

Motives of Political Violence in the Middle East with Special Reference to Syria

Dr. Abdulrahman Al- Fawwaz

Associate Prof, Al-Balqa Applied University
Amman-Jordan

ABSTRACT

The study aims at understanding the concept of political violence and the reasons behind its spread in the Middle East, focusing on the study of the Syrian situation after the Baath Party took over since 1963 . The study has shown that the violence used in Syria is the official political violence practiced by the state against the people for the sake of perpetuation of the regime. The most important factors that led to the development of political violence in Syria represent the absence of political, social and economic justice, for the growth of internal opposition, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, which is one of the strongest political parties opposed to the Syrian regime. The study showed that the recent internal revolutions did not succeed due to the historical relations between the Syrian political system and Russia. The latter defended in various ways to maintain the Syrian regime and the position of the pro-regime Iran to achieve its strategic interests in the Arab world.

Keywords: Political Violence, Middle East, Syria.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Arab countries have suffered all manifestations of direct and indirect colonialism that have spread over the years and contributed to the creation of political chaos in the Arab world. Where political regimes followed the so-called "strategies of terror and intimidation", to socialize and dominate the society politically and ideologically ,which led to the emergence of political opposition of regimes, this opposition forces were classified within the categories of subversive and threatening the security of the state, and the emergence of the concept of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes which was the most embodiment of political terrorism¹.

The phenomenon of political violence in the Middle East spread as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the role of the superpowers in the occupation of the Arab world in the Israeli presence and the struggle with it for the liberation of the occupied territories and the focus of the Arab countries on military spending rather than the focus on political and social justice and economic development and the emergence of ideological and national trends and religious calling for the liberation of the occupied territories and the end of Western domination on the Arab political systems, which led to the outbreak of internal conflicts for power and change of government and it was one of the main factors in the emergence of so-called political violence which is practiced by the state through its various organs against individual citizens or groups in order to preserve the existing political system.

¹ Barrington Moore: The Social Roots of Democracy and Dictatorship. Translated by Georges Joha, The Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut 1973, p. 114

In view of the research topic, the study was subdivided into five main axis:

The first axis: the concept of political violence.

The second axis: the Israeli presence and the beginning of political violence in the Arab countries.

The third axis: the evolution of political violence in Syria.

The fourth axis: The Syrian Revolution.

The fifth axis: Foreign interventions in Syria.

Research problem and questions:

The phenomenon of political violence has spread since the era of independence in some Arab countries, where colonialism left many political conflicts for power and hegemony in all possible means. The Syrian case is considered one of the other Arab cases in which political violence has spread. This study aims to explore the real reasons that led to the emergence of political opposition since the sixties until the outbreak of internal revolutions at the moment.

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of political violence contains a lot of ambiguity in various aspects, so there is an urgent need for further research and analysis to provide a real assessment for the reality of the Syrian situation. Therefore, the study came to answer the following questions:

1. What is the natural disposition of the violence used in Syria?
2. What are the main reasons behind the development and growth of political violence in Syria?
3. What are the most internal forces opposed the Syrian regime?
4. What are the most prominent countries supporting the Syrian regime?

Objectives of the study:

1. Identifying the nature of political violence used in Syria.
2. Exploring the main reasons behind the spread of political violence in Syria.
3. Exploring the most prominent forces opposing the Syrian regime.
4. Exploring the roles of the countries that supporting the Syrian regime.

The importance of study:

Many scholars and intellectuals were interested in the phenomenon of political violence, which dealt with this subject in order to understand and study how it emerged and spread in the Arab countries. The study examines the phenomenon of political violence that has emerged in Syria since 1963 to provide a clear assessment of the main events that led to this political violence. The study is a major reference to other studies. The study presents the reasons behind the emergence of this phenomenon as an incentive to avoid the resulting internal and external dangers on political violence, in addition to directing researchers, political systems and internal opposition forces to apply the principle of political justice, equality and respect for the opinions of others without excessive use of military power.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the historical method , to find out the way and the required facts and scientific knowledge. With relying on evidences to achieve the goals of the study. Due to the lack of sufficient studies on this subject, this study has taken the form of depth and searching for information from various primary sources and secondary references (books and magazines) and analyzing them in a proper way away from bias in a particular direction in order to come up with a unique and rare study of its kind .

The first axis: the concept of political violence

The operational definition of violence phenomena, is the violence used to impose a particular political situation for political gain and overthrow the regime. There is power or state violence, which involves a large number of acts by the official authority to impose a certain regime and maintain order. The official authority has mastered the use of violent methods to suppress all dissenting views, especially in societies where democracy is suffocating, and acts of violence by groups opposed to official power in the state².

According to Denisiouff " The philosophical and social interpretations of liberal thought divide the concept of violence into three basic sections: first, the violence that can be called (higher violence), which is used by military, police, intelligence, legislative and penal systems in domestic and foreign policy. Second: anti-imperialist violence directed against colonial and military exploiters and oppressors, and against the bourgeois authorities. Third, the violence that accompanies various forms of public criminality and organized gangs³".

Ahmad Jalal Izz al-Din sees, political violence is the human use of force , frighten and intimidate others, or directed to things by destroying, corrupting or seizing them⁴.

Ted Hendrich says that violence is the actual use of force or threat by using force to achieve social goals that have political connotations and dimensions, individually or collectively, covertly or publicly, organized or unorganized⁵.

