

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The question of Syria

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Introduction

Syria – formally known as the Syrian Arab Republic – is a state of 18 million people on the Mediterranean coast on the Middle Eastern Region.

The civil war in Syria was because of different groups trying to gain control over their country, chaos coming from the government and anti-government fighters. The fighting is between soldiers who support Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, the rebel fighters who don't want Assad to be in power anymore, and ISIS. ISIS ended up taking parts of Iraq and moving into eastern Syria, so they can gain land and power, continually fighting in the country. The key countries who supported the Syrian government were Russia and Iran, and the rebels were the US, turkey and Saudi Arabia.

The uprising of the war came from a number of events that occurred, pushing people to the limit after a lack of freedom and harsh government created protests and public anger. In 2011, a series of protests and demonstrations across the Middle East were known as the "Arab Spring", which gave hope to Syrian pro-democracy activists, helping them to stand up for themselves. The same year, one of the peaceful protests resulted in a 13-year-old boy being killed after being brutally tortured for writing in graffiti whilst supporting the Arab Spring. This then led to President Bashar al-Assad of the Syrian government killing and imprisoning hundreds of demonstrators as a response to the protesting. Later that year, defectors from the military had formed a rebel group called the Free Syrian Army, who aimed to overthrow the government. This caused the shift into the beginning of the civil war.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Iran

Syria and Iran have signed a mutual defence treaty in 2004 because they had created a strategic relationship of convenience. Geopolitical realities bring the nations together in an alliance because they share a common goal of "not being next to Iraq." Syria is usually called Iran's "closest ally." Iran had also vowed to protect civilians in the Idlib province (a city in northwestern Syria), and that they are ready to support an assault by regime forces on the rebel-held province.

Russia

Russia–Syria relations refers to the bilateral relationship between Russia and Syria. Russia has an embassy in Damascus and Syria has an embassy in Moscow. Russia enjoys a historically strong, stable, and friendly relationship with Syria, as it did until the Arab Spring with most of the Arab countries.

US

On April 14th, armed forces from the UK, US and France fired missiles to destroy what they say are chemical weapons factories in Syria, following a response to a suspected chemical attack in the Douma area.

President Trump said: "The purpose of our actions tonight [was] to establish a strong deterrent against the production, spread and use of chemical weapons."

United States Under the Obama Administration the United States have been calling for Assad's resignation since August 2011, and have pressed the United Nations Security Council to condemn the Syrian government. They also have recognized the National Coalition of Revolution and Opposition Forces (SOC) as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and provide non lethal assistance to the Coalition and an affiliated Supreme Military Command Council (SMC). Furthermore, the US provides humanitarian aid to international organizations supporting Syrian civilians and nonlethal support to unarmed and armed elements of the Syrian opposition. The Obama Administration believes that a negotiated political settlement is required and has prepared military plans to secure Syria's stockpiles of chemical weapons, if necessary.

Turkey

The alliance between Syria winning independence in 1946 had come across the points of cold war politics, which redefined Turkey's relations with Syria. Turkey also shares its longest common border with Syria. Turkey contributes to the creating an opposition in line with the demands of the Syrian people, when they supported the Riyadh meeting in December 2015, being recognised by 114 countries and 13 international organisations. Turkey believes that the Syrian conflict can only be ended by the Syrians and that it will only be the Syrians who will determine the future of Syria, however, Turkey will continue to support the people of Syria.

Timeline of Events

1918 October - Arab troops led by Emir Feisal, and supported by British forces, capture Damascus, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule.

1919 - Emir Feisal backs Arab self-rule at the Versailles peace conference, following the defeat of Germany and the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

1920 March - National Congress elected the previous year proclaims Emir Feisal King of Syria from the Taurus mountains of Turkey to the Sinai desert in Egypt.

1920-21 - Syria is divided into three autonomous regions by the French, with separate areas for the Alawis on the coast and the Druze in the south. Lebanon is separated off entirely.

1925-6 - Nationalist agitation against French rule develops into uprising. French forces bombard Damascus.

1928 - Elections held for a constituent assembly, which drafts a constitution for Syria. French High Commissioner rejects the proposals, sparking nationalist protests.

1936 - France agrees to work towards Syrian independence and dissolves the autonomous regions, but maintains military and economic dominance and keeps Lebanon as a separate state.

1941 - British and Free French troops occupy Syria. General De Gaulle promises to end the French mandate.

