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Syria was once one of the Middle East's most stable states. Today it is a country on its knees. Almost 200,000 people are estimated to have died in its bloody internal conflict and, as the violence intensifies, Syria's future looks bleak.

In this timely book, Samer Abboud provides an in-depth analysis of Syria's descent into civil war. He unravels the complex and multi-layered causes of the current political and military stalemate - from rebel fragmentation to the differing roles of international actors, and the rise of competing centers of power throughout the country. Rebel in-fighting and the lack of a centralizing authority, he contends, have exacerbated Syria's fragmentation and fragility. This, in turn, has aided the survival of the Assad regime, contributed to the upsurge of sectarianism, and led to a major humanitarian crisis as nine million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes.

A resolution to the Syrian conflict seems unlikely in the short-term as the major actors remains committed to a military solution. As this situation persists, the continued fighting is reshaping Syria's borders and will have repercussions on the wider Middle East for decades to come.



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Review

"This book brings together the phases and dimensions of the Syrian conflict in a uniquely convincing and comprehensive way. This is prefaced by a useful overview of the historical context of the Uprising. The book's sections on the militarisation of the conflict are especially valuable."

Raymond Hinnebusch, University of St Andrews

Samer Abboud offers a cogent survey of multiple dimensions of the Syrian civil war. Readers will find authoritative, yet accessible, treatments of the radical Islamists of the Assistance Front (Jabhat al-Nusra) and the Islamic State, the innovative Kurdish autonomy project, the horrendous economic and human costs of the fighting, and the puzzling responses of foreign actors, particularly Russia and the United Nations, among many other crucial topics.

Fred H. Lawson, Mills College

About the Author

Samer N. Abboud is Associate Professor of International Studies at the Department of Historical and Political Studies, Arcadia University

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