

**Committee: The Security Council**

**Issue: The question of Syria: The World beyond the War**

**Student Officer: Andreas Georgantis**

**Position: Deputy President**

**INTRODUCTION**

*To the Freedom of Syrian people*

Dear Delegates,

My name is Andreas Georgantis, I am 19 years old and currently I'm a sophomore at the Faculty of Law in Democritus University of Thrace. This conference is my 14th and my 5th ATSMUN since I was a student at Arsakeia Tositseia Schools of Ekali and I had the opportunity to be in this conference since the 10th grade. Since it's my second in a row time chairing an e-committee at an ATSMUN I know it can sometimes be challenging, but I have learned that delegates who attend e-committees are also really dedicated to the conference and so I'm really excited to meet and cooperate with you and hopefully to see you next year in Patras.

This year's second topic at the Security Council is a challenging one, but also one you all are familiar with. The Syrian War. If we had to put a starting point it would be on 15th March 2011. That March during peaceful protests in Syria against President Bashar al-Assad, 15 boys were detained and tortured for writing a graffiti in support of the Arab Spring. A 13-year-old was killed after having been brutally tortured<sup>1</sup>. The Syrian government continued to use deadly forces against in all the next protests. That was the time that opposition supporters took arms, first



(1) A peaceful uprising against the president of Syria 10 years ago turned into a full-scale civil war. The conflict has left more than 380,000 people dead, devastated cities and drawn in other countries.

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<sup>1</sup> §2: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/14/syrias-war-explained-from-the-beginning>

to defend themselves and then to attack the security forces. This was the beginning of the war. There have been exactly 10 years since then. Leaders have changed, supporters took a step-back, or a step-in, thousands of innocent people have died, thousands of the people escaped the country and managed to survive, organizations such as the UN took action, but the question still remains: Is the war ever going to end?

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring was a series of uprisings in Arab countries demanding democracy. Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain and of course Syria were the countries involved. The events began in the spring of 2011. The name "Spring" is given to the movements towards democracy<sup>2</sup> and coincidentally in Syria happened on spring. It's still in question how all Arab countries demonstrated at the same time and it has been said that the CIA had been involved pushing forward the movement, but as it is right now there is no reliable resource confirming that.

### **Arab Winter**

This term used to describe the aftermath of the middle east crisis. 10 years after the Arab spring movements and still, there is no success in it (or at least a major one). This is why media, analytics and academics -mostly from the western world- have characterized the aftermath of the war as a winter since it now seems to move to hibernation.

### **ISIS - ISIL**

The Islamic State or ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) or as Barack Obama said ISIL (The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) is a Sunni jihadist group with violent ideology, calling itself a caliphate and claims to be religious authority over all Muslims. From the very beginning, the western world claimed that ISIS is a terrorist organization, even before their first moves. ISIS indeed ended to be a terrorist organization as they made shocking actions such as assassinations on live broadcasts around the world. It's not a secret that Islamic State lures people from more than 80 countries that joined their forces. In the end, caliphate collapsed but their actions are still on the mind of everyone.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/arab-spring>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The Six-Day War

The political situation after the second Arab- Israeli war was critical. Arab leaders were losing power after military losses and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees were created by the 1948 war<sup>3</sup>. Palestinian guerrilla groups based in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were attacking Israel. Israel retaliated by striking a West Bank village and taking down six Syrian aircrafts. In 1967, the Six-Day war takes place and the main reason was a series of border disputes. That war (June 5-10, 1967) was the third of Arab-Israeli wars (1948, 1956) with an Israeli decisive victory including the capture of Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, the old City of Jerusalem and Golan Heights<sup>4</sup>. The United Nations Security Council on June 7 called for a cease-fire: Israel, Jordan and Egypt accepted. Syria, however, ignored the call and continued to attack villages in northern Israel. With the defeat of the Syrian army in the Golan Heights Syria accepted the cease-fire on June 10th, 1967, and the war ended.

The Six-Day war changed the geopolitical status of the Middle East. Israeli victory led to a major national pride for Israel. On the opposing side, Arab leaders of the Six-Day war met in Khartoum in Sudan and in August 1967 signed a resolution that promised: “no peace, `no recognition and no negotiation” with Israel. The “three No’s” resolution still exists<sup>5</sup>.

