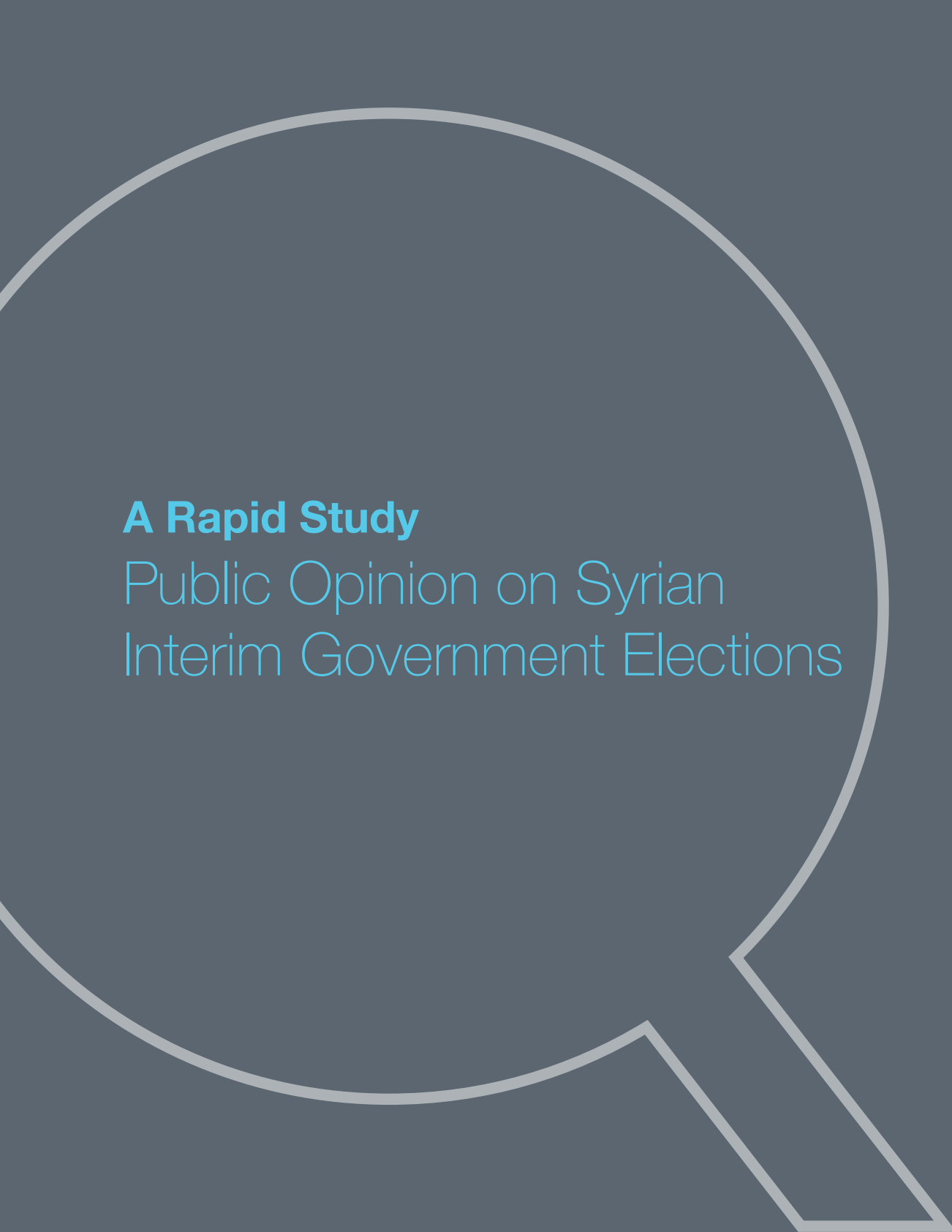




A Rapid Study

Public Opinion on Syrian Interim Government Elections



A Snapshot study attempting to capture the public opinion in several opposition-held areas in Syria about the upcoming interim government elections.

