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# Syria: What Reforms While a Storm Is Building?

→ Samir El Aita





## Arab Reform Initiative

Syria underwent profound changes since 2005 in its regional and international positioning, as well as in its internal political situation. This policy brief discusses the domestic prospects for change and the potential for reforms and analyzes the impact of regional and international developments on the domestic situation. For the first time in decades, Syrian public opinion is critical of its authorities' role in Lebanon, with the majority holding them responsible for the situation there. The economic situation has deteriorated to levels dangerous for social stability. Direct criticism of the President and his team by the business community is unprecedented. The opposition overcame its weaknesses and political and civil society movements signed the "Damascus Declaration" calling openly for peaceful "regime change". The prospects for peaceful change depend on the findings of the UN investigation commission over the assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Hariri, the ability of the opposition to propose a platform to demonstrate to the Syrian public that change will not lead to chaos; and the ability of the "power system" to respond intelligently to the combination of international pressures and internal challenges on the economic, social and political front.



## About the author

### Samir El Aita

General Director of Mafhoum (Concept) and Le Monde Diplomatique - Arabic Edition

## About Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is the leading independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality and social justice.

- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

Founded in 2005, the Arab Reform Initiative is governed by a Plenary of its members and an Executive Committee.

[arab-reform.net](http://arab-reform.net)

[contact@arab-reform.net](mailto:contact@arab-reform.net)



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