

Teacher Perspective's Crisis Management Applied in the Syrian Crisis

Dr. Ogün YÜRÜTKEN

Maritime School, Girne American University, Girne
ogunyurutken@gau.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7131-5114>

Feriha DİKMEN

Faculty of Communication, Girne American University, Girne
ferihadikmen@gau.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4846-3736>

ABSTRACT

In education, natural disasters, management of domestic and foreign policies of states, and solutions to problems that arise in organisational institutions constitute a wide range. Crises can be partially eliminated, or their adverse effects can be reduced with appropriate risk management and planning thanks to planned crisis management and effective target-oriented education. The subject of "Crisis Management" has developed worldwide and has increasingly gained importance in teaching the most effective management of the crisis process in political, social and security areas. In this study, the methods, tools and practices regarding crisis management applied in the Syrian crisis, which started in the Middle East in 2010 and grew with the refugee problem in Turkey and all over the world and turned into a hot war with the effect of the Arab Spring, which also brought socio-economic issues and the methods, tools and practices applied in Syria, Turkey's close neighbour located on the southern border, were examined. Inferences and solution suggestions regarding teaching effective crisis management and communication are presented in the study's findings.

Keywords: Crisis; Teaching, Crisis Management; Syria; Turkey

INTRODUCTION

A crisis is an unexpected and undesirable emergency that a business or individual encounters (TDK, 2023). The term crisis, commonly used to describe the challenges faced by economic structures, has recently been incorporated into public relations literature. In order to minimize the damage caused by a crisis and restore the organization's image to its pre-crisis state, management must first identify the key issues that contributed to the crisis and then promptly communicate and take action. In a crisis, the role of public relations becomes more crucial than ever. Developing strategies to respond swiftly and implementing them is particularly vital in crisis management.

It is obvious how important public relations has become in crises and how much organisation managers focus on public relations research becomes essential. These factors also include what results organisations can achieve if they deliberately respond to a crisis in the field and how they can be affected if unprepared. Among all these possibilities, the question of whether the solution to the situation will be an opportunity for countries or whether the consequences will be a disaster and the solution of the crisis to be put forward is of vital importance.

In this study, the operation of crisis management practices within the scope of public relations will be questioned, using the example of the Syrian crisis. With the effect of the Arab Spring that started in the Middle East in 2010, the protests that began in March 2011 in Syria, Turkey's close neighbour on the southern border, turned into violent actions in a short time, and a civil war started in the country. Methods, tools and practices related to public relations will be investigated and examined in the crisis management issues and issues applied in the Syrian crisis, which has turned into a hot war in the Middle East and has grown with the refugee problem in Turkey and all over the world, bringing with it socio-economic issues. A conclusion will be reached about effective crisis management and communication. Based on the results and solution proposals to be reached, suggestions that can be used in crisis management, communication and political communication, which are the subject of public relations, will be presented.

This crisis, whose effects are very closely related to our country, has had many military, social, political, and cultural consequences. These consequences have spread from mass migrations to border conflicts, from international crises to various embargoes and sanctions. In this study, these ongoing effects were examined, and possible future consequences were tried to be revealed.

CRISIS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Kernisky describes the crisis as a significant mismatch between the expectations of an organisation and what is happening around it (Kernisky, 1997, p. 843). Many factors contribute to the formation of a crisis. A crisis is an unexpected situation that develops suddenly, moves quickly and is faced without any preparation. It can mean collapse if it is not well evaluated for the organisation and an opportunity if it is evaluated well. A crisis, also known as a strategic turning point, can be a situation in which the pillars of business life change, and this moment signals new opportunities or the beginning of the end (Grove, 1997, p. 4).

All organisations worldwide have one thing in common: They constantly look for new ways to do things. Organisations change over time, and adapting to this change will help the organisation overcome what could be a critical transition point. Crisis management is defined as the ability to anticipate, prevent, or respond to potential problems when they arise rather than taking action to limit their consequences (Mackenzie, 1995, pp. 73-77).

On the other hand, it has been stated that crisis management is necessary not to harm the organisation's image or the communication with the target audience (Paksoy, 1997, p. 47). In terms of public relations, in a sense, crisis management is defined as the struggle to turn a difficulty, disaster or problem into an opportunity (Arıcı, 2001, p. 2). If managed well, a crisis is an opportunity. In a crisis environment, if opportunities are not used enough, it leaves the environment and society hesitant and undermines trust in the organisation. In many organisations, the scale and nature of the impact of crises will vary. Crisis management is like a hurricane that swallows everything and leaves nothing in its way. Nerves are tense, everyone is ready to get angry, and essential work can be postponed (Mackenzie, 1995, p. 72). In crisis management, managing a crisis successfully and effectively is possible with a crisis plan and team. For a well-prepared, qualified and experienced manager, crisis management cannot go beyond ordinary administrative issues. This brings severe success and comfort (Peker-Aytürk, 2000, p. 386).

