



Review Conclusions/ Recommendations	Response
<p>As it is understood that the Syria OGN is soon to be updated, this review has not attempted to assess whether, at the time of publication of the OGN, it gave an indication of the range of relevant material that should be considered by officials. Rather than conduct a historical exercise, it was proposed that it would be more useful to identify those issues not currently addressed in the OGN which it is suggested should be considered by officials. Recommended sources on these issues have been provided in ARC's Review of the September 2013 Home Office COI Report on Syria. As a general point, it is recommended to include UNHCR's most recent protection considerations for each main category of claim in the OGN:</p> <p>UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic, Update II, 22 October 2013, Risk profiles</p>	<p>The recommendations for the revised version of the OGN are being implemented.</p>
<p><u>2.3 Actors of protection</u></p> <p>This section does not currently address the range of human rights violations committed in the current conflict with impunity by both the security agencies and the armed forces. There is no mention of massacres, hostage-taking, enforced disappearance or sexual violence. The abuses of the Shabbiha in the current conflict are not reported on.</p> <p>With regards to access to a fair trial, the OGN currently does not include information on the creation of Anti-Terrorism courts, lawyers being directly targeted, or parallel justice systems being set up by armed opposition groups.</p>	<p>Accepted. This has been fully addressed in the revised version of the OGN.</p>
<p><u>2.4 Internal relocation</u></p> <p>This section does not include any information on persons attempting to flee being targeted by government snipers, sieges/blockades nor does it address the situation for IDPs.</p>	<p>Accepted. This has been fully addressed in the revised version of the OGN.</p>

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<p><u>3.6 General security and humanitarian situation</u></p> <p>This section does not make clear that the conflict became categorised as an internal armed conflict under international humanitarian law in July 2012 according to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN. It does not capture the range of violations committed in the current conflict concerning the treatment of civilians and hors de combat fighters and the violations concerning the conduct of hostilities as documented in the Independent International Commission of Inquiry reports to have been committed by both government forces and affiliated militia and by anti-government armed opposition groups. The use of chemical weapons against civilians is also not addressed.</p> <p>The humanitarian situation is only briefly addressed; limited information is included on the use of blockades/sieges in the conflict, access to healthcare or food insecurity.</p>	<p>Accepted. This section has been expanded in the revised version of the OGN to include additional recommended information.</p>
<p><u>3.7 Kurds</u></p> <p>The OGN does not mention the two major Kurdish alliances: The Kurdish Supreme Council and the Syrian Kurdish National Council (KNC). No information is currently included on the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing the People's Protection Committees/Popular Protection Units (YPG) which have been involved in fighting in Kurdish areas both with the Syria regime, Islamists and with the Free Syria Army.</p>	<p>Accepted. This has been addressed in the revised version of the OGN.</p>
<p><u>3.8 Political Opposition to the Government</u></p> <p>This section does not currently report on the mass arrest campaigns, enforced disappearances and extra-judicial executions carried out by the Syria security forces against perceived opponents, including protestors and family members of alleged armed opposition group members. Information on the main political opposition groups, the treatment of political activists and perceived political opponents in detention since the outbreak of the internal armed conflict is also not currently included.</p>	<p>Accepted. This has been addressed in the revised version of the OGN.</p>

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<p><u>3.9 Affiliation to the Muslim Brotherhood</u></p> <p>No information is included on the Muslim Brotherhood's link to armed opposition groups and the creation of its own militia.</p>	<p>Accepted. This section has been revised and expanded.</p>
<p><u>3.10 Forced Military Conscription</u></p> <p>No information is currently included on forced recruitment by security forces occurring at checkpoints in the current conflict. Neither is information on the previous deaths of Kurdish conscripts included.</p>	<p>Accepted. This section has been revised and expanded.</p>
<p><u>3.11 Returning failed asylum seekers</u></p> <p>It is considered that this section of the OGN provides adequate material on the range of issues to be considered in relation to the treatment of refused asylum seekers.</p>	<p>This section has been revised and updated.</p>
<p><u>3.12 Women</u></p> <p>This section fails to include information on the ineffectiveness of the state in providing protection against gender-based violence as most violations against women are seen as belonging to the 'private sphere'.</p> <p>This section also does not currently report on the increased use of sexual violence against women during the armed conflict, which some commentators have referred to as potentially reaching the 'rape as a weapon of war' threshold, by both armed opposition groups and government forces. In addition, no information is included on the targeted use of kidnapping by both armed opposition groups and government forces, or the use of arbitrary arrests and detention by government forces of women, who may be political activists, perceived political opponents or family members of such persons.</p>	<p>Accepted. This section has been fully revised and expanded.</p>

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<p><u>3.13. Prison Conditions</u></p> <p>No information is currently included on deaths in detention, which in some cases are due to torture, the increased use of summary executions in detention as a result of the conflict or medical personnel being involved in government torture practices at unofficial sites of detention.</p>	<p>Accepted. This section has been fully revised and expanded.</p>
<p><u>4.3 Minors claiming in their own right</u></p> <p>No COI is included in this section despite the extensive human rights abuses committed against minors as set out in the COI Report on Syria.</p>	<p>This section is a standard text in all OGNs simply directing caseworkers to generic guidance. Para 1.2 of each OGN directs caseworkers to refer to the relevant COI product.</p>
<p><u>Recommended additional main categories of claims</u></p> <p>Given the changing nature of the armed conflict in Syria the following two additional categories of claims are recommended to be considered for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of armed opposition groups: This might be due to their imposition of Sharia law in the areas they control and/or it might be due to the fear of enforced disappearances, kidnappings and extrajudicial killings against perceived pro-government supporters or collaborators – these are reported to include political activists, journalists and politicians. - Forced recruitment by armed opposition groups: Increasingly it is reported that armed opposition groups are forcing civilians, including children, to support their armed activities. 	<p>OGNs do not aim to cover all potential categories of claim; only the most common ones identified by senior caseworkers at the start of the drafting process.</p> <p>We are however grateful to the reviewer for identifying further potential categories of claim which may arise in the foreseeable future and are considering their inclusion in the next version of the OGN.</p>