



1. Please provide information on the Social National Syrian Party – aims, objectives, formation, leaders in 2007 and around that time, and any information on the way it was viewed by the Syrian government in 2006/2007 and the way any members are currently viewed.

Note: Information specifically on the Syrian Social National (or Nationalist) Party (SSNP) in Syria was difficult to find. Most sources discuss the party in Lebanon with only passing reference to Syria. Aside from a couple of media articles, and a brief entry in political handbooks, the only recent detailed report found which discusses the party in Syria as well as Lebanon is a 2007 article by Eyal Zisser in the journal *Die Welt des Islam* (The World of Islam).¹

The SSNP was established in 1932 by Lebanese Christian (Greek Orthodox), Antun Saada. Described as “radical and secular”², the party’s primary goal was the creation of “Greater Syria”, encompassing what is today Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, and Jordan.³ The SSNP was one of the main rivals to the now-ruling Ba’ath party in Syria in the early 1950s, following the country’s independence in 1946. After a senior Ba’athist officer was assassinated by a SSNP member in 1955, the party was suppressed by the Syrian military authorities and “virtually disappeared from the Syrian political scene”.⁴ The SSNP remained active in Lebanon, and its armed militia in Lebanon became a proxy of the Syrian government during the Lebanese civil war.⁵ The SSNP was allegedly responsible for the assassination of Lebanese president Bashir Gemayel in 1982. In Syria, the party was increasingly tolerated by President Hafiz al-Assad, and the ideology of the Ba’ath party, which was traditionally “pan-Arabist”, moved closer to “pan-Syrian”.⁶ During Bashar al-Assad’s presidency the party has become more active politically (although it had already been represented in the People’s Assembly for over 12 years by a party member who had run as an independent candidate, “with the silent approval of the Syrian authorities”⁷). The date of the actual legalisation of the party appears to be 2003, when it joined the Ba’ath-led National Progressive Front (NPF) and contested the March

¹ Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 188-206 – Attachment 1.

² Moubayed, S. 2005, ‘Syria’s Ba’athists loosen the reins’, *Asia Times*, 26 April http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GD26Ak04.html – Accessed 10 June 2010 – Attachment 2.

³ Szajkowski, B. (ed) 2005, ‘Syria’ in *Political Parties of the World*, John Harper Publishing, London, p. 582 – Attachment 3.

⁴ Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, p. 196 – Attachment 1.

⁵ Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, p. 191 – Attachment 1.

⁶ Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 188-206 – Attachment 1; Pipes, D. 1988, ‘Radical Politics and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, August <http://www.danielpipes.org/5788/radical-politics-and-the-syrian-social-nationalist-party> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 4.

⁷ Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, p. 203 – Attachment 1

2003 elections.⁸ Other sources put the date of legalisation as 2005.⁹ In any event, the SSNP was a legal political party by 2006.

Members

No information was found on how members are currently viewed or treated. The SSNP reportedly has the greatest number of members (estimated around 90,000 in 2005) after the Ba'ath party in Syria.¹⁰ While all reports indicate that the two parties have converged, the size of the SSNP, even after having been officially banned for around half a century, may mean that it would still be seen as a threat to the main party. In two reports the authors describe the alliance between the two parties as “surprising” given the bitter rivalry in the past.¹¹

Aims/Ideology

The ideology and doctrine of the SSNP are set out in a document written by SSNP founder, Antun Saada, and included on the SSNP website (http://www.ssnp.com/new/index_en.htm) with explanatory notes. The introduction states: “The principles have remained in their essence unaltered since the inception of the first organizational structure of the SSNP”.¹²

According to Daniel Pipes, writing in 1988, the party subscribes to “pure pan-Syrianism” although Pipes claims that the party has changed its overt stance on the issue. According to Pipes, the party is intensely secular and anti-religious. In the past it has used violence as a means to further its goals, being involved in coup attempts in Lebanon and assassinations of political figures in both Lebanon and Syria.¹³

Leaders

An annual list of Syrian political leaders was found on Exxun.com¹⁴ (the authoritativeness of the website is not established). According to this, Jubran Urayji was the leader in 2006-2007. Jabran Urayji is also given as the leader in other sources.¹⁵ Ali Qansu (Ali Qanso) is listed as the leader in 2008 and 2009. While some sources list Ali Qanso as the current SSNP leader, a *Daily Star* article reports that Asaad Hardan took over from Ali Qanso in

⁸ Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 202-203 – Attachment 1; Szajkowski, B. (ed) 2005, ‘Syria’ in *Political Parties of the World*, John Harper Publishing, London, p. 582 – Attachment 3.