Crisis communication, on the other hand, has an essential place in managing the crisis correctly and effectively, informing the public, eliminating the panic environment, and expressing itself in the institution. It is necessary to be able to respond in a timely and satisfactory manner. In this respect, it has a significant role in crisis management. Crisis management has many unique features that distinguish it from traditional management approaches. The primary purpose of crisis management is to predict crises, determine their types, take precautions against crises, learn from crises in many areas, and create an organisation that can recover as soon as possible (Pearson-Mitroff, 1993, p. 49).

The main features of a successful crisis management can be listed as follows (Haşit, 2000, p. 66-67):

- The foresight of people who manage crises is essential in crisis management. The success of crisis prevention depends on how leaders perceive the situation.

Continuous crisis management is essential. There is no before-and-after. It's always good practice to test and review plans for foreseeable crises.

Crisis management should be established according to the type of crisis that occurs. Every crisis has its own symptoms and solutions, and solving one makes another inevitable.

Successful crisis management can have enormous rewards. By managing crises well, crisis management can increase management confidence and morale. Managers who successfully emerge from a crisis start new career stages.

- Coping with crises involves a critical, necessary, challenging, and complex process. Therefore, one should not expect a quick resolution of the situation. This is a long, difficult road. Resolving crises requires flexible and creative thinking, impartiality, courage, teamwork, always being ready, open to innovations, and prepared for unexpected demands and situations.

- Crisis management has critical elements such as communication, control, cost, culture, regulation, contingency planning, system complexity, and interdependencies. These factors constitute an organisation's recipe for crises and are critical to managing and resolving crises through corporate values and beliefs.

- The central systems and response strategies in crisis communication management are varied.

On the other hand, in times of crisis, public relations is of primary importance for an organisation, and a system in place that can anticipate an impending crisis, use crises in favour of the organisation, and give a new impetus to company processes is a more valuable and sought-after feature. The systems that come into play after the crisis comes to a head should be abandoned (Tüz, 2001, p. 26). Crisis management is an environment that requires the management of the entire organisation with public relations. A crisis should not devastate an organisation because it is part of an organisation and constantly interacts with its environment. Although eliminating them does not

always seem possible, it is possible to keep them at an optimum level and overcome the crisis by using public relations measures that do not harm the organisation (Şimşek, 1999, p. 316).

Public relations departments cannot predict crises in advance but must identify potential problems and weaknesses. Opportunities should be grouped in order of priority, and questions, answers, and solutions should be created for each possible crisis scenario. Once the strategy is developed, management must be informed, a description of the crisis must be developed, and public relations must manage it to help plan the media response (Görpe, 2001, p. 28).

The main intervention strategies of public relations in crisis management are as follows (Peker-Aytürk, 2000, p. 389):

Precautionary Strategy: This strategy is used by agencies before the first rebuttal to create a crisis. An example can be set up to prove them wrong in advance.

- **Aggressive Response Strategy:** This institution has established itself as a crisis powerhouse. Examples include aggression, embarrassment, shock, and threats.

- **Defensive Intervention Strategy:** The side in danger is less aggressive. Examples include denial, apology, and exemption.

Distracting Communication Strategies: These aim to distract the public's reaction and keep eyes away from the facility. Examples of this include reconciliation, sociability, indifference, and name changes.

Strategies for Expressing Semi-Audibly: This is an attempt to show empathy, reduce the public reaction as much as possible, and openly admit guilt. Examples of expressions of concern, condolence, regret, and apology can be given.

Corrective Action Strategy: This strategy consists of actions taken to repair damage to the target group, such as investigation, corrective action, compensation, etc.

- **Strategic Inaction:** There is no comment on the development of the event. For example, silence can be treated as a case, and the crisis or problem can be solved and forgotten without being mentioned too much.

Stages and Effects of the Crisis Process

The first stage is pre-crisis public relations work, pre-crisis preparation within organisations, and developing contingency plans prepared by crisis management to face a crisis. The task of public relations is to ensure that an organisation is sensitive to crises through various activities and that crises are overcome unharmed if they arise. It should be recommended that a study on the organisation's activities be prepared to facilitate the detection of possible crises that may occur in the organisation and the problems that may cause crises in the future. In the preparatory phase, which includes pre-crisis public relations research, an organisation should first define a crisis, review its relationship with the external environment, and create a crisis management team to intervene (Üzün, 2000, p. 25).

In the second stage, the crisis management team should be formed. While creating this team, care should be taken to recruit knowledgeable, persistent and hardworking people willing to take risks. The first pillar of these activities is the appointment of a crisis spokesperson for the channels through which the messages to be conveyed in the event of a crisis will be conveyed and for the crisis unit, which should give a single voice primarily for the transmission of information about the crisis (Genç, 1996, p. 193). The crisis management team leader is the top management level of the organisation. The Public Relations Manager is the lead consultant. The other members are the heads of departments such as production, human resources, marketing, etc. If the manager who manages the team feels that the team is lacking, he can appoint consultants from outside the institution (Budak-Budak, 1998, p. 252). Managers work by advising and guiding the organisation's employees. If necessary, they also create an opportunity to learn from them and benefit from their knowledge. This will help everyone work together as a team and overcome challenges. An effective communication system should always be considered. It should also be regarded as a qualified crisis management team dedicated to organisational activities and with appropriate capacity and decision-making authority (Deming, 1996, p. 97).

