# The Role of International Civil Society Organisations in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building: Utilising Social Media to Address Power Struggles in Syria

Archan Mitra[1]* and K.M. Baharul Islam[2]

[1]School of Media Studies, Presidency University, Bangalore, India
[2]Centre of Excellence in Public Policy and Government, Indian Institute of Management Kashipur, Uttarakhand, India

*Corresponding author: archan6644@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

In the years leading up to March 2011, a period characterized by extensive public protests in Syria, International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) collaborated with Syrian civil groups on a range of initiatives. However, this engagement faced stagnation due to a lack of essential information and inadequate communication methods, which also led to a surge in dissatisfaction. The crux of the issue appears to be the coercive suppression of opposing rallies that ultimately escalated into armed conflict, exacerbating forced migrations and amplifying the refugee crisis in Syria and beyond. A critical examination of this period delineates the shortcomings in the coordination among ICSOs, underscoring a pressing need for effective communication strategies to foster global peace. The Syrian populace, marked by diversity and a firm commitment to democratic governance, exhibits notable resilience amidst the prevailing circumstances. Recognizing this, the current research proposes the development of a novel communication strategy harnessing the power of social media platforms to enhance engagement with the Syrian public. This initiative seeks to facilitate bi-directional information sharing and foster active dialogue at various societal levels, underlining the potential of social media in advancing a comprehensive peace plan. The proposed strategy outlines a renewed focus on inclusive communication tactics, encouraging grassroots involvement essential for addressing the deep-seated issues in society. Leveraging sentiment analysis of discourse on social media platforms, it aims to glean crucial insights to steer future strategic directions. The researchers posit that implementing this innovative framework could significantly enhance the role of ICSOs in fostering a cohesive global community, suggesting its broader application across other Arab states facing similar challenges. This study, therefore, advocates for a transformative approach wherein ICSOs leverage informed communication to build a society grounded in mutual understanding and respect, laying the cornerstone for a potential blueprint in advancing global peace through strategic engagements.

**Keywords:** International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs), Communication strategies, Syrian civil society, Social media platforms, Grassroots approach

Before the initiation of the extensive public protests that permeated Syria in March 2011, numerous International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) engaged in a collective endeavour with diverse local Syrian civil society factions, coordinating a variety of cultural, political, and developmental

initiatives. However, the proactive engagement faced considerable stagnation as a result of an operational void experienced by the organisations. This phenomenon can be partially explained by the restricted availability of essential information and inadequate communication methods. Consequently, a multitude of initiatives were abruptly terminated, resulting in a widespread sentiment of dissatisfaction about the efforts to cultivate a harmonious partnership between international and domestic civic organisations.

The genesis of dispute may be traced back to the coercive suppression of rallies that were in opposition to the administration. Over time, this disagreement escalated into an armed clash by March 2011. During this period characterised by instability, there was a discernible rise in the forced migration of individuals, resulting in a substantial proliferation of the refugee phenomenon not only within the borders of Syria but also extending to neighbouring areas. In light of the prevailing circumstances, it became more apparent that the coordination of International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs), which bear the responsibility of fostering global peace, was insufficient. Consequently, this lack of coordination further intensified the crisis to a considerable extent.

Currently, it is crucial to undertake a comprehensive analysis and acknowledge the persistent resilience exhibited by the Syrian populace. This society is distinguished by its heterogeneous ethnic makeup and robust religious institutions. The steadfast commitment of citizens to the fundamental tenets of freedom of speech and open dialogue underscores a populace that is profoundly characterised by courage and an unflinching loyalty to democratic governance. The proposal to provide a novel communication strategy is driven by the inherent possibilities offered by social media platforms. This approach facilitates bidirectional information sharing and fosters active engagement at both macro and micro levels.

The present scholarly endeavour examines the possibilities of using social media communications to augment engagement with the Syrian public,

with the aim of advancing a comprehensive peace plan by mitigating ongoing hostilities. The primary objective is to do sentiment analysis on the discourse regularly observed on these platforms, with the aim of acquiring significant insights. This will thereafter provide guidance for future strategic orientations, encompassing both comprehensive and nuanced perspectives.

This research study introduces an innovative framework that civil society organisations can utilise to implement a renewed strategy in addressing the underlying issues that impact society. This framework involves the use of informed and inclusive communication tactics. The active engagement of the local community in this endeavour is not only desirable but also fundamentally indispensable in order to promote a grassroots approach to tackling the crisis. The researchers suggest a broader application of the created strategic framework by making comparisons to other Arab states that are encountering comparable difficulties. If subjected to rigorous testing and implemented in many states, this paradigm has the potential to showcase the significant influence of International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) in fostering a cohesive and harmonious global society. From this particular standpoint, the researchers put out a proposition to envision a worldwide scenario wherein International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) assume a pivotal function in the advancement of peace. The importance of adopting informed communication as a potent tool for fostering a community characterised by mutual understanding and respect is underscored.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the modern digital era, the potential significance of social media platforms in facilitating mediation activities has emerged. In the information age, scholars such as Castells (2007) have analysed the revolutionary impact of communication media. Their research has cast light on the transformative capacity of contemporary networks to induce societal changes. In addition, empirical research has demonstrated that social media platforms can significantly affect the formation of diplomatic ties

and facilitate direct communication between leaders and the general populace. Scholars, such as Aday *et al.* (2010) and Melissen (2005), have conducted exhaustive research in this particular field.

