

# Moscow's Proposed Draft Constitution for Syria Is Questionable

By [Sophie Mangal](#)

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*The Russian-proposed constitution for Syria is raising a storm in Media. Not only the opposition but the governmental circles are discussing it. Many forums are endlessly debating its 85-controversial articles. Some Syrians feel insulted by a charter authored by one outside power and approved by two others, Turkey and Iran.*

The Islamists are furious, because the draft constitution scraps Article 3, which specifies Islam as the religion of the president of the republic. This is a long-standing article since 1920 which several Syrian leaders, including Hafez Al Assad, tried to change, with little luck.

Arab nationalists are also very unhappy with the new charter, because it changes the name of the country from "Syrian Arab Republic" into "Syrian Republic." This was proposed in order to please non-Arab components of Syrian society, like the Turkmen, Armenians, Circassians, and Kurds. It is how the republic was called between 1932-1958; the word "Arab" was only injected into its name as late as 1961, in response to a character slaughter campaign waged by then-Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser, accusing Syrians of being "bad Arabs" for supporting a coup against the short-lived Syrian-Egyptian Union.

But in fact the Russian-authored constitution gives a little bit to everybody — keeping everybody satisfied, and equally furious. For example, in order to please the opposition, it slashes some of the Syrian presidency's legislative powers, taking away 23 authorities currently vested in the Office of the President.

Such powers include the right to name judges on the Higher Court of Justice, the right to name governor of the Central Bank, and to appoint the prime minister and his deputies. To please Damascus officialdom, it keeps the president in full-control of the army and the security apparatus.

What are the main differences???

Stay tuned and you will find out.

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