Concepts such as Crisis Room, War Room or Situation Room are primarily encountered in political crises. A crisis room is a symbol of collective wisdom, symbolising bringing together all the energy and resources of an organisation to solve a problem. In case of any crisis, all relevant information flows here, and this information is immediately evaluated, necessary decisions are made, and essential strategies are developed. Crisis room management ensures that all information is collected in the exact centre, instantly assessed, and decisions are made together with the management and acted accordingly (Tüz, 2001, p. 10).

For this purpose, the following measures should be taken to establish an effective communication system in crisis management (Peker-Aytürk, 2000, p. 394):

- There should be an adequate flow of information within the organisation.
- The list of people and organisations to be contacted in case of crisis should be updated.

A press centre should be established so the press and media representatives can continuously benefit from it. The press should be provided with necessary support services.

The Crisis Center Coordination Body should have a Press and Public Relations Office that is open to the press and the public for a certain period of time. At the same time, as the spokesperson of the Crisis Management Team, the Head of Press and Public Relations should inform the press and the public and make statements on behalf of the facility.

- Crisis management decisions should be communicated to stakeholders first.
- Be realistic and acquire the ability to quickly make an enlightening statement, especially against exaggerated, inaccurate, unrealistic, demoralising, aggressive, panic-inducing, fear-inducing, destructive gossip, information and news.

In the third stage, the planning phase, it is essential to analyse each organisation to develop a plan to achieve the most successful outcome throughout the crises. Even if they don't achieve the financial success they need, these efforts are jeopardised in the long run if the plan goes awry. An effective communication plan is required to get results (Çöklü, 1994, p. 324). Therefore, when developing a plan, it is helpful to start with a general definition of crisis management to provide a general framework. During the preparation, care should be taken to ensure that the contingency plan has the following characteristics (Emrealp, 1993, p. 29): It should be concretely formulated, accessible, measurable, time limits should be shown, priority should be, and existing restrictions should be clearly stated. For a crisis plan to be defined, a crisis management unit must have a crisis communication plan that can be implemented during a crisis, but its use is not mandatory. A crisis communication plan is about preparing before the storm. This plan cannot fit into a specific scheme and may change as the crisis develops, so it needs to be constantly updated. It also means the preparation of an overall crisis communication strategy. When creating a crisis plan, all options should be determined in writing at the outset to overcome the crisis with the least possible damage. In addition, the coping capacity of the institution should be assessed using objective tools. It is necessary to take measures to prevent a crisis (Çamdereli, 2000, p. 126). It is essential and efficient to have a prepared crisis plan ready and to test and implement the plan prepared by the crisis management team. If properly organised by the crisis team leader, the crisis plan becomes a dynamic and educational experience for the team members at this stage. Once the plan is implemented, the crisis management team tries to determine which crises we will face in the next few years (Göztaş, 1997, p. 45).

Crisis Management and Its Features

Principles of Crisis Management: Crisis management is not about avoiding or resolving crises but about preventing crises or turning crises into successes. However, in the fight against crises originating from outside the organisation due to unforeseen environmental factors and natural, political, economic, and technical reasons, the necessary administrative and rational measures are taken to manage them effectively. Compliance plays a crucial role in crisis management. Organisations need leadership to overcome crises and turn them into opportunities (Peker-Aytürk, 2000, p. 385-386).

Saffir-Tarrand also summarises and evaluates the seven crisis management principles that emerge when dealing with organisational crises and gives the following recommendations (Saffir-Tarrand, 1993, pp. 86-88):

A crisis management team responsible for day-to-day tasks should be formed to focus on problems. The crisis management team should centralise and control the flow of information. The speakers should be chosen carefully and use expressions that will not exacerbate the problem. Only selected and well-prepared speakers should inform the media. Spokespersons should work on the image and image strategy of the evolving organisation.

- An appropriate strategy should be defined for the worst-case scenario.
- Focus on content under pressure. The media needs to present the issue accurately.
- Potential allies should be identified, national and special groups should be established to work with in times of crisis, and support groups should be established.
- A comprehensive crisis action plan should be developed. This plan should be distributed to all stakeholders. New members should be explained to contingency plans when they join the team. A well-crafted action plan should include policy reports consulted in times of crisis, a complete list of emergencies that may occur, a list of critical listeners and appreciation groups with monitoring of opposing groups, contingency plan resource analysis, a list of crisis management team members, and periodic crisis surveys.