⁹ ‘Arab Political Systems: Baseline Information and Reforms – Syria’ 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace website, 6 March <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=16918> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 5; Moubayed, S. 2006, ‘Strengthening the line’, *Al-Ahram*, no. 782, 16-22 February <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/782/re302.htm> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 6.

¹⁰ Moubayed, S. 2005, ‘Syria’s Ba’athists loosen the reins’, *Asia Times*, 26 April http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GD26Ak04.html – Accessed 10 June 2010 – Attachment 2.

¹¹ Hinnebusch, R. 2008, ‘Modern Syrian Politics’, *History Compass*, no. 6, vol. 1, p. 265 <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/intrel/media/ModernSyrianPoliticsHISTCOM.pdf> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 7; Zisser, E. 2007, ‘The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria’, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 188-206 – Attachment 1.

¹² ‘Ideology’ (undated), Syrian Social Nationalist Party website <http://www.ssnp.com/new/ssnp/en/ssnp.htm> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 8.

¹³ Pipes, D. 1988, ‘Radical Politics and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, August <http://www.danielpipes.org/5788/radical-politics-and-the-syrian-social-nationalist-party> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 4.

¹⁴ ‘Syria – Political parties and leaders’ 2010, Exxun.com website, last updated 7 June http://www.exxun.com/afd_hy/Syria/gv_political_parties.html – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 9.

¹⁵ ‘Arab Political Systems: Baseline Information and Reforms – Syria’ 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace website, 6 March <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=16918> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 5; Szajkowski, B. (ed) 2005, ‘Syria’ in *Political Parties of the World*, John Harper Publishing, London, p. 582 – Attachment 3.

July 2008.¹⁶ The entry for the SSNP in Syria in the current edition of the *Political Handbook of the World* also gives the leader as Asaad Hardan.¹⁷ Most SSNP leaders referred to in these sources appear to be Lebanese. For example, Asaad Hardan was a Lebanese MP.¹⁸ Ali Qanso was also a Minister without portfolio in the Lebanese government.¹⁹

Yūsuf Sawayd is described as the head of the party's political bureau (in 2003) in Syria in Eyal Zisser's article. According to this, in 2006 he joined the Syrian government and was appointed as a minister without portfolio.²⁰ A 2006 *Al-Ahram Weekly* article states that Sawayd was the first SSNP member to officially assume cabinet office since the party was outlawed in the 1950s.²¹ Other specifically Syrian leaders in the party were not found.

Factions

According to information in the latest UK Home Office report, it is the "Centralist Wing" of the SSNP which is part of the NPF.²² No further information on this faction in Syria was found. Eyal Zisser's article does refer to various SSNP factions in Lebanon during the 1980s.²³ According to Daniel Pipes, in his 1988 essay, there was even an anti-Syrian wing of the SSNP in Lebanon.²⁴

Profiles of the SSNP in Syria from various sources

Political Handbook of the World, 2010 edition:

Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP). Formally banned in the 1970s, the SSNP supports creation of a "Greater Syria." The party remained active in Lebanon for most of the late-twentieth century. In 2005 the SSNP was legalized and became the first official non-Arab, non-socialist political grouping. The party secured two seats in the 2007 elections. Reports in 2009 alleged widespread dissatisfaction with party leader Asaad HARDAN among the rank-and-file members.

Leader: Asaad HARDAN (Party Chairman).²⁵

¹⁶ 'Asaad Hardan assumes SSNP's reins' 2008, *Daily Star*, 4 July – Attachment 10.

¹⁷ 'Syria' 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition*. Originally published in *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, edited by Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff (Washington: CQ Press, 2010). http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Syria – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 11.

¹⁸ 'Treasury Designates Individuals Furthering Syrian Regime's Efforts to Undermine Lebanese Democracy' 2007, Website of the US Embassy in Lebanon, 5 November http://lebanon.usembassy.gov/latest_embassy_news/press-releases/prtreasury110507.html – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 12.

¹⁹ Elghossain, A. 2008, 'Lebanon's Cabinet confident of prompt, all-encompassing ministerial statement', *Daily Star*, 19 July – Attachment 13.

²⁰ Zisser, E. 2007, 'The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, p. 203 – Attachment 1.

²¹ Moubayed, S. 2006, 'Strengthening the line', *Al-Ahram*, no. 782, 16-22 February <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/782/re302.htm> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 6.

²² UK Border Agency 2009, 'Country of origin information report: The Syrian Arab Republic', UK Home Office website, 6 February, Section 12.02 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/syria-060209.doc> – Accessed 9 February 2009 – Attachment 14.

²³ Zisser, E. 2007, 'The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 199-200 – Attachment 1.