Despite optimistic predictions regarding the use of social media to promote peace, numerous scholars have highlighted the inherent limitations and misconduct potential. In his work, Morozov (2012) emphasises the potential dangers associated with misinformation, which can overshadow the advantageous exchange of ideas facilitated by these platforms. In a similar manner, Tufekci (2017) and Barberá *et al.* (2015) have conducted empirical research that contributes to a nuanced understanding of the topic by shedding light on the benefits and risks associated with the use of networked demonstrations in efforts to promote peace.

The Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA) facilitates the provision of media accessibility to individuals. This enables individuals to enhance their awareness of their environment and thus make informed decisions and respond appropriately. The Arab region has witnessed a notable surge in the manifestation of unrestricted expression, which has permeated the political landscape of these nations and contributed to the dismantling of state-controlled media monopolies within their borders. The Arab region has experienced the emergence of a new era in social media, leading to a consistent growth in citizen involvement on the internet. The figure was approximately 100 million in the year 2015[1] and has exhibited an upward trend since.

The advent of the digital communication era has accelerated the proliferation of freedom of expression and has continued to grow in magnitude. Arab individuals are increasingly utilising online platforms as a means to voice their opinions and exercise their right to freedom of speech and expression. As a result of the restrictions imposed by governmental authorities on communication activities, individuals are eager to articulate their ideas regarding the novel spatial format now accessible to them. The influence of this novel format exhibits a distinct anthropological quality,

as its true ramifications cannot be fully discerned until a significant span of time, approximately a decade or more, has elapsed. In the Middle East and North African countries, individuals continue to face limitations while engaging in discussions pertaining to sensitive subjects on social media platforms (Ghannam, 2011). Briefly, the current corpus of scholarly works encompasses a vast array of prospects and challenges associated with the use of social media as a potent instrument for promoting peace. In order to thoroughly comprehend and utilise the potential of social media within the context of peacebuilding, it is necessary to conduct exhaustive and rigorous research.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- ⊙ To determine the significance of social media in mitigating the power conflict in Syria.
- ⊙ To understand the function of International Civil Society Organisations in utilising social media to mitigate the power struggle.

## METHODOLOGY

The research is a qualitative examination of how International Civil Society Organisations use social media to mitigate power struggles. Researchers have conducted their studies in phases.

First, the researchers conducted a review of relevant articles and books pertinent to the aspect of the topic under study that was the subject of the study. The researchers have introduced the fundamental concepts of conflict resolution and how to maintain peace through ICSOs strategies for peace negotiations and the significance of social media as an instrument for freedom of speech and expression after reviewing several articles. This phase justifies the accomplishment of the first objective under consideration.

Second, the researchers have qualitatively analysed and extracted the public's perspective on the impending crisis devastating their nation. The researchers believe that we cannot reach a consensus based solely on textual analysis without first gaining a thorough comprehension of the public's

perspective. The researchers used a method of purposive sampling to select pertinent blogs pertaining to the conflicting situations in Syria that accurately reflect the state of the social media platform. Therefore, the researchers selected five relevant blogs (which were suggested as pertinent blogs in The Guardian), from which we extracted the five most recently published articles and gathered public opinion. Lexanalytics is utilised for this purpose. It is an opinion mining add-on for Microsoft Excel that facilitates the quantitative representation of qualitative social media discussions.

The researchers have reviewed the Twitter accounts of ICSOs involved in mitigating conflict situations in Syria through effective communication and information dissemination. Purposeful sampling and the hashtag #Syria were used to identify the key organisations promoting peace in such conflicted regions. In addition, the first three organisational profiles from the category of organisations with the most followers have been selected for review in this phase of the study. To achieve their second and final objective, the researchers have derived conclusions from the integrated analytical report of textual, opinion, and review-based analysis.

## Freedom of Speech and Expression in Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 declared that the utmost goal of the general populace is the freedom of expression and belief, as well as freedom from fear and want. According to Article 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), it is explicitly stated that no State, group, or individual shall have the right to partake in any action or engage in any behaviour with the intention of undermining or eliminating any of the rights and freedoms outlined in this Declaration.

The notion of "Freedom of Speech and Expression" is widely recognised in both International Law and many Domestic Constitutional Laws. It is firmly established that this right is safeguarded and cannot be arbitrarily revoked by any state, organisation, or individual.

## Social Media for Freedom

In his article titled "Social media and democracy: Critical reflections" (Unwin, 2012), Tim Unwin discusses the utilisation of social media for political purposes and its multifaceted nature, specifically in relation to democratic systems. Unwin's paper, presented at the 2012 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, highlights the challenges encountered by social media in this context. In the article, the author discusses the importance of social media in contemporary political contexts, using the Arab Spring Revolutions as an illustrative example commonly referred to as the "Facebook Revolution" or "Twitter Revolution." However, the author also addresses the issue of social exclusion faced by marginalised segments of society, who frequently experience limited access to political, economic, and social information.