Hassanein Tawfik defined political violence as a behavior motivated by political objectives and based on the use of force to inflict harm on persons or property⁶. Paul Wilkinson also defined political violence as the use force or threat by force to harm others in order to achieve political goals⁷.

Johnson sees inequality between values and the environment in society as the result of the failure of social structure, leading to social crises and political violence in society⁸.

Charles Tilly asserts that the emergence of political conflict in society necessarily leads to the emergence of the concept of "multi-sovereignty power". This means that the presence of competing forces in society weakening the role of the government and the emergence of power blocs, which creates a challenge to the existing authority⁹.

Most researchers agree that political violence is a violence when the motives and objectives are political in nature, despite the difference in determining the nature of these goals and the nature of the forces associated with them, so researchers see that political violence is the use of force to achieve political goals.

² Mustafa Omar al-Tair "aggression, violence and extremism." Arab Journal for Security Studies Riyadh. 1993 pp. 44-45.

³ F. Denisiouff, Theories of Violence in the Ideological Conflict, Sahar Said, Dar Damascus, unpublished, pp. 94-97.

⁴ Ahmed Jalal Izz al-Din, Terrorism and Violence in Politics, Freedom House, Cairo, First Edition, 1986, p. 128.

⁵ Ted Hendrich, Political Violence, Philosophy, Origins, Dimensions, Translated by Abdel-Karim Mahfouz, and Issa Tannous, 1986, p. 132

⁶ Hassanein Tawfik Ibrahim, The Phenomenon of Political Violence in Egypt (1952-1987), Quantitative Analytical Study in the Arab Future, No. 117, Beirut, 1988.

⁷ Paul Wilkinson, Terrorism and the Liberal State (New York: John Wiley, 1977), p. 30

⁸ Johnson, Chalmers, Revolutionary Change. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1976.

⁹ Tilly, Charles "Revolution and Collective Violence", In Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson w.Polspy (eds) Handbook of Political science: Macro-Political Theory (3) Reading Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company 1975.

The second axis: the Israeli presence and the beginning of political violence in the Arab countries

The conditions that experienced by the Arab countries under the British and French mandate after the collapse of Ottoman rule, and the signing of the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 and the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and the emergence of the Arab-Israeli conflict carried many forms of political violence in the last century, convert its governments as tools in the hand of the superpower countries, while the rest of them became unable to move and confront, within the framework of the dependence on the diversity of degrees and forms of political, economic, technological and cultural¹⁰.

The Middle East had different ideologies after the establishment of the Jewish state. Which led the region to engage in violence and conflicts during the French and British mandate, followed by the recognition of the State of Israel by the United States of America in 1948, which led the region to multiple wars, including the war of 1948, 1967, 1973. The phenomenon of arms race has emerged significantly and huge sums of money to build military capabilities in the Middle East. The dependence of the States parties of the conflict, increased to the superpowers through their division into neighboring countries of the Western and Eastern camps, increased foreign interference and competition in the affairs of the region, creating chaos and violence¹¹.

The successive American administrations, whether democratic or republican, have maintained a consistent set of strategic objectives in the Arab region and have adopted various means and mechanisms to achieve this. The most important of these are the provision of support for political systems that support American policies, regardless of the legitimacy of these regimes or their level of popularity. Washington has classified the Arab states into two camps: moderation and disobedience, in accordance with their respective support for the US strategy and policies in the region.

The 1948 and 1967 wars were a starting point for political violence after the Arab defeat and the displacement of thousands of Palestinian refugees to neighboring countries. The Arabs were in a state of political, social, economic and military turmoil and intensified political moves aimed at liberating the occupied territories and settling the conflict in the region.

The UN Security Council adopted resolution 242, and as a result of this resolution, the positions of the Arab countries were different. Both Jordan and Egypt accepted the resolution. They adopted political action as a way to gain world public opinion in favor of the Palestinian issue and achieve Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied¹². The Syrian government condemned the decision, calling it a US-Jewish conspiracy aimed at imposing the conditions of surrender to the Arabs and the liquidation of the Palestinian issue¹³. These organizations chose

¹⁰ Abdulrahman Al-Fawaz, Jordanian-US Tripartite Relationships, Unpublished Master Thesis, Baroda University, India 2001.

¹¹ Abdul Rahman Al Fawaz, The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dar Al-Hamed Publishing, Jordan 2012.p 57.

¹² See Abd al-Mun'im al-Rifai's remarks on Jordan's position on the Security Council resolution in the Jordanian documents of 1967, Document No. 149, P. 331; see also: Research and Publishing House, Series of Record of Opinions on Political Facts in the Arab Countries, 1968, p. 636.

¹³ See the statement of the Syrian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on Security Council Resolution 242 in Al-Jarida, Beirut, p. 4877, 23 October, The first of 1968; Nahar, Beirut, p. 10138, 24 October 1968; Syrian Arab Republic, Ministry of Information, Syrian Revolution in its year VII, p. 416.

the armed struggle as a way to liberate the occupied Arab territories, supported by Syria, which at the same time attacked Jordan and Egypt's recognition of the decision¹⁴.

There have been internal contradictions among Arabs against regimes in the Arab countries as a result of the policy of Israeli expansion and the negotiation of some Arab regimes with the Israeli entity, which has created the most severe internal political violence, especially when Israel intervenes in the Arab affairs, whether through statements, negotiations or media campaigns. In the Syrian case, Israeli media attacks were launched in the 1960s and 1970s aimed at stirring up sectarian strife repeatedly, in order to confuse the status of power in the ruling Baath regime that began after 1963.