²⁴ Pipes, D. 1988, 'Radical Politics and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, August <http://www.danielpipes.org/5788/radical-politics-and-the-syrian-social-nationalist-party> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 4.

²⁵ 'Syria' 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition*. Originally published in *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, edited by Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff

Political Parties of the World, 2005 edition:

Syrian Social Nationalist Party
Hizb al-Suri al-Qawmi al-Ijtimai
Leadership. Jubran Urayji
Websites. www.ssnp.com; www.alqawmi.com

Established by Antun Saada in 1932, the party began as a secret society opposing French colonial rule and seeking to unify “greater Syria,” encompassing what is today Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, and Jordan. Saada was executed for treason by the Lebanese authorities in June 1949, and the party was suppressed by the Syrian military authorities in 1955. It remained active primarily in Lebanon and subscribes to many of the BASP’s principles. Following the appointment of Bashar al-Assad, the SSNP was given increasing public space, culminating in its participation in the 2003 elections, when it won four seats.²⁶

Asia Times article, April 2005:

Founded in Beirut in 1932, originally as a secret society of five intellectuals, by the revolutionary philosopher Antune Saada, it grew into an official party and became immensely popular in Syria from the 1940s onward. A radical and secular party, it originally flourished among students at the American University of Beirut and spread to other intellectual centers in Lebanon and Syria, calling for the unification of Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Jordan), and challenging the ideas of modern Arab nationalism that became popular in the 1950s under Nasser of Egypt. Meaning, the SSNP was uninterested in North Africa (Egypt included) or the Arab Gulf region.

It was outlawed in Syria in 1955 when some of its members were accused of assassinating Adnan al-Malki, the deputy chief of staff of the Syrian army. Malki was an Arab nationalist, an ally of the Ba’ath, and his brother Riyad was a ranking Ba’athist in Syria. Authorities cracked down on the party, forcing it to move underground, and greatly persecuted SSNP members from 1955 onward.

Restrictions softened when Hafez Assad came to power in 1970, reportedly because he sympathized with the SSNP, and in February 2001, his son, President Bashar Assad, gave an interview to the Jordanian weekly al-Majd saying that he “did not mind” a relaunch of the SSNP in Syria. A few months later, the SSNP was permitted to attend a meeting of the NPF as an “observer”.

This was seen as an indicator that the state was willing to grant more freedoms to the SSNP, especially since it tolerated its members having seats in parliament. After an uprising started in Palestine in September 2000, the party was permitted to stage a rally in Damascus, in favor of the Palestinian resistance, for the first time in 50 years. This month, Assad received a delegation of SSNP leaders in Damascus, including Issam al-Mahayri, the aging secretary general of its Syria branch since the party founder’s death in 1949.

All of these are indicators that the SSNP is back on its way to becoming a main factor in political life in Syria. The failure of modern Arab nationalism, and the distance of countries once considered as solid Arab “brothers” such as Libya, Sudan, Morocco, Kuwait, Yemen and Oman, all explain why the concept of Greater Syria is on the rise in modern Syria. Of all the other parties that will be

(Washington: CQ Press, 2010). http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Syria – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 11.

²⁶ Szajkowski, B. (ed) 2005, ‘Syria’ in *Political Parties of the World*, John Harper Publishing, London, p. 582 – Attachment 3.

authorized, the SSNP probably has the largest power base (unofficially estimated at more than 90,000), matched only by the Ba'ath.²⁷

2. Please provide information on Abdel Halim Khadam.

Khadam is a former vice-president of Syria. In 2005 he left the Ba'ath party (sources differ as to whether he resigned²⁸ or was sacked²⁹) and went overseas. Whilst in Paris he gave a media interview implicating Syrian President Assad and other Syrian officials in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.³⁰ The United Nations team investigating the assassination then asked to interview the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and the foreign minister, Farouk al-Sharaa, in the inquiry into the killing.³¹ The Syrian parliament voted to bring high treason charges against Khaddam.³² In 2006 he joined with exiled Syrian Muslim Brotherhood leaders and other secular and Kurdish expatriate dissidents and announced the formation of an opposition front, the National Salvation Front (NSF), as well as plans to establish a "government-in-exile".³³ When Khaddam announced he was forming a government in exile, "he said he was willing to cooperate with all political forces in Syria, from Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood to disenchanted members of the ruling Baath Party."³⁴ Khaddam was dismissed in many circles as corrupt, without sufficient support, and complicit in 40 years of the Syrian regime.³⁵

The NSF reportedly collapsed in April 2009.³⁶ Little reportage was found on Khaddam's recent activities. An article on the Juhina Portal News website dated 17 April 2010 reports on a dispute between Khaddam and the widow of Rafiq Hariri. The article states: "Sources also confirm that since Sarkozy became the President of France in 2007 the

²⁷ Moubayed, S. 2005, 'Syria's Ba'athists loosen the reins', *Asia Times*, 26 April

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GD26Ak04.html – Accessed 10 June 2010 – Attachment 2.

