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Jordan Strikes and Israeli Incursions Drive Anger as Diplomacy Advances

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1. The week at a glance

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1. Israel and the south became the week's dominant theme, surging to a quarter of all discussion, driven by Jordan's Daraa strikes and continued Quneitra incursions.
2. People's overall tone stayed deeply negative, while outlet tone was far milder, with the widest gap seen around Suwayda, Jordan's strikes and the coastal ambush.
3. Diplomatic stories, the Iraqi PM's Damascus visit and talk of joining the Mecca Defence Pact, drew cautiously positive reactions, contrasting with grim economic and security news.
4. The media centred its coverage on diplomacy and the Daraa investigation committee, while ordinary Syrians voiced far more anger over Jordan, diesel shortages and Kurdish integration than coverage conveyed.
5. Flash floods in the east and a deadly ambush near Tartus added to a week marked by grief, suspicion and sectarian undertones.

2. What people said

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النقاش هذا الأسبوع تقف عليه قصة واحدة: غارات الأردن الجوية على درعا. الق ظهرت في ٢٣ تحديثاً وكانت حزناً وغضباً من أشد ما شهده الأسبوع بين الناس. تجاورا بوضوح حذر وسائل الإعلام الذي كان أقل سلبية بكثير. ترافق ذلك مع استمرار توغلات إسرائيل في القنيطرة وحربا عبر عدة محاور، ما رفع حصة موضوع «إسرائيل والجنوب» بشكل ملحوظ ليصبح الأبرز هذا الأسبوع. مع احتجاجات تضامنية في حي جورة يدمشق ربطت بوضوح بين الحدثين.

في المقابل، حملت قصص العلاقات الدولية نبرة أكثر هدوءاً في إيجابية أحياناً: زيارة رئيس الوزراء العراقي للدمشق وتمركه الرمزي بصفره مقابين دولار للعلاقات الدينية لاقت ترحيباً واسعاً وكانت من أكثر الردود تفاؤلاً خلال الأسبوع. كما حظي الحديث عن انضمام سوريا إلى تحالف مكة الدفاعي باهتمام منقسم بين حماس دبي ومشكوك حول جدوى العملية أمام إسرائيل.

اختلفت رؤية التناول بين الناس ووسائل الإعلام بشكل لافت هذا الأسبوع: فبينما ركزت التغطية على الدوغمائية والحاجة للتحقيق المشترك بعد غارات درعا. عاد الناس على غضب سياسي أعمق تجاه تقاعس الحكومة في حماية الجنوب، وتجاه أزمة المازوت التي لم تحظ بتغطية لكن رغم أنها أكثر أندية الاتفاقات غضباً. كذلك بقي السخط الكردي العميق في قبادة قسد وحزب العمال الكردستاني بشأن عملية الاندماج حاضراً بقوة في المنشورات بينما وصلته تغطية الحكومة ببيانات رسمية باهتة. في حين لم تتطرق التغطية الأمنية إلى الدعوات الطائفية لتدابير جماعية ضد العلويين بعد كمين طرطوس.

برزت قروقات لغوية ومجتمعية واضحة: المتحدثون بالكردية عثروا عن قهر وتضامن في كثير كوباني لكن أصغاً عن قلق من دمج جاهوش الغلشمني وكوباني ضمن النظام الوطني. بوضنه تكراراً لسياسات تعريب سابقة. بينما غاب الصوبير التغطي بالعربية تقريباً عن هذا النقاش. على السلحل، انقسمت التغطيات بعد كمين طرطوس بين دعوات للإجراءات جماعية ضد الطائفة العلوية وأصوات أقل تدعو للتريث. ما يستدعي المراقبة لما يحمله من هزة طائفية.

من المستجدات اللافتة: القبضات المطاطية في الحسكة وبدر الزور والرقة التي حُلّقت وقيات ورنجوة، وقوبلت بتعليقات تعرح الاستسلام الذيق. بانتقادات ضمنية للصف البنية التحتية. كما لوحظ تكرار شبه حرفي للعبارات الرسمية في خبر إحباط مخطط لاستهداف مصفاة حمص. وهو ما يستدعي تدقيقاً إضافياً دون الجزم بوجود تنسيق مقصود.

