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Weekly coverage round-up (Apr 22 - 26)

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Al-Jumhuriya Collective



A quick English summary of our Arabic news coverage this week.

“Fuel crisis overwhelms the regime” (22 April, 2019). The year 2019 has witnessed an intensifying resource crisis for those living in Assad regime-controlled parts of Syria. Videos and images show queues of people stretching for kilometers to buy household cooking gas. Cars wait in lines for days at petrol stations to fill their tanks. Diesel shortages have left millions without heating in the winter cold. By the regime’s [own admission](#), a key cause of this has been the suspension of a crucial credit line from Iran. For an extensive analysis, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

“Who controls the Syrian regime’s army?” (23 April, 2019). On 20 April, the Syrian regime’s army leadership issued a [formal statement](#) denying reports of armed clashes between Russian and Iranian forces in Deir al-Zor and Aleppo. This unusual step—the first of its kind—coincided with further indications of an escalating dispute between Moscow and Tehran regarding the restructuring of the regime’s army. The recent reported promotion of Salim Harba to chief of staff, for instance, was seen as a boost for Moscow’s influence within the army at Tehran’s expense. For more on the wider Russian-Iranian power struggle over the reins of the regime’s military institution, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

“The rebirth of theater in Idlib” (24 April, 2019). For the first time in over a decade, a theater festival featuring six groups will be held in northern Syria’s Idlib City this coming June. The development follows the opening five months ago of a cultural center containing the only stage in the city

properly equipped to put on plays. Al-Jumhuriya speaks to directors and actors about the unlikely renaissance of drama in Idlib, despite the significant challenges imposed by eight years of war, not to mention the jihadist-led coalition that currently controls the city. As one director put it, he hopes the revival of theater might change Idlib's image from that of a "black spot" to a place "filled with writers, artists, poets, and playwrights." For more, read our [full report](#) (Arabic).

"Sending feelings with gifts" (25 April, 2019). The existence of millions of Syrians living outside their homeland as refugees has given birth to a curious new industry. Dozens of Facebook pages now offer gift services for those in the diaspora looking to send presents to loved ones on the inside—or vice versa. Whether it's roses and a cake for Mothers' Day, or gifts for birthdays or engagements, Syrians in Europe (for example) send money to these intermediaries, who in turn deliver the goods to the recipients' front doors. For more details, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

"Yemen faces cholera once again" (26 April, 2019). Yemen is beset by another wave of the deadly bacterial infection cholera, from which it has suffered periodic outbreaks since 2016, killing over 3,000 and infecting more than 1.5 million. At least 190 have died of it since January, and over 200,000 are currently thought to be suffering from it—far more than the figures for the same time period last year, when the disease was somewhat contained. For more, see our [full](#)

report (Arabic).