²⁸ Fattah, H. 2006, 'U.N. Asks to Meet Syrian Leader in Inquiry on Beirut Killing', *New York Times*, 3 January <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A04EFDF1130F930A35752C0A9609C8B63&sec=&spon=> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 15; 'Syria' 2010, Political Handbook of the World Online Edition.

Originally published in *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, edited by Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff (Washington: CQ Press, 2010).

http://library.cqpress.com/phw/phw2010_Syria – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 11.

²⁹ Pan, E. 2006, 'Syria: Has Assad Dodged a Bullet?', Council on Foreign Relations website, 26 April <http://www.cfr.org/publication/10546/syria.html> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 16.

³⁰ Gambill, G. 2006, 'Dossier: Abdul Halim Khaddam', *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 1, February http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0602/0602_6.htm – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 17.

³¹ Fattah, H. 2006, 'U.N. Asks to Meet Syrian Leader in Inquiry on Beirut Killing', *New York Times*, 3 January <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A04EFDF1130F930A35752C0A9609C8B63&sec=&spon=> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 15.

³² Gambill, G. 2006, 'Dossier: Abdul Halim Khaddam', *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 1, February http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0602/0602_6.htm – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 17.

³³ Gambill, G. 2006, 'Dossier: The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood', *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 2, April/May http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0604/0604_2.htm – Accessed 23 April 2008 – Attachment 18.

³⁴ 'Former Syrian VP set to form government in exile' 2006, *Haaretz*, source: *Associated Press*, 15 January <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/former-syrian-vp-set-to-form-government-in-exile-1.62220> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 19.

³⁵ Gambill, G. 2006, 'Dossier: Abdul Halim Khaddam', *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 1, February http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0602/0602_6.htm – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 17; Pan, E.

2006, 'Syria: Has Assad Dodged a Bullet?', Council on Foreign Relations website, 26 April <http://www.cfr.org/publication/10546/syria.html> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 16.

³⁶ Sands, P. 2009, 'Syrian opposition group collapses' 2009, *The National*, 22 April <http://www.thenational.ae/article/20090422/FOREIGN/704219850/1135> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 20.

French authorities restrict Khaddam's movements and prevent him from appearing on media and bar him from political activities."³⁷

For more detailed information on Khaddam, see the profile in *The Mideast Monitor*, dated February 2006. This gives details on Khaddam's 40 year career in the Syrian government, his political relationship with Rafiq Hariri, and the immediate aftermath of the media interviews in which he accused the Syrian government of complicity in the assassination of Hariri.³⁸ *BBC News* also has a profile of Khaddam, dated 31 December 2005.³⁹

Attachments

1. Zisser, E. 2007, 'The Syrian Phoenix – The Revival of the Syrian Social National Party in Syria', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 188-206.
2. Moubayed, S. 2005, 'Syria's Ba'athists loosen the reins', *Asia Times*, 26 April http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GD26Ak04.html – Accessed 10 June 2010.
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7. Hinnebusch, R. 2008, 'Modern Syrian Politics', *History Compass*, no. 6, vol. 1, p. 265 <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/intrel/media/ModernSyrianPoliticsHISTCOM.pdf> – Accessed 11 June 2010.
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10. 'Asaad Hardan assumes SSNP's reins' 2008, *Daily Star*, 4 July. (FACTIVA)

³⁷ 'Khaddam Seized Hariri's House in Paris.. Nazek Hariri Goes to the French Court to Pick him Out' 2010, *Jouhina Portal News*, 17 April <http://www.jpnews-sy.com/en/news.php?id=641> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 21.

³⁸ Gambill, G. 2006, 'Dossier: Abdul Halim Khaddam', *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 1, February http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0602/0602_6.htm – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 17.

³⁹ 'Profile: Abdul Halim Khaddam' 2005, *BBC News*, 31 December http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4572362.stm – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 22.

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12. 'Treasury Designates Individuals Furthering Syrian Regime's Efforts to Undermine Lebanese Democracy' 2007, Website of the US Embassy in Lebanon, 5 November
http://lebanon.usembassy.gov/latest_embassy_news/press-releases/prtreasury110507.html
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<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A04EFDF1130F930A35752C0A9609C8B63&sec=&spon=> – Accessed 11 June 2010.
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http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4572362.stm – Accessed 11 June 2010.