Human security

Human security in North and East Syria Region

Components and challenges

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Introduction

In recent decades, the knowledge society[1] has increasingly focused on the individual as a key factor in issues of security and development. Most research converges on the idea that the individual is a crucial link between security and society within a symbiotic and complementary relationship. A society cannot enjoy security when its members do not feel secure, and vice versa. This relationship also extends to the national security of a country in its various dimensions.

The importance of human security became especially apparent with the rise of ideological extremism that glorifies violence. Extremist groups have found fertile ground for recruitment in communities lacking adequate human security. Recently, these groups have launched waves of bloody attacks across various parts of the world, causing significant human, material, and moral losses. These attacks have been carried out by individuals who believe that their human security can only be achieved through such heinous acts.

On the other hand, many economic and service sectors in various countries have deteriorated significantly due to the migration of dozens of citizens seeking safer conditions elsewhere. Most research agrees that individuals who do not feel secure in their environment become sources of insecurity. This notion is well-captured in the African proverb: "The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth." This highlights one of the most significant internal factors contributing to the deterioration of human security. External factors, such as policies that trigger economic crises, create tense political conditions or exacerbate them, allowing extremists to move into specific geographies with the aim of controlling them. These are among the objective factors that contribute to insecurity, as witnessed in the Middle East.

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[1] The Knowledge Society: It is a group of people with similar interests who try to benefit from combining their knowledge about the fields they are interested in. In this process, they add more to this knowledge. Thus, knowledge is the mental and useful output of the processes of perception, learning, and thinking. This term is often used by politicians, policymakers, and scientists interested in future studies... Wikipedia; Knowledge Society.

There is no doubt that human security is one of the instinctive motivators for humans. Most studies related to primitive societies indicate that human security played a role in the formation of the earliest human clusters (the clan society) and their evolution into the societies we know today. In many cases, it has become a decisive factor in determining an individual's political, professional, and social orientations. Moreover, it has turned into a standard for evaluating the success of policies aimed at achieving national security in various countries.

As a result, many global studies have addressed human security, making it a significant issue in an era marked by conflicts and dangerous climate changes. Some studies have made efforts to reach advanced levels of human security, even as many countries, especially in the Near East, witness a significant decline in this area.

The state of human security in North and East Syria is relatively better than in other parts of Syria. Many residents of other regions have expressed their desire to live in North and East Syria, as reflected in statements made during visits for purposes such as studying, medical treatment, trade, or completing civil transactions. However, it cannot be said that North and East Syria enjoys complete human security, as the region faces many challenges and threats due to both internal and external factors.

This study will attempt to identify these factors by shedding light on the concept of human security, its characteristics, components, and dimensions, and applying them to the situation in North and East Syria. The study will employ a descriptive methodology and the tool of observation to contribute to raising awareness of the importance of human security in light of the political, security, economic, and climate developments in the region. To this end, the study will explore the concept of human security, provide a general overview of its state in Syria as a whole and in North and East Syria specifically, examine the dynamics in place to strengthen it, and discuss the main current and future threats and challenges based on monitoring the security, political, economic, environmental, health, and social realities in the region over approximately two years prior to the writing of this study.

○ **Concept of human security:**

Human security is one of the most important concepts in the field of security and peace, focusing on the ability of individuals to exercise their choices freely and safely. Traditionally, the focus had long been on the state, but human security has now become a fundamental pillar of national security. Despite its close connection to the essence of human existence and perceptions since early civilization, the term "human security" can be traced back to the establishment of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1840, where it was given a liberal dimension. Later, this concept was embodied in the general principles of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Geneva Conventions[2]. It gained further attention in political, economic, and social studies with a security dimension, which aimed to integrate the human element into security studies across various fields.

Human security lacks a single, universally agreed-upon definition, and its meaning varies in the contexts of political, security, and developmental planning, which explains the diversity of its interpretations. In the 1994 Human Development Report, the United Nations defined human security as "safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in jobs, homes, or communities." Meanwhile, the Arab Human Development Report[3] defined human security as "the protection of individuals from severe, widespread, and prolonged threats to their lives and freedoms." The United Nations' Human Security Commission, formed in 2001, offered a similar definition, describing it as "the protection of the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment."

Most definitions of human security have been developed by those concerned with social and human rights issues. However, if you were to ask any individual

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[2] سماح عبد الله؛ مفهوم الأمن الإنساني؛ الناشر: المجلة الاجتماعية القومية؛ المجلد53/العدد3/أيلول 2016؛ الرابط:
https://jns.journals.ekb.eg/article_205011_3711573205cee9f51a41c4c8fec4500f.pdf

[3] تقرير التنمية الإنسانية العربية للعام 2009/ تحديات آمن الإنسان في البلدان العربية، الناشر برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي 2009؛
ص19-22؛ الرابط:
https://arab-hdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ahdr-report_2009-ar-full.pdf

about their own security, the answers would undoubtedly vary. Naturally, people would begin by identifying the most severe threats and challenges they face in their environment. This may explain the diversity of definitions for human security, as environments and security priorities differ. For instance, a person living in an economically prosperous environment will have a different perspective on human security compared to someone living in an economically underdeveloped environment.

Most analyses of human security tend to focus on external threats more than the internal threats that individuals might bring upon themselves. This makes it difficult to establish a precise definition of human security, leading to a conceptual dilemma. One may encounter two competing concepts: one provided by the United Nations, which makes individuals reliant on those managing their affairs, and the other defined by individuals themselves, which may conflict with the security of their peers. This suggests the need for a definition that is based on a relatively precise identification of the components and characteristics of human security, addressing both internal and external threats.

▪ **Components of human security:**

Most research on human security agrees that economic, food, health, environmental, personal, and political security are the main dimensions of human security, which are achieved when all are fully available. However, there are other important dimensions as well, such as societal and knowledge security. The absence of these two dimensions leaves human security dependent on the will of others and increases reliance on authorities or institutions to meet needs, which seems to contradict the actual goal of achieving human security.

In the context of human security, societal security refers to the individual's feeling of belonging to a community that provides them with cultural identity and a set of values that offer reassurance and practical support, along with social respect and appreciation. An individual cannot feel secure in a society that lacks security. Knowledge security, in short, refers to an individual's possession of

information that enables them to properly understand themselves and the reality they live in, allowing them to think constructively and make appropriate decisions, thus becoming a source of security in their environment. As Plato said, "Knowledge is power, and ignorance is the root of all evil."

Based on lived experiences during the Syrian crisis—where human security reached dangerous lows, with famine, beheadings, displacement, torture, and other atrocities causing unprecedented levels of fear and anxiety—there is a need to expand thinking about the concept of human security by identifying its key components. Drawing from the experiences of the Syrian crisis and related research, three essential components of human security can be identified: protection, awareness, and empowerment. Among these, awareness—which refers to understanding and sound perception—stands as the principal condition for human security. Without it, neither protection nor empowerment can be effectively managed. Without these components, human security remains incomplete, regardless of the support provided by authorities or the efforts made by individuals. For example, economic security cannot be achieved unless protection, awareness, and empowerment in the economic field are present, and this applies to other dimensions as well. This necessitates rethinking the definitions of these dimensions and their order, which will allow for a clearer understanding of their components.

▪ **Dimensions of human security and their threat factors:**

1. **Economic security:**

A common definition of individual economic security is protection from poverty. The ICRC[4] provides a broader definition, stating that economic security is "the condition that allows individuals, families, or communities to meet their essential needs and cover obligatory expenses sustainably and with dignity." Essential needs include food, water, shelter, clothing, hygiene products, and the ability to

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4 4 اللجنة الدولية للصليب الأحمر؛ الأمن الاقتصادي؛ الرابط:
https://www.icrc.org/ar/what-we-do/ensuring-economic-security

afford healthcare and education. The International Security Dictionary[5] defines economic security as "freedom from poverty, possessing sufficient economic resources to participate in society with dignity, and being protected from future volatility and risks." This concept also encompasses job security, income security, and unemployment insurance.

Economic security is achieved through a combination of factors that both individuals and governmental and civil institutions must secure, including:

-        Economic awareness which involves understanding the economic reality and organizing one's economic behavior appropriately, such as rationalizing consumption, spending, saving, and mastering skills in work and investment.

-        Protection from monopolies, exploitation, degrading treatment, and workplace hazards.

-        Empowerment by providing suitable employment opportunities, a system of financial and moral incentives, sufficient income to meet living needs, access to resources, protection of rights, and the development of economic awareness. Ensuring access to housing is also critical, as its absence is one of the most severe manifestations of economic insecurity.

Self-induced threats to economic security include a lack of desire to develop economic awareness, excessive dependence on others, and a mindset that favors being an employee over thinking like an investor in personal, material, or available opportunities.

External threats to economic security include conflicts, religious, sectarian, racial, and political hatred, authoritarianism and corruption in governance, climate change, natural disasters, and diseases—factors beyond the individual's control that often threaten their economic security.

