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Hierarchies of Victimhood in the Syrian Civil War: Who Gets Seen, Helped, and Believed?

Ayesha Merchant
ayeshammerchant@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Syrian Civil War has resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in recent history, affecting millions through violence, displacement, detention, and loss. While significant research has examined victimhood, humanitarian aid, media representation, and transitional justice in Syria, these topics are often studied separately. This paper explores how humanitarian, legal, and media systems collectively shape the recognition and representation of victims in the Syrian Civil War. Using a qualitative research approach, this study analyzed academic literature, human rights reports, policy papers, and transitional justice frameworks related to Syria. Through thematic and discourse analysis, the research examined patterns surrounding victim classification, visibility, humanitarian aid, media representation, and inclusion in future justice processes.

The findings revealed that recognition is not determined by suffering alone. Instead, recognition is influenced by the interaction of multiple systems that shape which victims receive visibility, support, and acknowledgment. A recurring pattern throughout the research was the relationship between media visibility, humanitarian response, and legal recognition. Victims who received greater public attention were often more visible within humanitarian and justice discussions as well. The findings also highlighted a disconnect between institutional definitions of victimhood and how many Syrians understand their own experiences, with some individuals identifying as survivors, activists, or community members rather than victims.

This paper argues that recognition functions as an ongoing process rather than a single decision or label. By examining the connections between legal systems, humanitarian organizations, media narratives, and transitional justice efforts, the research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how recognition operates within the Syrian Civil War. Ultimately, the study suggests that understanding victim recognition requires looking beyond individual institutions and examining how multiple systems interact to shape visibility, inclusion, and representation.

***Keywords*:** Victim Recognition, Transitional Justice, Victimhood, Humanitarian Aid, Media Representation, Visibility, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Reconciliation, Accountability, Representation

INTRODUCTION

The Syrian Civil War has become one of the most devastating conflicts of the twenty-first century. Since it began in 2011, millions of Syrians have experienced displacement, violence, detention, and the loss of their homes, families, and communities. Although the conflict is often discussed in terms of humanitarian need, political instability, and international intervention, much less attention has been given to how victims of the war are recognized and represented. Recognition is often assumed to be straightforward, with the idea that anyone who has suffered is automatically acknowledged as a victim. However, existing research suggests that recognition is far more complex.

Victim recognition extends beyond simply identifying who has experienced harm. It influences access to humanitarian aid, legal protection, public sympathy, and future justice processes. The way victims are represented by humanitarian organizations, legal institutions, and the media can shape whose experiences receive international attention and whose remain largely overlooked. As a result, recognition becomes an important part of understanding not only the conflict itself, but also the systems that respond to it.

Much of the existing literature explores topics such as victim classification, humanitarian aid, media representation, and transitional justice. While these areas provide valuable insight into the experiences of Syrians affected by the conflict, they are often examined independently. This creates a gap in understanding how these different systems interact and collectively influence victim recognition. Looking at them separately can overlook the broader process through which recognition is produced.

This research seeks to address that gap by examining how humanitarian, legal, and media systems shape the recognition and representation of victims in the Syrian Civil War. Rather than focusing on one institution or perspective, the paper explores how these systems influence one another and how their interaction affects visibility, support, and inclusion in future justice efforts.

To answer this research question, the study uses a qualitative approach based on academic literature, human rights reports, policy papers, and transitional justice frameworks. Through thematic and discourse analysis, the research identifies recurring patterns across the literature and examines how recognition is constructed within different systems.

The findings suggest that recognition in the Syrian Civil War is shaped by the interaction of humanitarian, legal, and media systems rather than by any single institution alone. While these systems are often discussed separately in existing literature, they appear to influence one another in ways that affect visibility, support, and inclusion in future justice processes. A recurring pattern throughout the research was the relationship between media visibility, humanitarian response, and legal recognition, demonstrating that recognition functions as an ongoing process rather than a single decision or label. By bringing these perspectives together, this paper aims to provide a more complete understanding of victim

recognition and contribute to broader discussions surrounding humanitarian response, justice, and reconciliation in Syria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most significant themes throughout the literature is the question of who is recognized as a victim in the Syrian Civil War. Although victimhood is often assumed to be a straightforward category, the literature suggests that recognition is far more complex and contested. Rather than being based solely on suffering, recognition is frequently shaped by legal definitions, political priorities, and institutional frameworks. As a result, different groups affected by the conflict may receive different levels of acknowledgment, support, and inclusion in justice processes.

