
REPORT ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIONS
FOR THE BRUSSELS VIII CONFERENCE ON

“Supporting the future of Syria and the region”

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of the EU’s civil society consultations in advance of the Day of Dialogue at the eighth Brussels Conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the region, which will be held on 30 April 2024. The consultations took two forms: in-country consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs), and an online survey of Syrian individuals and CSO representatives in Syria and the wider region carried out on behalf of the EU by the Center for Operational Analysis and Research (COAR).

In-country consultations with civil society were conducted by EU delegations to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon between January and March 2024 to identify recommendations and key topics for the Brussels VIII Conference. These events, held both in-person and online, gathered representatives from NGOs, civil society, and international stakeholders to foster exchange and explore key topics within the Syria response for the upcoming year.

The survey was open from 19 February to 10 March and collected opinions across four key topic areas identified by the in-country consultations:

1. Civil Society and Governance
2. Service Delivery and Early Recovery
3. Displacement and Durable Solutions
4. Peacebuilding and the Political Process

Each topic area contained multiple questions to gauge the opinions of Syrian civil society on the effectiveness of the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria, key challenges faced by civil society organisations, and priorities for the future. Some questions were repeated from [last year’s survey](#) to facilitate comparison and monitor change over time. The results were analysed by COAR and are presented in this report, with comparisons between respondents based on location and whether they are CSO representatives or individual Syrians included where relevant. The key findings for each topic area are summarised below.

1. Civil Society and Governance

In this section, CSO representatives and individual Syrians were asked separate questions to ensure that they could answer based on their own experiences.

CSOs operating both inside and outside Syria reported funding issues and difficulties with bank transfers as the most important challenges facing their organisations. Those operating inside Syria cited interference from local or national authorities as well as conflict incidents to a greater extent than those outside Syria, who instead noted challenges relating to administrative constraints and hate speech and discrimination.

In terms of the general operational environment, more respondents in every location said that conditions had deteriorated rather than improved over the past 12 months, with those in Lebanon most likely to say that conditions had deteriorated. When compared with last year’s survey, fewer respondents from every location reported an improved operational environment. Within Syria, those operating in northeast and northwest Syria were most likely to report that the operational environment had improved, although in every location more respondents reported a deterioration in the operational environment than an improvement. For those reporting an improvement, the main reasons cited were better cooperation between CSOs as well as a better security environment, while those reporting deterioration pointed to reduced funding, decreased international support, and economic conditions.

Individual Syrians were asked about their involvement in community decision-making, whether their needs are met by civil society’s response to the crisis in Syria, and their representation in the peace process. Fewer than half of individual Syrian respondents agreed with each of the statements. When compared

with last year’s survey, fewer participants agreed that they are meaningfully involved in decision-making in their current location, while more agreed that they are well-represented by civil society’s response to the Syria crisis.

Overall, respondents were more likely to agree than disagree that civil society is meaningfully included in making decisions about the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria. When asked about how to strengthen the role of civil society in the response to the crisis in Syria, respondents highlighted the need for increased funding, capacity strengthening, and international political support. Individual Syrians were more likely than CSO respondents to emphasise independence from interfering actors and better accountability to beneficiaries.

Respondents pointed most strongly to the ongoing conflict and the lack of national reconciliation or political solution as the main challenges to governance in Syria. Individual Syrians were more likely to highlight corruption and the presence of militias/armed groups, while CSOs pointed to a lack of financial resources. When analysed by region of Syria, those in Government of Syria-controlled areas pointed more strongly to corruption and sanctions, while those in northwest Syria were more likely to cite lack of financial resources.

2. Service Delivery and Early Recovery

When asked about the impediments to improving access to public services in Syria, CSO respondents emphasised a lack of financial resources and the extent of conflict-related damage to a greater extent than individual Syrians, while individual Syrians pointed to corruption. All respondents also highlighted the lack of a political solution to the conflict. When divided by area of Syria, once again respondents within Government of Syria-controlled areas pointed more strongly to corruption and sanctions, while those in northwest Syria pointed more strongly to the lack of financial resources.

Similarly to last year’s survey, respondents emphasised specialised education programmes, small business support, and the rehabilitation of public infrastructure as the best ways to improve access to jobs and livelihoods in Syria. Individual Syrians were more likely to suggest addressing corruption. On donor priorities, respondents emphasised the need to link humanitarian and development work to enhance the effectiveness of recovery efforts in Syria, provide accountability and transparency, as well as ensure sustainability in the response. On the obstacles to the success of projects seeking to restore services and livelihoods, while respondents most often chose the absence of a political solution to the conflict, CSO respondents were more likely to select a lack of funding, while individual Syrians more strongly pointed to corruption and the presence of armed groups.

3. Displacement and Durable Solutions

Responses to this set of questions, which asked about Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and IDPs displaced within Syria, were broadly in line with those received last year. On the main challenges faced by Syrian refugees in host countries, almost three-quarters of respondents selected “risk of deportation/evacuation”. Other issues cited were the lack of legal protections, growing anti-refugee sentiments, and discrimination within the host community. To ensure the protection of refugees, respondents emphasised political pressure on host countries, stronger legal protections, as well as more funding for projects focused on integration. A political solution to the conflict and safety and security guarantees were seen as most needed to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees to Syria.

The risk of additional forced displacement was the most noted challenge faced by IDPs in Syria, followed by the poor security situation, a lack of funding to address long-term needs, and a lack of employment opportunities. Livelihoods and employment support, funding for integration projects, and political pressure

on local authorities were the most cited requirements for supporting IDPs. As with refugees, respondents believe that a political solution to the conflict and safety and security guarantees are prerequisites to the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of IDPs to their communities of origin.

4. Peacebuilding and the Political Process

This section of the survey asked a new set of questions regarding the political process towards a solution to the conflict in Syria. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that a political solution to the conflict should be prioritised, yet they also overwhelmingly agreed that no meaningful progress had been made in the past 12 months. Where respondents elaborated, they most frequently referred to the international community’s inability or unwillingness to find a solution or agreement to solve the Syria crisis. Linked to this, and also commonly mentioned, was the idea that other international crises, such as the wars in Ukraine or Gaza, had taken precedence over the Syrian crisis, meaning both less funding and a reduced interest in Syria.

Respondents were most likely to agree that civil society is meaningfully included in finding a political solution to the conflict, while they were least likely to agree that Syrians inside Syria are meaningfully included. In no case did more agree than disagree, however. Respondents suggested that civil society can best contribute to a political solution to the conflict by promoting political knowledge among Syrians and opening dialogues among Syrians inside and outside Syria.

5. The Day of Dialogue

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked about their expectations for topics to be included in the Day of Dialogue at the Brussels Conference. The most frequently mentioned expectation was the desire for a political solution to the Syrian crisis, seen as vital to making progress in Syria. Other key themes include the importance of the inclusion of Syrians and civil society organisations in dialogue and attempts to address the crisis in Syria, with particular emphasis on civil society involvement, as well as refugee and IDP issues and better financing and funding.

List of abbreviations

CSO	Civil society organisation
GoS	Government of Syria
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
NES	Northeast Syria
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NS	Northern Syria
NWS	Northwest Syria
WoS	Whole of Syria

1. Introduction

This report summarises the findings of the EU’s civil society consultations in advance of the “Day of Dialogue” at the eighth Brussels Conference on “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region,” which will be held on 30 April 2024. In-country civil society consultations were carried out in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon to identify key topics of interest for discussion during the Day of Dialogue, bringing together civil society representatives, key decision-makers from countries neighbouring Syria and donor countries, as well as institutional stakeholders such as the EU and the UN. The EU commissioned an online survey to capture opinions and recommendations from Syrian civil society and individual Syrians, from both inside and outside the country, on the topics and themes of interest generated from the in-country consultations: Civil Society and Governance, Service Delivery and Early Recovery, Displacement and Durable Solutions, and Peacebuilding and the Political Process. There were a total of **834** valid respondents to the survey, defined as having completed the first demographics page.

Following this introduction, the report is divided into two chapters, which outline the main findings of the in-country consultations and the online survey. The results of the in-country consultations are described country by country, while the results of the online survey are presented across five subsections: an initial demographic overview of respondents, and then a subsection for each theme. The data is visualised using charts and maps, showing top-level data of all respondents or data segmented by demographic or other variables where these recorded a significant difference. Additional context and explanations are provided in-text, as well as comparisons and changes over time with last year’s survey where relevant.

1.1. Methodology

The online consultation was designed by COAR in close collaboration with the EU, based on the priority topics for the Brussels VIII Conference identified by the first round of in-country consultations in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. The survey was created using SurveyMonkey and made available online between 19 February and 10 March in Arabic and English. Respondents were actively sought through social media channels and direct mailing lists. The survey was open only to respondents aged 18 or over.

The survey was designed to capture the opinions of both CSO representatives and individual Syrians inside Syria as well as in neighbouring countries and within the EU. The initial questions captured demographic information such as age, gender, type of respondent (CSO or individual Syrian), and country-level location. While the survey used “skip logic” to ensure that respondents only answered questions relevant to their experiences, our aim was to ensure that as many substantive questions as possible were answered by all respondents to allow for comparison. Most questions were multiple choice (allowing for the selection of up to three answers), with an option to skip and an option to select “Other” and specify a response in-text. A total of 45 questions across 18 pages were uploaded to SurveyMonkey, although due to the skip logic, most respondents were presented with around 30.

1.2. Limitations

- To ensure that the data collected was as comparable as possible between individual Syrians and CSOs, the same survey was used for all respondents – with some minor changes using skip logic.
- While efforts were made to keep the language as simple as possible, some of the terminology and phrasing used may not have been understood by respondents who were not familiar with the context of the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis.

- Outreach efforts broadly targeted countries in the region through social media, mailing lists, and direct contact with CSO networks. However, significantly fewer people responded to the survey when compared to last year despite additional outreach efforts. This may be explained in part by the increased attention focused on the Syria response during the survey last year, resulting from the earthquakes that struck Syria and Türkiye in February 2023, and the correspondingly less attention focused on Syria this year amid the conflict in Gaza. Notably, social media outreach saw fewer “organic” impressions resulting from shares and reposts than last year. Respondents may also be experiencing “survey fatigue”, with an unwillingness to participate in a similar survey to one they completed last year. Future surveys may seek to address this with increased, multi-stakeholder outreach, targeted advertising, or significantly shorter and easier to complete surveys.
- As last year’s survey saw a significant drop-off rate in responses due to the amount of time it took to complete, this year’s survey was purposely shortened. Drop-off rates were lower as a result, with the average amount of time spent on the survey **13 minutes** compared to 16 minutes last year. Due to the structure of the survey, partial data was collected from respondents who did not complete the entire survey and is included in the below analysis.

2. In-country Consultations

In-country consultations with civil society were carried out between January and March 2024 to identify recommendations and key topics for the Brussels VIII Conference. In Jordan, the EU Delegation organised two events on 16 January and 7 February, in collaboration with the Jordan INGO forum. In Lebanon, participants were invited by the EU to two days of civil society consultations on 19 and 20 February. In Syria, the Syrian Civic Space Initiative organised four days of consultations on 15 and 19–21 February. The below sub-sections outline the key results of the in-country consultations.

2.1. Jordan – Walk the Talk

Two consultations were held in Jordan, led by the EU Delegation to Jordan, and with the participation of the Jordan INGO Forum in collaboration with the Jordan National NGO Forum and the Coordination Committee for Civil Society Organisations. The first consultation also saw the participation of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), whilst the second was attended by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and NEAR B (Neighbourhood South and Türkiye). The first consultation was held on 16 January and brought together 23 CSO representatives, and the second consultation was held on 7 February. Participants identified six key topics for inclusion in the Day of Dialogue at the Brussels Conference: A political solution in Syria, long-term guarantees for host countries, enhancing protection and incorporating deepening needs of refugees in national response plans, durable solutions in neighbouring countries, the future of refugees in camp-settings, and aid effectiveness. Participants also stressed the need for greater focus on neighbouring countries.

The first consultation highlighted the urgent need for a political solution in Syria, primarily because the continued lack of a political solution continues to affect all other areas of response to the Syrian crisis. Across both consultations, participants otherwise largely focused on issues concerning Jordan, in particular refugee integration and conditions in refugee camps.

Participants in the first meeting also stressed the need for long-term guarantees for host countries such as Jordan as the probability of refugee returns remains low. They proposed revising the Jordan Compact’s objectives to offer sustained support, including secure funding and initiatives promoting refugee self-reliance through education and employment opportunities. Enhancing protection for refugees and aligning their needs with national response plans was seen as crucial, particularly amid escalating demands. Participants noted that durable solutions in neighbouring countries require inclusive development strategies, which emphasise resettlement and economic integration for refugees. Planning for the future of refugees in camps is essential, and requires effective aid distribution and scenario planning, while streamlining bureaucratic processes is vital for aid effectiveness, and enables NGOs to operate efficiently and maximise their impact.

Participants identified that healthcare and medical aid for Syrian refugees in Jordan face challenges as international donors reduce support, especially for non-communicable diseases, which affect many refugees. Mental health support, particularly for women exposed to violence, was also seen as a key issue. Participants observed that camp management discussions should focus on protection, integration, and social cohesion, while developmental aid and private sector involvement should also be emphasised. Educational access remains limited. For example, only 10–20% of students attend school in Mafraq, primarily due to transportation issues. A shift in aid strategy was also seen as necessary, combining livelihood support with humanitarian aid to address rising poverty levels. CSOs should work to improve coordination among themselves, INGOs, and the Jordanian government, concretely to achieve fair funding distribution. Concerns were raised over funding transparency, with only 22% of committed funds reported as being fulfilled by the Jordanian government. Expectations for the B8C conference included clear objectives and concrete outcomes demanded by CSOs.

Those who attended the second meeting continued to focus on refugee needs and integration, and also emphasised the importance of long-term guarantees for host countries like Jordan to ensure sustained support for Syrian refugees. Many of the themes from the first meeting were repeated. Financial predictability was noted as being crucial for maintaining refugee access to basic services and promoting self-reliance, as was the development of infrastructure. Participants gave the example of one school in Madaba Governorate which operates in shifts to accommodate 117 female students in the morning and 107 Syrian students in the evening, reflecting the pressures on infrastructure. Recommendations include improving coordination among EU Member States and donors to deliver aid effectively, as well as collaboration between the EU and the Jordanian government on issues such as economic inclusion and the protection of refugees. Participants underscored the need for targeted interventions due to high unemployment rates and limited labour market access for refugees, and called for enhancing refugees’ skills and creating meaningful employment opportunities, whilst also addressing the education system’s shortcomings. The discussion also addressed challenges in self-employment and proposed solutions such as supporting production lines and broadening dialogue with entities like the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as the importance of entrepreneurship and business ownership. Finally, participants recommended ensuring guaranteed funding despite donor cuts and addressing the future of refugee camps, alongside the need for comprehensive support services for refugees.

2.2. Lebanon — Local Days of Dialogue

In Lebanon, participants were invited to two days of in-person civil society consultations in Beirut between 19 and 20 February, jointly organised by the EU Delegation and three civil society platforms: Lebanon INGOs Humanitarian Forum (LHIF), Lebanon Humanitarian and Development NGOs Forum (LHDF), and the Working Group for People Affected by the Syrian Crisis (WG PASC). Participant numbers differed across the sessions offered, ranging from 54 to 76, and focused on four main topics identified by an online survey among the civil society platforms: “strengthening national capacities for basic services”, “access to services for refugees”, “maintaining comprehensive protection for refugees”, and “durable solutions”.

On strengthening national capacities, participants recommended that donors enhance coordination to facilitate integrated programming, breaking down silos between humanitarian and development efforts. Participants observed that while some progress has been made, many donors still operate independently, hindering efficiency and sustainability. Conditional funding could be used to advocate for greater inclusion of refugees in national service delivery schemes. Contextualising strategies according to country-specific needs was seen as crucial, especially recognising the unique challenges faced in Lebanon compared to Jordan or Türkiye. Participants recommended that NGOs should involve municipalities in projects through advisory committees and project design, fostering bottom-up approaches that enhance localisation and sustainability.

Access to services was seen as a significant challenge, especially in sectors like health, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), and education. Government support for refugee access to services in Lebanon is limited, and it instead relies heavily on donor funding. Participants noted that issues such as school closures, financial constraints, and regional disparities further complicate the situation, with vulnerable areas like Akkar facing heightened protection concerns for school-aged children. Participants emphasised the importance of holistic responses to address these challenges. However, a lack of good data, duplication of efforts, and competition among organisations can be seen as a threat to progress. Participants called for long-term and sustainable solutions, alongside comprehensive strategies that address the multifaceted refugee challenges.

On maintaining protection for Syrian refugees, participants highlighted that refugees are still reliant on humanitarian assistance for basic needs, with an urgent need for a unified response to reduce tensions and support refugee dignity. The politicisation of refugees in Lebanon and ensuing social tensions have resulted from the economic crisis. Efforts to alleviate tensions between Lebanese communities and refugees should

adopt a nuanced approach, incorporating conflict sensitivity and “do no harm” principles, with aid resources allocated based on need rather than population group or nationality. Participants stated that donors are pivotal in pressuring Lebanese governments to address these issues and ensure equitable aid distribution.

For durable solutions, participants highlighted that Syrian refugee returns should be closely monitored and based on principles of humanitarian law, ensuring any return is undertaken in a safe, voluntary, and dignified manner. They suggested that the international community should increase quotas for the resettlement and complementary pathways of Syrian refugees that include market integration, family reunification, and sponsorship schemes.

2.3. Syria – Syrian Civic Space Initiative

The Syrian Civic Space Initiative (SCSI), supported by the EU and aiming at fostering intra-Syrian dialogue, conducted four online consultation sessions on 15 and 19–21 February. Each session focused on a different topic and was divided into two working groups to discuss the key issues relevant to the session’s topic.

The first session focused on “The Social and Community Disintegration Dilemma in Syria”. Participants discussed two main approaches to the issue of social and political fragmentation in Syria: one focused on bringing together local communities and fostering opportunities for dialogue, and the second on reinforcing local governance and working through the frame of decentralisation. Those who discussed local communities and dialogue emphasised that Syrian civil society faces significant challenges in its capacity to mediate between local communities and authorities, as well as across the different zones of the conflict. While civil platforms play a crucial role in connecting Syrians, concentrating efforts in certain areas was seen to lead to uneven development. Introducing new themes like community coherence and women’s participation can promote discussions beyond conflict lines, but executing projects across regions is hindered by political conflict, instability, communication issues, logistical difficulties, and banking restrictions for local organisations.

