Negative Brief: Repeal the Caesar Act

By David W. Helton[[1]](#footnote-1)

***Resolved: The United States federal government should significantly reform its policy regarding export and/or import regulations.***

The Affirmative team says that we should repeal the Caesar Act of 2019. This act imposes sanctions on any foreign person or entity which does business with the Assad regime in areas like construction, energy, oil, and military products. Aff will say these sanctions harm the Syrian people by stopping the reconstruction of Syria and possibly giving Isis the ability to grow further in the region. The Caesar sanctions are hardly to blame for the suffering of the Syrian people, but Aff is not wrong on the reconstruction part, but that’s a good thing. Most of the companies listed under the Caesar Act are construction companies. Why? Certainly not because the US wants to see Syrians suffer, but rather because allowing Assad to rebuild is, in the long term, worse for civilians. Assad will use the economic opportunity of reconstruction to target dissent in the country, kick locals out of their homes to build expensive homes refugees can’t afford, and line the pockets of his regime, as well as Russia and China. That’s a worse world for the Syrian civilian. Additionally, lifting the Caesar sanctions now fails to hold Assad accountable for his atrocities and give his regime more political power. The US can’t allow Assad to get away with the deaths and destruction he has caused. If we do, he will only continue the atrocities. That’s why the Caesar Act needs to remain in place.

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Negative Brief: Repeal the Caesar Act

SOLVENCY

1. Even if Caesar were abolished, civilians will suffer

Assad bans imports

Steven Heydemann 2020 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution; former director of the U.S. Institute of Peace Syria-related activities. Heydemann consults widely with the U.S. and European governments on issues relating to Syria policy and the status of the Syrian conflict.) June 19, 2020” The Caesar Act and a pathway out of conflict in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/19/the-caesar-act-and-a-pathway-out-of-conflict-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

Other regime actions have been similarly damaging for Syrians struggling to survive as the economy collapses around them. In recent months, as the Syrian lira has lost value at a precipitous rate, the regime has shut down the informal money exchange (hawala) offices through which many Syrians received remittances from relatives in Lebanon and abroad — a crucial source of income in a country where conflict has driven 80% of the population into poverty. Remittances are now required to move through state-controlled banks and exchanges, which exchange them for Syrian currency at a rate 75% below its recent value. While the purchasing power of the lira erodes by the day, moreover, transactions in other currencies have been criminalized. The regime has imposed sharp new limits on the quantities of subsidized goods available to citizens through a state-run smart card system, yet citizens report that their accounts are being charged for food they never received — indicators that officials implementing the scheme are siphoning off goods for their own use or resale on black markets. In a desperate bid to hold onto foreign exchange, all but critical imports have been banned.

Repealing the Caesar Act won’t make Syrians better off

Steven Heydemann 2020 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution; former director of the U.S. Institute of Peace Syria-related activities.) June 19, 2020” The Caesar Act and a pathway out of conflict in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/19/the-caesar-act-and-a-pathway-out-of-conflict-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

In sum, Syrian civilians are indeed suffering, but to blame the yet-to-be-implemented Caesar Act for their fate is to ignore the culpability of the Assad regime in the destruction of Syria’s economy and the impoverishment of the population he holds in contempt. Criticism of the act neglects the weight of external factors, from Lebanon’s own economic crisis to the collapse of oil prices, the weakening of the Russian and Iranian economies, and the effects of COVID-19. Such criticism requires that we discount the impact of the regime’s corruption, its long history of brutal, predatory exploitation of its own citizens, and its willingness to sacrifice their lives to preserve the regime’s hold on power. To offer Syria sanctions relief, to imagine that the disappearance of the Caesar Act would leave ordinary Syrians better off, is deeply misguided. To identify the source of their suffering, we need look no further than the presidential palace in Damascus.