Al-Omari (2026) argues that victim classification in Syria remains inconsistent and politically influenced. Different actors involved in transitional justice efforts often define victims in different ways, creating uncertainty about who qualifies for recognition, reparations, or participation in future justice mechanisms. This suggests that recognition is not simply a reflection of harm experienced but a process shaped by institutional decisions. As a result, certain groups may become more visible within justice frameworks while others remain excluded.

This issue becomes particularly important when examining transitional justice. The Syrian Network for Human Rights describes transitional justice as a process that includes truth-telling, accountability, reparations, and institutional reform. Similarly, the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre emphasizes the importance of documentation and legal reform in creating pathways toward accountability. Both organizations view recognition as a necessary foundation for justice and reconciliation. However, while these frameworks provide valuable solutions for addressing past violations, they also reveal an underlying challenge. Many proposals focus on creating institutions and legal mechanisms but provide less insight into whether these systems will adequately represent the diverse experiences of Syrians affected by the conflict.

The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism reinforces this concern by describing Syria's transitional justice efforts as fragmented and still developing. Although progress is being made, uncertainty remains regarding how victims will be included in future accountability processes. This demonstrates that recognition remains an unresolved issue within Syria's post-conflict landscape. While the literature generally agrees that justice requires recognition, there is less agreement on how recognition should be implemented in practice and who ultimately decides which experiences are included.

Taken together, this body of literature highlights the importance of recognition within transitional justice. However, it tends to focus heavily on institutional frameworks and policy recommendations. Much less attention is given to how victims themselves experience recognition or exclusion. This suggests that there is still a gap between theoretical models of justice and the lived realities of those affected by the conflict.

A second major theme throughout the literature is the role of representation in shaping public understanding of victimhood. Many scholars argue that recognition is closely linked to visibility, meaning that some victims receive greater attention because their experiences fit dominant humanitarian and media narratives. This raises important questions about how suffering is portrayed and whose stories are prioritized.

LUGARIT argues that many Syrian stories remain untold because global narratives often focus on simplified and emotionally compelling forms of suffering. As a result, some experiences become highly visible while others receive little attention. This suggests that public understanding of the Syrian conflict is shaped not only by what happens on the ground but also by which stories are selected and amplified. Media representation therefore plays a significant role in determining which victims become recognizable to international audiences.

This idea is further supported by the work of Didier Fassin and Miriam Ticktin. Both scholars argue that humanitarian systems often prioritize victims who appear innocent, vulnerable, and non-political. Individuals who fit these expectations are more likely to receive sympathy and support, while those with more complex identities or political affiliations may receive less attention. In the Syrian context, this helps explain why women and children are often featured prominently in humanitarian campaigns while other affected groups receive comparatively less visibility.

The literature on humanitarian aid reveals a similar pattern. Aid distribution is frequently influenced by factors such as accessibility, donor priorities, and international attention rather than solely by need. Refugees outside Syria often receive greater visibility than internally displaced people within the country because they are more present within international media and humanitarian networks. This demonstrates that visibility can influence access to resources and support. Recognition therefore becomes closely tied to broader systems of representation rather than simply the severity of suffering experienced.

While the literature successfully demonstrates the connection between visibility and recognition, it often treats media representation, humanitarian aid, and transitional justice as separate issues. In reality, these systems are interconnected. The way victims are represented in media narratives can influence public sympathy, which in turn shapes humanitarian priorities and potentially affects future justice processes. This relationship remains underexplored within existing research.

Overall, the literature provides valuable insight into victim classification, transitional justice, media representation, and humanitarian aid in Syria. Most scholars agree that recognition plays a critical role in determining access to justice, support, and visibility. However, these topics are often examined independently rather than as parts of a larger system.

A key limitation of the existing literature is that it tends to focus either on institutional approaches to justice or on media and humanitarian narratives without fully connecting the two. As a result, there is limited research examining how legal recognition, public visibility, and humanitarian support work together to shape the experiences of victims in Syria.

