MASHREK

WHAT ROLE CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PLAY IN FRAGILE OR CRISIS-STRICKEN STATES? THE CASE OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS

Dialogue and capacity building of local and regional authorities in EU partner countries in the fields of development and local governance

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What role can local governments play in fragile or crisis-stricken States? The case of the Syrian crisis

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EDITORIAL

Taking the case of the Syrian crisis and the refugee flows it has given rise to, this study examines the role of local governance in crisis stricken areas and fragile States.

It is the outcome of work carried out over the past 17 years within Cités Unies France (CUF), a network which has served to facilitate and coordinate international actions for French local authorities for over 40 years. CUF has often been witness to the hardships experienced by local authorities in times of natural disaster, civil war and, more generally, when the State is absent.

French and European local authorities have often served to give a voice to their afflicted counterparts. The process behind this study began at the request of French local governments wishing to provide support to their colleagues in "post-emergency" situations. Their question was the following: how can we help local authorities coming out of a critical crisis situation to once again be in a position to perform their duties and provide indispensable local public services?

This led to the creation of solidarity funds, sourced by French local authorities, following earthquakes, wars and famines. These funds are disbursed over a period of one to two years, and have served to rebuild municipal services or to rehabilitate housing. They have often taken the form of direct budgetary assistance to municipalities. Nicaragua, Algeria, Morocco, Japan, Haiti and the Philippines are among the countries where CUF, on behalf of French local authorities, have worked toward empowering and reinforcing local governance.

Past experience and acknowledgment of the limits to existing systems have led us to define a new approach to such post-crisis periods, which follow upon situations of emergency and which unfortunately can last for years.

We propose what could be called a "local generalist approach". This is assistance to local authorities to enable them to manage all the problems that fragile populations have to face.

Our approach is based on three realizations:

- Increased decentralization worldwide has engendered both strong territorial identities and new local political elites.
- A rise in the number of weak States unable to fulfill their state duties and, a fortiori, to manage crisis situations.
- The mainstreaming of multilateral humanitarian assistance with large budgets but little knowledge of local specificities.

This state of affairs has led us to the conclusion that local authorities, or at least local solidarity networks, e.g. 'Asabiyya in the Arab world and Manteka in the Persian world, were the best suited for managing such difficulties. It was thus important to support them and to do what what we could to raise awareness among major donors.

Cités Unies France belongs to the world network of local and regional authorities, UCLG. Within this organization, created in 2004, we defend local autonomy and cooperation among local authorities. Support provided by local governance in favor of development, social rest, post-civil war reconciliation, are some of the arguments put forward by the UCLG in discussions with for example the World Bank and the European Union. Cités Unies France alongside Dutch, Canadians, Turkish, have been tabling this debate within international instances.

The crisis fueled by the civil war in Syria between forces "for and against Bachar El Assad" has found resonance in the Shia/Sunni conflict in Iraq, Syria and Turkey, and has spread throughout the Near- and Middle-East. This has led to massive flows of refugees: over 1.2 million to Lebanon, adding to the 400,000 Palestinians who have been there since the 1970s. Lebanon has many of the characteristics of a State paralyzed by risks of internal conflict and in a state of financial bankruptcy. The absence of administration in fact puts local governance on the front line, where they struggle to face demands from inhabitants whose numbers are at times doubled by an influx of refugees.

This example could easily become generalized in the entire area. Turkey, despite its strong and responsible State, is not entirely sheltered from the imbalances caused by such fluctuating situations.

Based on the Syrian crisis, this study analyzes the responses that local governments can bring to situations which are more and more often beyond the reach of the international community.

This is not a system designed to replace what we already have, but is rather a new parameter to be added to the UN and European intervention systems in crisis situations.

Bertrand Gallet
Director General
Cités Unies France.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABREVIATIONS

AFD – French Agency of Development
AMM – Association of The Mali's Mayors
ODA – Official Development Assistance
APLA – Association of Palestinian Local Authorities
DAC – Development Assistance Committee
CUF – Cités Unies France
UCLG - United Cities and Local Governments
ECHO - European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department
FCM – Federation of Canadian Municipalities
LCP – League of the Cities of the Philippines
FMFA – French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OECD – Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
WHO – World Health Organization
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
UNO – The United Nations Organization
UNDP – The United Nations Development Program
RCDP – French Network of Decentralised Cooperation for Palestine
RRP – Regional Response Plan
EU – European Union
UNCDE – United Nations Capital Development Fond
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VNG international – Netherland Association of Local Authorities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART 1: Mashreq: Overview of a crisis prone region

The Mashreq is composed of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, and Egypt.

These countries are regularly struck by crisis situations. A crisis is defined as the consequence of a major event which has led to profound upheaval, to a change in how a society functions. Depending on the case, this signifies human, material, economic and even environmental losses. Crises are the result of sudden events, the causes of which may vary.

The many crises currently affecting the Mashreq region explain why five out of these six States are currently classified as Fragile States. According to the OECD definition: "States are fragile when governments and state structures lack capacity and/or political will to deliver safety and security, good governance, and poverty reduction to their citizens". Only Jordan remains relatively stable.

The need to address the question of fragile States is linked to the issues they raise:

- The number of fragile States continues to rise despite heightened awareness;
- Crises and fragilities add to and reinforce each other within a vicious circle which it is urgent to end;
- Fragility is easily exported and endangers regional security;
- Fragility comes at a very high price, not only for fragile States but also for any intervening State.

The vectors of fragility in the Mashreq States:

- The linguistic, ethnic, community, cultural and ideological fragmentation of the inhabitants of each State;
- The strategic nature of the region (its geographic position and natural resources);
- Increased penetration of international stakes in the region;
- The Israel-Palestine conflict and its consequences;
- Difficulties faced by the Mashreq States in participating in the world economy.

The Syrian crisis, the causes of which are linked to the above mentioned vectors, has reached a dead-lock, thus becoming a factor of regional destabilization, reinforcing fragilities in the Mashreq:

- The crisis has had terrible consequences for the country and could even lead to the collapse of its territorial integrity;
- Neighboring States face consequences of two types: social and economic tensions have increased in Syria's five neighboring States; Syrian refugees are a drain on State resources and heighten local tensions.

PART 2: Mashreq local authorities on the front line of the crisis

In most cases, the Mashreq States are made up of three territorial levels. Municipalities are the only decentralized entities. However, the forms of decentralization can be more theoretical than real and are not always accompanied by adequate transfers of authority and funds.
Municipalities have to face numerous difficulties which prevent their actions from being effective (governmental oversight, insufficient funding, a lack of clear legal standing, etc.).

One thus sees the emergence of alternatives to the municipal framework:

- Inhabitants falling back on solidarity groups ('asabiyya);
- The creation of neighborhood committees which remain aloof from municipal actions.

Whatever the case, local authorities are on the front line when a crisis breaks out because of their proximity to the grassroots and their electoral legitimacy. Their constituents expect them to take actions and to guide them towards crisis resolution. However, municipalities in fact tend to lose control over their territory and have a hard time carrying out the usual distribution of services, and above all to cover the additional human and financial losses linked to crises.

In the Mashreq, given the enormous difficulties posed by the massive influx of refugees to cities, municipalities are forced to ask for urgent support from the international community, as they can no longer effectively manage their constituents' needs. Competition over access to services rapidly increases tensions in certain territories and can lead to fresh outbreaks of violence.

Major emergency management measures and development programs launched in fragile States by international organizations moreover contribute to marginalizing local authorities:

- In emergency situations: analysis of the United Nations cluster approach highlights how little emergency actors consult with local and national governments. Aid administration, which has been developing alongside preexisting administrations, creates a situation of redundancy, a feeling of opacity, and prevents local authorities and citizens from considering any projects as their own. Local authorities are ignored for fear of corruption, by a lack of knowledge on the role of municipalities and, to be clear, because most international organizations despise politics. Local authorities thus have difficulty in regaining their position overseeing their territories and local reconstruction.

- In development assistance to fragile States: Assessment of the OECD intervention principles insists on the marginalization of local stakeholders. This hinders project effectiveness and sustainability, can go against stated goals and can lead to unequal aid distribution, to bolstering corruption, and are thus sometimes a source of frustrations or tension among the various components of local societies.

In Syria, assistance workers cannot access the (almost non-existent) local authorities, which raises many issues for the transition of town management in the aftermath of crises.

In neighboring States, the United Nations Regional Response Plans (RRPs) only include local authorities at the margins, more as stakeholders to be consulted than as necessary actors in crisis management. On the ground, municipal representatives still note a lack of means, and an urgent need for assistance. In the end, the UNHCR mainly works with competent central authorities, leaving local authorities with no legitimacy and therefore helpless to manage the crisis.

PART 3: The local generalist approach: a new paradigm for intervening in situations of crisis

The new approach laid out by Cités Unies France in this paper on intervening in States which are fragile or in crisis stems from previously established facts and proposes to favor a crisis management process which implicates affected local authorities, with help from the international community.

Local authorities have three major assets which must be recognized and leveraged:

- Proximity which makes it possible to call upon known stakeholders as a first response, to rapidly assess damage and needs, to access the most remote and/or vulnerable constituents, to provide emergency actors with all information necessary to effectively operate, etc.

- Legitimacy which helps make projects implemented by international stakeholders more acceptable, thus ensuring the projects will be adopted at local level, adding to their long-term success.

- A lasting presence guaranteeing project sustainability as local authorities can ensure the transition from emergency to development by guiding new arrivals, and foster greater implication in actions linked to crisis prevention and preparedness.

The main limits to this approach stem from structural weaknesses in the decentralized entities in the Mashreq (autonomization and transfer of competencies are blocked).

Direct support to local authorities makes it possible to overcome these limits and to empower them in the long term. Indeed, direct support, by giving concrete technical and financial means of action to the local authorities, will ultimately structure and consolidate the decentralization process and the local governance.

Local governments and their networks around the world have the means and capacities to ensure this support:

- They have experience in territorial management which can be called upon in times of crisis;
- They have had good results in the field of local participatory governance, which can be called upon to prevent crises and to consolidate social cohesion;
- They have the experience of support to local authorities, namely through decentralized cooperation partnerships.

Local governments have also showed their willingness to invest in all matters linked to humanitarian crises:

- Solidarity has first been shown through donations to NGOs;
- Over the last few years there has been increased demand for more active participation in light of the fact that NGOs have little scope for action to offer local authorities.

Local governments and their networks can support affected local authorities in the short, mid and long term:

- Advocacy towards international organizations has also been organized;
- Financial technical and human resources have been mobilized on the ground in crisis situations;
- They participate in conjoint solidarity initiatives (emergency funds, etc.).

Cités Unies France for example, set up a solidarity fund to support the municipality of Kab Elias in Lebanon. The sums gathered will be used first to purchase waste disposal containers for the municipality to be able to treat surplus waste and second to purchase a water truck to ensure that water is distributed to all components of the society.

PART 4: Proposal for an action protocol for local governments

I. The role of local governments in the pre-crisis (prevention/preparation) phase

In pre-crisis phases, impacted groups supported by local authorities who so wish could play a crucial role in:

- identifying referents in all sectors of public life to be called upon in the event of a crisis;
- assessing territorial risks and vulnerabilities;
- drawing up crisis prevention and preparedness plans based on risk diagnostics;
- centralizing local diagnostics to draft a national risk prevention plan;
- optimizing or creating crisis prevention mechanisms at local level.

II. The role of local governments in the emergency phase

During an emergency phase local authorities can serve as leaders:

- in implementing the crisis response plan, alerting stakeholders, ensuring the public receives updates regularly, assessing and collating assessments of the crisis situation and current needs, contacting potential donors as well as partner municipalities and municipality networks;
- in coordinating emergency aid and serving as guides for the various stakeholders;
- in distributing services to inhabitants in times of crisis by adapting to new contexts and accompanying emergency workers in their tasks.

III. Post-crisis phase (rehabilitation/reconstruction)

Lastly, during post-crisis phases, local authorities can be at the heart of reconstruction:

- by becoming the leaders of the action programs developed on their territories;
- by partaking in the definition and deployment of projects alongside reconstruction stakeholders;
- by ensuring the proper use of monies received, coordination, and monitoring of projects carried out on their territories;
- by bringing local inhabitants on board programs so as to foster local support and project sustainability;
- by assessing the crisis management process in order to optimize it.

Contents

PART 1. THE MASHREQ: OVERVIEW OF A CRISIS PRONE REGION

The first part of our study provides an analysis of the Mashreq region, well known for its recurrent crises which place it among the most conflict prone areas of the world. The most recent dramatic crisis to date, the Syrian crisis, well illustrates the context. Not only does it have a tragic impact on Syria's inhabitants and territory, it also increases the fragility of all other Mashreq States.

I. Defining the concepts: the Mashreq, crises and Fragile States

a) The Mashreq

This term means "place of the rising sun" in Arabic, as opposed to the term Maghreb, which means "place of the setting sun". The Mashreq is considered the East of the Arab world, an area which has not come under influence from Berber. In the most common definition of the term, it comprises States which belong neither to the Maghreb (the area between the Tripoli region and the Atlantic Ocean), nor the Arabian Peninsula (comprising Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait). The term "Mashreq" is sometimes used as a synonym for the Near East, which in this case refers to the five States of the fertile crescent: Irak, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine (Israel being considered a separate entity), as well as to Egypt, because although some do not consider the latter part of the Mashreq, it is not part of the Maghreb nor of the Arabian Peninsula. In this study, it is thus these six States we refer to when using the term Mashreq.

b) Crises: the case of armed conflict

Generally speaking, a crisis is the consequence of a major event which has led to profound upheaval, to a change in how a society functions. Depending on the case, this signifies human, material, economic and even environmental losses. Crises are the result of sudden and brutal events, the causes of which may vary. Some crises are the consequence of natural causes (earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, etc.), sanitary hazards (epidemics, famines, etc.), industrial disasters (factory explosions, chemical spills, nuclear leaks, etc.), others result from major threats to the security of local inhabitants and their social environment (political, social, religious, ethnic, etc. tensions).

In this study we will be looking in particular at a specific type of crisis, i.e. armed conflict and its consequences. A conflict may be defined as "the pursuit of antagonistic and incompatible objectives by two or more individuals or groups. A conflict can be conducted peacefully or by means of force and violence (Lederach, 1997)".[1] More precisely, armed conflict is a "dynamic process of violent confrontation between two or more antagonists. According to international human rights law, there are two types of conflict: international conflicts and conflicts of a non-international nature."[2] International conflict is when disagreements between two states give rise to the intervention of armed forces against one another. A conflict is non-international when hostilities break out between governmental armed forces and armed groups organized within a national territory.

In the 21st century conflicts have changed in nature. There are still ongoing international conflicts in some areas, but their numbers have dropped significantly. Most conflict today is of an intra-state dimension, but nonetheless has repercussions on neighboring states. These conflicts all have their origins, among other factors, in a combination of socio-political tensions fed by a lack of dialog between stakeholders in national life, social injustices, bad governance, religious and ethnic rivalries and intolerances and struggles linked to control over strategic natural resources.

[1] Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (ILO/CRISIS), Prevention and resolution of violent and armed conflicts, Training manual for use by trade union organizations. International Labour Organization (ILO), 2010, p. 2.
[2] Ibid.

Conflict intensity varies over time but mostly follows a similar cycle made up of the same main stages. Before reaching the stage of armed conflict, there is usually a rise in tensions between the various stakeholders. If governments do not bring this phase under control, by taking preventive measures (dialog, consultations, negotiation, mediation), tensions can very rapidly escalate into violent clashes which negatively impact some or all of a country's inhabitants. The crisis then intensifies, with regular or even constant episodes of violence. Conflicts are resolved either through negotiated measures leading to the signing of a peace agreement by the adversaries, or by the victory of one side over the other. Once this phase has been reached, the peace re-establishment process begins, which is then consolidated and in time, if all goes well, leads to a stabilized State and progressive return to development. One should note however that not all conflicts reach the consolidation phase where peace and State building are possible. Moreover, even when some conflicts do reach this stage, fresh outbreaks of violence often rapidly occur. In such cases one speaks of durable crises or grey zones.[3]

The consequences of armed conflict can be multiple and have an adverse effect on individuals and societies, as well as at the socio-economic, political and environmental levels within a given society. In human terms, above and beyond the numerous deaths from armed conflicts every year, they also lead to severe handicaps, and long-term wounds and illnesses. They trigger mass population movements: refugees fleeing to neighboring countries and internally displaced people within countries in crisis. This has many macroeconomic consequences. It often leads to the disruption of economic, trade and financial activities as well as of the labor market (an increase in unemployment and/or underemployment, human and economic flows out of the country, etc.). The lack of resources leads to a decrease in buying power, an increase in poverty and fosters the development of informal and even criminal markets (trafficking in drugs, humans, weapons, etc.). The society as a whole is affected by the destruction of the infrastructure necessary for the delivery of basic services to the inhabitants (food, water, energy, transportation, health, education, etc.). Violence leads people to fall back on traditional support networks such as the family, clan, tribe or ethnic group. Individuals' allegiance to these groups, called 'asabiyya',[4] creates fragmentation within societies, thus reducing the possibility of durable peace processes. At the political level, national and local governance is very often destabilized by conflict. Even when political leaders manage to stay in power, they are weakened. Most of the time, governments are partially or entirely overthrown, thus making institutions even weaker. Conflicts usually also harm the environment, through the destruction of infrastructure, farmlands, etc. as well as through the use of chemical or toxic weapons. All of which slows down development or halts it altogether.

c) Fragile States

In most cases, States in a situation of armed conflict or in the process of conflict resolution are considered fragile States. We will now define this concept and see how international awareness of it has arisen.