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[5] بول روبنسون؛ قاموس الأمن الدولي؛ ترجمة ونشر: مركز الإمارات للدراسات والبحوث الاستراتيجية/ أبو ظبي؛ الطبعة الأولى 2009؛ ص97.

2. Food security:

Food security is closely related to economic security. Generally, food security[6] is defined as "a state in which people are not hungry or malnourished and do not fear either condition." Another definition[7] states that "food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food."

Food security is achieved through a combination of factors that both individuals and governmental and civil institutions must secure, including:

- Food awareness which is having adequate knowledge of healthy and nutritious food types and patterns, and possessing the necessary skills to care for, produce, buy, prepare, and consume food to meet nutritional needs from available resources, as well as being aware of food-related issues[8].

- Protection from unsafe food, monopolization, and difficulties in securing food. To achieve this, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has identified four key conditions: food availability at all times, access to food, culturally acceptable food, and safe and healthy food, produced in a sustainable manner.

- Empowerment which involves the ability to secure food through purchase, production, or storage, and selecting food appropriate to the individual's needs. The success of this largely depends on achieving economic security.

Self-induced threats to food security include a lack of desire to develop food awareness, failing to create long-term strategies for securing food through preservation and storage, and neglecting to take precautionary measures on an individual level for emergencies when securing food becomes difficult.

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[6] بول روبنسون؛ قاموس الأمن الدولي؛ ترجمة ونشر: مركز الإمارات للدراسات والبحوث الاستراتيجية/ أبو ظبي؛ الطبعة الأولى 2009؛ ص119.

[7] هند فؤاد؛ الأمن الإنساني؛ المفهوم والعلاقات والأبعاد؛ الناشر: المجلة الجنائية القومية، المجلد63، العدد2، يوليو 2020؛ الرابط: https://ncj.journals.ekb.eg/article_316783_2d08880faca24e6b56398ae96f8f4abe.pdf

[8] منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة (الفاو)/ المؤتمر الإقليمي الخامس والعشرون للشرق الأدنى؛ الأمن الغذائي والتوعية بالتغذية على نطاق الأسرة؛ الناشر: منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة (الفاو)/ بيروت- 2000.03.24م؛ الرابط: https://www.fao.org/3/X4212a/X4212a.htm

External threats include climate change and its accompanying droughts, water shortages, fires, and rising temperatures, all of which impact food production and preservation. Additional threats include energy insecurity, conflicts, and the absence of a national government capable of providing protection, food awareness, and empowerment. These factors, in one way or another, can lead to famine.

3. Health security:

Health security ensures a minimum level of protection against diseases, psychological stress, and various injuries. Health security[9] is defined as "the pursuit of freeing individuals from all threats that could negatively impact their physical, mental, and social well-being, beyond just providing healthcare that protects them from illness and disability." In other words, health is not merely the absence of disease but the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

Health security is achieved by ensuring a combination of factors that both individuals and governmental and civil institutions must secure, including:

- Health awareness: This involves having sufficient health-related information to respond to health challenges and threats, such as dealing with pollutants, psychological stress, and diseases. It includes knowing how to prevent illness and adopting behaviors that support an individual's physical, mental, intellectual, and nutritional health, as well as environmental hygiene.

- Protection from diseases, drug monopolies, and fraud, which requires an effective healthcare system, competent medical professionals, adequate medical and health facilities, and the availability of food security.

- Empowerment by ensuring an individual's ability to access health services and live in a healthy environment. This is closely tied to economic security, as not all healthcare services are free, making the poor more vulnerable to not receiving such services and facing malnutrition. Furthermore, the deterioration of health security significantly impacts economic security. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health problems push 100 million people worldwide into

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9 -الأمنية للعلوم العربية نايف جامعة /الأمنية البحوث مركز :الناشر ؛الصحي الأمن ؛دوح أبو كاظم خالد 2021ص ؛م3 .

poverty[10] each year due to the significant negative impact of diseases on an individual's ability to perform their work adequately.

Neglecting to develop health awareness is one of the most prominent self-induced threats to health security, as it puts the individual and those around them at avoidable risk by failing to respond promptly through prevention or timely treatment. External factors include widespread epidemics, pollution, government neglect of the healthcare sector, and climate change, which leads to floods, droughts, and heat stress. The WHO[11] predicts that from 2030 to 2050, 250,000 people will die due to heat stress, malnutrition, malaria, and diarrhea. Climate change also spreads viruses and infectious diseases[12] (viral, parasitic, bacterial), transmitted by insects, animals, air, or water, among other means.

4. Environmental security:

Environmental security[13] is defined as "protecting people from harm caused by the degradation of the natural environment" and as "maintaining[14] the overall ecosystem and preventing any dangers threatening the environment's elements (water, air, soil), or the health of humans, animals, plants, or the natural surroundings at a regional level." Environmental security is critical to human security, as it plays a role in achieving stability and supporting economic, food, and health security.

Environmental security is achieved by ensuring a combination of factors that both individuals and governmental and civil institutions must secure, including:

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[10] د. خديجة عرفة؛ الأمن الإنساني في ظل التغيرات المناخية.. تحديات متزايدة؛ الناشر: السياسة الدولية؛ تاريخ النشر: 2022.11.10؛ الرابط:
https://www.siyassa.org.eg/News/18422.aspx

[11] د. خديجة عرفة؛ الأمن الإنساني في ظل التغيرات المناخية.. تحديات متزايدة؛ الناشر: السياسة الدولية؛ تاريخ النشر: 2022.11.10؛ الرابط:
https://www.siyassa.org.eg/News/18422.aspx

[12] عماد حسن؛ دراسة: تغيّر المناخ يزيد من انتشار مسببات الأمراض المعدية؛ الناشر: DW؛ تاريخ النشر: 2022.08.16؛ الرابط:
https://www.dw.com/ar/دراسة-تغيّر-المناخ-يزيد-من-انتشار-مسببات-أمراض-تصيب-البشر/a-62810293

[13] بول روبنسون؛ قاموس الأمن الدولي؛ ترجمة ونشر: مركز الإمارات للدراسات والبحوث الاستراتيجية/ أبو ظبي؛ الطبعة الأولى 2009؛ ص105.

[14] د. ياحي مريم& د. العمرية بوقرة؛ الأمن البيئي في إطار تحقيق التنمية المستدامة في الوطن العربي؛ الناشر: المركز الديمقراطي العربي للدراسات الاستراتيجية والسياسة والاقتصادية/ ألمانيا- برلين/ 2021؛ ص92؛ الرابط:
https://democraticac.de/?tag=الأمن-الإنساني-في-ظل-التحديات-الع

- Environmental awareness: This is defined[15] as "feeling responsible for the environment and nature and engaging in practices that help protect and preserve them, as well as educating others about the dangers caused by incorrect human behaviors and their severity." To achieve this, environmental knowledge must be developed, and efforts should be made to preserve the environment, prevent pollution, and rationalize the use of resources.

- Protection from natural disasters and the threats caused by human damage to nature, including air, water, and soil, as well as protection from threats posed by both living and non-living components of the ecosystem. It also involves protection from various forms of environmental pollution: air pollution, light pollution, littering, noise pollution, plastic pollution, soil pollution, radioactive pollution, thermal pollution, visual pollution, and water pollution.

- Empowerment by providing what is necessary to enable individuals to achieve environmental security. This includes the availability of waste disposal and treatment methods, the right to protest against pollution sources in one's surroundings, and access to various cleaning tools and means. Responses to environmental security-related complaints must also be ensured.

Neglecting to develop environmental awareness or failing to protect the environment, starting with personal hygiene within one's means, is among the self-induced factors threatening environmental security. In contrast, the absence of environmental culture within society, institutional neglect of environmental protection and development, climate change, and industrial pollution are among the most significant external factors threatening an individual's environmental security.

5. Personal security:

Personal security is generally defined as protecting individuals from physical violence, harm, accidents, theft, robbery, kidnapping, extortion, fraud, persecution, bullying, and degrading treatment, whether caused by the state or other individuals. Women are often more vulnerable to forms of domestic violence,

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[15] سناء الدويكات؛ مفهوم الوعي البيئي؛ الناشر: موضوع؛ الرابط:
https://mawdoo3.com/مفهوم_الوعي_البيئي/

institutionalized violence, and both direct and indirect violence. Some reports[16] suggest that men, in the field, compensate for their sense of insecurity and loss of control by increasing their aggression toward women. Additionally, human trafficking and forced labor of men under inhumane conditions, as well as the sexual and physical exploitation of women in nightclubs and the forced use of children as beggars or street vendors, often leading to their sexual exploitation, are all concerns.

Personal security is achieved by ensuring a combination of factors that both individuals and governmental and civil institutions must secure, including:

-        Awareness of personal security: Developing individual skills and appropriate measures to protect personal security and face threats, enhancing awareness of the dangers in one's environment by possessing and analyzing relevant information, and resolving personal disputes peacefully. Neglecting this awareness is one of the self-induced factors threatening personal security.