Participants recommended addressing geographical disparities and involving local organisations for balanced development. Establishing banking structures in certain regions and facilitating legal mechanisms for bank transfers were seen as crucial, alongside implementing sustainable funding mechanisms. Strategies should be sensitive to regional dynamics to prevent exacerbating tensions, and empowering Syrian civil society to transition from aid to developmental and political roles was seen as essential. Involvement of Syrians in international platforms is vital, as is deepening civil society’s role through control mechanisms over government institutions and election processes.

Those who discussed local governance highlighted the diverse nature of relations with local authorities, some of which impede civil society’s work. Participants also highlighted the absence of unions, resulting in a lack of mechanisms for protecting workers and contributing to societal disintegration exacerbated by the conflict. Participants recommended that donors and policymakers create spaces for alternative governance and support civil society, promote awareness of decentralisation, build partnerships, and support projects providing integrated services. They also called for dialogue between Syrians, expanding alliances across Syria’s various geographies, and designing strategies to maintain support for local entities.

In the second session, participants discussed “Food Security & Community Resilience”, again split into two groups, one which focused on civil society and food security, and the other on community resilience, providing a series of recommendations on both issues. Those who discussed food security recommended that donors and policymakers prioritise sustainable agricultural projects to ensure food security in Syria, empowering local councils for effective planning and execution. Supporting demand over supply by offering goods at fair prices is crucial, alongside emphasising governance for efficient management. Efforts should focus on infrastructure, family empowerment, and agricultural cooperatives, transitioning from excessive

centralisation to decentralised development. Engaging civil society and media for impactful decision-making is essential, as is providing resources and training for modern agricultural practices to address the water crisis exacerbated by climate and political factors.

The participants who discussed community resilience highlighted the importance of reclassifying funding for Syrian projects from humanitarian assistance to development aid, particularly in the health sector. Participants commented that emphasis should be placed on local partnerships to ensure local ownership of aid, whilst improved project design was seen as central to the success of these partnerships. Other key recommendations included funding studies on early recovery, prioritising education, supporting the agricultural sector, activating the private sector, promoting cross-geography projects for Syrian unity and peace, establishing just distribution of electricity, and supporting trade and production.

The third session focused on “The Emigration of Syrians and the Exhaustion of the Communities’ Resources”, with sub-topics on support for Syrian youth, and addressing the consequences of emigration from Syria. Participants who discussed Syrian youth recommended prioritising their needs and voices by creating safe environments for participation in decision-making processes and forums, as well as promoting dialogue between donors and youth. Both mental and physical health were seen as key issues, and participants suggested providing psychological support services as well as establishing centres to address drug addiction. They also recommended increasing projects for job opportunities, along with recognition of academic qualifications, which should be strengthened by the creation of environments which facilitate education and employment integration. Participants also suggested organising regular community meetings for all age groups to foster youth development and societal integration.

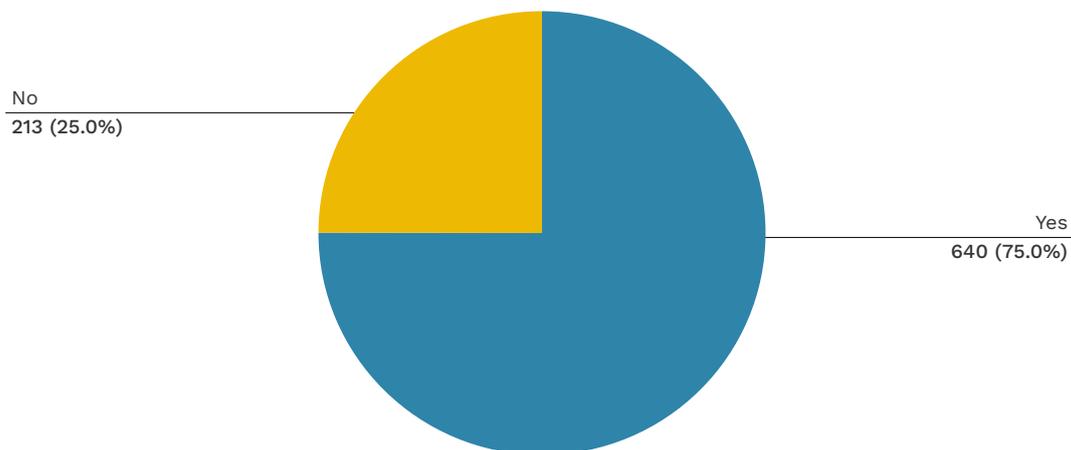
Recommendations to mitigate migration effects included strengthening communities via self-governance and economic empowerment, as well as work to improve living standards and external advocacy for educational and technological support, along with protecting civil society and advocating for secure return options. Participants also suggested collaborating with foreign experts and the diaspora to foster development, as well as supporting local resources and small agricultural businesses. Recognising Syrian educational degrees abroad was seen as important. They also highlighted the importance of fostering community dialogues and cross-sectoral initiatives driven by civil society, the private sector, and emigrants as being key for sustainable solutions.

The final session focused on “The Stagnation of the Political Process and the Loss of the Syrians’ Roles Within It”, with two working groups on the role of civil society in activating political engagement and the role of civil society in building trust and reinforcing social cohesion. Participants in the first group underscored the need to redirect funding towards early recovery while creating civil spaces for dialogues to facilitate a return to the political processes. Supporting cross-geographical initiatives to include all of Syria, as well as initiatives promoting social compassion linked to political solutions, and youth and women empowerment in mediation and political dialogue were all given high importance. Participants stated that donors should align interventions with local priorities, seek to protect and empower civil society, facilitate dialogue between civil society and political representatives, and enhance cooperation between organisations working to foster dialogue and understanding among communities.

Those who discussed building trust and reinforcing social cohesion emphasised the importance of messages of unity from Syrian actors for international decision-makers and donors. Participants also highlighted exploring alternative paths beyond the Astana and Geneva talks, noting that learning from war-affected countries’ experiences is vital for reaching solutions. Further recommendations included promoting community participation and creating clear methodologies for civil society engagement in politics, as well as safeguarding civil society, supporting cross-sectoral projects, and reinforcing democracy. Financially enabling volunteer groups, fostering coordination among civil society organisations, and maintaining humanitarian aid neutrality were seen as central to social cohesion. Participants advocated against normalisation without a political process and recommended working towards political solutions that align with Syrian realities.

3. Online Civil Society Consultations

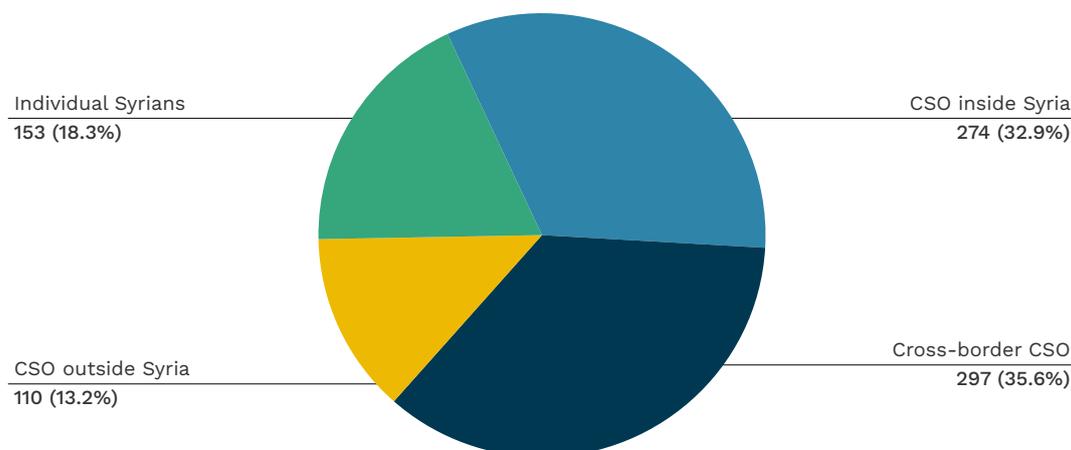
Figure 1: Are you familiar with the Day of Dialogue at the Brussels Conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the region?



Following an initial question to confirm that participants are over 18 and consent to proceed with the survey, participants were asked about their familiarity with the Day of Dialogue at the Brussels Conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the region. Three-quarters of respondents expressed that they were familiar with it, although familiarity was lower among individual Syrians (63%). Familiarity was highest for CSO respondents working inside Syria, at 81%.

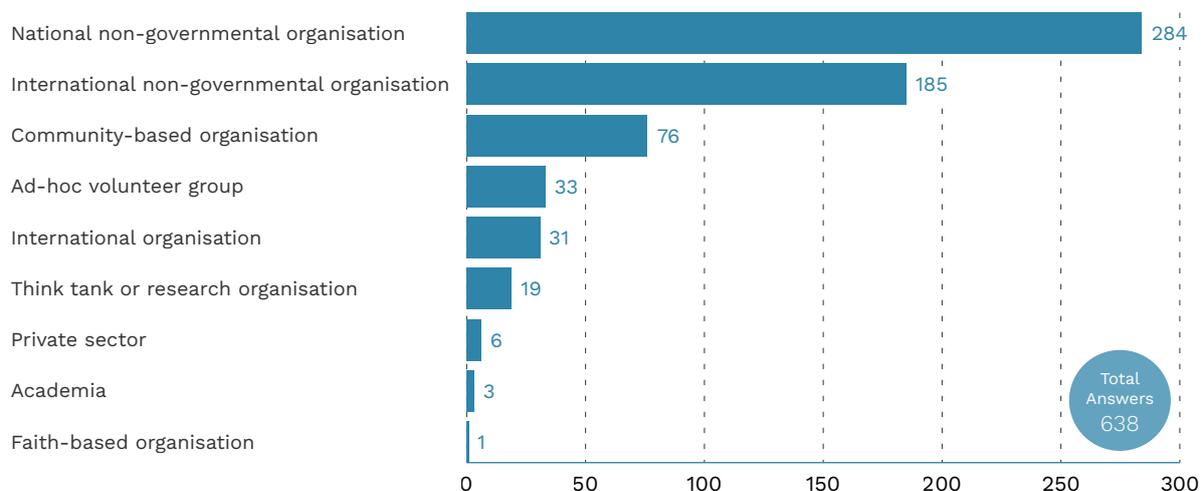
3.1. Demographic Information

Figure 2: Respondent Category



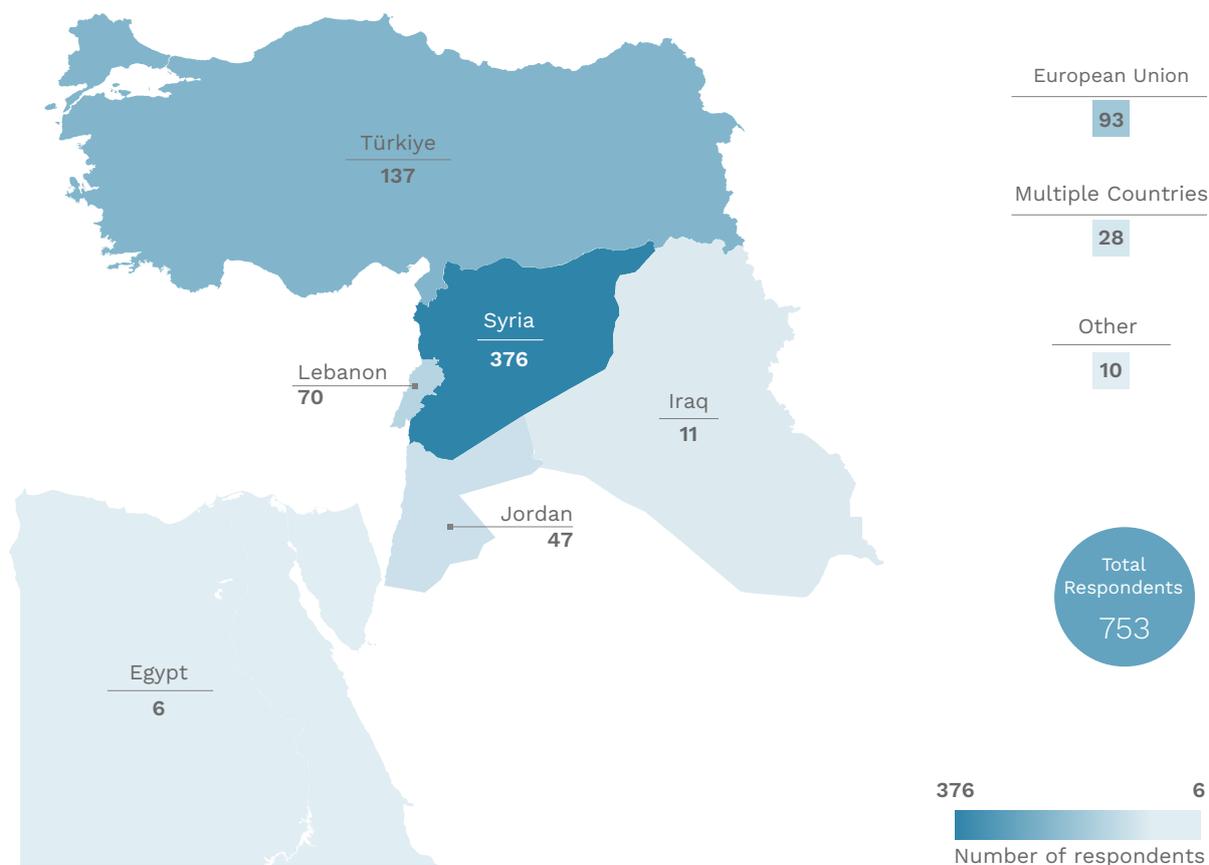
The survey recorded **834** valid responses, defined as having completed the demographics page which asked about gender, age, and type of respondent (CSO representative or individual). Around four-fifths of respondents (681) represent CSOs, while the remainder (153) are individual Syrians not affiliated with CSOs. CSO respondents were further subdivided into CSOs based inside Syria, CSOs based outside Syria but working inside Syria (cross-border CSOs), and CSOs working with Syrians in other countries (CSOs outside Syria). Cross-border CSOs and CSOs inside Syria each accounted for around a third of the overall sample.

Figure 3: What type of organisation do you work for?



Of the 638 respondents who specified the type of organisation they worked for, a majority chose either national non-governmental organisation (284) or international non-governmental organisation (185).

Figure 4: Country locations



Of respondents who specified a location, around half were based in Syria, followed by 18% in Türkiye and 12% in Lebanon. CSO respondents operating in Syria were asked to specify the areas in which they work. For conflict-sensitivity purposes, the locations were specified at the governorate level (and sub-governorate level for areas of shared control) and aggregated. 66% of respondents selected areas in only one zone of control, while 11% of respondents selected locations across more than one zone of control. 23% of respondents indicated that they work across the whole of Syria.

Figure 5: In which areas of Syria does your organisation operate?

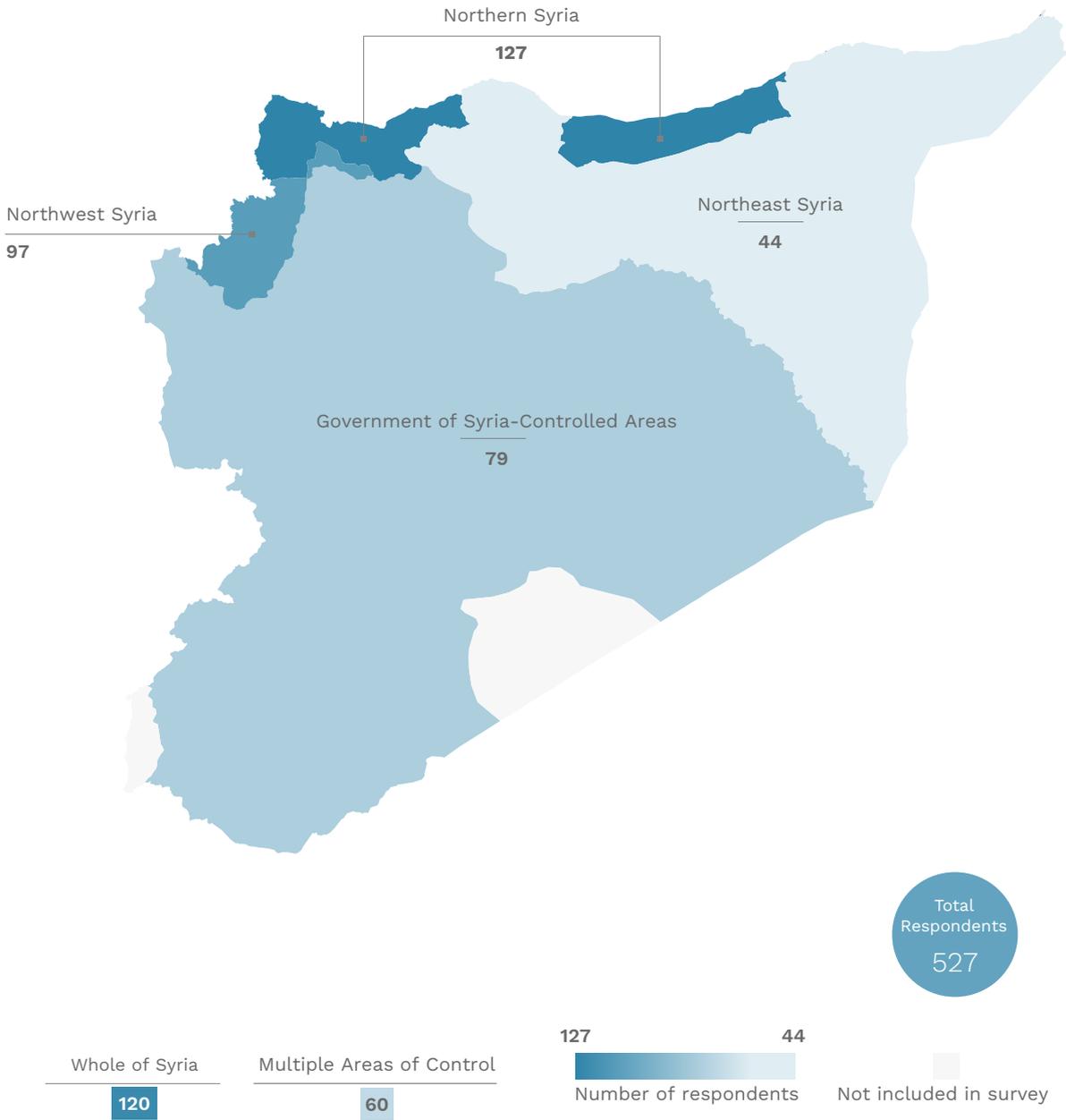
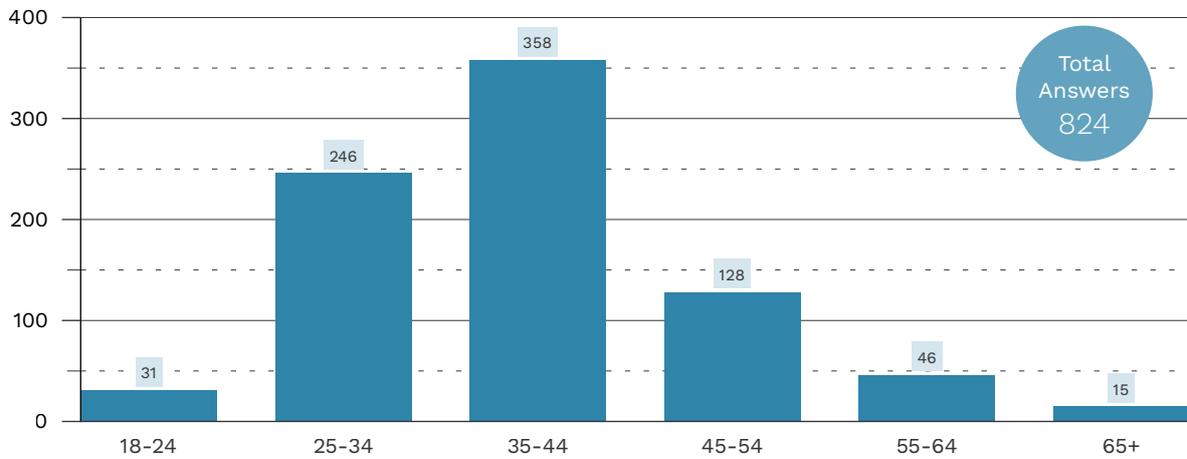
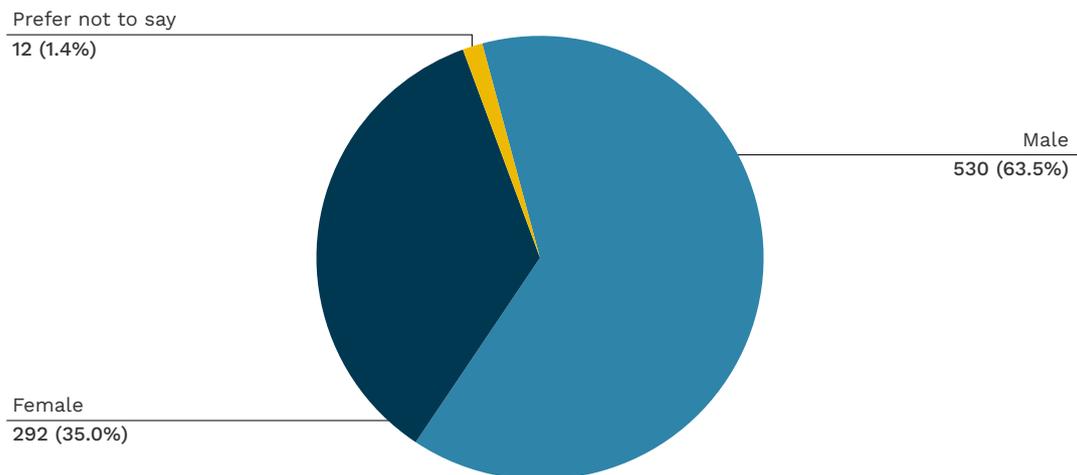