The OECD definition notes that "States are fragile when governments and state structures lack capacity and/or political will to deliver safety and security, good governance, and poverty reduction to their citizens".[5]

This concept became mainstream in policy making and development aid vocabulary in the 1990s, with the disintegration of the Somali state following a popular uprising which forced the President Mohammed Siyad Barre to resign. The sharp increase in the number of uprisings and conflicts in Africa (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda) further raised awareness among international public development assistance donors. Previously, assistance had mostly been distributed to "developing countries" which respected the "good governance" criteria established by international donors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Actions carried out in fragile states were considered a waste and very little was done.

[3] Grünewald F., Tessier Laurence, "Zones grises, crises durables, conflits oubliés : les défis humanitaires", RICR, Juin 2001, vol 83, n°842, pp. 323-351, (online: http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/Crises_durables_crises_oubliees.pdf).

[4] According to Ibn Khaldoun, an Arabic philosopher in the Middle Ages, 'assabiyyas are a form of clan solidarity at the tribal level which takes precedence over broader solidarity, at the national level. This solidarity is described as the fundamental link within a human society. They are often considered a form of tribalism or clanism.

[5] OECD definition from 2007. For further details, see the OECD website: http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/statebuildinginfragilestates.htm

Following the September 11th attacks in 2001, the concept of fragile state became a major focus in strategic policy planning for security and development. This change in stance by some States and international agencies can be ascribed to heightened awareness of threats to global security posed by fragile or failed states, which had hitherto been mostly ignored. Such threats are among others caused by population displacement, an increase in the underground economy, the rise of terrorist organizations, epidemic outbreaks, and the impossibility for such States to control social tension and conflict. Given these factors, it has become a priority to intervene to support development and institution- and state-building in situations of softened sovereignty, to treat the root causes of potential threats to the West and more broadly to reduce world insecurity.

Consensus has not yet been reached however as to what defines a Fragile State. State fragility varies with context and can be measured on a "progressive scale ranging from Failing states (...) to States characterized by serious vulnerabilities".[6,7] The concept of Fragile State thus cannot be defined statically: the notion is fuzzy and highly context dependent. In the definition established by the Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency), a distinction is made between two aspects of fragility: a State is said to be fragile when it is in a situation of political and security crisis; it is also said to be fragile when it shows indications of weak governance.[8] It is indeed important to distinguish between the two situations as not all fragile States are in a situation of crisis or conflict. That being said, in most cases the two definitions are linked as States undergoing political and security crises necessarily show weakened governance; they are unable to maintain the security of their citizens or control the various factions present on their territory. Just as States with softened sovereignty will be unable to ensure domestic security and prevent conflicts.

One thus sees that there are several traits which are shared by fragile States:

- ➜ the State is unable to fully perform its sovereign functions, including security (foreign and domestic) and the judiciary;
- ➜ the State has difficulty providing basic services to its citizens (water, transportation, waste management, education, health care, etc.);
- ➜ the State is struggling for economic development and inclusion in a globalized economy (stagnant economy, aging farmers, etc.);
- ➜ the living conditions of citizens deteriorate: high poverty levels, the development of slums and informal accommodation, high unemployment rates, etc.;
- ➜ the States loses its domestic legitimacy;
- ➜ one sees a rise in power of various ethnic or religious groups, whether spawned by conflict or not.

Today the term is widely used and at times occupies a central place in all issues related to emergency aid, development assistance, security, and human rights. International structures and bodies have been set up to specifically address the problem of weak States and the difficulties they present for humanitarian and development assistance. The OECD for example has created a "fragile States group" and the World Bank a "Fragile States Unit" within their Operations Policy and Country Services devoted to "Fragile States, conflict and social development". Their work on the subject has led to classifications which, through various criteria, asses the situations of fragile States and lay out principles for intervention and assistance optimization.

There are several factors which make it increasingly necessary to implement effective and sustainable actions in fragile States.

[6] Brinkerhoff D.W., Johnson R.W., "La décentralisation de la gouvernance dans les États fragiles : les enseignements du cas irakien", *Revue internationale des sciences administratives*, 2009/4, vol.75, p. 646
[7] All quotation translations from the French are by Margaret Dunham.
[8] Castellanet C., Solanel G., Ficatier Y., "Adapter les pratiques opérationnelles des bailleurs dans les États fragile", AFD ex-post, n°31, juin 2010, 87p.

First, despite the heightened interest of the last nearly twenty years, the number of fragile States continues to rise. Denis Bauchard (2011) notes that "the number of fragile States has increased alarmingly, especially in sensitive areas of Africa and the Near East".[9] According to various donor rankings, there are today between 36 and 50 fragile States, which means that over 1.5 billion people are affected (i.e. 20% of world population), as presented in the 2011 estimates of the World Bank.[10] The fragility of these States has a negative impact on development and, according to a OECD report, Fragile States are the farthest away from achieving the Millennium Development Goals.[11]

Furthermore, crises and fragility intertwine and reinforce each other within a vicious cycle. This "spiral of failure"[12] often begins with contested elections, a rise in tension between different factions in society, or natural disasters. Such incidents would probably not have a major impact on States not already showing signs of fragility. However when States are unable to control such incidents they can get mired in them, and possibly collapse when the fragilities worsen and lead to renewed crisis. According to a 2011 World Bank Report, "90% of civil wars witnessed over the last decade occurred in countries which had already undergone civil conflict within the preceding 30 years".[13] This morbid outlook highlights the ineffectiveness of emergency interventions: it is first and foremost the contributing factors to fragility that must be eradicated. To do so, it must be done early, so as to avoid crises. Failing that, States must be given the means to overcome them while also reducing their impact. Crisis prevention appears to be one of the keys to reducing the number of fragile States worldwide in the long term.

Fragility is easily exported and endangers regional security. Ethnic and political tensions cross borders. When States show signs of fragility as in the Sahel and the Near East, successive crises can lead to region-wide chaos. Consequently, weakened areas become fertile breeding grounds for extremist groups, and international intervention is less likely to succeed. Thus above and beyond the challenge of fragile States for development, they are also a threat to global security and the international community.

Finally, fragility comes at a very high price, not only for fragile States but also for any State which intervenes. For States which are fragile or in a situation of open conflict, human costs are colossal: it was estimated in 2008 that 300 million people were affected worldwide.[14] There is also a spill-over effect, not only are victims affected, but such situations also lead to population displacements, a phenomenon which skyrocketed in 2013 with the Syrian conflict. The living conditions of displaced people deteriorate, with very little access to housing, food or health care. Moreover, one observes a considerable gap in poverty levels between crisis-ridden countries and relatively stable ones. Human costs also correlate with material damage and infrastructure loss. It takes States dozens of years and considerable financial outlays to reconstruct a country. Economically, fragility negatively impacts investment, economic growth and job creation. According to an AFD report, "the cost of weak economic policies and institutions for citizens of fragile States (...) is believed to represent a loss of 2.6 percentage points of growth yearly".[15] When accompanied by violence, there can be an additional loss of up to 1.6 percentage points per annum. In total, according to the 2011 World Bank Report, for a middle-sized developing economy, conflict costs 30 years of GDP growth, and trade levels take 20 years to return to their pre-conflict highs. Furthermore, the same report estimates that countries which are making progress in development lose approximately .7% of GDP per neighbor country in conflict,[16] again highlighting the regional nature of crises. The cost of international intervention in fragile States is also very high. This is true for all types of interventions – emergency, humanitarian and/or military as well as long-term development assistance in e.g. State building and peace keeping. Costs are difficult to determine globally, specific examples do nonetheless give some indication of the order of magnitude. The 2011 World Bank Report states that the "naval operation to fight against piracy in the Horn of Africa and Indian Ocean costs (...) between 1.3 and 2 billion USD yearly".[17] In France, on average the cost of external operations (OPEX) is 1 billion EUR yearly, which cost is in addition to the defense budget.

[9] Bauchard D., "Introduction", Politique étrangère, 2011/1 (Printemps), p. 10.
[10] World Bank Report, "2011 Report on world development: conflicts, security and development. Executive summary", April, 2011, p. 2.
[11] OECD, *International Engagement in Fragile States: Can't we do better?*, OECD Publishing, 2011, p. 3.
[12] Michailof S., "Comment sortir de l'ornière les pays "faillis"?" Politique étrangère, 2011/1 (Printemps), p. 32.
[13] World Bank Report, op.cit. p. 2.
[14] Boinet A., Miribel B., "Analyses et propositions sur l'action humanitaire dans les situations de crise et post-crise. Rapport à M. Bernard Kouchner, ministre des affaires Étrangères et Européennes", Mars 2010, p.6.
[15] Castellanet C., Solanel G., Ficatier Y., *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[16] World Bank Report, "2011 Report on world development: conflicts, security and development. Executive summary", 2011, p. 5.
[17] Ibid, p. 15.

One must then add humanitarian aid funding, which in 2013 amounted to over 87 million EUR, distributed to 35 different countries (with two-thirds of the funds going to the Near-East and Africa).[18] 70% of aid, i.e. over 60 million EUR, was earmarked for situations of durable or prolonged crises, yet again emphasizing the costs engendered by fragile States.

II. The fragility of the Mashreq States and drivers of crisis

Most States which are currently fragile and/or in crisis are located in Africa and the Near East, as established in reports by international bodies such as the OECD and the World Bank.19 Five main factors are generally identified to explain why the Mashreq region and the States it comprises are so prone to crises. This region is fragmented, strategic, permeable, mired in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and its inclusion in globalization has a detrimental effect.

a) The Mashreq patchwork[20]

The inhabitants of the Mashreq States are heterogeneous in many ways: linguistically, ethnically, culturally, religiously and ideologically. Alongside Arabic and its many dialects, the most widely spoken language family in the Near East, one also finds languages from other families such as Syriac (Arameic), Turkmenic (Turkick) and Kurdish (Indo-European). These language distinctions make it easier to identify the various ethnic tribes which make up the inhabitants of the Mashreq region. Because although Arabs are the majority, there are many other ethnic minorities living side by side in the six Mashreq States: Jews, Alawites, Kurds, Levantine Christians, Turkmens, Alevis, Druze, Copt, Assyrian, Syriac, etc.[21] The Mashreq is further fragmented into a variety of faiths. In the words of Fabrice Balanche,[22] these "communitarian divisions are an additional driver of conflict". One must remember after all that this region is the historical cradle of the three major monotheistic religions, which still persist there today. Christians are scattered over the six countries and across faiths (Egyptian Copts, Lebanese Maronite Catholics, Orthodox Greek, etc.); Jews have mostly progressively settled in Israel, in most cases after being forced to leave the neighboring Arab States. Moreover, while Islam is the most extensive religion in the Near East, there are nonetheless Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims, each being further subdivided into many different faiths.[23] This Sunni/Shia divide is still very relevant in the Mashreq, which is the buffer zone in the rivalry between the powers on either side for control of the region in terms of faith - Iran for the Shia and Saudi Arabia for the Sunni. This rivalry often translates into physical skirmishes in territories inhabited by both Sunni and Shia, e.g. Iraq, Lebanon and Syria.[24] There are also small religious groups who are impervious to the three main religions, for example the Yazidi in Iraq and the Bahais. Fragmentation is also visible at the cultural level and in terms of lifestyles: the Near Eastern States are composed of various nomadic tribes, Bedouins, Berbers mingling with peasants and city dwellers. Lastly, at the ideological level, there have always been nationalistic divides (pan-Arabism and the push for a great Arab State, autonomy nationalists in various countries with borders drawn artificially by Westerners in the 1920s, inter-state nationalism as with e.g. Kurds in Iraq and Syria).

b) The Mashreq: a strategic region

Geopolitically, the region under study has always had strategic importance, first through its geographic location: it is located at the crossroads between three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa. In consequence, it is a busy trade hub, especially around river deltas and waterway trade routes. Indeed, until 1947, this zone was the British Empire's "route to India".

[18] "Document sur l'aide humanitaire de la France en 2013" distributed during the National Humanitarian Conference on March 31, 2014. Data sources: DGM/DBM, NUOI/H, CDC/MH

[19] See for example the World Bank International Finance Corporation report which assess that "The Middle East and North Africa is home to several fragile and conflict-affected states": http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/4fddea80433adec7bb05ff384c61d9f7/IFC+MENA+Eng+Final.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

[20] See Annexes 1 to 4 for further details on the ethnic and religious divides in the region.

[21] For further details on the ethnic composition of the Near and Middle East, see the maps by Michael Izadi at http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/maps.shtml

[22] Balanche F., "Communautés, fragmentation territoriale et gouvernement au Proche-Orient Arabe (Irak, Syrie, Jordanie et Liban)", *Études interculturelles*, 5/2012, Tome I, p.20.

[23] See Annex 4 on the various Islamic faiths.

[24] For more information on the role played by religion in the Syrian conflict and its consequences for Iraqi and Lebanese societies, see the following section.

Another driver of instability is managing the various resources at the disposal of the States in the region. The Mashreq and more broadly the States of the Near East are overflowing with resources. Energy foremost (gas and oil), but also spices, steel, pewter, phosphate, etc. Control over resource-rich territories as well as distribution of the profits they generate can be a source of tensions among the various components of the society, as in the oil-rich Kirkouk region of Iraq. The struggle for possession of such resources feeds rivalry among neighboring States, as with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.[25] Lastly, alongside oil, a major strategic resource and a concern for State economies and security is control over water resources. This has fast become a major issue in the Mashreq where the resources are very unevenly distributed. Iraq, Syria, and Egypt benefit from considerable hydraulic resources whereas Palestine, Israel, and Jordan are forced to overdraw their water resources. Being a rare resource, water well illustrates how tensions can be exacerbated, such as between Israel and neighboring Arab States.

c) A region under international pressure

As a highly strategic region, the Mashreq has always held the gaze of major powers. Although the region's territories were never colonized contrary to Asian and African territories during the Ottoman Empire, they were nonetheless closely watched and influenced by their alliances with the major powers of the time, namely the United Kingdom and France – with the latter occupying Egypt and part of the Arabian Peninsula so as to keep control over the "India route". Subsequently, following World War I, with the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, the major powers shared the region out, drawing borders and distributing control amongst themselves in the name of Society of Nations mandates, whereby France lost control of Lebanon and Syria and the United Kingdom control of Palestine and Iraq. Even though the territories under mandate progressively gained independence, western interests are still very present in the region and are drivers of conflict. During World War II the allied powers were heavily involved in the region around the Suez Canal and oil fields. The Cold War put an end to British and French sway, the USSR and the United States becoming the two superpowers. Alliances in the region were formed in terms of the rivalry between the two. The USSR strongly backed Arab nationalism, especially in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, while the United States did their utmost to push Russia out to guarantee supplies in oil and protect the newly created State of Israel. Today still, States in the North remain strongly involved in the region. France for example has retained its historical ties to Christians in Lebanon, the United Stated intervened in Iraq in 2003 and toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein, they also maintain military bases in many States, namely in Jordan, and more broadly in the Middle East, e.g. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Their protracted presence has fueled religious radicalism and the attendant acts of terrorism against the "Western enemy" and their "Arab traitor" allies.

d) The Israel-Palestine conflict

Conflicts cross borders and have consequences at the regional level, exacerbating the fragility of surrounding States. It is impossible to mention sources of vulnerability in the Mashreq without mentioning the overarching conflict between Israel and Palestine. For nearly a century, episodes of violence and war have undermined stability, security and peace in the region. Over time, these episodes have forced many thousands of Palestinians into exile, with most finding refuge in neighboring States, mainly Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and to a lesser extent Iraq and Egypt. The flow of refugees has often led to economic and social imbalances, as well as the creation of combatant Palestinian groups, usually in refugee camps. Jordan fiercely repressed these combatants in 1970, during the "Black September",[26] one of the consequences of the Israel-Palestine conflict and a major source of tension and uncertainty for Palestinians in Jordan. Moreover, the influx of Palestinians who came from Jordan to Lebanon was at the origins of the long civil war which tore Lebanon apart between 1975 and 1990. One should also note that defense of the Palestinian cause has often engendered tensions within Arab States, despite the will of Arab peoples to unite against the Israeli occupant (as called for e.g. during the so-called Israel-Arab wars). Egypt for example, the first State to have signed peace agreements with Israel in 1979, was considered a traitor to the Palestinian cause, a puppet of the Americans and was even excluded from the Arab League for ten years.