The ideological debate between the Syrian Baath Party groups centered on the issue of giving priority to internalized social policy or to an Arab nationalist policy directed outwardly with the aim of cooperation between the Arabs and the unity among them against Israel. After 1970s, the Syrian Baath Party tried to put an end to Syria's political isolation in the Arab world. He sought to converge with the "confrontation states" - Egypt and Jordan - as well as with the more conservative countries such as Saudi Arabia in order to build a united military and political front against Israel. The Arab countries managed to coordinate their military efforts effectively against Israel and achieved a success in the October 1973 war.

However, the relations between Syria and Egypt did not last for a long time after Syria accused Egypt's President Sadat of trying to destabilize the internal Syrian unity after Egypt signed the agreement on the separation of forces in Sinai with Israel in September 1975, where President Sadat devoted a great deal of attention and propaganda to the media that the Syrian Baath was under the control of the Alawites. Egypt has outperformed other regional radio stations that have also focused their efforts against Syria, such as Israel Radio and the Voice of Lebanon¹⁵. Despite media campaigns against Syria, the Syrian opposition, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, has strongly condemned President Sadat's dealings with Israel¹⁶.

In March 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who was strongly criticized by Syria for his visit to Israel in November 1977, went into talks with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to declare that the Baath regime in Syria was " firstly Alawites, secondly Baathist and thirdly Syria"¹⁷. In order to suggest that President al-Assad had the intention of establishing a superior state.

Crisis and divergence of views among Arab political systems have created many tensions and movements of political violence in light of the balance of power among Arab leaders¹⁸. Centers of influence have multiplied after 1967, leading to weakness and inconsistency at the level of orientation and practice among the units of the Arab regimes¹⁹. Some Arab leaders have been subjected to the will of the outside to ensure that they will continue to govern, or others will seek power, if they push themselves into external interests. This has become a justification for foreign intervention and further division among the Arab peoples.

¹⁴ See the statement of the guerrilla organizations on Security Council resolution 242 in Anwar, Beirut, p. 2864, 16 October 1968.

¹⁵ Al-Ahram Newspaper, April 6, 1979, May 15, 1979, June 6, 1979

¹⁶ Johannes Reissner. Die AndereAblehnungsfront: Summen Radikal – isiamischer Kreise zur Friedensinitiative Avwar as – sadats, Orient, Vol 21, No. 2 June 1979. pp: 19.41

¹⁷ October Magazine, interview with President Anwar Sadat, March 26, 1978. Radio Cairo, March 25, 1978.

¹⁸ Ghassan Salama, Pluralism and Neutralization: Arab Relations - Present and Future, Cairo, April 9, 1988.

¹⁹ Ahmed Youssef, The Influence of Oil Wealth on Arab Political Relations, Dar Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi, 1985 .

The third axis: the evolution of political violence in Syria

The Baath party seized the power in Syria with a military coup known as the March 8 Revolution 1963. The year 1963 marked a major turning point in Syria's history, with certain sectarian, regional, socio-economic and political groups being represented. These groups competed for power centers in Syria . The most prominent groups were the Alawites, the Druze, the Ismailis, who were considered minorities compared to Sunni Muslims, and the Syrian political life was dominated by people of the petty bourgeoisie and progressive political parties. The "traditional" struggle within these elites, a power struggle between socio-economic elites belonging to almost the same classes, has appeared and was trying to overthrow its political rivals in order to achieve its own limited personal interests.

The sectarian, regional and clan loyalties have played an important role in the power struggle in Syria. It is therefore possible to conclude that the strength of military and civilian political officers at the national level has relied heavily on the influence they have been able to impose on regional, sectarian or clan levels. To be politically successful among members of his or her religious community or clan, and the conflict of power between people from different regions or religious communities has often been expressed in the form of conflict between regions or conflict between sects and conflict has been expressed to power between people of the same region or religious community in the form of an internal territorial dispute or internal sectarian conflict²⁰, Hafez al-Assad managed to gain considerable influence at the clan level in the areas of origin, because of their strong position at the national level.

The struggle for power became apparent in 1964 among the most prominent Alawite officers of the Ba'athist military commission, such as Salah Nadeed and Hafiz al-Asad²¹. The power struggle reached its peak between Assad and Jadid, both from Lattakia, and each sought to extend his authority within the Ba'th Party at the national level and strengthen his grip on the party branch and its other institutions. The latter succeeded in extending its influence after controlling the party after a military coup known as the corrective movement In 1970, led the Minister Hafez al-Assad came to power. After he carried out numerous arrests against Jadid and his supporters. Many fled to Lebanon to avoid arrest and continued to oppose Assad there²². Jadid was arrested and remained in captivity until his death on August 19, 1993.

As a result of the Baath Party's unilateral rise in power, the number of minority members in the Syrian officers' corps increased at the expense of Sunnis. One of the main reasons for this is that the Baathist military commanders who took part in the coup summoned many officers and non-commissioned officers with whom they had familial, tribal or regional ties to quickly²³ consolidate their newly acquired positions. Most of the military personnel who were called in this way belonged to Minorities, especially Alawites, Druze and Ismailis. Where he reinforced the leadership of the army on sectarian bases and took over the upper leadership of the Alawites.

