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United Nations Security Council

Combating the Humanitarian Crisis in Syria

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Letter from the Chairs	2
Committee Introduction	3
Agenda Introduction	4
Key Terms	5
Historical Background	7
Current State of Affairs	9
Stances of Parties	10
Possible Solutions	15
Questions to Consider	16
Bibliography	17

Letter from the Chairs

Dear delegates,

We are delighted to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council to discuss and resolve the Syrian conflict. It is our greatest honour to be serving you for this upcoming conference; we will do everything we can to make this committee the best it can be.

Message from the Head Chair:

I am Benjamin, and it is my greatest pleasure to be serving as your head chair. Security Council is a unique committee that offers a world of new opportunities. As delegates of the UNSC, you will be able to inspect and devise ways to resolve some of the most sensitive and pressing issues in the world today. Special features like veto power and clause-by-clause voting mean that you will be given the chance to navigate much more intricate diplomatic strategies, which will (hopefully) guide you to striking an agreement with the opposing bloc. I have every hope and faith that your experience in this conference will become a valuable addition to your memories and skill as a member of the MUN community.

Message from the Deputy Chair:

Hello delegates, I am Jueon Kang who will be serving as a deputy chair for the UNSC committee. I am a freshman in Korea International School Jeju and I started my MUN journey 2 years ago. I still can not forget every single conference that I have participated as a delegate and a chair. SJAMUN, being my first Model United Nations experience ever, has a place in my heart and I would love to see delegates being truly engaged and enjoy the conference overall. I have always enjoyed fruitful discussions, interesting debates, and unique strategies inside Model United Nations, and I hope to see them again from you. I hope to learn more about Model United Nations through this chairing opportunity.

Message from the Associate Chair:

Greetings delegates, I am Jun Seong Baek, who will be serving as an associate chair for the UNSC committee. I am a junior at St Johnsbury Academy Jeju, and this will be my third time chairing a conference. I may lack some chairing knowledge, but I will always try my best to ensure that all delegates have a great conference experience. I would love to see all the delegates actively participating in the conference and some fruitful discussions. I hope you will have an unforgettable conference with us and be sure to prepare a lot before the conference.

Best regards,

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Committee Introduction

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations, and specifically addresses the resolution of international conflicts and threats to global security. The UNSC's primary objective is to minimise the likelihood of conflict by offering just solutions in its earliest stages. During times of conflict, both armed and soft, the UNSC must end the conflict as swiftly as possible while minimising the casualties and damage caused.

The UNSC consists of 15 member states; 5 of which are permanent. The permanent states are referred to as P5 nations (permanent 5), and consist of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Each of the P5 nations possesses a special right called 'veto power', which allows them to reject any operative clause of a substantive document regardless of the results of the vote, causing it to fail automatically. It's worth noting, however, that substantive documents may still pass without the positive vote of a P5 nation if they choose to abstain from voting. Veto power cannot be exercised in procedural votes.

When a P5 nation has exercised its veto power, delegates may motion for, or the Chair may automatically entertain a P5 caucus. During a P5 caucus, a discussion is held by the P5 nations separately, where delegates in favour of the vetoed clause attempt to persuade the vetoing state to withdraw its veto. A re-vote is held at the end of a P5 caucus.

The remaining 10 nations are temporary, and have 2 year tenures, with 5 members being replaced each year. The temporary nations do not possess veto power and behave largely like delegates in a GA committee.

The UNSC is special in that it is equipped by the UN charter with unparalleled power. It is equipped with its own armed peacekeeping force called the 'Blue Helmets'. Apart from this, the UNSC is also able to use punitive measures such as trade sanctions and embargoes. While the Council is obliged to do everything within the bounds of reasonability to resolve issues diplomatically without the use of force, it is also the responsibility of delegates to use force when it is needed to minimise the casualties and threats to peace and security posed by the agenda.

Agenda Introduction

On March 15, 2011, a peaceful protest in Syria escalated to a brutal civil war. Protesters demanded the end of the authoritarian rule and a new government. However, the government responded with violence, resulting in a mass conflict. Throughout the 14 years of conflict, Syria has been under one of the world's most devastating and complicated humanitarian crises. In 2025, nearly two-thirds of the population is in need of humanitarian aid. Over 6.8 million people are displaced, and another 5.4 million have sought refuge in neighboring countries, placing enormous pressure on nearby nations.