-        Protection from any source of danger to the individual's safety.

-        Empowerment by providing what is necessary to achieve personal security, removing obstacles that prevent its realization (as long as they do not conflict with public security), and ensuring access to protection and resources that enhance awareness of personal security.

Institutional corruption, authoritarian governance, extremist ideologies, conflicts, climate change, and natural disasters are among the most significant external factors weakening protection and empowerment for achieving personal security.

6. Political security:

Political security is commonly defined as protection from political persecution and oppression, and the ability to exercise the rights stipulated in the International

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[16] تقرير التنمية الإنسانية العربية للعام 2009/ تحديات أمن الإنسان في البلدان العربية، الناشر برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي 2009؛ الرابط:

https://arab-hdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ahdr-report_2009-ar-full.pdf

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[17] and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[18]. It includes protection from arbitrary policies regarding searches, surveillance, arrests, torture, and execution. Most experiences indicate that political security for individuals can only be achieved under democratic regimes or systems that adhere to a consensual social contract with the populations they govern.

Political security is ensured by a combination of factors that must be secured by both individuals and governmental and civil institutions, including:

- Political awareness: This refers to the individual's understanding of their political rights and the rights of others within the framework of the constitution or the social contract of the region or democratic state in which they live.

- Protection from arbitrary policies and authoritarian and extremist ideologies.

- Empowerment through providing the means that enable individuals to exercise their political rights, protect them, and defend them, such as elections, media, publications, criticism, protest, litigation, political organization, and more.

There are several factors that threaten an individual's political security, and humanity has long faced challenges in expressing opinions, beliefs, cultures, and shaping their lives accordingly. These challenges arise from the contradictions that sometimes emerge between people's behaviors, beliefs, and goals, despite the fact that contradiction is considered a law of nature according to dialectical theory.

The subjective factors that threaten political security include failing to develop political awareness and not breaking free from ideological extremism, which imposes control over others. Individuals can free themselves from this through

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[17] الأمم المتحدة؛ العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية؛ الرابط:
https://www.ohchr.org/ar/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights
[18] الأمم المتحدة؛ الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان؛ الرابط:
https://www.un.org/ar/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

tolerance and adopting democracy. The objective factors that threaten an individual's political security are authoritarian, extremist, and occupying regimes.

▪ Characteristics of human security:

Human security differs from national security, state security, and international security in several ways, most notably:

1. Human security serves as a fundamental pillar for national, state, and international security, complementing them and being an essential element of their existence. For example, a state may be secure, but the human security of individuals within it may face significant challenges. In many regions, such as the Middle East, the relationship between the state and human security has become unhealthy, with the state becoming a source of threat to individual security.

2. The primary focus of human security is the individual.

3. It has a preventive nature, acting preemptively to confront threats to individuals. Every tool or method used to achieve human security is primarily preventive, making prevention better than cure.

4. It serves as one of the main sources of liberation from fear, political tolerance, and social solidarity.

5. It encompasses both rich and poor societies, as well as developed and underdeveloped ones.

6. The effects on human security are not unidirectional; impacting one dimension of human security leads to negative consequences on other dimensions.

7. Human security is not synonymous with human rights. Human rights are one factor in achieving human security, while human security is a condition for establishing human rights.

8. The loss of human security can be man-made, resulting from poor choices, or it can stem from natural forces, or be a combination of both.

Based on the above, a general definition of human security can be provided: it is a set of actions and measures taken and managed by mature adults of both genders in a manner that ensures individuals are freed from fear, need, harm, and

ignorance, and can live in a safe environment. This is achieved through individuals' access to awareness, protection, and empowerment, allowing them to feel secure and, at the same time, become a source of security for their surroundings, community, and country.

No individual can achieve complete human security because they remain part of their environment and bound by the laws of nature, which they cannot escape. Nonetheless, individuals must be able to achieve and manage the elements upon which their human security is based, primarily by developing awareness that stems from the will of mature individuals capable of taking responsibility for themselves and those they support. In addition, responses must be managed through protection and empowerment, which should be provided not only by mature individuals but also by the administration of the community, region, or state. Protection should come through prevention and problem-solving, and empowerment should enhance people's ability to act on their behalf and on behalf of others.

o **State of human security in Syria:**

Before its crisis, Syria was not in a position where its human security could be assessed as good. This was not due to a lack of resources but rather because of the mindset that governed the Syrian state since its establishment after the liberation from Ottoman occupation. The 2009 Arab Human Development Report[19] criticized most Arab states regarding the state of human security, stating that Arab states, including Syria, were artificial entities that failed to develop good governance, achieve justice in wealth distribution among different groups, or respect cultural diversity. The report held the Arab nationalist movement responsible for suppressing diversity in these countries and assimilating other identities under its authority. According to the report, this policy led those with different identities to seek to free themselves from the national state under which they were governed. In response, regimes imposed more restrictions, control,

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[19] للمزيد انظر: تقرير التنمية الإنسانية العربية للعام 2009/ تحديات آمن الإنسان في البلدان العربية، الناشر برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي 2009؛ الرابط:

https://arab-hdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ahdr-report_2009-ar-full.pdf

exclusion, deprivation, and discrimination, granting extensive powers to security apparatuses that became a pragmatic tool for directing government policies. This led to the failure of most human security projects, which researchers attribute to constitutions framed by ideologies or jurisprudential concepts that allowed rights violations in the name of ideology or sect. This issue was clearly manifested in the Syrian constitution, which subjected the country to the ideology of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, imposing it as the ideology of the state and society[20].

The conditions that followed the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011 witnessed a worsening humanitarian situation across the entire Syrian geography. Crises of pollution, extremism, demographic change, drug trafficking, disease outbreaks, and migration intensified, along with the loss of freedoms, widespread poverty, unemployment, and local conflicts, rendering human security in Syria nearly nonexistent. In other words, the reality of the Syrian crisis has turned the lack of human security into an issue affecting most Syrians in various regions. A UN report[21] confirmed that "at least 12.9 million people in Syria suffered from food insecurity. The conflict remains one of the deadliest for civilians worldwide, killing 454 civilians last year, including 88 women and 115 children. Moreover, over 7 million people are internally displaced..." The WHO report[22] indicated that "the Syrian healthcare system is disrupted, with 65% of Syrian hospitals and 62% of primary healthcare centers either closed or only partially functioning..." A scientific study[23] also highlighted that Syria suffers from severe drought, leading to a deterioration in agriculture and livestock, difficulties in securing drinking water, and increased risks of virus and disease outbreaks, especially cholera, hepatitis, and other inflammatory diseases.

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[20] Same reference p.58

[21] الأمم المتحدة؛ مسؤول أممي يصف الوضع الإنساني في سوريا بـ "السفينة الغارقة" مع تحول أنظار العالم إلى أزمات أخرى؛ الناشر: أخبار الأمم المتحدة؛ تاريخ النشر: 2024.03.22م؛ الرابط:
https://news.un.org/ar/story/2024/03/1129471

[22] World Health Organization (WHO); WHO marks 13 years of the Syrian crisis with renewed commitment and support; 14 March 2024; Link: https://www.emro.who.int/syria/news/who-marks-13-years-of-the-syrian-crisis-with-renewed-commitment-and-support.html

[23] OCHA; Syria: Drought - 2021-2024; Link:
https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2021-000125-syr#:~:text=Related%20Disasters-,Disaster%20description,water%20response%20plan%20of%20September%202021.%20(ECHO%2C%2018%20Jul%202022),-Severe%20drought%20is

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Psychological disorders resulting from the deteriorating living conditions, services, and the loss of a sense of safety are among the consequences of the Syrian crisis and one of the most significant indicators of the lack of human security. This issue especially affects those who have been exposed to or witnessed violence, or were forced to flee their homes. According to the WHO, one out of every ten people in Syria suffers from a mental health condition ranging from mild to moderate, while one out of every 30 Syrians suffers from a severe mental health condition that could have a devastating impact on daily life[24]. According to WHO statistics, 75% of people suffering from mental health issues do not receive any treatment at all[25]. Psychological pressures have led to assertive behavior[26] disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly among displaced women, girls, and boys. What exacerbates this crisis is the lack of specialized doctors in psychiatry and neurology in the country.

