



Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Syria

Sapienza University of Rome
June 12, 2025

Before 1918, Syria was part of the Ottoman Empire, where the Sultan also held the title of Caliph, the political and religious successor to the Islamic prophet Muhammad. The abolition of the Caliphate by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924 marked a turning point in the history of the Muslim world.

After gaining independence in 1946, Syria saw the rise of various political movements, including communists, the Muslim Brotherhood, Arab nationalists, and Syrian nationalists. In 1963, the Arab nationalist Ba'ath party came to power, promoting an Arab identity reinforced through state mechanisms such as the press, public institutions, schools, and the Constitution.

The protests that began in 2011 against the al Assad regime led to the emergence of numerous political and military groups, ranging from jihadist organizations to peaceful political movements. During this period, extremist Islamist groups carried out attacks against Syria's cultural heritage.

A pivotal moment in Syria's current history occurred on December 8, 2024, with the fall of the al Assad regime. This event has ushered in a period of profound political transformation, raising urgent questions about the future of Syria's governance, social fabric, and cultural identity.

This conference aims to explore the ideological positions of various political and religious groups in Syria and their impact on ethnic and religious minorities. We will examine how national identity is constructed and whether it is inclusive or exclusive towards minorities. Key questions include:

- How are minorities represented in the national identity?
- What role do they play in the Constitution, textbooks, press, and cultural heritage?
- How might recent political changes affect the status and rights of ethnic and religious groups in Syria?

Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, Facoltà di Lettere, Auletta di archeologia
15.00 - 19.30

Introduction

Marco Ramazzotti, Sapienza University of Rome

Syria. Ethnic and Religious Groups Map and Post-Baath Era

Ahmed Fatima Kzzo, Sapienza University of Rome

Il richiamo alla storia antica nella Nation-Building degli Stati del Mediterraneo

Umberto Livadiotti, Guglielmo Marconi University

The Presence of Ethnic and Religious Groups in the Syrian Curricula

Nebras Dalloul, Independent Researcher in Political Science

Break

The Jews of Aleppo: A Once-Integrated Community That is No More

Abraham Marcus, University of Texas

Communities, Nationalism(s), and Cultural Heritage: Lessons from Neighboring Iraq

Helen Malko, Stanford University

Il patrimonio culturale come forza trainante per superare lo scontro di civiltà

Tiberio Graziani, Chairman of Vision & Global Trends. International Institute for Global Analyses

Kurdish Citizenship in Syria: Cultural and Social Perspectives a Century after the Founding of the State

Ghiath Rammo, University of Roma Tre

Organizers: Marco Ramazzotti, Ahmed Fatima Kzzo and Ghiath Rammo