The week's stories

- **Fallout continues from Jordanian airstrikes on Daraa, diplomatic tensions with Amman**: The week's most discussed and angriest story, exposing public frustration with government passivity toward both Jordan and Israel.
- **Iraqi PM al-Zaidi's historic Damascus visit and $10M shrine donation**: A rare positive moment, with public focus on the symbolic donation diverging from the media's geopolitical framing.
- **Deadly ambush on customs patrol between Baniyas and Tartus**: Triggered sectarian calls for collective measures against Alawite communities, a theme largely absent from media coverage.
- **Flash floods kill seven and disrupt eastern and northern Syria**: A significant humanitarian event spanning multiple provinces, met with religious resignation rather than political anger.
- **Backlash over decision affecting Rojava and Kobani universities' status**: Shows a deep Kurdish-Arabic divide in attention and framing, with Kurdish anger understated in official coverage.
- **Jordan's balloon-smuggling incident fuels Syrian-Jordanian suspicion**: Public mockery of the claim's retraction found little echo in media coverage focused on the Daraa strikes.

Themes this week

Theme	Share of discussion	People	Outlets	Stories
Israel and the south	24% (+14 pts)	Strongly negative	Leaning negative	16
International relations	12% (+7 pts)	Mostly neutral	Leaning positive	20
Society and daily life	8% (+4 pts)	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	12
Economy and services	3% (-1 pts)	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	11
Security and violence	2% (+0 pts)	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	23
North-east and the Kurdish question	2% (+0 pts)	Leaning negative	Leaning negative	14
Suwayda and the Druze	1% (-4 pts)	Leaning negative	Leaning negative	4
Transitional justice	1% (+0 pts)	Leaning negative	Leaning positive	9
Governance and the new state	1% (+0 pts)	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	4
Refugees and return	0% (+0 pts)	Leaning positive	Leaning positive	5
Other	0% (+0 pts)	Mostly neutral	–	1
Coast and Alawite communities	0% (+0 pts)	Leaning negative	Leaning negative	1

Tone by day

	People	Outlets	Posts analysed
26 October 2026	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	3,624
27 October 2026	Strongly negative	Leaning negative	3,283
28 October 2026	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	4,017
29 October 2026	Mostly neutral	Mostly neutral	3,245
30 October 2026	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	4,897
31 October 2026	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	3,036
1 November 2026	Leaning negative	Mostly neutral	4,805

Each update analyses a sample of up to 800 posts from the previous 24 hours, so one post can be counted in several updates. Compare days with each other rather than reading the figures as numbers of posts.

3. Topic gap: people and the media

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Measured: each area's share of attention

Security
More from the media
People 51%
Media 57%

Economy and daily life
About the same
People 19%
Media 20%

Governance and politics
More from people
People 30%
Media 23%

Share of people's own posts and comments on the tracker's stories in each area (outlets not counted), next to the share of the media reports filed under each area, over 26 October 2026 to 1 November 2026: 9,864 post analyses and 1,045 reports. Areas group the tracker's themes: security (security, Israel and the south, the coast, Suwayda); economy and daily life (economy, refugees, society); governance and politics (governance, justice, the north-east, international relations).

What people talked about most

1. Jordan strikes allleged militant sites in southern Syria after Karak church attack 22% of people's posts on average
2. Heavy rains and flash floods hit Raqqa, Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor 8% of people's posts on average
3. Iraqi PM Ali al-Zaidi makes historic first visit to Damascus 4% of people's posts on average
4. Foreign Minister Shaibani addresses Manama Dialogue on security, Israel and Gulf alliances 2% of people's posts on average
5. Jordan announces then retracts claim of foiling armed infiltration from Syria 2% of people's posts on average

What the media focused on

- **Security:** Jordan's Strikes on Daraa Dominate a Fraught Security Week
- **Economy:** Reform Pledges Meet Reserve Currency and Market Stagnation
- **Governance:** Diplomacy Dominates as Media Scrutiny of Services Persists

How they compare

The media and ordinary Syrians converged most clearly on the two biggest stories of the period, the Jordanian strikes on Daraa and the Iraqi prime minister's visit, but the texture of public reaction consistently carried more emotional and political charge than the institutional framing conveyed. On Daraa, the tracker shows people's tone sharply negative and sustained, blending grief with explicit anger at the Syrian government's perceived passivity toward both Israel and Jordan, a popular political dimension largely missing from committee-focused, diplomacy-centred coverage. On the Iraqi visit, people's attention focused heavily on the symbolic $10 million donation to religious sites, a detail the media treated as a minor aside within a broader geopolitical story of oil, security and partnership.

What people raised that the media barely covered

- The diesel crisis, which drew the angriest public reactions of the period despite emergency shipments, received almost no dedicated media coverage, leaving a major driver of daily hardship largely undocumented.
- Shop closures in Damascus and Aleppo, blamed by ordinary Syrians on rents, import competition and corruption, were barely addressed outside former-focused reporting by Hawar News and Enab Baladi.
- Public mockery of Jordanian narratives around the border infiltration claim and its retraction, a notable theme in people's posts, found little echo in media coverage focused on the Daraa strikes.
- Sectarian calls for collective measures against Alawite communities following the Baniias-Tartus ambush, visible in public comments, were not substantively addressed in security or governance coverage.
- The depth of Kurdish-language anger at SDF/PKK leadership over the integration process, strongly present online, was understated in governance coverage that described Kurdish political demands mostly through formal statements.

