SYRIA

INTRODUCTION
Following World War I, France acquired a mandate over the northern portion of the former Ottoman Empire province of Syria. The French administered the area as Syria until granting it independence in 1946. Syria united with Egypt in February 1958 to form the United Arab Republic. In September 1961, the two entities separated, and the Syrian Arab Republic was reestablished.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Bashar al-ASAD
Head of Government
Prime Minister Hussein ARNOUS
Government Type
presidential republic; highly authoritarian regime
Capital
Damascus
Legislature
unicameral People’s Assembly or Majlis al-Shaab (250 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 187,437 sq km
Land: 185,887 sq km
Water: 1,550 sq km
Climate
mostly desert; hot, dry, sunny summers (June to August) and mild, rainy winters (December to February) along coast; cold weather with snow or sleet periodically in Damascus
Natural Resources
petroleum, phosphates, chrome and manganese ores, asphalt, iron ore, rock salt, marble, gypsum, hydropower

as of October 2021

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
low-income Middle Eastern economy; prior infrastructure and economy devastated by 11-year civil war; ongoing US sanctions; sporadic trans-migration during conflict; currently being supported by World Bank trust fund; ongoing hyperinflation
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $50.28 billion (2015 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $2,900 (2015 est.)
Industries - petroleum, textiles, food processing, beverages, tobacco, phosphate rock mining, cement, oil seeds crushing, automobile assembly
Agricultural products - wheat, barley, milk, olives, tomatoes, oranges, potatoes, sheep milk, lemons, limes
Exports $1.85 billion (2017 est.)
olive oil, cumin seeds, pistachios, tomatoes, apples, pears, spices, pitted fruits (2019)
partners: Saudi Arabia 23%, Turkey 18%, Egypt 14%, UAE 8%, Jordan 7%, Kuwait 5% (2019)
Imports $6.279 billion (2017 est.)
cigarettes, broadcasting equipment, wheat flours, sunflower oil, refined petroleum (2019)
partners: Turkey 27%, China 22%, UAE 14%, Egypt 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
20.4 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
NA
Ethnicity
Arab ~50%, Alawite ~15%, Kurd ~10%, Levantine ~10%, other ~15% (includes Druze, Ismaili, Imami, Nusairi, Assyrian, Turkoman, Armenian)
Language
Arabic (official), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French, English
Religion
Muslim 87% (official; includes Sunni 74% and Alawi, Ismaili, and Shia 13%), Christian 10% (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and Nestorian), Druze 3%