Figure 6: What is your age?



77% of respondents were under the age of 44, with the largest group (43%) between the ages of 35 and 44. The sample group skewed male, with 64% of respondents men, 35% women, and 1% preferring not to say. For the individual Syrians group (i.e. those not representing CSOs), the sample was slightly more balanced at 55% men, 42% women, and 3% preferring not to say.

Figure 7: Gender of respondents

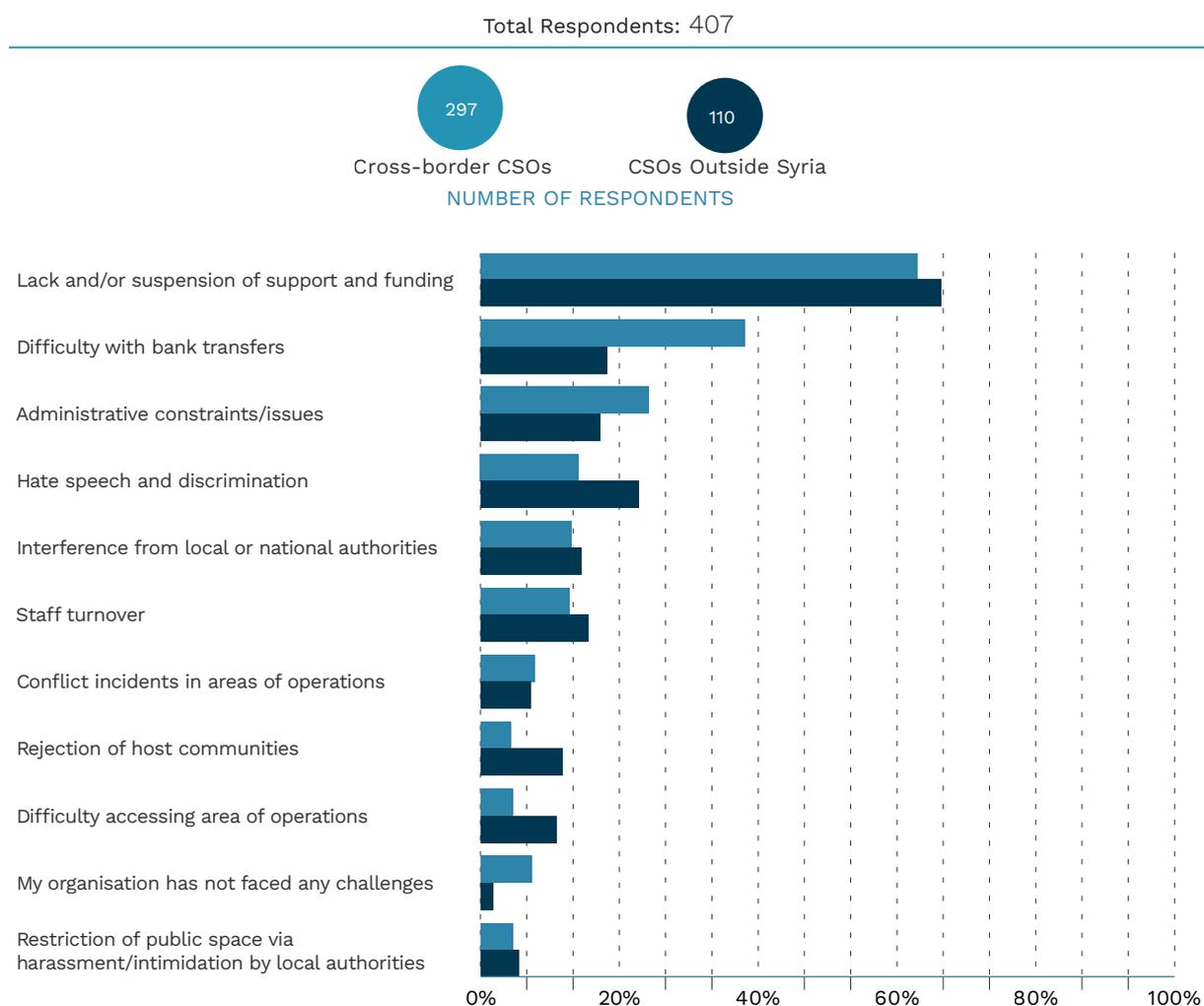


3.2. Civil Society and Governance

To ensure that respondents only answered questions relevant to their experiences, this section of the survey used skip logic to provide different questions to CSO respondents and individual Syrians. CSO respondents were asked about specific challenges their organisations had faced as well as changes in the operational environment over the past 12 months, while individual Syrians were asked three questions concerning local decision-making and the role of civil society and the international community in the humanitarian and political response to the crisis in Syria. Following these, a final set of questions asked all respondents about how they felt the role of civil society in the response to the crisis in Syria might be strengthened, as well as current challenges to governance in Syria. This section also included a question relating to the response to the earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria in February 2023.

3.2.1. Questions for CSOs

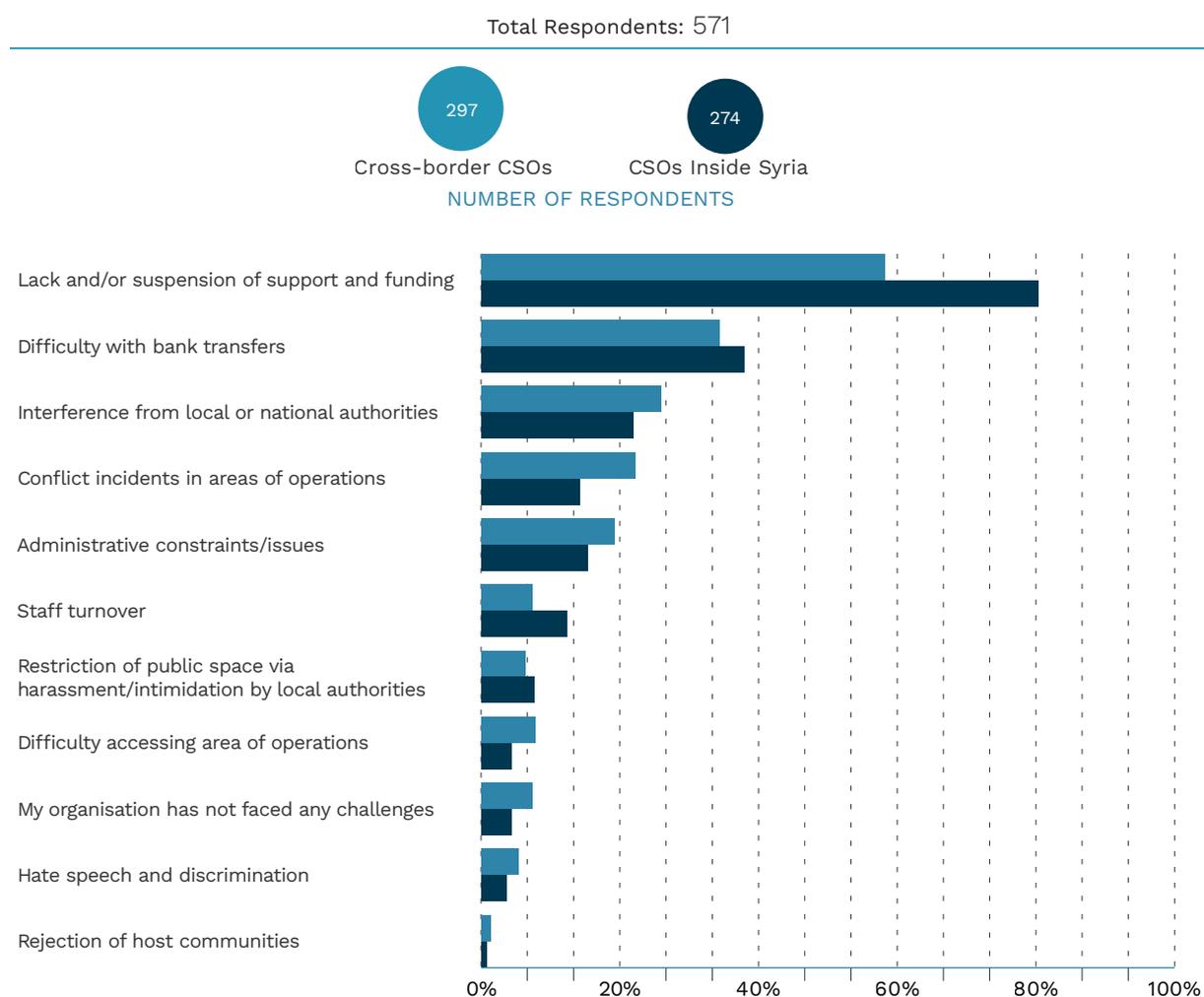
Figure 8: What are the most important challenges faced by your organisation (Outside Syria)?



CSO respondents were first asked to outline the challenges faced by their organisations over the past 12 months, both outside and inside Syria. The most significant challenge identified was “lack and/or suspension of support and funding”, selected by 64% of respondents overall. The second most selected response

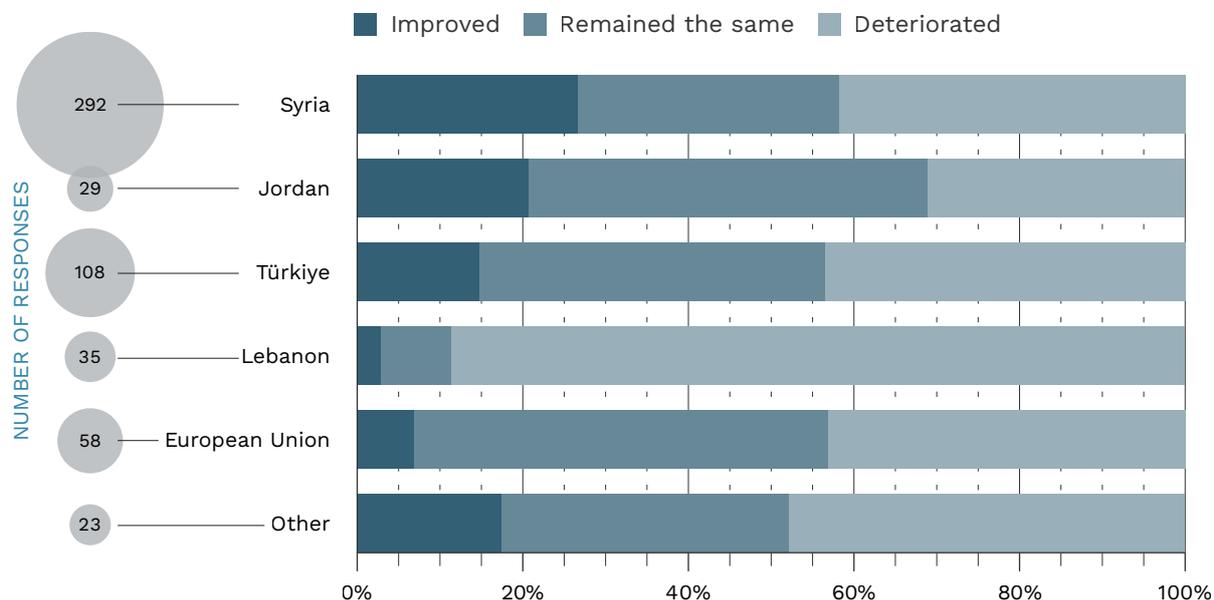
was “difficulty with bank transfers”, which was selected by 33% of respondents overall. However, this was led by cross-border CSOs, which selected this option at over twice the rate of CSOs outside Syria (38% vs 18%). Instead, CSOs outside Syria were more likely to highlight “hate speech or racism”, with 23% of respondents selecting this option, compared to 14% of cross-border respondents. “Administrative constraints/issues” were the third-most selected response, chosen by 22% of the sample overall; 24% and 17% of cross-border CSO respondents and CSO respondents outside Syria, respectively.

Figure 9: What are the most important challenges faced by your organisation (Inside Syria)?



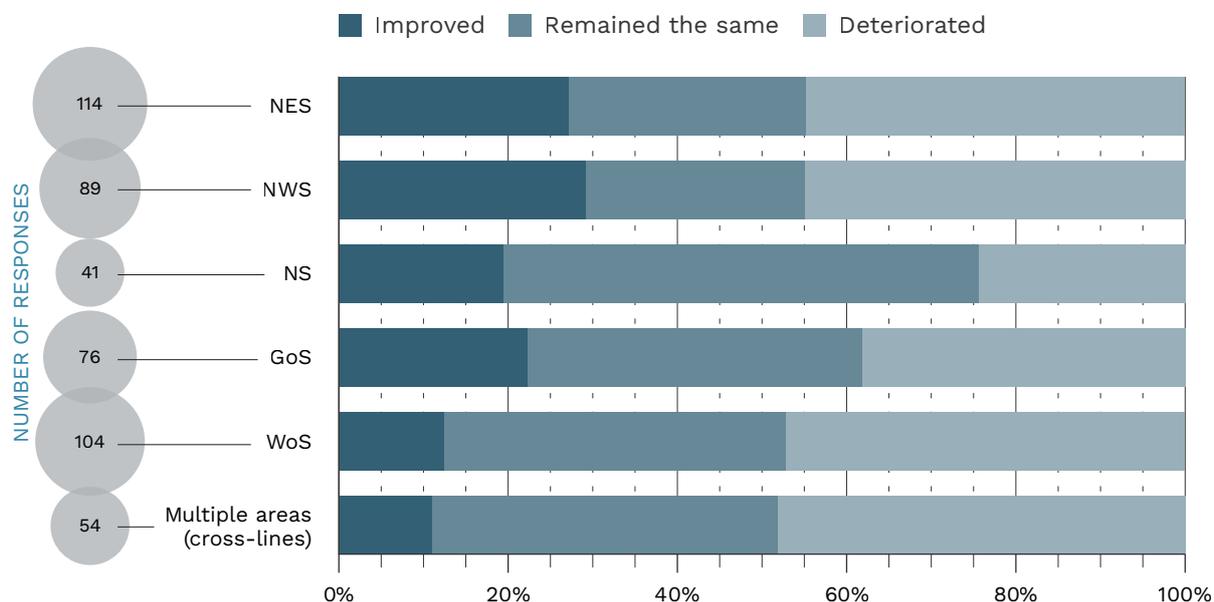
Regarding challenges inside Syria, 69% of CSO respondents also identified “lack and/or suspension of support and funding” as their key challenge. There was a significant difference, however, between cross-border CSOs (58%) and CSOs inside Syria (80%). The second and third-most selected responses, “difficulty with bank transfers” and “Interference from local or national authorities”, were selected at similar rates by cross-border CSOs (34% and 26%, respectively) and CSOs inside Syria (38% and 22%, respectively). The two groups differed more strongly in their selection of “conflict incidents in areas of operations”, which was selected by 22% of cross-border CSOs and 14% of CSOs inside Syria; and “staff turnover”, which was selected by 7% of cross-border CSOs but 12% of CSOs inside Syria. The heightened challenge of conflict incidents for cross-border CSOs is understandable, considering they are more likely to be operating in north and north-west Syria, which remain under the control of opposition groups.

Figure 10: How has the general operational environment in your country of work changed in the past 12 months?