Several factors have contributed to the Syrian crisis. The demand for democratic government, economic instability, and the government's repression of individual rights were the primary causes of the conflict. As the conflict continued, the involvement of the United States, Russia, Iran, and Turkey has escalated the intensity of the conflict, leading to more deaths and a longer duration of the conflict. Adding on, extremist groups started to emerge. The most well-known group is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which was founded in 2013. This group is known for its notorious activities, such as brutal violence, the use of child soldiers, slavery, and the destruction of cultural heritage sites.

Multiple international efforts have been made to resolve the conflict. On December 18, 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2254, which called for a nationwide ceasefire and political settlement in Syria to end the civil war. While this resolution laid the groundwork, its effectiveness is a debatable topic, as the introduction of new organizations has interrupted its implementation.

Key Terms

Arab Spring

A wave of pro-democracy movements is happening in Arab countries. This movement motivated many Syrians to demand a democratic government.

Bashar al-Assad

Longtime Syrian president whose authoritarian rule and violent repression of protests triggered the Syrian Civil War.

Daraa Protests

The initial 2011 protests in Daraa, Syria, where lots of youths who drew anti-government graffiti were arrested and tortured. This is viewed as the starting point.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

A terrorist group emerged during the war, known for slavery, the use of child soldiers, and cultural destruction.

Syrian Salvation Government

An opposition government that once temporarily held power after the fall of Assad in 2024.

Ahmed al-Sharra

The official president of the Syrian government starting from 2025.

Hei'at Tahrir al-Sham

Islamic groups that are known for their extremist ideas.

Refugee Return Trend

Syrians are returning to their motherland due to a change in regime and worsening conditions abroad.

Damascus Offensive

A military campaign by a rebel force that overthrew Assad's rule.

Vienna Peace Talk

An international conference hosted by the United Nations, co-chaired by the US and Russia, that failed to reach an agreement.

Proxy War dynamics

The Syrian conflict evolved into a proxy war involving the US, Russia, Iran, and Turkey supporting opposing groups.

Historical Background

A number of different social, economic, and political causes escalated to its worst by 2011, triggering the onset of large-scale protests. The government's subsequent violent repression of these movements led to armed resistance, then a fully fledged civil war by 2012.

Bashar al-Assad rose to power on 17th July 2000, succeeding his authoritarian father Hafez al-Assad a week after his death. His reign was celebrated by the Syrian people as an opportunity for liberal reform. However, his initial reputation as a reformer was mostly unfulfilled; after a brief period of democratic and capitalist reform, Assad quickly transitioned back into his father's authoritarian methods of ruling. Censorship of the media was strict, and due process was often suspended for suspected opponents of the regime. This meant Syria remained largely unchanged since its authoritarian, repressive structure in the 1970s.

On a larger scale, there were major anti-governmental popular protests spanning through a large portion of the Arab homeland, sometimes known as the Arab Spring. It was triggered by an initial revolution in Tunisia, then spread to neighboring countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and Libya. Many Syrians took inspiration from the events in Syria's neighboring countries; it served to demonstrate that repressive regimes could be overthrown.

Environmental factors also served a role in raising discontent among the citizens. Between 2006 and 2010, Syria suffered a severe drought unprecedented in its modern history, causing debilitating setbacks for the crops and livestock production in 60% of the country. By 2010, nearly 1.5 million people were displaced.

Resistance in Syria was triggered when a 14-year-old in the heavily suffering country of Daraa was arrested with his friends and tortured for writing anti-government graffiti on the wall. Parents and neighbors protested against their arrest and demanded their release. While the demonstration was initially peaceful, it was restrained by force, with the use of tear gas and batons. Protestors were often arrested and imprisoned as well. The continued use of such violent methods led to the increased visibility of the government's violent and repressive methods, in turn causing the rest of the country to join the protests. On the 15th of March 2011, Assad saw the first organised, nation-wide protest, where protesters throughout the country began a demonstration simultaneously. The subsequent violent crackdown on protests led to the peaceful demonstrations to develop into increasingly armed resistance, sparking the civil war by June.