Based on the literature reviewed, it appears that recognition functions as more than a legal category or humanitarian concern. It influences who receives aid, whose stories are heard, and who is included in future discussions of justice and reconciliation. However, the relationship between these different forms of recognition remains insufficiently explored. This paper seeks to address that gap by examining how humanitarian, legal, and media systems collectively shape the recognition and representation of victims in the Syrian Civil War, and how this influences their inclusion in transitional justice processes.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative document analysis to examine how victims of the Syrian Civil War are recognized and represented through humanitarian, legal, and media systems. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on language, identity, classification, and representation rather than numerical data. The main unit of analysis was therefore a claim, description, label, or framing choice within each source.

The research relied on a focused sample of nine sources from the literature review. These sources were selected based on four main factors: their relevance to Syria or victim recognition, their authority within their field, how frequently they are used in discussions of humanitarianism or transitional justice, and their ability to represent different parts of the recognition process. The purpose was not to analyze everything written about the Syrian conflict. Instead, the sources were chosen to allow legal, humanitarian, academic, and media perspectives to be compared.

Source type	**Sources analyzed**	**Purpose in the research**
Legal and policy sources	Al-Omari and TIMEP, International IDEA, the Syrian Network for Human Rights, and the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre	To examine formal definitions of victims, eligibility, documentation, reparations, accountability, and participation
Academic scholarship	Didier Fassin and Miriam Ticktin	To examine humanitarian ideas surrounding vulnerability, innocence, deservingness, and care
Media reporting	Freedland in *The Guardian* and McKirdy and Tawfeeq at CNN	To examine the framing of Alan Kurdi and Omran Daqneesh and how individuals become symbols of a larger crisis
Syrian public commentary	LUGARIT	To examine which Syrian

		experiences are described as visible, missing, or still untold

The analysis was completed in three main steps. First, each source was closely read and passages were marked whenever they defined a victim, named a specific victim group, discussed who should receive aid or justice, or explained why a person or experience became publicly visible. The research then used inductive coding. This means that the codes were developed from repeated ideas found in the sources instead of being completely decided before the sources were read.

After the first reading, similar ideas were organized into six main codes:

1. Victim classification
2. Media visibility
3. Humanitarian prioritization
4. Legal or justice recognition
5. Self-identification versus institutional labeling
6. Exclusion or underrepresentation

A passage could be placed under more than one code if it connected different systems. For example, a media story could be coded under both media visibility and humanitarian prioritization if it showed how increased attention influenced discussions of aid.

Second, the codes were compared across the different types of sources. For example, the research compared how legal and policy sources discussed refugees, internally displaced persons, detainees, families of missing people, civilians, and former combatants. It also compared the representation of women and children with the lower visibility of adult men, detainees, and families of the disappeared. The purpose of these comparisons was not to rank one group's suffering above another. Instead, it was to examine why certain experiences became more recognizable than others within the same conflict.

Third, discourse analysis was used to examine the specific language and framing choices found in the sources. This included analyzing words such as “victim,” “survivor,” “innocent,” “vulnerable,” “symbol,” and “face.” The research also examined who was allowed to speak and who was only spoken about, whether victims were presented as active individuals or passive recipients of care, and whether responsibility for harm was clearly stated or hidden through passive language.

In the media sources, particular attention was given to headlines, captions, and the repeated use of symbolic images. In legal and policy sources, the analysis focused on definitions, lists of eligible groups, documentation, participation, and reparations. This made it possible to examine how different institutions described victims depending on their own goals and responsibilities.

Finally, the coded findings were compared across the three main systems: media, humanitarian response, and legal or transitional justice recognition. A relationship was treated as a recurring pattern when it

appeared in more than one type of source rather than in one isolated example. This process helped trace how an individual or group could first become visible through media coverage, then receive greater humanitarian attention, and later become more included in legal or transitional justice discussions. It also helped reveal the opposite process, in which certain experiences remained underrepresented across all three systems.

One limitation of this methodology is that it relies on a relatively small sample of secondary sources rather than firsthand interviews or fieldwork. The research can show how institutions, scholars, and the media construct recognition, but it cannot represent the views of every Syrian or prove that media attention directly caused a specific humanitarian or legal decision. Therefore, the findings should be understood as recurring patterns within the selected sources rather than a complete measurement of all victim experiences in the Syrian Civil War.

RESULTS

The findings of this research show that recognition during the Syrian Civil War is influenced by far more than just the direct experience of suffering. Across the literature, a recurring theme is that humanitarian organizations, media narratives, legal frameworks, and transitional justice mechanisms all contribute to shaping which victims are acknowledged, supported, and made visible. While millions of Syrians have experienced violence, displacement, detention, and loss, these experiences have not been recognized in a consistent or equal manner. Instead, recognition often depends on how suffering is interpreted and communicated within broader institutional and global contexts.