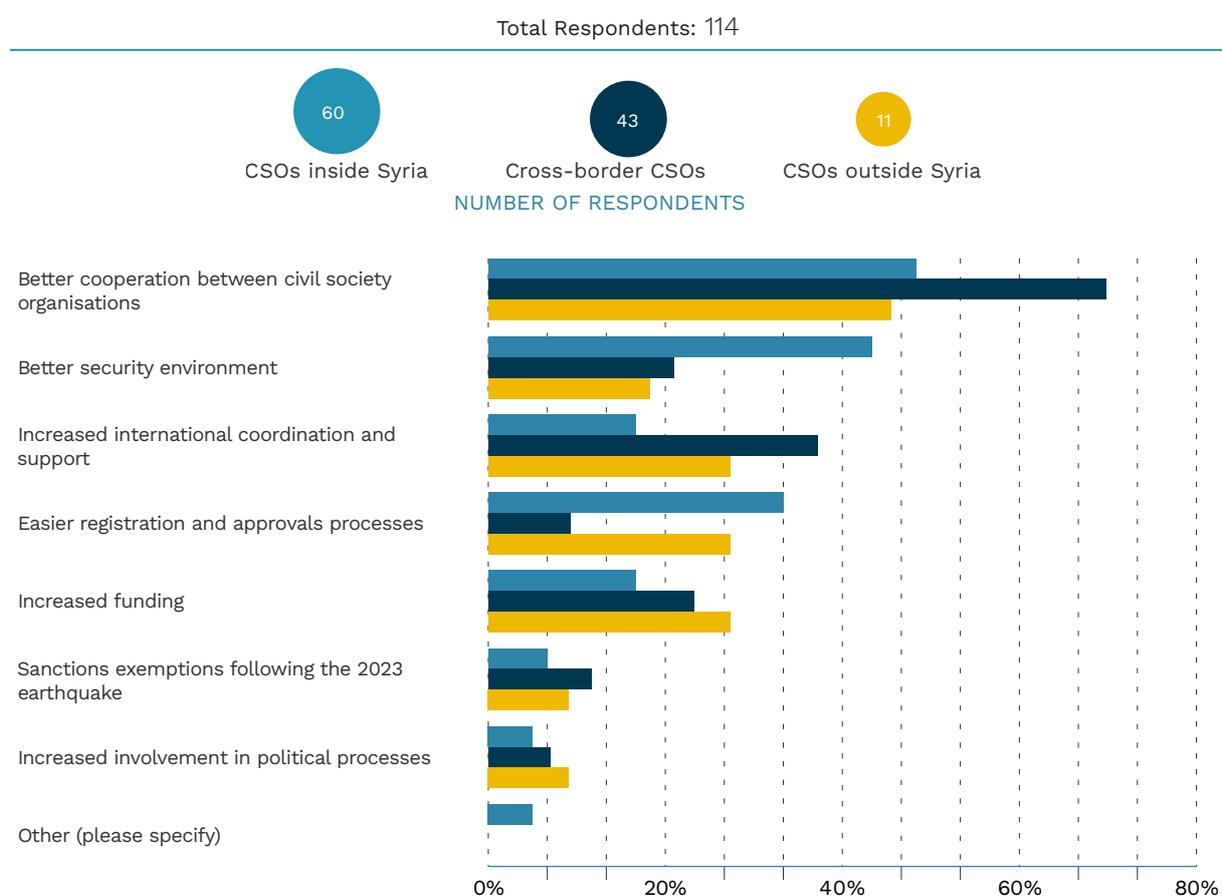
When asked about how the general operational environment for civil society in their country of work had changed over the past 12 months, respondents in all countries were more likely to say that conditions had deteriorated than improved, and all saw fewer respondents reporting improved conditions than last year’s survey, where almost 50% of CSO respondents in Syria and 47% of CSO respondents in Jordan said that the general operational environment had improved. This year, just over 25% in Syria and 20% in Jordan felt that conditions had improved. In Lebanon, nearly 90% of respondents said that the operational environment had deteriorated, compared to two-thirds of respondents last year. Those in the EU and Jordan were most likely to say that conditions remained the same.

Figure 11: How has the general operational environment in your country of operations changed in the past 12 months? (By area of Syria)



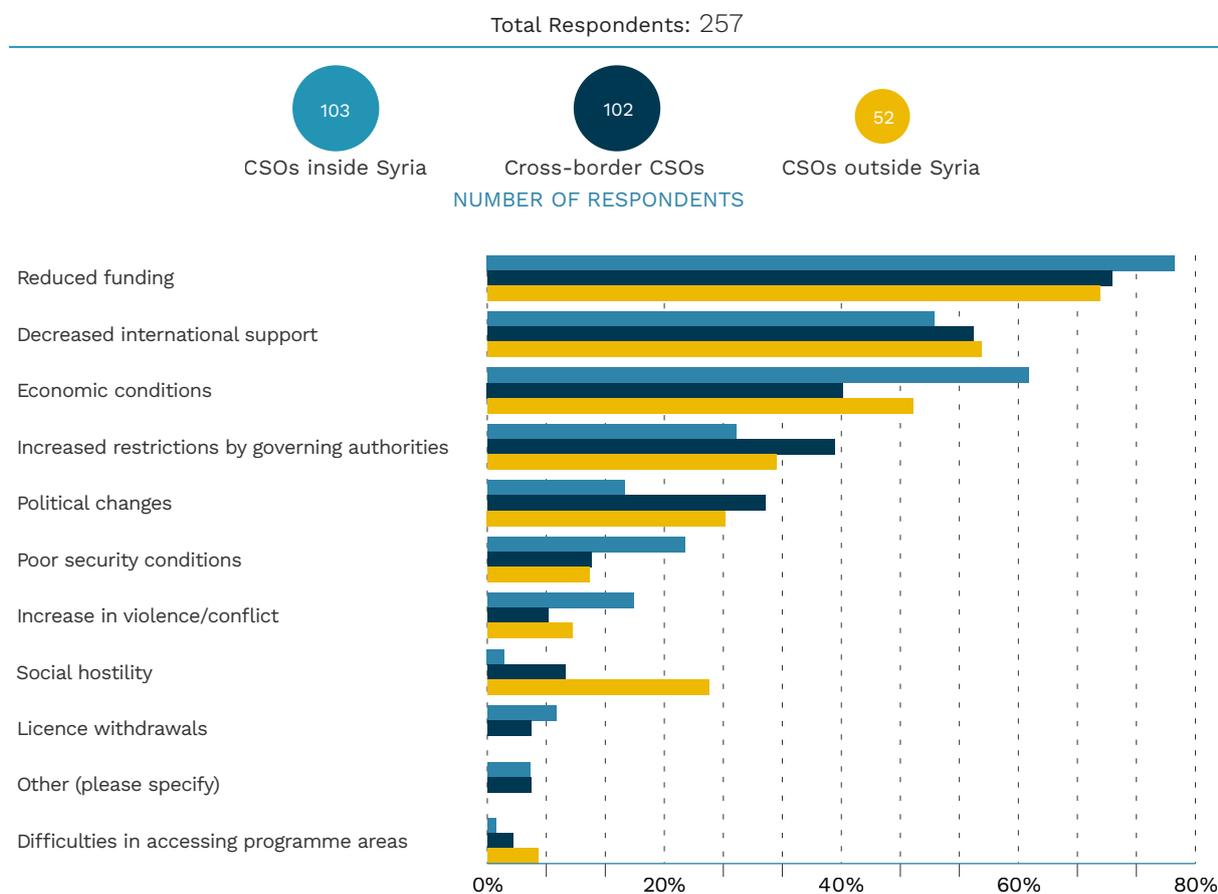
These patterns were reflected within different areas of Syria, with all areas reporting worse conditions when compared with last year. In 2023’s survey, more than 50% of respondents in NES and NWS reported that conditions had improved, which this year fell to just over 25%. Those working cross-lines also saw a fall from around 40% of respondents saying conditions had improved last year to just over 10% this year. Those in Northern Syria were most likely to say that conditions remained the same, and also the least likely to report deteriorating conditions, with around 25% of respondents choosing this option.

Figure 12: What factors have led to an improvement in the general operational environment for civil society in your country of operations in the last 12 months?



Respondents who selected that the general operational environment had improved were then asked to highlight reasons for the improvement. The most cited response was “better cooperation between civil society organisations” (56%), which was the top response among all three types of CSOs. Respondents from CSOs inside Syria were much more likely to cite a “better security environment” (43% compared to 21% for cross-border CSOs and 18% for CSOs outside Syria), while 37% of cross-border CSO respondents cited “increased international coordination and support”, compared to 17% of CSO respondents inside Syria and 27% of those outside Syria. The starkest difference between respondent types can be seen in the selection of “easier registration and approvals processes”, which was selected by 33% of CSOs inside Syria and 27% of those outside Syria, but only 9% of those operating across the border.

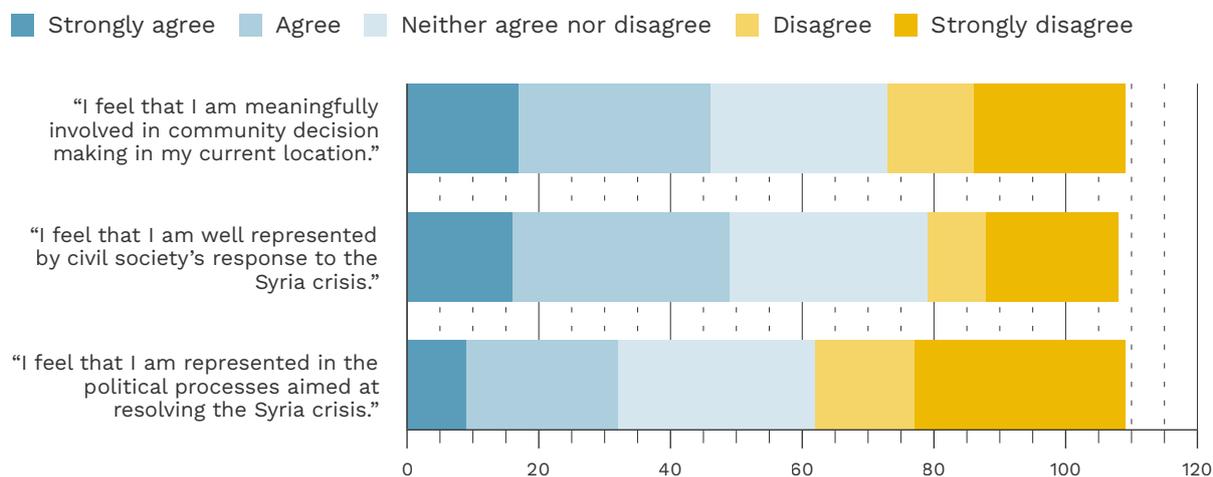
Figure 13: What factors have led to a deterioration in the general operational environment for civil society in your country of operations in the last 12 months?



“Reduced funding” was highlighted by 73% of all respondents as a key factor for deterioration in operational conditions, while respondents also noted the impact of “decreased international support” (53%). “Economic conditions” was selected by 50% of respondents overall, but more strongly by CSOs inside Syria (61%) than by cross-border CSOs (40%) and CSOs outside Syria (48). Across categories, “increased restrictions by governing authorities” was the third-most selected response (33%), while “political changes” was selected more by cross-border CSOs (31%) and CSOs outside Syria (27%) than CSOs inside Syria (16%). Other major differences were the highlighting of “poor security conditions” by CSOs inside Syria (22%) to a greater extent than other CSO respondents (12%), and CSOs outside Syria noting “social hostility” to a much higher degree (25%) than those inside Syria (1%) and working across the border (9%).

3.2.2. Questions for Individual Syrians

Figure 14: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

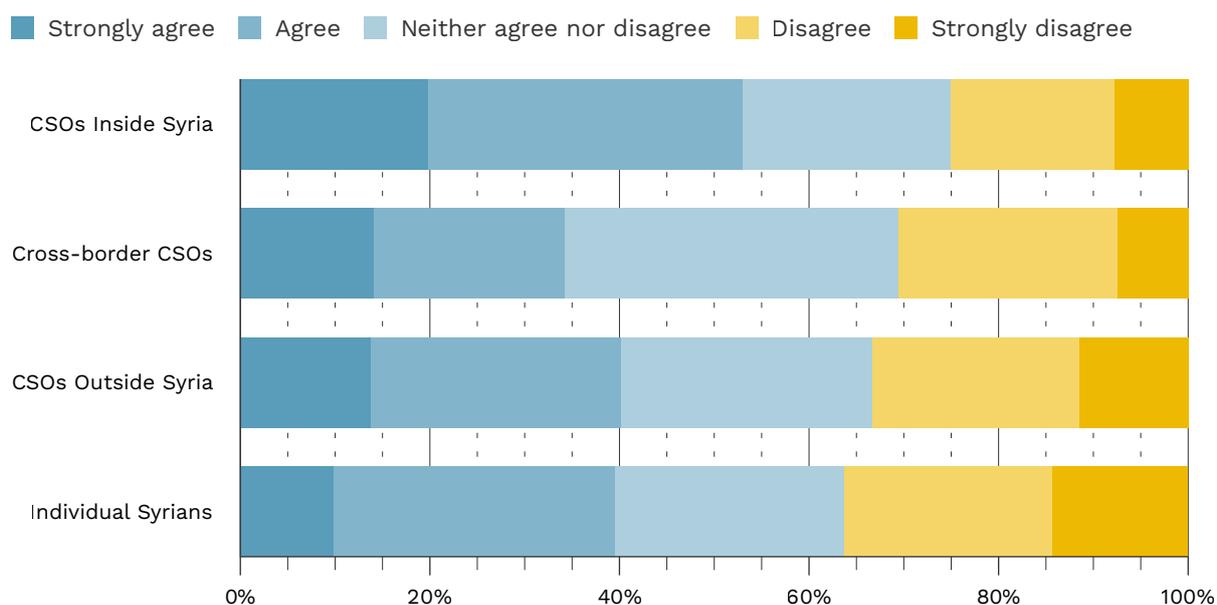


Individual Syrian respondents not affiliated with CSOs were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements relating to community decision-making, civil society’s response to the Syria crisis, and their representation in the political process to resolve the Syrian crisis. Just under half of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are meaningfully involved in community decision-making in their current location (42%), and are well represented by civil society’s response to the crisis (45%). However, fewer than a third agreed or strongly agreed that they are represented in the political process to resolve the crisis in Syria (29%), with the same number strongly disagreeing with the statement. When compared with last year’s survey, fewer participants agreed or strongly agreed that they are meaningfully involved in decision-making in their current location (42% vs 54%), while more agreed or strongly agreed that they are well-represented by civil society’s response to the Syria crisis (45% vs 33%). The third question was not asked in last year’s survey.

3.2.3. Questions for All Respondents

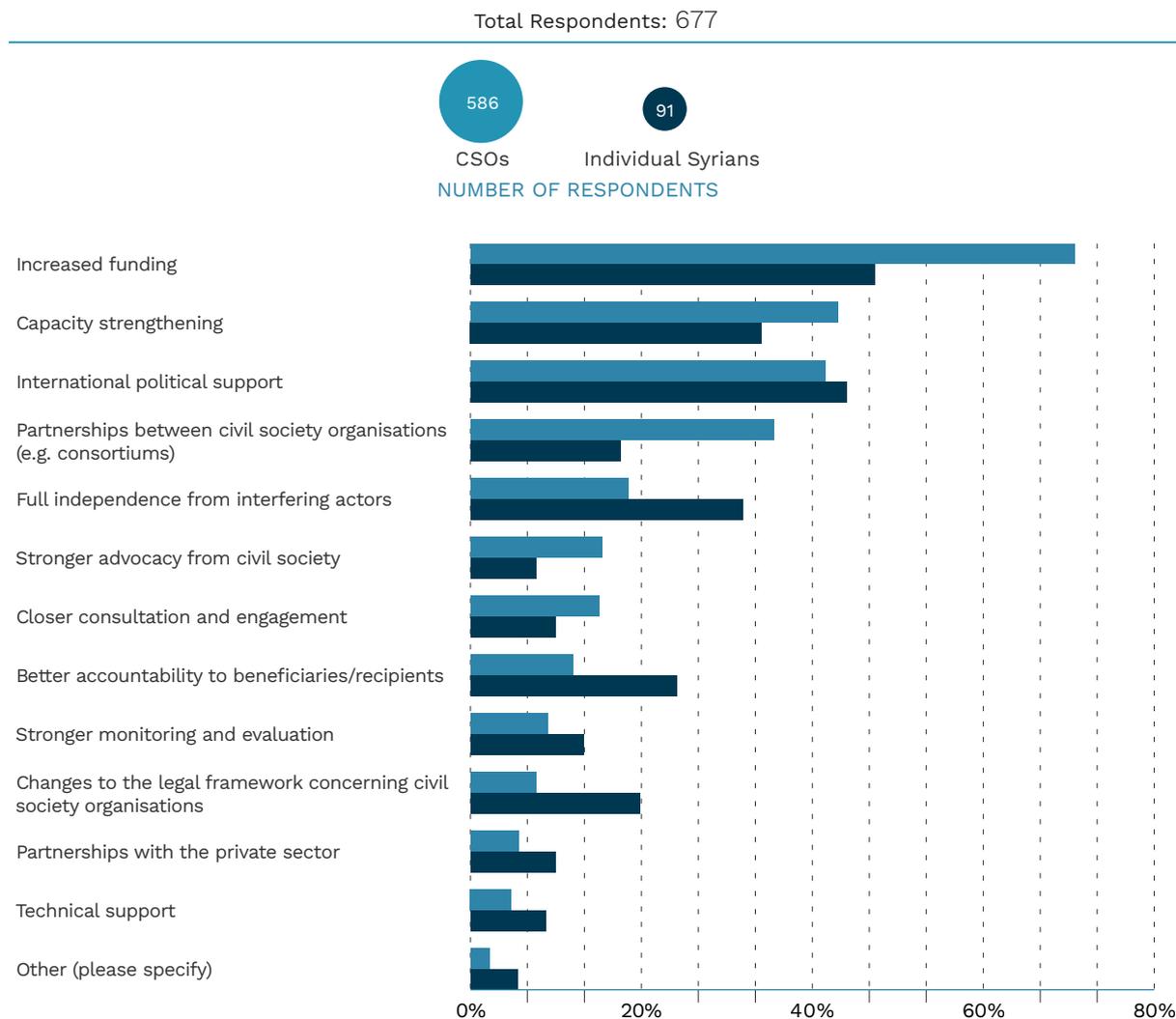
The next set of questions, concerning several issues including the role of civil society and its involvement in the humanitarian responses, how its role should be strengthened, challenges to governance in Syria, and the response to the 2023 earthquake, were answered by all respondents.

Figure 15: To what extent do you agree that civil society is meaningfully included in making decisions about the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria?