2. Repeal of Caesar won't solve for reconstruction

Assad has a history of abusing reconstruction funds

[Majdolin Hasan](https://twitter.com/majdulinhasan) 2021 (Project Manager at Global Investigative Journalism Network. She is a three-time award-winning journalist with more than 14 years of experience. BA in Journalism, MA in Political Science from the University of Jordan.) September 21, 2021 “Investigating What Assad’s Regime Did with Money to Rebuild Syria <https://gijn.org/2021/09/21/investigating-what-assads-regime-did-with-the-money-meant-to-rebuild-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

To address some of the shortfall, the Syrian regime imposed a reconstruction tax on the pretext of compensating those who lost their homes during the war. But an investigation by three nonprofits — the [Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project](https://www.occrp.org/en) (OCCRP), the [Syrian Investigative Reporting for Accountability Journalism Association](https://sirajsy.net/ar/?p=5989) (SIRAJ), and London-based [Finance Uncovered](https://www.financeuncovered.org/) — found that [most of the revenue raised by these taxes was diverted](https://www.occrp.org/en/37-ccblog/ccblog/14459-syria-s-reconstruction-tax-props-up-the-assad-regime), with some used for military purposes.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Caesar doesn’t cause civilian harm

Assad is responsible for Syrian’s suffering – any impact the Caesar sanctions have had is hard to distinguish

Dr. David Adesnik and Toby Dershowitz 2020 (Adesnik – a Senior Fellow and Director of Research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. PhD and MA in International Relations from Oxford University. Dershowitz - Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Strategy at the FDD.) June 17, 2020 “Sanctions Against Syria Will Help, Not Harm, Civilians” <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2020/06/17/syria-sanctions-will-help-not-harm-civilians/> (accessed July 21 2022)

Yet the same is true of claims that the Caesar Act or other sanctions will harm civilians. Nine years of relentless war—much of it targeting civilians—is the main cause of deprivation. So is the rampant [corruption](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-10-10-syrias-transactional-state-khatib-sinjab.pdf) that distorts every aspect of the Syrian economy. The crisis touched off by the collapse of the lira will further complicate any effort to distinguish the precise impact of Caesar sanctions.

Sanctions not at fault for suffering – civilians in poverty in areas that aren’t sanctioned

[Sana Sekkarie](https://www.justsecurity.org/author/sekkariesana/) 2020 (a Security Studies master’s candidate at Georgetown University. BA from the University of Virginia where she also worked as a research assistant focusing on the Syrian conflict at the Department of Politics. She now works as the Special Assistant to the Chairman of Atlantic Media. Sana spent a year as a research intern at the Institute for the Study of War’s Syria desk.) July 21, 2020 “The Caesar Sanctions Help Reinforce Norms Enshrined in International Law” <https://www.justsecurity.org/71568/the-caesar-sanctions-help-reinforce-norms-enshrined-in-international-law/> (accessed July 21 2022)

Many critics of the Caesar sanctions incorrectly connect them to the current freefall of the Syrian economy, a position to which Barber gestures. However, Syria’s economic nightmare began [long before](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4328392?seq=1) the implementation of the Caesar sanctions — or other sanctions, for that matter — and this is important to keep in mind when assessing efforts like the Caesar sanctions.

**END QUOTE. SHE GOES ON LATER IN THE ARTICLE WRITING QUOTE:**
Much of the worst poverty in Syria is concentrated in northwestern and northeastern Syria, which remain outside the total control of the regime and cannot be significantly impacted by the Caesar sanctions. The poverty in these areas partly results from the regime preventing international humanitarian aid from reaching opposition- and Kurdish-held areas. American officials have [stated](https://youtu.be/bZZDd-KaNzo) that these sanctions [explicitly exclude](http://www.hawarnews.com/en/haber/william-robak-caesars-act-to-exclude-autonomous-administration-areas-h16685.html) the Kurdish-governed northeast. Opposition held-northwest Syria has begun adopting the Turkish lira to avoid the rapidly devaluing Syrian lira.

A/T “Caesar make suffering worse” – It's very specifically targeted and exempts humanitarian supplies

Steven Heydemann 2020 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution; former director of the U.S. Institute of Peace Syria-related activities.) June 19, 2020” The Caesar Act and a pathway out of conflict in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/19/the-caesar-act-and-a-pathway-out-of-conflict-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

The potential harm the act might cause to Syrian civilians is a serious issue, yet it has been designed to mitigate such effects. The Caesar Act includes language instructing the administration to “enhance the protection of civilians.” In its focus on targeted economic activity, it is explicitly designed to avoid penalizing humanitarian assistance, including medical and food supplies intended for civilian use. The sanctions defined in the Act are targeted, not general, to avoid overreach and unintended effects on those whose conduct is not directly covered. Nor is the law so complex, ambiguous, or bewildering that its implementation will inevitably be muddled, as some critics have argued. Indeed, the language of the act is refreshingly clear and straightforward. The penalties it imposes are consistent with its objectives: to erode the regime’s capacity to wage war, and to create meaningful economic incentives to induce the Assad regime to free political detainees, end violence against civilians, and demonstrate “irreversible progress” toward the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254, a Russian-backed initiative that leaves open the ultimate fate of Bashar Assad.

