

FAZA'AT IN DAR'A

A window into traditional civic
engagement in southern Syria

Thematic Report
August 2023



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Executive Summary

With the international community navigating a potential transition from emergency response to early recovery in Syria, focus is turning to civil society engagement to promote sustainable growth. In the absence of government support in service provision throughout Syria, there is even greater pressure on local communities to provide for themselves. One way which communities in Dar'a, in government-controlled southern Syria, have navigated this is to hold local fundraising campaigns, known as 'faza'at', to raise money for infrastructure projects. Although not without their pitfalls and problems, Faza'at held in January 2023 raised SYP 39 billion (\$4 million) donated by locals and expatriates and contributed significantly toward improved provision of water, electricity and internet services.

Here, CA-SYR unpacks the Faza'at in Dar'a and their potential to contribute to early recovery, within the parameters and restrictions created by the government in post-conflict Syria.



Solar system on a rehabilitated water well in Hara township, Dar'a. (Source: CA-SYR)

Introduction

In January 2023, residents in Dar'a governorate organized a number of 'faza'at' – a 'faza'a' is a local community-led crowdfunding campaigns – to raise money for infrastructure projects throughout the governorate. The faza'at raised SYP 39 billion (US\$4 million), which was used to improve basic service provision, including water, electricity and internet access. Figure 1. shows locations where faza'at were organized throughout Dar'a, and Figure 2. shows how much was raised in each community.

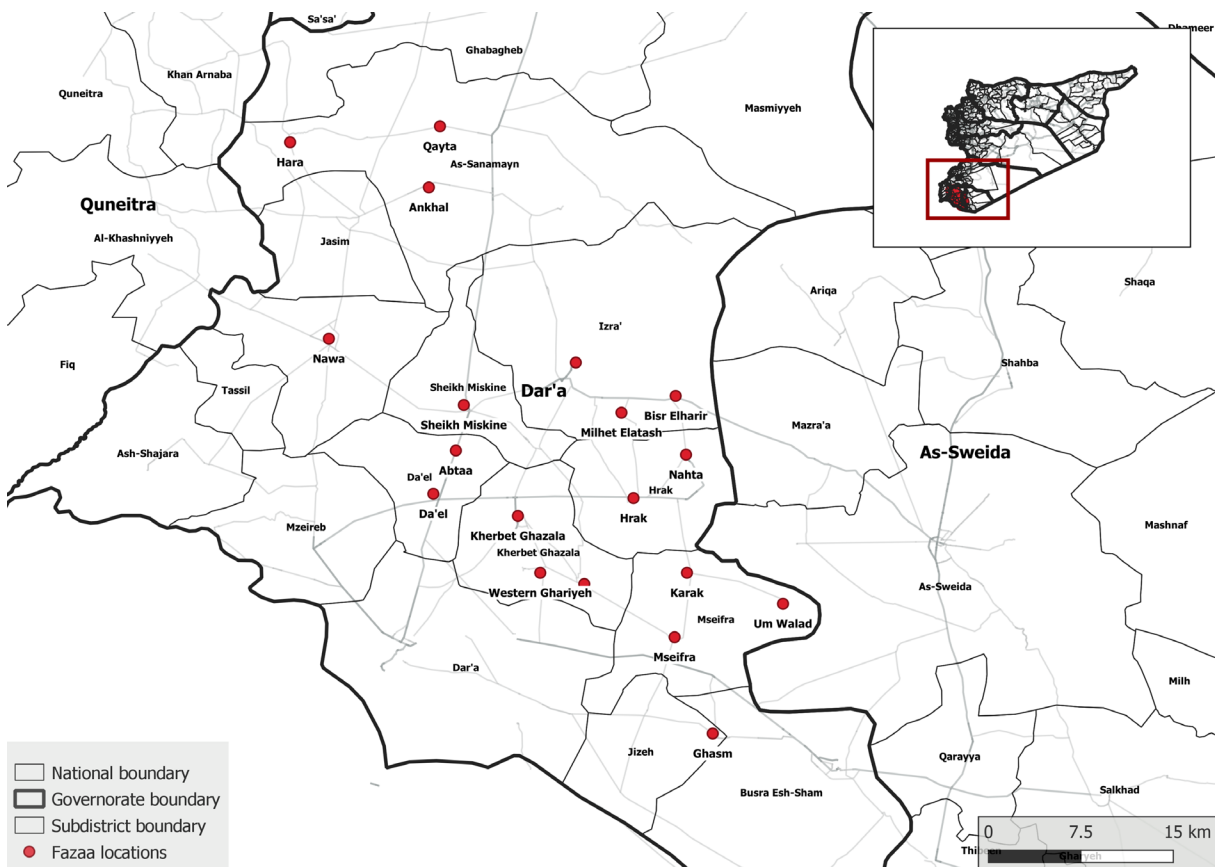


Figure 1. Communities in Dar'a where a faza'a was announced (Source: CA-SYR).

