

## SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

**Dates of Elections:** 10 and 11 February 1986

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Syria, the People's Council, consists of 195 Deputies elected for 4 years. According to the Constitution, half the Assembly members must be workers and peasants; these currently number 99.

### **Electoral System**

All Syrian citizens who are at least 18 years of age and registered as electors are entitled to vote unless they are insane or have been convicted of a serious crime. Voting is not compulsory.

Qualified electors of at least 25 years of age may be candidates for the People's Council. Civil servants and members of the armed forces must resign from their posts if elected as Deputies. As mentioned above, at least half of the Deputies must be workers and peasants, terms specifically defined in the election law. All parliamentarians are elected by simple majority vote. Each member is deemed to represent the whole population, and his mandate may not be limited by any restrictions or conditions.

Except in cases defined by law, the elected member may take leave in order to join the Council. His post or work is reserved for him, the period of leave being regarded as active. Candidates run in an individual capacity even if they are members of a political party.

If a parliamentary seat becomes vacant for any reason, it is filled through a by-election within 90 days, provided the remaining period of the Council's term is not less than six months.

### **General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The Syrian Communist Party made a comeback and women more than doubled their number of seats as a result of the 1986 elections to the People's Council. The ruling *Baath* party was the biggest winner, with a total of 129 seats in the 195-member Parliament. The Communists, who had no members in the previous legislature, won nine seats. There were a total of 88 newcomers to the Council.

The newly-elected Parliament was opened by President of the Republic Hafez al-Assad on 27 February.

**Statistics**

*1. Distribution of Seats in the People's Council*

Political Group

National Progressive Front	
<i>Baath</i> Arab Socialist Party. . . . .	<b>.129</b>
- Syrian Arab Socialist Union . . . . .	.9
- Socialist Unionist . . . . .	.8
- Arab Socialist Party. . . . .	.5
Communist Party of Syria . . . . .	.9
Independents. . . . .	.35
	~195

*2. Distribution of Members of the People's Council according to Sex*

<b>Men</b> . . . . .	.177
Women. . . . .	.18
	195