In his book, *The Middle East Conflict*, Patrick Seale writes: "Assad and his colleagues in the Military Committee managed to eliminate all organized resistance to their rule, which they practiced behind the curtain), and they had to govern by force rather than consent, perhaps because they were a dissident military group from a semi-finished party that did not have the

²⁰ Hurcwitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension*, p 154

²¹ Van Dusen *Political Integration and Regionalism in Syria*, p 163

²² Middle East Watch, *Syria Unmasked: The Suppression of Human Rights by the Asad Regime*, London, 1991, pp. 166-169.

²³ Munif Al-Razzaz, *The Miracle Experience* (Beirut 1967), pp. 158-159.

grassroots, and the experience of those early days influenced their positions for several years afterward. The party grew strong and large, and he did not save himself from the habits of caution and repression.²⁴ "

In 1964, a rebellion against the Baath Party took place in Hama, in which the local Muslim Brotherhood played an important role. The bloody repression of this disobedience widened the gap between the majority of the city's population, Sunnis and most of the Baath Party's minority leadership²⁵.

As a result of the rise of the military elite within the Baath party, it had a major impact on the development of political institutions. This phase ended with a corrective movement in November 1970 by Hafez al-Asad, who took power in 1971 and reorganized the political system and established the People's Assembly in 1971, In 1972, which included the pro-Baathist political parties, as a new constitution was proclaimed in 1973 to give the Ba'ath party dominance and control over political decisions. The Baath party became a platform for professional advancement within state institutions and helped spread nepotism and corruption²⁶.

The necessary institutions for the concentration of power were built by the President of the Republic, and an arbitrary presidential constitution was devised of an arbitrary approach, limiting the two branches of government and authorities to the President. The loyalty to the "leader", based on the privileges and personal gains he enjoys, has become a rule in the government, in the absence of the rule of law, the principle of accountability and the disruption of the institutions of civil society, which can play the role of counter power. Since then, the trade union movement has had no independent margin for the Baath Party's national leadership²⁷.

Since the power in Syria has turned into a dictatorship, during which the Syrian people did not practice or know freedom they fought for. The situation in the country did not stabilize. Many constitutions and governments changed. Even some governments did not last more than one day. This is affect the economic and social conditions of the Syrian people negatively. Syria became the center of the conflict of the regional states and the international borders, and each side of the conflict tried to drag Syria to its axis, and because of the growing differences and conflicts between the army blocks, and in order to get rid of their problems was the project of unity with Egypt, and soon fell under a new experience thwarted by Hopes, and failed unity because it was done quickly, and was not built on the right foundations, and the military turned to the coup again, and began a new phase full of bloody conflict.

Al-Assad sought to restore relations with Egypt and Jordan after being cut off and uniting Arab efforts to resist Israel. These efforts led to the 1973 war. The political stability in Syria was post-war. There was only one group of Alawite officers, Who held the upper hand and was able to impose his will on others despite internal opposition.

²⁴ (Torrent) Patrick: Assad - The Middle East Conflict, p. 142, I 10, Publishing Company for Publishing and Distribution - Beirut - 2007.

²⁵ Mataa al-Safadi, Baath Party, p. 341, Al-Hayat, April 24, 1964, and Fouad al-Atrash, Druze, plots, history and facts (Beirut 1975, p. 374).

²⁶ Mohamed Gamal Barout et al., How to Make Decision in Arab Systems: Case Study of Syria, Beirut, Center for Arab Unity Studies. 2010, p. 291, 317.

²⁷ (Dagher) Violet, (Human Rights and Democracy in Syria), Collective Work of Eighteen Syrian Researchers, pp. 7-8, Orab Publications and the Arab Commission for Human Rights in cooperation with the European Commission, I, 2001 .

However, instability in Syria returned in 1976 after issuing orders to the Syrian army to intervene in the Lebanese civil war. This war, which has been ignited at some point since 1975, between Lebanese right-wing political parties, which is mainly composed of Maronite Christians and left-wing political parties, most of whose followers were from various Islamic sects and later supported militarily by guerrilla organizations Palestinian conflict.

The fighting escalated in a way that was not expected at all and the Syrians were initially involved in a violent military confrontation with the Palestinian guerrillas and the militias of the Lebanese left, the traditional allies of the Syrian Baath regime. This intervention led to the burning of Syrian opponents against Assad and the emergence of some conspiracies to drop some of the Syrian armed forces, and there was a series of political assassinations and attacks on the leaders of the Ba'ath party and the rise of sectarian divisions in Syria.

As a result of the policy of injustice, terrorism and marginalization against Sunni Muslims, and the domination of an increasingly sectarian upper party, Islamic trends have emerged demanding jihad against the Assad regime after being excluded from office in the state and following the policy of marginalization and restraining them in secret prisons

The most prominent of the bloody events was a year in 1979 at the artillery school in Aleppo, when at least 32 military students were killed and 54 wounded, led to the sectarian polarization controlled by the Alawites. The various statements and accusations exchanged between the regime of Assad and Sunni Muslims²⁸, and immediately after the massacre of Aleppo a campaign was launched throughout the country and offered to eradicate the Muslim Brotherhood, and the execution of many of them were in prisons. Which led to reactions in the Arab press, especially in Saudi Arabia and Egypt after both King Faisal and Anwar Sadat said that the Syrian regime is liquidating a division on sectarian grounds.

The Aleppo incident has provoked fear and panic, and has been the starting point for many crimes, assassinations, repression and coercion. Many people fear sectarian civil war is imminent if radical reforms do not occur to eliminate the sectarian and authoritarian character of the regime.