### The Rise of Assads

It has been said that Hafez al-Assad was the architect of modern Syria. Hafez al-Assad became the Syrian defense minister in 1966, as well as Commander of the Syrian air force. He created a system of *divide et impera*<sup>6</sup> where he personalized the power so much that he alone healed



(ii)Bashar al-Assad

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<sup>3</sup> Origins of the Six-Day war: <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/six-day-war>

<sup>4</sup> §1,2: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>

<sup>5</sup> (Entire article): <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/141>

<sup>6</sup> Devide and rule; political way to divide the people so the leader can rule easily. The ultimate divide and rule has been attributed to Philip II of Macedon and utilised by Julius Caesar and Napoleon.

the state together. His eldest son Basel was built to be the successor. That was not the case, since he died in a car accident in 1994 leading Bashar al-Assad to succeed his father after his death in 2000.

In the beginning, the new leader – as obliged – begun working with his father’s people, although he put them aside slowly. As his father did in the last decades, he created an urban elite society and controlled all the key political positions. There was a debate until the early 2010s that Bashar was a natural reformer and had every tension to move from his father’s policies, open up Syria but his father’s “clique” didn’t allow him to do so. He carefully manipulated and even took with his side Western journalists, academics and policymakers to make him appear accessible, sympathetic and thoughtful. After the future events, this debate does not longer exist<sup>7</sup>.

### **Tensions with the United States**

In 2002, Senior US officials includes Syria in a list of states that make up an “axis of evil”, listed there already by President Bush prior to that year. US Undersecretary of State John Bolton stated that Damascus is acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Two years later President Assad visits Turkey, the first Syrian president to do so. That trip temporarily breaks the frozen relationship between the two neighbors. Later the same year, the US imposes economic sanctions in Syria with the excuse that Syria is supporting terrorism and they’ve failed to stop militants entering Iraq.<sup>8</sup>

### **Arab Spring Echo and the Beginning of the Civil War**

In March 2011, as stated in the introduction, 15 Syrian children were arrested and tortured for writing an Arab-Spring-inspired graffiti stating “The people want the fall of the regime”. One of the boys was killed.

Protests broke out all over Syria with the demands of releasing the remaining kids, along with greater freedoms for all people in the country. However, the government led by President Bashar al-Assad responded by



(iii)Uprising turn violent

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<sup>7</sup> (Entire article): <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34709235>

<sup>8</sup> Tensions with US: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995>

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killing protestors. When after these events Assad refused to resign, people decided on the supporters and the opponents.

It's important for our analysis to read what President Barack Obama stated in his speech at the time: *"The Syrian government must stop shooting demonstrators and allow peaceful protests; release political prisoners and stop unjust arrests; allow human rights monitors to have access to cities like Dara's; and start a serious dialogue to advance a democratic transition (...). Otherwise, President Assad and his regime will continue to be challenged from within and isolated abroad,"*

In Late April 2011, Syrian Army Brought tanks in Derra to fight the protestors. In the next few months rebels in Syria formed the Free Syrian Army (FSA), violence rapidly escalated from Derra to Damascus and the rest of the country and the civil war began<sup>9</sup>. The incidents of the graffiti and the protestors was the final act. The truth is there were many other things that happened that didn't leave any other chance to citizens but to turn against their "president": Assad has been accused many times of torturing and killing his political opponents, the Syrian economy was a disaster, high unemployment, corruption and many other things during his leadership. Finally, we can't ignore the religious factor: Most of the Syrians are Sunni Muslims, yet the Syria's government is dominated by members of the Shia Alawite<sup>10</sup>.

### From Civil War to War

The Civil War escalated really fast. By June 2013, the United Nations said 90,000 people had been killed in the conflict and by August 2015 that figured had climbed to 250,000<sup>11</sup>. But the conflict didn't stop at the dispute over President Assad. Others find the opportunity to get involved in the issue for their benefit. But let's take it from the beginning: In November 2011 Arab League votes to suspend Syria accusing it of failing to implement an Arab peace plan and imposes sanctions. That



(iv)A man stands atop a building looking at the destroyed Syrian town of Kobane, also known as Ain al-Arab, 2015.

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<sup>9</sup> Arab Spring Spark: <https://www.history.com/news/syria-civil-war-assad-rebels>

<sup>10</sup> Assad's Crackdown: <https://www.history.com/news/syria-civil-war-assad-rebels>

<sup>11</sup> Descent into civil war: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

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leaves Syrian venerable. With the situation only getting worse United Nations Security Council endorses a peace plan. In November 2012 National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces was formed in Qatar and in the next month United States, United Kingdom, France, Turkey and the Gulf states recognize it as the “legitimate representative” of the Syrian People.