The international community separated into pro-Assad and pro-rebel camps. The USA had been critical of Assad's campaign against the rebels, and had attempted to pass multiple resolutions in the UNSC to condemn al-Assad regime for their actions in the war, which included the use of weapons of mass destruction and the indiscriminate attack against medical facilities. In 2014, US forces officially began supporting the rebels, bombing Syrian governmental facilities. Russia also joined the war in 2015 at the official request of Assad, 2 years after America's initial involvement with the war. This officially escalated the war to the international stage. A peace talk was held in Vienna to discuss the resolution of the Syrian

crisis, co-chaired by the US and Russia, with the attendees including all P5 nations and 11 countries in addition to the Arab League, the European Union, and the United Nations. The conference, however, was unsuccessful and achieved little agreement between the two camps.

By 2023, the conflict between the rebel and Assad forces had subsided into a stalemate, with Assad remaining in power and the rebels' hopes of a new government largely dying out. This unstable stalemate lasted until November 2024, when rebel forces began a resurgence, when they invaded the city of Aleppo, restarting armed conflict over the region. The rebel forces rapidly progressed, capturing Damascus, where they announced the fall of the Assad regime. This marked the end of the Syrian civil war, but conflicts continued with small armed groups. Notably, neighboring countries including Turkey continued to back attacks against the newly established Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.

Current State of Affairs

Formation of caretaker regime → provisional government.

Relations with other countries including Turkey

A provisional government, called the caretaker regime, was established by the Syrian opposition on the 10th of December, 2024. Power had been transferred to the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG), appointing Mohammed al-Bashir, the leader of the SSG, as the prime minister of Syria. Power was transferred again by January 2025 to Ahmed al-Sharaa, through his appointment as President of Syria by Syrian General Command (the general authority that governs the Syrian military forces). Since then, al-Sharaa declared his plan for, then signed, a 5-year constitution, converting the governmental structure into a constitutional presidential regime.

The current Syrian cabinet consists of 23 members including the president, originating from a mixture of previous officials from the Assad regime, technocrats and prominent members of the Hei'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). The HTS also holds considerable influence over major government organs, notably the national Security Council of Syria.

The original legislative organ, the People's Assembly, was abolished in January 2025 and is due to be replaced by a temporary legislative body called the Interim Legislative Council. Under the interim system, the president is given the right to appoint one third of the cabinet, although the exact size of the cabinet is yet to be determined. The current government is meant to stabilise Syrian politics for 5 years before handing over to a permanent government structure.

Syria still faces a massive refugee crisis as of today. By late 2024, there were 7.4 million internal displaced persons (IDPs), placing Syria on top of the global IDP list. 6.1 million Syrians are refugees, asylum seekers, or are otherwise in need of international protection, with the majority of these people in Turkiye, Lebanon and Jordan. A total of 8.4 million Syrians within Syria are in need of protection, due to having been displaced, returning from forced displacement, or being stateless. There is a major shift in the refugee movement, however, with a far greater number of refugees and IDPs seeking to return to Syria, due to the change of government as well as the deteriorating conditions in major refugee destinations such as Lebanon. There was a verified total of 476,000 refugees and 376,000 IDPs confirmed by the UN in 2024, which is a significant increase from previous years.

Stances of Parties

Algeria

Algeria is, for the most part, supportive of Syria and advocates for Syrian sovereignty and stability. However, Algeria was a major supporter of the Assad regime to the end, and thus expresses concern over the recent uprising of Islamic groups such as the HTS. Algeria's main explicit concern lies in the idea that Syria may become a haven for terrorism; a concern caused, among other reasons, by its own history of violent organisations. Tensions persist between the Algerian and Syrian governments, and will need to be resolved before Algeria consents to large-scale support systems for Syria. Key focus points for Algeria include the release of 500 Algerian soldiers, currently detained within Syria.