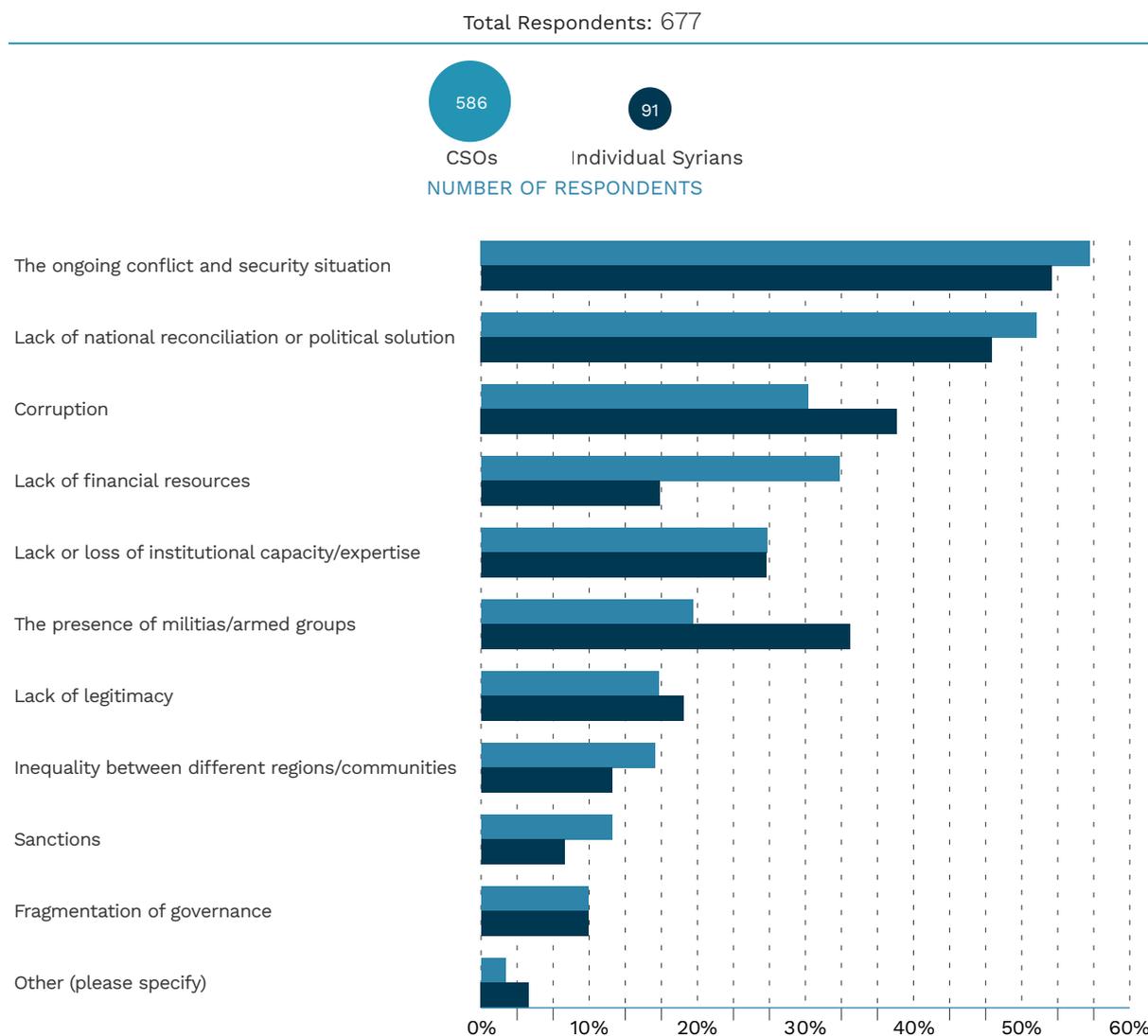
CSO respondents inside Syria were much more likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel included in the humanitarian response, with 53% of respondents saying they agree or strongly agree with this statement. Individual Syrian respondents were the most likely to disagree, with 14% of respondents strongly disagreeing, and 22% disagreeing. Cross-border respondents were mostly likely to respond “neither agree nor disagree”, with 35% of respondents selecting this option.

Figure 16: What is most needed to strengthen the role of civil society in the response to the crisis in Syria?



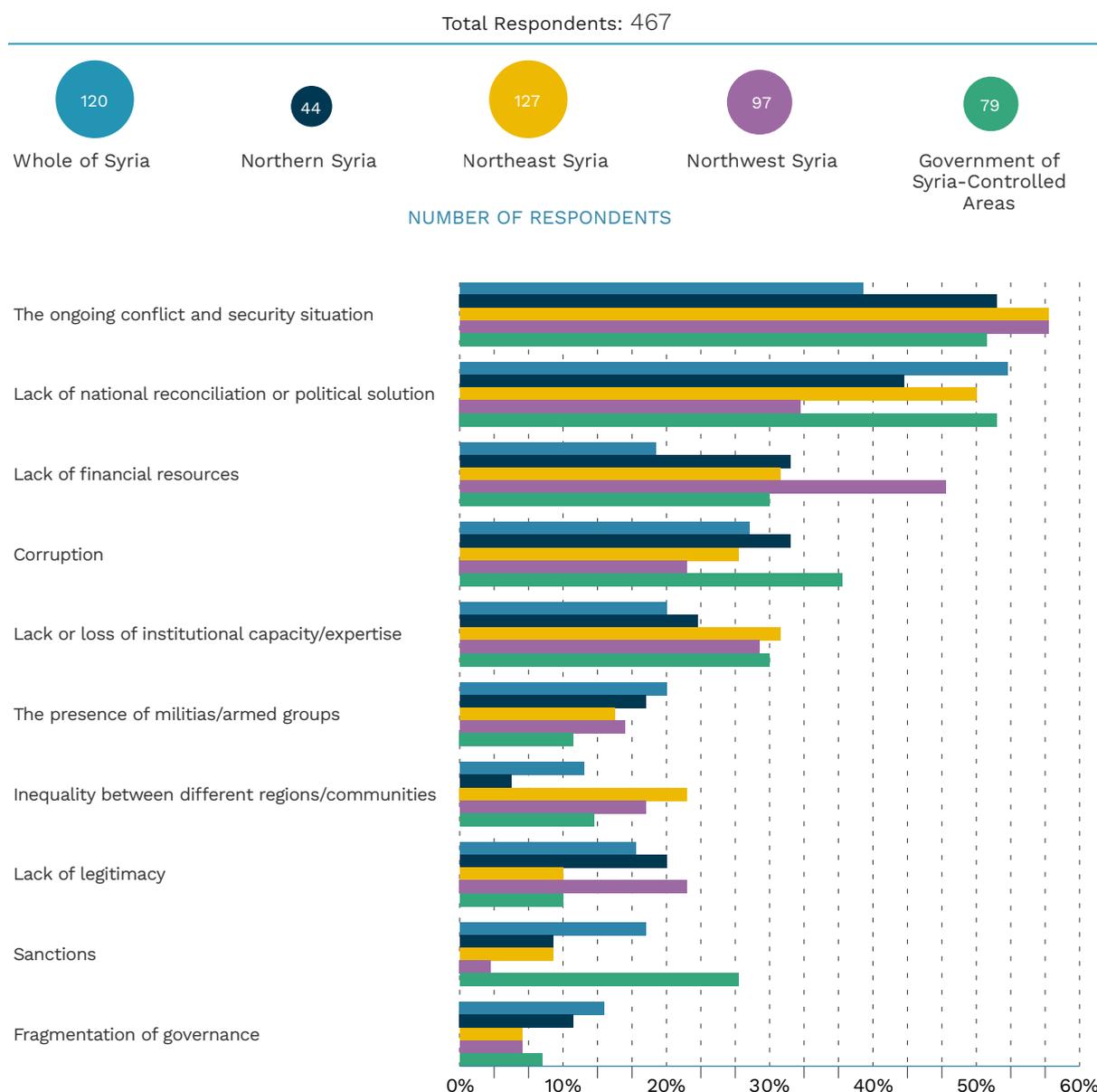
When asked what is most needed to strengthen the role of civil society in response to the Syria crisis, responses differed somewhat between CSO respondents and Individual Syrians. Whilst both groups selected the same top three responses “increased funding”, (preferred by 71% of CSO respondents compared to 47% of individual Syrians), “capacity strengthening” (43% of CSOs and 34% of individual Syrians) and “international political support”, (41% and 44% respectively), individual Syrians were more likely to highlight the importance of “full independence from interfering actors” (32% vs 18% of CSO respondents), “better accountability to beneficiaries/recipients” (24% vs 12%), and “Changes to the legal framework concerning civil society organisations” (20% vs 8%), while CSO respondents placed more emphasis on “Partnerships between civil society organisations (e.g. consortiums)” (35% vs 18% of individual Syrians). These responses were broadly similar to those received last year.

Figure 17: In your opinion, what are the main challenges to governance in Syria?



Respondents were then asked to identify the main challenges to governance in Syria. The top two responses were “the ongoing conflict and security situation” (56%) and “lack of national reconciliation or political solution” (51%), which saw roughly the same rate of selection by all respondents. While “corruption” was the third-most selected response (31%), it was selected at a higher rate by individual Syrians than CSO respondents (38% and 30%, respectively). Lack of financial resources was seen as substantially more important to CSO respondents (33%) than individual Syrians (16%). This figure was driven particularly by CSOs inside Syria, 42% of which selected this option, compared with 29% of cross-border CSOs and 21% of CSOs outside Syria. There was also a significant difference in the selection of “the presence of militias/armed groups”, as this was highlighted by 34% of individual Syrians compared to 20% of CSO respondents.

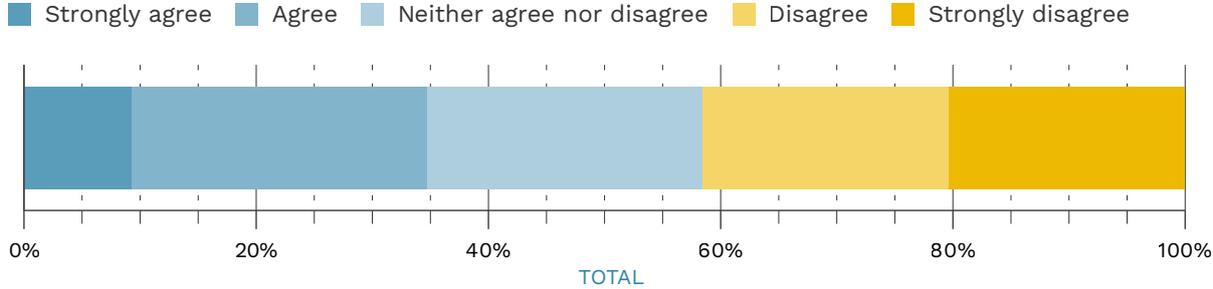
Figure 18: In your opinion, what are the main challenges to governance in Syria (by Area of Syria)?



When the same responses are analysed by area of operations in Syria,¹ there are some important differences, although the top two categories remain the same. “Lack of financial resources” was seen as far more important to respondents working in Northwest Syria, for whom it was the second-most important response, selected by 47% of respondents. By contrast, respondents working across the whole of Syria, saw this as much less important, chosen by 19% of respondents. This may be due to the scale of organisations that operate at the national level, as these are likely better funded when compared to the predominantly local and small-scale organisations working only in specific governorates. Respondents in government-controlled areas of Syria were much more likely to highlight sanctions as a problem, with 27% of respondents from GoS areas selecting this option. This group was also the most likely to see corruption as an issue, selected by 37% of GoS respondents, although this was also rated relatively frequently by other respondents in other areas of Syria.

¹ Note that these responses include only CSOs, and only those that specified a location of operations.

Figure 19: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I feel that the response to the 2023 earthquake and the support provided was sufficient.”

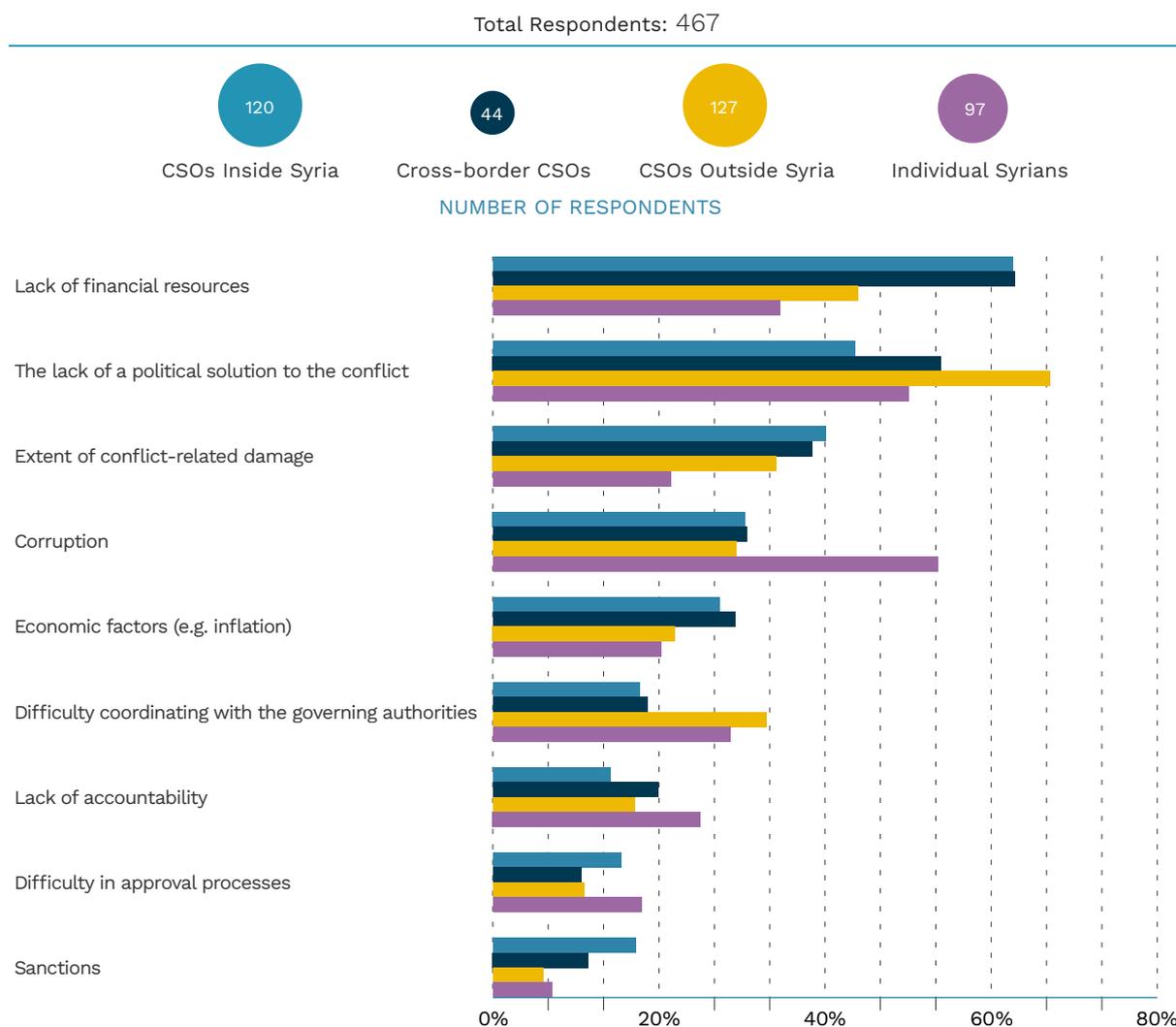


There was little consensus on the effectiveness of the response to the earthquake, with responses spread across the board, although respondents were slightly more likely to disagree than agree with the statement that the response was sufficient (42% disagreed or strongly disagreed, whilst 35% agreed or strongly agreed). Respondents were also asked to explain their answers in the form of an open-ended question. Responses skewed towards those unhappy with the earthquake response, with most comments referring to the slow arrival of humanitarian support, as well as referring to an insufficient response which did not reflect the scale of the disaster.

3.3. Service Delivery and Early Recovery

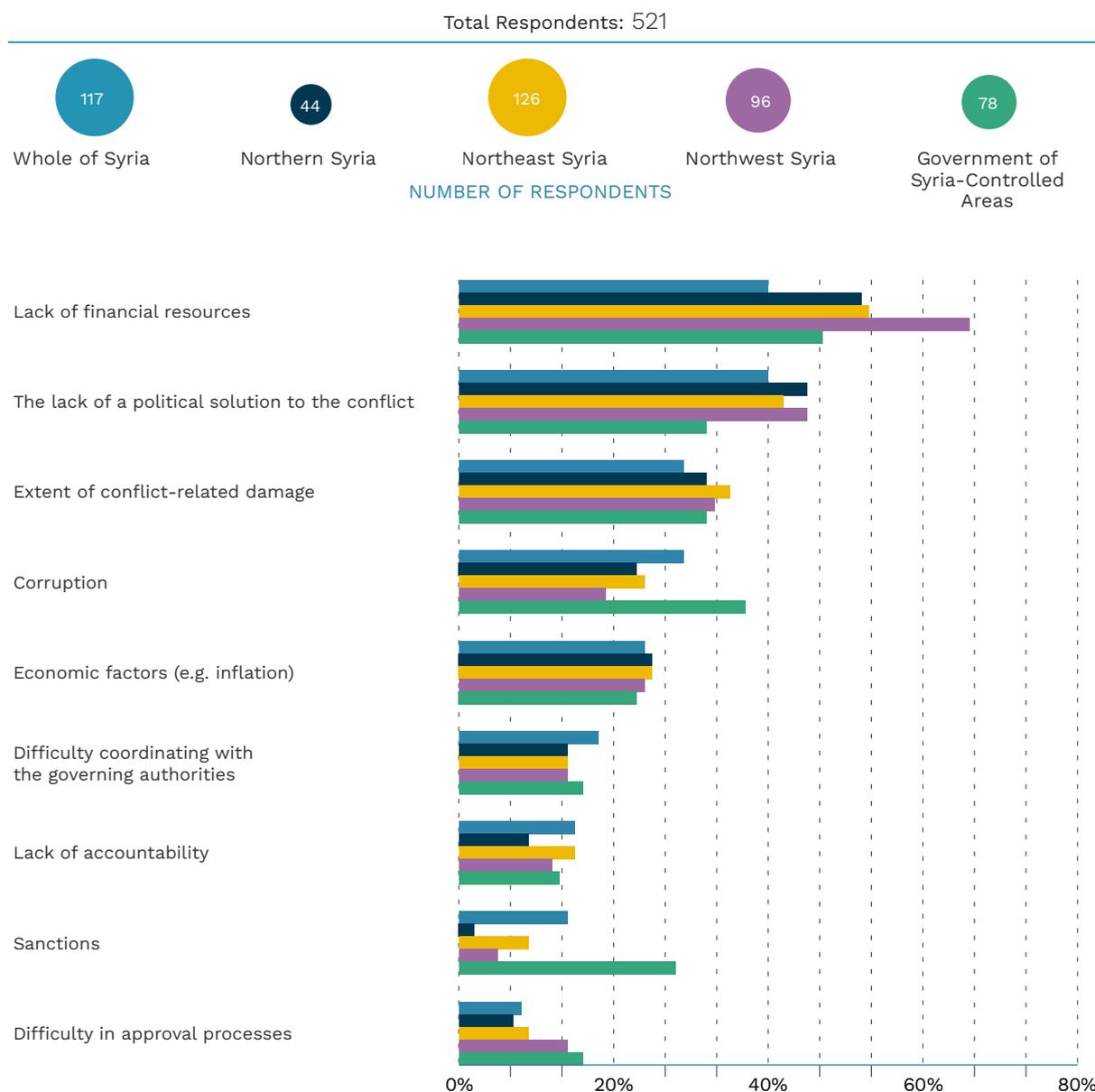
In this section of the survey, respondents were asked about priority sectors for work on improving service delivery in Syria, as well as the challenges to improving access to basic services, along with how to improve access to jobs, and early recovery efforts. All respondents to the survey (both CSO and individual Syrians) were asked all questions in this section.