In another scholarly essay entitled "Social Media and Democracy: Facebook as a Tool for the Establishment of Democracy in Egypt," authored by Sergiy Prokhorov, a researcher affiliated with Malmo University, a comprehensive analysis is provided to elucidate the intricate nature underlying the concept of "democracy." The primary objective of the thesis was to examine the function of Facebook in political growth, namely in the advancement and consolidation of democracy, using the case study of Egypt's revolution.

## Status of Social Media in Syria

The country of Syria possesses a populace exceeding 22 million individuals. Based on available information, it was observed that the internet penetration rate in Syria was approximately 28% in 2014. During this time, there were instances of restricted access to ICT apps, censored social media material, and the detainment of bloggers and ICT users, as depicted in Figure 1 provided. This statement suggests the severe condition of the nation, as its citizens were denied the fundamental human freedom to freely articulate their opinions and thoughts. The significance of social media in political growth and its role in promoting

democracy is emphasised in the research conducted by Prokhorov and Unwin.

A study was conducted to assess the level of social media freedom and gain insights into public perceptions on the limited freedom experienced by individuals (Freedom House, 2015).

| Population: | 22 million |
|---|---|
| Internet Penetration 2014: | 28 percent |
| Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked: | Yes |
| Political/Social Content Blocked: | Yes |
| Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested: | Yes |
| Press Freedom 2015 Status: | Not Free |

**Fig. 1:** Social Media Status of Syria (***Source:*** Centre for International Media Assistance, available at www.cima.ned.org)

## The Influence of Syria's Inaccessible Social Media

Online tools such as social media platforms have played a vital role both domestically and internationally in documenting instances of human rights violations, advocating for the release of incarcerated activists, and disseminating information about global war situations. According to Dublin (2013), Syrian individuals demonstrate high levels of engagement on Facebook, utilising the platform to express their perspectives, engage in discussions surrounding pertinent matters, provide commentary on enacted policies, and organise both online and offline events. A Facebook petition calling for the release of Youssef Abdelke was established by a collective of Syrian intellectuals and artists. This petition garnered the support of more than 2,500 users. Abdelke, a proficient illustrator and painter, expressed his political dissent through his artistic creations, resulting in his detention in July 2013. The individual in question was incarcerated as a result of affixing his signature to a written proclamation that called for the resignation of President Assad (Babelmed, 2014). Abdelke was released from

custody after a period of one month, as documented by Khalil Sweileh in 2013. This exemplified the influence of social media, often perceived as lacking authority, within the context of Syria. There exists a divergence of opinions on the extent of accessibility of social media within the context of Syria. The existing limitations in the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be overcome in order to establish dominance in pursuit of a virtuous objective.

The occurrence of a phenomenon known as the "You Tube War" can be attributed to the egregious infringements upon human rights, resulting in the proliferation of videos providing extensive coverage of such crimes. The movies that were broadcast on the websites depicted military battles and the subsequent devastation that occurred in the post-conflict period (Koett, 2014). The Syrian government has transitioned its approach from employing heavy weaponry and missiles against opposition forces. Similarly, journalists and media representatives, who often focus on their own professional domains, have now changed their attention towards documenting the violent consequences of these conflicts. A substantial number of films have been uploaded to the online platform known as YouTube, originating from various sources such as journalists, citizen journalists, rebel groups, civil society organisations, and nonprofit organisations. Social media platforms dedicated to video sharing, such as 'YouTube,' have emerged as platforms for propagating individuals' perspectives and enabling global dissemination of their voices. In 2013, a total of over 200,000 videos were uploaded on the popular online video platform, YouTube, pertaining to the topic of Syria. In spite of the challenges encountered in media coverage inside distant and conflict-ridden regions, the establishment of "Local Media Offices" serves to ensure that local journalists focus on a specific geographic region. Subsequently, these journalists employ social media networking platforms to authenticate and disseminate newly acquired material.

## Role of ICSOs in UN System

The impact of civil society on intergovernmental decision-making processes is now widely recognised, notwithstanding the persistent but diminishing opposition from certain International Organisations. The ongoing analyses and reforms conducted by several intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) indicate that the focus has shifted from questioning the necessity of NGOs' involvement to determining the most effective methods of managing their engagement. The connection between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can be categorised as either operational or implementation-oriented. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has an operational relationship with approximately 500 non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The collaboration between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation of projects is regulated by agreements that define shared duties. In regards to the selection criterion, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) places emphasis on prioritising collaboration with indigenous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or multinational NGOs that have local affiliates. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) operates an NGO Coordination Unit that serves as a central hub for addressing overarching policy matters related to non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The initial inquiry is to the current legal standing of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within the framework of contemporary international law.