People: ordinary Syrians' own posts and comments on the tracker, outlets not counted. The media: our analysis of Syrian and international media, think tanks and international organisations.

4. What the media said

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The overall picture: Jordan's Strikes on Daraa Overshadow a Week of Diplomatic Gains

In short: The media this period described Syria pursuing reintegration on several fronts, financial, diplomatic and aviation, even as Jordanian airstrikes on Daraa and persistent Israeli incursions exposed how fragile the country's security architecture remains. Across security, economy and governance, coverage converged on a single tension: official narratives of sovereignty and partnership sitting alongside unresolved questions about who protects Syrian civilians.

The Jordanian strikes on Daraa and Sweida were the week's dominant story across all three domains, pulling security coverage toward accountability questions, governance coverage toward diplomatic crisis management, and even economic reporting toward concerns about regional stability. Syrian institutions, from the People's Assembly to the Bar Association, framed the strikes as a war crime demanding accountability (Enab Baladi, Syria TV), while Jordan's government stressed 'brotherly relations' and a joint investigative committee (Al-Watan Online). The hawkish Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies instead framed the strikes as exposing a security vacuum in southern Syria (FDD), a reading contested by Syrian commentators who called the operation more showcase than substance (Al-Watan Online).

Israeli incursions ran as a parallel, chronic thread rather than a single dramatic event, documented in security coverage (182 incursions in October alone, per SOHR, SOHR) and echoed in governance reporting on the Golan and Quneitra. This steady drumbeat received far less institutional attention than the acute Jordanian strikes despite arguably greater cumulative civilian impact, with the UN noting it was 'closely following' both dynamics (UN News). The asymmetry between a one-off Jordanian strike and ongoing Israeli activity suggests the media's attention follows dramatic rupture more than sustained harm.

Economic coverage described a reform and reintegration push, central bank talks in Paris, FATF re-engagement, IMF discussions, and the lifting of ICAO's air safety warning, that largely proceeded on a separate diplomatic track from the security crises (SANA, SANA, SANA). Yet this optimism rested on conditional, forward-looking language ('cautiously hopeful but conditional on follow-through'), while currency instability, with the dollar reportedly trading at 20,000 in merchants' ledgers, and a 70 percent informal economy persisted unresolved (Al-Watan Online, Al-Watan Online). The gap between institutional reform narratives and currency-level dysfunction is a recurring fault line likely to persist into the coming period.

Governance coverage's two biggest stories, the Iraqi prime minister's Damascus visit and the Jordanian strikes, both carried undercurrents the state-aligned press downplayed: the Daraa crisis exposed public anger at perceived government weakness, while even the warmly received Iraqi visit drew Syrian outlets like Enab Baladi to frame it as testing the 'limits' of partnership, not just its prospects (Enab Baladi). Foreign Minister al-Shaibani's statements positioning Syria within regional security architecture, including potential membership in the Mecca Pact, extended this reintegration narrative but also highlighted how much of Syria's current security posture depends on external alliances rather than domestic capacity.

Transitional justice appeared across both security and governance coverage as an area of visible state activity, arrests, court sessions, workshops, yet The Syrian Observer's citation of a rights report finding 'accountability gaps' excluding victims of Islamist armed groups was a rare critical counterpoint largely absent from state-aligned coverage (The Syrian Observer). This divergence suggests that while institutional transitional-justice activity is substantial and widely reported, independent scrutiny of its completeness remains thin and concentrated in a narrow set of outlets.

Kurdish political dynamics surfaced in governance coverage mainly through formal statements, Mazloum Abdi on Kurdish participation, university mergers described neutrally, women's demands for constitutional pluralism, but people's own posts described active backlash, protests in Tal Abyad, burned vehicles, and sharp Kurdish-language anger at SDF/PKK leadership over the integration process. The institutional coverage of Kurdish affairs thus reads considerably calmer than what Kurdish and pro-Kurdish commenters were expressing online, a gap with implications for how integration tensions are being managed versus reported.

Press freedom emerged as a notable Syrian-driven thread, with Syria Direct and Enab Baladi questioning whether the government is genuinely listening despite formal gains, and Zaman al-Wasl reporting direct ministry pressure on its own journalists (Syria Direct, Zaman al-Wasl). This self-critical strand, largely confined to independent Syrian outlets, stands in contrast to the more celebratory diplomatic and reform narratives dominating state and international coverage, and points to an unresolved tension between Syria's international rehabilitation and its domestic media environment.