One of the most significant findings is the absence of a clear and universally accepted definition of who qualifies as a victim. Different organizations, governments, and legal bodies apply varying criteria, which can directly influence access to humanitarian aid, legal protection, and participation in justice processes. Mansour al-Omari from the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy argues that victim classification in Syria remains politically contested and that there is no single definition that has been accepted across all accountability and justice initiatives. Similarly, the International IDEA Transitional Justice Handbook defines victims as individuals who have suffered physical, mental, emotional, or economic harm, but it does not clearly explain how different victim groups should be prioritized in complex conflicts such as Syria. As a result, refugees, internally displaced persons, detainees, families of the disappeared, civilians, and even former combatants may all be affected by the conflict but receive different levels of recognition depending on the framework being applied. This suggests that recognition is not determined solely by the extent of harm experienced, but also by how individuals are classified within institutional systems.

Another important pattern identified in the research is the strong relationship between visibility and recognition. Groups that receive greater media exposure often receive more attention within humanitarian and political discussions. Throughout the Syrian conflict, international media outlets frequently highlighted stories involving women and children. One of the most well-known examples is Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian refugee whose death while attempting to reach Europe became an international

symbol of the refugee crisis after photographs of his body were published around the world (Freedland, 2025). Another example is Omran Daqneesh, the young boy whose image sitting injured and covered in dust after an airstrike in Aleppo was widely shared by international news organizations (Mackirdy, Tawfeeq, 2017). These stories generated significant global attention and helped raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of the war. This media attention also shaped which victims received humanitarian support and legal recognition. Groups whose stories were more visible were more likely to receive aid, advocacy, and documentation, while less visible groups could be overlooked. This shows how media visibility, humanitarian response, and justice systems are connected in determining who is ultimately recognized as a victim.While this representation has played an important role in mobilizing international support, it has also contributed to a narrower understanding of victimhood. Other groups, particularly adult men, are often underrepresented in media narratives despite experiencing significant forms of violence. Reports from the Syrian Network for Human Rights document thousands of cases involving arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearance, and targeted attacks, many of which involve adult male civilians. However, these experiences generally receive less media attention than stories involving women and children. This suggests that visibility is influenced not only by the severity of suffering but also by public perceptions of vulnerability and innocence.

The research also highlights that many Syrian experiences remain underrepresented or overlooked in dominant narratives about the war. Media coverage often prioritizes stories that are emotionally compelling, easy to communicate, and capable of generating international engagement. Although these narratives are effective in raising awareness, they do not fully capture the diversity of experiences within the conflict. For example, the experiences of detainees held in Syrian prisons, families searching for missing relatives, and communities affected by long-term displacement often receive less attention than highly visible humanitarian stories. As a result, recognition becomes uneven, with certain experiences amplified while others remain marginalized.

A particularly significant finding is the interconnected nature of media representation, humanitarian response, and victim recognition. These systems do not operate independently. Instead, they continuously influence one another. Individuals and groups who receive greater visibility in media narratives are often more likely to be included in humanitarian agendas and policy discussions. For example, international attention surrounding the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 increased political pressure on governments and humanitarian organizations to respond to the growing number of displaced Syrians seeking asylum. At the same time, less visible groups, such as families of the forcibly disappeared, often struggled to achieve the same level of international recognition despite experiencing severe human rights violations. This demonstrates that recognition is shaped not only by objective need but also by how suffering is presented and understood by wider audiences.

The findings further reveal ongoing challenges within transitional justice efforts. Most transitional justice frameworks focus on accountability, truth-seeking, reparations, and reconciliation. However, many of the sources reviewed provide limited guidance regarding how different victim groups should be represented within these processes. For example, truth-seeking initiatives often document testimonies from victims of detention, displacement, and violence, but there is little agreement on how these experiences should be

prioritized. Similarly, discussions surrounding reparations frequently acknowledge the need to support victims but rarely specify which groups would qualify for assistance. The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre emphasizes the importance of documenting violations experienced by a wide range of communities, including detainees, displaced persons, women, and families of the disappeared. However, uncertainty remains regarding how these groups will ultimately be included within future justice mechanisms. The absence of a universally accepted definition of victimhood raises concerns that some experiences may continue to be overlooked even within post-conflict accountability efforts.