2. Caesar doesn't cause Syria's economic problems

Caesar didn’t cause the [Syrian currency] lira’s value to fall

Dr. David Adesnik and Toby Dershowitz 2020 (Adesnik – a Senior Fellow and Director of Research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. PhD and MA in International Relations from Oxford University. Dershowitz - Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Strategy at the FDD.) June 17, 2020 “Sanctions Against Syria Will Help, Not Harm, Civilians” <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2020/06/17/syria-sanctions-will-help-not-harm-civilians/> (accessed July 21 2022)

While U.S. President Donald Trump signed the Caesar sanctions into law last December, the legislation mandated a 180-day waiting period before the administration could impose new sanctions. During those six months, a [financial crisis](https://www.ft.com/content/532c223c-1062-11ea-a7e6-62bf4f9e548a) in next-door Lebanon has had the kind of devastating [impact](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/06/09/Syria-economic-crisis-currency-exchange-rate-crash-us-sanctions) on the Syrian economy that no sanctions regime could design. Lebanon’s heavily [dollarized](http://www.thinktriangle.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Extend_Pretend_Lebanons_Financial_House_of_Cards_2019.pdf) economy served as Syria’s main source of hard currency amid U.S. and EU sanctions; when Lebanese banks restricted access, demand for U.S. dollars in Syria [began](https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2019/12/11/syrian-currency-crisis-batters-assad-regime/) to dramatically outstrip supply. This culminated in the [free fall](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-economy-currency/syrian-pound-hits-record-low-ahead-of-new-u-s-sanctions-dealers-idUSKBN23F2YL) of the Syrian lira, which traded at 515 to the dollar last June, and 1,500 just a month ago, before bottoming out at just under 3,200 to the dollar last week.

Syrian economic woes are due to corruption, not the Caesar Act

J[ulia Maloof](https://www.americansecurityproject.org/author/jmaloof/)  2015 (Sr. User Experience Researcher at Comcast. BA in Sociology and International Relations from John Hopkins University.) Jun 25, 2015 “Syrian Economics & Terrorism“ <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/terrorism-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

While Assad cut social programs and privatized large sectors of the economy, his cousin Rami Makhlouf used the situation to his advantage, [buying up](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/05e5ffcc-70fa-11e0-962a-00144feabdc0.html?ftcamp=rss#axzz1LYsZWLd7) real estate, banking, free trade zones, duty-free shops, and luxury department stores. He also owns Syriatel, the largest mobile phone company in Syria. By 2010 he controlled as much as [60% of the Syrian economy](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/05e5ffcc-70fa-11e0-962a-00144feabdc0.html?ftcamp=rss#axzz1LYsZWLd7). It is this type of corruption in both the state legal system and the economy that strangled economic diversity and created [massive inequality](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/04/08/in-syria-follow-the-money-to-find-the-roots-of-the-revolt.html).

DISADVANTAGES

1. Lost opportunity to create change

Link: Caesar puts pressure on Assad

Al-Estiklal Newspaper 2021 (news and media site that publishes on global news, with a special focus on the Arab states.) June 24, 2021 “A Year After its Implementation; How Did The “Caesar's Act” Affect the Assad Regime?” <https://www.alestiklal.net/en/view/9083/a-year-after-its-implementation-how-did-th> (accessed July 21 2022)

As part of his reading of the effects of the Act on the regime, the economist at Jusoor Center for Studies, Khaled Al-Terkawi, believes that “Caesar succeeded in isolating the regime economically, so that the latter seeks to open up to the world more, but what happened is that the sanctions made it lose its ability to make any real investments, partnerships or foreign trade”. In turn, the Syrian journalist, “Ayman Abdel Nour”, head of the “Syrian Christians for Peace” organization, believes that “the Act has had a significant impact on the regime, causing damage to the regime and to the political and economic figures who work with it”. Abdel Nour confirmed that “the Act does not affect the lives of civilians, as the regime seeks to portray it, and that the cause of the queues in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo is the rampant corruption in the regime’s institutions, the Assad family stole the country's resources, in addition to the collapse of the banking sector in Lebanon”.