The next year Islamists rise. The first chemical weapons will be used in September 2013 in Damascus but the responsibility cannot be allocated. The government allows the United Nations to intervene and destroy any chemical weapons stocks. Washington had already declared the use of chemical weapons as a “red line”, but the attack didn’t trigger any military response. In 2014 an al-Qaeda splinter group seizes Raqqa and with parts of Syrian and Iraqi territories declares a caliphate and renaming itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In the same year, Kurds take Rojava and create an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Syria.

The next phase of the war is United States intervention. In March 2015 Assad’s forces have started to lose ground in many towns and his army is slowly undermined by Islamist militants helped by foreign jihadists coming to Syria. It is no secret that the United States (as the international customary law allows) has been helping Syrian Rebels with food, water and pickup trucks but also quickly begun providing training, money and intelligence in Syrian rebel comandantes (something not clear if allowed by the international law). After 2014 -at least- two U.S. programs attempted to assist Syrian rebels. The first program planned to train and equip 15,000 rebels to fight the Islamic State with a budget of 500 million USD. The program didn’t bring the expected results and it was canceled a year later. One more US program with a budget of 1 billion USD by the CIA aimed to fight Assad was more successful but the Trump administration shut it down in 2017. Obama administration began missions against the Islamic state in 2014. US, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates all attacked Islamic State forces inside Syria. In late 2015 the first American troops enter Syria. They recruit, organize and advise thousands of Syrian Kurdish and Arab fighters<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-syria-islamic-state-group-middle-east-international-news-96701a254c5a448cb253f14ab697419b>

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The Russian military intervention in the Syrian Civil War began in September 2015 after an official request by the Syrian Government for military aid against rebel groups<sup>13</sup>, the Islamic State, al-Nusra Front (al-Qaeda in Syria) and the Army of Conquest (Sunni Islamist rebel factions), with the last two created and taking power recently. In the beginning, the help was temporary but by the end of 2017 it became permanent<sup>14</sup>. Russian intervention also brings an end to the Battle of Aleppo (2012-2016). Aleppo was one of the most important cities in Syria and the economic center of the country. The “mother of battles”, the most violent battlefield in modern warfare with the Syrian opposition (free Syrian Army and al-Qaeda) against the government ends with the Russian aircrafts entering the city and closing the supplying lines of the opposition. Estimated 31,000 people have died and 33,500 buildings have either been damaged or destroyed, including the Old City of Aleppo, a world Heritage site. That was a huge turning point in the Syrian Civil War<sup>15</sup>.

Turkish intervention in Northern Syria is next. On August 24, 2016, Turkey declared that is “exercising its rights of self-defense codified under the UN Charter Article 51”. Technically the claim of Turkey is legally correct since northern Syria is bordering with Turkey and is well known that terrorist organizations affiliated with al-Qaeda, ISIL and Syrian Democratic Forces, all of them being armed forces are threatening Turkey. The “Operation Euphrates Shield” aimed to control Syrian territory from the Turkish borders to the Euphrates River. On March 29, 2017, the Turkish military announced that the operation was “successfully completed”. The Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the first day of the operation said that it was aimed against both ISIL and Syrian Kurdish “terror threatening our (Turkey) country”. Turkey succeeds not only to protect their southern borders from in-war-Syria, but also to fight their long-time enemy; the Kurds<sup>16</sup>. Turkey alongside with Syrian National Army will

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<sup>13</sup> [Since the groups are claiming a different president, they have the right to do so with the use of the right of determination. (Το Δίκαιο της Διεθνούς Κοινωνίας, Antonopoulos, Maglivera). The Russian intervention and help to the government even it has not been officially recognized was illegal]

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/10/1/what-has-russia-gained-from-five-years-of-fighting-in-syria>

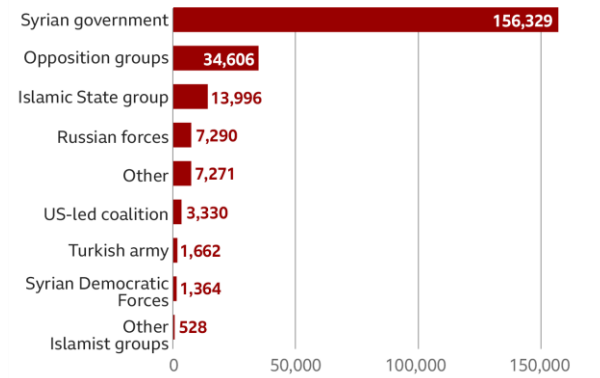
<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-aleppo-timeline-idUSKBN1430PJ>

<sup>16</sup> <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/01/19/operation-euphrates-shield-aims-and-gains-pub-67754>

succeed in one more operation “The Olive Branch Operation” in 2018 against Kurds and Syrian Democratic Forces.