[25] De Lestrange C., Paillard C-A, Zelenko P., *Géopolitique du pétrole: un nouveau marché, de nouveaux risques, des nouveaux mondes*, Technip, 2005, p. 54.
[26] King Hussein of Jordan launched a brutal repressive attack on the PLO combatants in his kingdom following several attempted coups against him. In 1971 the Palestinian combatants, led by Yasser Arafat, were definitively forced out of Jordan and took refuge in Lebanon.

The length of the conflict and the ineffectiveness of the leaders of the Arab States partially explain the emergence of radical groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, whose goal is to regain possession of all of historical Palestinian territory, goal which they further through terrorist attacks on Israel. These conflict-linked elements have considerably heightened tension and fragility throughout the Mashreq.

e) Difficulties faced by the Mashreq States in participating in the world economy

Recent tensions in the countries of the area and the Arab Springs could also be considered a consequence of these States' inclusion in globalization (progressive dismantling of protectionism, increased direct foreign investment, especially from the Gulf State powers). The metropolization of some Near Eastern cities such as Amman, Beirut and Damascus has contributed to increasing socio-economic inequality, strengthened differences between social groups and territories, which in consequence drives powerful frustrations. Thus globalization can be said to have participated in weakening the States by fragilizing national unity, pushing citizens to turn to authorities they feel closer to. This tendency of communities to withdraw into themselves is widely seen in the globalization process, and serves to resist the creation of a "global village".[27] However this withdrawal weakens countries' unity, heightens socio-economic divides and endangers the stability of society as a whole.

The region is home to many armed conflicts and recurrent tensions which make it more and more vulnerable. In addition to so-called "conventional" wars such as the Gulf wars, or the Arab-Israeli wars, as well as civil wars (namely the 1975-1990 Lebanese war), the Mashreq States have faced a history of highly tense and troubled situations: political and military coups (in Egypt, Syria and Iraq), rises in extremism and attacks, dissidence among various ethnic groups such as the Kurds in Iraq, popular uprisings such as the Palestinian intifadas, or, more recently, the break-ups of the "Arab springs", etc. This unrest has fed historic tensions and is a constant threat to the entire region's stability.

At state level, the Mashreq States are slowly slipping into the official category of fragile States. Iraq, since 2003, and Syria and Egypt since 2013, have joined Lebanon and the Palestine Territories in the long OECD list of fragile States. Today, Jordan alone is not considered a fragile State.[28]

III. The Syrian crisis: A factor in regional destabilization

Mashreq is thus a region both fragile and unstable. Each State is affected by the troubles and crises of its neighbors. In this context, the Syrian crisis which erupted in the spring of 2011 has had, above and beyond the tragic consequences for the inhabitants and territories of Syria, significant consequences for its neighbors.

a) Origins of the crisis

As with most of the Mashreq States, Syria's primary fragility stems from the complex and fragmented make-up of its population. The various Arab elites who have governed Syria over time have never succeeded in establishing true national cohesion. Many were even opposed to the principle of a Nation-State, considered a Western concept, and based their management of public life on infranational identities (clans, religious communities, ethnic groups). In Syrian the Sunni Arabs represent the majority but there are numerous minorities: Alawites, a religious movement linked to Shiism, who represent approximately 15% of inhabitants, Christians approximately 8%, Druze approximately 4% and Seveners close to 1%. In addition to these ethnic-religious fragmentations one must also take into account the Kurdish ethnolinguistic community, at 15%.

[27] For further details on this phenomenon, see for example Fontan J-M, Klein J-L, Tremblay D-G, *Entre la Métropolisation et le Village Global: Les Scènes Territoriales de la reconversion*, Presse Universitaire du Qébec, 1999, 334p.
[28] See the various inserts for an analysis of their fragilities.

When the Al-Assad clan came to power in 1970 by staging a coup, the Baathist leader Hafez Al-Assad implemented a political strategy which consisted of not ostensibly favoring the Alawites and basing his political orientation and legitimacy on socialist ideals and Arab nationalism. He was able to use citizens' ideological convictions but above all, like many, he applied the principle of "divide and rule".[29] Although the Alawite community, which hitherto had been marginalized and despised, acceded to a more comfortable social level, Hafez Al-Assad chose to not give them complete control over Syrian resources and wealth so as not to foster any Sunni uprisings. He chose to guarantee stability by dividing the Sunni majority, doing so by manipulating social fragmentation, especially at local level. The Sunni were then the majority in government and administration, while Alawite continued to occupy key positions, notably in security (army, police, etc.) In sum, power was in the hands of the Assad clan. Historical tensions between the Alawite minority and the Sunni majority have however been exacerbated because of State favoritism in their favor combined with economic difficulties and social inequality.

Secondly, several trends within Syrian society contribute to heightened tensions. When Bachar Al-Assad came to power in 2000 in his father's stead he implemented a different political and economic strategy. Firstly, in economic terms, the Syrian economy was modernized, building on reforms which had already been under way since the 1990s but which accelerated after 2000; this because the business class and new Syrian generations who had till then been ignored by the labor market put pressure on the government. Lastly, the Syrian regime undertook privatization and liberalization measures, more particularly in the banking sector, opening the territory to direct foreign investment. However, despite the reforms it has not been possible to welcome all new arrivals on the labor market, moreover there is increasing discontent because most wealth is distributed to the new upper classes, close to power. Bachar Al-Assad's new political vision led Syria to progressively pull out of peripheral territories, thus neglecting rural inhabitants. While Hafez Al-Assad's agrarian reforms gained loyalty to the regime from rural populations, Bachar Al-Assad's economic liberalization took a different track and implemented strict measures on agriculture, leading to a decrease in agriculture revenues concurrent with a rise in the wealth of the larger cities. A dearth of water resources has fed frustrations. In the north-west above all, farmable land has been reduced by measures implemented to preserve resources, while those close to power are awarded special privileges. Rural life has deteriorated, leading to migration to the periphery of large cities, concentrating extreme poverty in poorer neighborhoods, where the popular uprisings arose. Wealth inequality has increased sharply and has created a break between the inner and outer cities of Syria. In 2010, despite modernizing economic reform, 30% of Syria's population was living below the poverty level.

To finish, like for the other Mashreq States, Syria is not only the victim of internal strife, it is also hit by conflicts in neighboring countries. In 2004 there was a Kurdish uprising to protest the State's neglect of their region, their underdevelopment and to demand autonomy. This movement led to severe repression on the part of the regime, amid indifference on the part of other Syrian citizens, feeding increased resentment. Not forgetting that the Iraq crisis, which began in 2003, led to an influx of thousands of Iraqi refugees, further complicating the make-up of Syrian demographics.

b) How to analyze the Syrian crisis

Over time, all of these elements have led to an unprecedented revolt in the country. In March 2011, Syria joined the ranks of countries undergoing widespread protest movements, of the type which led to the overthrow of the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt. The uprising began in the city Deraa, south of Damascus, in the agricultural region Hauran, which had suffered both from the liberal economic and agricultural policies. Dissent quickly spread to numerous Syrian regions, especially in the poorer quarters of major cities. The protest movements were peaceful to begin with but were immediately severely repressed despite promises of reform, which were simply smokescreens. The opposition movement therefore turned into a lasting armed uprising and then a full-blown civil war. Despite significant progress by the rebels in the beginning of the crisis, the regime has held strong and has regained control over strategic areas of the territory. That being said, for now neither has been able to take decisive control over Syria's main cities and strategic zones. Three years on, violence continues and any outcome to the conflict is increasingly remote.

[29] See the study by Balanche F., "Communautés, fragmentation territoriale et gouvernement au Proche-Orient Arabe (Irak, Syrie, Jordanie et Liban)", op. cit., pp. 28-30 (section "Les minorités en Syrie craignent un scénario à l'irakienne").

Fragility coupled with the country's ethnic and religious fragmentation give insight into the complexity of this crisis since, although the beginning the protest movement, like in other Arab countries, resembled an ideological, social and political protest against the ruling regime, many analysts quickly showed that it was grounded in confessionalization and communitarism.[30] Beyond the fact that the dissident territories house disgruntled lower classes, who have not benefited from economic development, such areas are above all made up of a majority of Sunni Arabs. On the other hand, the Syrian regime is upheld, more or less actively and more or less explicitly, by Syrian minorities: the Alawites, Seveners, Christians and Druze.

Lastly, the penetration of foreign interests from the onset of the crisis have not hastened its resolution. Syria has become a burning geopolitical issue for all regional stakeholders. Iran, Syria's faithful ally from the conflict's start would have everything to lose from the defeat of Bachar Al-Assad and the installation of a Sunni government at its border. Iraq has chosen prudence and to support Bachar Al-Assad because Iraqi territory could be compromised by a Sunni victory. Turkey, a Sunni power in the Near East, is very present at the side of the rebels and favors Sunni power over Iran, but more importantly because it is a way of monitoring the Kurdish population. Lastly, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States actively support the rebels and hope to see the Alawite regime topple in favor of the Sunni. Syria has also become a battle ground between two ideological extremes in the Muslim religion. Secondly, the United States and the European Union see this revolution as a means to weaken Iran, but do not wish to directly confront Russia and China who support the Bachar Al-Assad regime.

c) Syria destroyed

The Syrian civil war has caused the death of nearly 170,000 people and close to nine million Syrians have had to flee the violence, finding refuge elsewhere in Syria or in the bordering countries.[31] Families living in particularly unstable zones such as the city of Damascus, Homs and Deraa have left to settle in calmer rural areas, or in their areas of origin where they may seek refuge from their family, clan or community. The humanitarian situation for Syrians is atrocious, especially in certain neighborhoods besieged by the regime, with emergency and humanitarian help facing extreme difficulty in accessing affected populations.

Beyond human casualties, the war also has disastrous repercussions on the economy. Entire sections of cities have been destroyed and will have to be entirely rebuilt once the conflict is resolved. The UNESCO has indicated that most of the Syrian sites classified among world heritage sites have been hit by bombing and/or looting, with some having been entirely destroyed. The government estimates that destruction amounts to more than $1.5 trillion.[32] If it were to take place today, reconstruction would cost over $75 billion, according to the daily newspaper Al-Watan. In addition to the cost of destruction, the country's economic woes are also linked to international sanctions and the collapse of the country's revenues, i.e. from oil – in most cases the oil fields are in locations controlled by rebels – agriculture and tourism. Because Syrian revenues are close to nill, the country depends on help from its allies, primary among whom is Iran, whose support has been unfailing from the beginning. According to a UN report, Syria's GDP fell from between 35 and 40% between 2011 and 2013.[33] Growth, which was relatively strong in the years 2000 thanks to the reforms implemented by Bachar Al-Assad, has halted, and their currency reserves, which were high before the crisis, have dropped to almost zero, with the country also undergoing a situation of inflation and massive unemployment.

The current situation and forecasts of a durable civil war mean that there is a significant risk of extreme fragmentation of Syria. Territorial divides existed before the crisis, but today, fears are for the integrity of the Syrian territory.[34] The creation of a Syrian Kurdistan remains a possibility. Syria has never been a true Nation State and feelings of infranational belonging within a context of civil war may not hold in a State context.

[30] See among others BALANCHE F., "Géographie de la crise syrienne", *Outre Terre*, n°29, 2011, pp. 437-458; and ASSEBURG M., "Guerre civile en Syrie: conséquences géopolitiques et scénarios possibles", *Annuaire IEmed de la méditerranée*, juin 2013, pp. 18-24.
[31] Hassine J., "Les réfugiés syriens, facteur de déstabilisation régionale", *OrientXXI*, décembre 2013, (online: http://orientxxi.info/magazine/les-refugies-syriens-facteur-de,0445).
[32] AFP, "Syrie: Des destructions à 1500mds$", lefigaro.fr, *septembre 2013* (online: http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-eco/2013/09/03/97002-20130903FILWWW00306-syrie-des-destructions-a-1500-mds.php).
[33] Leonard C., "La déliquescence de l'économie syrienne", *lefigaro.fr*, septembre 2013, (online: http://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/2013/09/05/20002-20130905ARTFIG00355-la-deliquescence-de-l-economie-syrienne.php).
[34] Balanche F., "Géographie de la révolte syrienne", op cit.

Social cohesion has been reduced to rubble and there is every reason to fear that minorities – the foremost being the Alawite community – will the object of repressions and therefore compelled to flee if the Bachar Al-Assad regime were to collapse.

To finish, the Syrian conflict has favored the emergence of armed radical and terrorist groups from both sides as well as in neighboring States, through support from allied States who provide weapons and funding (the Gulf States for Syrian rebels, and Iran and the Syrian regime for radical groups allied with the regime, e.g. the Lebanese Hezbollah).

d) Regional repercussions

The future of the Mashreq and its stability largely depend on the unfolding of the Syrian crisis due to possible contagion from political tensions and pressure caused by the arrival of millions of refugees.

Contagious tensions

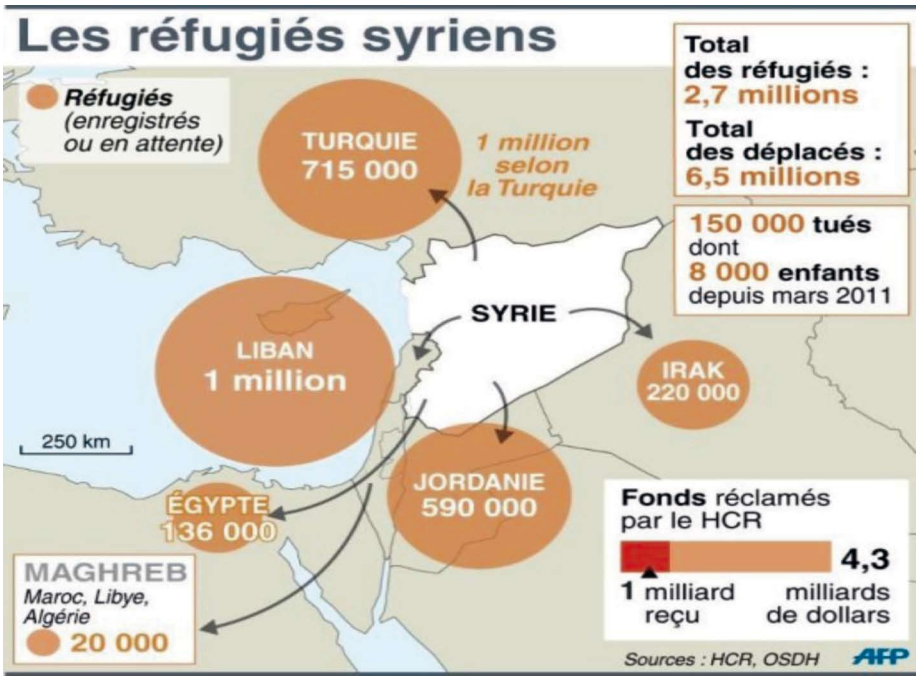
Given its position of dividing line between Sunni and Shia in the Near East, Mashreq is at the heart of the ideological conflict and struggle for control over the region, currently playing out in Syria. This threatens the stability of the entire region, but more importantly reinforces religious tensions, within each State but especially in Lebanon and Iraq. The governments and opposition parties in Iraq and Lebanon have each chosen sides which they openly support (financially, militarily and/or politically). The inhabitants of these two countries are also highly sensitive to the Syrian question, which has become a matter for internal clashes. In Lebanon the governing coalition (coalition of March 8 made up of members from e.g. Hezbollah and Christian minorities) supported the Syrian regime but the coalition of March 14 favored the Syrian opposition. The situation is particularly tense in the north of the country where numerous combatants from the opposition have taken refuge to launch their attacks on the regime. Various militia skirmish in the area and the army is not always in a position to intervene. Lastly, the withdrawal of combatants against the Syrian regime to North Lebanon led the Syrian army to launch attacks at the border on several occasions, in an attempt to push back the opponents. In Iraq, the government has prudently aligned its position on that of Tehran and supports the Syrian regime, whereas Sunni opposition parties support the Syrian opposition, and Iraqi Kurds support the Syrian Kurdish party and its demands for autonomy. Beginning in 2013, Iraq has seen the worst episodes of violence and instability since the end of American occupation. Because of their higher ethnic and religious homogeneity, Egypt and Jordan are less affected politically, and more or less openly support the Sunni rebellion. However in Jordan tensions have arisen over the past few years because the Muslim Brotherhood wishes to have their own Arab spring.[35] Moreover the Syrian conflict has dangerously weakened the economies of the States in the region. This is particularly true in Lebanon where growth slowed in 2012 because of the collapse of tourism and the conflicts in North Lebanon. The Mashreq States all face these problems which risk reinforcing social and economic divides – and consequently social tensions – within these unstable countries.

The refugee crisis

At the end of June, 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees assessed the total number of Syrian refugees in bordering countries at over 3 million.[36] In Lebanon, more than one million refugees have been registered by the UNHCR, nearly 600,000 in Jordan, approximately 220,000 in Iraq and 130,000 in Egypt. Iraq is the only State to have closed its border with Syria, to avoid the influx of thousands of refugees, however the Kurdish region has welcomed Syrian citizens, mostly Kurds, in the name of ethnic solidarity. Syrian refugees have almost always been welcomed in decent conditions, however the prolongation of the crisis and the rising flow of people to the cities of the Mashreq considerably complicate the situation.