Figure 20: In your opinion, what are the main impediments to improving access to public services in Syria (by respondent type)?



When asked about the main impediments to improving access to public services in Syria, the most selected were “lack of financial resources” (56%), “the lack of a political solution to the conflict” (51%), “extent of conflict-related damage” (36%), and “corruption” (33%). A political solution was seen as most important to CSO respondents outside Syria, chosen by 67% of respondents, while corruption was the most important issue for individual Syrians (53% of respondents). Individual Syrians were much less likely to select “extent of conflict-related damage”, with only 21% choosing this option. CSOs inside Syria and cross-border CSOs had largely similar responses across the board, with little substantial variation. Sanctions were seen to be the least important impediment to access to public services.

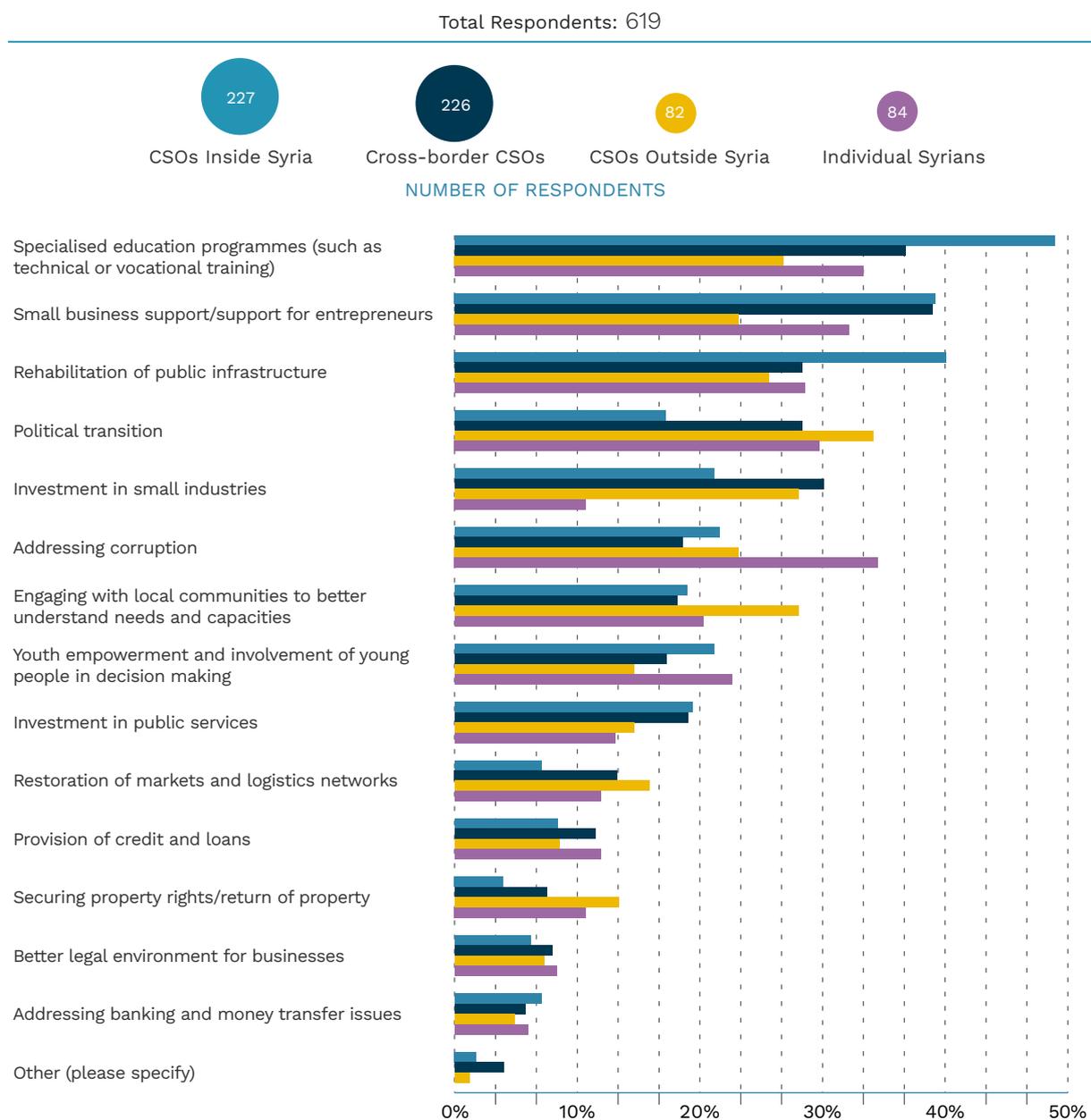
Figure 21: In your opinion, what are the main impediments to improving access to public services in Syria (by Area of Syria)?



When these responses are analysed by area of operations inside Syria,² some important differences can be observed, even though the top three responses remain the same. Lack of financial resources was again seen as a bigger problem in Northwest Syria than in any other area, similar to the responses to the question on challenges to governance (see ["3.2.3. Questions for All Respondents"](#) on page 17). This pattern is also reflected by the emphasis placed on the impact of sanctions and corruption by those operating in GoS areas, which were both seen as more significant challenges to governance in these areas than others.

² Note that these responses include only CSOs, and only those that specified a location of operations.

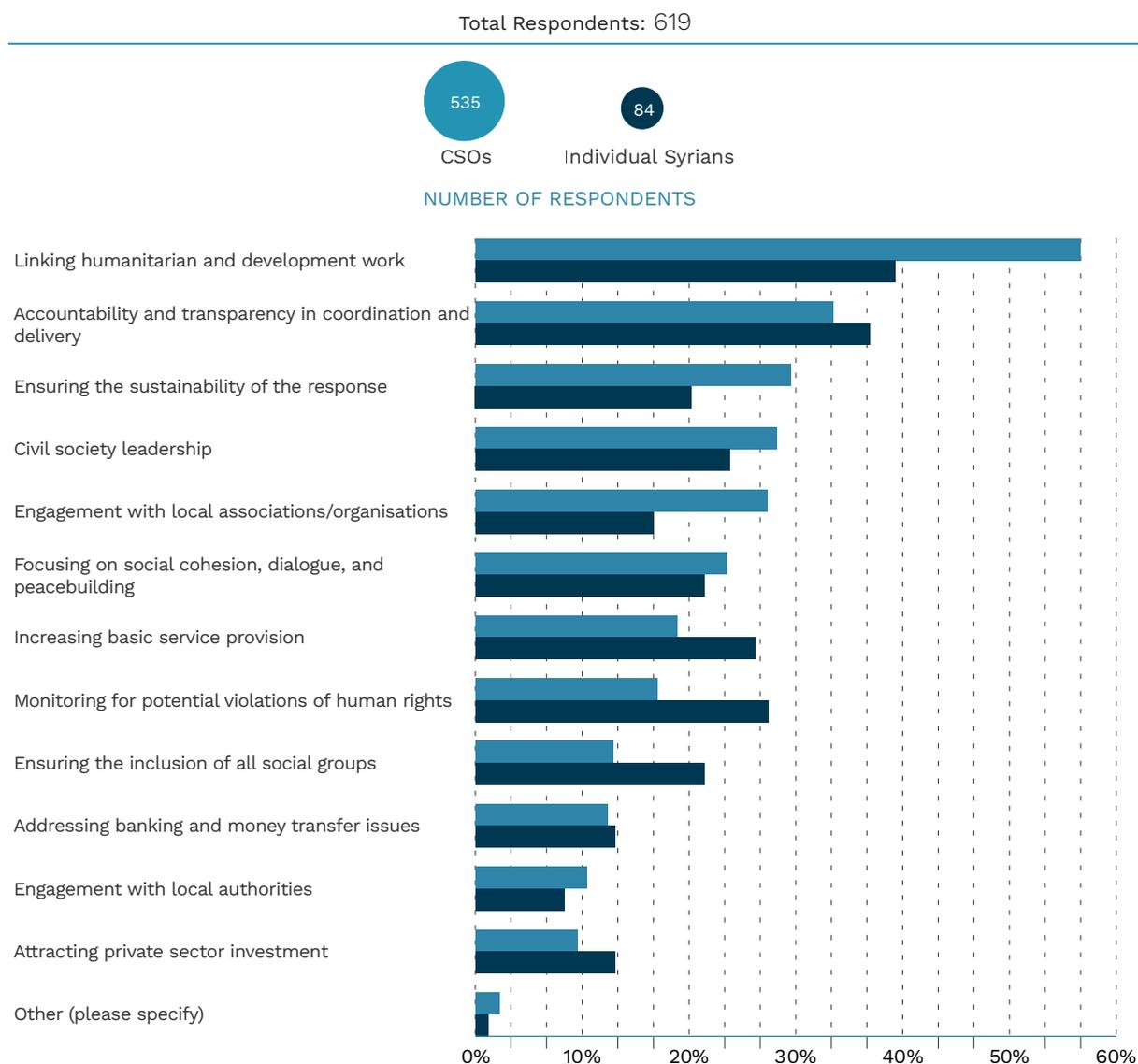
Figure 22: In your opinion, what is the best way to improve access to jobs and livelihoods in Syria?



As with last year’s survey, respondents were asked about the best ways to improve access to jobs and livelihoods in Syria. Respondents selected the same top three responses as last year “specialised education programmes” (39%) “small business support/support for entrepreneurs” (36%), and “rehabilitation of public infrastructure” (32%). However, this year, “addressing corruption” was the most selected response for individual Syrians (35%) compared to the third-most last year, in contrast to the sixth-most selected response for CSO respondents (21%). The other notable difference is that CSO respondents were much more likely to select “investment in small industries” than individual Syrians (26% vs 11%).

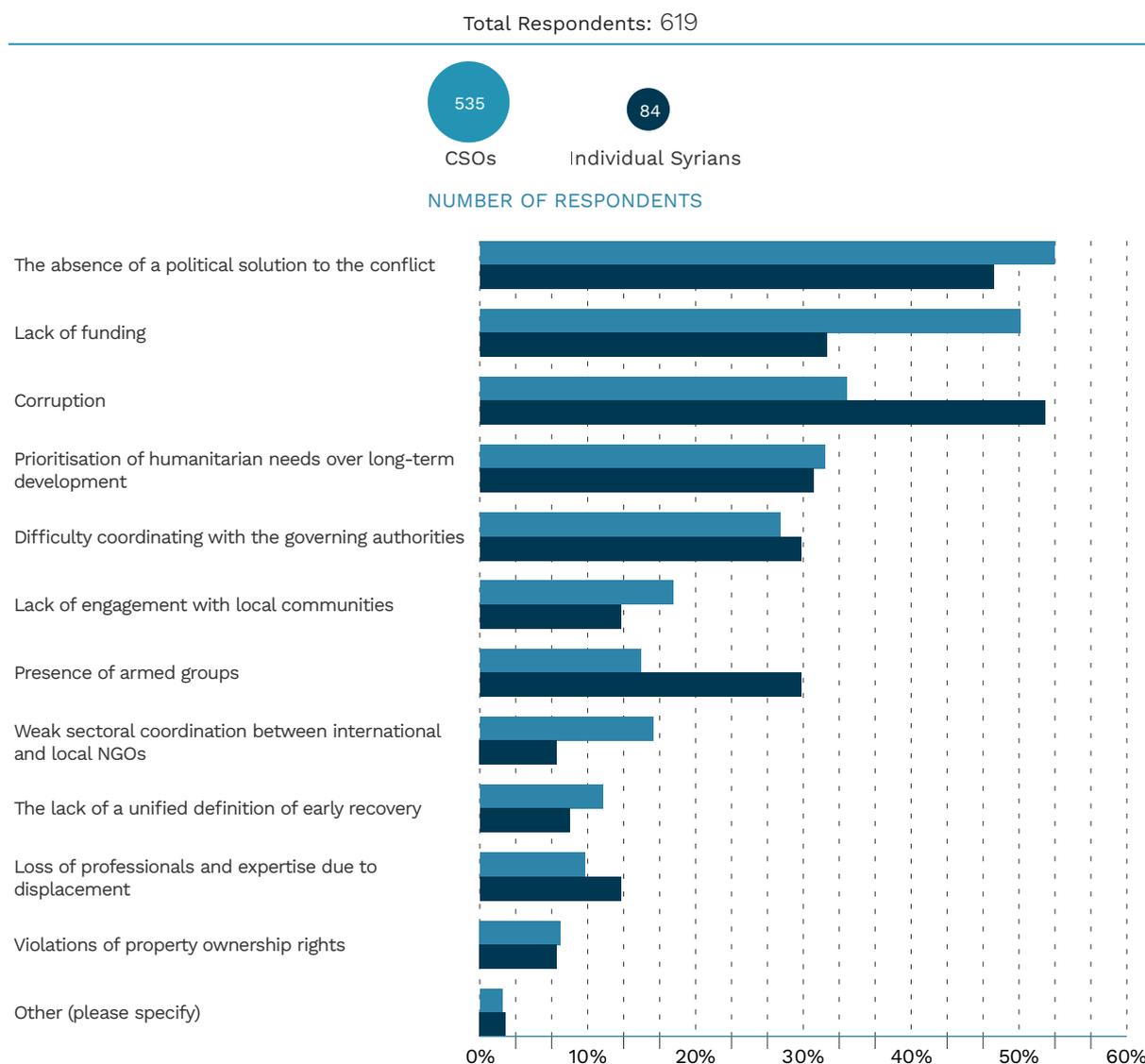
Further differences can be seen when looking at the data by respondent type. “Political transition” was the most selected option by CSOs outside Syria (34%), while it was selected to a much lesser extent by CSOs inside Syria (17%). CSOs inside Syria were much more likely to select “rehabilitation of public infrastructure” (40%) than other CSOs (28%) or individual Syrians (29%).

Figure 23: What are the most important elements that donors should prioritise to enhance the effectiveness of recovery efforts in Syria?



When asked about the most important elements for donors to prioritise in recovery efforts in Syria, a majority of respondents (54%) chose “linking humanitarian and development work”, which was also the most-selected response last year. “Accountability and transparency in coordination and aid delivery” (34%) and “ensuring the sustainability of the response” (28%) also remained in the top three, albeit swapped around compared to last year’s results. “Ensuring the sustainability of the response” and “Engagement with local associations/organisations” were both substantially more important to CSO respondents (30% and 27% respectively) than for individual Syrians (20% and 17% respectively). On the other hand, individual Syrians were more likely to select “Increasing basic service provision” (26% vs 19%), “Monitoring for potential violations of human rights” (27% vs 17%), and “ensuring the inclusion of all social groups” (21% vs 13%) than CSO respondents.

Figure 24: What are the main obstacles to the success of projects seeking to restore services and livelihoods in conflict-affected areas in Syria?



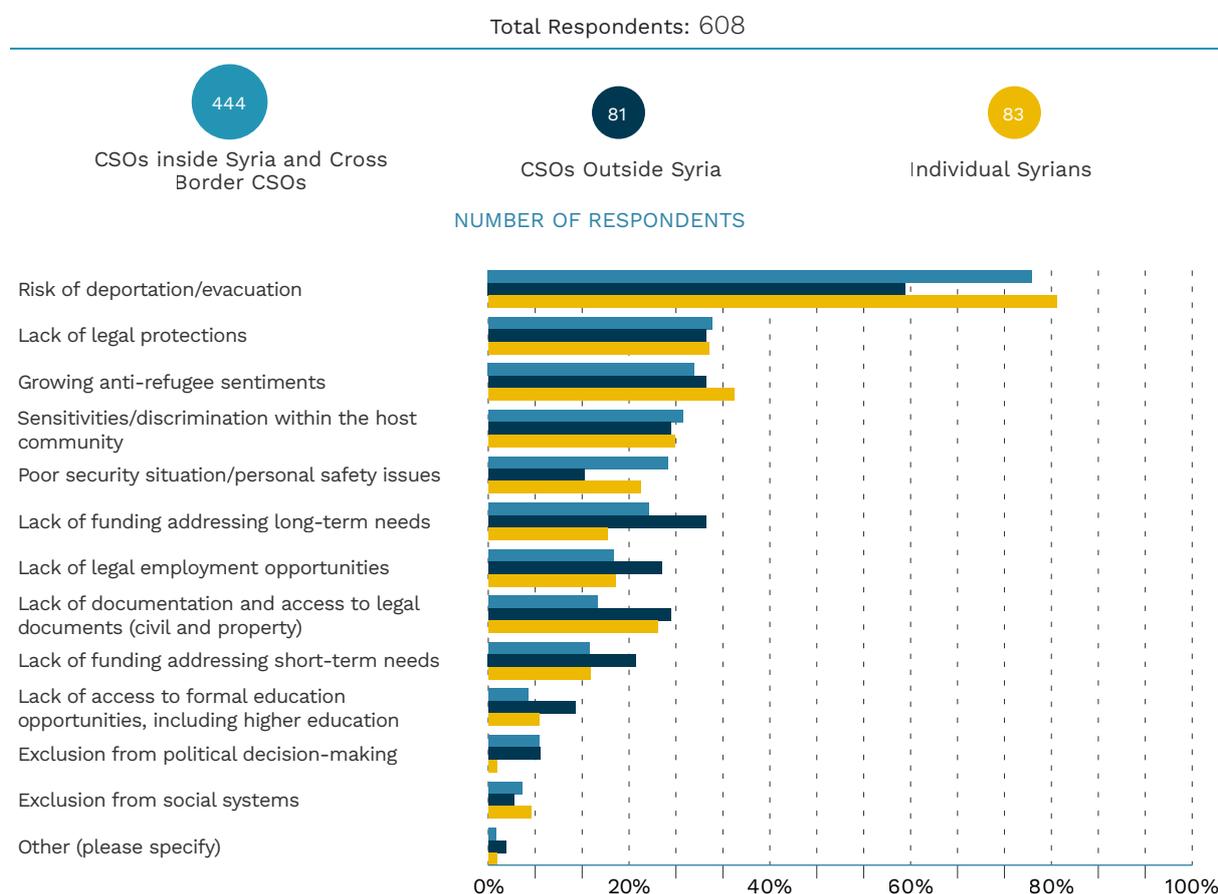
Overall, the top three responses to this question were “the absence of a political solution to the conflict” (53%), “lack of funding” (48%) and “corruption” (37%). However, individual Syrians chose “corruption” most often (52%), while CSO respondents highlighted “lack of funding” to a greater degree than individual Syrians (50% vs 32%). Aside from this, responses were largely similar between the two groups, except the “presence of armed groups” which was perceived as a more significant issue by individual Syrians (30%) compared to only 15% of CSO respondents, and “weak sectoral coordination between international and local NGOs”, selected by 16% of CSO respondents but only 7% of individual Syrians.