Taken together, the period's coverage describes a state moving confidently on diplomatic and financial reintegration while remaining exposed and reactive on security, with Jordan, Israel and internal armed remnants all testing its authority in different ways. The coming period's trajectory likely depends on whether the joint Syrian-Jordanian investigation produces real accountability, whether Israeli incursions continue unchecked, and whether economic reforms translate into visible relief, three open questions the media largely treated as parallel rather than connected stories this week.

Security: Jordan's Strikes on Daraa Dominate a Fraught Security Week

In short: Jordanian airstrikes on southern Syria after the Karak church attack became the week's central security story, straining Syrian-Jordanian relations even as both governments moved quickly to form a joint investigative committee. Meanwhile Israeli incursions, landmine deaths, floods and transitional-justice arrests continued largely unresolved in the background of the media's attention.

Syrian outlets including SANA, the state-run agency, Syria TV and Enab Baladi, an independent outlet, extensively covered Jordanian airstrikes on Daraa and Sweida that killed civilians including children, with Al-Watan Online reporting casualties and SANA raising the death toll to seven killed. Damascus denied coordinating with Jordan beforehand, as reported by Enab Baladi and Zaman al-Wasl, while Jordan's government, per Al-Watan Online, affirmed 'brotherly relations' and proposed a joint committee. The Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a hawkish Washington think tank, argued the strikes 'lay bare' a security vacuum in southern Syria (FDD), while FDD separately framed the strikes as retaliation for the church attack (FDD). Syrian commentators, including a researcher cited by Al-Watan Online, suggested the strikes served 'showcase' purposes more than addressing real threats, and Zaman al-Wasl argued Jordan was exporting its own security weakness onto Syria.

Multiple Syrian institutions condemned the strikes and demanded accountability: Enab Baladi reported that Syria's People's Assembly called the bombing a war crime, the Syrian Bar Association via Syria TV demanded an independent probe, and Foreign Minister al-Shaibani visited Daraa saying 'the state bears responsibility for the blood of its citizens' (Syria TV). A joint Syrian-Jordanian security committee was announced to investigate the operation and its fallout, confirmed across SANA, Al-Watan Online and Hawar News, a Kurdish-administration-affiliated outlet. Al-Watan Online argued that contradictions in Jordan's account do not absolve Amman of responsibility, insisting 'no security without coordination, no justice without accountability,' while Zaman al-Wasl said Jordanian journalists and officials failed to produce evidence of the alleged 'terrorists' targeted.

Israeli military activity in southern Syria remained a persistent theme. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented 182 Israeli incursions into southern Syria in October alone, with two civilians killed and 27 detained (SOHR), alongside heavy low-altitude Israeli jet activity over the south (SOHR). UN News reported the United Nations 'closely following' developments and condemning any civilian loss of life connected to both Jordanian and Israeli actions (UN News). Syrian outlets such as Syria TV, Al-Watan Online and Zaman al-Wasl tracked repeated incursions, abductions and detentions in Quneitra countryside throughout the week, describing new checkpoints and bulldozing under what SANA called the 'Sufa 53' project (SANA). ORSAM, a Turkish think tank, analysed contradictions in what it frames as Israel's pursuit of a fragmented, securitized Syria.

Transitional justice and accountability for former-regime figures featured prominently in Syrian coverage. Zaman al-Wasl and Enab Baladi reported arrests of senior Assad-era officers and officials in Homs, while SANA reported the arrest of a man, Abd al-Barr al-Saad, accused of war crimes against civilians (SANA). SANA also reported Syria's Fourth Criminal Court holding sessions on transitional-justice cases, including a verdict against a named defendant (SANA), and Syria TV reported a life sentence for membership in an Iran-linked militia. The Syrian Observer, however, cited a rights report finding Syria's transitional justice process has 'accountability gaps' and excludes victims of Islamist armed groups (The Syrian Observer), a caveat largely absent from state-aligned coverage.

Landmines and war remnants emerged as a recurring hazard story. SANA quoted a minister announcing Syria's first landmine-contamination map (SANA), echoed by Halab Today, Syria TV and The Syrian Observer, describing a three-year clearance plan. SOHR reported that war remnants killed or injured 14 civilians, including five children, in under 24 hours (SOHR), while Enab Baladi and Hawar News reported individual landmine deaths in Hasakah and Palmyra countryside, and Syria TV reported a war-remnant rocket exploding after children lit a fire nearby.