[35] Balanche F., "La crise syrienne et le Proche-Orient", Gremmo, 2013.
[36] UNHCR, *2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6)* – Strategic Overview, 2014, p.1. (Online: http://www.unhcr.org/52b170e49.html)

A legal vacuum on the question of refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq imperils the safety of these vulnerable populations. These States have not signed the Geneva Convention of 1951 on the status of refugees. Officially they are considered guests and have no legal protection. In addition, arbitrary arrests, detentions and deportation, coupled with an increase in the number of refugees are observed. In some States, e.g. Lebanon and Jordan, refugees are not authorized to circulate freely, and in Jordan are forced to remain in the camps. One must also mention that many refugees, out of fear or ignorance of their rights, do not make their presence known to the UNHCR, even though that is the only way to access humanitarian aid. Lastly, Palestinian refugees fleeing Syria are in a very precarious situation, e.g. are no longer able to leave Lebanon.



With time, refugees have become a major exacerbating factor in the fragile social and economic situations in the Mashreq States.[37] Their unprecedented number has overextended capacity for the States and for international aid. It has become highly difficult for them to access basic services such as water, electricity, housing, employment, and health and education services. This is true both for refugees in host communities and in camps. Local authorities and international humanitarian workers are struggling to distribute comprehensive assistance to all of these populations affected by the crisis. Organizations are thus forced to set priorities in their aid to refugees, thereby increasing frustration in local communities. This leads to social tensions and there have been outbreaks of violence, especially in Jordan and Lebanon. The Syrians are accused of being responsible for the economic and social woes of their host countries. Since the beginning of 2013, the various stakeholders (public authorities, international agencies and inhabitants) have come to the realization that the refugee situation will certainly be a lasting one. This poses the risk of deterioration in the refugees' living conditions but also in those of the host communities, increasing the likelihood of conflict outbreaks. Syrian refugees are progressively becoming a political problem for governments, whose stability and legitimacy are called into question. In Jordan at the end of 2012 there were protests accusing the King of corruption, especially because of his ties to West Bank tribes. This pushes regimes, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, to threaten the international community with closure of their borders to protect their countries' stability if aid to refugees and their host countries does not increase significantly.

In Lebanon the government has refused to create any camps: after their experiences with Palestinian refugees, they fear that the Syrians will remain indefinitely, thereby imperiling the religious balance. This has led refugees to seek community protection, reinforcing polarization of the conflict, as shown by outbreaks of violence in North Lebanon amongst the various factions.

[37] Hassine J., "Les réfugiés syriens, facteur de déstabilisation régionale. Turquie, Jordanie, Liban", op. cit.

Egypt is a special case. The country signed the 1951 Geneva Convention and thus, in accordance with international law, must protect refugees on its territory. However, although for the first two years of the conflict, Egypt was able to integrate the Syrian refugees without difficulty, the situation rapidly deteriorated due to social and economic factors. There were numerous social and political protests for more rights and better living conditions, and Egyptians began accusing Syrians of accepting meager salaries, undermining Egyptian wage demands. When the elected President Mohammed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood was removed from power by the army, Syrians were even accused of fighting for the Muslim Brotherhood and increasing social chaos. Since then, General Sisi has been in power and has made it mandatory for Syrians to obtain a visa to enter Egyptian territory and there have been many arrests and deportations, worsening their extreme vulnerability.

Over time, refugees have thus become a new driver of fragility in the Mashreq States. In this framework, the local authorities in these States are on the front line and must face huge difficulties to meet the needs both of their constituents and of the new arrivals. And yet the international aid community tends to marginalize local governments and to ignore the help they could provide in meeting the crisis.

PART 2. LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE MASHREQ, ON THE FRONT LINE OF THE CRISIS AND YET MARGINALIZED BY THE SYSTEM

The Syrian crisis is strongly affecting the Mashreq States, because of its scope but also because of preexisting instability. What are the consequences for local authorities who moreover are being ignored by the international aid community?

I. Local authorities in the Mashreq: what they can and must do

a) Local authorities in the Mashreq and their capabilities

While each State has its own territorial and administrative organization, there are local authorities everywhere, whether de facto or de jure, and regardless of their administrative status (deconcentrated, decentralized and at times even informal). In the Mashreq, "municipalities are relatively longstanding institutions as they were introduced in the mid 19th century at the time of the modernization of the Ottoman Empire."[38] They were further reinforced during colonial times and continued well after, at independence. For the past ten years or so the States of the Near East have been attempting to consolidate the jurisdiction and prerogatives of these decentralized entities, namely by holding mayoral elections in Palestine and Jordan, or by announcing reforms at the decentralized level. And yet, in this region, only the Syrian and Lebanese constitutions mention the principle of local autonomy for municipalities. In addition to the municipal level, in most Mashreq States one also finds two intermediate levels, governorates and districts. At these two levels, governors are appointed by and accountable to the State. As noted in the First Global Report by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), decentralization in the Mashrek is hardly more than an administrative term and is not accompanied by the necessary economic and fiscal devolution. Worse yet, in 2008 the report notes "a broader trend (...) toward the gradual confiscation of local authority by central governments".[39]

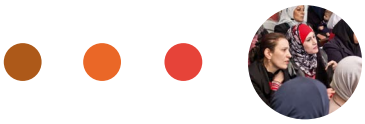
[38] Beckouche P. "Gouvernance et territoire dans les pays arabes méditerranéens", *Maghreb, Mashrek*, 2011/2, n°208, p. 95.
[39] Marcou G. (dir.), *Decentrailzation and local democracy in the world: first global report by United Cities and Local Governments*, 2008, p. 203.

Administrative organization in the Mashreq States

Country	Population/area	Political regime	Federal entities or autonomous regions	Second tier	Local level
Iraq	pop. 26.5M 438,320 km² per capita GDP 928 USD	Parliamentary Republic	Kurdistan	Region/Governorate/District	Municipalities
Jordan	pop. 5.4.M 88,800 km² per capita GDP 2,500 USD	Constitutional Monarchy		Governorate (12)	Municipalities (99)
Lebanon	pop. 3.6M 10,452 km² per capita GDP 6,180 USD	Parliamentary Republic		Region (6), department	Municipalities (930)
Palestine	pop. 3.5M 5,842 km² (West Bank + 365 km² (Gaza Strip))	"Palestinian Authority"		Governorate (14)	Municipalities (74: 63 in the West Bank and 11 in the Gaza Strip)
Syria	pop. 19.M 185,180 km² per capita GDP 1,380 USD	Authoritarian Presidential Republic		Department (14)	Town (107) Small town (248) Village (207)
Egypt	pop. 86M 1,001,449 km² per capita GDP 6,700 USD	Republic (interim government)		Governorates (28) Districts	Cities neighborhoods Villages

Source: World Bank Data from the UCLG report, Marcou G. (dir.), *Decentralization and local democracy in the world: first global report by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)*, 2008, p. 209.

Municipalities in the Mashreq States theoretically have jurisdiction over relatively important sectors. The sectors established in various legal texts range from street cleaning, maintenance of public buildings and pipe networks to health, education, sports, transportation or waste disposal. In practice, because of mistrust and state control (over administration, budgets and taxes) as well as jurisdictions overlapping with those of central power or private interests – the Mashreq States sometimes implement partnerships with the private sector for the distribution of various territorial services such as water and electricity municipalities only have very basic jurisdiction, such as over cleaning and maintaining public spaces, garbage collection, maintaining public infrastructure, waste water disposal and public lighting. In the water sector for example, with the exception of Palestine, Mashreq municipalities are only responsible for maintenance and infrastructure. All planning and water distribution is carried out by the central authorities. Municipalities must also plan for their needs and determine local tax rates, in close collaboration with central administrations which retain control over more important decisions and closely monitor all municipality actions. Although jurisdiction over urban transportation is shared by central and local administrations, national oversight leaves very little room for manoeuvre at local level for designing transportation systems. The central level can also decide to take away jurisdiction if deemed necessary. Thus in 1995 the reform of Jordan's law on municipalities led to the withdrawal of 13 of their 39 theoretical areas of jurisdiction. In Lebanon, local authorities lost certain jurisdictions in favor of private businesses without their consent, in fact without even having been consulted. Municipalities have even lost jurisdiction over civil registers, given over to the *mokhtars*, or village chiefs, elected by direct universal suffrage but, like municipalities, having



in fact very few responsibilities, most power being in the hands of administrations under control of the central power. In the States, most theoretical municipal jurisdictions are in fact held by the central authority, through the various ministries involved. Moreover, even when jurisdiction is supposed to exist, local autonomy is hampered by control from central authorities, both before and after decision making.

In Palestine, given the complex administrative situation (division into three administrative zones, A, B and C) municipalities have more autonomy. In this context, local authorities have jurisdiction over urban planning in their territories, public infrastructure works, economic development, garbage collection and disposal as well as waste water management. Iraq is another special case as the post-conflict constitution has established a semi-autonomous region, the Kurdistan Regional Government, which has its own constitution, its own ministers and its own parliament. In contrast to the other Mashreq States, in all Iraqi governorates, districts and sub-districts, municipal councils are elected.[40]

b) Entities facing multiple difficulties

Alongside the tradition of centralizing in most of these States, other factors also hamper municipal action in the Mashreq. Local authorities are under supervision from governments who often perceive them as factors of risk to national unity. Therefore all local decisions are carefully examined by central powers, either the tutelary ministry or local deconcentrated authorities (the governor, the *wali*, etc.) Furthermore, insufficient funding for municipalities makes it difficult to empower them with the necessary capacities and skills to meet the needs of citizens, especially in the distribution of public services, which compromises their effectiveness and their legitimacy. The lack of municipal revenues for basic service management also stems from the absence of a national authority to set local tax and service rates. This lack of resources is also due to governments' reticence to transfer the funds necessary to carry out local missions as well as a gap between service rates for users and the real cost of these services, covered by government subsidies.[41] Municipalities have barely enough funds for their payroll and to provide daily services to their citizens. Most major public infrastructure works are financed by outside donors such as the World Bank. However such donors only fund the cost of capital, leaving maintenance at the charge of municipalities, which are often unable to meet them through a dearth in financial resources. In the entire region, there is legal uncertainty as to sharing responsibility between the State and local authorities which favors central power, only leaving minor functions in the hands of local authorities. Moreover, numerous stakeholders have noted insufficient numbers of local employees and an absence of training.

The difficulties faced by municipalities lead to unequal access to public services. Public transportation for example usually functions well in urban areas but provides little service, if any, to rural areas. The lack of public infrastructure for water and solid waste management mean insufficient services and an increasing state of disrepair. Because of urban sprawling, more and more people live in slums and there is no upkeep of public spaces. Moreover, unchecked urbanization makes territories more vulnerable in case of a natural disaster (earthquakes, rising sea levels, etc.) Local and national elected officials are aware of these challenges and wish to draft emergency plans. Unfortunately, such plans must be tested at local level to know whether they can be useful in other such situations, i.e. shared with other municipalities, but local authorities have neither the funds nor the administrative approval to carry out this mission.

c) Alternatives to the municipal framework

Where local government exists, it is limited by the actions of the central authority. Municipalities are very little involved in major territorial development projects and their theoretical powers are in fact in the hands of the State or other stakeholders linked to each State's specific ethnic and religious organization. Nonetheless, one does see alternative systems develop. The State shows a tendency both to limit the actions of local authorities and to focus on sovereign functions. This leaves a leadership void for some prerogatives, which are then seized by traditional leaders for the benefit of their own ethnic and/or religious community.[42]

[40] For more information on municipality responsibilities in the Middle East, see the UCLG *Third global report on decentralization and local democracy, GOLD III, Basic services for all in an urbanizing world, chapter 7, Middle East and West Asia.*

[41] UCLG, *Third global report on decentralization and local democracy, GOLD III, Basic services for all in an urbanizing world, chapter 7, Middle East and West Asia.*

[42] Ferro J., "De la colonisation à l'indépendance: l'État autoritaire, instrument de l'unité nationale", *wikiterritorial.cnfpt*, mars 2014, (online: http://www.wikiterritorial.cnfpt.fr/xwiki/wiki/econnaissances/view/Notions-Cles/LesmutationspolitiquesetadministrativesdelEtatarabemoderne MarocAlgerieTunisieLibyeEgyptePalestineJordanieLiban)

P. Beckouche speaks of an informal decentralized system where traditional leaders take over prerogatives generally held by municipalities to distribute services to more or less broad communities.[43] Citizens tend to trust their own solidarity group – called *'assabiyya'* by Ibn Khaldoun – especially in periods of insecurity. These groups "founded on personal relations (...) and whose goal is precisely this solidarity and not justifying the group's creation"[44] are sometimes simply constituted of lineages linked by intermarriages or by larger groups, determined by religious or ethnic affiliation. The leaders of these groups can at times become involved in the State political and social apparatus to meet the needs of their group, thereby strengthening their legitimacy. This phenomenon of withdrawal into one's group is quite frequent in local organization in the Mashreq States, and can work relatively well when they provide access to basic services such as water, electricity, employment, housing, etc. This ethnic, clannic or communitarian level is not ideal but is nonetheless necessary when States are fragile and there is no one else in a position to meet citizens' needs.

To overcome these hurdles, some local authorities in Lebanon and Palestine have decided to pool resources. In Palestine namely, the Joint Service Councils were set up by the Ministry of local governments with the goal of creating shared administrative structures. The objective of these councils was to play a wider role in managing local affairs. However, the larger Palestinian cities fear losing their prerogatives, which severely limits scope for action. In Lebanon, the actions of the Joint Service Councils have been discontinued for lack of State funds.

Lastly, in Iraq and Palestine neighborhood councils and committees have taken on some prerogatives under the theoretical responsibility of municipalities (garbage collection in Palestine and food distribution in Iraq, for example). Their effectiveness is once again hampered by a lack of financial resources.

II. Local authorities on the front line of crises

a) Local authorities in overwhelming situations

Whatever the territorial administration, local actors, put in place by formal or informal decentralization, are at the forefront when a crisis erupts because this always effects the functioning of local administration. It is indeed up to mayors, elected officials and legitimate stakeholders from the community to provide emergency aid, since they are present, know the city, the territory and its inhabitants, and are, on most cases, the legitimate actors in the eyes of inhabitants to whom they are known. Whatever the size of the territory where a crisis erupts, inhabitants tend to turn to local political leaders, closer to them. In a crisis, people expect their legitimate representatives to implement all necessary measures to keep them informed, reassured, supported, and to guarantee continuation of a relatively normal life, namely by providing the usual social and economic services, and to guide reconstruction.

In most cases, municipal actors are faced with structural obstacles which impede their actions. When a crisis erupts, municipalities tend to lose control over their territory and it becomes hard to respond to the needs of inhabitants and to carry out the usual distribution of services, and above all to cover the additional human and financial losses linked to the crisis. Crises directly affect the working conditions of local elected officials and technicians, highlighting the lack of means at their disposal and, as a result, prevent them from meeting the needs of their charges.

Local authorities are thus in a particularly complex position. As stakeholders in their territory, they are on the front line when a crisis erupts, of which the first effect is shock, and which can lead to the breakdown of society's usual functions. However, despite the difficulties linked to scarcity of funds, local elected officials are seen as the only political representatives, whose mission is to manage the crisis as best as possible for their constituents.

[43] See the text by Beckouche P., Op. cit.
[44] Roy O., "Groupes de solidarité au Moyen-Orient et en Asie centrale. États, territoires et réseaux", *Les cahiers du Ceri*, n°16, 1996, p. 8.

During the Gaza crisis following the Israeli operation "Summer Rains" in 2006, the economic and political asphyxia of Palestine was complete, and civil infrastructure had been entirely destroyed (bridges, a power plant, water infrastructure). Israel stopped transferring tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority. Citizens were deprived of all basic services. The 150,000 civil servants of the Palestinian National Authority had not been paid since March 2006, nor had the municipal civil servants. Many Town Halls were in a situation of bankruptcy and risked having to shut down. In sum, Palestine's entire administrative fabric was on the point of disappearing. Municipalities, deprived of their financial resources and struggling to ensure services to their constituents, had to launch an appeal to the international community through the APLA (Association of Palestinian Local Authorities).

b) Impact of the Syrian crisis on the Mashreq municipalities

The influx of Syrian refugees did indeed fragilize the States in the region, but it had above all local consequences. Municipalities managing services such as waste disposal and maintaining public spaces experienced a very rapid population rise. When municipalities struggle it has a negative impact on both constituents and refugees. The inhabitants complain to their local elected officials or traditional leaders who, despite the best will in the world, have no means to slow the rising tide of discontent among their constituents. The powerlessness of local stakeholders leads to high frustration in the territories hit by the crisis and to the increased "delegitimacy" of local leaders, weak even before the conflict. This reinforces social instability because when a population no longer believes in the legitimacy and effectiveness of their local and/or national political representatives they withdraw into themselves and become highly vulnerable.

