

# SYRIA

Ongoing chaos and the devastation caused by more than a decade of conflict again preclude any ranking of Syria in the *Index of Economic Freedom*. In addition to its horrific death toll, the long civil war has caused a near collapse of economic output and has largely wiped out economic freedom.

The economic cost of the Syrian civil war is likely to exceed \$1 trillion, including aggregate GDP lost because of the conflict and future reconstruction costs. That figure does not include the very significant negative economic impact on Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon. The noneconomic costs are immeasurable.

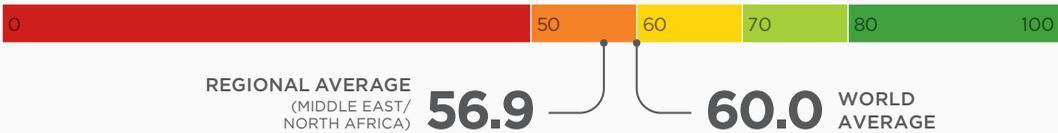
**IMPACT OF COVID-19:** As of December 1, 2021, 2,755 deaths had been attributed to the pandemic in Syria, and the government's response to the crisis ranked 32nd among the countries included in this *Index* in terms of its stringency. The economy contracted by 10.5 percent in 2020.

WORLD RANK: **N/A** | REGIONAL RANK: **N/A**

ECONOMIC FREEDOM STATUS: **NOT GRADED**

## ECONOMIC FREEDOM SCORE

**N/A**



HISTORICAL *INDEX* SCORE CHANGE (SINCE 1996): N/A

## RECENT FREEDOM TREND



## QUICK FACTS

**POPULATION:**  
17.5 million

**GDP (PPP):** n/a  
-10.5% growth in 2020  
5-year compound annual growth -1.4%  
n/a per capita

**UNEMPLOYMENT:**  
9.0%

**INFLATION (CPI):**  
n/a

**FDI INFLOW:** n/a

**PUBLIC DEBT:**  
52.7% of GDP

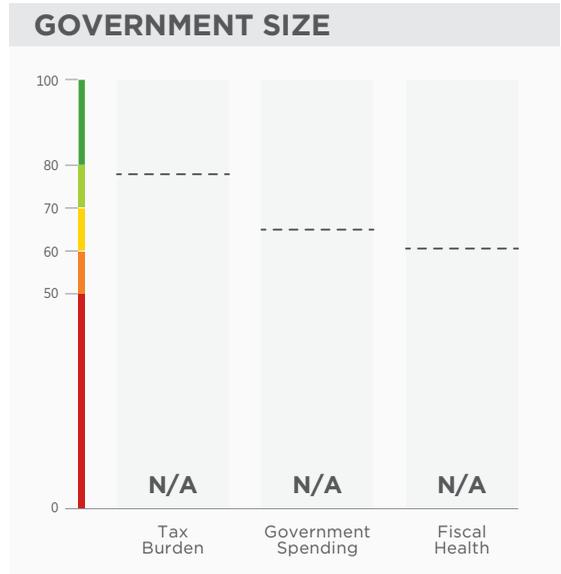
2020 data unless otherwise noted. Data compiled as of September 2021

**BACKGROUND:** The Assad family has ruled Syria since Hafez al-Assad's military coup in 1970. Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father in 2000 but failed to fulfill promises to open the socialist economy and ease repression. A brutal crackdown on Arab Spring protests in 2011 sparked an armed uprising that became a sectarian civil war between the predominantly Sunni rebels and the Alawite-dominated regime. The conflict has killed more than 500,000 Syrians and has driven about 5.7 million refugees out of the country, but Assad's regime, supported by Iran, Russia, and the terrorist Hezbollah, has largely defeated the fractured armed opposition. Assad claimed to have won 95 percent of the votes in the May 2021 presidential election, and Syria's economy remains severely depressed.

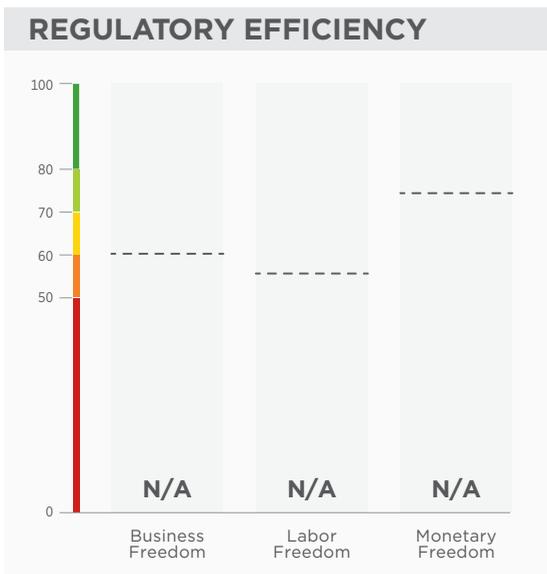
# 12 ECONOMIC FREEDOMS | SYRIA



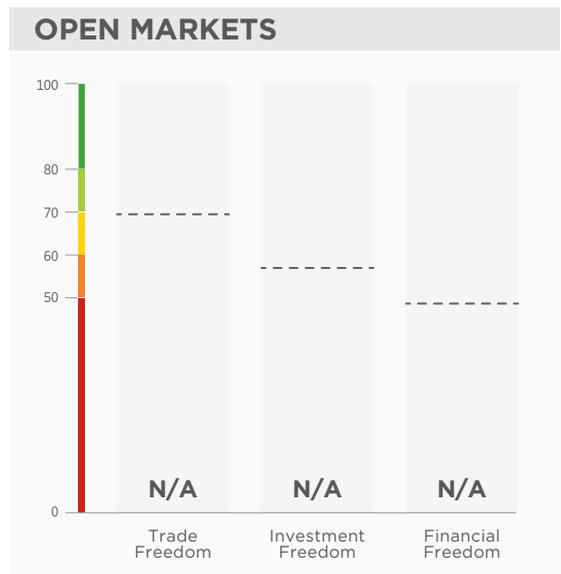
Property rights are frequently violated. Expropriations are commonplace. Although the judiciary is statutorily independent, judges and all other leaders of the regime's constitutionally protected Ba'ath Party dominate courts and all other branches of government and act with impunity. Corruption is pervasive, including in opposition-controlled areas. Members and allies of the regime are said to own or control much of the economy.



The continuing civil conflict has resulted in mounting damage to the economy. Economic policy has focused on protecting the regime and maintaining the military's fighting capacity. Government spending has been driven by the regime's political concerns and the need to protect its own interests. Budget revenue from oil and taxes has severely declined. The regime's economic mismanagement has caused the near collapse of the economy.



International sanctions, damaged infrastructure, and little household purchasing power make opportunities for private businesses sparse. Functioning labor markets do not exist in many war-torn locations. Inflation has been running at record levels, severely eroding purchasing power.



Political instability, exacerbated by the ongoing civil war and significant security threats, is a significant impediment to trade and investment. The investment environment has long lacked transparency and efficiency. The financial infrastructure has been significantly degraded by unstable political and economic conditions. Severely limited access to financing impedes any meaningful private business development.