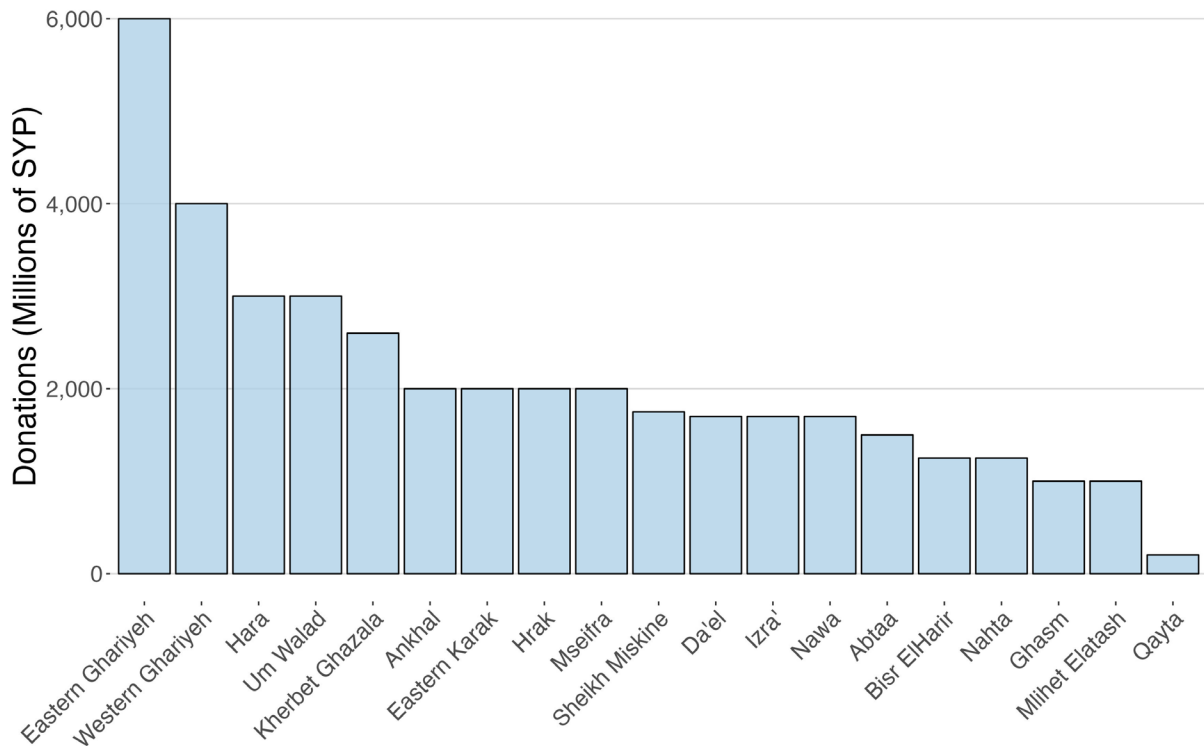


Figure 2. Sum of SYP donations collected in communities announcing a faza'a. (Source: CA-SYR)

The Syrian government's involvement in these campaigns has raised questions about the nature of civil society in Syria post-conflict, and whether there is room for it to develop organically in the current political climate.

In 2010, just prior to the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, it was estimated that the local charities provided SYP 6.5 billion worth of financial support and services and provided assistance to approximately 2.2 million Syrians.¹ Following the start of the conflict, hundreds more charitable CSOs began operating in the country, as the government lost control over much of its territory. The presence of these organizations diminished as the government then re-took control, and established reconciliation agreements with the opposition, particularly in southern and central governorates.² This happened in Dar'a where reconciliation led to the establishment of government-sponsored NGOs (ie, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and Syria Trust) which [supplanted](#) numerous CSOs and NGOs operating in the area, leaving the governorate with almost no room for civic engagement. Many activists also left the area following Damascus retaking control.

The success of the faza'at in Dar'a in January initially indicates restoration of growing civil society engagement in Syria and offers an opportunity to explore how community and government relations have developed since reconciliation in 2018. International humanitarian actors, as discussed during the 2023 Brussels VII Conference 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' are keen to promote the importance of continuing to work with and provide financial and capacity-building support to Syria's civil society to encourage early recovery in the country. Similarly, sideline events by UN agencies at the conference also [stressed](#) the need to support civil society, highlighting the role of civil society organizations in promoting recovery.

1 NAFS, "The Role of Civil Society in Post Conflict Syrian Arab Republic", unpublished background paper, 2020

2 Ibid

CA-SYR aims to contribute to these recent discussions, through analysis of how the community-run faza'at in Dar'a contribute to early recovery, and the criticisms and pitfalls of these initiatives. The faza'at offer insight to explore how civic engagement has developed in Dar'a, particularly since the governorate's [reconciliation](#) with the Syrian government in 2018. Criticisms of them include the awareness of heavy government involvement in both organizing and implementation of the projects (with varying success), and the potential for the initiatives to further entrench political and economic inequality between communities (which can be traced back to government loyalties). While this report does not intend to establish parameters for civil society engagement, or say whether faza'at can or cannot be identified as purely civil society initiatives, it does aim to provide a more grounded understanding of how communities are responding to improve standards of living in southern Syria.

What is a fazaa?

A 'fazaa' is an Arabic/Bedouin act of communal solidarity that takes place in response to a (usually sudden) event that concerns members of a tribe or a tribal-based community. This collective action is more common in rural areas where tribes constitute the backbone of the community's social structure. (They may also occur among Arab communities living abroad or tribal-based groups living together in urban areas.) Faza'at have been observed in areas of rural Syria, Jordan, Iraq, as well as the Gulf states – all areas where tribes continue to hold significant social status and exercise day-to-day influence in communal matters.

Faza'at are initiated for a variety of reasons, whether humanitarian, military, economic or social. They can be called to encourage social cohesion, or to fundraise for specific causes, both small-scale and widespread. Financial contributions or on-the-ground support to build or rebuild an individual's house, for example, is common practice. Faza'at can also be initiated as a community call-to-arms, to protect against attacks or outside aggression.

Faza'at are common in southern Syria, particularly in Quneitra, Dar'a, and As-Sweida governorates, and in eastern Syria, particularly in Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh governorates, where the social structure is more tribal compared to the rest of the country. The concept of a fazaa has changed over the last 50 years as tribal financial support mechanisms became more structured. The need for financial support through faza'at reduced with the establishment of tribal funds, through which individuals could regularly make financial contributions to support families in need. Charitable faza'at re-emerged during the conflict, as the funds were unable to provide for the level of need in communities.

Faza'at have evolved over time to become a local form of civic engagement, fulfilling the basic needs of communities. They have been particularly useful following the start of the Syrian conflict in areas where the Syrian and de facto governments have been unable to provide basic services.

Unlike formal civil society organizations, faza'at do not possess a permanent organizational hierarchy but do include a governance structure, administered by committees that are spontaneously formed and last for the duration of the project's timeframe. These committees are usually run by local community members who possess the following characteristics:

- They have a good reputation within the local community and are trustworthy; they have never been associated with criminal activity, and are generally upstanding members of society.

- They have influence within their community; they can be tribal leaders, local government officials, traders, part of local media outlets, civil society activists, or local NGO workers.
- They are largely neutral toward residents regardless of their political affiliation and place their community ahead of their political affiliation, particularly in matters that concern the community's wellbeing.

After the faza'a is announced, an executive committee is formed to call for donations, which are given in cash or through local or international money transfers. The executive committee works from a specified location, such as a marquee or a guest house, where people can donate directly or encourage others to do so. A supervisory committee is also set up and usually includes representatives from the tribes in the community to ensure their consent and participation.



Chapter 1. Faza'at in Dar'a

The faza'at held in Dar'a outwardly looked to contribute to much-needed development in civic engagement. There were several factors which enabled the communities to mobilize, including promotion and support from the Syrian government and its security forces, relatively high levels of social cohesion, links to wealthy expatriates and geographical bias. These could indicate a more purposeful, top-down initiative.