The Importance of Public Relations and Media in Crisis Communication and Management

In crisis communication, it is essential to establish a sustainable and trust-based relationship with the environment while overcoming crises. Although it seems impossible to eliminate environmental interaction issues, it is also possible to keep them at optimal levels and reduce them to a size that will not harm the organisation with a strategic crisis communication approach (Şimşek, 1999, p. 316). The development and diversification of the mass media are both beneficial and dangerous, mainly due to the enrichment of new media, which is added to the traditional media and tends to increase, and the rapid dissemination of accompanying information such as ideas, comments, news, etc. New media includes websites, social networks, forums, blogs, and online chats. It also contains rooms, web dictionaries, and more. A crisis that arises or develops in this environment also poses a threat to businesses and institutions. This is especially true in a virtual environment that is free from property issues, agnostic to the spiral of advertiser/publisher relations, and more accessible than traditional mass media, especially in virtual environments that allow the use of pseudonyms (Göztaş, 1997, p. 59-60). Threats from virtual environments can infect millions of people within hours or minutes, and businesses need to quickly find the correct answers and implement them without waiting to protect their reputations (Er, 2008, p. 153).

In new media crises, which are accepted as the basic principle of crisis management approaches today, the necessity of developing the ability to predict and eliminate possible problems with good observation skills and to take steps to solve potential issues without underestimating them is also increasing. An email from several people, a new discussion on social media, or a seemingly inconsequential blog post can become a giant avalanche caused by a small snowball rolling down a mountain. To avoid falling into an avalanche in a crisis that draws the media's and stakeholders' attention to an organisation, the most crucial step is to ensure a healthy and sustainable production and flow of information. Organisations should meticulously organise the time and coordination of those involved in crisis communication to provide adequate information flow in unpredictable, sudden and reputational crises (Peltekoğlu, 1998, p. 452).

In crisis management, public relations can use new media tools to express the consequences of the crisis and create an environment where they can be conveyed to the public and the organisation's target audience through the press (Pertekor, 1998, p. 242). Communication with the media brings significant benefits to an organisation. We can list these benefits as follows (Fink, 1986, p. 109):

- Working with the media makes organisations active rather than passive.
- Organizations have more time to control and deliver messages sent.

Organisations have more opportunities to correct misinformation than if they were not dependent on the media, i.e., if there were no communications.

- Failure to communicate with the media indicates that the organisation has not significantly impacted the crisis.

AN EXAMPLE OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT WITH COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: SYRIAN CRISIS

In the study, literature information, field news, media news about the Syrian crisis and published expert reports were generally used. Unrefuted news (embraced journalism), or news that many media outlets have confirmed, has been accepted as accurate. As definitions, the institutions recognised by Turkey in the international arena are taken as a basis, and their official names are used. The statements and declarations of the structures identified as terrorist organisations were not respected. In the same way, in terms of borders and the authorities that govern those borders, the borders and authorities recognised by official institutions are assumed to be correct and valid.

The research is limited to the sources reached. It is only possible to receive news from the front of a civil war and the environment in which it is experienced to provide information and statistics through intermediaries. Only the example of Syria and the news coming from this field have been credited through prestigious sources. The articles published by leading academics and academic publications on this subject have been considered in crisis management. Crisis management has been limited to the Syrian civil war and its effects, and no comparison has been made with the crises and wars currently taking place in other parts of the world.

Historical Process in the Syrian Crisis

A mass movement that began in the Middle East in late 2010 can be defined as demanding a democratic regime in which people oppressed by oppressive and authoritarian governments can have a more significant say in governing their countries. This context has been used by various names on social media and by researchers interested in the subject. These movements are the Arab Awakening, the Arab Spring, and the Arab Revolt. The Arab Spring is the most used (Doğan and Durgun, 2012, p. 62).

Syria, which gained its independence after France withdrew from Syrian territory in 1946, was subjected to military coups in the 1950s and 1960s and dragged the country into internal instability. A military coup in 1963 brought to

power the Ba'ath Party, which advocated Arab nationalism, and Hafez al-Assad became president in 1971 with the support of the notables and the bourgeoisie. Hafez al-Assad transformed the country into a democratic authoritarian structure for 40 years from that day until he died in 2000 (Şen, 2013, p. 57). It should be remembered that the impact of the series of dictatorships that started with the French mandate in Syria on the people has had the most significant impact on today's issues. France's separation of the country into various minorities with autonomy and other privileges has caused many problems. Chief among these is the conflict between Alawites and Sunnis. As for the majority of the Sunni population, the Alevis, who are a predominantly agricultural minority in the western part of the country, have gained severe cadres in the armed security forces (Özdemir, 2016, p. 83). In Syria, where the Baath Party is in power, the people are stunned by "emergencies" such as corruption, unequal income distribution, limited freedom of the press and expression, torture, and a deteriorating domestic climate. For this reason, the people started to protest the government (Hediye, 2012, p. 31). A process similar to what the region's countries witnessed at the beginning of these demonstrations has encouraged the Syrian people. The uprising, which started on March 15, 2011, in Daraa in southern Syria, gradually spread throughout the country. Those overwhelmed by the pressure of the Assad regime started protest actions (Dalacoura, 2012, p. 66). In the meantime, Turkey has been greatly affected by the Syrian crisis because it is both a Muslim and a neighbouring state and the existence of a deep historical relationship.