NGOs have had a significant impact in shaping the global agenda, exerting influence on the formulation of international regulations, and making valuable contributions to the enforcement of international standards. Notably, their efforts have been instrumental in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The period following 2002 was characterised by a particular emphasis on two key areas of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) activities: their interactions with inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) and their involvement in international legal procedures. The involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in international diaspora has consistently been a significant aspect. This is due to the growing recognition by intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) that NGOs serve as valuable partners in achieving their objectives and implementing their policies. NGOs contribute to IGOs' success through activities such as disseminating information, raising public awareness, and engaging in direct action on the ground.

The latter is of utmost importance due to the significant increase in the number of International Courts and Tribunals in the past twenty years. The current inquiry pertains to the consultative nature of the relationship between intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Alternatively, it explores the extent to which NGOs play a participatory role within the specific realm of economic and social cooperation. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) currently possess an expanded scope of influence, which intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) are increasingly inclined to embrace (or find themselves less capable of opposing).

## Importance of ICSOs in mitigating power struggle and building peace in Syria-A Case Study of UNSMIS

The 2011-starting Syrian conflict has been marked by an unprecedented level of destruction and a serious humanitarian disaster. International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) have an increasingly important role in promoting peace in the region as a result of rising tensions. This case study's main point of interest is how the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) actively participated in addressing power dynamics and leading measures to bring about peace.

The United Nations Security Council gave its approval for the establishment of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) in April 2012. This initiative's main goal was to monitor and oversee the complete cessation of

armed hostilities by all parties involved in all their forms. It also planned to provide assistance during the six-point plan's execution, which was created to address and end the ongoing conflict. The mission was carried out in an environment that was marked by a high level of volatility and by entrenched power dynamics among numerous factions.

The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS)'s main goal was to promote improved intergroup interaction and create a climate that was favourable for calm discussions and transitional procedures. The group's main goal was to establish a durable peace that was supported by a just allocation of power and the preservation of basic human rights. A technique that the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) used was constant observation of the local situation. The achievement was made possible by sending a team of observers to several cities inside the Syrian area, which made it possible to quickly assess if the peace agreements were being followed and to report any violations. By putting this method into action, the parties involved were encouraged to be more accountable to one another and the peace process was made more transparent.

The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) encountered many difficulties when putting its operational plan into practise, including limited access to areas affected by the conflict and jeopardised personnel safety. Despite the difficulties indicated above, the group successfully held a number of discussions with the parties involved in the incident. Additionally, it brought attention to the ceasefire agreement's transgressions, which encouraged global recognition and prompted a response from the international community. In order to demonstrate the possible impact of proactive international intervention in conflict-affected regions, the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) displayed sustained efforts that resulted in a brief period of comparative quiet (United Nations, 2012).

An instructive example that highlights the crucial role that International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) may play in addressing power dynamics and aiding the establishment of peaceful conditions is the case study of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS). By successfully establishing a channel of communication and putting policies into place, the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) ensured accountability. This provided a chance for dialogue in a challenging and unpredictable situation.

The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria's (UNSMIS) efforts, which serve as evidence of the crucial role played by international civil society organisations (ICSOs) in actions aimed at promoting peace, were put on hold in August 2012 due to the escalation of violence, but this did not lessen their relevance. The way the mission handled real-time monitoring and reporting was a prime example of the critical role that accountability and transparency play in promoting the establishment of enduring peace.

In summary, the UNSMIS case study research provides a comprehensive view on the significant role international civil society organisations (ICSOs) play in times of crisis. Using Syria as an example, this analysis highlights the different opportunities and difficulties that occur when pursuing programmes for promoting peace in areas that have been destroyed by conflict. Despite the significant challenges encountered, the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria's (UNSMIS) involvement offers a useful example for international organisations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of upcoming peace-building initiatives. This proclamation offers a framework for a strategy that international civil society organisations (ICSOs) can use to best utilise their influence in promoting communication, responsibility, and peace in areas characterised by ongoing power struggles. In order to effectively support efforts to establish peace, it is essential to look at techniques for improving information distribution and communication tactics within the fields of media and communication, particularly in the context of environmental communication.

## Social Media Discourse Analysis of Syria

The next social media study aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of the prevailing popular sentiment towards the crisis situation in Syria. According to The Guardian, a group of researchers undertook an examination of popular Syrian blogs using opinion mining techniques. The blogs cited above include 'Free Halab', 'Qunfuz', 'Syrian Revolution', 'Maysaloon', and 'Walls'. The analysis is segmented into discrete phases. The preliminary phase of the study involves doing a thematic analysis of blogs, enabling the researchers to have an understanding of the prevailing genre of discourse concerning Syria. This study on thematic sentiment analysis facilitates the understanding of the main subjects and emotions conveyed in connection with the given issue. The following step is understanding the entity, which assists in identifying the terms that serve as active variables within the discourse retrieved from the blogs. This facilitates International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) in efficiently discerning and formulating strategic plans that give precedence to the most crucial priority areas. The final component of this study is the performance of sentiment analysis on the words employed in phrases retrieved from the chosen blogs, as defined by the researchers.