Role of government

Previous faza'at in Dar'a have been held with minimal visibility, with administrative committees formed and communication through encrypted messaging on services such as WhatsApp. Without government acknowledgment of the faza'at, there is the potential that organizers would be tried by the Counter Terrorism Court under Article 4 of the counter-terrorism [law 19/2012](#) for financing terrorism or engaging in money laundering activities, as the money collected comes from unknown sources. The January faza'at in Dar'a did not appear to be running this risk, as shown by promotion on more open social media platforms, including Facebook, and participation by municipal staff in executive committees.

The faza'at across several communities also looked to have had direct government involvement. For example, Dar'a governor Louay al-Kharita sponsored the faza'at and encouraged local communities to participate, Military Intelligence gave the green light for them to take place, and local government officials took part in organizing and managing the fundraising. Local sources noted that the Baath party was involved in running some faza'at through municipal employees who participated in the committees. These employees were mostly placed in cashier or accountant positions within the committees, well-positioned to report on donors and the amount of money collected. In addition to the Baath party, Military Intelligence, while not directly involved, reportedly observed and provided security for the faza'at from afar, and provided approvals for them.

The government has been accused of using the faza'at to finance infrastructure projects which would normally fall under the remit of public responsibility, as well as leveraging faza'at to bolster foreign currency inflows. The SYP 39 billion raised is amount 22% higher than the government's entire 2023 budget [earmarked](#) for 'Councils of Cities, Districts and Municipalities' across

government-held areas and 3800% higher than Dar'a governorate's budget of SYP 1 billion, according to local sources.

Social cohesion

Social cohesion was also seen as a contributing factor to faza'a being called. The structure of a faza'a is fragile, since they require consensus to work. Committees are usually formed by residents of various tribal and political affiliations who agree on tackling an issue that affects the community as a whole. If deep-seated divisions exist between the various tribes and some decide not to participate or give approval, they can fail. For example, Tafas city in western Dar'a did not announce a faza'a because its major tribes – Kiwan, al-Zo'bi, and Baradan – mistrust each other, are highly divided, and constantly feuding. Heavy clashes between the different tribes in February 2021 eventually necessitated the intervention of the Eighth Brigade based in Busra and other former-opposition military actors to intervene and stop the fighting.³ Dar'a al-Balad⁴ has also suffered from the same divisive issues, which eventually led to [clashes](#) between former-opposition groups after one side allegedly harbored [ISIS](#) combatants.

Wealthy expatriates

Links to wealthy Syrian expatriates were also a factor in whether communities in Dar'a announced a faza'a. The overwhelming majority of communities that announced a faza'a have a high proportion of their residents living abroad, who regularly send remittances back to family in Syria. These expatriates, largely from northern and eastern Dar'a, (see Figure 3.) have been a driving force in the faza'at and have donated large amounts of money to make the collections successful.⁵ The remaining communities have fewer links to wealthy expatriates, and have traditionally relied on agriculture or government jobs as a source of their livelihoods.

Geographical bias

The faza'at in January were largely announced in communities under strong or partial government control post-2018. It is likely that faza'at took place in these areas because of direct government involvement – either through giving permission or sponsorship. Additionally, in general infrastructure for service provision in the east is considerably better preserved than in the west and so easier to repair and replace, largely due to the reduced level of resistance to the government's offensives to take back control of the area post-2018. The main former opposition group operating and controlling the east opted to [reconcile](#) prior to July 2018, while in western Dar'a groups chose to fight until all of southern Syria was reconciled in July 2018. The west also has higher rates of agricultural households, and fewer links to wealthy expats – it is generally poorer

³ Local sources reported that the clashes resulted in casualties and material damage and deepened the divide between the tribes. Tribes have also accused each other of harboring ISIS combatants who have been accused of targeting former-opposition leaders and central committee members. This has constantly attracted the attention of the government's security forces who besieged entire communities and parts of cities to. Former-opposition leaders across Dar'a also distrust each for the collapse of the opposition frontline in southern Syria.

⁴ In addition to the existence of divisions in Dar'a al-Balad, local sources stated that community leaders decided not to start an overt faza'a because residents are afraid of installing and rebuilding services infrastructure only to have it destroyed in another military operation against the city.

⁵ For example, Ayman al-Fayez, a businessman from Hara township (As-Sanamayn subdistrict) donated SYP 200 m while Khaldoun al-Zo'bi from Mseifra township (Mseifra subdistrict) in the eastern donated SYP 400 m.

than the eastern countryside. Finally, security is less stable in communities like Tafas and Dar'a al-Balad, also in the west, making community engagement more difficult.