The Syrian leadership accused the Muslim Brotherhood group of involvement in the assassinations. It also hinted at a direct relationship between assassinations and external opposition to Syria's rejection of a partial agreement with Israel similar to that accepted by Egyptian President Sadat²⁹. It also accused the Syrian leadership that imperialism and Zionism incited the Muslim Brotherhood to commit criminal acts of killing, destruction and spreading sedition under the guise of religion to undermine the internal unity³⁰, and quickly launched extensive campaigns to eliminate the Muslim Brotherhood organization across Syria, began to execute 15 members of the organization were in Syrian prisons. The Muslim Brotherhood's response was that assassinations were the only possible language for understanding with the state³¹. All this has led to a series of sectarian acts and reactions that have become difficult to distinguish³².

²⁸ The Baath, June 24, 1979 and July 1, 1979. Compare Nazir, Issue 10, February 1, 1980, pp. 10-11 .

²⁹ Damascus Radio, June 22, 1979. Baath Party, June 24, 1979.

³⁰ Damascus Radio, June 22, 1979. Baath Party, June 24, 1979.

³¹ Al-Nazir, Issue 10, 1 February 1980, p12.

³² Middle East Watch. Syria Unmasked: The suppression of human rights by the Asad regime (London, 1991), chapter 2 "The Great Repression, 1976 to 1982", pp. 8 -21

The Syrian leadership began arming thousands of the Baath party to counteract the destructive activities and attacks of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood fighters³³. It relied on military units equipped with heavy weapons to root out guerrilla warfare in the cities³⁴. Tension and revenge began to dominate Muslim Brotherhood thinking against the regime, where they carried out the assassination attempt of Hafez al-Assad in 1980, but the attempt did not succeed. On this day, about 550 Muslim Brotherhood prisoners were brutally shot and tried to cover the subject in secret, but news spread among the Syrian people³⁵.

The sectarian clashes between the Muslim Brotherhood fighters and the Baath regime controlled by the Alawites continued to reach bloody events in Hama in 1982 that were not witnessed by modern Syria. Where Mujahideen of the Muslim Brotherhood immunized themselves within a wide network of weapons-equipped bunkers in Hama. The regime forces besieged entire areas and carried out mass arrests with the killing of many individuals who resisted the army and turned into an armed confrontation and revolution that encompassed a whole city. The fighting continued in Hama for a month, characterized by the utmost violence, bloodshed and vandalism. It is estimated that about 10% of the total population of 200,000 people has been killed. The entire district was heavily populated, including mosques, markets and road networks³⁶.

The Syrian political system continued to control political life under the pretext of avoiding Syria's international and regional conflicts to extend its influence upon it. The regime relied on the security and intelligence services and granted the security issue a priority at all levels³⁷. The party life was marginalized only by one party, the Baath Socialist Party, Community and state, as well as left-wing parties³⁸. Therefore, partisan life remained stagnant and there was no noticeable development in the 1980s and 1990s.

On July 10, 2000, Bashar al-Assad became president of Syria after a constitutional amendment. He followed the policy of openness with political activities, which was known as the Damascus Spring. The state went towards liberalizing the economy and developing civil society; however, the political opening stage was short-lived. However, the stage of political openness did not last long and ended with the arrest of most of the symbols of the Damascus spring or their escape abroad. Followed by the events of al-Suwayda after the protests against the regime in 2001. Al-Hasakah and al-Qamishli witnessed popular movements against the regime in 2004. The Syrian regime succeeded in suppressing the two movements with heavy weapons. It was held at the 2005 Baath Party conference, which aims at lifting the state of emergency and establishing political pluralism. The resolution has not been achieved³⁹.

Poverty in Syria is growing steadily, with the poverty rate being more than 33% of the population. Government policies have not reduced poverty rates nor reduced the disparity

³³ The organizational Report, 1985, pp 21-22.

³⁴ Patrick Seate Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East. P. 327

³⁵ Middle East Watch. Syria Unmasked: The Suppressor of Human Rights by the Asad Regime London, 1991. pp. 16, 35, 61

³⁶ Palmyra, The Continuing Massacre, Dar al-Nazir, Third Edition 1981, Al-Rai Newspaper (Amman) February 26, 1981.

³⁷ Michel Kilo et al., The Winds of Change in the Arab World, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 2011, p 190.

³⁸ Jamal Wakim, The Great Powers' Conflict on Syria, Publishing Company for Distribution and Publishing, Beirut, 2012, p. 202

³⁹ Antoine Samaha, The History of Modern and Contemporary Syria, Dar Sader, Beirut, 2012, pp. 107, 119.

between regions. Poverty is more concentrated in the eastern and northern regions, especially in rural areas, Poverty and regional differences exacerbated economic exclusion, which included a significant segment of society⁴⁰.

The decrease in cultivable land contributed to the increase in rural and eastern poverty in 2010. Droughts also reduced domestic food production, leading to large-scale internal migration, and the migration of migrants from rural areas to southern cities has played an important role in the ranking of these areas On the scale of poverty in Syria, in addition to the low rate of wages, reflecting the beginning of a bias in the distribution of national income in favor of capital at the expense of low-income people⁴¹.

The reduction in subsidies on fuel and fertilizer since 2008 has also reduced the pressures on the living standards of poor Syrian households. The public expenditure on health care has not exceeded 2% of gross domestic product (GDP). The quality of health care services has not improved significantly between 2001 and 2009, The proportion of patients with chronic diseases is high and has reached about 10% of the population, as well as the increase in prices caused by the real estate boom over the past decade prevented the opportunity to own housing, especially young people⁴².

