

Unraveling Syria's transformation from a civil war to a proxy war

Elon faculty break down the effects the Syrian conflict might have on the U.S. and Elon

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Baris Kesgin

Baris Kesgin, assistant professor of political science, breaks down the possible effects the Syrian conflict might have on U.S. international relations.

Q: Can you explain the current status of the war in Syria? And what countries are actively involved?

A: There are a multiplicity of actors on the ground: the Syrian government, Russia, the United States, Iran, Turkey, various Syrian opposition forces and the so-called 'Islamic State.' Russia and Iran continue to stand by the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad; the United States and various Syrian opposition forces have been working together against the 'Islamic State' forces. In addition, Turkey's military has entered into the Syrian territory against the Kurdish forces, which also puts Turkey and its NATO ally United States at odds. The 'Islamic State' still control some territory.

Q: This conflict began in 2011 as a civil war, has that changed?



Syrian students stand on rubble of damaged buildings at a site hit by activists.

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A: The conflict in Syria indeed started as a civil war, yet quickly evolved into a much bigger and complex one. As is, we observe that this is an internationalized civil war — with multiple international actors directly involved. Then we may well argue that there are proxy wars being fought within because major actors (Russia, Iran, etc.) support different factions who are in turn fighting each other. These majors are not directly fighting each other, yet through these actors effectively they are ...

Q: Can you estimate how much longer this conflict may go on?

A: Tough question. Unfortunately, no end in sight.

Q: What factors do you think could bring this conflict to an end?

A: Two major powers — Russia and the United States — are involved in Syria; in addition, regional powers — Turkey and Iran — are on the ground. It is not impossible that these actors — in various combinations — may directly confront each other. Any such scenario would change dynamics significantly. In addition to Turkey and Iran, we must

note, Israel is keeping a close eye on Syria — as it hit Syrian military targets multiple times already. A radical change in the Syrian government's position or a reformulation of Russia's preferences would lead to some changes. Otherwise, we may well see ongoing conflict for a while.



Shanna Van Beek

Shanna Van Beek, assistant director of study abroad, explains the steps taken to keep students safe.

Q: How will this conflict affect Elon study abroad programs?

A: Elon's vetting of study abroad partners includes risk assessment as well as risk management — one of the primary component of assessment of the Department of State (DOS) Travel Advisory for each location. This is diplomatic by necessity but also dynamic and informative. Current risk is Level 3, which means to exercise increased caution, with some areas within assigned a higher risk. Should the travel advisory be updated, say from an incident as a result of the indictment, Elon will reassess risk at that time. This is true at any time and for any location. Should a situation arise that triggers a Level 4 DOS Travel Advisory in a location where Elon students are studying, Elon will reassess risk at that time. Long story short: While this does have the potential to affect the Department of State advisory information study abroad program available, it is unaffected at this time.

Q: Will this affect the study abroad currently studying in the Middle East?

A: We advise all Elon students to practice smart situational awareness during their travel, and it is possible that the recent events prompts students to exercise awareness more acutely. The more likely, however, contribute to more robust and transparent conversations on campus — raelis are, to generalize, more to share opinions, and therefore our students will have access to many perspectives.

Mediterranean Deli opening soon, according to owner

Amid health inspections and permits, the new deli is said to open in the next two weeks

Jackie Pascale

Executive Director | @jackie_pascale

Jamil Kadoura is just as anxious to open the Mediterranean Deli, Bakery and Catering in Park Place as the rest of the Elon University community is to welcome it.

"I'm really excited," said Kadoura, the owner of Mediterranean Deli. "I want this to be over with. It's been like, a year and a half. We wanted to do it the right way. It's very important to bring it in not too fast and not make mistakes."

The Mediterranean Deli has been a tease for Elon students since its announcement last spring.

A health inspection is the next step for the restaurant, and Kadoura said it "went well."

"Three things the health department is crazy about: temperature, employee hygiene and temperature," Kadoura said. "If you pass these three things, you are good."

Kadoura said he believes the deli will open in the next two weeks, but the town of Elon just put up another road block. He's waiting on new parts to be sent in order to meet a ventilation standard.

Kadoura said he's excited to bring Middle Eastern culture and homemade dishes to Elon.

"Everything is made here, one hundred percent," Kadoura said. "When I come here and I make my own food, I celebrate my culture every day."

As a Jerusalem native, Kadoura

IF YOU GO...

Current Location: 410 W Franklin St, Chapel Hill, NC
Current Hours: Sunday-Monday: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Cuisine: Mediterranean food including pitas, gyros and much more.

says Mediterranean food is a part of a lifelong diet. The homemade pitas, gyros, Turkish candies and everything else on the menu are the result of more than 30 years of experience in Mediterranean cooking.

"Our parents talked to us when we were kids about the Mediterranean diet, but we didn't believe them," Kadoura reflected. "Now there's study after study that validates what our parents told us. My mom was right, I should've eaten my lentils more."

Kadoura's mom does not get to see this new location open in action. She died a little more than a year ago, but Kadoura said he knows that she'd be proud of this expansion of his business.

Kadoura learned about cooking from his mom, and learned about business from the bottom up. He started as a dishwasher and worked his way up through hotel and restaurant management. He said his background sets his restaurant apart from the rest.

"This is not a deli, this is an operation," Kadoura said. "When you see the food in the deli cases the first day we're open, that's when you'll know what kind of operation we are."

The opening has been pushed back several times since the restaurant was first announced to be filling the space on the first floor of Park Place. Just upstairs, there



Several customers have said the homemade falafel pita is one of their favorite items on the menu.

were severe mold and mildew issues this past fall. Kadoura said this did not cause any holdups in the construction process.

ENN spoke with several customers from the Chapel Hill, location who said they go to the restaurant and market at least once a week. Some favorite items on the menu are the lamb fatayer, falafel pita, roasted cauliflower and cucumber salad.

Even an Elon alumnus was at the Chapel Hill location and said he was very jealous the restaurant is coming to Elon.

"I'm so upset this wasn't at Elon

when I was a student," said Sam Shantry '17.

Mediterranean Deli has changed the menu over the years to meet consumer wants and needs even though Kadoura says consistency is "the foundation of restaurants." He is meeting these needs, he said, by adding more gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options to the menu. He also added açai bowls, which he said he believes will be a huge hit on Elon's campus.

"This university, I really fell in love with it, and I feel that we're going to do well here," Kadoura said.



WHEN I COME HERE AND MAKE MY OWN FOOD, I CELEBRATE MY CULTURE EVERY DAY.

JAMIL KADOURA
MEDITERRANEAN DELI OWNER