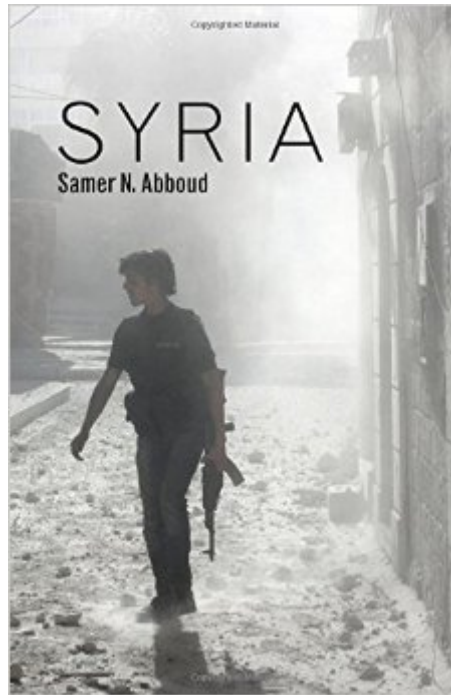


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Syria (Hot Spots In Global Politics)



Synopsis

Syria was once one of the Middle East's most stable states. Today it is a country on its knees. Almost 200,000 people are estimated to have died in its bloody internal conflict and, as the violence intensifies, Syria's future looks bleak. In this timely book, Samer Abboud provides an in-depth analysis of Syria's descent into civil war. He unravels the complex and multi-layered causes of the current political and military stalemate - from rebel fragmentation to the differing roles of international actors, and the rise of competing centers of power throughout the country. Rebel in-fighting and the lack of a centralizing authority, he contends, have exacerbated Syria's fragmentation and fragility. This, in turn, has aided the survival of the Assad regime, contributed to the upsurge of sectarianism, and led to a major humanitarian crisis as nine million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes. A resolution to the Syrian conflict seems unlikely in the short-term as the major actors remains committed to a military solution. As this situation persists, the continued fighting is reshaping Syria's borders and will have repercussions on the wider Middle East for decades to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

• *Syria* • was written by Samer N. Abboud, Associate Professor of International Studies at Arcadia University, • to help the reader understand the broader dynamics driving the [Syrian civil war], why it has persisted, who the main actors are, and why it has evolved in the way it has. • Mr. Abboud is a scholar of Middle Eastern descent who specializes in the political economy of the

Syrian conflict. Here, he examines the parallel processes of revolution and civil war and their effects on Syrian state and society. This study is organized into six chapters, beginning with an overview of Syria from the end of the French mandate in 1946, through the 1963 Ba'athist coup, until the beginning of civil war in 2011. From there, Abboud discusses the first months of the uprising before militarization, the four main violent actors in the war, the international dimensions of the conflict, Syria's territorial fragmentation, and the humanitarian crisis. He concludes with his own ideas about resolution. The first chapter, "The Rise and Fall of the Ba'ath Party," is full of helpful information. It actually begins in the late Ottoman period, when economic reforms created the landlord-merchant class that dominated Syrian politics until the Ba'ath coup of 1963. Abboud describes the unstable political landscape during Syria's "democratic" years after independence and why and how this led to the Ba'athist coup, which installed a rural-minoritarian and authoritarian-populist government. He traces the struggles of Pres. Hafez al-Assad and then Pres. Bashar al-Assad to adapt Syria's economy in the face of an increasingly outdated, failing statist model, culminating in neo-liberal reforms beginning in 2000, which attempted to achieve social welfare through increasingly privatized and marketized mechanisms.

Samer Abboud is Associate Professor of International Studies at the Department of Historical and Political studies at Arcadia University. In this book he attempts in six chapters to give a history of Syria from its Ottoman years to the French Mandate and the Ba'ath Party control starting in the early 1960s, Syria's history with Israel and Palestine, its collaboration with Iran in the region and how all that brought Syria to its present crisis. The 2011 Syrian uprising is presented in full context (and compared to other uprisings in the region known now as the "Arab Spring,") then he introduces the growing opposition, international intervention and internal fragmentation, the growing humanitarian crisis and finally a resolution. All chapters are well-presented with a solid conclusion. This book must be read in its entirety. Knowing the pre-uprising history is important because the Ba'ath Party quieted all opposition. Syria's borders may have been artificially drawn by its colonial oppressors, but it is a region of small sects and tribes that for many years have been able to live cohesively. Dissenters were either forced into exile or executed. As long as political unrest did not threaten the Assad Syrian government, nothing was done. Those who had the power to influence the people were far away; there was no central leadership. Then the uprising became militarized and an armed opposition ensued. It's no wonder then that ISIS and al-Qaeda were able to storm through and take over parts of Syria because opponents were scattered and not unified nor

organized to resist at first. (That is slowly changing though) The educated middle class, the successful business owners and investors were all safely in Damascus and ready to defend the Assad regime.

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