In the case of Syria, although some urban governance mechanisms were proven to be resilient, most municipalities are struggling to ensure basic services. Some municipalities have even ceased working because of the war. Their authority is hampered by the conflict, with all or part of infrastructure destroyed, and members of their personnel are war casualties or fleeing to neighboring countries, in addition to a sudden drop in revenues.

This situation has placed a heavy burden on host municipalities in the Mashreq countries. In some cases the number of inhabitants has doubled, leading to a sharp rise in the cost of local public services. The effects on health care, water and hygiene services, waste disposal, education and security are catastrophic. Local authorities need emergency aid to be able to carry out their duties. Although ONGs are very active in the region, they are not a substitute for the responsibilities and actions usually in the hands of the local authorities. The latter must be supported to allow them to retain control over their territories and guarantee social stability. A study carried out by UCLG in municipalities affected by the influx of Syrian refugees[45] reveals that the situation is indeed dire, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan. The ever increasing presence of refugees in these States is a drain on already rare resources such as water, electricity, employment and health and education services. Although the refugees have been reasonably well taken in by the Lebanese and Jordanians, there are high tensions around the refugee camps in Jordan and in the areas of Lebanon bordering Syria, where the number of refugees is very high. The municipalities encountered during an UCLG mission voiced an urgent need for help in facing the crisis, despite assistance from the UNHCR, and called upon the solidarity of their peers from around the world and in the international community more broadly to help them overcome this overwhelming crisis.

In Lebanon, the government has refused all refugee camps. Competition is fierce in the cities and villages over jobs, education for children and access to health care. For example, the mayor of Kab Elias, in the Bekaa region, voiced urgent needs in various areas of daily life: the water distribution network does not cover the areas where the refugees have settled; waste disposal management is failing, adversely affecting health; the power grid is insufficient and power outages are a regular occurrence; police forces struggle to keep rising tensions in check. The Lebanese State is bankrupt and unable to meet needs. Local officials appear to be left to their own devices, despite humanitarian assistance.

[45] For more information on the UCLG mission, see the mission report on the Cités Unies France website: Giovetti S., "Compte rendu de la mission de cadrage et de solidarité envers les collectivités accueillant des réfugiés syriens", Cités Unies France, avril 2013, (online: http://www.cites-unies-france.org/spip.php?article1772)

In Jordan, the situation is similar for refugees having settled in host communities, and is also deteriorating in the camps set up by the government and the UNHCR. The number of refugees swells every day. At municipal level, elected officials have set priorities for crisis management within their territories. Water availability has become a serious problem in need of urgent technical assistance. Health and sanitary services are insufficient in a large number of municipalities. Waste collection entails additional trucks and compressors to meet the needs of incoming populations. Schools do not have enough room and have to stack class time in two parts to meet the needs of more students – especially as Syrian school programs are different from those of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Lastly, host communities are also in urgent need of material and psychological support because the situation could easily lead to major tensions. A report by the REACH organization shows that municipalities appear currently unable to fulfill their duties and provide necessary services (especially waste management and road upkeep) and this erodes the trust citizens have in their local representatives, thereby threatening social cohesion. The REACH survey reveals that most communities in Jordan have a very poor opinion of their municipalities and believe that they were more effective before the arrival of the Syrians.[46] Local elected officials in these two States have called upon solidarity from the international community for direct help in facing the crisis.

In Iraq, the difficulties faced by municipalities seem to be relatively less serious, that is until the recent clashes between Shia and Sunni. Iraq took in fewer refugees as the government quickly shut its borders. Most of the refugees are Syrian Kurds who fled to Iraqi Kurdistan and are cared for by the UNHCR and regional Kurdish authorities. One camp has been built in the region but most refugees are hosted by the Kurdish community. The authorities have nonetheless voiced needs for medicines and equipment to provide water, electricity and housing to the refugees.

In Egypt, the rapid increase in population size has also triggered tensions. Access to employment has become a major issue, especially as Syrians tend to accept lower salaries and poorer working conditions. In turn, the tense social and economic situation in Egypt has worsened living conditions for the Syrian refugees. The last two years have seen spikes in inflation and prices, limiting access to resources such as food and housing both for the new arrivals and for the most vulnerable Egyptians. These difficulties are felt above all at a local level.

The Mashreq municipalities, their only decentralized level, are responsible for overcoming the consequences of the crises. But they do not have the necessary resources to do so and to preserve their legitimacy for their constituents. In the case of the Syrian crisis and more broadly in most crises where outside intervention is necessary, despite noting their vulnerability and serious need for help, local authorities are marginalized by international emergency assistance providers, be they United Nations agencies or NGOs.

III. The marginalization of local actors in crisis management

Most generally distinguish between two types of intervention on the part of the international community in fragile or conflict ridden States: emergency aid or humanitarian actions on one hand, and development assistance on the other. In fact, the classic cycle of emergency interventions can be summed up as follows: "prevention / (humanitarian) relief / rehabilitation / development"

a) Emergency aid

Emergency aid is immediately deployed following the outbreak of a crisis and attempts to meet the assistance needs of individuals affected in the short term. In the terms of the OECD, intervening during a crisis can be equated, for emergency stakeholders, with "complex emergencies".[47]

[46] REACH, Understanding social cohesion & resilience in Jordanian host communities. Assessment report, April 2014, 44p.
[47] Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies*, Evaluation and aid effectiveness, OECD, 1999, 30 p. Online at: http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2667294.pdf

This concept was developed in the 1980s in reaction to the Mozambique situation to be used "as a way of differentiating those situations where armed conflict and political instability are the principal causes of humanitarian needs from those where natural hazards are the principal cause of such needs."[48] Various types of stakeholders intervene in complex emergencies. When they exist and function, emergency intervention is carried out by national relief and rescue organizations (army, civil security organizations, local chapters of the Red Cross or Red Crescent and local NGOs). This assistance is carried out with the help of international NGOs, UN agencies, etc.. Most stakeholders are financially supported by donor organizations (public or private donors, whether at State level or not, bilateral or multilateral). At times, alongside humanitarian personnel, complex emergencies may also call for military intervention (coordinated internationally, regionally, mandated by the UN Security Council or regional organizations). Lastly, all stakeholders are supposed to be working in tight coordination with the government affected by the crisis if it is still operational.

The world of humanitarian aid is constantly assessing its actions, the challenges faced and the means to improve effectiveness. Review reports are full of the numerous challenges faced on a daily basis.[49] Among these challenges, coordination has long been the most important. The cluster approach, i.e. sectorial coordination, was set up in 2005 to reform the system of humanitarian aid, but failed to do so. In the UN definition, "Clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g. water, health and logistics."[50] However their assessment reveals that clusters too often fail to interact with national and local stakeholders, and encounter difficulties when they need to coordinate with local structures in the country of intervention.[51] Clusters are above all implemented to facilitate relations among the various international stakeholders, and neglect national and local authorities in the process. This may be explained by insufficient analysis of the intervention context and a lack of knowledge on existing local capacities. As a result, the national and local levels have difficulties appropriating the mechanisms and action plans elaborated for their territory, which negatively impacts the results and sustainability of interventions. The difficult coordination between international and local stakeholders often has negative consequences on the effectiveness and efficiency of responses and reconstruction. Aid administration, which develops in parallel to preexisting administrations, creates a situation of redundancy, a feeling of opacity, and prevents citizens from considering projects their own. Lastly, according to François Grünewald, Director General of the Group URD Urgence-Réhabilitation-Développement, a better approach would be strategic inter-sector coordination overseen by the relevant municipal authorities – with help from emergency actors when needed – instead of the sector-by-sector strategy implemented by clusters. Local authorities can be key for conflict resolution, but are ignored for fear of corruption, a lack of knowledge as to the role of municipalities and, to be clear, because most international organizations despise politics.[52] For many observers, clusters have become a permanent fixture and have progressively turned into veritable United Nations agencies, with all the inertia and expenses that entails. In sum, some problems which are specific to municipalities such as getting civil services functioning once again or managing waste disposal, are not properly taken care of, which fragilizes the long term results of the country's reconstruction; and many municipalities voice their discontent with the actions of international stakeholders who make decisions and implement actions on their territory, usually without their consent, and at times without even consulting them. Thus the local authorities are left to fend for themselves once the international organizations have left, and struggle to regain control over their territories and over local reconstruction efforts.

b) Development assistance in Fragile States

Development assistance is a broad concept involving a large number of different stakeholders and projects. Development assistance donors abound: States, private stakeholders (corporations and foundations), UN agencies, international institutions, NGOs, etc.. Development assistance may take the form of simple funding provided by a donor to a developing State, or can consist, for the donor or organization managing the funds, in implementing projects for development, with stakeholders from the concerned State. Emergency aid is sometimes considered development assistance and at times, in the field, both types of aid are used at the same time in a complementary fashion.

[48] Ibid, p. 6.
[49] See for example Boinet A., Miribel B., *Analyses et propositions sur l'action humanitaire dans les situations de crise et post-crise*, Rapport à M. Bernard Kouchner, ministre des affaires Étrangères et Européennes, Op. cit.
[50] OCHA, "OCHA On Message: The Cluster Approach", May 2012, p. 1.
[51] Group URD, GPPI, "Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 Synthesis Report", April 2010, 161 p.
[52] Grunewald F. (dir), Humanitarian aid in urban settings: current practice and future challenges, report of the URD Group, p.28-29.

And yet they are different in that whereas emergency aid is only deployed for a short time span, in a context of crisis, to provide emergency relief to affected populations, development assistance is deployed over a longer time span and aims to contribute to the country's economic rehabilitation. Development aid actions are often implemented with political authorities or civil society representatives. In 2007, the OECD Development Assistance Committee established Ten Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations.[53] A 2011 OECD report reveals that none of these ten principals are optimally applied in States classified as fragile. Many of the shortcomings noted in the report are linked to the marginalization of local actors. Programs implemented by development actors do not sufficiently take into account the context and reality on the ground. Context analyses are often poor and local actors are not asked for input. When the context analysis does exist, it is not well integrated in development plans, which then lack coherence. The report notes that Statebuilding efforts happen at the central level with limited support from decentralized administrations. The lack of engagement with non-State actors and legitimate local actors hampers reinforcement of the State/society link – which happens through dialog among the various components of society – and hampers reinforcement of political institutions' legitimacy in general. Although international actors have grasped the importance of local priorities, they only apply this principle at the level of national strategies and very little at international level. All of which is linked to a lack of clear decentrailzation strategies by States, preventing local authorities from fully playing their role. Marginalization of these actors is very clear when development assistance coordination is assessed. Central State instances are supposed to oversee coordination but have difficulty doing so. The usefulness of local authorities in terms of coordination are neither recognized nor used. This hinders project effectiveness and sustainability, can impede stated goals and can lead to unequal aid distribution, to increased corruption, etc.. Interventions are thus sometimes a source of frustrations or tension among the various components of the society who feel "forgotten" or discriminated against by the aid programs. Moreover, State weakness in coordination coupled with marginalization of local actors favors the creation of parallel entities – neighborhood committees, local associations, etc. – to implement projects, often managed by NGOs or United Nations agencies. This makes it harder for local populations to feel that projects belong to them. The risk is that projects may have to be stopped if local authorities are unable to accommodate them. Furthermore, parallel networks sap the legitimacy of political instances as citizens have the impression that development comes solely from without. Beyond marginalization of local authorities in development assistance distribution, the report highlights numerous challenges for development stakeholders such as the need to better foresee the impacts of operations on the ground, implementing crisis risk analysis and prevention mechanisms, and improving coordination among humanitarian and/or security actions with development actions.[54]

Lastly, in two cases – emergency relief and development assistance – it is important to note that international donors fund, in the majority of cases, their own operators (international NGOs, UN agencies, etc.). As a result, most of the sums engaged do not remain in the country hit by the crisis.

In other words, humanitarian actions are undertaken in the short term and target individuals whereas development actions are supposed to unfold over the long term and to support central powers. The intermediate tiers, local authorities and civil society actors, are little involved and are not the main recipients of the sums committed by aid donors. In addition, actions implemented can have negative impacts on the capacity of local actors to take over reconstruction of their territory once the crisis past, which, in fine, weakens their legitimacy.

c) Emergency aid to Syria

In the case of the Syrian crisis, one must distinguish between emergency interventions in a particularly tense context preventing implementation of effective actions, and longer term intervention from humanitarian and development aid actors to provide assistance to refugee populations and support to States which must bear this additional burden.

[53] Take context as the starting point; do no harm; focus on statebuilding as the central objective; prioritize prevention; recognize the links between political, security and development objectives; promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies; align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts; agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors; act fast... but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance; avoid pockets of exclusion. For further details: OECD, *International Engagement in Fragile States: Can't we do better?*, Op. Cit., 62 p.

[54] For further details, see the above-mentioned OECD document that gives a point-by-point breakdown of all of the flaws in development assistance to fragile States.

Humanitarian aid in Syria is hampered by the authorities who have forbidden ONGs any access to the people and by an extremely dangerous security context. When organizations are present despite the very difficult working conditions they often struggle to gain access to the wounded to treat or evacuate them. NGOs must negotiate with the various authorities on the ground for each action and for all travel. The particularly tense context and the complete collapse of many Syrian municipalities explain why, in this case, national and international emergency organizations target citizens directly, without going through local authorities. They are thus the ones attempting to repair water and electricity infrastructure, and to provide inhabitants with water, food, temporary lodging, emergency health care, etc. Moreover, the conflict has completely divided cities into various factions or armed groups fighting for control over them. Humanitarian organizations must thus interact with these stakeholders to ensure the services traditionally performed by municipalities. This does however raise the question of the transition of city management once the conflict is over. Today, Syrian municipalities have almost no power over their territory, or no longer exist. Local authority will have to be quickly restored to pilot the country's reconstruction.

d) International aid and the refugee question

In the countries bordering Syria, national and regional response plans to face the difficulties linked to the presence of refugees have been drawn up every year since the outbreak of the conflict by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR is a particularly important stakeholder carrying out actions in the refugee camps in Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, as well as in the host communities, to meet the needs of the refugee populations.

In the first Regional Response Plans (RRP) drawn up by United Nations agencies and major international NGOs, local authorities were included neither in the response planning nor in budgetary decisions. With one exception: the plan for Lebanon planned for "community support programs" supposed to support local communities under pressure by helping them build necessary infrastructure and creating jobs. In the framework of these programs, the amount directly destined to local Lebanese governments only represented .1% of aid. The RRP6,[55] the latest plan to date, mentions on several occasions the importance of collaboration and coordination with existing municipalities and local authorities but it would seem that, in these plans, local authorities are only seen as actors to be consulted to gather information on the territories (localization of refugees, number of refugees not identified by the UNHCR, particular needs, etc.). It is thus never a question of putting them in charge of implementing assistance in their territory. The RRP6 never mentions the necessity of capacity building for local governments (material, human and financial resources) so that they may gain in authority, legitimacy and technical skills in managing crises and rehabilitating their territory. The RRP6 is a recent document which, on paper, includes consulting with local authorities at each stage to adapt projects to the context and needs of refugees and their host communities. On the ground however, municipal representatives still note a lack of means, and an urgent need for assistance. In sum, the UNHCR works mainly with the competent central authorities in each sector (ministries, water agencies, etc.) and NGOs (whether local or international) to meet the needs of the most vulnerable (refugees and host communities) without meeting with local authorities. In Iraq for example, "UNHCR works with the Government, humanitarian stakeholders and donors in Iraq to provide protection and durable solutions for people of concern" [56] whereas the needs of the people for whom the international community is intervening fall under the duties of local authorities. There is thus a risk of undermining local authorities who no longer have any sway over their traditional functions and will not be ably to carry forward actions, once the crisis over, that they have not been associated with. In addition, populations note their local elected officials' powerlessness, weakening their legitimacy and social cohesion. In Jordan, a study carried out by REACH[57] shows that Syrian host communities and refugees are calling upon municipalities to better fulfill their duties, namely in garbage collection and street maintenance. The study shows that only 45% of Jordanians polled are satisfied with municipal services. Jordan's municipalities have thus lost part of their legitimacy.

[55] UNHCR, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6). Strategic Overview, 2014, Op. cit.
[56] See the 2014 UNHCR country operations profile – Iraq http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486426&submit=GO
[57] REACH, *Understanding social cohesion & resilience in Jordanian host communities. Assessment report, Op. cit.*

Humanitarian and development actions also have to face major challenges in the Syrian crisis. The same REACH report notes that humanitarian actors do not sufficiently take into account questions of social conhesion and the risks of tensions across communities. 67% of those surveyed (78% for Jordanians and 58% for Syrians) answered that in their opinion, humanitarian aid is not evenly distributed among Jordanians and Syrians. Nearly half of respondents feel that aid is not distributed to those most in need. Humanitarian organizations must take the discontent of populations into account, namely by increasing transparency, visibility and communication around eligibility criteria to ensure that frustrations will not worsen conflicts between domestic groups. Lastly, the survey shows that access to health care, education, employment and lodging is a source of significant tensions; 61% of Jordanians and 51% of Syrians believe that access to water is a source of tension between communities, whence the importance of implementing actions to promote social cohesion and resilience.