Link: Assad can’t rely on foreign partners to bail him out

Steven Heydemann 2020 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution; former director of the U.S. Institute of Peace Syria-related activities.) June 19, 2020” The Caesar Act and a pathway out of conflict in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/19/the-caesar-act-and-a-pathway-out-of-conflict-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

The Caesar Act also comes into effect at a moment of heightened economic vulnerability on the part of the regime, increasing the sanctions’ chances of success. In essence, every one of the pillars that Assad has relied on to keep his economy and his war machine afloat have crumbled. Lebanon’s economic free fall is accelerating, with the Lebanese lira hitting record lows in the past few days. Russia and Iran, battered by falling oil prices, sanctions, and the economic effects of the pandemic can no longer be counted on to bail Assad out.

Link: Caesar Act is necessary to create change

Steven Heydemann 2020 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. During the period from 2011 to 2015, Heydemann directed U.S. Institute of Peace Syria-related activities, including The Day After project (TDA). Heydemann consults widely with the U.S. and European governments on issues relating to Syria policy and the status of the Syrian conflict.) June 19, 2020” The Caesar Act and a pathway out of conflict in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/19/the-caesar-act-and-a-pathway-out-of-conflict-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

For its part, the Assad regime will continue to resist concessions and to reject compromises that might bring relief from sanctions. Syrian officials continue to offer the same belligerent comments that have long defined the regime’s rhetoric toward the U.S. Yet the current confluence of global, regional, and local economic conditions places the regime under greater pressure than it has ever previously experienced, even during its moments of greatest vulnerability during the civil war. From the triumphalist celebratory outlook that the regime expressed only a year ago, it now confronts the very real prospect of that it will be left on its own to contend with economic collapse and the resurgence of mass popular upheaval. The Caesar Act may be the straw that forces the regime to accept that if it wishes to survive, it will have to change.

Impact: Human rights. Rolling back sanctions encourages Assad to continue human rights abuses

 Steven Heydemann 2022 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. During the period from 2011 to 2015, Heydemann directed U.S. Institute of Peace Syria-related activities. Heydemann consults widely with the U.S. and European governments on issues relating to Syria policy and the status of the Syrian conflict.) January 13, 2022 “Assad’s normalization and the politics of erasure in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/01/13/assads-normalization-and-the-politics-of-erasure-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

If “step-for-step” diplomacy becomes accepted as a framework for normalizing the Assad regime, the eventual outcome will be the erasure of its responsibility for the destruction of Syria and all that has accompanied it. Russia, alongside the regime, is hard at work to ensure precisely this outcome. The U.S. and its European allies should not be complicit, directly or indirectly, in such efforts. The U.S. should do more than affirm its commitment to keeping sanctions on Assad’s brutal regime. It needs to put them to use, stating publicly that it will take steps to enforce sanctions against any party that violates them and following through promptly when violations occur. It must also make clear that there is only one pathway for sanctions relief: demonstrable, irreversible progress toward the meaningful political transition in Syria that is called for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254. To do otherwise sends a terrible signal about American indifference to the crimes of the Assad regime, and further weakens the possibilities for preventing other dictators from following in his footsteps.

2. Lost accountability

Link: Caesar Affects Assad personally

New Arab magazine 2020 (a fast-growing English-language news and current affairs website bringing you the biggest stories from the Middle East and North Africa and beyond.) June 17, 2020 “Caesar Act sanctions Syria's First Lady Asma Al-Assad for first time” <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/caesar-act-unprecedented-sanctions-syrias-asma-al-assad#:~:text=The%20US%20State%20Department%20on%20Wednesday%20sanctioned%20Asma,family%20members%20were%20also%20named%20in%20the%20list>. (accessed July 21 2022)

The [US](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/6/16/syrias-assad-must-compromise-or-face-sanctions-us-warns) State Department on Wednesday sanctioned [Asma Al-Assad](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2019/9/25/lebanese-designer-elie-saab-praises-gentle-lady-asma-al-assad), wife of [Syrian](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/6/17/syria-fighting-could-lead-to-coronavirus-outbreak-in-idlib) president Bashar, for the first time, along with 39 designated individuals and entities under the [Caesar Act.](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/6/17/syrian-lira-plummets-as-caesar-act-takes-force) This is the first time the Asma has been personally targeted by US sanctions, while her husband Bashar and other family members were also named in the list.
**END QUOTE. LATER IN THE SAME ARTICLE THEY GO ON TO WRITE QUOTE:**
Pompeo said the campaign will resume in the coming weeks, targeting more individuals and businesses that support the Assad regime.

