



THE DAY AFTER
Supporting Democratic Transition In Syria

**The
Syria Report**

BRUSSELS VII CONFERENCE ON SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF SYRIA AND THE REGION

Side event on Property Rights, Housing, and Early Recovery on Sidelines of the Seventh Brussels Conference

Session Date: June 13, 2023

Time: 12:00 PM - 02:00 PM CET

The Syrian conflict, which began in 2011, has witnessed numerous violations of land, housing, and property rights by various controlling forces. Of particular concern is the Syrian regime's efforts to legitimize these violations through a series of real estate legislation.

These violations have had a direct impact on the return of Syrian refugees to their home country, as Security Council Resolution 2254 emphasizes the return of displaced individuals and refugees to their "areas of origin." However, the imposition of security approvals on real estate transactions and restrictions on property disposal have hindered this process.

What is alarming is the recent agreement by the Security Council to renew cross-border aid entry to areas outside the regime's control, under the condition of using the term "early recovery." This term aligns with the regime's interpretation of the "reconstruction" process. The inclusion of this term may provide the regime with the means to expedite reconstruction within a legal framework that discriminates against refugees and dissenters.

It is important to note that UN Resolution 2254 of 2015, as well as the European Union and the United States, emphasize that the reconstruction process in Syria should not begin until the conflict is resolved through a political solution. With the absence of progress in this political solution, the rush towards early recovery activities poses an imminent threat to land, housing, and property rights in Syria. This situation coincides with the current stage of Arab countries' engagement with Damascus, which has exploited the catastrophic aftermath of the February 2023 earthquake. All these factors contribute to the financing of early recovery activities, blurring the line between them and reconstruction, and supporting economic stability in Syria under the Syrian regime's influence.

Considering these concerns, The Day After and Syria Report will host a session on the sidelines of the Brussels conference, focusing on housing and property rights, and the potential impact of early recovery activities.

Panellists

Jihad Yazigi: Editor-in-chief of The Syria Report

Anwar Majanni: Legal advisor to The Day After

The debate will be moderated by **Sawsan Abou Zainedin**, the Chief Executive Officer of Madaniya

Session Themes:

1. Violations of housing, land, and property rights affecting displaced and absent individuals.
2. The regime's perspective on early recovery, the risks of conflating it with reconstruction, and the fears of initiating Early Recovery without a political solution.
3. Violations of housing, land, and property rights within the Syrian real estate legal system, including the restrictions imposed by various regime institutions on property disposal.

This session aims to foster discussions and provide insights into the challenges and implications of early recovery activities on housing and property rights in Syria.

Invitees

This event is open to all international and locals who are interested in the file of property and housing rights in Syria including donor countries representatives, humanitarian organizations, .INGOs, civil society organizations, policymakers, researchers, and legal experts

Biographies of panelists

Mr. Jihad Yazigi is the founder and editor of The Syria Report, an online economics news bulletin. He has also published reports on Syria's war economy and decentralisation as well as on the regime's capitalisation on property destruction and reconstruction.

Mr. Anwar Majanni: Technical supervisor and Legal advisor to The Day After, a graduate of the Faculty of Law, University of Aleppo. A practicing lawyer and then judge in Syria, Anwar worked as a legal advisor in a number of international and Syrian organizations over the last few years. His main research interests include judicial independence, property rights, and housing. He chairs the Board of Directors of the Peace and Justice Organization (APJD), and is a member of the Constitutional Committee for Civil Society.

Sawsan Abou Zainedin is an architect and urban development planner by training. Her extensive professional background spans a decade in the development sector and involves a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the manifestations of the Syrian conflict through research and practice. Prior to joining Madaniya, Ms. Abou Zainedin consulted for several notable international organisations, including UN ESCWA, GIZ, the European Institute of Peace, Arab Reform Initiative, and PAX, among other. She has also worked with prominent Syrian

organisations, including the Syrian Centre for Policy Research and the Syrian Women Political Movement.

Organizer

v **The Day After (TDA)** is a Syrian non-profit organization that is working to countering authoritarianism, and support democratic transition in Syria. It adopts the values of human rights in accordance with international conventions and covenants.

v **The Syria Report** is the leading source of reliable economic information on Syria. The website features a large database of news, reports, business profiles, and statistics, and is read by hundreds of decision-makers worldwide. Our publication is completely independent and has no links to any religious, social, or political organisations.