This report is available on RMTeam website:

www.rmteam.org

For quoting and data requests please communicate with:

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15th August-2014

About us:

The RMTeam aims at providing a variety of services to the international community at large including: donors, local and international NGOs, and private institutions. These services would contribute to the rapid and successful implementation of humanitarian assistance and stabilization efforts.

The team specializes in Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation for a best alignment of objectives with the needs on the ground. We provide a transparent third party monitoring mechanism that measures in a systematic way the purported achievements against a set of indicators, while keeping an eye on the implementation progress.

RMTeam, benefiting from its extensive network of researchers, and through Public Opinion Polls provides a better understanding of public perception in different subject matters. We offer reliable opinion polls with high degree of representation and accuracy

In a pioneer initiative, RMTeam legal team provides a comprehensive Design and Monitoring of Elections inside and outside Syria.

Through its Specialized Research and Field Assessments, RMTeam supports its partners in acquiring first-hand knowledge in specific areas of interest (humanitarian aid, or development and reconstruction). The team collects up to date primary data and supports them by secondary data review that improve projects design and facilitate partners' selection and actual implementation phase.

The timely provision of data is key to the success of our partners' projects and to reach our ultimate goal in assisting the people of Syria.

Background:

Following the formation of Syrian Coalition (SC) in November 2012, opposition forces attempted to make serious moves toward establishing alternative institutions in opposition-held areas in Syria and widening their support to various civilian and military actors functioning on the ground. In March 2013, SC members elected Ghassan Hitto as a prime minister for the Syrian interim government and were assigned to form a government of 10-12 ministries including a ministry of defence. However, disputes within the SC did not allow for the government to be formed and Ghassan Hitto resigned in July 2013.

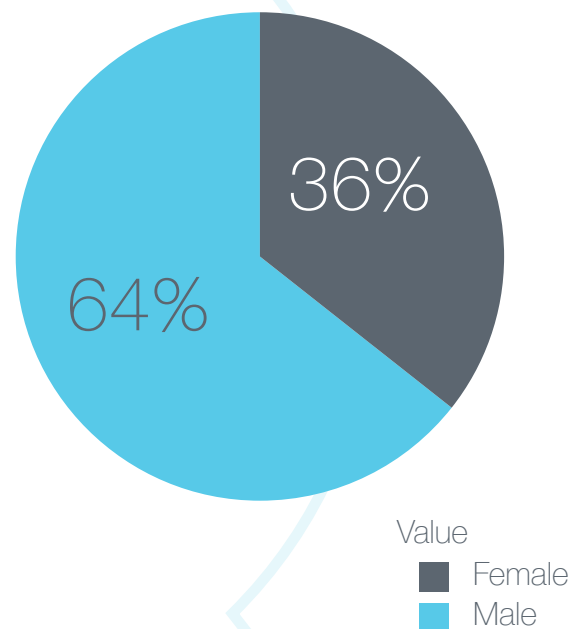
In September 2013, the political committee of SC elected a new interim government to be led by Ahmad Tou'ama, a dentist and was among the signatories of Damascus Declaration. The interim government established its offices in Gaziantep-Turkey and since then grew into 10 active ministries, over 350 employees in Turkey and about 2,000 employees inside Syria.

After few public disputes between the SC and the interim government over the role and powers granted to the interim government, the SC dismissed the interim government in July 2014. Currently, the political committee of SC is attempting to agree on a name to be selected as the new prime minister, few names have been discussed till now and this study is based on the leaked names RMTeam could know about till now (BBC 2012/10/17, The New York Times 2013/03/18, The Syrian Observer 2013/12/03, Al Jazeera 2013/11/12, Reuters 2014/07/22)

Methodology:

This survey is based on random interviews with local population attempting to gauge the attitudes of the public in 7 governorates: Rural Damascus, Dar'a, Hama, Idleb, Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor and AL Hasakeh. 3 locations were selected in each governorate and a total number of 52 interviews were done in each governorate. The study took in consideration gender disaggregation as well as shown in the chart below:

Gender Disaggregation

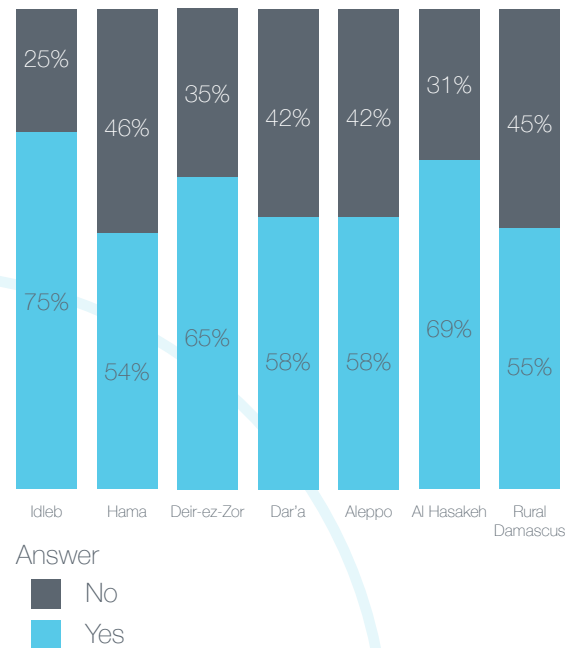


A total number of 365 interviews were carried out within 42 hours starting from 10th August 2014, meaning that the sample size is small and results are not representative but shall be seen as an indicator of people's opinion about the election of the new interim government and the performance of the previous one. The names of the candidates mentioned in this study are not comprehensive of all the candidates being discussed by the SC and are based on leaks and not official information released by SC.

Key Findings:

Questions were mainly targeting subjects related to the new changes in the SC and the elections of the new interim government, answers revealed slight differences between different geographic areas when questions were related directly to the SC and an overall fine knowledge about the situation inside the SC, when asked about the knowledge of the new leadership of the SC which was elected in July, a minimum of 54% of the interviewees in the visited governorate expressed that they knew about the new leadership, the number was high in Idleb governorate comparing to the rest.

Percentage Of People Who Heard Of Electing Hadi Al Bahra As A President Of SC



The rest of the questions in the survey were more related to the interim government, and it showed variety of answers between different geographic areas. In general, high percentage of the interviewees knew that the interim government has been discharged, with a very high percentage in Deir-ez-Zor where the Prime Minister Ahmad Tou'ma comes from; an overall percentage of 39% across all governorates did not know that the interim government has been discharged.

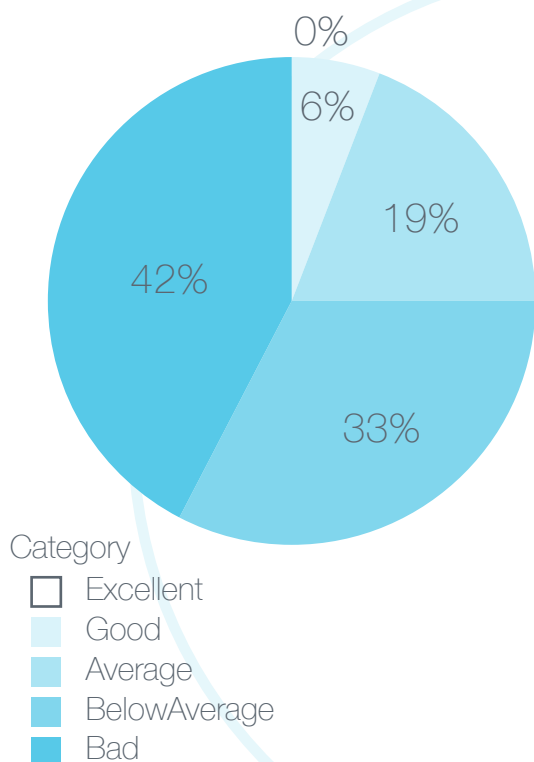
Percentage Of People Who Know That The Interim Government Has Been Discharged