3.4. Displacement and Durable Solutions

These questions asked about Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and IDPs displaced within Syria. While the circumstances of these two groups differ, the results show that respondents believe both groups face similar challenges — with a political solution to the conflict as the central prerequisite to facilitating safe, dignified, and voluntary return. As these questions were also asked in last year’s survey, the analysis below includes a comparison and monitoring of changes in opinions over time. On the whole, respondents gave broadly similar answers to last year, indicating little meaningful progress in tackling the causes and consequences of displacement.

3.4.1. Refugees

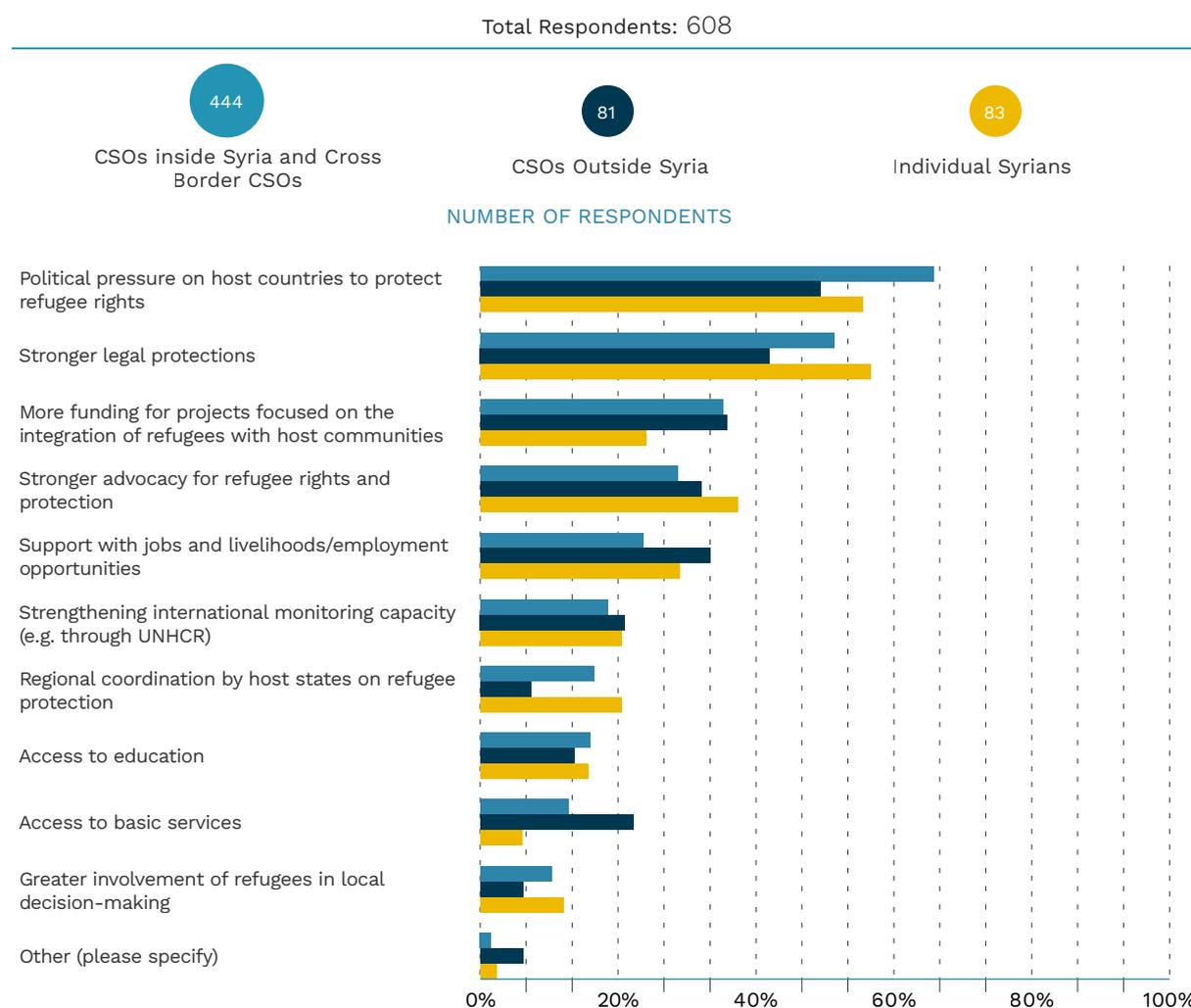
Figure 25: In your opinion, what are the main challenges faced by Syrian refugees in host countries?



In this first question, cross-border CSOs and CSOs working inside Syria responded similarly, while CSOs working with Syrians outside Syria — those most likely to be working with refugees — provided a different ranking of key challenges faced by Syrian refugees. The most selected option for all respondents was “Risk of deportation/evacuation”, although it was selected by only 60% of CSOs working outside Syria, compared to 77% of other CSOs and 81% of individual Syrians. CSOs outside Syria then pointed to “Lack of legal protections”, “Growing anti-refugee sentiments”, and “Lack of funding addressing long-term needs” (31%). CSOs outside Syria, alongside individual Syrians, also pointed more strongly to “Lack of documentation and access to legal documents (civil and property)” (26% and 24%, respectively) than other CSO respondents (16%), while CSOs outside Syria were less likely to select “Poor security situation/personal safety issues” (14%) than other CSO respondents (25%) and individual Syrians (22%).

When compared with last year’s survey, responses were broadly similar. The most notable difference comes in the relative positions of “lack of funding addressing short-term needs” and “lack of funding addressing long-term needs”. For CSOs outside Syria in particular, a much greater share cited funding for long-term needs (31%) rather than short-term needs (21%), a reversal from last year (22% and 43%, respectively).

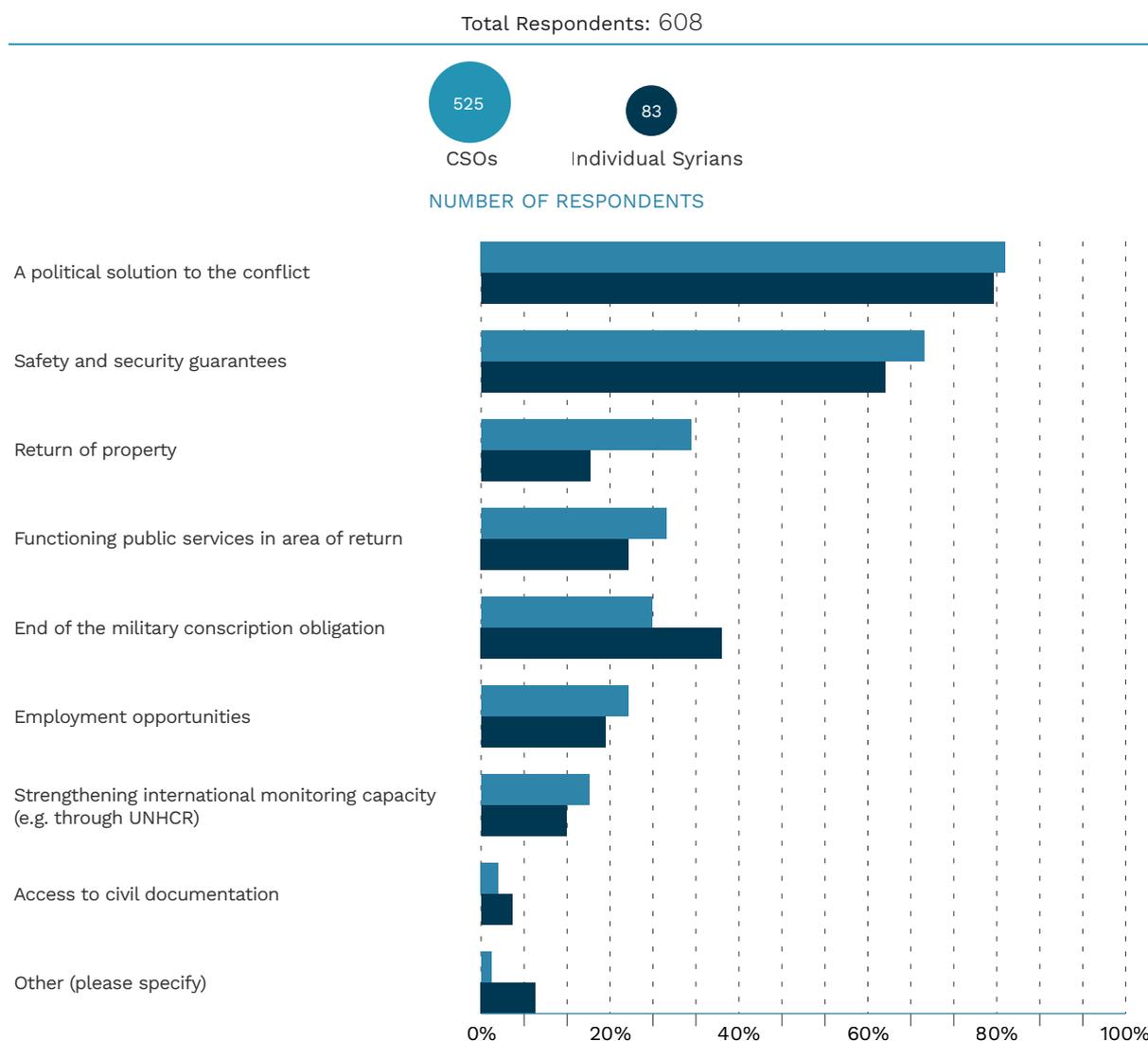
Figure 26: In your opinion, what is most needed to ensure the protection of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries?



When asked what is most needed to support Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, 62% of respondents answered “Political pressure on host countries to protect refugee rights,” 51% with “Stronger legal protections,” and 34% with “More funding for projects focused on the integration of refugees with host communities.” The two most-selected options this year were combined into one last year, which was the most selected in 2023. However, “Support with jobs and livelihoods/employment opportunities”, which was the second-most selected option last year (48%), was the fifth-most selected option this year (26%).

As with the previous question, respondents from CSOs working with Syrians outside Syria answered differently to other CSO respondents, more strongly emphasising “Support with jobs and livelihoods/employment opportunities” (33% vs 24%) as well as “Access to basic services” (22% vs 13%). Meanwhile, individual Syrians appeared to focus on legal rights and advocacy, focusing on “Stronger legal protections” (57%), “Political pressure on host countries to protect legal rights” (56%), and “Stronger advocacy for refugee rights and protection” (37%).

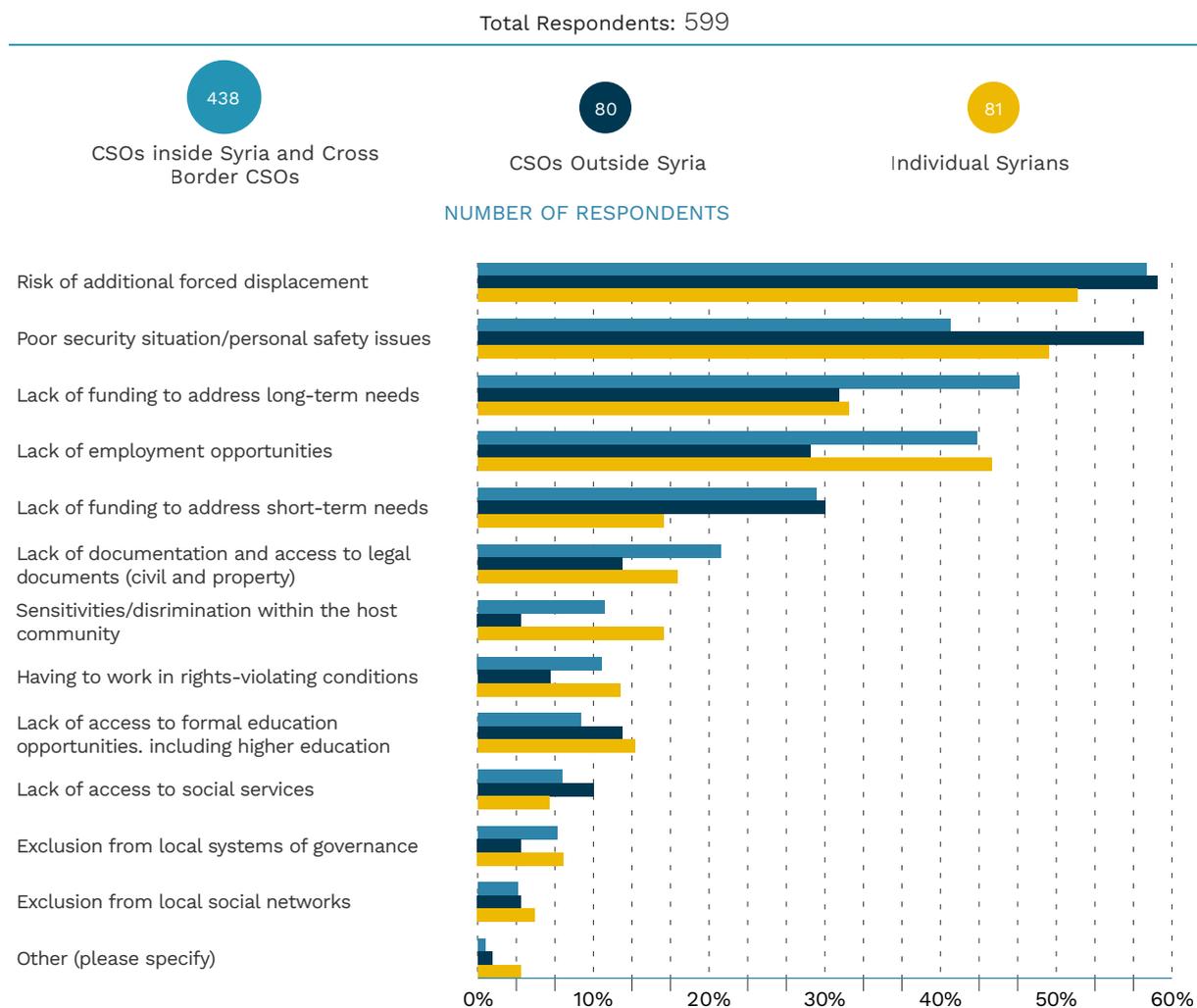
Figure 27: In your opinion, what would be needed to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees to Syria?



On what would be needed to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees to Syria, respondents overall selected the same top three options as last year: “a political solution to the conflict” (81%), followed by “safety and security guarantees” (68%), and “Return of property” (30%). However, “End of the military conscription obligation” was the third-most selected response for individual Syrians (37%), and only the fifth-most selected response for CSOs (26%). Respondents also differed in their prioritisation of “Return of property”, selected by 33% of CSO respondents but only 17% of individual Syrians.

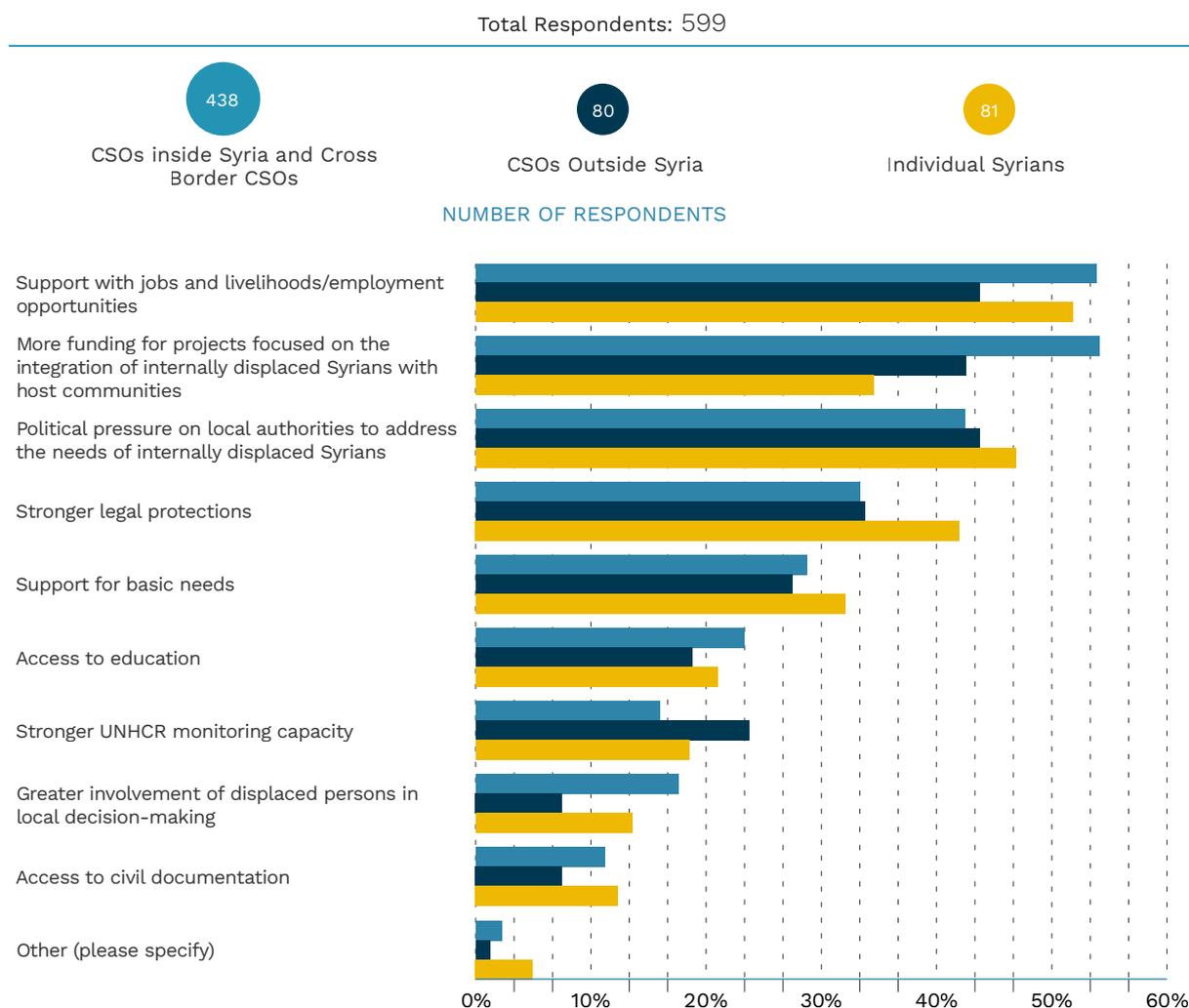
3.4.2. Internally Displaced Persons

Figure 28: In your opinion, what are the main challenges facing Syrians displaced internally within Syria?