## Analysis

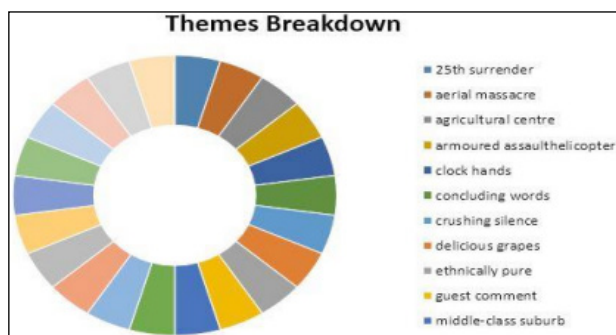The primary topics examined in the blog posts are depicted in Fig. 2.



**Fig. 2:** Theme Breakdown of Blogs

This is a macro-level study of the provided scenario. The significance of these subjects holds considerable importance in facilitating communication among the populace of Syria. Themes such as the Arial massacre hold significance in the context of this study since the researcher aims to emphasise the overarching subjects through which information is shared via blogs and various social media platforms. International Civil Society Organisations can focus their efforts by identifying the specific areas of concern. This approach has the potential to yield time and cost savings by eliminating the need for individual data collecting in the Syrian Battle grounds. Additionally, it is possible to develop real-time solutions to address the conflict issue.
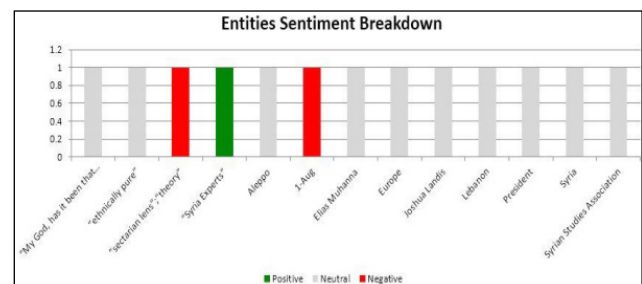


**Fig. 3:** Entities Sentiment Breakdown of Blogs

The sentiment breakdown of entities, as depicted in Fig. 4, represents words that are categorised as positive, neutral, and negative. This strategy is also considered a component of macro-communication, as it encompasses a wider viewpoint. The analysis of the software-generated data reveals that the entities discussed in the blogs predominantly exhibit a neutral sentiment, with a smaller proportion displaying negative sentiment. The limited presence of positive sentiments can be attributed to the challenging circumstances faced by individuals. Conversely, the prevalence of neutral remarks can be attributed to concerns surrounding potential restrictions on the freedom to express oneself and engage in open communication. Therefore, adopting a neutral mode of communication ensures that individuals can freely convey their thoughts without compromising their freedom of speech. Information and Communication Security Officers (ICSOs) play a crucial role in identifying and addressing various entities, hence offering effective solutions to mitigate potential risks and vulnerabilities. Opinion leaders,

such as Syrian experts, can be regarded as influential entities within society. It is well recognised that in order to facilitate effective communication in conflict resolution and the promotion of peace, it is imperative to identify individuals who possess significant influence and can contribute to problem-solving at the grassroots level.



**Fig. 4:** Word Cloud

Phrase analysis refers to the examination of terms within blogs, with the aim of comprehending their underlying feelings. The word cloud depicted in Fig. 5 serves as a crucial instrument for discerning the significant terms that contribute to the sentiment discourse within the Syrian blogging community. The term "cloud" for Phrase Analysis is presented in Fig. 5. The presence of terms such as "massacre," "terrible," and "surrender" within the analysed blogs indicates the manifestation of negative inclinations. Certain words, such as "quiet," possess a neutral connotation in their etymology. Conversely, words like "delicious," "famed," and "experts" exhibit a positive tone.



**Fig. 5:** Phrase Sentiment Analysis from Blogs

The word cloud is generated by the software by the utilisation of sophisticated programming techniques that analyse the sentiment of the entire sentence, hence enabling the provision of a word cloud for phrase analysis. The intensity of the Phrase Sentiment Analysis is depicted in Fig. 5. This is an expansion of the concept of a word cloud, which incorporates information on the frequency and intensity with which words are used in a positive, neutral, or negative manner.

## FINDINGS

The researchers have discovered that sentiment analysis may be utilised to extract the sentiments of individuals, so enabling a comprehensive comprehension of the situation in conflict locations within Syria. International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) can employ this information to facilitate the development of plans and the formulation of policies for effective execution. The researchers have identified the following findings:

Researchers have comprehended that social media effectively captures the sentiment of individuals. This approach enables the calculation of latent emotions and desires within individuals. Lexanalytics is a marketing technology that is employed to gain insights on the purchasing behaviours exhibited by clients. However, when employed in a more expansive context, such as aiding in the alleviation of crises and fostering peace among individuals. The utilisation of social media analytics enables the acquisition and dissemination of desired information from previously inaccessible regions. By harnessing the full potential of social media, this approach offers a means to address longstanding issues that have plagued the nation.

## Social Media Review of ICSOs

The primary purpose of organisations establishing accounts on various social media platforms is to engage with the population of Syria, providing them with information, facilitating effective communication, delivering news updates, and offering a venue for the expression and exchange of opinions. The social media platforms utilised by

International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) have been identified by the researchers.