Another notable insight is that many Syrians do not necessarily identify with the label of "victim." Several sources suggest that individuals may instead see themselves as survivors, activists, community members, or political participants. This distinction highlights a gap between external representations and personal identity. It suggests that recognition is not only imposed by institutions but is also shaped by how individuals understand and describe their own experiences. This finding demonstrates the importance of considering self-identification rather than relying solely on externally assigned categories.

Overall, the findings indicate that victim recognition in the Syrian Civil War is shaped by the interaction of multiple interconnected systems rather than a single institution or process. Legal recognition, media visibility, humanitarian action, and transitional justice frameworks collectively influence whose experiences are acknowledged and how they are understood. These systems do not function in isolation. Instead, they reinforce and shape one another, contributing to patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Recognition therefore emerges as a dynamic and ongoing process that extends beyond immediate humanitarian concerns, playing a key role in determining visibility, access to support, and participation in future justice and reconciliation efforts.

ANALYSIS

One of the most important findings to emerge from this research was that recognition in the Syrian Civil War is not shaped by a single system. While much of the literature discusses media representation, humanitarian aid, legal recognition, and transitional justice separately, the findings suggest that these systems are closely connected. Recognition appears to be produced through the interaction of all of them rather than through any one process alone. This was one of the clearest patterns across the research and became increasingly apparent when comparing sources that approached the issue from different perspectives.

A pattern that appeared repeatedly throughout the literature was the role of visibility. Victims who received greater media attention were often more visible within humanitarian discussions as well. In turn, those same groups were more likely to become part of broader conversations surrounding justice, accountability, and reconciliation. This does not mean that visibility automatically guarantees support or recognition, nor does it mean that less visible groups experience less suffering. Instead, it suggests that visibility can influence how victims are understood, discussed, and prioritized. As a result, recognition is

shaped not only by suffering itself, but also by how that suffering is presented and communicated to wider audiences.

This finding is important because it challenges the way recognition is often discussed in the existing literature. Several sources focus primarily on one aspect of recognition rather than examining how different systems interact. For example, the Syrian Network for Human Rights focuses largely on documenting violations and identifying victim groups, while the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre emphasizes accountability and justice mechanisms. The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism examines victimhood through legal and security frameworks, whereas scholars such as Didier Fassin and Miriam Ticktin focus on humanitarian recognition and the politics of victimhood. Although these sources provide valuable insights, they often analyze media representation, humanitarian aid, legal recognition, and transitional justice separately. The findings of this research suggest that these systems are closely connected and continuously influence one another.

Another important observation was the gap between institutional recognition and personal identity. Many organizations rely on victim classifications in order to distribute aid, document violations, or create accountability mechanisms. These categories are often necessary for practical reasons, but several sources showed that many Syrians do not necessarily identify with the label of "victim." Some prefer to see themselves as survivors, activists, parents, community members, or individuals who have endured difficult circumstances without defining themselves through them. This suggests that recognition is not only about whether people are acknowledged by institutions, but also about whether those forms of recognition reflect how individuals understand their own experiences.

This disconnect raises broader questions about representation. If recognition is built around categories that do not fully capture lived experiences, there is a risk that important perspectives may be overlooked. While institutional classifications can help provide support and accountability, they may not always reflect the complexity of people's identities during and after conflict. This finding highlights the importance of considering not only how victims are categorized, but also how they represent themselves.

The findings also raise questions about inclusion within future transitional justice efforts. If recognition influences visibility, and visibility influences participation in humanitarian and justice processes, then unequal recognition may have long-term consequences. Groups that receive less attention today may also face greater challenges in having their experiences acknowledged in future discussions about accountability and reconciliation. This does not mean they will be excluded entirely, but it highlights the importance of considering whose voices are represented and whose experiences remain less visible. Recognition therefore has implications that extend beyond immediate humanitarian support and into future discussions about justice and historical memory.