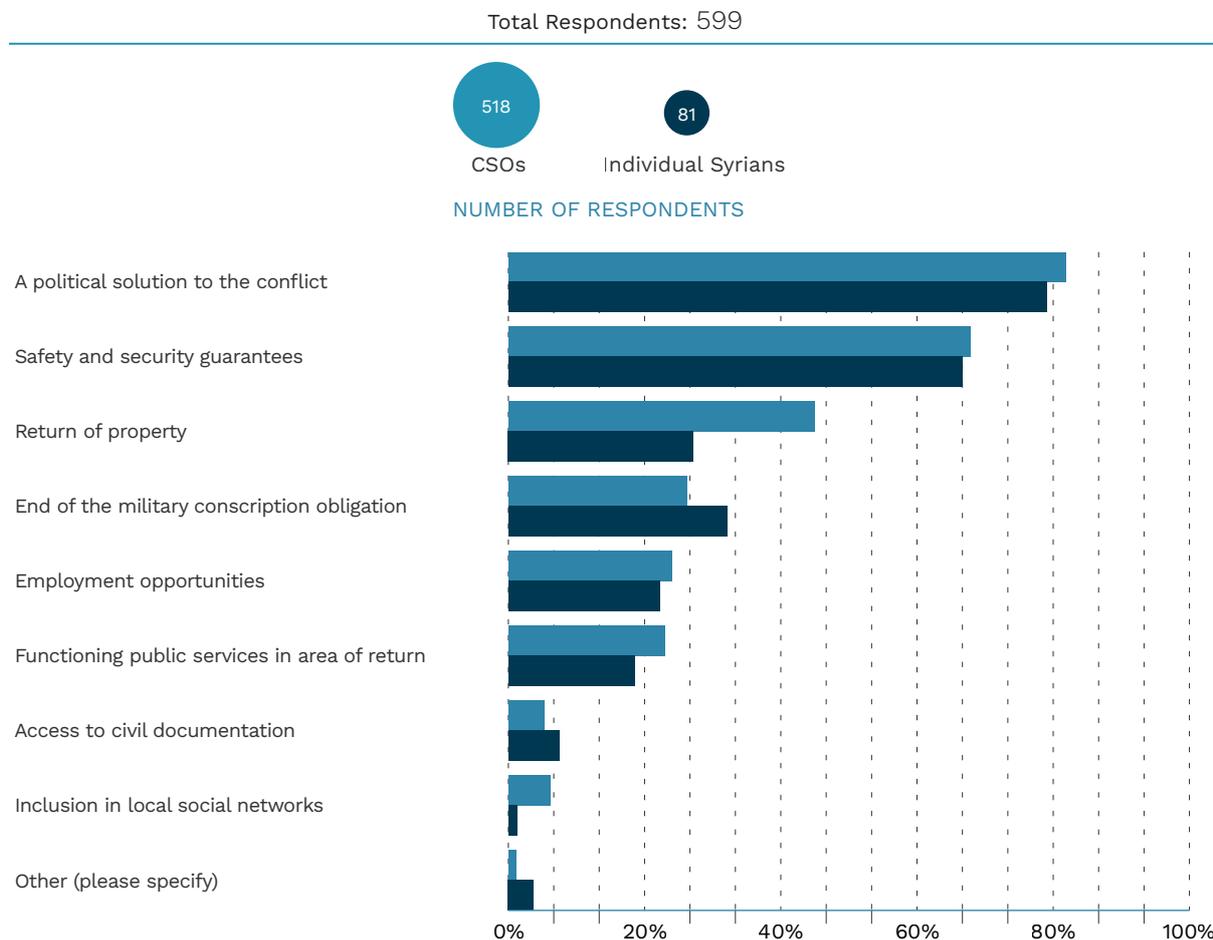
This set of questions concerned the challenges faced by IDPs in Syria. When asked about the main challenges faced by this group, respondents chose “risk of additional forced displacement” (57%), followed by “poor security situation/personal safety issues” (44%), “lack of funding to address long-term needs” (43%), and “lack of employment opportunities” (41%). This top four is the same as in the 2023 survey, with broadly similar percentages. These results were also similar across all respondent categories, although CSO respondents outside Syria pointed to “poor security/personal safety issues” more strongly (58%) than other CSO respondents (41%) and individual Syrians (49%). Furthermore, CSOs inside Syria and cross-border CSOs much more strongly selected “lack of funding to address long-term needs” (47%) compared to CSOs outside Syria (31%) and individual Syrians (32%), while CSOs outside Syria pointed to “lack of employment opportunities” to a lower degree (29%) than other CSOs (43%) and individual Syrians (44%). This discrepancy may in part be explained by the fact that CSOs outside Syria are less likely to have experience of working with IDPs and understanding their needs.

Figure 29: In your opinion, what is most needed to support internally displaced Syrians?
 (select up to three)



On what is most needed to support internally displaced Syrians, the three most selected options were “support with jobs and livelihoods/employment opportunities” (52%), “more funding for projects focused on the integration of internally displaced Syrians with host communities” (50%) and “political pressure on local authorities to address the needs of internally displaced Syrians” (43%). For individual Syrians, however, “stronger legal protections” was the third-most selected option (42%), while significantly fewer chose “more funding for projects focused on the integration of internally displaced Syrians with host communities” (35%) than CSOs outside Syria (43%) or other CSOs (54%). When compared with last year’s survey, the results showed little variation, with the main differences in the relative position of “support for basic needs” and “access to education”, which switched places in this year’s survey, and an increase in the number of participants selecting “stronger UNHCR monitoring capacity”, which was selected by 17% of participants this year compared to 5% last year. This difference could be explained by slightly different phrasing, as UNHCR was not mentioned in last year’s survey.

Figure 30: In your opinion, what would be needed to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced Syrians to their communities of origin?



Similar to opinions on refugees, an overwhelming majority of respondents selected “a political solution to the conflict” (81%) as being needed to facilitate the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced Syrians to their communities of origin. This was followed by “safety and security guarantees” (68%), “return of property” (43%), the “end of the military conscription obligation” (27%), and “employment opportunities” (24%). As with the same question asked about refugees, the main notable difference was in the relative position of “return of property” and “end of the military conscription obligation”, where the former was selected more prominently by CSO respondents (45% to 27%) and the latter by individual Syrians (32% to 26%). Overall, there was little difference in responses between this and last year’s sample.

3.5. Peacebuilding and the Political Process

This section of the survey asked a new set of questions regarding the political process towards a solution to the conflict in Syria.

Figure 31: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: “A political solution to the conflict in Syria should be prioritised”.

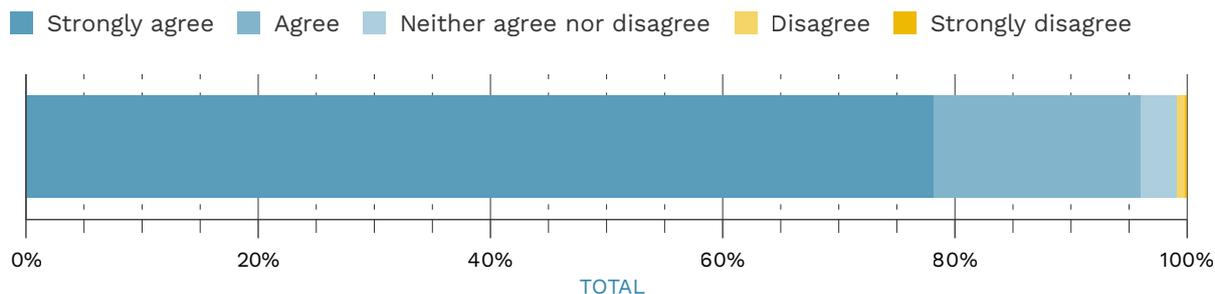
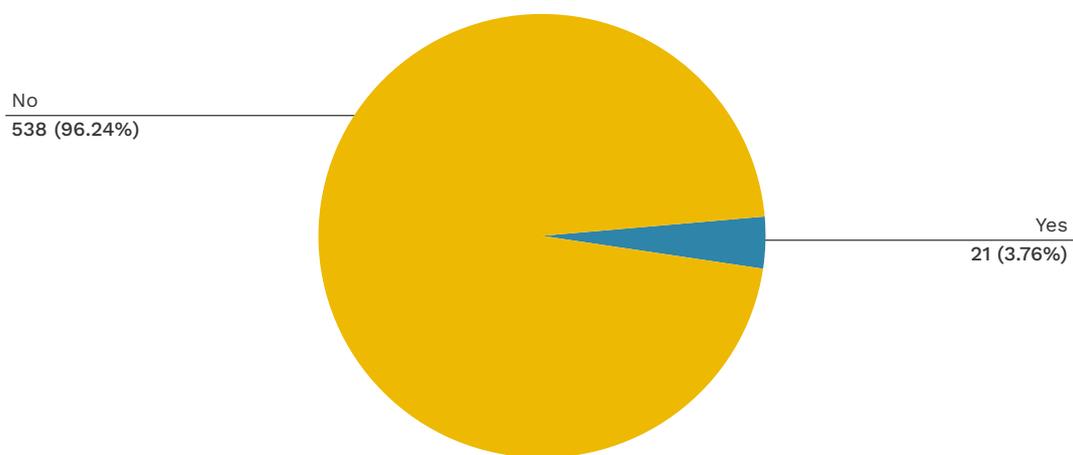


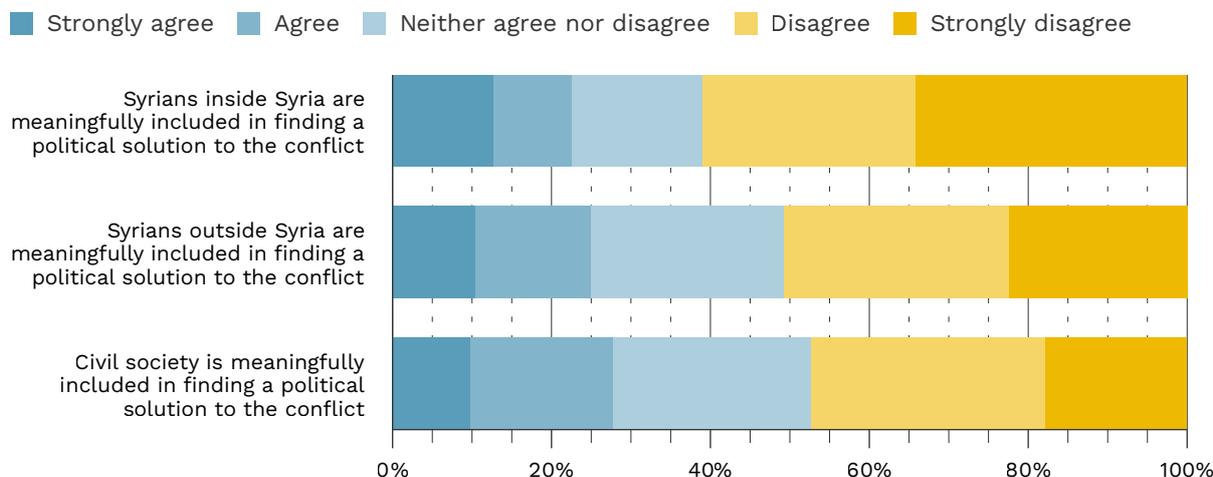
Figure 32: Do you believe that there has been meaningful progress towards a political solution in Syria over the last 12 months?



The first two questions in this section asked about the current process towards a political solution in Syria. There were no significant differences between different types of respondent, with over 96% agreeing or strongly agreeing that “A political solution to the conflict in Syria remains a priority”. Despite this, however, over 96% also believe that there has been no meaningful progress towards a political solution over the last 12 months.

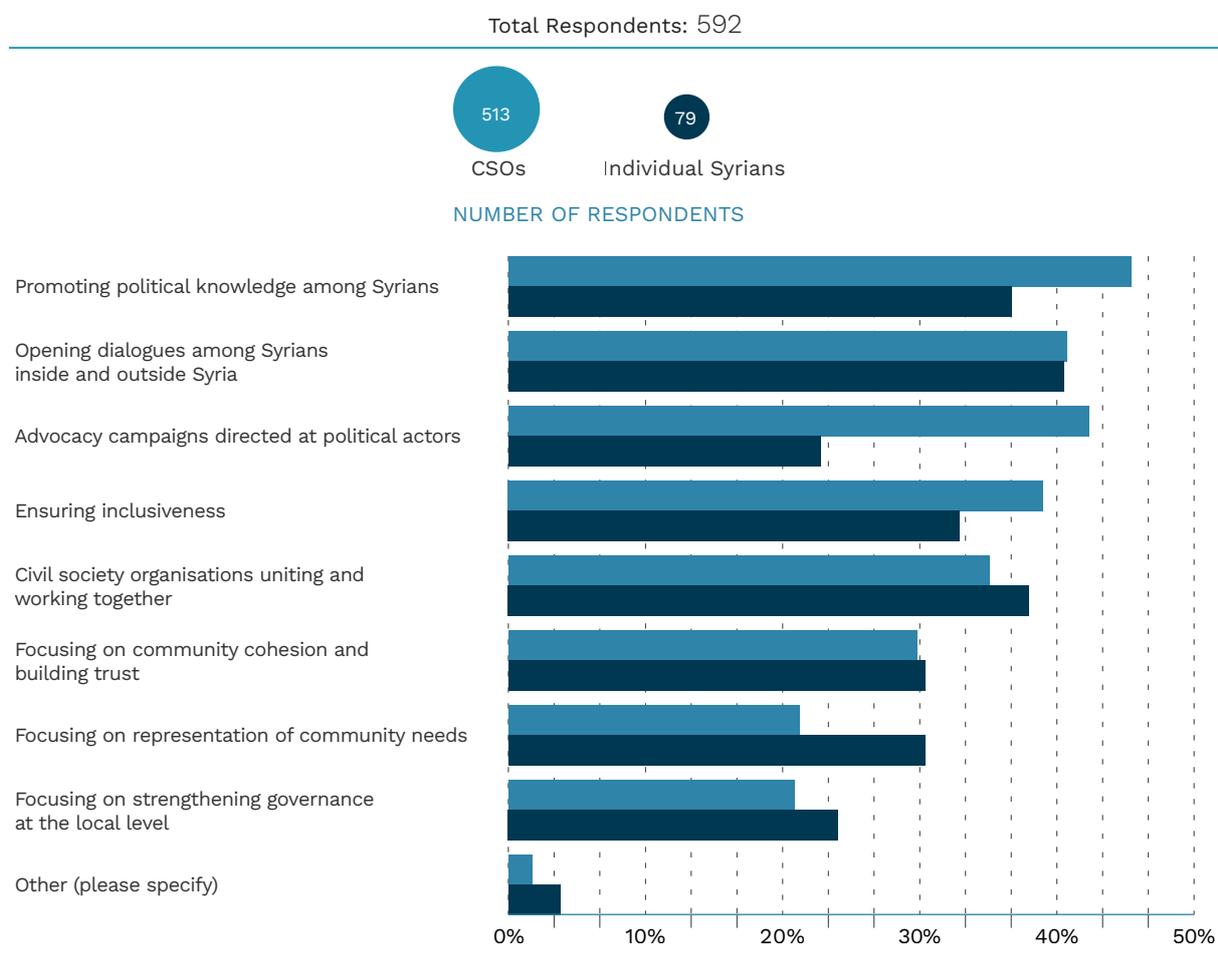
Respondents were asked to explain why they felt there had/had not been meaningful progress towards a political solution to the conflict in Syria over the last 12 months. A total of 246 responses were received, and a thematic analysis of the responses reveals that they most frequently referred to the international community’s inability or unwillingness to find a solution or agreement to solve the Syria crisis. Linked to this, and also commonly mentioned, was the idea that other international crises, such as the wars in Ukraine or Gaza had taken precedence over the Syrian crisis, meaning both less funding and a reduced interest in Syria. Respondents also referred to both the lack of progress in the Syrian Constitution Committee and the failure to implement UN Resolution 2254. Another prominent theme was that of the impact of the ongoing conflict and violence as an obstacle to achieving meaningful progress.

Figure 33: To what extent do you agree with the following statements:



When asked about the inclusion of various groups in finding a political solution to the conflict, respondents again showed little variation by type. A majority disagreed or strongly disagreed that Syrians inside Syria (61%) and Syrians outside Syria (50%) are meaningfully included in finding a political solution to the conflict, while a plurality (47%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that civil society is meaningfully included. Respondents generally agreed to a greater extent that civil society is included rather than Syrians themselves, with Syrians inside Syria believed to be the least included.

Figure 34: How can civil society best contribute to a political solution to the conflict?



When asked how best civil society can contribute to a political solution, opinions and priorities differed between CSO and individual Syrian responses and generally showed a high level of variation. The three most chosen responses for CSOs were “Promoting political knowledge among Syrians” (45%), “Advocacy campaigns directed at political actors” (42%) and “Opening dialogues among Syrians inside and outside Syria” (41%); while for individual Syrians, the three most chosen responses were “Opening dialogues among Syrians inside and outside Syria” (41%), “Civil society organisations uniting and working together” (38%), and “Promoting political knowledge among Syrians” (37%). Notably, individual Syrians were much more likely to select “Focusing on representation of community needs” (30% vs 21%) while CSO respondents were more likely to select “Advocacy campaigns directed at political actors” (42% vs 21%). Cross-border CSOs, alongside individual Syrians, were more likely to select “Focusing on strengthening governance at the local level” (25% vs 18%).

3.6. The Day of Dialogue

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked about their expectations for the Day of Dialogue at the Brussels Conference. This question received 323 responses overall. A thematic analysis of the results revealed several key issues present in many of the responses. The most frequently mentioned theme was the desire for a political solution to the Syrian crisis, which was seen as vital to making progress in Syria and was highlighted elsewhere in the survey. Unfortunately, many of the comments emphasising the need for a political solution also emphasised the lack of progress made to date, similar to the written responses in [“3.5. Peacebuilding and the Political Process”](#) on page 33, and again, several responses referred to the failure to implement UN Resolution 2254.

Other key themes identified were the importance of the inclusion of Syrians and civil society organisations in dialogue and attempts to address the crisis in Syria, with particular emphasis on civil society involvement, unsurprising given the targets of the survey. Refugee and IDP issues were also frequently mentioned, with respondents desiring greater support and protections for refugees and IDPs, as well as opportunities to discuss the issue in the context of the conference. Better financing and funding was another key theme of note, especially for local organisations.



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