## International Organizations

As of September 9th, 2023, there were 7312 followers, giving a total of 583 followers. UNDP Syria is a significant contributor to the Twitter platform for discussion of Syrian issues and develops nonviolent actions to empower the people in thinking about bettering the lives of the people in Syria and building a resilient nation.

The UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) serves as a platform to share important yet sensitive information with the public about establishing refugee camps, protecting human rights, etc. with a total of 845 followers and 37.7k followers as of September 9th, 2023. It is the designated location where individuals can deal with issues pertaining to refugee standards and policies as envisioned by the United Nations.

OCHA is the main forum for people to express their issues connected to human rights, with a total of
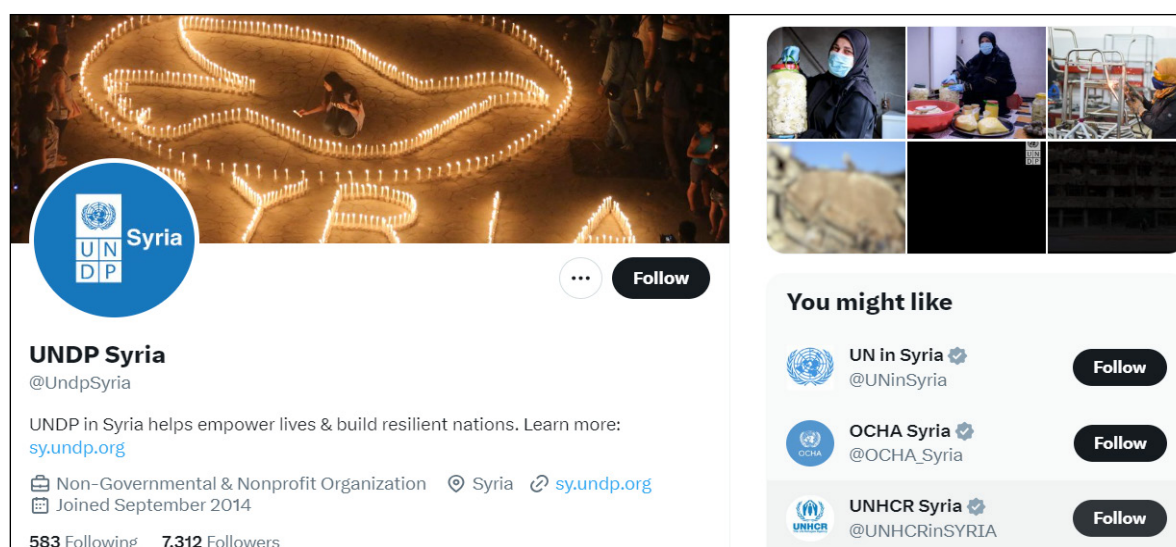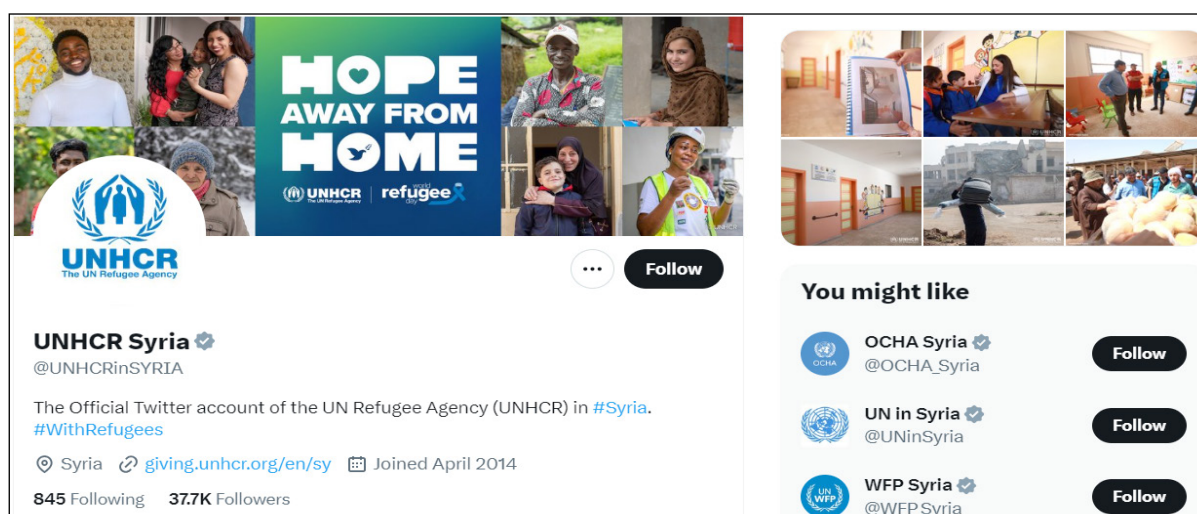