Tension with foreign fighters and internal security incidents were documented mainly by Syrian outlets. SOHR and The Syrian Observer reported French fighters accusing Syrian authorities of a food blockade and deadly ambush in Harem, with Enab Baladi confirming one person killed in clashes between Syrian security forces and French foreign fighters in Idlib. Separately, Enab Baladi reported an interior ministry member killed by unknown gunmen in Deir Ezzor, and SANA reported a customs officer killed in an ambush blamed on 'remnants of the former regime' on the Homs-Tartous road. Syria TV reported an international coalition strike targeting a named ISIS-linked commander in Qara, Rif Dimashq, amid a reported car bombing on the Damascus-Homs road.

Floods and natural hazards briefly intersected with the security narrative as a civil-protection story. SOHR reported five dead and five missing with 25 rescued (SOHR), while Syria TV and Enab Baladi detailed deaths and evacuations across several provinces, and Zaman al-Wasl reported four children drowned in floodwater left by the storms. These reports, largely factual and humanitarian in tone, stood apart from the politically charged coverage of strikes and incursions.

Information integrity and public mood around the Jordanian strikes drew specific scrutiny. Syria TV examined whether hate speech following the strikes reflected 'genuine public anger or coordinated campaigns,' and its ECAD monitor found accounts spreading claims linking the Karak attack to Syria before the attackers' identities were confirmed (Syria TV). Al-Watan Online separately examined how Israeli-sourced narratives, from curriculum imagery to threat videos, circulate and gain traction in Syrian online discourse.

Where they agree

The media broadly agree, across Syrian state, independent and international sources, that the Jordanian strikes killed civilians and that Damascus did not coordinate them beforehand, as reported consistently by SANA, Enab Baladi and Al-Watan Online. There is also wide agreement, voiced by SOHR, ANHA and Hawar News alike, that Israeli incursions into southern Syria have intensified and that accountability for them remains absent.

Where they differ

Sources diverge on intent and blame regarding the Jordanian strikes: FDD frames them as a legitimate response to a security vacuum, while Al-Watan Online and Zaman al-Wasl argue they were disproportionate or performative, exposing Jordan's own weaknesses rather than Syria's. Syrian and international sources also differ on transitional justice's adequacy, with state-aligned outlets emphasizing arrests and convictions while The Syrian Observer highlights structural accountability gaps.

Recommendations

- Syria TV and the Syrian Bar Association recommend that Jordan and Syria conduct a transparent, independent investigation into the Daraa strikes to establish responsibility.
- Al-Watan Online cites a legal expert recommending that any future cross-border security operation require prior coordination with Damascus to avoid civilian casualties.
- The Syrian Observer's cited rights report recommends that Syria's transitional justice process close accountability gaps and include victims of Islamist armed groups.
- SANA and Halab Today report that Syria's Emergency Ministry recommends accelerating the national landmine-clearance plan to reduce civilian deaths from war remnants.
- Hawar News reports Ilham Ahmed calling on authorities to halt attacks on returnees to Kurdish areas and hold those responsible accountable.

Economy: Reform Pledges Meet Reserve Currency and Market Stagnation

In short: The media this period documented an intense diplomatic and institutional push, reconnecting Syria's central bank to European and global financial systems, courting Gulf and Iraqi investment, and reopening the Nassib crossing, while Syrian outlets simultaneously reported deepening strain on farmers, informal-economy dominance, and a widening gap between official optimism and street-level hardship.

Financial reintegration dominated coverage: SANA reports that Syria's central bank governor discussed reconnecting the country to the European banking system during talks in Paris, while Al-Watan Online, a Syrian outlet, and Syria TV covered parallel efforts with France. SANA also reports Syria's anti-money laundering authority attended the Financial Action Task Force meeting in Paris after a 15-year absence, with an official telling SANA Syria is committed to FATF standards, and Syria TV reporting Syria is preparing an assessment aimed at exiting the grey list. Separately, SANA reports Syria and the IMF discussed fiscal reforms with the finance minister setting a six-month deadline (SANA), while Al-Watan Online and Al-Watan Online ask whether IMF technical cooperation can build investor confidence. The overall framing across these Syrian state and independent outlets is cautiously hopeful but conditional on follow-through.

Monetary instability persisted as a counterpoint: Al-Watan Online cites an expert saying the dollar trading at 20,000 in merchants' ledgers reflects unclear monetary policy entrenching a cash economy, while a separate Al-Watan analysis offers a structural diagnosis of exchange-rate policy. Enab Baladi, an independent outlet, reports the pound's decline is worsening inflation, citing an expert's proposal for an early-warning indicator. Al-Watan Online reports that 70 percent of Syria's economy operates outside the formal system, a figure another Al-Watan piece argues needs updating. Together these Syrian sources depict a currency and informality problem that institutional reforms have not yet resolved.