The Syrian Crisis for Turkey

Before the Arab Spring, Turkey-Syria relations were perhaps at the best level in history. The policy of Syria, which experienced the Arab Spring, against the people was of great importance for itself and the Middle East. Syria is Turkey's border neighbour, and Turkey first started to follow a wait-and-see policy towards Syria in order not to repeat the contradictory policies implemented in Libya (Oğuzlu, 2012, p. 53). In August 2011, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu visited Damascus and expressed his desire to achieve democratisation in Syria. After these meetings, it was stated that with the increase in violence in Syria, there may be a Turkish military intervention in Syria (Akbaş, 2012: 67). However, Turkey challenged these Western discourses by emphasising that Bashar al-Assad should implement reforms and solve the problem peacefully (Kibaroglu, 2012, p. 32). When these demands failed, Ankara changed its Syria policy and allowed the refugees fleeing its territory to live within its borders. In addition, in June 2012, a Turkish Air Force fighter jet was shot down over the Mediterranean coast of Syria. In October 2012, five people were killed in bombs dropped by Assad's forces in the Akçakale district of Sanliurfa. Thereupon, Turkey changed its policy sharply. As a result, Turkey, which exhibited moderate bilateral relations with the Syrian regime in the early stages of the popular uprising in Syria, experienced a severe political change in this process, which led to the direct support of the opposition against the regime. Kaman says, "This change is not a transition but a final break." The situation has turned into a grave refugee crisis on a national and public basis, mainly for which a permanent solution has not been found (Balci, 2013: 307-308). Communication and public relations are also essential elements in crisis management, which are strategically applied by states in creating political solutions to the Syrian problem.

Communication and Public Relations in the Syria Crisis

Due to the communication tools that have become widespread within the Communication and Public Relations discipline, the media has emerged as a new and effective power. The power of the media in crisis management, which is the subject of this article, is an undeniable reality (Cote, 2022, p. 23). Social media plays a vital role in the Syrian uprising in that these social media channels help organise, communicate and develop demands and statuses among protesters. The Arab uprising has drastically changed how we view social media and deal with it. Many scientists think that social media such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook are not just tools for socialising, organising, and talking about birthday parties. Around the world, social media is becoming an agent of change, playing a public and political role in organising the social movement. Social media also plays a vital role in covering and communicating news worldwide. The role of social media in the Middle East is even more critical because it creates a platform for discussion where there is no absolute truth. Social media played a crucial role in shaping the political debate in the Arab Spring. Online political chats preceded the main events on the ground. Social media has also helped spread democratic ideas in the Arab world. Social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter have become some of the most powerful tools of revolution that convey people's demands for freedom, transparency, justice, and a freely elected government. Social media has played a role in the Syrian uprising in that these social media channels have helped to organise, communicate, and develop demands and status among the protesters.

Debates about the power and potential of new media in shaping society are divided between scholars such as La Jeunesse and Echikson (2013, p. 52), who see social media as a tool for democratic openness, and those who emphasise controlling, such as Howard and Hussain (2011, p. 38). Even in democratic countries, some authors believe that new technology threatens citizens' freedom and privacy. Other scholars have become attracted to the

potential role of new media in shaping politics by opening up a new platform for debate, especially in societies without a natural platform for public discussion (Howard and Hussain, 2011, p. 38).

However, some authors, such as Khandker, have offered a more balanced view of the potential and pitfalls of new media's liberating and controlling role. International managers and experts who actively use crisis management believe that social media plays a significant and vital role in organising and promoting social movements. The increase in the power of new media over traditional media has made it more powerful. However, traditional media has undoubtedly played a significant role in presenting the Syrian uprising to the global community, which has broadly supported the libertarian transition. In addition, the political leaders of these Middle Eastern countries who witnessed the uprising had foreseen this situation. With or without social networks, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain were ready for revolutionary movements due to various political-economic conditions. Similarly, it was unknown to what extent these revolutions would be successful and whether social networks could be supported (Khandker, 2015, p. 667).

The internet played an essential role in the developments with the effect of the Arab Spring during the Bashar al-Assad period. During the Assad government, the Internet was introduced to Syria in 2001. However, access to social media apps such as Facebook and YouTube is officially banned. The civil war has made the Internet controversial among politicians (Howard & Hussain, 2011, p. 38). Opposition actors claimed that Assad was monitoring videos and messages on the internet in real-time. In some cases, it has also been argued that they obtained confidential state secrets via the Internet to warn their colleagues in Damascus of the regime's actions against them. The pro-government Syrian Electronic Army has also been accused of DDoS attacks, phishing scams, and fighting opposition activists online. Assad's forces examined laptops at checkpoints for software, allowing users to bypass government spyware (Chozick, 2012, p. 24).

In the Syrian Civil War, the public relations efforts of third parties, such as the United States or Turkey, were carried out intensively. Because the governments of these countries have resorted to such practices to strengthen their Syria policy in their own countries and to gather supporters. As President Obama sought congressional approval for a military strike on Syria for allegedly using chemical weapons against his people, the Daily's Matt Wilson said the vote in the Senate and House of Representatives was like "walking a tightrope." As U.S. pressure for military action in Syria has increased, special interest groups have emerged as a public relations response. Groups such as the Syrian Progress Institute financed ads in publications such as the Washington Post, which featured an image of children allegedly victims of a chemical weapons attack. Thus, it was declared that "America's credibility and national interests are in danger" in the military authorisation vote, which was approached as a public communication strategy using the media (Gurcan, 2012, p. 99-138).