Despite attempts at improvement by the international community, it would seem today that much more needs to be done to integrate local authorities. In time, they must be in a position to play a leading role in crisis management and rehabilitation. We believe that a new crisis management model is needed. One that could be called a "local and generalist approach".

PART 3. THE LOCAL GENERALIST APPROACH: A NEW PARADIGM FOR INTERVENING IN SITUATIONS OF CRISIS

The need to develop a new intervention model in territories in crisis or in a situation of fragility is borne out by all of these factors.

- Local authorities, regardless of their level of autonomy, their resources and capacities, are always on the front line of crises and face structural difficulties in fulfilling their daily duties towards their constituents;
- International interventions (which are indispensable) tend to marginalize local authorities, which can negatively affect emergency relief and development projects.
- Funding for emergency interventions generally does not profit the country's public authorities as the committed sums transit through large NGOs or international agencies.

The goal of this new paradigm is to favor crisis management processes which involve the affected local authorities. They are valuable assets and can be called upon in times of crisis. We believe they should be empowered by the international community and local government networks, who have shown they are favorable and willing to bolster and support authorities in crisis situations.

I. Revisiting the principles of intervention and recognizing the value of local governments

a) The need to rethink current approaches

Humanitarian and development actions can have negative local impacts and fail to meet their objectives. The current approach of international actors consists of directing their actions and/or funding towards central authorities, this is one of the factors that causes limitations in international interventions. According to Brinkerhoff and Johnson,[58] difficulties faced by the central State hamper aid and capacity building.

[58] Brinkheroff DW., Johnson RW., "La décentralisation de la gouvernance locale dans les États fragiles: les enseignements tirés du cas irakien", *Revue internationale des sciences administratives*, 2009/4, vol.75, pp. 643-668.

The authors mention weak government legitimacy in certain regions and territories, in particular in the Mashreq, given its ethnic and religious divides. This lack of legitimacy worsens when governments marginalize certain portions of the population as in pre-crisis Syria or today's Iraq, where political and ethnic divisions prevent the fair distribution of oil revenues. When one is far removed from the ground, it is difficult to manage local social tensions and conflicts, especially when the government lacks legitimacy to resolve such conflicts. To finish, central governments have insufficient financial, human and/or material means to deploy and coordinate aid.

While it is necessary to support States which are in crisis or extremely fragile, this must be supplemented by the involvement of local authorities in the humanitarian response. We propose to examine here a local generalist approach which places local governments at the heart of crisis management, in all its phases – prevention, emergency and reconstruction – alongside traditional actors.

Emergency aid and development actors are aware that their interventions would be facilitated by the effective and thoughtful participation of local authorities. A report by the Global forum on local development states: "Many countries, even the poorest and most vulnerable ones, have shown that when investments are made at the local level, progress toward the MDGs is made more quickly and is more sustainable."[59] While the local level is indispensable for deploying effective and sustainable development projects, it should also play a role in all phases of crisis management. On this subject, C. Becker, based on examples of best practices in natural disaster management in the United States by local governments writes that "most agree that the key factor in successful long-term recovery is local leadership".[60]

The three main capacities held by local authorities but not by the international community are their proximity, their legitimacy, and their constant presence on the ground.

b) Proximity and expertise

Elected municipal officials are above all inhabitants of the territory in which they were elected, they are known and generally respected by their constituents. In addition, they have responsibilities and, if they aspire to reelection, they must be as capable as possible and to show that they know their territory and its inhabitants.

When a crisis erupts, local authorities can mobilize support for an immediate emergency response. Local authorities can also provide overviews as to the consequences of the crisis and what to prioritize. For example, faced with the influx of Syrian refugees in their territories, local authorities in the bordering countries make a record of all incomers and their needs in terms of health care and access to lodging. If transmitting such information to the national level were to trigger adapted support, local governments could take charge of distributing services, based on their own identification of needs.

This proximity is also an asset for reaching out to the most vulnerable, especially in isolated areas. In the States neighboring Syria, refugees are not always in the charge of the UNHCR in camps: many lodge with locals or in informal housing. Local actors often have more information than external actors on the localization and needs of these populations. They can more easily bring them the help they need. Above all, this proximity makes it possible for local authorities to implement more effective actions plans than usual protocols.

In a crisis situation, of course local authorities cannot act alone, they must coordinate their actions with those of the other stakeholders. Again, proximity and familiarity with local specificities are an asset to guide international actors. Local authorities can provide the necessary information – as to the territory, its inhabitants and the consequences of the crisis itself in the zone in question – to effective and efficient aid deployment. They can provide facilities to intervention teams for meetings and coordination, thereby avoiding redundancy. Although they cannot meet all needs, local authorities should become referents in coordinating emergency relief, and relevant intermediaries among the various partners.

[59] Global forum on local development, "Pursuing the MDGs through local government", p. 6 (online: http://uncdf.org/gfld/docs/session_1.pdf).
[60] Becker C., "Disaster recovery: a local government responsibility", ICMA publication, PM magazine, March 2009, volume 91, n°2.

If international donors were to finance local authorities, with adapted control measures, this would guarantee that funds allocated to the most affected populations are indeed used for that purpose, that they are used on the territory, for the inhabitants and by local actors.

c) The legitimacy of local tiers

Local authorities and, in the case of the Mashreq, municipalities, are often the only local actors present on the territory after having been elected (partially or entirely) by the inhabitants. They therefore have strong legitimacy whereas external emergency actors do not.

Local authorities may communicate on the projects being implemented, in coordination with international actors. Populations are more prone to accept the presence of external actors and to respect what is implemented if the information is channeled through legitimate local actors, whose implication in the projects is transparent.

This political legitimacy is even more important when it is a case of organizing mediation or reconciliation processes. In Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, these "post-crisis" actions will be crucial to the stability and future of these States. Currently, municipalities do not have the means to implement such actions. And yet it is at local level that the success of a reconciliation process plays out. In Lebanon for example, social tensions and the reconciliation modalities are not the same in the North and South because of differing populations. In North-Lebanon, Shia Hezbollah combatants are more numerous, which leads to heightened tension. Only a detailed local approach can take into account such differences needed to ensure reconciliation. Currently, the Lebanese State is not in a position to do so.

d) Actors present in the long term

Contrary to aid personnel, local authorities are present in a given territory in the long term. Although elected officials can change over time, they are nonetheless supposed to take to heart the well-being and sustainable development of their territory, and post-crisis reconstruction efforts are indissociable from development efforts. How to reconstruct, work methods, the choices to be made, are all essential elements for a country's development. A territory's resilience is therefore indissociable from its capacity for development, and local authorities, because they are permanent, have a key role to play in this mechanism.

Local governments can guide short-term implementation of projects and ensure successful transitions between emergencies and reconstruction, by involving new actors for projects on a larger scale. Indeed, local actors can inform new actors as to what has been done, how, with what goals in mind, etc. and explain the local priorities and strategies to be adopted for sustainable reconstruction of the territory. They allow for progressive return to development which takes into account each territory's resilience.

The involvement of local authorities is also a guarantee that local populations will appropriate the projects, and that they will continue once international actors withdraw. This is not always the case when international actors set up parallel forms of governance to carry out their projects. Furthermore, local agents, very often, are not sufficiently trained to manage long term reconstruction and development projects on their territory. It is thus legitimate to wonder how local Jordanian or Lebanese authorities will manage their populations whose demographics will have changed, once the Syrian crisis is resolved, if they are not involved in the projects upstream, projects on education, lodging, access to water, etc. and if they have not been trained to acquire the technical skills and strategic vision necessary to manage a new economic and social setting.

Their presence on the ground makes it possible for local authorities to play an important role during crisis prevention and preparation phases. Once things have returned to normal, local authorities have the ability to provide feedback on the experience of the crisis and its management, on what works, on what could be improved and what must be done to ensure that future crises will have less of an impact.

e) A few examples

We deem it useful to mention here the Malian crisis of 2012 where local authorities played a crucial role. In northern Mali, an area hit by an extremely violent armed crisis, they gathered together their abilities and their knowledge of the territory to provide support for the inhabitants and prepare for the return of the State. They pooled their expertise to draw up a plan on "emergency actions by local authorities for the establishment and consolidation of peace in the north of the country".[61] They identified actions to be implemented to help the return of elected local officials and to ensure they had sufficient means to manage the area, to ensure distribution of basic services in the affected zones (access to schools, health care, water, electricity and food), and to foster a climate of dialog and appeasement. Their plan was validated by the Malian government, thus recognizing the crucial role local authorities played in managing the crisis.

Following the 2003 crisis, Iraq also illustrated the advantages of local management for reconstruction.[62] The central government, which had been deprived of its members from the Baathist party, had lost all ability to govern. Initially, reconstruction had to be carried out at deconcentrated levels of the State in the provinces, which had a positive impact in terms of faster and more effective distribution of local services. The needs of the population and territory were quickly identified and work was started. The Iraqi government pursued this policy by allocating nearly 20% of the budget to the provinces and broadly defining the powers to use it. The local actors went on to develop projects for repairing and reconstructing the infrastructure necessary to provide services to the population, and on the whole the projects went very well. The decision to set up local elected councils also reinforced democracy and the legitimacy of the local entities as well as creating instances for dialog to prevent the outbreak of future conflicts. Although these results have been undermined by the current situation, in the majority they had a positive effect in the years following the conflict. There is a risk that current clashes between Sunni and Shia as well as a rise in extremism on both sides could endanger the very existence of an Iraqi State. It is possible that, like in Syria, in order to survive, communities will have to withdraw into themselves.

f) Challenges to be overcome

The local generalist crisis management and reconstruction approach has several benefits. In the case of the Syrian crisis however, applying it presents several difficulties. The abilities of local authorities in the Mashreq cannot at present be employed optimally given blockages in the process of empowerment and transfer of responsibilities. In the light of recent world changes, decentralization processes seem inevitable, and little by little the Mashreq local authorities should follow the trend. For the time being, the municipalities in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt have very limited responsibilities, their decision making power is restricted and their actions controlled. This explains a feeling of powerlessness on the part of local elected officials in the face of the crisis, a feeling worsened by a lack of means. Even before the crisis, their human, material and financial means for administering their territories were scanty. These means are ever more insufficient, which hampers crisis management. There is a high risk of corruption which is often used as an excuse by international actors to not deal directly with local authorities. Corruption mirrors the ethnic and religious divides in a country and largely contributes to a culture of clientelism, further devaluing their actions.

However these limitations should not lead to the exclusion of the Mashreq local authorities from crisis management. Despite their weaknesses and the disdain with which they are treated, they have undeniable strengths in emergency situations and reconstruction. They must be empowered and reinforced.

II. Empowering local authorities

Involving local authorities in crisis management appears to be an essential element in intervention effectiveness. In most cases however, these actors do not have the skills and resources necessary to face crises and their consequences. It is to overcome this lack of means that the international community of local governments must intervene.

[61] The document is available (in French) at the following address: http://www.alimenterre.org/sites/www.cfsi.asso.fr/files/595_bis_amm_plan_actions_prioritaires_v27juin13.pdf.
[62] On this subject, see Brinkheroff DW., Johnson RW., "La décentralisation de la gouvernance locale dans les Etats fragiles: les enseignements tirés du cas irakien", Op. cit.

a) Means and capacities of local governments

Local officials the world over, and more particularly in States where decentralization is well advanced (especially in Europe) have the necessary abilities to support local authorities in crisis management. They have experience in managing their territories in sectors such as administrative services (civil and land registers, etc.), sanitation, health care, housing, education, waste management, water, transportation, etc.. Continuity of service in these various sectors is fundamental. It makes it possible to minimize the impact of the crisis on inhabitants and to ensure a return to normal in the shortest possible delays. In some countries, local governments have very detailed risk and crisis management plans as well as land use plans which take into account local vulnerabilities. Similarly, many local officials in "developed" countries have had good results in the area of local participative governance, which is an important phase in conflict prevention in fragile States.

Moreover, partnerships between local authorities in various development and territorial management sectors have been in place for several decades through friendships, twinnings and cooperation partnerships between municipalities. European local officials have tried to play a role in the local development of countries in the South and East having young local institutions and where democratization and decentralization processes are still fragile. Today there are thousands of twinnings and partnerships between regional and local authorities in Europe and in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. These partnerships aim to improve the living conditions for constituents and the quality of public services by reinforcing local and regional administrative capacities. These relations involve money transfers to the supported municipality, but not only. They are more and more strategic in nature as they also organize technical and management exchanges based on principles of reciprocity and horizontal rather than vertical collaboration. The European Commission moreover recognizes the participation of municipalities in the North in development projects implemented with all civil society actors in given countries.[63] The European Union for example finances certain cross-municipal projects in the framework of regional programs. These projects, alongside many others funded by municipalities themselves, have given them considerable experience in this area. Furthermore, for the last 15 years or so, the internationalization of local government actions has increased and gained visibility, notably through initiatives for the creation of national and international municipality networks. National municipality networks such as Cités Unies France (CUF), VNG International in the Netherlands and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) now play a considerable role at international level by federating, supporting, and enhancing the value of external municipal actions. Projects and actions carried out on the ground reinforce partnerships. In 2014 in Paris was created the world network of municipalities, United Cities Local Governments (UCLG) demonstrating the will of local authorities around the world to act together and to have as much weight as possible at international level.

b) Willingness of local governments to address crisis management

Local governments worldwide are present on the international scene, especially in the sector of development, and they are taking increased interest in crisis situations, whether caused by natural disasters (such as the 2004 tsunami in the Asia-Pacific region or the 2010 earthquake in Haiti) or by the outbreak of armed conflict (the very strong desire on the part of local officials to strengthen their partnerships with affected local officials in Mali is an example of this). International solidarity with strongly affected local officials and their constituents has become a sector unto itself in the international actions of local governments. This willingness initially took the form of declarations of support and/or donations to the NGOs intervening in countries in a situation of crisis. In France for example, over the years local officials have become one of the foremost humanitarian donors towards large specialized structures such as the Red Cross, the Fondation de France and emergency NGOs such as Secours Catholique and Secours populaire. The sending of emergency funds was moreover made legally secure with the 2007 Thiollière Act. Similarly, legislation provides a framework and support for solidarity actions in most municipalities which carry out international actions. In parallel, municipalities are increasingly voicing their refusal to serve as simple "cash cows" to be milked by NGOs and international donors. The limits of NGO donations are becoming increasingly clear to local governments who seek innovative solutions which are clearly geared towards other local governments and developing their capacities.

[63] See for example "The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises", Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council. High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security.

Some municipal networks are leveraging this new desire to allow municipalities who so wish to intervene in territories in crisis. The Cités Unies France created the "Crisis and rehabilitation" group in 2012 to accompany French local officials having partnerships with municipalities affected by a crisis outbreak and to address the question of the role of French local governments in times of crisis. At the end of the 1990s, Cités Unies France created a solidarity fund framework for aid in situations of armed conflict and natural disasters. This makes it possible for volunteer municipalities to pool their means to participate in rehabilitation efforts in stricken territories. These solidarity funds have been progressively built and developed around two principles: to provide support to affected local authorities; and to involve donors in project management. Lastly, UCLG, headquartered in Barcelona, is currently presided by the Mayor of Istanbul, gravely concerned by the situation in Syria. The major international bodies, the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union, are all familiar with UCLG and collaborate with them actively. Local crisis management was recognized by the UCLG at its World Executive Bureau in Liverpool in June, 2014, where the creation of a crisis platform was validated; this will allow its members to meet and to develop joint projects on a larger scale.

The support of the international community towards local governments in the crisis management cycle now appears possible, given that development partnerships already exist. Moreover, local authorities have a clear will to support their peers and have technical capacities in territory management to bring to other municipalities at each stage of the crisis cycle. Thus all the conditions are met so that local government networks be in a position to participate in the development of a new action paradigm for municipalities in crisis situations.

c) What actions should the international local government community carry out?

Several types of actions are possible.

In the short term, at the onset of a crisis, municipalities can affirm their support to local authorities and send solidarity messages to their constituents and their peers in need. Then local officials from around the world, singly or within their national or international networks, can organize field missions to understand the origins of the crisis, identify municipalities in need of assistance, the local specificities of the affected territories, and together with the local actors, identify the population's urgent needs. Once these preliminary factors are identified, municipalities who so wish -and who have the means- can send funds directly to the local entities they became acquainted with on the ground (regardless of whether there had been any previous links between the municipalities) to provide them with additional support to face the costs of the crisis. One could also consider sending human and material resources to the site to guide local actors in addressing the more technical aspects of crisis management, if such assistance is requested. Lastly, every willing local elected official has political means to lobby international donors and agencies. Large scale lobbying could be a way to channel funds and assistance projects towards the local authorities in a crisis situation, or at least remind emergency actors of the importance of involving such actors in crisis management to increase the effectiveness of interventions. To illustrate, let us take the conflict in Mali. Cités Unies France, in partnership with the Mali Municipality Association (Association des Municipalités du Mali), took part in the donor conference organized in March 2013 in Brussels. This led to a decision whereby one third of the funds raised by the international community for Mali are to be earmarked for decentralization and local governance. Moreover, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to double the amount in the solidarity fund opened by Cités Unies France for Malian municipalities.