**Fig. 6:** Twitter account of UNDP Syria
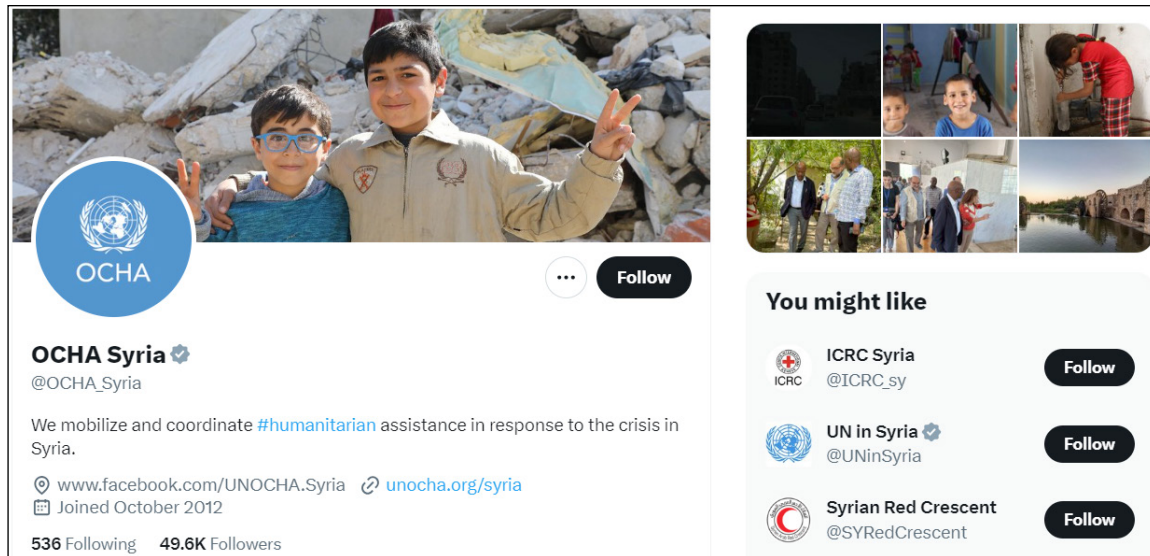


**Fig. 7:** Twitter account of UNHCR Syria
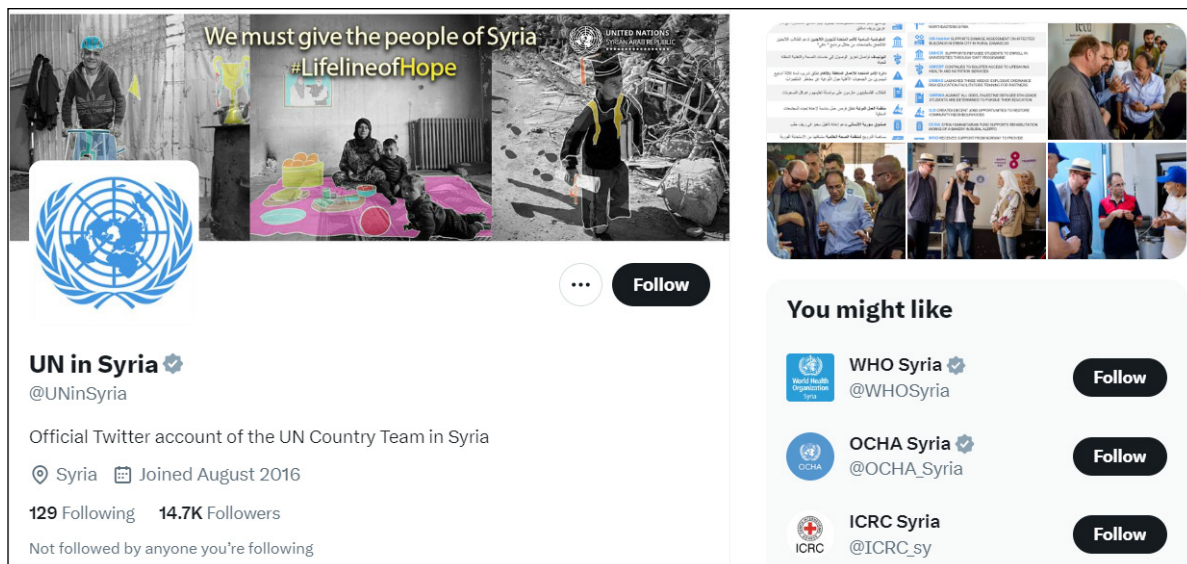
**Fig. 8:** Twitter account of OCHA Syria



**Fig. 9:** Twitter account of UN in Syria

536 followers, or 49.6 followers, as of September 9th, 2023. They address the crisis issues by mobilising and organising humanitarian efforts in response to the crisis in Syria. This help is given during violent situations.

As of September 9, 2023, the United Nations (UN) has amassed a following of 129 individuals and garnered 14.7k followers. In its efforts to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations, the UN engages in collaborative endeavours with over 200 humanitarian partners. These partnerships aim to deliver crucial humanitarian aid through the implementation of Humanitarian Response Plans. Consequently, millions of individuals are provided with life-saving and life-sustaining assistance throughout the course of the year.