Most local governments appear incapable of securing the required dimensions of human security due to power struggles. International sanctions continue to strangle the Syrian regime, and areas under its control are witnessing assassination wars and score-settling. In areas occupied by Turkish forces and their mercenaries in northern and northwestern Syria, there is a lack of stability and security due to demographic changes and the near-daily violations committed by armed mercenary groups. The chaos of widespread weapons and the absence of the rule of law[27], along with ongoing power struggles, have led to

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[24] World Health Organization (WHO); Mental health; Link:
https://www.emro.who.int/syria/priority-areas/mental-health.html

[25] World Health Organization (WHO); WHO-supported mobile teams deliver mental health care in Syria; 14 October 2020; Link: https://www.emro.who.int/syria/news/who-supported-mobile-teams-deliver-mental-health-care-in-syria.html

[26] Assertive behavior is "an individual's ability to appropriately express any emotion toward others, except anxiety, and that a decrease in assertive behavior exposes the individual to many problems that hinder their psychological and social adjustment. This negatively reflects in various physical and behavioral forms. An individual who is unable to express their negative emotions in situations that require it feels dissatisfaction, and this increases their feelings of loneliness, depression, anxiety, social anxiety, conflict, and psychological disorders..." See ؛أ.د. غسان حسين سالم وأحلام حسين ورة؛ اعداد مقياس لقياس السلوك التوكيدي لدى طلبة جامعة بغداد؛ المجلد المجلد /كلية التربية للبنات- جامعة بغداد- الناشر: (29) 2 (2018.

[27] A recent example of this is the incident of the kidnapping of suspects accused of detonating a car bomb in the market of the city of Azaz on March 31, 2024, by mercenaries from the "Sham Front." They were abducted from Azaz prison and then executed without a judicial trial on April 25, 2024. Afterward, the mercenaries burned the bodies, mutilated them, and dumped them in the city market, while the so-called interim government, affiliated with the Turkish state, was unable to do anything. Muhammed Al-Qadi; Azaz... Field Execution and Burning of Bodies in Turkish-Controlled Areas, https://npasyria.com/184878/

escalations in conflicts, reaching a peak between the so-called National Army and the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra) in the second half of 2023.

In northern and eastern Syria, the region suffers from attacks by ISIS cells, with the al-Hol and Roj camps representing significant threats. Turkish state attacks have also caused extensive destruction of infrastructure and service facilities, depriving over two million people of water and electricity at the beginning of 2024, in violation of international humanitarian law, according to a UN report[28]. The report also stated that 16.7 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian aid, facing unprecedented challenges.

Despite the varying conditions between Syrian regions, the country suffers from many crises, and no area can completely distance itself from them. In the north and east of Syria, there is more flexibility in responding to and managing crises on both individual and institutional levels. However, human security remains vulnerable due to the aggressive policies of regimes and organizations opposed to the social contract of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, along with the impact of climate change and drug trafficking. According to a report by the American magazine Foreign Affairs[29], the Middle East is "drowning in Captagon," accusing the Syrian regime of direct responsibility for this issue.

o **Human security in North and East Syria**

The regions of northern and eastern Syria are generally less tense compared to other Syrian areas. The Autonomous Administration, in cooperation with local communities, has relatively protected the region from destruction and provided services to 5,771,000 citizens[30], establishing relative social peace and political

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[28] United Nations Human Rights Council; United Nations Commission of Inquiry: "In Syria as well, a ceasefire is an urgent demand." https://www.ohchr.org/ar/press-releases/2024/03/un-commission-inquiry-syria-too-desperately-needs-ceasefire

[29] Vanda Felbab-Brown; The Middle East Is Awash in Drugs; Foreign Affairs; 11.04.2024; Link: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/middle-east/middle-east-awash-drugs

[30] د. كسار العلي؛ تقييم مدخلات النظام الصحي في شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: تحالف منظمات المجتمع المدني في شمال وشرق سوريا/ 2024م؛ ص13

stability in most provinces of North and East Syria. Most studies agree that the relative success in achieving aspects of human security, which remain below the desired level, can be attributed to the region's resources, the social contract of the Autonomous Administration, and its partnership with the international coalition to combat terrorism. Despite this, the elements of human security, including awareness, protection, and empowerment, remain relatively weak.

There is a general lack of awareness regarding human security. Through communication with many people in northern and eastern Syria over the years, it has become clear that there is often an unintentional conflation between personal ambitions, political stances, and their human security. Many who have the ability to face human security challenges and think of migrating under the pretense of seeking their human security seem to be influenced by their political orientation or are worried due to propaganda directed against the political and military institutions of northern and eastern Syria by Turkey, Syria, Iran, ISIS, the Muslim Brotherhood, and some local organizations. Watching official TV channels and social media platforms affiliated with these regimes and organizations reveals the nature of this propaganda, along with internal criticism of the weaknesses and shortcomings of the Autonomous Administration's internal policies.

On the other hand, many people find it difficult to know how to defend their rights due to the multiple civil and governmental bodies where legal claims can be filed. Most analyses in this regard point to the security policies implemented by the Syrian regime before 2013, which prioritized state security and Arab national security over the human security of citizens. That is, human security had no place in the regime's domestic policy, leaving the burden of securing their own human security, as well as the security of those they care for, on the shoulders of adults without relying on any government support. This turned the state into a source of human security threats in northern and eastern Syria, where industrial and commercial projects were banned, and the region was forced into an agricultural economy, driving citizens to rely more on household economies to manage their livelihoods. The regime exploited the region's energy resources to develop industrial, commercial, and tourism infrastructure in its stronghold provinces of Aleppo, the coast, Homs, and Damascus, forcing thousands of families to leave their regions in search of new sources of income, especially

during periods of drought that struck northern and eastern Syria. The regime also excluded building academies in the region that would guarantee the development of knowledge among the region's youth. Hence, the regime's policies were aimed at consolidating its control and authority over northern and eastern Syria and the rest of the Syrian regions through a strategy of distraction, that is, keeping citizens busy securing their human security—especially economic, food, and personal security—forcing them into submission to the regime's authority through a combination of fear and hunger. Most of those who adopted positions opposed to the regime faced indefinite physical or psychological torture in prisons and were deprived of work. Therefore, most citizens were unfamiliar with the elements of their human security, including awareness, protection, and empowerment, which has had an impact in the new environment formed after 2014 with the establishment of the Democratic Autonomous Administration, which was supposed to develop these elements but seems to have struggled due to two reasons. First, the lack of ability to attract the necessary number of qualified personnel, many of whom chose to migrate due to the repercussions of the Syrian crisis or took a rigid political stance against the Autonomous Administration. This imposed a significant burden on the qualified individuals working in managing the service facilities, infrastructure, and natural and human resources under the Autonomous Administration. Second, the many defensive battles fought against Turkey, the Syrian regime, ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and the factions of the Muslim Brotherhood, with these forces continually attempting to create economic, political, security, and social problems in northern and eastern Syria through blockades, military operations, inciting local communities against the Autonomous Administration, and stirring ethnic and sectarian divisions among them. They also engaged in demographic changes in the areas occupied by the Turkish military in northern Syria.

Based on the aforementioned, human security in the Autonomous Region of North and East Syria can be described as being in a state of critical relative stability. The region's citizens strive to balance the challenges and requirements of their human security by adopting austerity measures, relying on more than one source of income, and using cost-effective methods. For its part, the Autonomous Administration attempts to address the consequences of the neglect and marginalization policies that the Syrian regime imposed on the region for more

than 50 years while also dealing with the crises caused by the regimes and organizations opposed to the Autonomous Administration and the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, it is trying to rectify its mistakes and weaknesses in managing the response to the growing needs of local communities while combating corruption and organized crime that exploits the conditions resulting from attempts to destabilize the security environment of northern and eastern Syria.

▪ **The Challenges Facing Human Security in the North and East Syria Region:**

The political, economic, and security crises currently unfolding in the Middle East, and specifically in Syria, have created a range of challenges and obstacles in ensuring the fundamental aspects of human security. The situation has reached levels that have rendered the governing systems in most countries in the region unable to confront these issues, forcing them to adopt a policy of preventing circumstances from teetering over the edge. This is a policy that the Autonomous Administration is trying to follow in North and East Syria; however, it has resulted in increased burdens on citizens to secure their human safety and confront challenges obstructing the realization of its dimensions. Undoubtedly, there are many challenges, and it is necessary to tackle them progressively, starting with the most impactful ones and choosing the appropriate response strategy for each. Therefore, the most prominent challenges facing each dimension of human security in North and East Syria will be discussed as follows:

1. Economic Security:

Agriculture used to be the main economic resource for most of the people in the region, which is characterized by fertile lands, where the area of arable and effectively cultivated land is about 2,300,000 hectares[31]. The main crops grown are wheat, barley, lentils, cotton, yellow corn, and among vegetables, tomatoes; and among fruit trees, the olive tree. Agriculture served as a source of income for a wide range of citizens in terms of investment, job opportunities, and trade,

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[31] د. عبد الرحيم خليف؛ تقرير واقع القطاع الزراعي في شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: تحالف منظمات المجتمع المدني في شمال وشرق سوريا/ آذار 2024م- قامشلو؛ ص6.

especially in the absence of an industrial economy due to the policies of the Syrian regime. Agriculture significantly deteriorated after the area faced waves of drought and desertification due to decreased rainfall, pushing citizens to look for other sources of income.