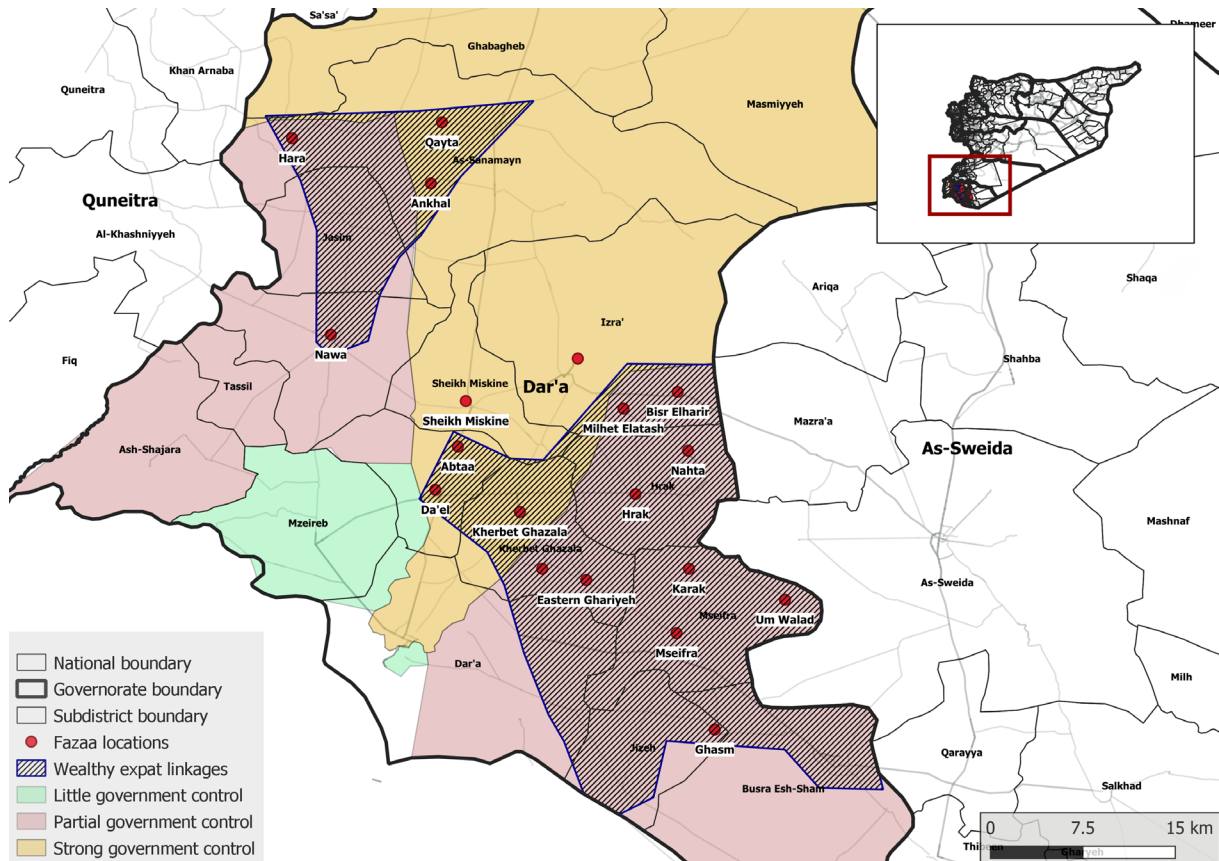


Figure 3. Degree of government control and links to wealthy expats (Source: CA-SYR)

Eastern Karak faza'a (Case study)

A faza'a was announced in Karak, southern Dar'a, on messaging and social media platforms, including Whatsapp and Facebook. The executive committee was established in a prominent guest house, and a marquee was also set up near the guest house to act as a place for residents to write poems to encourage people to donate and collect donations. Community leaders wanted all sections of the community to be involved, necessitating the formation of a supervisory committee composed of more than 50 tribal representatives and other social groups. Local sources highlighted that many on the supervisory and executive committees previously ideologically leaned toward the opposition, who were now working with government representatives for the local community's benefit.

Additionally, the Karak municipality also supported the faza'a, and had two of its members added to the executive committee as the cashier and a purchasing committee member – as discussed, this enables the Baath-affiliated municipality staff to report back, likely to Military Intelligence, on cashflows and donors.

The executive committee placed representatives inside the governorate's towns and cities to gather donations for Karak township. Representatives were also selected abroad and divided according to specific regions throughout the world. These individuals would direct expatriates who wish to donate to official or unofficial monetary transfer agencies (IMTA) to send the money to the executive committee. Local sources stated that this allowed the executive committee to collect SYP 2 billion (\$222,000).

Chapter 2. Service provision in Dar'a

The reasons given for calling the faza'at in January were to raise money to renew, replace and install infrastructure throughout the governorate, to improve provision of services including water, electricity and internet, which was lacking.

Service provision in Dar'a had [improved](#) post-conflict – albeit to varying degrees across the governorate – following the [reconciliation agreements](#) in July 2018 and the return of state institutions to areas previously controlled by the opposition. However, damage to infrastructure sustained during [hostilities](#) coupled with sharp economic decline, limited government resources, and the withdrawal of civil society actors and international funding from Dar'a overall ultimately led to a sharp decline in access to services.

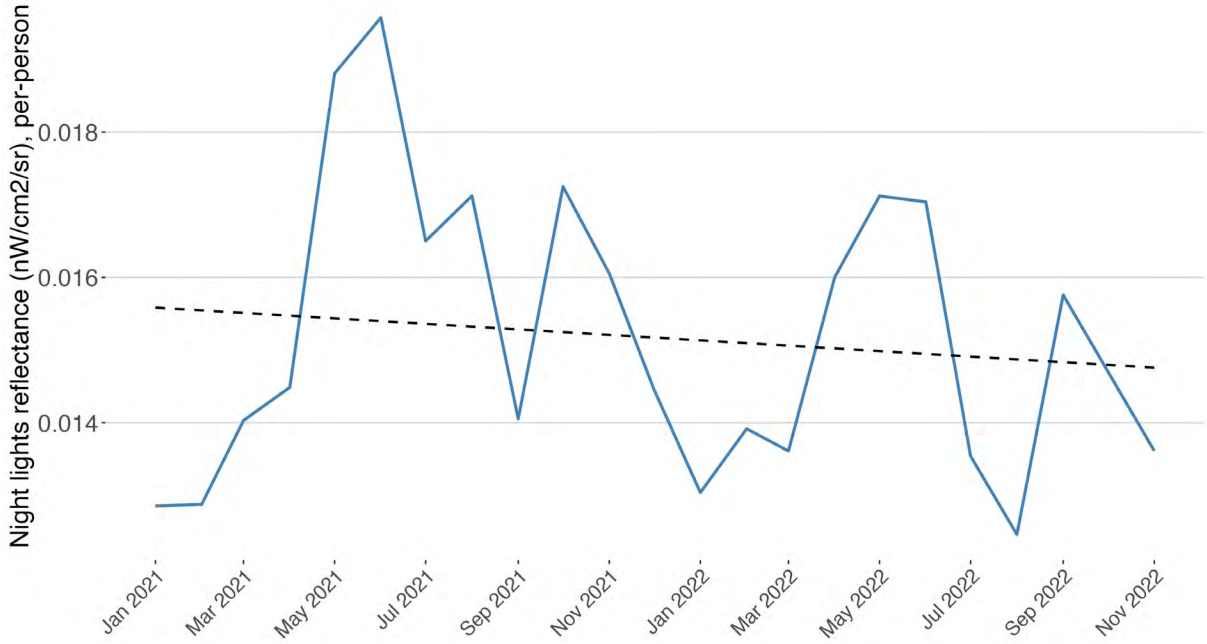


Figure 4. Night light reflectance per person in Dar'a governorate from January 2021 to November 2022. (Source: HNAP Monthly Needs Monitoring Dataset and [VIIRS night lights satellite images](#))

Figure 4. shows the level of night light reflectance (NLR) per person in Dar'a governorate, which reveals that per-capita electricity consumption has been steadily declining over the past two years. The total population of Dar'a has been relatively stable over the past year, so changes in NLR per person are likely mostly driven by increased rationing by the government due to its inability to generate a sufficient amount of electricity.

Water provision also significantly deteriorated, making water a priority need for many households. Figure 5. shows the proportion of the total population of communities in Dar'a governorate that reported water as a priority need; the proportion of the population steadily rose from January 2021 to September 2021, and from that point, approximately half of Dar'a's population reported water as a priority need. Most recently, reports of water as a priority increased from 51% (August 2022) to 55% (November 2022).