### Who is responsible for most deaths in Syria?

Documented deaths of civilians and combatants, by group responsible



Source: Violations Documentation Center, Dec 2020



(v) Who is responsible for deaths in Syria

In March 2019 ISIS was ousted got the last territory they seized across Syria and Iraq. In late 2014, ISIS peak, they controlled a large part of government resources and bureaucracy in both states and forced millions to live under their rule. ISIS indeed attracted approximately 40,000 people from more than 80 countries to join their forces<sup>17</sup>. For the last months, ISIS were losing town by town, most of them to the Kurdish army, and the small town of

Baghuz will be famous as Baghdadi, the ISIS leader, will be assassinated and the caliphate will fall. This is known as the last fight Islamic State gave and lost<sup>18</sup>. In the aftermath of their lost Turkey is ready to attack Idlib, an area in Syria controlled by rebels and home for 3 million people. Before that happens, the president of Russia Vladimir Putin and the president of Turkey Erdogan agreed on Idlib Demilitarization and created a buffer zone. The agreement also included terms such as but not limited to the refrain from attacking from Syrian Government in the zone and radical groups such as al-Qaeda must leave the zone. The agreement was never affiliated as a whole and it has been characterized as “unsuccessful” one year later. There has been one attempt to revive it since then, but it was not successful<sup>19</sup>.

After the parties failed to reach an agreement there were two attacks on Idlib in Syria conducted by the Russian army. The first one was from Russia, Iran and the Syrian government against the rebels and the only difference in the second one was that the rebels were backed by the Turkish. On 5 March 2020 Russia and Turkey agreed to a ceasefire in Syria<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/BriefingBook46p/ISISCaliphate](https://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook46p/ISISCaliphate)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/23/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-isis-caliphate>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-putin-erdogan-hope-idUSKCN1LX1BU>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/05/russia-and-turkey-agree-cease-fire-in-syrias-idlib-province>



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If we have to sum up the states participating to understand how complicated the issue

is:

On the Syrian government's side, we have:

- Russia (carries out air strikes and provides political support at the UN)
- Iran (provides arms, credit, military advisers and reportedly combat troops)
- Hezbollah (The Lebanese Shia movement has sent thousands of fighters)
- Shia Muslim militias (recruited by Iran from Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen)

And, on the side of the rebels\* we have:

- Turkey (provides arms, military and political support)
- Gulf Arab states (provide money and weapons)
- The US (provides arms, training and military assistance to "moderate" groups)
- Jordan (provides logistical support and training)

\*The term "rebels" is used to describe a huge and diverse array of fighters, some of whom co-operate with jihadists like those from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an al-Qaeda-linked alliance. Different foreign states often back different rebel factions.

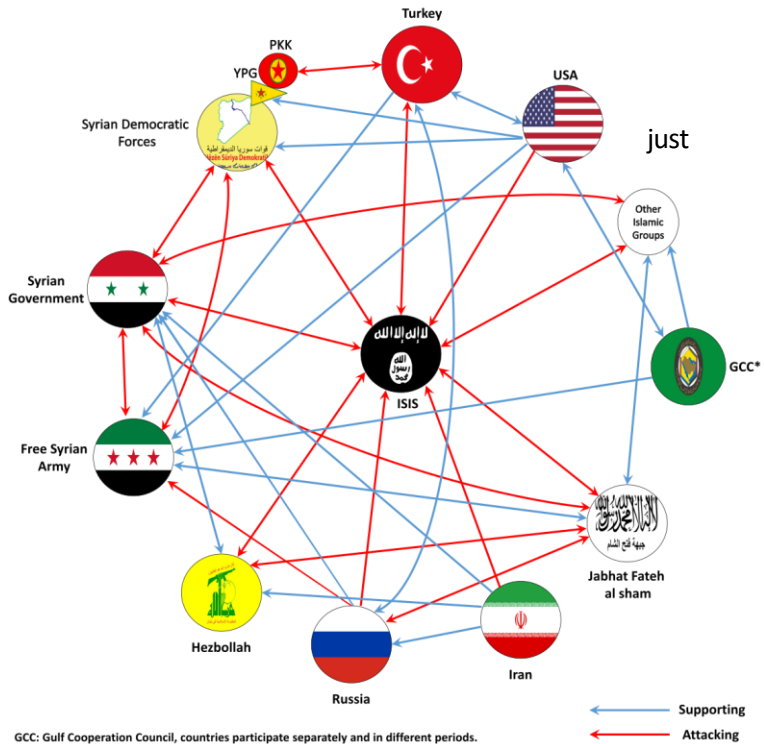
At this point, it's also worth noting that although the US supports some rebel groups, it had not intentionally attacked the Syrian government directly until Friday, when it **fired missiles at an airbase** used in an alleged chemical attack.