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has also started using various social media features to clean up his negative image. His experts, advising Assad, created an official Instagram account for the "Syrian Presidency" to the president. The account portrays Assad in various positive poses. As a working young man, he is intertwined with the people and even the image of a leader whose wife is doing charity work in Syria. However, it does not seem to have achieved the desired result. Patrick Coffee of PR Newser said, "Most Instagram users have had the opportunity to let Assad know exactly how they feel in the comments, often including the word "go to hell" and other less nasty profanities (Habertürk, 2013).

Crisis management has been a method that has been applied very frequently in Turkey during the Syrian crisis, both out of necessity and out of necessity. Both the refugees taken, terrorist acts and cross-border operations have created many crisis management experiences. At this point, the Presidential Communications Department and similar public institutions, established by Presidential Decree No. 14, published in the Official Gazette dated July 24, 2018, and numbered 30488, took steps and played a leading role in crisis management. Many crisis management steps have been taken, from aid organisations to refugee camps, from press releases to policy measures when necessary. In addition, the state's contribution to crisis management has been seen through channels called new media. In the same way, a great public opinion study was carried out for operations such as Euphrates Shield and Peace Spring, and the support of the people was provided through media campaigns. They organised magnificent martyrs' funerals, and many experts appeared on TV and emphasised the necessity of operations.

Although there are approximately 3.3 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, the presence of 233 thousand asylum seekers in accommodation centres is a severe situation assessment. This situation shows that more than 92% of Syrian refugees live in different parts of the country in an uncontrolled and dispersed manner. Syrians see Accommodation Centres as a last resort due to their various limitations and inadequacies, and the immigrants who settle in multiple cities are the source of economic, administrative, social, cultural and spatial multidimensional problems. We know that some of those who came from Syria also have the status of Turkish citizens. Due to the

deficiencies in the official documents of many Syrians who came to Turkey, reliable information about those who came to Turkey cannot be reached (AFAD, 2014, p. 16). It is known that 3.3 million Syrian refugees, who are scattered uncontrollably in our country, will be the source of both security and new economic, social and cultural problems. To take precautions in this regard, first of all, it is necessary to know where under what conditions and for how long the target group (3.3 million Syrian refugees) has been living in the country.

CONCLUSION

The Syrian crisis emerged as the most important result of the Arab uprisings. The peaceful protests that erupted in Syria in March 2011 have since escalated into the world's most complex conflict. Syria's multi-layered conflict encompasses a rivalry between the United States and Russia, regional wars of teaching, and military great power competition. The conflict also involves a plethora of powerful non-state actors, ranging from Sunni jihadist groups such as the Islamic State group (ISIS) and al-Qaeda to openly secular Kurdish fighters. The human cost of the conflict is catastrophic and has unleashed the largest migration crisis since the end of World War II. More than half of Syria's population has been displaced, with 6.5 million internally displaced and 5.6 million displaced as refugees. The number of people killed in the conflict has reached 1 million (Dinçer, 2013: 82-95).

The brutality of the conflict, marked by the Assad regime's systematic torture, widespread detentions and disappearances, and routine violations of international norms, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, cannot be underestimated. Syrians are suffering from the worst economic downturn since the start of the civil war, which has added to their misery. As a result of high inflation, the Syrian currency lost two-thirds of its value in 2020, resulting in a lack of necessities and rising poverty rates within the country. According to the World Food Program, 60 per cent of the population had to live without food security (Güven, 2016).

Syria has witnessed a period of relative calm since the Idlib ceasefire negotiated between Turkey and Russia on March 5, 2020. The Syrian Crisis has remained largely static, with no significant military offensives or forced displacements. Yet this predicament is inherently unstable, with many potential flashpoints on the horizon between Israel and Iran, Turkey and the Kurds, and Russia and the United States. Meanwhile, ISIS remains a low-level insurgent but continues to exploit security vacuums in its revival efforts. Southwestern Syria is also unsettled by intermittent anti-regime violence and demonstrations (Anadolu Agency, 2020).

The Syrian Crisis is a significant problem that must be solved for the region and the international community. The first of these is the issue of relocation. The multifaceted displacement crisis provoked by the conflict shows no signs of abating and will likely shape the region's contours in the coming years. Given the hostile environment and large-scale destruction in Syria, Syrian refugees are unlikely to return to their homes anytime soon. A recent Norwegian Refugee Council report states that Syrian refugees are unlikely to return in the next five to ten years. Countries hosting refugees face significant socioeconomic challenges, compounded by pandemic and lockdown measures. Without effective interventions, the prolonged displacement resulting from the Syrian conflict has the potential to lead to a series of crises in nearby host countries with ripple effects towards Europe.