These shortfalls in basic service provision led to the faza'at being called, eventually raising SYP 39 billion (US\$4 million) to be put towards new infrastructure projects.

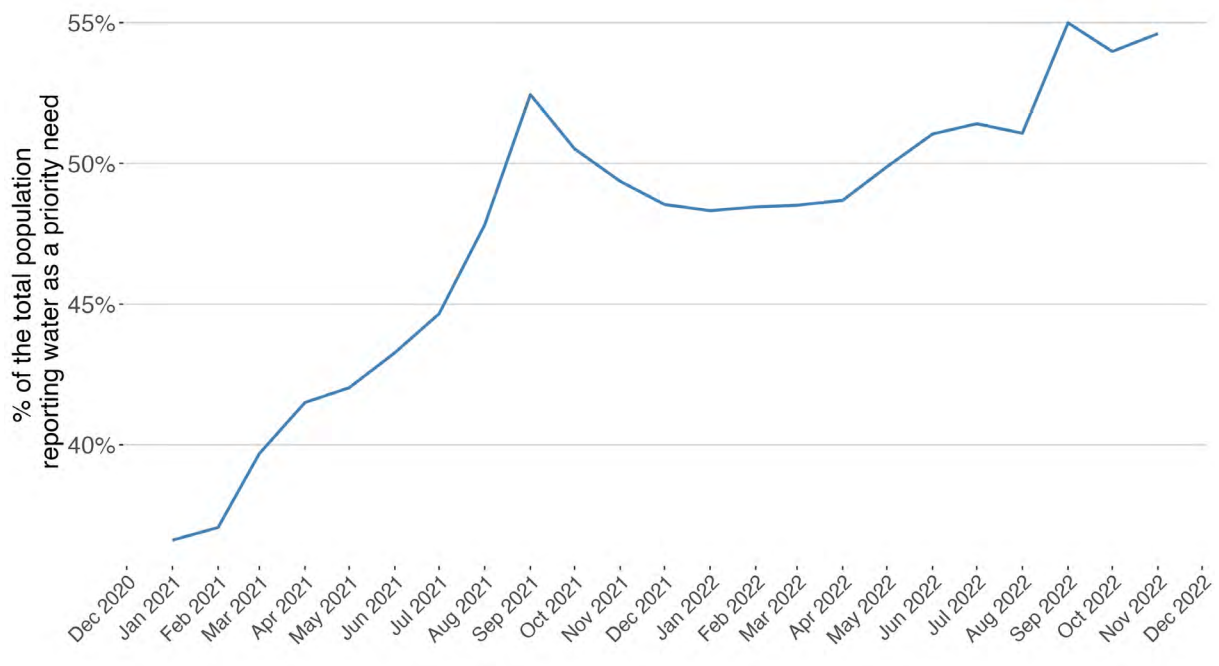


Figure 5. The proportion of the total population reporting water as a priority need (Source: HNAP Multi-Sector Needs Assessment).

Faza'at successes

The faza'a had a positive impact on service provision for many communities in northern and eastern Dar'a, with new services infrastructure installed and pre-existing ones repaired. Media sources [reported](#) that dozens of water wells were repaired in Da'el, Sheikh Miskine, Abtaa, Nahta, and western Ghariyeh. The assistant manager of the Water Establishment, Osama Kadri, [said](#) that funding contributed to being able to operate 92 wells on solar power (30 in cooperation with civil society and 62 with international organizations), adding that the Establishment has made the necessary repairs to the wells' water pumps. Also, ten internet exchange points were [made operational](#) in Jasem, Abtaa, Da'el, Ankhal, Hara, Tafas, Tal Shihab, Ghasm, Eastern

Ghariyeh, Western Ghariyeh, and Kafr Shams after they were fitted with solar power systems, enabling them to improve internet coverage and reduce fuel consumption by 50%. Over 6 km of solar-powered street lights were installed in Da'el and Sheikh Miskine among other locations.

Some communities were able to complete their planned projects following the faza'a, and improve service provision. For example, street lighting in eastern Karak has seen significant improvement; the town's primary roads have been lined with solar-powered street lights and work is ongoing for the secondary roads. Water provision in Um Walad improved after solar-powered water pumps were installed, enabling the town's residents to reduce their reliance on water trucking. Additionally, communities in which projects were successful encouraged Syrian expatriates to donate more money – another SYP 150 million was raised after the success of the January fundraising efforts. Finally, tribes have been encouraged to hold their own faza'at for the first time since the government's return in 2018; local sources have reported that the amount of money donated to the Masalmeh and al-Akrad tribal funds has increased.

...and shortcomings

Faza'at provided funding for the installation and repair of a number of infrastructure projects across Dar'a, however local sources reported that many of the projects never made it past planning stages, and implementation varied between communities. This disparity in implementation is reflected in the satellite imagery analysis of the faza'a communities.