Regional diplomacy and trade corridors featured heavily: Arab News, The National, The Jerusalem Post and L'Orient-Le Jour covered Iraqi PM al-Zaidi's visit to Damascus, framed around economic corridors and a proposed joint economic council, a call also reported by SANA and Halab Today. Al-Watan Online reports Iraq as a gateway for Syrian exports with $5 billion tied to trade facilitation issues, while an economic adviser cited by Al-Watan called the visit highly significant. SANA separately reports discussions with Qatar (SANA, SANA) and Saudi Arabia on energy and housing cooperation (SANA, SANA), part of a broader pattern of Gulf and Iraqi engagement that Syrian and regional media present as evidence of reintegration.

Border and transport infrastructure saw mixed developments: Zaman al-Wasl and Anadolu Ajansı reported the temporary closure of the Nassib crossing with Jordan, while Hawar News, Arab News and Al-Araby Al-Jadeed reported its reopening within a day, with Al-Watan framing the Busayri-Tanf road as an economic corridor reconnecting Syria to regional markets. Zaman al-Wasl reports $643 million allocated for roads and railways, and Zaman al-Wasl reports nine international contracts to rehabilitate roads and link Iraq to Mediterranean ports, while Enab Baladi details a $199 million highway project. The lifting of ICAO's 13-year air safety warning, reported by Enab Baladi, SANA (fec5e85624fbb8), Halab Today and Turkish state-run Anadolu Ajansı, was widely presented as a symbolic milestone for international reintegration, with Arab News noting Syrian Airlines will resume Berlin-Damascus flights.

Agricultural distress was a recurring theme in Syrian independent and Kurdish-affiliated reporting: Hawar News, affiliated with the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration, reports sunflower farmers facing rising costs and trader control over prices, while a separate Hawar News piece reports farmers in the Jazira region cutting cultivated areas due to lack of support. Enab Baladi reports bean farmers in Hama countryside losing profits to production costs, and Enab Baladi reports Israeli incursions threatening Quneitra farmers' livelihoods. Al-Jumhuriya, an independent outlet, reports delayed wheat payments freezing markets in the Jazira region. These accounts collectively depict a sector squeezed by costs, market power and insecurity largely absent from the diplomatic narrative.

Reform in the business and regulatory environment drew cautious scrutiny: The Syria Report, a specialist think tank, interviews the Companies Directorate head on regulatory and digital reform, while a separate Syria Report piece finds Damascus dominates new company registrations with Saudi firms leading foreign branch openings. SANA reports Syria launched a project to digitize business registration (SANA) and expand digital tax payments (SANA). Enab Baladi and a related Enab Baladi explain the Investment Authority's Circular No. 36, while Enab Baladi asks whether real-estate oversight protects savings or restricts the market, reflecting debate over whether new rules help or hinder private activity.

Reconstruction financing and humanitarian gaps were flagged by international and Syrian sources alike: Human Rights Watch and ReliefWeb both argue Syria's new reconstruction fund offers a chance for reform if managed transparently. Enab Baladi reports Syria remains burdened by more than $22 billion in debt inherited from the previous era, while Hawar News, North Press and Enab Baladi report UN warnings that millions of Syrians need emergency winter aid, with Syria TV noting returnees face a harsh winter amid aid shortages. The Syrian Dialogue Center critiques the assumption that painful reform is inevitable, calling on the state to protect vulnerable groups and preserve social cohesion, a more critical note than the optimism in other coverage.

Where they agree

Syrian state media (SANA), independent outlets (Al-Watan, Enab Baladi, Syria TV) and international organisations (Human Rights Watch, ReliefWeb) broadly agree that Syria's reconnection to international financial and diplomatic networks, through the central bank, FATF, IMF, and Gulf and Iraqi partnerships, represents genuine movement after years of isolation. There is also wide agreement, spanning Al-Watan, Enab Baladi and the Syrian Dialogue Center, that currency instability, informality and unclear monetary policy remain unresolved structural problems undermining these gains.

Where they differ

Sources differ on how much credit to give the reform narrative: Al-Watan Online's reporting on growth forecasts of 10 percent asks skeptically whether recovery is real, while SANA's steady stream of bilateral meeting reports presents a more uniformly positive trajectory. The Syrian Dialogue Center explicitly challenges the premise, found across much of the institutional coverage, that painful reform is an unavoidable price, arguing instead for state responsibility toward vulnerable groups, a critique not voiced in the SANA or think-tank coverage of fiscal and banking reform.