Currently, the citizens of North and East Syria rely on more than one source of income to secure their economic situation, with average wages for workers across various sectors being around three dollars a day. This amount is insufficient to meet various living, health, and service needs. Most citizens have adapted to this situation by using several strategies, including cutting expenses, taking on additional jobs, maintaining family solidarity, and developing home-based economies in line with new circumstances. Supporting these strategies is the continued operation of social solidarity systems that provide financial assistance among local communities under various names: help, zakat, charity, and interest-free loans, in addition to services and job opportunities offered by the Autonomous Administration within their capabilities.

One of the main challenges facing the economic security of individuals in the region is:

1) The lack of a law for workers in the public and private business sectors in North and East Syria, which is a constant source of concern for employees in these sectors.

2) The limited scope of job opportunities available in the area due to the absence of diverse investment projects. The well-known reason for this is the ongoing attempts by opposing regimes and organizations against Autonomous Administration to create an unsafe environment for investing capital and establishing economic projects. This was clearly evident in the Turkish attacks on North and East Syria in early 2024 and the continuous threats against the region, along with the extortion tactics used by ISIS cells against traders in some rural areas.

3) Climate change, as agriculture and livestock farming continue to be professions pursued by a significant portion of the population. This sector has been severely affected by drought waves that hit the region, which has become a serious challenge to economic development due to its threat to a large area that

constitutes 60% of the total arable land[32]. In the years 2021 and 2022, there were even instances where yellow corn was mixed with flour to cover the need for bread, as securing livestock feed became difficult, leading to an increase in unemployment during that period. Additionally, agricultural and animal pests have plagued many areas in the region. For instance, the Agriculture and Irrigation Authority within the Autonomous Administration[33] mobilized its efforts to combat diseases recently appearing in strategic crops like rust and blight, along with powdery mildew and the spread of pests, particularly the locusts. They defined the operational mechanism for advisory units to guide farmers in fighting these diseases in fields that reached the threshold economic level[34].

4) The lack of savings among most citizens due to the high cost of living, as their income barely covers their daily needs. Things are even tougher for individuals supporting minors, the sick, or those unable to take on additional work due to health issues or other circumstances. This is considered one of the main obstacles to starting small private projects that could enhance individual economic security.

5) The difficulty of securing fuel and its high prices, which impact economic returns in the investment field, creating a gap between investment costs and returns.

What exacerbates these challenges is the low economic awareness among citizens or the failure to develop it, as a culture of dependency or a tendency to migrate is still prevalent among some. This may stem from the despair caused by the continued worsening of the Syrian crisis; however, the culture of resisting negative conditions and managing them according to available resources remains dominant among the general public. On the other hand, Autonomous Administration still lacks clear plans to ensure protection and empowerment for the region's citizens. According to the recommendations of the report on the state of the agricultural sector in North and East Syria[35], the Autonomous Administration must exert greater efforts to support the agricultural sector. The

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[32] Same reference p.7

[33] وكالة أنباء هاوار؛ توجيه من هيئة الزراعة والري لمكافحة حشرة السونة في إقليم شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: وكالة أنباء هاوار؛ تاريخ النشر: 2024.04.14م؛ الرابط:
https://hawarnews.com/ar/توجيه-من-هيئة-الزراعة-والري-لمكافحة-حشرة-السونة-في-إقليم-شمال-وشرق-سوريا/

[34] The economic threshold: an economic principle used in defense of plant health, referring to the maximum load of pests, animals, or plants that a crop can endure without suffering any economic damage, meaning "the cost of intervention should not exceed the value of the damage caused by the pest".

[35] انظر: د. عبد الرحيم خليف؛ تقرير واقع القطاع الزراعي في شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: تحالف منظمات المجتمع المدني في شمال وشرق سوريا/ آذار 2024.قامشلو -م

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security challenges it faces may exceed its capacity to achieve this, which necessitates greater and unconventional efforts to tackle these challenges. This could be achieved by selecting strategic competencies capable of conducting studies, analyses, and responses to emerging crises outside the scope of political consensus among the political powers of the North and East Syria region, as this relates to human security and, consequently, the national security of the components of North and East Syria.

2. Food Security:

Due to the challenges facing economic security, many citizens have given up the habit of stockpiling food or cut back on certain items; despite the availability of various food products in the region, most are not subjected to rigorous health inspections. The Autonomous Administration has attempted to address this issue by establishing a food lab in Al-Hasakah, but this is not enough to cover all markets in Northeast Syria. The situation relies on the integrity of traders, the level of food awareness among citizens, and the efficiency of monitoring committees.

Food security can be evaluated as below the desired level, yet it is acceptable compared to the circumstances the region is going through. Most citizens can secure the minimum of their food needs[36] during peacetime, and no reports of a famine disaster have emerged in the region of North and East Syria. The region has not yet experienced any famines or widespread malnutrition or a lack of food items in the markets. Almost every village or rural area has livestock, whether cows, sheep, or goats, and their cheeses, milks, wool, and meats provide a source of income for a significant portion of the residents of those villages and rural areas. According to statistics from 2022:

Relief organizations and social welfare still provide food aid to a considerable number of those in need, in addition to the services offered by the Autonomous Administration in securing food.

Among the most notable challenges facing individual food security in the region are:

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[36]" Nutrient Requirements" are the minimum amount of nutrients a person needs to maintain normal functions and overall health. For more information, see: Dr. Nehal Mohamed Abdel Meguid et al.; Food Culture; First Edition/2015; Publisher: Al-Falah Library for Publishing and Distribution/Kuwait; p. 14.

1) Challenges to individual economic security, which result in many being unable to secure sufficient quantities of food and supplies.

2) The lack of development or enhancement of the health monitoring system and quality standards of the Autonomous Administration for the various food products that enter or are produced in the region.

3) Difficulty in securing flour, bread, cooking gas, and fuels due to the self-administration's inability to overcome the security and political conditions imposed on the area, which hinder large-scale investment in the oil and gas rights widespread in Northeast Syria. Current production operations from oil and gas fields barely meet local consumption needs. Recent Turkish shelling on energy stations in Rumailan has led to a significant crisis in the fuel sector in Northeast Syria, prompting the Autonomous Administration to import gas from outside the region.

4) Difficulty in securing drinking water in many areas for various reasons, including the self-administration's failure to respond to these crises more effectively, alongside the local production's inability to meet the region's needs and the challenge of importing from abroad due to political considerations. Furthermore, there are no ready projects to draw water from the Tigris River to the Jazeera region. The Turkish state has also played a destructive role in this context, creating difficulties in securing drinking water for over a million citizens in the Jazeera region due to its closure of the Allouk water station in Ras al-Ain/Serekaniye, which it has occupied since 2019 and its deliberate reduction of the Euphrates River's water level, causing a major crisis for many farmers along the river in Northeast Syria and leading to the suspension of electricity generation from the Euphrates Dam. Earlier this year, it bombed grain silos and several small and medium-sized projects and gas and oil stations in the Rumailan area[37].

Moreover, the decrease in rainfall over the past years has led to a drop in groundwater levels, surface water bodies, and storage dams, significantly affecting

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[37] للاطلاع على التقارير الموثقة عن هذه الاعتداءات انظر:

هبة زيادين؛ القصف التركي يعيث خرابا في شمال شرق سوريا/ تضرر البنية التحتية الحيوية وملايين السكان بلا خدمات أساسية؛ الناشر: Human Rights Watch؛ تاريخ النشر: 2024.02.09م؛ الرابط:

https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2024/02/09/turkiyes-strikes-wreak-havoc-northeast-syria

سوريون من أجل الحقيقة والعدالة؛ 158 منظمة سورية تدين الاستهداف التركي للمنشآت المدنية في شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: سوريون من أجل الحقيقة والعدالة؛ تاريخ النشر: 2023.12.28م؛ الرابط:

https://stj-sy.org/ar/158/للـ-التركي-الاستهداف-تدين-سورية-منظمة-

the agriculture and animal husbandry sectors due to reduced available grazing land and rising feed costs. A report indicated a drop in livestock numbers in 2022 compared to previous years and a rise in the prices of their products, which seems to have contributed to a greater reliance on poultry:

	Cows	Sheep	Poultry
Year	Number (in thousands)	Number (in thousands)	Number
2022	122	1700	380
2021	143	2100	360
2020	150	3000	236
Statistics on livestock in the region of North and East Syria ([38])			

According to a study[39], livestock exposed to drought waves are prone to various types of fevers such as brucellosis, foot-and-mouth disease, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, and smallpox, along with issues like salt deficiency, liver worms, head worm disease, scabies, and pasteurellosis, among others. What exacerbates these challenges is the lack of nutritional awareness among citizens, or at least the failure to develop it, especially since many who migrated from villages have almost abandoned their traditional food culture[40], which was built on a legacy of hundreds of years of experiences, marked by periods of prosperity and deprivation, passed down through generations. Additionally, the self-management system has not incorporated food security into its strategic plans

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[38] د. عبد الرحيم خليف؛ تقرير واقع القطاع الزراعي في شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: تحالف منظمات المجتمع المدني في شمال وشرق سوريا/ آذار 2024م- قامشلو.

