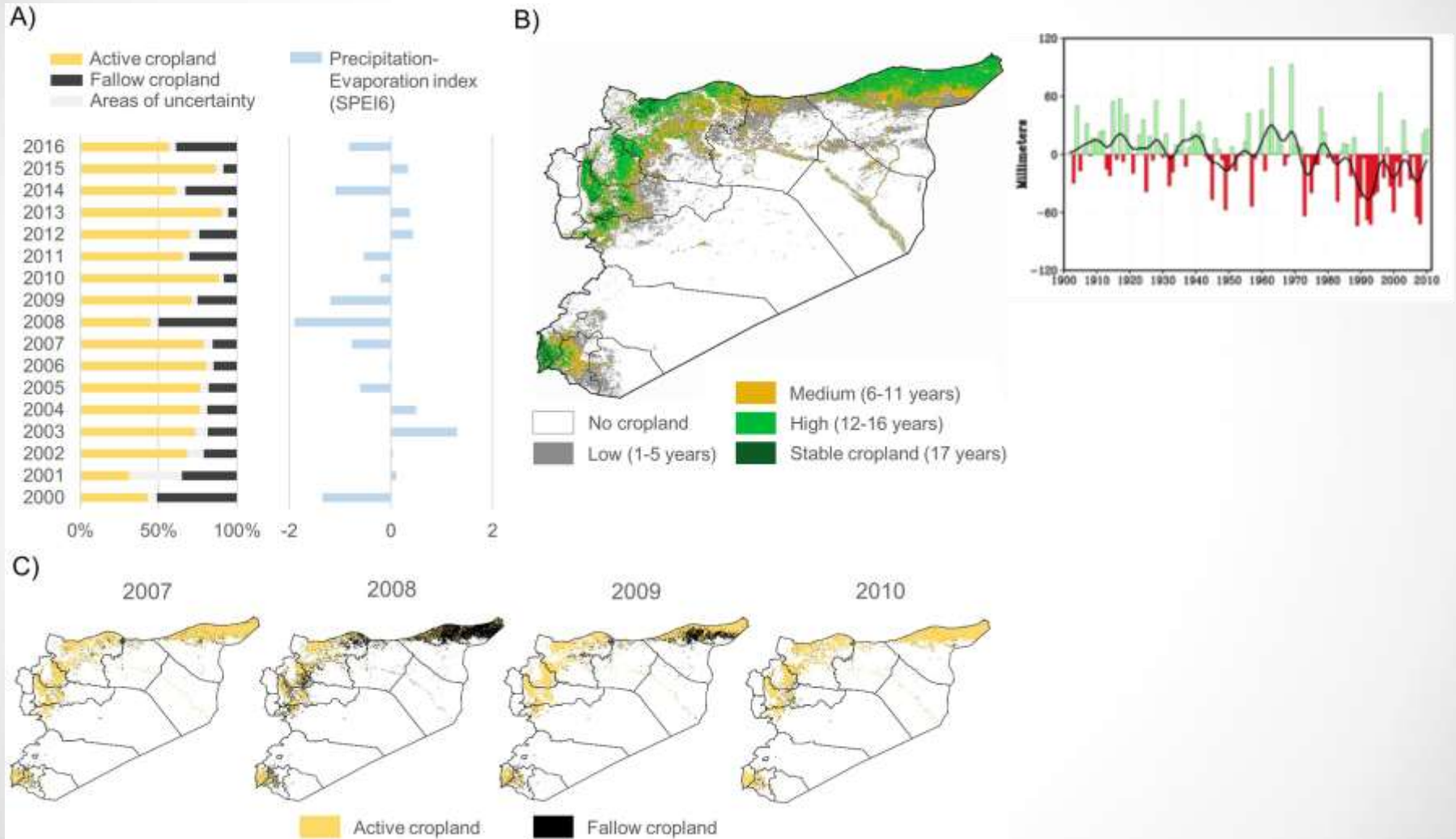
- **Sea level** rise and the Mediterranean landscape
 - Are the risks on the delta of the Nile only the responsibility of Egyptians?
 - Gaza and its viability?

- Climate change, warning systems and new technologies
 - The stopping of the US financing of **UNEP**
 - **Warning Systems**: a national or transnational challenge
 - **Solar energy and desalinization**: cooperation on **more effective technologies**?