## FINDINGS

Upon conducting an analysis of the operations of the organisation, the researchers have come to the conclusion that in the current period characterised by clicktivism, the metrics of likes and followers hold significant importance. Social media serves as a vital instrument employed by International Civil Society Organisations (ICSOs) to address and alleviate issues by establishing a virtual platform for the purpose of sharing information. This facilitates organisations in directing their attention towards the provision of support to individuals and engaging in real-time discussions regarding their issues. Access to information and the right to communicate ideas and beliefs are of utmost importance for the people residing in conflict situations, such as Syria, where accessibility is often challenging. These organisations are actively engaged in the development of a feedback platform that enables individuals to provide commentary and express their perspectives on many topics of discussion, as well as the daily news and events occurring within the state. In this manner, individuals become cognizant of their predicaments and acquire the knowledge necessary to address those predicaments. These organisations offer solutions on a daily basis. Furthermore, it facilitates the widespread dissemination of information on a global scale.

## CONCLUSION

In recent years, Syrians have primarily relied on the Internet, namely social networks, as their main source of information. The organisation has successfully established an extensive communication infrastructure, comprising numerous Facebook sites, Twitter accounts, and Skype profiles. Numerous digital initiatives were created by individuals of Syrian origin, both residing within and outside the borders of the nation, with the aim of facilitating universal information accessibility for all segments of society. Various television channels such as Syrian Revolution TV, Syria Alshabab Channel, and Alghad TV, along with radio stations like Radio Alkul, Hawa FM, and radio Smart, emerged during the period under consideration. Additionally, a

wide range of online publications, particularly those originating from outside the nation, became prevalent. Currently, the accessibility of information for those residing in Syria is contingent upon the presence of electricity and the Internet. Numerous associations, serving as representatives of the Syrian civil society, were established both within and beyond the borders of the nation during this biennial period. The number provided is 16. Numerous international civil society organisations (iCSOs) have also initiated social media campaigns with the aim of providing global updates on the peace initiatives and efforts to alleviate the power struggle in Syria. The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) maintained a record of their working agenda, policy, and findings for a duration of four months on the official website of the United Nations. However, there is potential for greater utilisation of social media tools to effectively disseminate information and updates to peace negotiators, international organisations, civil society, inter-governmental agencies, victims, and volunteers regarding ongoing peace restoration efforts and the reduction of power struggles. This can be achieved by providing a platform for rebel groups to express their perspectives.

## REFERENCES

Aday, S., Farrell, H., Lynch, M., Sides, J., Kelly, J. and Zuckerman, E. 2010. Blogs and bullets: New media in contentious politics. *United States Institute of Peace*, **65**: 1-31.

Babelmed. Déclaration pour Syrie democratique" [Declaration for a Democratic Syria]. March 14, 2014. http://bit.ly/1izKKHU. (Accessed August 24, 2016).

Barberá, P., Jost, J.T., Nagler, J., Tucker, J.A. and Bonneau, R. 2015. Tweeting from left to right: Is online political communication more than an echo chamber?. *Psychological Science*, **26**(10): 1531-1542.

Castells, M. 2007. Communication, power and counter-power in the network society. *International Journal of Communication*, **1**(1): 29.

Dublin, Judith. Syrian Fight Fire with Facebook. Septemebr 23, 2013. http://voc.tv/1UJqcIP (accessed August 26, 2016).

Freedom House. freedomhouse.org. 2015. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedomnet/2015/syria (accessed August 26, 2016).

Ghannam, J. 2011. Social Media in the Arab World: Leading up to the Uprisings of 2011. *Center for international media assistance*, **3**(1): 1-44.

Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, **53**(1): 59-68.

Khalil Sweileh, Omar al-Sheikh, Al-Akhbar. Syria: Youssef Abdelke Free, Resolved to Stay in Damascus. August 23, 2013. http://bit.ly/1XQaLmi (accessed August 24, 2016).

Koettl, C. 2014. The YouTube War: Citizen Videos Revolutionize Human Rights Monitoring in Syria. *Media Shift*, **18**.

Melissen, J. 2005. The new public diplomacy: Between theory and practice. In *The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (pp. 3-27). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Morozov, E. 2012. *The net delusion: The dark side of Internet freedom*. Public Affairs.

Prokhorov, S. 2012. Social media and democracy: Facebook as a tool for the establishment of democracy in Egypt.

Rahman, Z., Basak, D.K. and Nausheen, S. 2013. Library, democracy and sustainable development: The role of public libraries in India. *Golden Research Thoughts*, **3**(2): 1-6.

Senger, D. and Suopis, C. 2010. Can Social Media Spread Democracy?. *April*, *23*, 2013.

Tufekci, Z. 2017. *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Yale University Press.

United Nations (2-12). Six-Point Proposal of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States- as annexed to Security Council resolution 2042 (2012) of 14 April. Available at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/six_point_proposal.pdf (Accessed 1 Sept. 2016).

United Nations. (2012). United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria. Retrieved from https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SY_120420_UNSMIS%20Mandate.pdf

Unwin, P.T. 2012. Social media and democracy: critical reflections.