Recommendations

- Human Rights Watch and ReliefWeb recommend that Syria's new reconstruction fund be managed with transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure genuine reform.
- The Syrian Dialogue Center recommends that the Syrian state take explicit responsibility for protecting vulnerable groups and preserving social cohesion during economic reform, rather than treating hardship as inevitable.
- An expert cited by Enab Baladi recommends developing an early-warning indicator to track inflationary pressure linked to the pound's decline.
- A researcher cited by Al-Watan Online recommends specific conditions, beyond geography alone, for Syria to become a viable regional economic platform.
- Al-Watan Online recommends rationalising imports and supporting local production to help Syrian industry recover competitiveness.

Governance: Diplomacy Dominates as Media Scrutiny of Services Persists

In short: Media coverage of Syrian governance this week centred overwhelmingly on diplomacy, led by the Iraqi prime minister's landmark Damascus visit and the fallout from Jordanian strikes on Daraa, while Syrian outlets continued separate scrutiny of hospital mismanagement, curriculum disputes and press freedom. Ordinary Syrians shared the diplomatic focus but reacted with far more anger over the Daraa strikes and Kurdish integration issues than the institutional coverage conveyed.

Syrian state media including SANA, Al-Watan Online and Syria TV gave extensive coverage to Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's first official visit to Damascus since Assad's fall, where President al-Sharaa said relations with Iraq rest on historic ties and a shared opportunity to build strong states and fight corruption. Outlets reported discussions of oil exports via the Baniyas pipeline, border security and water, framed by Enab Baladi and Enab Baladi as testing both the prospects and the limits of the partnership. Zaman al-Wasl noted al-Zaidi donated $10 million to the Umayyad Mosque and the shrine of Sayyida Zainab, a gesture widely covered as symbolic of warming ties. Al-Watan Online carried an Iraqi adviser's reading of the visit as a sign of deepening political and economic engagement.

Multiple Syrian outlets covered the diplomatic crisis following Jordanian airstrikes on Daraa that killed civilians, with Syria TV and SANA reporting the People's Assembly condemned the strikes and called for a joint investigation, while Enab Baladi reported the Constitutional Committee called them a war crime. SANA and Al-Watan Online reported the government said there was no prior coordination with Jordan, a claim also noted by The Times of Israel and the Qatar-funded Al Jazeera's regional coverage context. Al-Watan Online and Zaman al-Wasl framed Damascus's response as a measured assertion of sovereignty balanced against fraternal ties with Jordan, while Hawar News, affiliated with the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration, reported the foreign ministry announced a joint field and security committee.

Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani was extensively quoted across outlets positioning Syria within regional security architecture: SANA and Halab Today reported him saying Syria has left "the trench of conflicts" to take a place in regional security-making, while Syria TV and The Syrian Observer reported Syria is weighing joining the Saudi-Turkish-Pakistani "Mecca Pact." Al-Watan Online quoted him insisting the Golan is Syrian land under UN Security Council resolution 497, and SANA reported the GCC reaffirmed support for Syria's sovereignty. These statements collectively present a narrative, pushed primarily through state and state-aligned outlets, of Syria's reintegration into regional diplomacy.

Judicial and transitional justice reform featured prominently: the Syrian Dialogue Center held a workshop identifying persistent gaps in judicial reform, while SANA reported the same workshop called for strengthening judicial independence and fair trial guarantees. SANA reported Homs hosted a consultative meeting involving victims in the transitional justice strategy, and Hawar News reported a parallel dialogue in Qamishli on transitional justice and peacebuilding. The Syrian Network for Human Rights separately examined INTERPOL's role in Syria's accountability efforts, underscoring continued international legal dimensions to the justice agenda.

Curriculum changes generated sustained controversy across Syrian and north-east outlets: Syria TV and Hawar News, affiliated with the Autonomous Administration, reported disputes over altered or removed images in school textbooks, while the Education Ministry, cited by Syria TV and ANHA (also affiliated with the Autonomous Administration), said the changes reflect Syrian society's diversity. The Beirut-based Al Akhbar framed the changes more critically as blurring images of women and statues, while The Syrian Observer and Syria TV examined broader questions of what children are now being taught about national identity after the fall of the former regime.