Fourth Axis: The Syrian Revolution

The absence of political life and the poor economic and social conditions in Syria were considered factors that led to the internal revolutions against the Syrian regime which started on 18/3/2011. In addition to the tyranny of the regime and its monopoly on power and the arbitration of its security clans on the people contributed to the outbreak of the Syrian revolution. Many countries have assumed that the Syrian regime will collapse in less than 9 months, but the expectations have not been realized for the intervention of many actors at the international and regional levels.

As a result of the fall of some Arab regimes, known as the Arab Spring, especially in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, some politicians and intellectuals opposed to the Syrian regime saw the opportunity to topple the Assad regime, affected by the wave of protests that began from the city of Daraa. Child, who had written slogans on the walls calling for freedom and the overthrow of the regime on 26-2-2011, followed by some popular activities demanding the overthrow of the regime in other Syrian cities.

Demonstrations took place in the cities of Daraa, Damascus, Homs and Baniyas under the name of "Juma al-Karama" on 18/3/2011. The demonstration was strongly suppressed and some of the perpetrators and activists were arrested. The protests turned into bloody battles involving hundreds of deaths. The demonstrations moved to some Syrian cities on 25-3-2011. And the situation became appropriate for regional and international interventions in support of some forces opposed to the Syrian regime in light of the spread of armed militias.

The Syrian revolution has found only external interference in light of the fears of Western countries of the control of the Islamic revolutionary regime to rule in Syria on one hand, and the fears of Russia and Iran to cut their interests in Syria on the other. The success of the Syrian

⁴⁰ Abdul Razzaq Buzidi, American-Russian Competition in the Middle East: A Case Study of the Syrian Crisis 2010-2014, Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Mohammed Khader, Algeria, 2015, p.

⁴¹ Abdul-Razzaq Buzidi, op. Cit., P. 127 .

⁴² Abdul-Razzaq Buzidi, op. Cit., P. 127.

revolution may change the internal and external policies, especially with Russia, the end of the Russian military presence on Syrian territory, most notably the Russian military base in Tartous on the shores of the Mediterranean. For Iran, the success of the revolution means ending the Iranian presence in Syria and cutting the way between Iran and Hezbollah as Syria's gateway to an alliance of Iran with Hezbollah⁴³.

Fifth axis: Foreign interventions in Syria

The Syrian revolution created a suitable place for foreign intervention in the Syrian affairs in light of the spread of all manifestations of political violence either by the Syrian regime or by the internal opposition forces. The international forces were racing towards the Syrian crisis. As international positions were acute at the beginning of the crisis, and then to international negotiations to contain the crisis under the direct Russian intervention in Syria.

One of the most prominent external interventions in the beginning was the American intervention after the US-Syrian relations witnessed a state of tension during the last five decades, as a result of the latter's entry into the socialist camp. The US accused the Syrian regime of possessing weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorism because of its relationship with Hezbollah, the Palestinian resistance, Kurdish list of terrorism, and accused Syria of its involvement in supporting groups opposed to the US presence in Iraq in 2003.

US President Barack Obama called on the Syrian regime, represented by President Bashar al-Assad, "to lead the transition in his country or step aside." The United States and the European Union have imposed sanctions on Syrian officials including Bashar al-Assad. While China and Russia have refused to interfere in Syria's affairs and have expressed concern over efforts to denounce Syria in the Security Council⁴⁴.

President Barack Obama stressed on the need for stop firing and arbitrary arrests by the Syrian security forces "otherwise the Syrian regime will face an internal challenge and international isolation." "The Syrian people have expressed their courage before the crackdown in the country"⁴⁵.

The American demands at the beginning of the crisis were the need to carry out comprehensive reforms and meet the needs of the people and find a political solution to the Syrian crisis, and then turned to pressure on the Syrian regime and the imposition of economic sanctions. As the violence in Syria escalated, an American prepared for US military action to strike at Syria. The main preparations were made to strike the sea at the Syrian army. The US Navy reinforced its presence in the Mediterranean. As a result of the use of chemical weapons in the eastern Gouta of Damascus, gave a strong justification for Washington and its allies to military intervention⁴⁶, but the Russian-Chinese intervention obstructed America's plans to launch a military strike was possible.

After that, the American plans turned to the demand that the Syrian regime must step down from the government and stressed that the solution would be political without supporting the

⁴³ Ghazi Tawbah, The Syrian Revolution: Causes and Developments (a study presented to the Islamic Ummah Conference held in Astambol on 1-07-2012)

⁴⁴ Russian-Chinese concern for efforts to condemn Syria. Al Jazeera Net, 2011-5-27. This track arrived on June 11, 2011.

⁴⁵ Obama supports change and expects the departure of leaders. Al Jazeera Net 2011-5-20. This track arrived on June 9, 2011

⁴⁶ Fayez Al-Duwairi, "Military Work Experience Syria", Al-Jazeera Center for Studies

Syrian opposition with the necessary weapons for fear of falling it into the hands of terrorist groups. With the emphasis on the need to abandon the Syrian regime from the chemical arsenal, and the mobilization of support from all the superpowers, but the Russian proposal on the delivery of the chemical arsenal to the international community, contributed to reducing the possibility of military strike on the Syrian regime after the delivery of shipments on several stages of the Syrian side and start preparing for the Russian proposal.

