



## Lessons From Syria

*The importance of reviewing  
security risk management in  
post-conflict zones*

The ILS Risk Advisory team recently returned from a visit to a global client engaged in research in Syria for over 40 years. We visited an area they have been operating in, that experienced some of the most intense fighting, more than a decade ago.



The trip highlighted the importance of organisational reviews of security risk management in post-conflict environments, taking into consideration the evolving threats, a changed security and political environment, and the legacy of past hostilities.

Syria has undergone major upheavals in the past 15 years with multiple uprisings, a protracted civil war, a devastating earthquake, and the overthrow of the Assad regime in 2024.

While still considered a fragile and vulnerable security context, the country has seen considerable improvement in security, with the return of millions of refugees to the country over the past year.



With the lessons from our Syria visit in mind, we ask - ***what are the key considerations for operating in post conflict-zones for NGOs, journalists and researchers?***

## Key considerations for organisations in post-conflict areas:

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**Organisational profile** - It is crucial to ask how the changes in the security and political situation may affect the reputation of the organisation and the work that is being carried out - *do these changes impact the public perception, and therefore change the risk levels?*
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**Security plans and context analysis** - *What new threats and risks have emerged given the recent history of the area? Do SOPs and contingency plans need updating? Do staff need training?*

- **Community and Stakeholder Engagement** - *What has changed in terms of the relationship between the organisation and the local communities and/or the governing authorities?*
- **Premises security** - *What are the updated physical and practical security concerns with regards to assets, premises and personnel?*
- **Legacies of conflict** - *How has the physical public infrastructure been affected? What is the level of exposure to Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) of your operations and travel ?*

## What does ILS Recommend?

-  **Listen and Learn** - Take into account the lived experience and potential trauma of local staff when engaging in security management reviews - *does training feel appropriate and adequate? Is there sufficient mental health support available?*
-  **Maintain and strengthen** - Uphold Duty of Care to staff by updating security frameworks, reviewing contingency planning, SOPs and incident management procedures, and offering training - *despite the sense of improved security.*

 **Continuous context monitoring** - Keep up to date with security incidents, political and cultural trends, and local/regional developments.



With an increase in conflict globally, international organisations are more exposed to a wider range of security risks than ever before.

At ILS, we support a variety of NGO, research, rights and media clients working in fragile security contexts all over the world, including post-conflict areas with nuanced and specific risks.

👉 Let's talk. If you or your organisation are looking for security risk management support, we'd love to hear from you.