

## How are Syrians responding to the Syrian government's decisions?



Recent government decisions related to raising fuel and electricity prices and setting the price of wheat have become the focus of broad debate among Syrians. But they have not only revealed the usual controversy over economic policies; they have also exposed a striking divergence in how Syrians inside the country and abroad interpret these decisions.

While some Syrians living in host countries or abroad view these measures as economic necessities or steps that can be compared with the experiences of other countries, many Syrians inside the country see them from an entirely different angle, as decisions that directly affect the details of their daily lives and their ability to bear the burdens of living.

This divergence is tied not only to the nature of the decisions themselves, but also to the gap between two different experiences: the experience of those living inside Syria amid rising prices, declining incomes, weak services, scarce job opportunities, and the effects of years of war on infrastructure and institutions; and the experience of those following the scene from abroad, where economic comparisons appear more present than the pressure of daily suffering.

As a result, reactions inside the country have been sharper and more critical, while others have tended to justify these steps on the basis of broader economic considerations.

But does this divide merely reflect a difference in assessing the Syrian government's decisions, or does it reveal a deeper gap between the reality inside the country and outside perceptions of what Syrians live through every day?

Different experiences inside and outside the country

Syrians' differing positions on government decisions, such as raising fuel and electricity prices or policies tied to living conditions, are not linked only to the scale of the economic impact. They are also connected to the differing experiences Syrians have lived through inside and outside the country. Years of war and migration have created a clear gap in how reality is assessed and decisions are interpreted, between those who remained in Syria and lived through economic shifts day by day, and those who left, encountered other countries' experiences, and became familiar with different models of governance and administration.

Abu Ahmad, an employee from Damascus who has not left Syria since the war years, told Noon Post that most Syrians inside the country view economic decisions through the lens of their direct impact on daily life, especially amid rising prices, declining purchasing power, and scarce job opportunities.

He added that many compare the current reality with what they lived through before the war or in previous years, because their daily suffering makes any economic decision directly tied to their ability to secure their basic needs.

By contrast, Alaa, a Syrian who emigrated after the outbreak of the revolution and lived for years in Turkey, believes that the experience of living outside the country has changed how many Syrians in the diaspora view economic policies.

Alaa explained to Noon Post that exposure to the experiences of other countries, such as Turkey, which went through periods of inflation and economic crises and then managed to strengthen its production and expand its economy to become part of the G20, has led many expatriates to sometimes view government decisions through the lens of reform and reconstruction, not only their immediate impact.

In this context, researcher Kinda Hawasli believes that understanding this divergence requires looking at the frames of reference each side uses. She said that a broad segment of Syrians inside the country, especially those who did not have the opportunity to leave, "do not know, or have nothing to measure against, except the condition Syria was previously in."

As a result, their comparisons remain rooted in the contrast between before and after 2011, whether in terms of living conditions, decision-making mechanisms, or the shape of institutions.

Hawasli added, in remarks to Noon Post, that Syrians abroad have not forgotten their experience inside the country, but they have gained a broader space for comparison after interacting with new environments and different systems of governance, making their view of economic and political decisions more connected to broader approaches than the local context alone.

### Different priorities

The divergence in Syrians' positions toward government decisions is not limited to differences in experience or the environments they have lived in. It is also tied to a clear disparity in concerns and priorities between those who remained inside the country and those living in exile and host countries.

In this context, economic expert Ali al-Mohammad believes that Syrians inside the country have lived through compounded crises over the past 15 years, including inflation, declining purchasing power, rising unemployment, as well as energy and service crises. As a result, the priority for a broad segment of them has become directly tied to the vocabulary of daily life, such as income levels, the availability of basic goods, job opportunities, and the ability to secure a stable and dignified livelihood.

By contrast, al-Mohammad explained to Noon Post that Syrians abroad view the scene from a different perspective, with their concerns focused on the future of the Syrian economy, the size of the public budget, administrative reform, reducing corruption and bureaucracy, and enacting laws related to investment, taxes, monetary policy, and the exchange rate of the Syrian pound.

In a parallel reading, economist Mohammad Alabi believes that the gap between inside and outside is not tied only to differences in information, but also to the degree of feeling the crisis itself. Syrians abroad often view decisions to raise prices and reduce subsidies through the lens of figures, fiscal deficits, and the possibility of reform, drawing on the experiences of countries that rely on real prices for energy and services.

Alabi told Noon Post that Syrians inside the country deal with these decisions from the angle of their direct impact on daily life, amid weak wages, the absence of stable services, and rising living costs, making the priorities of the two sides different and deepening the divergence in how they read government policies.

### Agreement on the need for reform

Despite differing positions toward economic decisions and the mechanisms for implementing them, there is broad agreement among Syrians inside and outside the country on the importance of moving forward on the path of economic reform and achieving development, as two essential gateways to improving living

conditions and restoring stability.

In this context, economic researcher Ali Mohammad said that the basic idea is that everyone seeks what serves the country's and the citizen's best interests, but the angle of view differs between those living inside the country and those residing abroad.

He explained that those living abroad often view economic decisions through the lens of the relative stability they enjoy, whether in terms of income, exchange-rate stability, or the availability of job opportunities, making them more inclined to accept government justifications or to view decisions from an economic and academic perspective.

Mohammad added that both sides agree on the necessity of economic reform and achieving development in a way that positively affects Syrians inside and outside the country, noting that Syrians living abroad are not detached from this reality, as they are often connected to their families and relatives inside the country. But he pointed out that the core of the difference lies in the speed of decision-making, its timing, and whether the economic and social conditions are prepared to absorb it with the least possible losses and costs for those living inside Syria.

This debate comes amid official steps taken by the Syrian government on reform and anti-corruption. On May 4, 2025, Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa issued Presidential Decree No. 13 establishing the Commission to Combat Illicit Gain, with the aim of protecting public funds, combating illicit enrichment in all its forms, and working to recover illicit funds. On Dec. 28, 2025, the commission launched the voluntary disclosure program, in a step considered part of a broader path to address financial files and enhance transparency within legal frameworks.

### The government's responsibility to clarify decisions

Alongside the growing debate over government decisions among Syrians inside and outside the country, another aspect stands out: the government's responsibility in managing these decisions and explaining them to public opinion, especially at a sensitive stage in Syria's history that requires greater clarity in official discourse and more effective communication with citizens.

The absence of sufficient clarification about the reasons for decisions and their objectives opens the door to differing interpretations and broad debates that may deepen the gap in understanding these decisions and their repercussions.

Commenting on this aspect, researcher Mohammad Alabi believes that the problem lies not only in the decisions themselves, but also in how they are

managed and in the absence of participation in making them.

He explained that difficult or painful economic decisions in any country require clear messaging that explains their reasons, objectives, duration, and what citizens will receive in return, alongside participatory mechanisms that vary from one decision to another, whether through parliamentary institutions, unions and professional chambers, or through societal discussions that include different segments of citizens.

Alabi added that countries that resort to austerity policies, despite their sensitivity, often handle them with greater transparency by involving citizens and clearly explaining their justifications. In the Syrian case, however, many decisions are issued — in his view — in a top-down manner, even though they affect the lives of millions of Syrians, without providing sufficient explanations or detailed justifications that answer the real questions people raise about the effects of these decisions and their usefulness.

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