[39] تيم الحاج؛ الجفاف يهدد المجتمعات الرعوية في سوريا؛ الناشر: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace؛ تاريخ النشر: 30 أيار 2023م؛ الرابط:

https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/89848

[40] The concept of food culture isn't much different from the general idea of culture. An individual's food culture is a social heritage and eating habits that have been ingrained in people's minds, becoming part of their identities... You can assess an individual's food culture through the dietary behaviors they practice .
Dr. Nehal Mohamed Abdel-Majeed et al.; Food Culture; 1st edition/2015; Publisher: Al-Falah Library for Publishing and Distribution/Kuwait; p. 204.

independently, often linking it with economic security or agricultural and livestock wealth development. Despite the interdependent relationship between them, there is no dedicated system for food security that clearly focuses on awareness, protection, and empowerment.

3. Health Security:

Individuals in urban areas enjoy relatively better health and medical services compared to rural and remote areas. The citizens of the region face significant difficulties in achieving their health security due to the challenges in securing prevention against various diseases, stemming from objective factors related to climate change, the spread of epidemics within the country or coming from outside, and the Turkish bombardment that targeted many health and medical centers in Northern and Eastern Syria at the beginning of this year, causing damage to the targeted medical facilities[41] after disrupting oxygen supplies to more than 12 private and public hospitals. Additionally, airstrikes on 38 health facilities disrupted their services, exacerbating the risk of waterborne diseases; this also put laboratory and X-ray services at risk. A coalition of civil society organizations in Northern and Eastern Syria has warned that the scale of the damage far exceeds the humanitarian community's capacity to continue providing lifesaving emergency services. Despite this, no waves of epidemics have been recorded, and access to medical services has somewhat continued. The region has a considerable number of medical and health centers; in 2023, there were 147 clinics providing services to 2,186,476 citizens, 20 qualified public hospitals serving 1,463,425 citizens, and 59 qualified private hospitals serving 167,549 citizens[42].

Social solidarity often plays a notable role in covering healthcare expenses, in addition to the free services provided by the self-management for various medical conditions such as cardiac, ocular, and renal diseases, and other laboratories,

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[41] OCHA/relief web; Situation Report #3, January 26th, 2024: Escalation of Hostilities Targeting Critical Civilian Infrastructures in Northeast Syria; 29 Jan 2024; Link:
https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/situation-report-3-january-26th-2024-escalation-hostilities-targeting-critical-civilian-infrastructures-northeast-syria

[42] انظر: د. كسار العلي؛ تقييم مدخلات النظام الصحي في شمال وشرق سوريا؛ الناشر: تحالف منظمات المجتمع المدني في شمال وشرق سوريا/ 2024م.

although their numbers don't cover the entire region. There is also a growing trend toward transitioning to solar energy for electricity generation, which could reduce air and noise pollution, especially in cities.

One of the biggest challenges facing individual health security in the region is:

1) The challenges related to economic security and food security for individuals.

2) The relative shortage of specialized healthcare centers in the region; for instance, according to a study published by a coalition of civil society organizations in Northern and Eastern Syria in 2024[43], The Al-Jazeera region (which is the largest province in the area) still needs 1,065 doctors, 1,543 nurses, and 50 health centers to achieve a relatively complete health security. There are only two public hospitals specializing in cardiology in the Jazeera and Kobani provinces, and four private hospitals in the Manbij and Raqqa provinces[44]. There's only one public hospital for ophthalmic diseases in Jazeera and one private hospital in Manbij. Furthermore, there are seven public dialysis centers in Kobani, Raqqa, Deir Al-Zor, Manbij, and Tabqa, but no private hospitals available. Additionally, there are three specialized thalassemia centers in Raqqa, Deir Al-Zor, and Manbij, with no private centers. The region also lacks mental health facilities, cancer centers, and drug manufacturing labs.

3) Pollution: Citizens are exposed to high levels of air and noise pollution in many cities due to most of them relying on diesel generators for electricity. This issue worsened after the Turkish bombing destroyed the thermal power station in Suwaida countryside earlier this year and disrupted the functioning of the hydroelectric station at the Euphrates Dam following decreased water levels, which led to the spread of diseases like cholera and intestinal infections in nearby areas. This situation was contained through cooperation between local communities and relevant Autonomous Administration institutions. Moreover, decreasing rainfall and increasing drought rates, especially in summer, have contributed to rising levels of various air pollutants like harmful gases, exhaust, dust, and fine particulate matter.

4) Psychological stress: Citizens in the region face significant psychological pressure due to the difficulties in living standards and services, and a relative loss

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[43] Same as the previous reference; p. 32
[44] Same previous reference.

of security, fueled by the scenes of violence they see on social media and news outlets, as well as ongoing threats to the area from opposing regimes and organizations. This leads to fears of losing property, livelihoods, displacement, and losing loved ones. Additionally, the Autonomous Administration lacks a clear plan and strategy to address the consequences of these pressures, leading to a gap between the mental health needs of the population and the services and interventions provided, due to the shortage of mental health specialists—there are only four psychiatrists in the region[45], two in The Al-Jazeera region and two in Raqqa, alongside a lack of psychiatric medications. During visits to several clinics in Qamishli and Hasakah, one can observe overcrowding with patients, sometimes requiring days to get an appointment with a doctor. When asked about how they address psychological pressures in patient evaluations, a cardiology specialist confirmed they primarily focus on lab test results, CT scans, MRIs, and heart condition measurements at the time of examination, with treatment interventions based on these assessments. The same goes for joint and internal diseases, indicating insufficient interest in psychological treatment, meaning the underlying cause may be psychological rather than organic, especially since there's a connection between psychological symptoms like depression and anxiety and medically unexplained physical symptoms such as muscle stiffness, headaches, back pain, hypertension, ulcers, and others, highlighting a relative lack of specialties related to psychosomatic disorders[46]. Joint efforts have been made between the Autonomous Administration and the World Health Organization to support associations and organizations involved in psychological rehabilitation and support; however, these efforts have not bridged the gap in mental health services.

5) Climate change has made heatwaves and droughts some of the most extreme weather phenomena affecting northern and eastern Syria. These conditions have caused serious complications for patients with heart, vascular, and respiratory issues, and have also created an environment ripe for the spread of various viral diseases. Complicating these problems are the difficulties in securing cooking gas

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[45] Same previous reference; p. 17.

[46] Psychosomatic disorders (which are psychological/physical) basically mean that a person has a lot of psychological stress factors, which in turn reflect on their physical aspects. This can manifest as illnesses like: stomach ulcers, feelings of nausea, or even sexual dysfunction, as well as duodenal ulcers, colon ulcers, asthma, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, and more ...

For more information, see: Dr. Mohamed Hassan Ghanem; A Brief Guide to Psychosomatic Disorders; Publisher: Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop - Cairo/2015; no edition number.

and electricity needed for cooling, food preservation, water filtration, and pumping.

What exacerbates these challenges is the inability of citizens to align their health awareness with their lived reality. The struggles to meet daily needs, rising prices, general pollution beyond their control, and the lack of electricity throughout the day push them to lower their guard, reducing adherence to health precautions that could protect their health. On another front, there's a challenge in providing adequate protection and empowerment, as the demand for specialized healthcare centers, labs, and radiology clinics in each province often exceeds what self-management can handle due to continuous threats from opposing regimes and groups. However, this doesn't prevent strategic plans from being developed in collaboration with international health organizations and health institutions in non-opposing countries like France, the United States, the Netherlands, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to secure assistance or part of the funding, expertise, and protection.

What gives hope for overcoming this dilemma is the existence of medical faculties in Rojava and Al-Sharq universities, which can supply the necessary medical staff for the region in the long term, amidst a need to establish more colleges, nursing schools, and other health institutes. The region still needs: 3,699 doctors, 3,274 nurses, and 139 health centers, according to a coalition of civil society organizations in northern and eastern Syria, to ensure effective protection and empowerment for achieving individual health security. Even though the conditions for the region's citizens are relatively better than in other parts of the country, health security still requires more support and assistance.

4. Environmental Security:

The environment in the northern and eastern Syria region lacks biodiversity due to factors related to climate change, the politicization of the Turkish water issue crossing into Syria, and the absence of infrastructure for environmental projects and development. This is a result of the negligence of the Syrian regime during its control over the area, leading to a contraction of the rural economy and increased migration from rural areas to cities. This has placed a heavy burden on the self-administration, especially since environmental issues are a key pillar of its social contract.