In the mid and long term, municipalities can contribute to the solidarity funds opened by the national and/or international networks. Such funds cannot be deployed as a first response in an emergency because the administrative procedure (collection, fund management, decisional procedures and money transfer) is quite lengthy given the number of stakeholders involved. These funds can however be highly useful for implementing important projects in the post-crisis phase. In Mali, the solidarity fund raised more than 200,000 EUR for municipality capacity building projects to allow them to fulfill their missions despite the crisis, as well as longer term projects to consolidate peace. Cooperation partnerships may also be set up between several municipalities with focus on prevention, crisis preparedness and/or management.

One of the goals of these new (or renewed) partnerships could be to build the resilience of concerned municipalities, i.e. "the ability of individuals, communities and states and their institutions to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term changes and uncertainty."[64] In the case of the Syrian crisis, resilient municipalities would probably have had fewer difficulties in absorbing newcomers to their territory, and to adapting their daily actions to the new situation. In fragile States this can be brought about through crisis prevention projects. European as well as African local authorities have considerable capacities in the area of participative democracy. They know how to include all the groups present on their territories and to ensure that each person's voice is heard, they reinforce dialog, consultation, reconciliation processes, and manage local tensions. All of which helps prevent the outbreak of conflicts. It can also prevent them from spreading at a national or even regional level (as was the case in the Sahel for example). Reinforcing this type of capacity is also useful in post-crisis phases, peace and social cohesion building, when inhabitants must learn anew to live side by side. Such a project would thus take into account the entire chain prevention-emergency-development since, by reinforcing social cohesion, one lessens the risk of a crisis outbreak and one fosters participative democracy. Partnerships can also focus on service management projects, so that their partner municipalities be able to continue to provide services despite pressures due to conflict. Municipal and regional crisis management plans can be drawn up with the municipalities, with the help and expertise of willing local authorities, to ensure they continue functioning. In this framework, developing projects which reinforce local institutions gives more weight to local elected officials with their constituents, which means that they are considered the authorities to turn to for crisis management. To finish, capacity building for local actors in fragile States or in situations of crisis thanks to exchanges across municipalities, would certainly have a positive impact on decentralization processes and State building. For these two types of actions – solidarity funds and cooperation partnerships geared towards crisis management – field missions could be organized by municipalities who wish to identify the reconstruction needs of their partners, to define projects together with them, to build strong relations with the relevant partners, etc.. Similarly, project follow-up missions could be undertaken by technical agents or municipal experts to assist and, if neccessary, train partner municipalities.

In addition, European municipalities and their networks have all intentions of pursuing the question of optimizing the involvement of local authorities in crisis situations. Within the World UCLG network, some of the matters we have been devoting our work to are tools for shared responses to crises, providing human and technical resources and support to affected local authorities. An ad-hoc working group was created in June, 2014.

In the longer term, local governments can continue their advocacy actions, lobbying international donors and instances, building on the experiences of the solidarity funds and of decentralized cooperation partnerships including the strands "crisis prevention/preparation" to enhance the involvement of local governments in crisis management procedures. With time, these initiatives coupled with extensive lobbying by local authorities also elected to international organizations could drive donors to envisage procedures to directly fund local authorities and their partners for crisis management. An additional benefit is that project sustainability would also be reinforced.

To conclude, the willingness of local elected officials from all continents to be involved in international solidarity in situations of crisis has significantly affected current practices in this area. Some actions need to be invented, others, such as the solidarity funds or observation missions, are already in place and have led to real progress.

[64] DAC/OECD definition of 2013. French version cited in Chataigner J-M., Les nouvelles frontières de la mondialisation, éditions Karthala, 2014, p. 14.

III. Case studies

To illustrate this new paradigm, we will present two projects carried out by municipal networks, in the framework of the tensions currently experienced by Mashreq States faced with a major influx of Syrian refugees.

More and more projects are being set up through partnerships with the local authorities in crisis-stricken States around the world and should be analyzed for the lessons they teach us. The current study focuses on the Mashreq and the consequences the Syrian refugee crisis has on neighboring States.

The resource group of United Cities Local Governments, of which Cités Unies France and VNG international (the international cooperation agency of the Association of Dutch Municipalities) are members, organized an exploratory mission to the countries neighboring Syria (Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon) to bring a message of solidarity, to take stock of municipalities' needs and to discuss with them which projects would be most supportive.

The mission report[65] notes that the local governments in all three States are struggling. In Lebanon and Jordan they are profoundly affected by the massive presence of Syrian refugees. In total, there are over one million refugees in Lebanon, in all parts of the country, and over 600,000 in Jordan. The length of the crisis coupled with the massive influx of highly vulnerable refugees has put a great strain on local Lebanese host communities, some of which are already extremely poor, and is draining the meager resources of local governments. Tensions around access to water, electricity, health care and education continue to rise, despite the efforts of international agencies on the ground. The report concludes that these municipalities are in urgent need of assistance. It mentions the 6th UNHCR Regional Action Plan which assess the needs of Syrian refugees, based on the analyses of UN agencies and NGOs, which did not consult with local authorities, whether in planning or in budgetary decisions, with the exception of support programs for Lebanese communities (representing only .1% of the allocated budget).

Following this exploratory mission, VNG international and Cités Unies France each thought about a project to be implemented in stricken States to help local authorities struggling with a refugee problem in Lebanon and Jordan in the best manner possible.

a) The Cités Unies France solidarity fund for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

In April 2013, Cité Unies France launched a call for solidarity to French municipalities to open a "solidarity fund for Lebanese local authorities affected by the influx of Syrian refugees". More than 50,000 EUR were collected thanks to the participation of five French municipalities: Bordeaux, Nantes, Leers, Reims and Sézanne.

The donor committee decided that this sum would be distributed to the local authorities in the group of municipalities in central Bekaa, and more particularly the municipality of Kab Elias, suffering from an influx of refugees. Currently, it is estimated that there are 25,000 Syrian refugees in Kab Elias in 16 camps, whereas the local population of Kab Elias is approximately 50,000. 80% of these refugees are women and children. The majority are registered with the UNHCR.

According to the Kab Elias Municipality data, 50% of these Syrian refugees (i.e. 12,500 people) live in 16 informal caps in the municipality. The total number of Syrian refugees in the group of central Bekaa municipalities is estimated at over 40,000.

One of the specificities with Lebanon is that the State has not granted refugee status to Syrians fleeing their country. It therefore provides no support to the local authorities who have to manage this influx. Although there are currently many NGOs and international organizations on site attempting to meet the emergency, it seemed indispensable to directly support the local authorities.

[65] For more information on the mission organized by UCLG, see the report: Giovetti S., Op. cit.

The project validated by the fund donor committee bears on two key sectors. First, solid waste management: two garbage containers will be bought to treat waste, the amount of which has risen considerably since the beginning of the crisis with over 40 tons to be treated daily, as compared to 20 tons previously. Second, the project concerns water: the purchase of a water tank truck should make it possible to bring water to the informal camps in Kab Elias and surrounding municipalities. A pump will also be purchased to access ground table water. The funds raised by Cités Unies France will shortly be sent to the city of Kab Elias to implement these actions, following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding. Donor French municipalities and Cités Unies France will have their say in the project's unfolding and will carry out two follow-up missions to, on the one hand, ensure the funds are properly used and, on the other hand, to support the municipalities on a technical level if they so desire.

b) The VNG international project in Jordan: International municipal assistance for the Al Zaa'tari refugee camp and the local governments of the Al-Mafraq governorate

Al Zaa'tari is a refugee camp in Jordan, close to the city of the same name. This camp attracted attention from the international community and media when, in the summer of 2013, the UNHCR estimated that the camp, with its 144,000 inhabitants, had become Jordan's fourth largest "city". There are also many refugees living in the areas around the camp, especially in the western part of the Al-Mafraq governorate. Refugees pack into the cities and towns often called "host communities", and are lodged in the houses or courtyards of Jordanian families. Some have no choice but to live on the streets. This situation puts pressure on the entire region and is a threat to social peace in Jordan. Local governments are on the front lines and are having great difficulties in managing the crisis.

The municipal assistance initiative proposed by VNG international for the Al-Mafraq governorate and the Al Zaa'tari refugee camp aims to improve the autonomy and involvement of both Jordanian citizens and refugees. The initiative proposes technical expertise in facing humanitarian challenges, to be put at the disposal of Jordanian authorities and the directors of the UNHCR camps. This assistance should improve the organization of services and the living conditions of refugees and Jordanian citizens. This initiative is based on a "from local authority to local authority" approach and is aligned with the Jordan National Resilience Plan. It will bear on sectors such as regional development and planning, governance, waste management, drinking water, transportation and infrastructure.

It is currently being drafted. It is financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and will be implemented by VNG international and the city of Amsterdam.

PART 4. PROPOSAL FOR AN ACTION PROTOCOL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND PROSPECTIVES ON THE SYRIAN CASES

It seems important to think through an action protocol for local governments in crisis situations which would supported by local authorities world wide. Local governments must have the means to react effectively at each stage of the crisis cycle (prevention/management/reconstruction).

I. The role of local governments in the pre-crisis (prevention/ preparation) phase

Identifying referents in all sectors susceptible of being affected by crises: local governments identify resource persons, from the public or private sphere, who are experts in the sectors indispensable for providing services in water, sanitation, power, housing, waste management and communication. In some areas, such as water and sanitation, these referents could be municipal agents; for security, officials from the municipal police. The same is true for traditional leaders who also have a role to play. These referents must establish diagnoses in their sectors of activity (risk analysis, mechanisms, existing means and tools for managing these risks, etc.) and to think of ways to better avoid crises or, failing that, to more effectively and efficiently manage them.

Risk and vulnerability assessment: Local governments in collaboration with these referents would carry out precise analyses to identify risks and establish a diagnosis in terms of vulnerabilities. Each municipality must also be familiar with the various groups, tensions, and potential sources of conflict (access to resources, difficulty accessing services, etc.). These assessments build on experience from past crises.

Drafting two types of plan from the risk diagnosis:

1) Prevention measures: local governments, in partnership with resource persons and other municipalities pool their analyses to implement approprate measures to prevent crises.
2) Crisis preparation plans: Municipalities must have crisis preparedness plans laying out decisions and measures to be taken in a crisis. Existing diagnoses help local elected officials and technical agents identify the available means, resources and technical skills which can be called upon as a first response in case of emergency. These plans describe emergency actions to be carried out, sector by sector. Local officials must for example establish what needs to be done to rapidly be able to communicate with inhabitants to provide emergency information (through social networks, traditional media, etc.). This plan must include measures for the rapid deployment of territorial security services.

In the Mashreq, there is also need for a plan on how to manage inflows of thousands of refugees, as population displacements are a recurring event in the region, as evidenced by displacement of Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian refugees. It is to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to manage refugee camps, however this task is akin to managing a city: Municipalities facing the installation of a refugee camp on their soil should therefore be consulted, in partnership with the UNHCR, and they should be supported by European municipalities.

Pooling diagnoses: The goal in sharing analyses is, in time, to be in a position to draft a national plan for crisis prevention and preparation. Ideally, this bottom-up approach would strengthen State capacity through more detailed knowledge of their territories. Drawing up a national prevention plan, with the goals of increasing resilience and stability, would allow States to:

– Know the specificities, risks and tensions within and across their populations and regions;
– Improve management of these issues at national level;
– Take appropriate measures to reinforce security, social cohesion, stability, etc.;

Crisis prevention and preparedness mechanisms: Many measures can be optimized by local and national governments to avoid conflict outbreaks on their soil: crisis watch mechanisms, control mechanisms, assessment and prevention measures, participative democracy, among many others.

Several crisis watch mechanisms are already in place for the Middle-East. Numerous think tanks, NGOs and experts have gathered to monitor this highly crisis prone region. Among them, the "International crisis group" organization,[66] working to prevent and resolve conflict in the world, has a program devoted to the Middle East which analyzes, on a daily basis, trends in the situations of the region's countries and in times of need can provide crisis resolution strategies.

Ideally, one should be able to tie a more territorial approach and analysis grid into existing monitoring activities. Here Mashreq municipalities must be fully involved in monitoring tensions across various groups on their soil. By their proximity, they are more capable of recognizing warning signals of a crisis and to alert all necessary. What is needed is to summarize all knowledge on the Mashreq territories, as well as all the watch mechanisms developed in the past by various actors (NGOs, think tanks, municipalities, etc.) to obtain a micro vision of crisis-outbreak risks.

In the Mashreq, a municipal watch tool could be developed to monitor tensions and alert the appropriate local governments. In addition, weekly or monthly neighborhood meetings could be held to include citizens in local political life, to give them a voice in settling differences, in negotiations, etc..

As concerns refugees, deeper knowledge of what local and national governments have done in the past would highlight the limits and challenges to be faced by governments in managing such a type of crisis, and to optimize their response plan.

Each of these actions (identifying referents, assessing risks, drafting local prevention plans, pooling plans and developing joint tools) can be considered possible strands in decentralized cooperation partnerships, or can become projects funded by municipal solidarity networks. Most European local authorities have experience in assessing risks and drafting local risk prevention plans and/or territorial security plans. It is obvious that simply drawing up an identical plan is not the answer, effective and efficient planning happens through sharing experiences, methodology and know how in risk management and this would be extremely useful to local authorities in fragile States or situations of crisis.

II. The role of local governments in the emergency phase

Implementing a crisis response plan: Because governments are on the front line when a crisis erupts, they must be in a position to provide a rapid response after the identification and assessment phases, to do so they must implement crisis management plans.

1. They must immediately alert actors in the affected sectors. In the Mashreq for examples, the services affected by an influx of refugees are water and waste management. Local elected officials can, alongside their referents in these two sectors, put previously established emergency measures into effect (calling in additional personnel, using reserves set aside for emergency situations, etc.)

[66] This group was created in 1995 and is currently chaired by Ghassan Salamé. For further information on this group's activities, see their website: http://www.crisisgroup.org/en.aspx

2. Communication: Local officials and municipal technical agents must broadcast information to the population concerning the situation, the procedures to be followed, how they can be of use to the community, contact details, etc.. Local governments must use both traditional means of communicating (printed press, radio, television, leaflet distribution) and innovative ones (social networks, etc.).

3. Carrying out an assessment: Using monitoring and assessment tools, local governments most estimate the cost of the situation and provide figures as to the cost of indispensable humanitarian needs to face the new situation, in the short, medium and long terms. Some municipalities in Jordan for example identified the needs of their territory and estimated the costs of the crisis. Recurrent needs are water, waste disposal, housing, electricity, health care and education.

4. Contacting potential donors: By identifying their needs, local governments can provide precise information to donors and emergency organizations as to what is most necessary. International organizations intervening in crises then know what human and material means are indispensable. This relationship with the donors is necessary for local authorities to be able to identify the most vulnerable and to channel aid in their direction. Municipalities in Jordan and Lebanon launched an appeal to international solidarity, giving precise details as to the immediate needs of their inhabitants.

5. Establishing relations with partner municipalities within networks: Municipalities can state their needs and describe their projects to potential partners and more broadly to the international community of local governments for help in territorial management in a situation of crisis. Partner municipalities of stricken peers can work together, as individuals or within a network, to raise emergency funds to send to their colleagues, and/or to send personnel and experts to the field to accompany and provide technical support to the affected municipality. It is also at such times that municipal networks such as Cités Unies France can decide to open an emergency fund and call upon solidarity from French municipalities to raise funds to be used in the future efforts at rebuilding the territories devastated by the crisis.

Coordinating emergency aid: Humanitarian organizations and international emergency agencies generally arrive within the first few days of a crisis. Local governments must serve as their referents and information relays. They can ensure access to the territories and populations by providing information as to which areas are high risk, access routes, and local specificities. They help coordination actors and humanitarian aid by providing meeting rooms and sharing assessments and diagnoses, in sum by being "territorial experts". Aid coordination is particularly important for effective crisis response and expertise must be recognized at the municipal level. Local governments and humanitarian aid organizations should be able to find coordination mechanisms for a more effective collaboration between services for the good of the populations, and to avoid setting up parallel bodies which could weaken local governance and effective crisis management.

Regaining control over territorial management by local government partnerships: As far as possible, affected municipalities must try to keep the upper hand over their basic functions by adapting to the new situation triggered by the crisis: these are basic services (food, lodging, health care facilities, transportation, waste management, etc.) and advice to inhabitants to minimize the scope of the crisis. To do so they must have access to emergency funds and possibly technical expertise support from their partners.