Link: Repealing Caesar would be bad: It would increase Assad's power

Basma Alloush and Alex Simon 2020 (Alloush - Policy Advisor at the International Committee of the Red Cross. MA in Law and Diplomacy and International Affairs from Tufts Univ. Simon - *is the director of the Syria Program with Synaps. MA in International Economics and Conflict Management from John Hopkins Univ.)* June 10, 2020 “Will More Syria Sanctions Hurt the Very Civilians They Aim to Protect?” herocks.com/2020/06/will-more-syria-sanctions-hurt-the-very-civilians-they-aim-to-protect/ (accessed July 21 2022)

This is not to suggest that the Caesar Act should somehow be repealed or that other sanctions should be abruptly lifted. No such reversal is forthcoming; even if it were, such unilateral concessions would carry immense costs as they would politically and economically bolster Assad and his ruling circle.

Impact: Repealing Caesar allows Assad to get away with mass murder

 Steven Heydemann 2022 (a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. Heydemann consults widely with the U.S. and European governments on issues relating to Syria policy and the status of the Syrian conflict.) January 13, 2022 “Assad’s normalization and the politics of erasure in Syria” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/01/13/assads-normalization-and-the-politics-of-erasure-in-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

Moreover, critiques of sanctions ignore the damage that their easing, even implicitly, will do — not only to the victims of regime violence and a source of leverage that critics often underestimate, but to international law and the global norms that represent the most viable mechanisms for holding the Assad regime accountable for its crimes and abuses. This is a regime that has overseen mass murder, the systematic use of chemical weapons against civilians, torture, arbitrary and illegal detentions, and the forced displacement of millions of Syrian civilians.

3. Reconstruction is bad

Link: AFF wants Caesar repealed to aid reconstruction

Link: Reconstruction benefits the elite, not refugees

Jomana Qaddour 2019 (a Syrian American analyst and doctoral student at Georgetown Univ Law Center, where she is focusing on Syrian constitutional issues.) February 28, 2019 “Assad Needs the United States and Its Allies for Reconstruction” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/assad-needs-united-states-and-its-allies-reconstruction> (accessed July 21 2022)

In short, Syria’s public and private sectors are not prepared to take on the challenge of nationwide reconstruction. Instead, they seem more focused on rewarding elites in the capital and other metropolitan areas while redrawing the country’s communal map. For example, rather than addressing the crucial task of providing housing to the nearly five million refugees still stuck abroad, current construction efforts center on pro-regime businessmen launching major luxury housing and entertainment projects in Damascus-area municipalities such as Marota City, Jobar, and al-Qabun, with more to come in Aleppo and Homs. According to local contractors, apartments in such developments will list at $3,500 per square meter ($300 per square foot), or nearly $500,000 for a three-bedroom unit, well beyond the reach of returning refugees.

Link: Assad uses reconstruction to line his pockets and benefit America’s enemies

J[ames Snell](https://english.alaraby.co.uk/taxonomy/term/67133) 2017 (a British writer educated at Cambridge. His work, focusing on global affairs, has appeared in numerous international publications.) October 2, 2017 “The Assad regime is exploiting reconstruction to gain legitimacy” <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/opinion/assad-regime-exploiting-reconstruction-gain-legitimacy> (accessed July 21 2022)

But more than that, it is providing a boon to the corruption of the Assad regime, which sees reconstruction less "as a means for economic recovery and social repair, but as an opportunity for self-enrichment, a way to reward loyalists and punish opponents", [according](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/08/24/rules-for-reconstruction-in-syria/) to Steven Heydemann of the Brookings Institution

**END QUOTE. HE GOES ON LATER IN THE ARTICLE WRITING QUOTE:**

It can control the awarding of contracts for reconstruction, which can be given to firms close to the regime and its internal allies, or even as rewards to external backers.

Iranian and Russian firms stand to benefit financially for the massive military support their nations have offered Assad. This is an adjunct to the corruption Ba'athist states and dictatorships generally create and profit from.