There are several factors in the individual's surrounding environment that can cause harm in various ways. For example, residents in the cities of northern and eastern Syria face significantly higher pollution levels than those in rural areas, due to the rapid urban lifestyle imposed by the Syrian crisis. Since the region lacks an industrial economy, the impacts of oil processing activities are relatively concentrated in specific areas. Most pollution and waste in the region stem from two main sources: internal combustion engines used in transport vehicles and electricity generation processes, as well as waste from various consumed materials. While the issue of transporting waste to designated landfills by local municipalities seems to be under relative control, the pollution generated by internal combustion engines is difficult to manage, particularly with the rising demand for electricity and the growth of commercial activity in the region, making cars essential in daily life.

Overall, the environmental policies of the Autonomous Administration on the ground have not lived up to the theoretical principles of its social contract, which aims to ensure environmental security for individuals in northern and eastern Syria, and still fall short of global standards due to a lack of adequate resources to mitigate environmental pollution. Despite this, there are efforts being made by the Environmental Authority within the democratic Autonomous Administration[47] through afforestation initiatives, awareness and cleanup campaigns, addressing construction violations, and building parks, although much more is needed.

Some of the main challenges facing environmental security in the region are:

1) The challenges affecting individual economic security, food security, and health security.

2) Drought, which is a significant factor hindering the expansion and density of vegetation. It has led to its decline in recent years, along with an increase in dust and fine particles in the air.

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[47] AANES MEDIA للعام البيئة هيئة مشاريع أبرز ... سوريا وشرق شمال مياه تحليل مشروع ؛2024 :النشر تاريخ ؛2024.01.21 ؛م
الرابط:
https://aanesgov.org/ar/?p=10098

3) The aggressive stance of the Turkish state towards the regions of northern and eastern Syria has resulted in reduced flow rates of the Euphrates River, deteriorating the surrounding environment along its course. This has negatively impacted the operation of hydropower stations in the river's dams and has led to the drying up of the Khabur River and most of the smaller rivers that used to flow into northern Syria. Additionally, the deliberate bombing of infrastructure and power stations has caused environmental pollution.

4) The limited financial capabilities of the Autonomous Administration to implement environmental projects and develop the environment. Their plans are still focused on emergency measures to contain environmental degradation and prevent its spread at larger rates. Some of their decisions have negatively impacted the environment, such as allowing the import of a large number of vehicles, the absence of recycling and desalination stations for water, waste treatment, a lack of expansion in creating artificial forests, and not adopting solar energy, in both photovoltaic and thermoelectric forms, as a strategy for securing the energy sector to reduce reliance on internal combustion engines for the region's energy needs.

Despite the fact that most of the region's residents have an environmental awareness stemming from their rural culture, they face circumstances that exceed their ability to safeguard their environmental security and address the harm they may encounter in their environment, especially urban dwellers. Many pollution sources have turned into income sources for many, leaving them with few or no options for replacement amid the difficult living conditions in the region. A significant number of citizens are unable to repair their homes. On the other hand, the Autonomous Administration and local civil society institutions are failing to provide protection and empowerment to achieve environmental security, and international organizations concerned show no effective cooperation with the region. During the summer and winter seasons, citizens struggle to meet their energy needs for cooling, heating, and lighting using diesel, gas, and electricity. Preventing air pollution is difficult, and sometimes trash can remain for over a day before being collected, attracting insects, stray dogs, and scavengers. Many roads suffer from potholes and wear, and sometimes dead animals hit by cars stay on the roads for days amidst the indifference of passersby and the related institutions responsible for their removal. There are no laws to limit auditory and visual

pollution, and even if there are relevant decisions, they are not implemented as required. Undoubtedly, what gives hope for supporting environmental security in the region is the continuous commitment of the Autonomous Administration to consider environmental development as one of its main pillars, and it is still proceeding with its projects, albeit at a slow pace.

5. Personal security:

Overall, personal security seems relatively preserved in the Northeastern Syria region, thanks to the multiple entities providing protection and defense. For example, for women, there are security forces and military organizations along with civil rights institutions specifically for them (like the Women's Asayish, Women's Protection Units, and Women's House, among others). There's been a qualitative development in the work of internal security forces; the social contract of the Autonomous Administration in Northeastern Syria has created cultural, political, and social conditions that have led local communities to manage their own affairs in their areas under administrative systems known as Autonomous Administration for the province, away from the party authoritarianism that Syrians suffered from during the Syrian regime's control. This has resulted in a decrease in hate speech stemming from national, religious, and sectarian extremism, forcing those extremists to operate secretly as cells opposing self-administration, rendering them incapable of imposing their ideas on the general public. On the other hand, communes and local councils have played a role in achieving civil peace, and the region remains almost free of organized crime networks, all of which positively affects an individual's personal security. Therefore, it can be said that personal security is relatively preserved in the social environment, although certain cases may arise where personal security is threatened due to motives of revenge, settling scores, falling victim to fraud, or professional negligence. One might also find themselves in a place exposed to a dangerous event due to personal or political disputes, bombing, explosions, natural disasters, or traffic accidents, or incidents caused by negligence in the law enforcement activities of the Autonomous Administration or insufficient legislative and executive decisions. Additionally, individuals may put their personal security at risk by engaging with narcotics or following ideologies contrary to the societal culture or opposing civil peace framed by the social contract, which could lead them to commit dangerous acts that jeopardize their lives or the lives of their social environment. Thus, it can

be said that the components of personal security for the region's citizens face a range of challenges, the most notable of which are:

1) The personal aspects of challenges facing economic security, food security, health security, and environmental security for the individual.

2) A lack of awareness about the dangers threatening personal security in the surrounding environment.

3) Difficulty in communication between the individual and law enforcement agencies, either due to the individual's political stance or due to professional negligence by some of those working in those agencies.

4) Armed operations carried out by regimes and groups opposing Autonomous Administration that do not distinguish between the administration and its citizens, with most victims of these operations being civilians; even in the occupied areas of Afrin, Kobani/Tal Abyad, and Ras al-Ain, those remaining from the original populations still face arbitrary arrests on the grounds of having previously worked in one of the Autonomous Administration institutions[48].

5) The insufficiency of the decisions and laws of the Autonomous Administration in responding to complaints or addressing violations: whether they are traffic, construction, import, supply, or infrastructure maintenance violations, etc.

6. Political Security:

There's a significant issue with the concept of political security due to the complexities surrounding the idea of politics itself. If we approach politics as a social phenomenon, it can be defined as "the development of society through the free management of its affairs, ensuring the advancement of individualism within it."[49] This means that society becomes aware of itself and its identity, both in

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[48] للاطلاع على بعض التقارير التي توثق هذه الحالات انظر:

سوريون من أجل الحقيقة والعدالة؛ عفرين: اعتقال ما لا يقل عن 73 شخصاً بينهم 5 سيدات خلال شباط 2020؛ تاريخ النشر: 2020.03.06م؛ الرابط:

https://stj-sy.org/ar/عفرين-اعتقال-ما-لا-يقل-عن-73-شخصاً-بينهم-5-س/

المرصد السوري لحقوق الإنسان؛ بتهمة التعامل مع "الإدارة الذاتية" سابقاً.. اعتقال مواطنين اثنين من قبل الاستخبارات التركية والشرطة العسكرية بريف عفرين؛ تاريخ النشر: 2024.03.28م؛ الرابط:

https://www.syriahr.com/708176/5-ساب-الذاتية-الإدارة-مع-التعامل-بتهمة/

[49] عبد الله أوجالان؛ مانيفستو الحضارة الديمقراطية: القضية الكردية وحل الأمة الديمقراطية؛ المجلد الخامس؛ ترجمة: زاخو شيار؛ الطبعة الثانية2014؛ ص31.

thought and practice, and develops and defends these aspects. This applies to all members of society, and dogmatism and extremism in beliefs can lead to many problems due to the inability of individuals to understand and appropriately respond to ongoing political developments.

Most organizations and individuals who do not support the social contract of Autonomous Administration in the North and East of Syria are seen as politically persecuted for ideological reasons. The Autonomous Administration has often faced criticism from human rights organizations based on their reports. Generally, political security in any political entity relates to the legitimacy of that entity. In the case of the Autonomous Administration, a lot of debate surrounds it; it is considered a legitimate entity by most local communities based on its social contract and the services it provides, as well as the protection it offers its citizens. Citizens respond to its decisions and adhere to its laws while seeking assistance from it. However, for the citizens in the region who support the Syrian, Turkish, and Iranian regimes, as well as ISIS, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Qaeda, the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat al-Nusra), and the Kurdish National Council and other groups opposing self-administration, they strive to undermine its legitimacy and engage in activities that can destabilize the area as long as it harms self-administration. The international community, on the other hand, treats Autonomous Administration as a non-governmental actor[50] and interacts with it through international organizations and the coalition against ISIS.