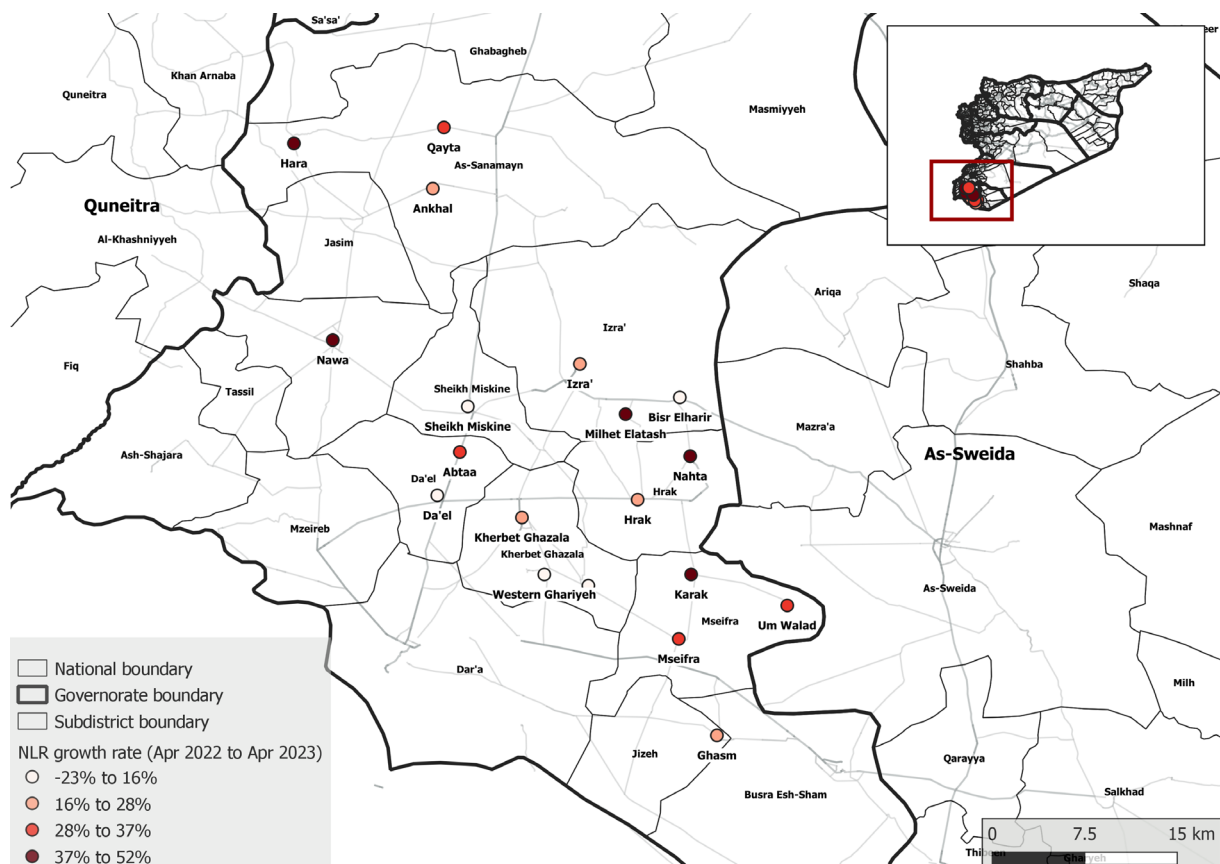


Figure 6. Change in night lights reflectance from April 2022 to April 2023 in communities that announced a faza'a. Exact percentage change in NRL per community can be found in the table in Annex 1. (Source: CA-SYR)

Night lights satellite imagery is commonly used as a proxy for urban development;^{6,7} therefore, changes in the night lights reflectance (NLR) of faza'a communities could indicate (though not confirm) if the fundraising has had an observable effect on urban development in the absence of robust sector-specific data. (There are other factors to take into account, for example, water projects or improved internet provision are unlikely to increase NLR.) For some forms of urban development, including electricity projects or increased construction, NLR can provide indications of local infrastructure improvements. Figure 6. shows the change in NLR from April 2022 to April 2023 using VIIRS nightly images that were used to measure recent changes in NLR.⁸

Communities that experienced low or negative growth were investigated further. According to reports, government interference in the implementation process in Izra' and Sheikh Miskine meant it was hindered by government bureaucratic hurdles, denying residents the opportunity to improve their services infrastructure. Further, the deteriorating security situation in Ankhal township prevented implementation from moving forward. Intense [clashes](#) between the 5th Corps' Eighth Brigade and armed groups broke out in Ankhal in late March after both sides accused each other of extorting civilians and engaging in criminal activities.

Faza'a called to assist earthquake victims

Dar'a residents announced faza'at to help families impacted by the 6 February earthquakes that hit northwest Syria. Residents of Hrak township and communities in western Dar'a [announced](#) faza'at which collected SYP 2 billion. The money went to impacted families in the opposition-held northwest to assist in rescue operations, set up a kitchen in Jandairis to cook for displaced families, secure alternative shelters, and provide financial assistance. Additionally, an aid convoy of 17 trucks carrying food and medical assistance was [sent](#) from Dar'a to assist impacted families in government-held Aleppo. Local sources noted that pro-opposition

and pro-government residents worked separately. The former had relatives living in the opposition-held north, while the latter donated in-kind food and medical items to affected families in government-held areas. Media sources [reported](#) that the government tried to warn residents against donating to the opposition-held north and asked that the funds be transferred to families in government-held Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, and Hama instead. The faza'at held for the earthquake victims were divided on political lines contrary to the January faza'a, which saw all sides working together. In addition to Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor tribes held their own faza'at, collecting clothing, mattresses, blankets, food, medicine, and money. The donations eventually amounted to a 120-vehicle convoy, which carried the donated items and money through the Aoun al-Dadat crossing connecting Autonomous Administration and opposition-held areas.



Truck carrying humanitarian aid bearing the sign "faza'a of the tribes" on its way from Deir-ez-Zor to the opposition-held north (Source: [almustaqel](#)).

6 <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-4292/14/4/825/htm>

7 <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/2515-7620/ab716c>

8 The usability of night light VIIRS images are subject to cloud cover; only images with the maximum number of cloudfree pixels among all nightly images in Nov 2022 and Mar 2023 were used for the analysis. The mean NLR for Nov 2022 was calculated with an average of four more nightly images than the mean NLR for Mar 2023.



Chapter 3. Analysis

A potential driver of inequality

While there is evidence that faza'at do yield positive results, the concentration of faza'at in certain areas could potentially contribute to growing inequality across Dar'a. As it stands, service infrastructure in the east, including street lighting, water, and internet coverage is much better than in the west, where communities are still struggling to secure sufficient basic services.

As a potential result of greater service provision and socioeconomic inequalities, internal migration is a possibility that could strain existing resources and services, foster power imbalances, and lead to localized tension. Local sources expect that as the political and economic gap continues to widen and the economic situation continues to deteriorate, citizens from western Dar'a will begin to search for housing and job opportunities in the east.

There are factors that will prevent this movement however – agricultural households, for example, are unlikely to leave their lands and their livelihoods. Additionally, many individuals wanted by the government either for conscription or security reasons would prefer to stay in Tafas and Dar'a al-Balad where they are safer. Moving east would put them at risk of arrest by security patrols or stopped at checkpoints. This then has the potential to further entrench disparities according to government loyalties.

Solidarity, local politics or revenue extraction?

The January faza'at across several communities in Dar'a were sponsored by the government. Consequently, tribal leaders announcing faza'at risked being perceived as being in good favor with the government – which could be positive or negative depending on community allegiances. It is also the case that tribal leaders and community members participating in faza'at could be seeking to improve their own personal reputation to better position themselves as local power brokers, whether politically, socially or tribally, or within governance structures. According to [reports](#), tribal political influence prior to the civil war was determined by the degree of connectivity these tribal leaders had with the state and security agencies. The Syrian government would often promote tribal figures to leadership positions depending on their willingness to stifle discontent within their tribe and reinforce loyalty towards the state. In return, the tribal leaders would be able to employ relatives in prominent positions within the military or have them instated in po-

litical positions. Similarly, municipality members affiliated with the Baath party who participated in faza'a committees provided an example of what government support could mean. The faza'at provide an opportunity for the government to enhance its image especially as pro-government media extensively covered the faza'at and [described](#) them as an act of patriotism and an expression of popular support for state institutions.