Where Russia reopened the military bases on the Syrian coast in the city of Tartus, and held military deals at a high level⁴⁷. Russia has written off 73% of the debts owed by Syria, amounting to about (13.4) billion, and transfer (1.5) billion to direct investments, To grant Russian companies concessions for oil and gas exploration in the Syrian coasts at a depth of 70 km and width of 30 km and for 24 years⁴⁸.

Russia entered directly into the power struggle in the Syrian territories due to the historical relations on one hand and the preservation of the socialist system in Syria. On the other hand, the revolution in Syria was classified as terrorist movements in the eyes of Russia, necessitating Russian intervention directly on the military level and sending its air, in order to end the Syrian revolution and to have a foothold on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Russia used veto power in the UN Security Council against any attack on the Assad regime and banned any resolution that could affect Russian-Syrian relations. China supported it in vetoing any Western intervention that would topple the Syrian regime. For the first time, the Russian-Chinese veto was used four times after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution to protect an Arab regime in an unprecedented manner, despite the insistence of the US, France, Britain and Germany to overthrow the Syrian regime, but their efforts failed, contrary to their success in overthrowing the Iraqi regime and Libyan and Egyptian.

Russia officially announced the start of operations by air strikes against terrorist organizations, especially the organization of Isis "Daesh". Military operations began on 30/9/2015, and Russian airliners achieved great success in directing several strikes against the anti-Syrian organizations. The Russian Orthodox Church announced its support for the military intervention and described it as a holy battle. As a result of the Russian intervention in Syria and the Syrian revolutionary forces weakened the capabilities of these organizations and their hopes of overthrowing the Assad regime, despite the efforts exerted by Western countries and some Arab countries to support the opposition and the Syrian revolution for years, these efforts have not been successful.

Russia's insistence on maintaining the Syrian regime serves its strategic interests in the region and stops Western ambitions, as it does not want an alternative regime in Syria, because it poses a threat on its interests if the Sunnis receive the regime and make up the overwhelming majority and their interests may be with countries other than Russia . Especially since Russia has economic privileges granted to them from the Assad regime. The energy and transport sector is considered one of the most important of these concessions, which was the Tishreen and Al-Baath power stations and the railway. Russia supplied the Assad regime with many experts on the economic and military levels.

⁴⁷ Ammar Yasser Hamo, *Russia and the Syrian Revolution*, Amaya Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Dar Ammar Publishing and Distribution, Amman 2016, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ Ammar Yasser Hamo, *Russia and the Syrian Revolution*, Amaya Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Dar Ammar Publishing and Distribution, Amman 2016.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has expressed his support for the Syrian regime and criticized the "imperialist madness" of the international community, which seeks to attack Syria under the pretext of defending its people⁴⁹, where the Turkish position Prime Minister Rajab Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey "will not close the door" in the face of refugees fleeing unrest in Syria⁵⁰, And stressed on as Erdogan described what is happening in Syria as "horrors" and accused the Syrian regime by nonhuman acting against the protesters against him, and he stressed that if the practices of Bashar al-Assad regime continued, Turkey will find it difficult to defend Syria in international forums.⁵¹

As for the Arab countries, the Arab initiative to resolve the Syrian crisis was put forward in November 2011, after the events that were violent and accused the Syrian authorities of using violence to suppress the protesters and cause the deaths of thousands of them. The Arab initiative was to release prisoners and protesters, withdraw the army from the cities and hold talks with the opposition, but the Syrian government did not respond to Arab demands. The Arab League decided to freeze Syria's membership in the Arab League and give it a three-day deadline to accept a protocol to send Arab observers. Which provoked angry reactions and heavy anger on the part of the Syrian government, followed by attacks and intrusions of the embassies of Qatar and Saudi Arabia in Damascus and the consulates of Turkey and France in Aleppo and Latakia. The Arab League imposed economic sanctions for not signing the protocol⁵².

Syria agreed to the Arab initiative in December 2011 on sending observers, bringing the total number of observers to 200 observers⁵³. After the mission stayed for a month and delivered the report to Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby, the Arab foreign ministers met on 22 January 2012 at the university's headquarters in Cairo to find a solution to the crisis, and here Qatar raised the issue of sending an Arab force to Syria. And considered that this step would be better than extending the mission's functions⁵⁴.

The Jordanian government has expressed its concern about what is happening in Syria and its support for the displaced Syrians of Jordan. In his first official reaction to the events in Syria, Jordan's King Abdullah called on his Syrian counterpart to step down in a BBC television interview. "If I were the place of Assad, I would have been wiped out"⁵⁵ the Jordanian monarch said. The reactions to the Syrian regime were soon condemned by the Jordanian government and accused of interfering in Syrian affairs by supporting the opposition, despite the opening of the Jordanian border to Syrian refugees, which reached about one and a half million refugees, which weighed heavily on the Jordanian economy.

Saudi Arabia's position on the development of events in Syria represented a halt to the bloodshed. Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah called for consultations on the Syrian crisis. Saudi Arabia succeeded in issuing a UN resolution in 2012 condemning the Syrian regime for

⁴⁹ Chavez supports Assad and attacks the West. Al Jazeera Net, 2011-4-26. This track arrived on June 5, 2011.

⁵⁰ Erdogan: Turkey will not close its borders to refugees fleeing Syria. Reuters, 8-6-2011. This track arrived on June 11, 2011.