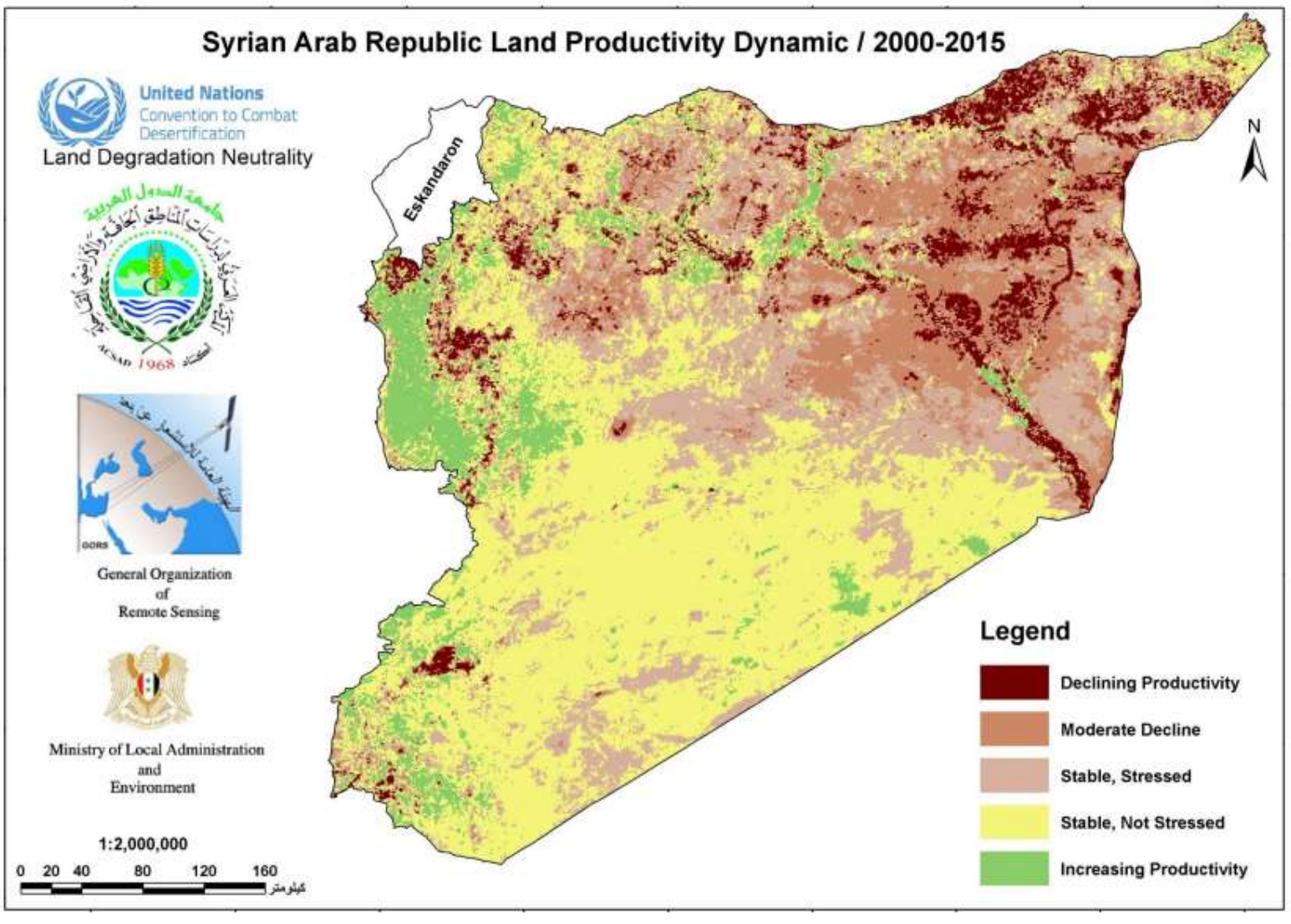
Climate change challenges in the Mediterranean