(The table above belongs to BBC and the article Syria war: A brief guide to who's fighting whom:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39528673> )

### **The Current Situation**

After 10 years of war, it seems to come to a conclusion. President Bashar al-Assad, with the backing of Russia and Iran, seems to have emerged military victorious from the conflict. After the COVID-19 the situation might change, but for now, the war seems finished. Although the crisis has started; the estimated death toll is 400,000 but it could be much higher and according to United Nations Refugee Agency an estimated 6,600,000 people have left Syria since the conflict started, 13,400,000 people in need of humanitarian and protection assistance in Syria and Syrian cities are literally ashes<sup>21</sup>.



Apart from Syria Lebanon, Turkey, Kurds, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Kuwait, France, Bangladesh, Philippines, Afghanistan, have all been affected one way or another, more or less by the conflict. Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Austria, Sweden, Germany, United States, Canada, Netherlands and many more arriving in hot spots such as Greek islands looking for asylum<sup>22</sup> as the EU completely fails to solve the issue.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### The Syrian Arab Republic

As expected, Syria is the major country involved in the issue and the one that might be affected more by a United Nations Security Council Resolution. If we accept that the Syrian War is over, Syria must shield its peace and begin reconstructing its cities. The economy is in a huge crisis, people have survived a 10-year brutal war and lost many of their loved ones and most of the cities are debris. One more factor the Syrian delegation should bear in mind is the

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/insights/28041/the-syria-civil-war-might-be-ending-but-the-crisis-will-live-on> // Stats: UNHCR

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/numbers-syrian-refugees-around-world/>

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millions of immigrants; Syria should have as their goal to lure back their citizens; everyone is necessary for the country to build again.

### **Russian Federation**

Russia played a big role both at the beginning and at the end of the war. They supported Assad and with their help, he managed to win the war. Russia also signed the agreement with Turkey to end the war. Their support is clear and as a permanent member, Russia should play a decisive role at the Security Council too.

### **Turkey**

Turkey on the other side didn't support Assad but achieved their goals too at the war; not to let Kurds or other forces cross their borders and claim their territory. The main reason Turkey is involved in the issue though is not their part in the war, but the fact that Turkey has the vast majority of Syrian immigrants. In the past, they have pushed many of them through their European borders mostly with Bulgaria, but also Greece and the countries of the Black Sea. But till thousands of Syrians are staying in Turkish land and the country cannot accommodate so many immigrants for much longer, so that's an issue they must solve.

### **The United States of America**

The USA was the one supporting the Arab Spring and also supporting the Syrian rebels especially the first years of the war, but also later on. Geographically speaking the USA has no role in the issue, but politically they are the supporter of Syrian rebels on the Security Council and also an ally of Turkey in the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The US delegation role can also be decisive in the Security Council.

## **TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
1966	Hafez al-Assad becomes the Syrian defense minister
2000	Bashar al-Assad succeed his father after his death
March 2011	15 Syrian children were arrested and tortured for writing an Arab-Spring-inspired graffiti stating, "The people want the fall of the regime".
April 2011	Syrian Army Brough tanks in Derra to fight the protestors.

November 2012	National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces formed
March 2015	United States intervention
September 2015	The Russian military intervention in the Syrian Civil War
August 2016	Turkish intervention in Northern Syria
March 2018	ISIS was ousted got the last territory they seized across Syria and Iraq.
5 March 2020	Russia and Turkey agreed to a ceasefire in Syria.

## UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The United Nations Security Council resolutions for the situation in Syria are a lot and we are going to list them for a more spherical study: SC 2042/2012, SC 2043/2012, SC 2118/2013, SC 2139/2014, SC 2165/2014, SC 2175/2014, SC 2191/2014, SC 2209/2015, SC 2235/2015, SC 2254/2015, SC 2258/2015, SC 2268/2016, SC 2286/2016, SC 2332/2016, SC 2336/2016, SC 2393/2017, SC 2401/2018, SC 2449/2018, SC 2504/2020, SC 2533/2020<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, we should include all the Security Council presidential Statements of; 3 August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16), 21 March 2012 (S/PRST/2012/6), 5 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/10), 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), 24 April 2015 (S/PRST/2015/10), 17 August 2015 (S/PRST/2015/15), and 8 October 2019 (S/PRST/2019/12),

In this section we are going to elaborate on the most important of them for our resolution.

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<sup>23</sup> This link to the Security Council Report provides all the resolutions: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un\\_documents\\_type/security-council-resolutions/page/2?ctype=Syria&cbtype=syria#038:cbtype=syria](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/page/2?ctype=Syria&cbtype=syria#038:cbtype=syria).

#### **4 October 2011**

Security Council proposes a resolution to demand an immediate end to violence and urge all sides to reject extremism, expressing “profound regret at the deaths of thousands of people including women and children”. The resolution fails with 9 votes in favor, 4 abstentions and 2 vetoes from the Russian Federation and China.

#### **SC Resolution 2118/ September 27th 2013**

This resolution was adopted unanimously by the Council and aimed at the destruction of the chemical weapons in Syria. Most specifically it required the verification and destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons stockpiles and called for peace talks in Geneva.

#### **SC Resolution 2249/ November 20th 2015**

This resolution called all member states to take all necessary measures on the territory under the control of ISIS to prevent terrorist acts committed by ISIS and other Al-Qaida affiliates.

#### **SC Resolution 2254/ December 18th 2015**

This resolution was adopted unanimously and focused on the political solution in the situation in Syria.

### **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

Since the end of the war happened one year ago, the aftermath conflicts are still young and none of them have previous attempts to be solved. And that’s the goal of the committee; not to leave any post-war conflicts to create a problem in global security and peace.

### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

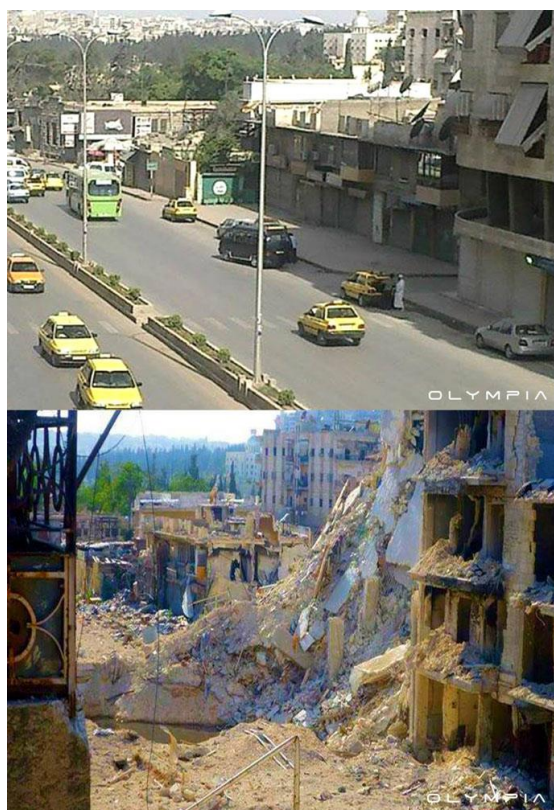
This issue is one of the most complicated in the 21st century. Delegates should bear in mind that as it is right now there is a chance to end the war once and for all. With that been said, the solutions to the issue should focus on how to secure peace in Syria. Furthermore, one major factor that needs to be solved is the financial and medical aid that the population

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of Syria needs to survive the aftermath of the war and to build again their lives. Education is an issue too; if you want to build a country from its ashes you need the new generation of people to be educated enough to do so. The cities are destroyed, both public buildings and houses need to be built. The economy of the country is going to face a huge crisis and most of the people haven't worked for the last decade, new working positions need to be created and the lands need to be cultivated. Public opinion has been manipulated for years and media are vanished; a new way for public information is also needed.

The second major issue that has to be discussed is immigration. Millions of Syrians are spread around the globe and most of them are cadging to survive. Syria has to lure them back, motivate them and make it easy for them to return to the country. Not only do people need to go back to their jobs and normal lives (as much as they can), but also more productive people mean faster development for Syria.





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Photos of the last page were published by Olympia restaurant in Aleppo and are showing the comparison between the city before and after the war. The photos have been reached on: <https://petapixel.com/2016/08/02/26-photos-show-war-changed-syria/>