⁵¹ Erdogan: atrocities committed in Syria. Al Jazeera Net, 2011-6-10. This track arrived on June 10, 2011

⁵² The atmosphere of escalation after the suspension of Syria - Al Jazeera Net on 13-11-2011.

⁵³ Radio Netherlands Worldwide www.rnw.nl/arabic/bulletin, Posted: 23-12-2011. Date of entry 23-11-2016.

⁵⁴ Qatar renews proposal to send Arab troops to Syria or refer the file to the Security Council. BBC Arabic. Date Posted: 22-01-2012.

Date of Access 6-3-2012.

⁵⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPGxK6qTnFw>

suppressing popular demands⁵⁶. The Saudi decision did not come alone, but came after the position of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States to stop the repression against the Syrian people.

Regional interventions loyal to the Syrian regime have been the Iranian support since the beginning of the revolution, through logistical, technical and financial support, the training of the Syrian army and the dispatch of some Iranian combat forces to Syria. This support was provided by strategic and sectarian interests and played a major role in the sustainability of the Syrian regime. Iran's financial, military and intelligence support varied. It helped inject billions of dollars to pay the salaries of the regime's staff, the army and the security services. Iran has used its intelligence expertise to use wiretapping devices, how to disperse demonstrations, extract confessions from Syrian detainees, and send Iranian soldiers and experts to support the Syrian regime⁵⁷.

Iran has been Syria's ally since Iran's 1979 revolution and provides Hezbollah with a strategic security route in Lebanon. Some Iranian officials have said that Syria is Iran's No. 35 province⁵⁸. As a result of Iran's limited support, has estimated the number of Iranian fighters in Syria about ten thousand fighters in 2013.

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has stated several times that the Syrian issue for the Islamic Republic of Iran is a red line and no one has the right to underestimate its importance. This indicates that the Syrian file for Iran is a fateful issue, That after six years of the Arab-American conspiracy against the Syrian state in cooperation with the Takfirin terrorists, the Americans sought in every way available to remove the Syrian president and put another president, who was rejected by the Islamic Republic of Iran⁵⁹. This indicates the extent to which Iran has survived the Syrian regime in order to spread sectarian Shiite ideology and not to cut off its limbs, especially in Lebanon after it took control and extended its influence on Iraq after the collapse of the regime in 2003.

The Guardian newspaper in May 2011 confirmed that the Iranian government had been assisting the Syrian government with riot gear, intelligence surveillance technology, e-mail monitoring technology, mobile phones and social media⁶⁰. The position of Hezbollah has announced its support for the Syrian regime from the outset, and participated in the suppression of the Syrian revolution by sending fighters to Syria. Hezbollah is an extension of Iran in Lebanon, and if the regime falls in Syria, Iranian supplies will not reach Hezbollah. Hezbollah has confirmed its stance on the Syrian regime through several statements by Hassan Nasrallah: "Whoever wants to overthrow Syria militarily, I say to him, you will not be able to do that, and Syria will stand firm and stand firm"⁶¹

⁵⁶ <http://www.france24.com/ar/20110808-saudi-arabia-syria-protests-bashar-assad-position-arab-world-turkey-iran>

⁵⁷ Ghazi Tawbah, *The Syrian Revolution: Causes and Developments* (a study presented to the Islamic Ummah Conference held in Astambol on 1-07-2012)

⁵⁸ <http://www.kaleme.com/1391/11/26/klm-133479>

⁵⁹ <http://islamtimes.org/ar/doc/news/550401>

⁶⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/08/iran-helping-syrian-regime-protesters>

⁶¹ <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2015/07/10/741858.html>

There is no doubt that the external interventions came to achieve self-interest in the first place, above any consideration for what happens to the Syrian people, which was divided between supporters and opponents based on the desire of the States participating in the Syrian crisis, which employed all its capabilities to compete for the survival of its interests fixed in the region without a potential threat, even if Was at the expense of the Syrian people.

CONCLUSION

The study presented the concept of political violence and the reasons for its development with the analysis of the most important events that led to its emergence in Syria in the absence of political justice and the one-party control of the pillars of the state, the failure of economic development and the emergence of class and religious inequality, which the state failed to provide to citizens, marginalization and deprivation at all levels and a key factor in the manifestations of political violence, whether by the people's reactions to the regime or through the regime's counter-insurgency and popular protests. The study presented the most important reasons for the Syrian revolution as a result of the time accumulations that prevailed in the power of the authorities through the security institutions, which led to the subsequent revolution after a series of bloody events. Which created a kind of chaos and internal chaos, which necessitated the intervention of the superpowers, and the emergence of US-Russian rivalry in the Syrian issue, which was controlled from the beginning by Russia, and the intervention of some regional forces loyal to the Syrian regime in order to maintain the system that serves its sectarian programs, especially Iran.

Through the reality of political violence in Syria, the study considered making some recommendations that would limit the phenomenon of political violence in the Middle East, including:

1. Establishing the principles of political, social and economic justice that will strengthen the relationship between the ruler and the ruled.
2. Using the language of dialogue and promote popular harmony between all its spectrums and components for the public interest of the state and not personal and partisan interests.
3. Staying away from the use of excessive forces against the people through the security institutions and contain the popular anger.
4. Never resorting to foreign interventions that would undermine national and national gains.
5. Preserving national unity and Arab nationalism aimed at promoting joint cooperation for the benefit and prosperity of the Arab peoples.