Today, most of the Syrian refugees in the region live in poverty. The prospects are dire for the most vulnerable among them, such as single mothers, children without caregivers, and people with disabilities. More than 90 per cent of Syrians live in extreme poverty, and early marriages are increasing. However, countries hosting refugees, especially Turkey, are taking positive steps, such as allowing refugees to enter the labour market and access public health services. These steps have been achieved despite the many refugees hosted in these countries. Turkey continues to host the world's largest refugee population, including over 3.7 million Syrians, while Lebanon and Jordan are among the countries with the highest number of refugees per capita globally (Dinçer, 2013: 82-95).

Meanwhile, humanitarian needs inside Syria are increasing. More than 6.9 million people are still internally displaced, and 14.6 million people need humanitarian and other forms of assistance. Syria's internal displacement – the highest rate in the world – poses equally troubling challenges. In Idlib, the last stronghold of the rebels, many people had to live in crowded and impoverished conditions. There could also be a significant humanitarian catastrophe with the potential cessation of UN humanitarian aid. People need help providing safe housing, and many still face challenges accessing essential services such as education and healthcare. In 2021, three-quarters of all households in the country said they could not meet their basic needs. This figure is 10% higher than the previous year (Güven, 2016).

However, some Syrians prefer to return home. In 2021, the UN confirmed or monitored the return of close to 36,000 refugees to Syria. Refugees refer to various factors in their decision to return, such as their safety, property rights, and livelihoods. In parallel, many internally displaced Syrians have returned to their homes in addition to their general reintegration needs. As the needs of humanitarian organisations grow inside Syria, they urgently need

the necessary resources to strengthen their work inside the country. In 2022, the UN received seven per cent of the US\$465.2 million required for its work in Syria. From Turkey's point of view, the Syrian civil war has turned into a real problem. The cost of the work, the refugee dimension and the military operations that must be carried out require serious financial resources for Turkey. The refugee problem has become a political situation in the country and has become an issue many political parties use in their campaigns. In addition, Turkey needs to manage not only the refugee crisis, whose relations with Western countries have often deteriorated but also the foreign policy and foreign promotion crisis in terms of a crisis management technique. The Syrian crisis is not over yet, and there is no hope that it will end. Therefore, it is still a practical issue in terms of crisis management and will need to be followed with the same seriousness (Oytun: 2014).

Crisis management is not only a concept used in company management but also one of the strategies used to produce solutions in the country's political management. Crisis management is the main characteristic of today's international relations, and its existence can be evidenced by the functioning of its institutions within the framework of certain norms and rules. How these institutionally defined norms, rules and institutions work can be used as a political element in the solution of the Syrian crisis. In the crisis in question, the international community continued to function within the framework of these norms and rules, and institutions such as excellent powers management, diplomacy, international law, and balance of power were operated in order to maintain order. Therefore, today's world must develop a mechanism for world peace that is not only "driven" by conflict and violence but also one of cooperation and solidarity, which can act towards specific goals through its institutions. For this reason, international crises such as the Syrian crisis, which is the subject of this study, can be managed in line with the international community's objectives. In other words, from a normative point of view, states should be operated as the wheels of international politics with shared values/common interests among states instead of mere chaos and conflict for crisis management in international relations. As it is known, while a political structure (today's state or nation-state) monopolizes the power of administration and sanction in the domestic politics of countries, unfortunately, there is no such higher authority in the international community and disorder prevails. In other words, in its simplest terms, international relations are anarchic. However, ideally, strong institutions such as the UN, NATO and the European Union should be able to create order through norms and rules. The most effective and straightforward solution results for crisis management can be obtained by employing these institutions, which are the most critical indicators of the existence of the international community in the Syrian crisis, in a sense, solution-oriented. However, international crisis management should not only be operative in times of crisis, but it should also be essential that all actions in the international arena are used to achieve the ideal social benefit in peacetime. It is also evident that the crisis in Syria is still ongoing and that it cannot be resolved for both Turkey and the world with crisis management. Therefore, it is also possible that the Syrian crisis will result in the supremacy of government forces or the opposition, with or without a humanitarian intervention, or even the emergence of new political structures by dividing Syria into several parts. These and many other possible outcomes not yet listed here are within the scope of international crisis management. For this reason, international crisis management is not an approach that can be applied to limited or specific situations but an approach that tries to understand/explain international relations in general terms.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the study's conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by The first draft of the manuscript was written by all authors who commented on parts of the manuscript written by other authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

Data analyzed in the article are available from the corresponding author on a reasonable request.

Declarations

Competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare relevant to this article's content.

REFERENCE

- <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/bahar-kalkani-harekati/turkiye-ve-rusya-idlibde-cease-of-the-law-agreement/1756201>
(Accessed: 5 March 2020)
- Akbas, Z. (2012). The process of change in the Middle East and Turkish foreign policy. *Journal of Academic Approaches*, 3, 53-54.
- Arıcı, K. (2001) Crises can be turned into opportunities. *Journal of Turk-Koop*, 17, 345.
- Balci, A. (2013). *Turkey's foreign policy, principles, actors, and practices*. Interaction Publications.