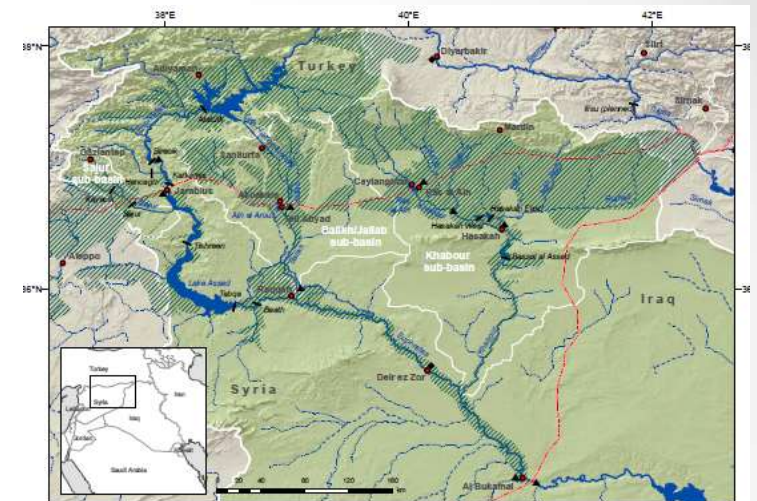
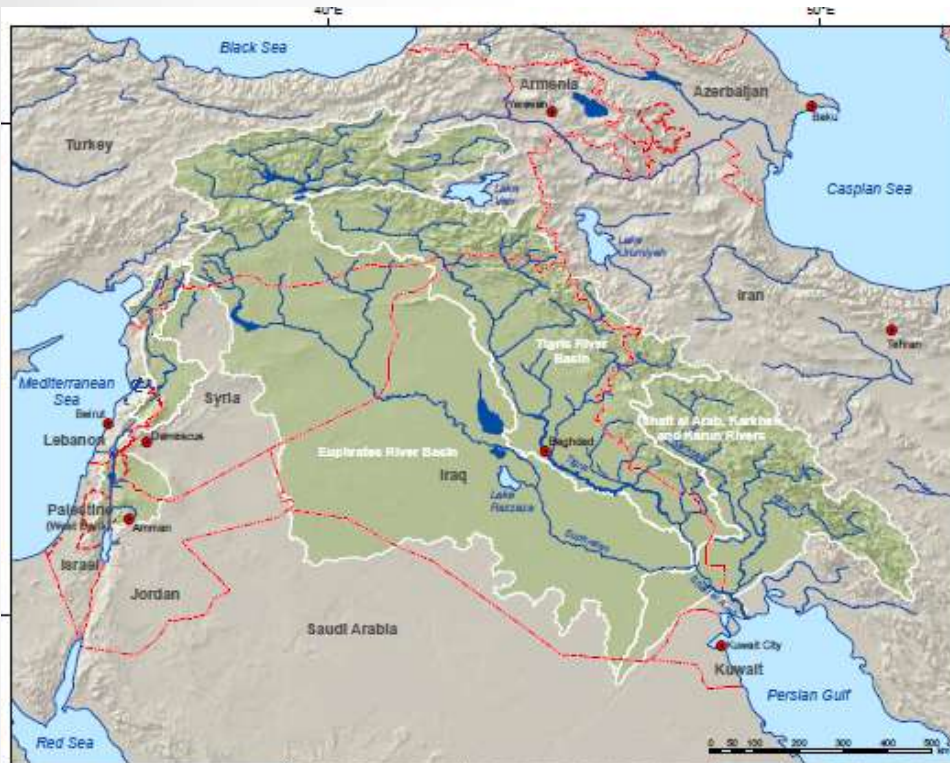
Climate change challenges in Syria



Climate change challenges in Syria



Climate change challenges in Syria, transnational issues



Shared Tributaries of the Euphrates River

- International boundary
- Selected city, town
- River
- Intermittent river, wadi
- Basin boundary
- Main shared sub-basin boundary
- ▨ Zone of agricultural development
- ▲ Dam
- ▲ Monitoring station
- ◆ Climate station
- Canal, irrigation tunnel
- Freshwater lake
- Spring

BGR (United World College)

Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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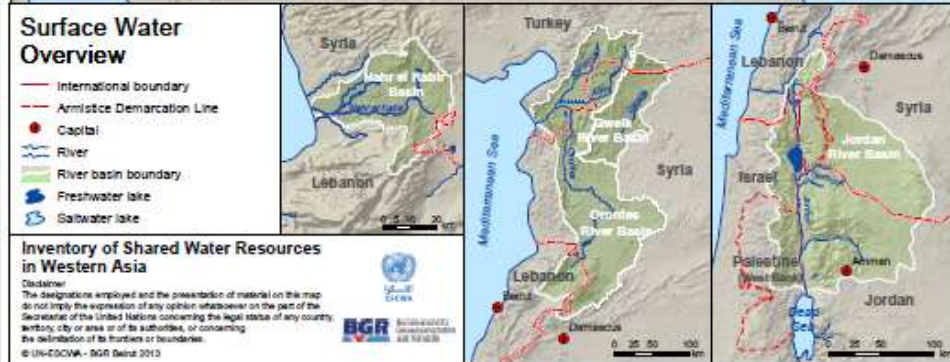


Figure 5. a) Mean annual discharge, b) specific mean annual discharge and c) discharge anomaly time series of the Euphrates (1937-2010)