At the same time, the research revealed several limitations within the existing literature. Much of the scholarship focuses on institutions, policies, and frameworks rather than the perspectives of Syrians themselves. Existing research often examines victimhood through legal definitions, accountability mechanisms, state responses, and transitional justice frameworks (ICCT, 2025; IDEA, 2003). Other

studies provide extensive documentation of violations, patterns of abuse, and victim groups, but tend to prioritize evidence collection and legal accountability over individual experiences and personal understandings of victimhood (SNHR, 2025; SJAC, 2025). While these sources provide valuable insight into how recognition operates at a structural level, they do not always capture how individuals experience recognition, exclusion, or representation in their everyday lives. As a result, there remains a gap between official discussions of recognition and the lived realities of those affected by the conflict. Future research could help address this limitation by incorporating more firsthand accounts, interviews, and personal testimonies.

While these sources provide valuable insight into how recognition operates at a structural level, they do not always capture how Syrians experience recognition, exclusion, or representation in their everyday lives. This limitation became particularly apparent when compared with scholars such as Didier Fassin and Miriam Ticktin, who focus more directly on how humanitarian systems construct categories of victimhood and deservingness. Their work suggests that recognition is not simply something granted through institutions but is also shaped by social narratives and power relationships (Fassin, 2012; Ticktin, 2011). As a result, a gap remains between official discussions of recognition and the lived realities of those affected by the conflict.

Future research could help address this limitation by incorporating more firsthand accounts, interviews, and personal testimonies from Syrians themselves. While institutional reports are essential for documenting violations and informing policy, they cannot fully capture how individuals understand their own identities, experiences, and relationships to labels such as “victim,” “survivor,” or “activist.”

CONCLUSION

This research set out to examine how victims of the Syrian Civil War are recognized and represented within humanitarian, legal, media, and transitional justice systems. While much of the existing literature focuses on these areas separately, the purpose of this study was to explore how they interact and collectively shape recognition. Using a qualitative approach based on academic literature, human rights reports, policy documents, and media analysis, the research investigated how different victim groups are acknowledged, represented, and included within broader discussions surrounding aid, accountability, and justice.

The findings suggest that recognition is shaped by far more than the direct experience of suffering. Instead, it is influenced by a combination of victim classification, media visibility, humanitarian priorities, and transitional justice frameworks. Throughout the literature, recognition emerged as a process that is produced through the interaction of multiple systems rather than through any single institution or mechanism. Victims who receive greater visibility in media narratives often become more visible within humanitarian and political discussions as well, while groups that receive less attention may struggle to achieve the same level of recognition despite experiencing significant harm.

The research also demonstrated that victimhood is not a fixed or universally accepted category. Different organizations and justice frameworks define victims in different ways, which can influence access to support, legal protection, and participation in future accountability efforts. At the same time, many Syrians do not necessarily identify themselves through the label of "victim," highlighting a gap between institutional classifications and personal understandings of identity. This suggests that recognition involves not only how institutions define victims but also how individuals understand and represent their own experiences.

The central argument of this research is that recognition in the Syrian Civil War is not determined by suffering alone. Rather, it is shaped through the interaction of humanitarian, legal, media, and transitional justice systems that influence whose experiences become visible, whose voices are heard, and whose experiences are included within broader discussions of justice and reconciliation. Understanding recognition in this way provides a more complete picture of how victimhood is constructed and understood within the Syrian conflict.

This research also raises several questions for future study. Further research could explore how Syrians themselves understand recognition and victimhood through interviews, testimonies, and firsthand accounts. Additional research could also examine how recognition changes over time as Syria moves toward future accountability and reconciliation efforts. Finally, future studies could investigate whether certain victim groups continue to face barriers to recognition within post-conflict justice processes and how more inclusive approaches to recognition might be developed.

Ultimately, this research suggests that discussions of justice, reconciliation, and humanitarian response cannot be separated from questions of recognition. Examining how victims are recognized, represented, and included is essential for understanding not only the experiences of those affected by the conflict, but also the broader systems that shape their visibility and voice.

The findings indicate that recognition in the Syrian Civil War remains unequal and contested because it is shaped through the interaction of humanitarian, legal, media, and transitional justice systems. Rather than being determined solely by suffering, recognition is influenced by how victims are classified, represented, and included within these systems. As a result, some experiences become highly visible while others receive far less attention despite occurring within the same conflict.

This insight is important because recognition affects more than public awareness. In the short term, it can influence access to attention, support, and humanitarian assistance. In the long term, it can shape whose experiences are documented, whose voices are heard, and who is included in future discussions of accountability and reconciliation. Understanding these connections provides a more complete picture of victimhood in the Syrian Civil War and highlights the importance of creating recognition processes that are more inclusive of the diverse experiences of those affected by the conflict.

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