In addition, local sources stated that the government's security agencies, particularly Military Intelligence, openly told local councils that they would not object to the faza'a taking place in the governorate, but reportedly [demanded a 10% cut](#) of the donations being collected by each community.⁹ This would undermine the community-based, civic nature of the faza'at, however, CA-SYR could not verify whether or not the demanded cut was actually extracted by Military Intelligence.

Lack of long-term sustainability

Finally, given the nature of the faza'a as a social construct and practice, sustainability is a major uncertainty. Many residents and community leaders have [criticized the entire process](#) saying that it is not sustainable since the communities themselves would have to maintain and repair infrastructure without government support. Local sources also stated that many residents believed that the faza'a's purpose should have been to help the most vulnerable households in the governorate at a time when many are unable to afford their basic needs. Prices of food and other basic commodities have increased to unaffordable levels for many, as measured by the increasing price of a partial survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB)¹⁰ which increased by 67% from April 2022 to April 2023, and 33% from December 2022 to April 2023 (see Figure 7.). Similarly, the affordability of a partial SMEB, shown in Figure 8., grew from April to July 2022, but has diminished by 10% since then.

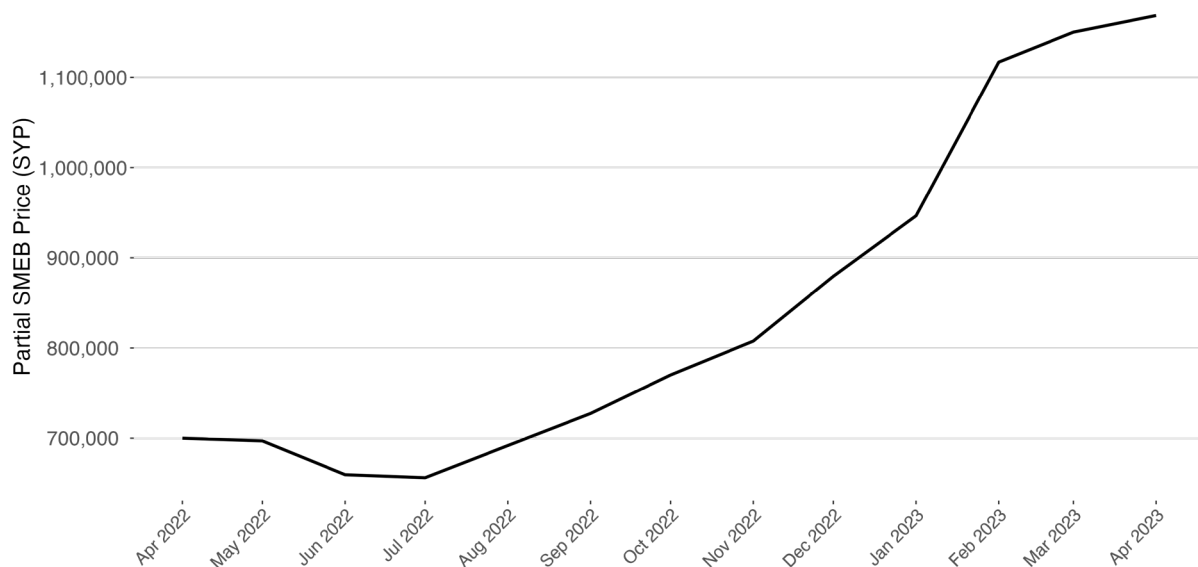


Figure 7. The average price of a partial SMEB in Dar'a governorate. (Source: [WFP market price data](#).¹¹)

⁹ The security agencies' cut wasn't collected directly in the form of bank notes, but rather through directing community leaders to purchase equipment needed for installation and repairs from affiliated businesses and sellers.

¹⁰ Partial SMEB price is a proxy indicator of food affordability in specific areas.

¹¹ The following items make up a partial SMEB: Bread, Bulgur, Cucumbers, Washing liquid, Eggplants, Eggs, Fuel, Lentils, Meat (chicken), Soap, Oil, Onions, Potatoes, Rice, Salt, Sanitary pads, Sugar, Tomatoes, Toothpaste.

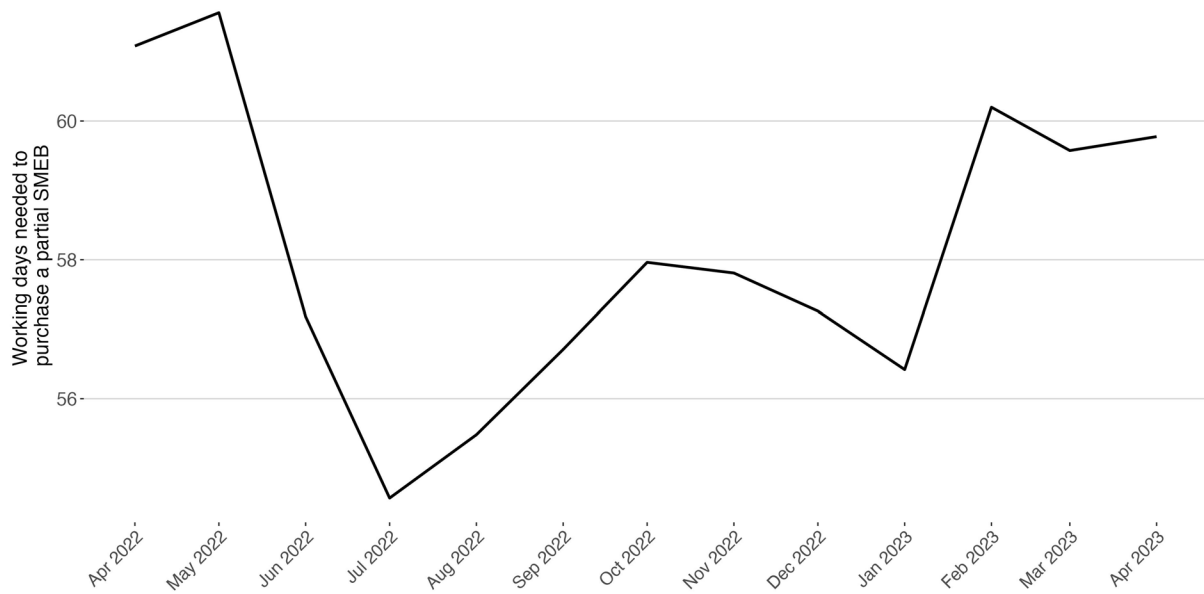


Figure 8. The affordability of (working days needed to purchase) a partial SMEB^{12,13} in Dar'a governorate. (Source: [WFP market price data](#))

12 The following items comprise the partial SMEB: Bread (shop), Bulgur, Cucumbers, Dishwashing liquid, Eggplants, Eggs, Fuel (gas), Lentils, Meat (chicken, plucked), Multipurpose soap, Oil, Onions, Potatoes, Rice, Salt (iodised), Sanitary pads, Sugar, Tomatoes, Toothpaste.