Link: Assad uses reconstruction to undermine dissent

*Anna Mysliwiec* 2019 *(*MA in public policy *from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She previously worked at the National Democratic Institute, where she managed programs that supported civic activists and local councils in opposition-controlled areas of Syria.)* [August 20, 2019](https://ksr.hkspublications.org/2019/08/20/when-the-dictator-wins-how-assad-is-using-reconstruction-to-strengthen-his-grip-on-syria/) “When the Dictator Wins: How Assad Is Using Reconstruction to Strengthen His Grip on Syria”<https://ksr.hkspublications.org/2019/08/20/when-the-dictator-wins-how-assad-is-using-reconstruction-to-strengthen-his-grip-on-syria/> (accessed July 21 2022)

Assad is also creating a legal architecture to literally reconstruct the country according to his own vision, benefiting his allies and displacing his adversaries.  Decree 66, passed in 2012, allows the government to redesign informal housing areas by selling them to developers, who can evict owners or residents without recourse after a 30-day notice period. This and accompanying laws could permanently dispossess many refugees and internally displaced people, just 9 percent of whom have adequate property title deeds with them. The Syrian government is selectively applying Decree 66 to destroy and resettle former opposition strongholds, often to implement urban plans that predated the civil war. The flagship Decree 66 project in Damascus is in Basateen al-Razi, a site of anti-government protest that the government is transforming into a gleaming new development. The vision to redevelop the area dates back to 2007. Homs and Aleppo similarly have proposals to use Decree 66 as a blueprint to destroy and redevelop opposition-held parts of their cities, often with the guidance of pre-2011 plans as well.

Brink: Caesar stops Russia and China from cashing in on Syrian reconstruction

 [Anchal Vohra](https://insidearabia.com/author/anchal-vohra/) 2020 (a multi-lingual foreign correspondent covering the Middle East, South Asia, and Germany. She is based in Beirut and is a TV correspondent for Al Jazeera English and a writer on the Middle East for Foreign Policy magazine.   July 22, 2020“Block Aid: Russia and China’s Response to the Caesar Act”<https://insidearabia.com/block-aid-russia-and-chinas-response-to-the-caesar-act/> (accessed July 21 2022)

Moscow spent billions of dollars in sustaining Assad and hoped to profit from the post-war construction boom. Beijing, too, had been waiting for the payday for the support it rendered. But the Caesar Act has thrown a spanner in the works. Russia and China are expecting relief on sanctions from the US so they can carry on as envisaged. In their statements, both Russia and China demanded that the US lift its “unilateral” and “coercive” measures imposed on Syria. Zhiang Jun, China’s permanent representative to the UN, said the US’ double standards on humanitarian issues were revealed when it imposed the “Caesar Act.” And, in a veiled threat, Jun [added](https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-07-11/China-ambassador-explains-second-veto-on-Syria-aid-via-Turkey--S1ZtJXY6Os/index.html) that the supply of aid — even  through the single crossing — is alright “at this stage,” implying that unless the US eased sanctions pressure, Putin and Jinping won’t shy away from shutting down the last border opening come the renewal in six months.

Impact: Caesar protects human rights by stopping corrupt reconstruction

 Matthew Lee 2020 (Diplomatic Writer for The Associated Press. Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service in International Relations from Georgetown University.) June 17, 2020 “US hits Syria’s elite with new economic and travel sanctions” <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/us/2020/06/17/us-hits-syrias-elite-with-new-sanctions-under-caesar-act.html> (accessed July 21 2022)

The sanctions are the result of legislation known as the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, named after the pseudonym of a Syrian policeman who turned over photographs of thousands of victims of torture by the Assad government.

**END QUOTE. HE GOES ON LATER IN THE ARTICLE WRITING QUOTE:**

Nearly half of the designated entities are construction companies involved in development projects, primarily in Damascus, the Syrian capital, on land expropriated from displaced Syrians.

**END QUOTE. HE GOES ON LATER IN THE ARTICLE WRITING QUOTE:**

“To make way for five-star real estate, the regime has evicted and razed the property of tens of thousands of residents from areas in Damascus that were until recently working class neighbourhoods sympathetic to the opposition,” the Treasury Department said in a statement. “Treasury’s action today exposes individuals and entities, including private-public partnerships, that seek to profit from this displacement and reconstruction.”

1. †David passed away on 19 August 2022. Coach Vance and the Monument team extend our deepest sympathies to his family for a young life taken from us too soon. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)