	Rural Damascus	Al Hasakeh	Aleppo	Dar'a	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Idleb	Grand Total
No	36%	58%	39%	62%	6%	48%	27%	39%
Yes	64%	42%	61%	38%	94%	52%	73%	61%

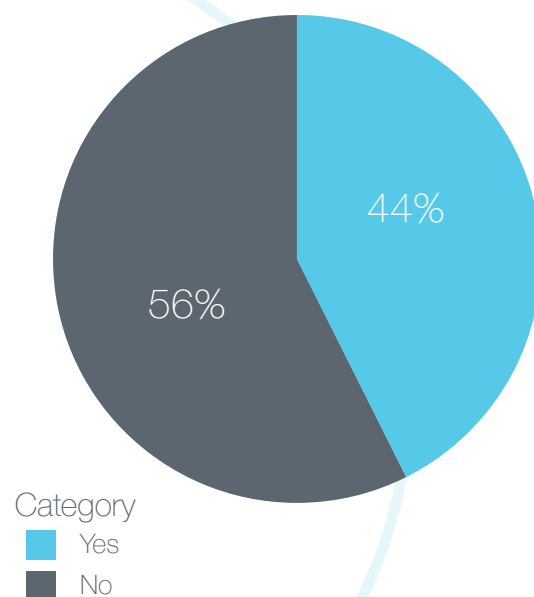
When asked about the impression of the public about the performance of the previous interim government, there were generally negative answers; no single answer received stated that the performance was excellent, on the contrary, 42% of the interviewees stated that think the performance was bad.

When asked if they know that the SC is working on forming a new interim government, less than half of the interviewee expressed knowledge about this subject, in spite of the overall fine percentage of people familiar with the issues related to the SC.

People's Impression About The Performance Of Syrian Interim Government

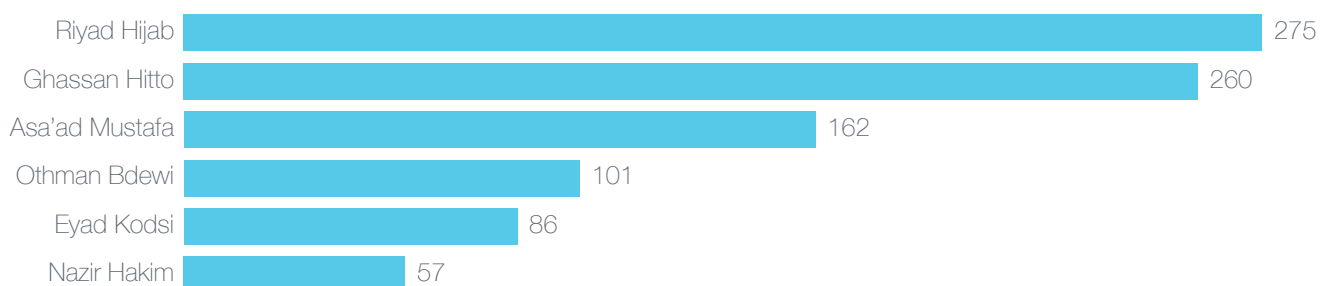


Percentage of people who know that SC is attempting to form a new government:



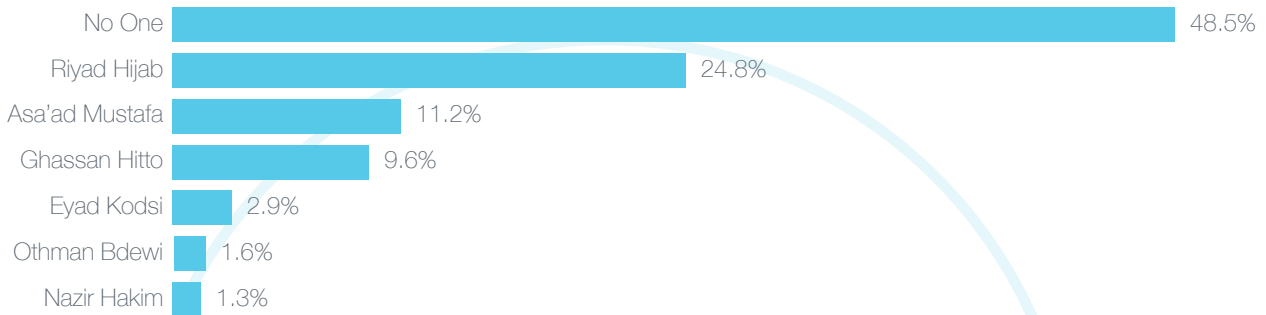
The answers varied critically when people were asked if they know any of the candidates whom their names were leaked: Ghassan Hitto, Othman Bdewi, Riyad Hijab, Eyad Kodsí, Asa'ad Mustafa and Nezar Hakim. Majority of interviewees across different governorates knew Riad Hijab, the ex-prime minister in Syria who defected from Syrian Government in August 2012; he was followed closely by Ghassan Hitto, the previous prime minister of Syrian Interim Government.

Number of times each candidate was recognised by people



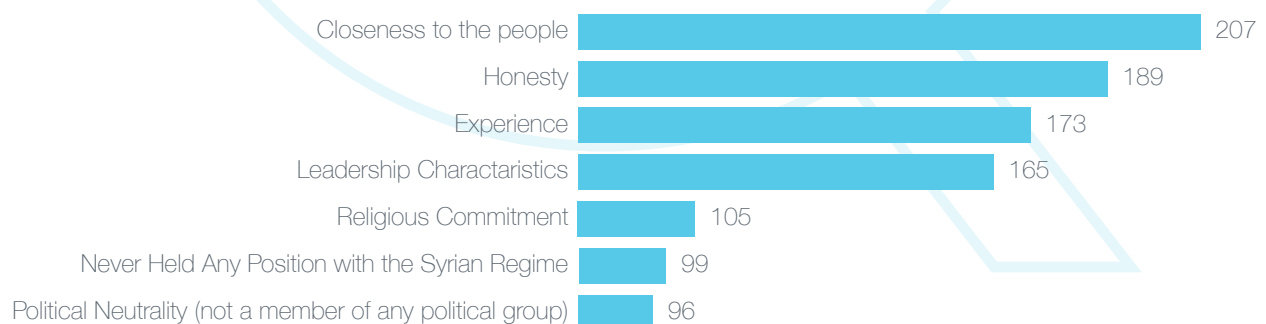
However, when it came to the preferred candidate for the interviewees, the answers were significantly negative, about 49% of the people interviewed proffered none of the suggested names, another interesting fact is that Riad Hijab, the defected prime minister, got the highest support but still with low percentage of about 25%, followed by Asa'ad Mustafa, a previous minister of agriculture in the Syrian Government.

Percentage of people preferring each candidate:



When asked about the main characteristics of the needed prime minister, the most repeated answer was that people want a prime minister who is close to them, possibly reflecting the fact that the interim government till now was never based inside Syrian territory. Honesty was the second requested qualification while political neutralism and not working with the Syrian regime in the past were less mentioned as required qualifications, which explains as well the two preferred candidates.

Preferred Characteristics of Candidates:



Conclusions:

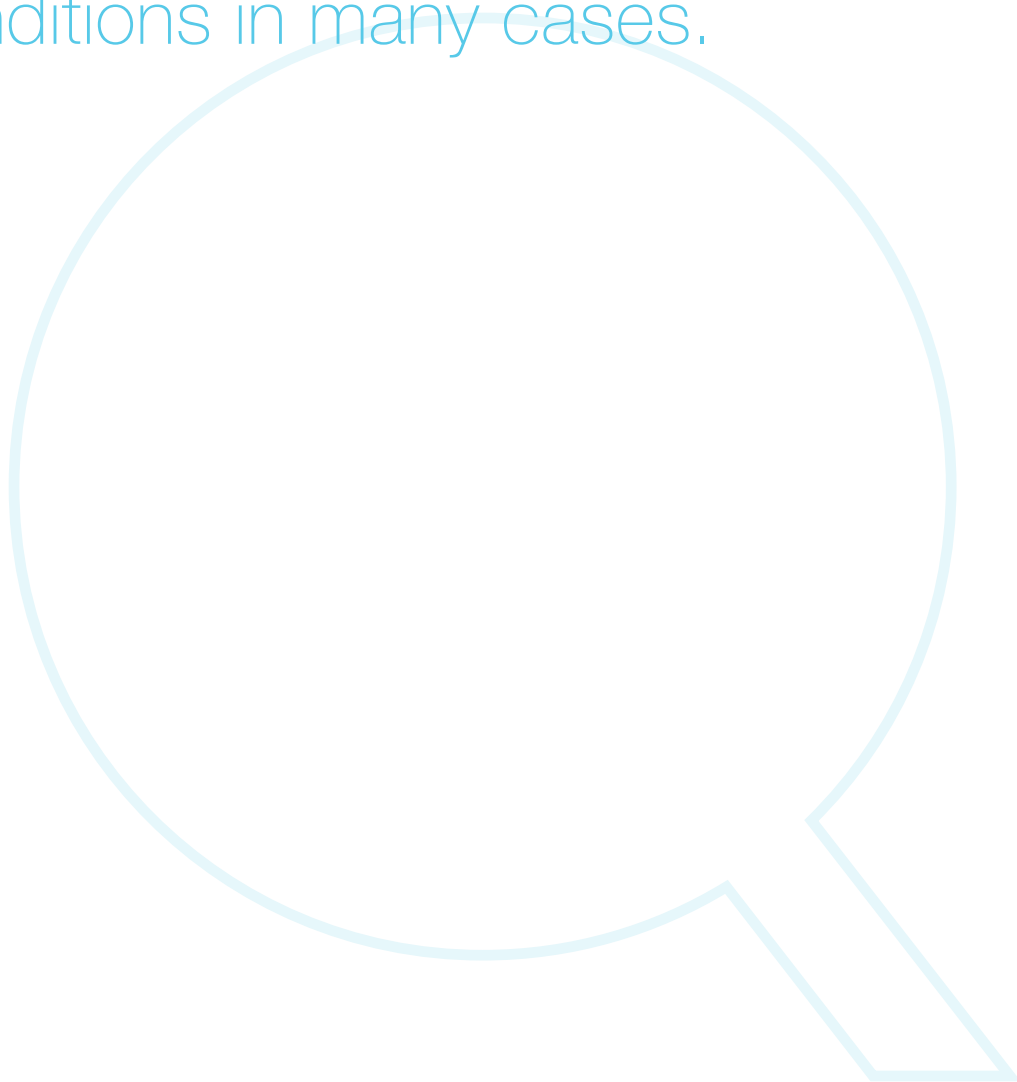
There is an overall dissatisfaction with the IG's performance across Syria, and a little awareness of what it is doing. The majority were aware of the dismissal of the past government, but less than half of those interviewed knew that the SC is in the process of forming a new government even though it is a natural step to be taken at this moment.

Of the three candidates most recognized were two who served with the Syrian regime, while the third was the first interim prime minister, while the rest were not known to the public. This might show that the SC is not doing enough to publicize the names of its candidates and to engage the public in the process. The majority did not like any of the Candidates, which enforces that the public is not engaged in the process.

In conclusion we see that the SC has to do more work to publicize the names of its candidates, to arrange for them to visit the non-regime controlled areas inside Syria and to gauge the public opinion more often in order to end with a selection that is closer to the public.

END OF RESEARCH

RMTeam thanks the network of field researchers who carried out the random interviews in a very short timeframe and under challenging conditions in many cases.



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