III. The post-crisis phase

The long term assessments carried out at the level of affected municipalities must provide precise indications and budgeting requirements for the needs of local governments once the emergency phase of the crisis is over. If these assessments, communicated to donors and the community of local governments, bear fruit, affected municipalities must implement rehabilitation projects but must also consider the crisis as an opportunity to rebuild a resilient territory, in keeping with the principles laid out in the "Build Back Better" approach.[67] Local officials and experts must keep the upper hand and, to do so, must be accompanied and supported in their reflections and actions by partner municipalities. This process may be divided into several phases:

– **Projects:** projects must be designed, when possible, by the affected municipality, and then proposed to partner local governments and international donors. They must conform to the Build Back Better approach for a more resilient territory and, over time, sustainable development. During the "proposal/negotiation" phase, local governments can facilitate concerted negotiations as they have the advantages of legitimacy and proximity. For the project to be rapidly validated by donors and/or partners and its implementation to begin, proposals must contain: the main conclusions of the assessment; the area(s) of priority (and justification of the choices); a matrix of the logical framework describing the general and specific objectives of the identified project(s); expected results; the activities to be organized and the partners (humanitarian organizations, the private sector, etc.) who will implement the project(s); the necessary technical (material and human) needs; a draft budget; and mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the project. Best practices were observed in the recent crises in Mali and the Central African Republic and could be taken as models for conflict-stricken territories. The city of Bangui for example drafted a precise project containing most of the elements necessary to implement a concrete project to foster the return, among others, of city markets.

– **Receiving funds, managing, coordinating and monitoring the project**: once a project has been validated by the donors and partners, the funds (solidarity funds, subsidies, exceptional funds, etc.) are sent to the stricken municipality which, overseeing the project, redistributes the sums, at times billing services, to those involved in the project (construction companies to rebuild public infrastructure, or NGOs specializing in local democracy building for example). Once again, the local government plays the role of coordinator by informing and/or regularly meeting with the various stakeholders for rigorous monitoring of project implementation, to ensure that work is progressing on schedule, to solve any problems encountered by the partners, etc.. Local government is also in charge of putting in place mechanisms to assess and monitor the program in the short, mid and long terms (writing up weekly reports, allocating funds for audits, etc.) and managing communications both with partners and local constituents on the project's progress. To conclude, local government must be the contracting or co-contracting authority. When requested and/or needed, municipalities can call upon technical support for this phase, and their partner local governments can establish agreements for technical support for the stricken municipality. Moreover, partner local governments can serve to guarantee project assessment and follow-up in partnership frameworks to reassure donors and ensure proper use of the funds.

[67] The Build Back Better, or BBB approach made its appearance in the discourse of the international community following the 2004 tsunami, to highlight the wish to consider the catastrophe as an opportunity to rebuild a more resilient territory than before. It is based on seven main principles: Do no harm: learn from the past; Agencies must be accountable to the people they seek to assist; People affected by disaster should be the decision-makers; Recovery of local economy and livelihoods must be a priority; Reconstruction and recovery efforts must recognize diversity; Communities should be allowed to use their own resources wherever possible; Reconstruction must take account of future hazards and risks. (Source: http://practicalaction.org/principles-building-back-better)

– Involving inhabitants in the projects: To foster popular support during the reconstruction phase, reinforce the project's legitimacy, ensure its sustainability, and strengthen democracy and governance, it is in the best interests of authorities to include local inhabitants. All decentralized cooperation projects, and more broadly local development projects, take into account local democracy. Projects implemented in a situation of post-conflict reconstruction should particularly insist on this point, it is only thus that processes for reinforcing social cohesion, reconciliation and peaceful relations can succeed and be maintained. Throughout the implementation of reconstruction projects, local authorities must give regular updates to their constituents on the project's main objectives, progress made in the various actions, and expected results. They must hold public meetings, create work groups with the various local administrative services in charge of the project, etc.. The ending of a crisis can be the opportunity to better take into account the principles of participative democracy, a key element in territorial development, and, in the longer term and on a larger scale, can reinforce State and institution building.

In addition, putting local authorities in charge of projects in their entirety contributes to local capacity-building, reinforces institutions and therefore the institutional architecture of the State. The post-crisis phase can therefore provide an opportunity to reconstruct a more resilient State.

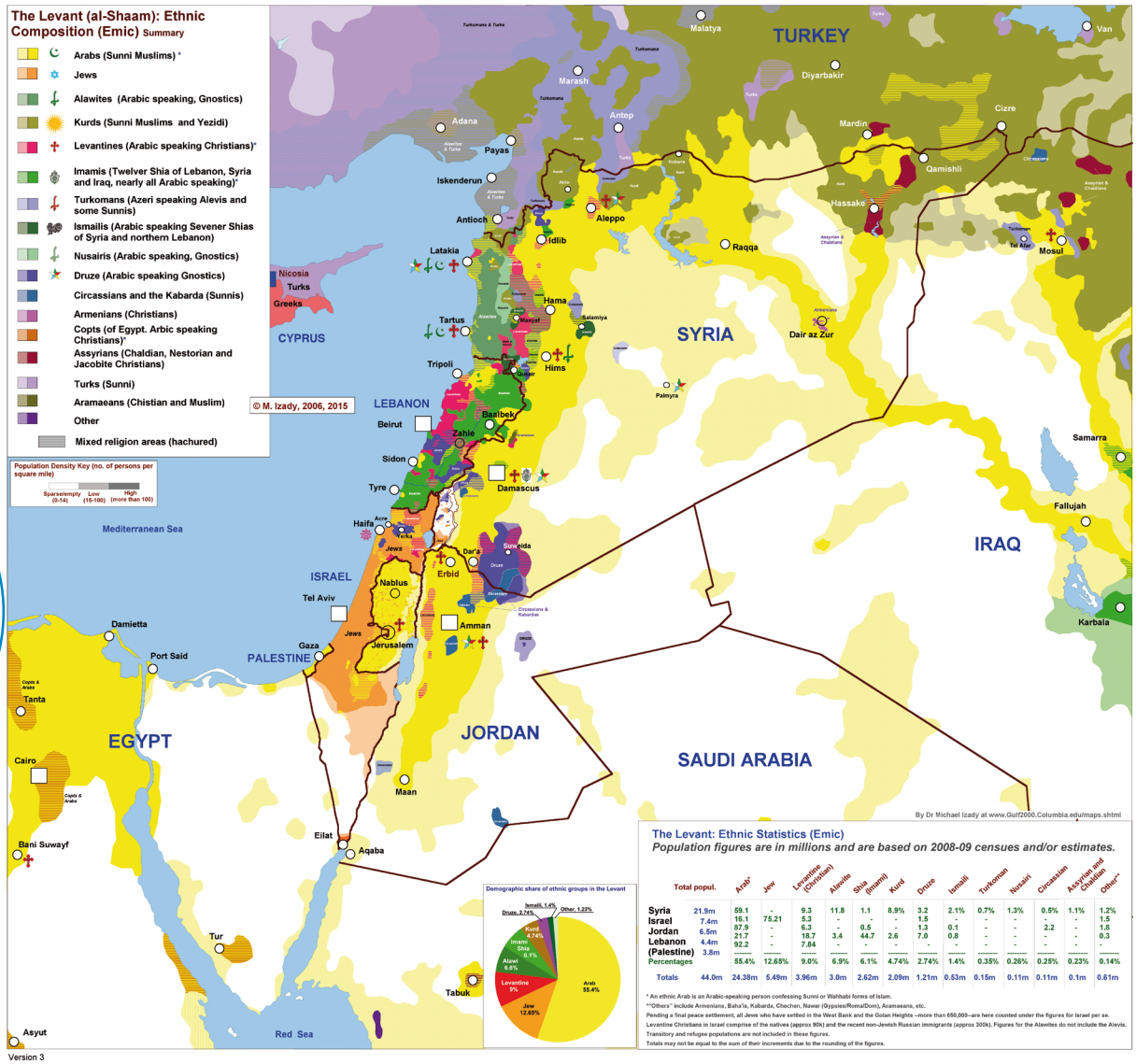
Assessing results and designing a crisis management system: In the long term, once projects are completed, local governments should report on the final assessment of the project. Such an assessment would also serve to better understand risk and crisis management comprehensively. It should highlight good practices, which elements in the system gave the best results in terms of prevention, preparation, management and/or reconstruction, and which should be improved or changed, as well as what elements should be added.

The assessment's conclusions would partake in the crisis prevention/preparation phase since they would show how to optimize prevention and preparation plans, would make any necessary changes to existing tools and mechanisms, and would continue the work on consolidating territorial resilience.

Local authorities have the necessary capacities to play a major role throughout the cycle of risk and crisis management. Moreover it would seem that their participation in crisis management could be a means to reinforce the entire State apparatus by linking questions of crisis resolution to territorial development and local governance. The international community, and more particularly local authorities the world over, have a crucial role to play in developing the paradigm of the local generalist approach.

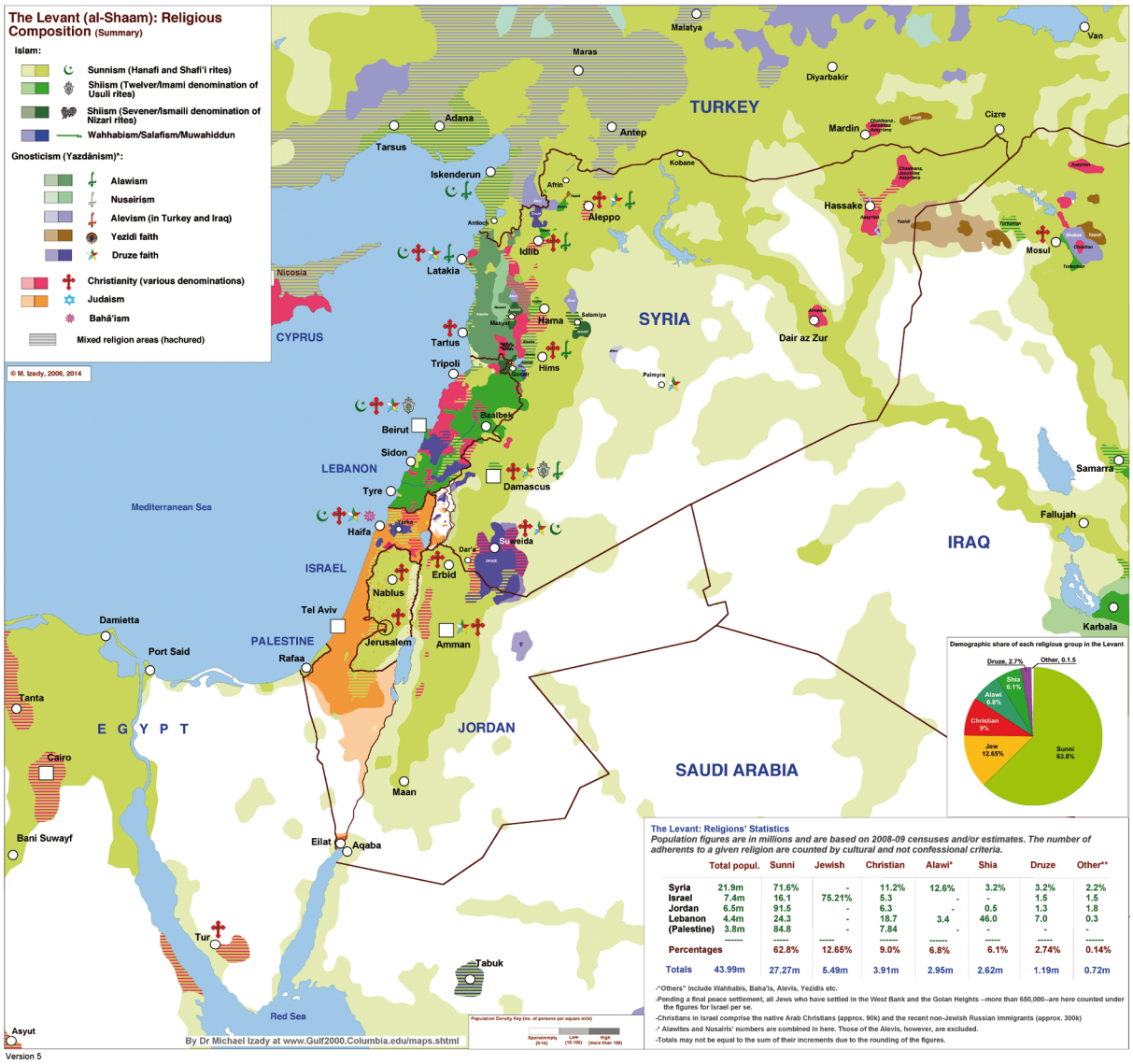
ANNEXES

I. Annex 1: Complexity of the ethnic make-up in the Near East



Source: Dr Michael Izadi. http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Levant_Ethnicity_summary_lg.png

II Annex 2: Religious fragmentation in the Near East



Source: Dr Michael Izady. http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Levant_Religion_summary_lg.png

III Annex 3: Summary table of religions in the Mashreq

Country	Population (in millions of inhabitants)	Sunni (%)	Shia (%)	Christian (%)	Alawite (%)	Druze (%)	Other (%)
Lebanon	4.4	24.3	46	18.7	3.4	7	0.3
Iraq	30.7	32.3	63.2	2.3	0		2.16
Syria	21.9	71.6	3.2	11.2	12.6	3.2	2.2
Palestine	3.8	84.8	0	7.84			
Jordan	6.5	91.5	0.5	6.3		1.3	1.8
Egypt	75.3	86.8	2.9	10.9			0.1
Total	**142.6 million**						
	Mashreq average (in %)	65.22	19.30	9.54	5.33	3.83	1.31

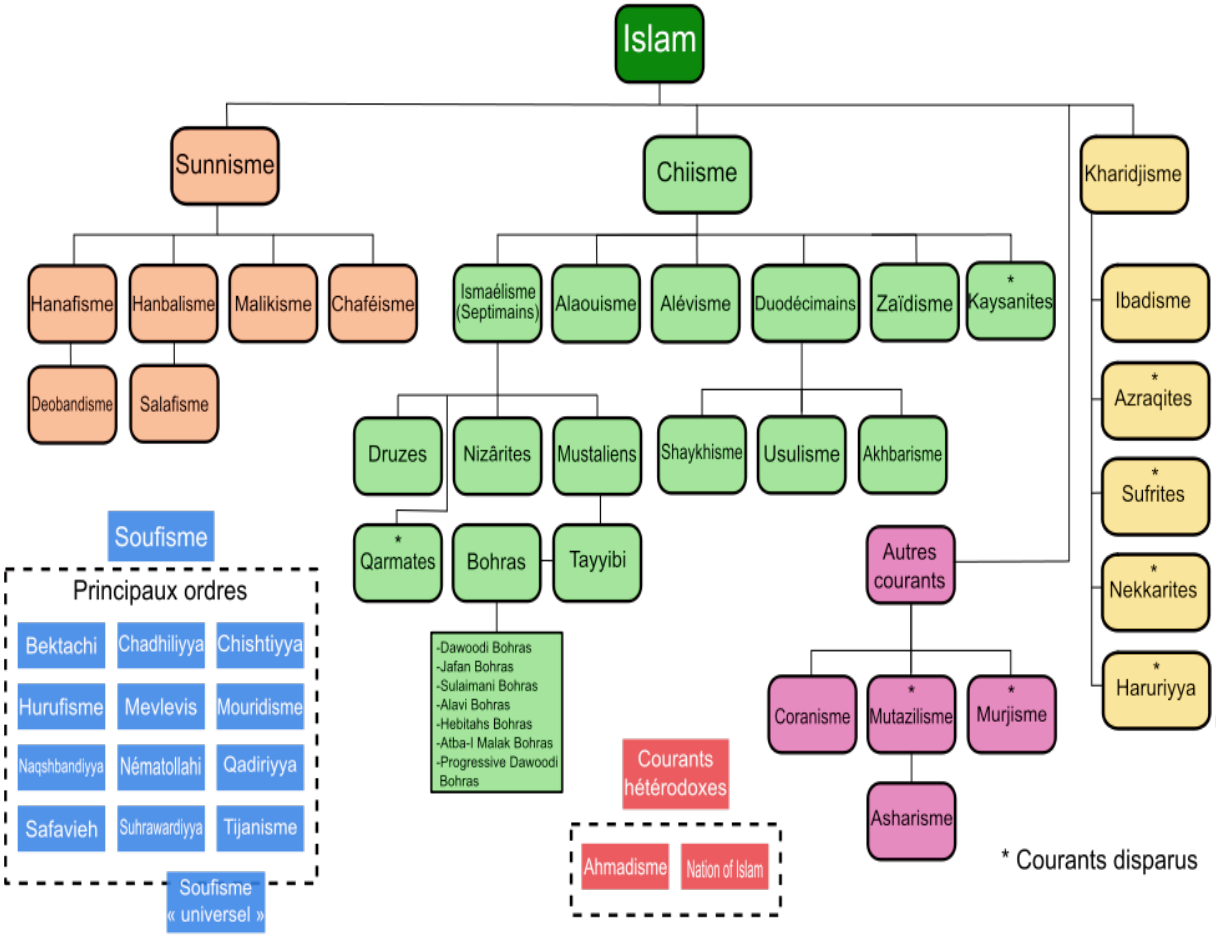
Remarks

The category "Other" includes e.g. the Baha'is, Alevis, Yezidis, etc..

The State totals do not amount to 100% due to decimal rounding.

Source: Dr Michael Izady. http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Levant_Religion_summary_lg.png

IV Annex 4: Islamic schools and branches



Source: Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_schools_and_branches)

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