What's important is that the laws of Autonomous Administration have declared their commitment to human rights charters and incorporated this into their social contract. They have made many strides in civil peace, ensuring that all components enjoy their culture, learn in their languages, express their opinions and beliefs freely[51], and establish parties. Despite this, political security cannot be

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[50] For example, this matter was mentioned in a UN report: Statement by Mr. Paulo Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, during the 54th session of the UN Human Rights Council; Publisher: United Nations; Publication date: September 22, 2023; Link: https://www.ohchr.org/ar/statements/2023/09/statement-paulo-pinheiro-chair-independent-international-commission-inquiry

[51] Some of the articles from the Social Contract:
Article 6: All languages spoken in the geography of North and East Syria are equal in all aspects of social, educational, and cultural life; every people or cultural group has the right to organize their life and manage their affairs in their mother tongue.

considered guaranteed in the North and East of Syria. Many rural residents of Deir Al-Zor have received threats from ISIS due to their support for self-administration, and numerous extremists from regimes and organizations opposing Autonomous Administration pose a threat to the political security of most residents in the region, as they lack a democratic project. The violations committed by the Turkish and Syrian regimes, ISIS, and the Muslim Brotherhood in occupied or controlled areas strongly indicate this issue. What's surprising is that most of the criticism directed at Autonomous Administration institutions fundamentally stems from their measures to protect the region's security. However, there is often a mix-up between criticism that arises from a political stance opposing Autonomous Administration and that from constructive political critiques of this administration. The root of the problem lies in the generally low political awareness, as most opponents of Autonomous Administration have failed to establish a democratic opposition entity capable of objectively voicing their political stances, which does not serve the regimes and organizations against the region's communities. Many of them live under the umbrella of Autonomous Administration and engage in political activities freely, yet Autonomous Administration has not managed to create a political climate that achieves this. Therefore, there is a significant issue with the concept of political security and challenges in analyzing its elements represented by awareness, protection, and empowerment due to the political landscape's complexity in the region. Without achieving complete stability in the area, no accurate assessments of political security can be made.

▪ Summary and Suggestions:

The self-defense system to protect human existence is at the core of the human security concept. Just as living beings cannot sustain their lives without food or reproduction, they also cannot continue to live in the absence of self-defense. Armed struggle is not the only means of self-defense; there are many other

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Article 13: Decisions that directly affect components must be based on the principle of consensus.

Article 29: Fair representation for all components in the institutions of the Democratic Self-Administration according to the demographics of the districts.

Article 60: Cultural, ethnic, and religious groups have the right to establish and organize their democratic institutions and maintain their cultures. No individual or component has the right to impose their beliefs, ideas, or culture on others by force.

For more articles, see: Hawar News Agency; the new social contract for the Democratic Self-Administration of North and East Syria; publication date: 2023.12.13; link: https://hawarnews.com/ar-العقد-الاجتماعي-الجديد-للإدارة-الذاتية/ الديمقراطية-لإقليم-شمال-وشرق-سوريا

mechanisms, including awareness, community, and ethics. Threats do not only come from a violent armed enemy but also from exploitation, repression of rights, monopolization, oppression, ignorance, illusions, drug addiction, extremism, and so on.

Regardless of the impact of ideological propaganda, human security is the main determinant of human behavior and thinking. People's stances often reflect their direction, and a lack of human security is a primary condition for revolutions. Experiences sometimes show that human hopes can be subjected to illusions caused by ideological promises that have become bygone. People often find their human security and that of their dependents tied to the authority of the ideology they believe in, even if they face dangers and tragedies in pursuing it. For example, most of those interviewed from ISIS were entirely convinced that the success of the organization's "Caliphate Project" would bring immense good to humanity, thus justifying the hardships they endured and the brutal acts they committed against others in its pursuit. Most studies agree that poverty and injustice are the main underlying reasons for joining extremist groups, just as they are key reasons for revolutions. However, the paradox lies in the fact that extremist groups dress themselves in the guise of revolution. While authoritarian regimes use policies of starvation, ignorance, and fear to subjugate the populations they govern, democratic systems do the opposite by promoting awareness, protection, and empowerment to ensure their continuity.

On the other hand, most commercial advertising now focuses on creating a perception of their products that does not harm any aspect of human security. Words like savings, health, environment, and safety are commonly circulated in promotional activities. Human security is an essential part of strategic planning and is considered a controversial issue for different ideologies. Its perspective varies from person to person; for instance, one might find economic security in applying religious sciences to their life, while others turn to secular sciences, and some might find economic security through their professional practice.

Regardless, human security is an existential issue for individuals and adheres to the convictions that shape their thinking in achieving their human security

dimensions to secure their lives. Alternatively, they may follow promises to achieve it, based on the available elements: awareness, protection, and empowerment, according to the political, economic, and cultural geography in which a person lives. Therefore, relativity is a key condition in assessing the extent to which a person enjoys their human security in any given geography.

Based on this, we can consider the citizens of the region to have a limited ability to respond to the challenges facing their economic, food, and personal security, while struggling with health, environmental, and political security challenges. The response rate depends on the situation allowed by the security, political, and economic conditions in the area; it's good compared to other Syrian regions but weak when measured against international human security standards.

Human security in the north and east of Syria reflects a deteriorating state of human development[52] in some aspects and stagnation in others, caused by various subjective and objective factors discussed in the research. It's hard to rely solely on statistics and data given the many obstacles and challenges faced. Therefore, to improve the response rate to human security challenges in this region, there needs to be a focus on achieving and then developing its components, which include awareness, protection, and empowerment. In the case of regional communities, based on the experiences they have lived through over the past decade, being open to knowledge and democratic principles and committing to ethics are key factors in developing these components. It's essential for responsible individuals and the institutions managing community affairs to take action accordingly. From what has been observed on the ground, certain things need to be secured through the combined efforts of individuals, society, and institutions, including:

1. The Autonomous Administration must provide all necessary tools and means to develop knowledge awareness in all areas, and citizens need to be open to this. It's a primary condition for understanding and accurately interacting with the world around us, which would support aspects of human security.

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[52] The United Nations Development Program introduced the concept of "human development" for the first time in the Human Development Report of 1990, stating: "Human development is a process aimed at expanding the choices available to people..." The fundamental choices center around three key aspects: living a long and healthy life, gaining knowledge, and acquiring the resources needed to achieve a decent standard of living...

2. The commune is considered the first line of defense for human security. Interest in the commune has declined since the establishment of self-administration, even though it constitutes one of its pillars. This has led to a decrease in interaction and communication between the commune and the community it manages, so it's essential to bridge the gap between them.

3. Autonomous Administration is more of an administrative entity than a political one, and the social contract it adopts is a social-political charter, not a party document. This fact is difficult for those influenced by the propaganda of opposing systems and organizations to grasp. Autonomous Administration seems to have not given enough attention to conveying this reality to this segment of society, and it should do what is necessary to communicate this truth and create an environment for the emergence of a constructive democratic opposition.

4. Functional neglect is an issue most countries face, and Autonomous Administration institutions are no exception. Conversely, many citizens neglect their supervisory roles; therefore, good governance factors should be provided for institutions to constructively respond to various complaints, criticism, observations, and suggestions.

5. Human resources are like an army that can tackle both natural disasters and the challenges threatening a country's security. There are plenty of human resources in the region, but they haven't been effectively utilized; most development efforts have focused on philosophical and political thought rather than fostering creativity in practical applications. This has mainly relied on improving combat capabilities and countering media warfare, leading many who couldn't adapt to the reality to either migrate or isolate themselves. Therefore, these resources need to be organized into specialized research centers with the right conditions to transform them into a source of energy for development, innovation, construction, managing natural resources, production processes, and infrastructure development.

6. It's been observed that many people invest their money in restaurants and general trading, making it difficult for local management to oversee project implementation. Many creative ideas remain stuck in the heads of their owners. Even if the three parties agree on a specific project, there's still anxiety about the results due to a lack of experience, no compensation for potential losses, or sheer greed. It seems beneficial to draw lessons from the experiences of other nations, like the English during their industrial revolution in the 19th century, which saw

the cooperation of three parties: the government, capital owners, and idea creators. In Northern and Eastern Syria, there are plenty of investment opportunities that could benefit everyone, such as in solar energy—both photovoltaic and thermal—and waste recycling, establishing closed farms, and assembly industries. Turning the equation of government, capital owner, and idea creator into an economic culture in the region through tri-party tenders could help achieve human security for the citizens.

7. Democracy provides a guarantee for civil peace, ensuring peaceful coexistence among diverse political and religious beliefs, as long as it remains a source of reassurance. This serves as a strong deterrent against various threats targeting the region. Therefore, it's essential to keep focusing on applying the theoretical principles of the social contract in reality. One must realize that democracy, which always keeps the political awareness and moral vigilance of societies alive, is the true arena for addressing issues without resorting to war.

8. There are two major problems troubling many citizens: the difficulty in securing medical treatment and housing costs. Many families are turning to borrowing, migrating, engaging in forbidden work, or forming family clusters resembling tribes, appointing the wealthiest among them as leaders. This behavior, while contradicting some traditional tribal values, is a natural response to seek protection and support, highlighting the institutions' failure to fully meet citizens' needs. Therefore, a specific care program for these issues should be established, with management and the community providing the necessary funding and support.

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