China

China is in strong support of Syrian sovereignty, with an emphasis on the idea that the Syrian governmental reform must be self-driven, and strongly opposes any unnecessary foreign intervention that may cause foreign imposition of a regime change. China recognises Syria's new regime, and advocates for all states to recognise and respect the new regime as the official governing entity of Syria. China is willing to provide political, economic and material aid to Syria, and may be interested in pacts to help the reconstruction of Syrian infrastructure once the Syrian economy and government are stabilised. China has announced no public stance on the question of Syrian refugees, although its geographic location makes it a suboptimal destination for refugees anyway.

Denmark

Denmark is most concerned about the human rights of the Syrian public and the humanitarian question that remains in Syria, in conjunction with the private interest in regulating refugee outflux. It will only support a Syrian regime that actively addresses this issue, and is willing to provide economic and material aid wherever reasonable to support the Syrian population and assist in Syria's economic and social recovery. Denmark has previously accepted Syrian refugees, but is now tightening asylum regulations due to its decision that many parts of Syria are now "safe to return to". Denmark is under internal political pressure to reduce refugee uptake, but is otherwise willing to provide support to Syria.

France

France is willing to support the new Syrian government, but takes a hard stance in terms of the conditions for this support. France demands inclusive governance (unconditional democracy), and crucially, accountability for the past actions of the Syrian government and the major entities that influence it, including the HTS. France also demands "transitional justice", and the ensurance of the safety and security of minority groups within Syria. France is a major contributor to the EU funds for Syria, but will only directly fund Syria if the above conditions are met. France also has interests closer to home in preventing terrorism and maintaining refugee migration, but is sometimes willing to prioritise the integrity of international law and the upholding of the values of the European Union.

Greece

Greece has formally expressed support for the Syrian government as part of the EU's consensus, but has also expressed concern regarding the new government's ability to sustain stability or uphold humanitarian values. Greece is currently contributing to border control and humanitarian aid, although most of this occurs through EU funds. Crucially, Greece is strict on its uptake of refugees, and is seeking to minimise refugee influx into Greece.

Iran

Iran is wary of the new government and, despite having recognised the government (without announcing support or diplomatic intentions), has its primary goal in maintaining its military and political presence within Syria. Iran's main objective is to keep its influence over Syria during this transitional period. Iran strongly supported the Assad regime, and thus has strained relations with the new Syrian government. Syria's specific needs also includes the maintenance of the supply lines in Hezbollah, as well as the suppression of anti-Iranian organisations, movements or sentiments within Syria.

Israel

Israel does not recognise the new Syrian government. Israel has a bitter history with Syria, primarily due to Assad's close relationship with Iran; Syria served as a channel for military personnel and equipment for use against Israel. While Israel welcomes the fall of the Assad regime, it still resents Syria as a government and is reluctant to provide support to its government. Notably, its tensions with Iran mean that Israel is highly concerned that Iranian or Iran-backed groups may operate in Syria. Israel's main concern lies in the maintenance of Israeli security, and the termination of the supply line to Hezbollah.

Pakistan

Pakistan recognises and supports the new Syrian government, and calls for international recognition of Syria's political and territorial integrity. In addition, Pakistan is willing to provide humanitarian and diplomatic aid to Syria. However, Pakistan is reluctant to provide economic aid to Syria, mostly due to internal economic concerns. Pakistan's main interest lies in the maintenance of good relations with all Muslim countries, including Syria.

Republic of Korea

The ROK re-established diplomatic relations with Syria in 2025 following the fall of the Assad regime after previously severing all ties due to Syria's alliance with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. South Korea is keen to establish good relations with the new Syrian government, but is also motivated by the desire to uphold international norms and ensure humanitarian standards are met within Syria. The ROK has pledged humanitarian support for Syria, but has made no significant economic, political or military contributions to the reconstruction of Syria, nor accepted a significant number of refugees. It has, however, accepted refugees where there was a humanitarian need to do so.