Press freedom and government transparency drew critical scrutiny from Syrian outlets themselves: Syria Direct asked whether the al-Sharaa government is genuinely listening despite gains in press freedom, citing opaque communication and reliance on loyal influencers, while Enab Baladi analysed the media's inability to counter a strategy of "spreading doubt." Zaman al-Wasl reported the health ministry threatened a complaint against its own investigation into spoiled medicines at al-Kasra hospital, and separately Zaman al-Wasl reported a health ministry spokesman accused its correspondent of defamation and serving an anti-state agenda; Zaman al-Wasl also asked why a justice ministry circular on protecting journalists excluded its own reporter's case. Syria TV reported rights advocates demanding accountability after a government official threatened a Syria TV presenter on air without apologising.

Kurdish political demands featured across Hawar News and ANHA, both affiliated with the Autonomous Administration: women in Jil Agha demanded recognition of linguistic and cultural pluralism in the constitution, a Kurdish politician said political pluralism is essential for a democratic Syria, and Hawar News and ANHA reported presidential adviser Mazloum Abdi saying Syria's stability requires Kurdish participation despite some efforts to derail the SDF integration process, per North Press. Separately, Syria TV and SANA reported administrative decisions merging Rojava, Kobani, Qamishli and Ain al-Arab universities into the Euphrates and Aleppo university structures, moves not framed critically by those outlets.

Local administration and infrastructure stories highlighted gaps between official plans and conditions on the ground: SANA and Enab Baladi reported the Emergency Ministry's plan, described by the English-language SANA as a five-year effort, to equip Civil Defence centres nationwide, while Syria TV reported cracks in the 35-year unmaintained Wadi al-Baqar dam threaten hundreds of homes in Deir ez-Zor, and Enab Baladi investigated why Aleppo keeps flooding despite drainage works. Syria TV reported Jabar residents demanding the government resolve long-stalled reconstruction, describing the situation as "a volcano about to erupt."

Where they agree

Syrian outlets across the political spectrum, from state-run SANA to independent Enab Baladi and Zaman al-Wasl, broadly agree that the Iraqi PM's visit marks a significant positive shift in regional relations. There is also broad agreement across Syria TV, SANA and Enab Baladi that the Jordanian strikes on Daraa were unjustified and that Syria's sovereignty response was appropriate, though the Constitutional Committee went further in calling them a war crime.

Where they differ

Sources differ sharply on curriculum changes: the Education Ministry, cited by Syria TV and ANHA, frames the revisions as reflecting societal diversity, while Al Akhbar frames the same changes as regressive blurring of women's images. Syrian outlets also diverge on press freedom: Zaman al-Wasl and Syria Direct document government pressure on journalists, while state-run SANA coverage does not address these tensions.

Recommendations

- The Syrian Dialogue Center recommends that Syrian authorities address persistent gaps in judicial reform identified in its workshop, to build a credible justice system.
- The Syrian Network for Human Rights recommends strengthening cooperation with INTERPOL to advance Syria's criminal accountability efforts.
- Syria TV reports journalists and rights advocates recommend holding accountable the government official who threatened a presenter, to restore press confidence.
- Syria TV suggests education authorities pursue an inclusive national pedagogical pact on curriculum reform to resolve recurring controversy.
- Enab Baladi implies Aleppo's municipal authorities need to address underlying infrastructure shortcomings behind repeated flooding, not just drainage works.

5. What to watch

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In what people say

- Whether the Syrian-Jordanian joint investigative committee produces findings that ease or deepen public anger over Daraa.
- Continued Israeli incursions and checkpoints in Quneitra and Daraa, and whether local acts of defiance (tearing down warning signs) escalate.
- The unresolved Rojava/Kobani university merger and Kurdish-language education dispute, which could sharpen Kurdish-Arabic divides.
- Whether sectarian rhetoric following the Tartus ambush spreads further, and whether the near-identical wording in the refinery-plot announcement draws more scrutiny.

In the media's view

- Whether the joint Syrian-Jordanian investigative committee produces findings and accountability, or stalls, will shape whether public anger documented in the tracker subsides or deepens further.
- Continued Israeli incursions into Daraa and Quneitra, already running at high monthly rates per SOHR, will test whether the government's measured diplomatic posture holds against rising public frustration at perceived inaction.
- Follow-through on financial reintegration steps, FATF grey-list exit, IMF benchmarks, and European banking reconnection, will determine whether institutional optimism translates into currency stability that ordinary Syrians have not yet felt.
- Kurdish integration tensions, visible in Tal Abyad protests and university mergers, bear watching for whether Damascus and the Autonomous Administration can manage friction that online communities describe far more sharply than official coverage.
- The winter aid response to UN warnings of emergency need among millions of Syrians will be a concrete test of whether reconstruction financing translates into relief before conditions worsen.
- Press freedom frictions, including ministry pressure on journalists reported by Zaman al-Wasl, will indicate whether domestic media space narrows even as Syria's international standing improves.

6. Sources and method

↑ Contents

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