

Iranian Private Sector to Assist in Rebuilding Syria?

OE Watch Commentary: More than seven years of civil war have largely destroyed Syria. As the Syrian Army and its outside supporters reconsolidate control over Syria—or at least those portions of the country not held by Syrian Kurds who have not targeted Assad directly—discussion has begun to turn toward reconstruction. The UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia has estimated that it will take \$388 billion to rebuild the country. While it is unrealistic that the international community will offer that degree of support, there is an active debate in many Western governments about whether contributing to reconstruction rewards Bashar al-Assad’s regime for the damages it caused or whether corruption in the Syrian government will enable Bashar’s regime to siphon off aid or channel away from towns and cities in which the opposition was active.

In the accompanying excerpted article from the *Fars News Agency*, Defense Minister Amir Hatami suggests that the Islamic Republic “is ready to assist” with reconstruction in Syria. That the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is already so involved in construction explains the irony of the Defense Minister promising the support of the private sector. Hatami’s signaling of Iranian involvement in Syria’s reconstruction also suggests that the Islamic Republic plans to double down on its involvement in Syria if the civil war ends with Assad victorious. That he does so against the backdrop of continuing demonstrations in Iran with regard to the state of the Iranian economy highlights the importance that Syria holds for the Islamic Republic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“We have stood alongside the Syrian people and government to fight the terrorism.”

Source: “Bakhsh-e Khasusi Iran baraye Bazsazi Suriya Amadegi Darad (The Iranian Private Sector is Ready to Rebuild Syria),” *Fars News Agency*, 26 August 2018. <https://goo.gl/W6X58J>

General [Amir] Hatami, at a press conference in Tehran, said the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to sustainable security and the preservation of the territorial integrity of the countries of the region and stated, “For 40 years, the Islamic Republic has had good relations with Syria in all fields, and this country [Syria] stood alongside Iran in the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war, and we have stood alongside the Syrian people and government to fight the terrorism, and we will continue in this way.”

He stated that these successes and victories, in the framework of the bilateral ties between the two countries and at an important political level, in cooperation with the forces of the resistance and the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic, overcame a major regional plot and conspiracy, and he said, “Congratulations to the Syrian Defense Minister and the leaders of the two countries, and to both the governments and nations of Iran and Syria.”

The Minister of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran said the people of Syria are a single entity regardless of their ethnic and religious backgrounds.... Amir Hatami stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its high capabilities, is ready to assist the Syrian people and the Syrian government in the field of reconstruction, said: “The Islamic Republic also has a high level of defensive capabilities and can help Syria to expand its military and equipment.”



More than seven years of fighting have destroyed much of Syria's civilian infrastructure. Here, a street scene in Aleppo.

Source: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Flickr) [OGL (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/1/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syria-two_years_of_tragedy_\(8642756918\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syria-two_years_of_tragedy_(8642756918).jpg).