- Budak, G., & Budak, G. (1998). *Public relations are behavioural approaches*. Peace Publications.
- Çamdereli, M. (2000). *Public relations in its main lines*. Line Bookstore.
- Coklu, Y. E. (1994). Crisis management in the organisation within the framework of public relations activities. *Marmara Journal of Communication*, 7, 321-327.
- Dalacoura, K. (2012). The 2011 uprising in the Arab Middle East: political change and geopolitical implications. *International Affairs*, 88(1), 66.
- Deming, E. W. (1996). *Exit from the crisis*. (Trans. Cem Akaş). Arcelik A.S.
- Dinçer, B. O., Federici, V., Ferris, E., Karaca, S., Kirisci, K. & Çarmıklı, Ö. (2013). Syrian refugee crisis and Turkey: Endless sojourn. <https://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2013/11/18%20syria%20turkey%20refugees/usakbrookings%20report%20final%20version14november13.pdf> (Accessed: 10 December 2022)
- Dogan, G., & Durgun B. (2012). Arab Spring and Libya: an evaluation within the framework of the historical process and the concept of democratisation. *Journal of Süleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences*, 15, 62.
- Emrealp, S. (1993). *Crisis management in municipalities*. Kent Printing House.
- Er, G. (2008). *Reputation management in a virtual environment*. Cinius Publications.
- Fink, S. (1986). *Crisis management: planning for the inevitable*. American Management Association.
- Young, N. (1996). *The path to the top: management*. Timaş Publications.
- Görpe, S. (2001). *Annotated English–Turkish public relations concepts*. Istanbul University Faculty of Communication Publications.
- Goztas, A. (1997). *Crisis management and public relations*. Ege Publishing.
- Grove, A. S. (1997). *Only the paranoid survive*. (Trans. Özlem Dinçkal- Ferma Lekesizalın). Sistem Publishing.
- Gurcan, M. (2012). Strategic communication model and its applicability to the field of security. *Security Strategies*, 15, 99-138.
- Güven, E. (2016). The working situation of Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey and their effects on the Turkish economy. Ilem Blog. <http://www.ilem.org.tr/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Bilgi-Notu-EsmaGu%CC%88ven.pdf> (Accessed: 10 December 2022)
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewim_uulhvz_AhUER_EDHUL_D7sQFnoECCoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haberturk.com%2Fgundem%2Fhaber%2F864944-basbakanlikta-suriye-zirvesi&usq=AOvVaw1_eebw2RnAsjGnG5rs6-kM&opi=89978449 (Accessed: 10 December 2022)
- Hashit, G. (2000). *Crisis management in enterprises and research study on Turkey's large industrial enterprises*. Anadolu University Open Education Faculty Publications.
- Gift, L. (2012). The dynamics of the Syrian crisis and the evaluation of the actors. *Middle East Analysis*, 4(44), 31.
- Howard, P., & Hussain, M. (2011). The role of digital media. *Journal of Democracy*, 22(3), 35-48.
- Kernisky, D. A. (1997). Proactive crisis management and ethical discourse: Dow Chemical's issues. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(8), 843-853.
- Khandker, T. (2015). *Global trends: communications and media studies*. Matters of Positivity.
- Kibaroglu, M. (2012). The Arab Spring and Turkey. *ADAM Academy*, 2, 32.
- La Jeunesse, R., & Echikson, W. (2013). *Social media guidebook*. OSCE Publications.
- Mackenzie, A. (1995). *Success and time*. (Trans. Gurcan Banger). Science Technical Publishing House.
- Oğuzlu, T. (2012). Turkey and the Arab Spring: The rise of the liberal, assertive and western axis in Turkish foreign policy. *Academic Middle East*, 6(2), 53.
- Oytun, O., Pirinççi, F., Erkmen, S., Maden, T. E., Kılıç, S., Duman, B. & Özdemirci, A. S. (2014). *The situation of Syrian refugees in Syria's neighbouring countries: Findings, conclusions and recommendations (No: 189)*. ORSAM. http://www.orsam.org.tr/eski/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/201452_189tur.pdf (Accessed: 10 December 2022)
- Özdemir, C. (2016). *Causes of the civil war in Syria: autocratic rule or regional and global powers?* Bilgi University.
- Paksoy, A. C. (1997). *Public relations practices in Turkey*. Rota Publications.
- Pearson, C. M. & Mitroff, I. I. (1993). From crisis prone to crisis, prepared a framework for crisis management. *Academy of Management Executive*, 7(1), 48-59.
- Peker, Ö., & Aytürk, N. (2000). *Effective management skills*. Judgment Publishing House.
- Peltekoğlu, F. B. (1998). *What is public relations?* Beta Edition Release.
- Sad, C. (2000). *Strategic Management and Public Relations*. Dokuz Eylül Publications.
- Saffir, L. & Tarrant, J. (1993). *Power public relations*. NTC/Contemporary Publishing Company.
- Sen, Y. (2013). Arab Spring in Syria. *Legislative Journal*, 23, 57.
- Simsek, M.Ş. (1999). *Management and Organization*. Nobel Publication Distribution. <https://sozluk.gov.tr/> (Accessed: 10 December 2022)

http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=167 (Accessed: 10 December 2022)
Tüz, M. V. (2001). *Crisis and Business Management*. Alpha Publications.