13 SMEB definition: November 2022 REACH JMMI (Fig. 9).

Conclusion

The success of the January 2023 faza'at was unprecedented. They demonstrated what local action can achieve when both cohesiveness and a common objective are present. It was the first time faza'at were promoted on such a large scale since the government re-took control of Dar'a governorate in July 2018, raising SYP 39 billion (\$4 million) with the aim of improving service provision. Services infrastructure was repaired and installed in several communities; many communities were able to reduce their reliance on water trucking and street lighting was made available following the installation of solar-powered street lighting.

However, despite the positive results, vulnerabilities in the process emerged. The faza'at proved to be fragile and dependent on social cohesion and government support within communities. The faza'at were accused of being politicized, as part of the government's efforts to improve services without investment and to encourage foreign currency inflows. They mostly took place in areas under partial or strong government control and were heavily promoted by pro-government media. Local actors such as tribal leaders were seen to announce faza'at to gain political favor within their communities. The faza'at were also less successful in some areas – some communities were unable to implement their projects following fundraising, either due to too much government bureaucracy and involvement, or deterioration of security.

In terms of impact, the faza'at could potentially exacerbate pre-existing inequality between western and eastern Dar'a, and widen the service provision gap. Eastern Dar'a has better links to wealthy expats and has more government support; its communities were able to raise more money, and make improvements to already better-preserved infrastructure. There are also questions behind the motives of some community and tribal leaders, who may have called the faza'at to position themselves as power brokers with the Syrian government. Rumors of security services profiting directly from the fundraising by taking a cut, are unconfirmed but would undermine civil society's efforts if true.

Faza'at remain an important part of the social fabric in southern Syria, despite shortcomings. Many of the highlighted vulnerabilities are specific to the local context and may not be an issue in other locations. With that being said, faza'at should be understood as closely related to early recovery efforts. The faza'at is innate in tribal society and customs, and is widely understood and used in tribal communities throughout southern and eastern Syria. Its structure promotes community cooperation and civic engagement, making it a potentially important tool toward societal growth.

Annex I

Percentage NRL Change in Communities with January 2023 Faza'a

Community	NLR growth rate April 2022 –April 2023
Nawa	52%
Nahta	48%
Karak	43%
Hara	42%
Milhet Elatash	38%
Abtaa	37%
Qayra	33%
Um Walad	32%
Mseifra	31%
Ankhal	28%
Kherbet Ghazala	27%
Hrak	27%
Izra'	23%
Ghasm	17%
Western Ghariyeh	3%
Bisr Elharir	0%
Eastern Ghariyeh	-6%
Sheikh Miskine	-23%

Table 1: NLR growth rate in communities that held a faza'a



CA-Syria Monthly Report, June 2023

In the face of civil war, displaced Syrians in Sudan are scrambling to leave. The bumper wheat harvest of 2023 has failed to translate into bumper profits for farmers, while food prices continue to increase. In Dar'a, security forces are implementing a new round of settlements, with an unexpectedly high turnout. Students traveled to government-controlled areas to take exams because Autonomous Administration qualifications remain unaccredited. Narcotics traders in Ar-Raqqa are being exposed by a social justice group on Facebook, leading to several arrests. In the northwest, there are seasonal water shortages in Al-Bab city, with wells supplying the city drying up. Truck drivers who have seen their jobs eroded are protesting across Turkish-backed areas.

[Go to report](#)

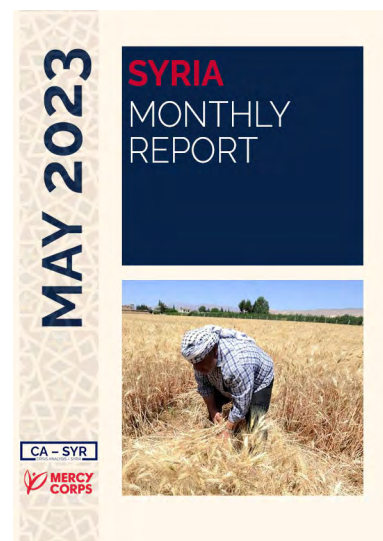


NWS Series Vol. 4

Post-earthquake cashflow challenges

Following the earthquakes, humanitarian actors mobilized to provide aid to affected populations in northwest Syria, prompting the need for a major influx of cash across the region. However, difficulties with local availability of cash, currency devaluation, and last-minute policies enacted by financial actors hampered fast mobilization of such support. This report lays out the financial barriers to rapid aid mobilization in recent months.

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CA-Syria Monthly Report, May 2023

In the aftermath of the Arab League Summit, many of Syria's Arab neighbors have been clear about their expectations of Damascus; the government's capability to bring about these changes remains limited. In government-held areas, a visit by Ibrahim Raisi, the Iranian president, to Damascus, in which a number of military and economic agreements were brokered has reinforced the Syrian-Iranian relationship. The closure of the Semalka-Fishkhabour border crossing between northeast Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq highlights intra-Kurdish tension, and had a knock-on effect on commercial activity and humanitarian activities. Protests against HTS for the arrest of members of Hizb al-Tahrir, a global non-violent political party, spread throughout Idlib and Aleppo. Arrests are in line with HTS actions to remove political (and military) threats, and to demonstrate opposition to extremism.

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The Crisis Analysis – Syria (CA-SYR), formerly HAT, was established in Beirut in March 2015 in response to the collective challenges facing the remote humanitarian response in Syria. CA-SYR's most important function is to collect and analyze data and information. Since 2015, our analysis has provided a forward-looking template for international interventions in Syria, and facilitated an increasingly adaptive, integrated, and ultimately impactful international response to the conflict. CA-SYR is a team within Mercy Corps, and is part of the Mercy Corps response to the Syrian crisis.

