

# Review of: "The Failure of Diplomatic Mediations in the Syrian Conflict – A Comparative Analysis"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Mona Awwad's article provides with a concise but meticulous analysis of mediation efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis, a daunting task in view of the conflict's complexity and multi-layer character. One should underline that the author has not only succeeded to analyse the multiple aspects of the problem but has also come up with relevant conclusions that might be taken into consideration by those involved in the mediation process.

This success is due, first of all, to the fact that the paper managed to combine the theoretical/methodological tools with practice-oriented research purposes, and this is, perhaps, the most important feature of the analysis.

The paper is well structured insofar as it contains a short expose on the most critical stages and the protagonists of the conflict, then provides an overview of mediation concept, based on the theoretical framework elaborated by Zartman et al. with five basic challenges of mediation.

Thanks to this coherent approach the author was able to find out the similarities and differences between the mediation efforts by the regional organization (the League of Arab States – LAS) and the two UN mediators, Annan and Brahimi. More importantly the analysis is helpful in identifying the major causes of mediation failure: incapability to address the root causes of the conflict; the dependence of both mediating agencies from the dominance of external parties that pursued their own interests; and the lack of the opposition's authentic representation due to the different sources of financing of its dispersed groups by external actors.

The distinction between directive and facilitator/communicator strategies as applied to the Syrian mediation efforts is yet another remarkable part of the analysis. The paper argues that both approaches proved to be a failure, whereas the question which one would be the most productive in the Syrian context remains open.

Although the study deals with the Syrian conflict, it might be considered in an even broader context, since the above-mentioned reasons of failure are typical for other conflict situations as well. Neither a group of states, or a regional organization or the UN, representing the international community, were able to mediate in a way to either avoid conflicts' degeneration into open war, as was the case in Ukraine and South Caucasus, or end the conflict without having recourse to imposed, coercive solution, as was the case in the Former Yugoslavia.

Mona Awwad's article may be considered as a first step in her study on the topic, and she should be encouraged to pursue her research to proceed with a more comprehensive study both in terms of covering the mediation's later stages and elaborating on the conclusions while also introducing a new element of recommendations to the internal and external

parties involved in the Syrian conflict.