Russia

Russia quickly established good diplomatic relationships with the new Syrian government, and announced its willingness to support Syria. Russia has been supporting Syria in major ways, including the shipment of oil and energy to address the relevant shortages in Syria, Russia's primary objective lies in the maintenance of its influence over Syria, primarily due to its value as a military base. There is, however, a major blemish in the relationship

between Russia and the new Syrian government due to Russia granting asylum for Assad and his government officials, straining diplomatic relations and causing a strong anti-Russian sentiment among Syrian citizens.

Slovenia

Slovenia supports the Syrian government and requests that it use an inclusive transition to a democratic government. Slovenia has provided substantial humanitarian aid and continues to call for major humanitarian projects such as demining. Slovenia calls for the reconstruction of Syria, and for the international community to support this by gradually lifting sanctions, albeit reversibly, especially in the energy sector. Slovenia is one of the few countries to continue processing large numbers of Syrian asylum requests, announcing that its major aim is to “protect civilians”.

Somalia

Somalia was eager in establishing diplomatic relations with the new Syrian government, and expressed optimism about the new regime. Somalia’s ability to support Syrian reconstruction, however, is extremely limited due to the severe domestic crises it is facing itself. Somalia does not currently harbor large numbers of Syrian refugees, nor does it have an established organ dedicated to the processing and administration of refugees. Some Syrian refugees in Syria have expressed hopes of returning to Syria, but no major action has been taken by the Somalian government to facilitate this.

Syria

The new Syrian government is actively seeking the recognition and support of all members of the international community, and requests support from other countries in the reconstruction of its infrastructure. The government announced its intention to restore stability and unity. Crucially, the Syrian government is requesting for the lifting of international sanctions placed on Syria, arguing that this is required for the recovery of the Syrian economy and the reconstruction of its infrastructure. These requests have been met with mixed responses from different countries. Syria’s primary objectives are to obtain legal legitimacy, attract investment and reform Syria to stabilise its social integrity.

UK

The UK delayed its re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Syria until July 2025, taking eight months to do so. However, the UK now fully supports the new Syrian government, having lauded it for the domestic and international dialogue process and efforts to achieve and maintain inclusiveness. The UK has pledged mass-scale humanitarian support totalling 160 million pounds, with a specific focus on water, food, healthcare and education. The UK has begun lifting sanctions on Syria, but makes it clear that this, and all other forms of support, are conditional on Syria’s continuation of reforms towards inclusion and security. The UK wishes to prevent a resurgence in terrorism and wants to achieve transitional justice in Syria.

USA

The USA has expressed support for Syria under very strict conditions. It demands the rejection of terrorism, destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles, general disarmament of Syria and the inclusion and protection of minorities and women. The USA has made it very

clear that support is contingent on the government's commitment to inclusive, non-sectarian governance and humanitarian access. The USA's main concern is that, if the transitional authority collapses, it could trigger a renewed civil war. The USA has warned that a failure in Syria could potentially result in national division as well as the jeopardisation of the stability of the entire Middle East.

Possible Solutions

A possible solution to address the political fragmentation and weak central governance would be to deploy military personnel to establish order throughout Syria, attempting to end any persistent military conflicts and ensure civilian safety. This would require the international recognition of a governing body, most likely the new Syrian provisional government, to clearly identify and support the central governing organisation. This would likely take effect within a relatively short time frame due to the minor and fragmented nature of the remaining military skirmishes, and could serve as an opportunity for a strong governing body to be formed and to establish control across Syria. The main advantage of this solution is the rapid effect it will have, with the main consequent drawback being its inherently prescriptive nature. Countries that value the structural integrity and rapid political recovery of Syria are likely to support this course of action, whereas those that wish to ensure the sovereignty of Syria and its independence in establishing its own governmental system would prefer to take a softer route.

Questions to Consider

As an independent state:

- How are your relations with the new Syrian government?
- How were your relations with the Assad regime?
- What form of government do you think Syria should adopt, and why do you think so?
- Is there a practical (non-ideological) reason for the answer to the previous question?
- Are there any particular assets of Syria or related parties that incentivise you?

As a member of the international community:

- What are the implications of the end of the Assad regime for Syrian citizens? Is the answer different for various subgroups, such as ethnicities or social standing?
- To what extent is international intervention acceptable or desirable in order to establish a 'good' social structure in Syria?

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