1958 February - Syria and Egypt form the United Arab Republic. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser heads the new state. He orders the dissolution of Syrian political parties, to the dismay of the Baath party, which had campaigned for union.

1966 February - Salah Jadid leads an internal coup against the civilian Baath leadership. Hafez al-Assad becomes defence minister.

1967 June - Israeli forces seize the Golan Heights from Syria and destroy much of Syria's air force in the Six Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

1970 November - Hafez al-Assad overthrows president Nur al-Din al-Atasi and imprisons Salah Jadid.

1973 - Rioting breaks out after President Assad drops the constitutional requirement that the president must be a Muslim. Suppressed by the army.

1973 October - Syria and Egypt go to war with Israel, but fail to retake the Golan Heights seized in 1967.

1980 September - Start of Iran-Iraq war. Syria backs Iran, in keeping with the traditional rivalry between Baathist leaderships in Iraq and Syria.

1982 June - Israel invades Lebanon and attacks the Syrian army, forcing it to withdraw from several areas. Israel attacks the PLO base in Beirut.

1983 May - Lebanon and Israel announce the end of hostilities. Syrian forces remain in Lebanon.

1987 February - President Assad sends troops into Lebanon for a second time to enforce a ceasefire in Beirut.

1994 - President Assad's son Basil, who was likely to succeed his father, is killed in a car accident.

2001 April - Outlawed Muslim Brotherhood says it will resume political activity, 20 years after its leaders were forced to flee.

2001 June - Syrian troops evacuate Beirut, redeploy in other parts of Lebanon, following pressure from Lebanese critics of Syria's presence.

2004 January - President Assad visits Turkey, the first Syrian leader to do so. The trip marks the end of decades of frosty relations, although ties sour again after the popular uprising in 2011.

2004 May - US imposes economic sanctions on Syria over what it calls its support for terrorism and failure to stop militants entering Iraq.

2007 March - European Union relaunches dialogue with Syria.

2008 October - Syria establishes diplomatic relations with Lebanon for first time since both countries established independence in 1940s.

2010 May - US renews sanctions against Syria, saying that it supports terrorist groups, seeks weapons of mass destruction and has provided Lebanon's Hezbollah with Scud missiles in violation of UN resolutions.

2011 May - Army tanks enter Deraa, Banyas, Homs and suburbs of Damascus in an effort to crush anti-regime protests. US and European Union tighten sanctions.

2011 June - The IAEA nuclear watchdog decides to report Syria to the UN Security Council over its alleged covert nuclear programme reactor programme. The structure housing the alleged reactor was destroyed in an Israeli air raid in 2007.

2011 July - President Assad sacks the governor of the northern province of Hama after mass demonstration there, eventually sending in troops to restore order at the cost of scores of lives.

2011 November - Arab League votes to suspend Syria, accusing it of failing to implement an Arab peace plan, and imposes sanctions.

2012 February - Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities.

2012 March - UN Security Council endorses non-binding peace plan drafted by UN envoy Kofi Annan. China and Russia agree to support the plan after an earlier, tougher draft is modified.

2012 August - Prime Minister Riad Hijab defects, US President Obama warns that use of chemical weapons would tilt the US towards intervention.

2013 September - UN weapons inspectors conclude that chemical weapons were used in an attack on the Ghouta area of Damascus in August that killed about 300 people, but do not allocate responsibility. Government allows UN to destroy chemical weapons stocks, process complete by June 2014.

2014 January-February - UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva fail, largely because Syrian authorities refuse to discuss a transitional government.

2015 January - Kurdish forces push Islamic State out of Kobane on Turkish border after four months of fighting.

2015 September - Russia carries out its first air strikes in Syria, saying they target the Islamic State group, but the West and Syrian opposition say it overwhelmingly targets anti-Assad rebels.

2015 December - Syrian Army allows rebels to evacuate remaining area of Homs, returning Syria's third-largest city to government control after four years.

2017 April - US President Donald Trump orders a missile attack on an airbase from which Syrian government planes allegedly staged a chemical weapons attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun.

2017 December - Russian President Putin visits, declaring mission accomplished for his forces in the battle against Islamic State.

2018 February - Government launches a ferocious assault on Eastern Ghouta, the final rebel-held enclave near Damascus.

2018 April - Claims of a new chemical attack in Eastern Ghouta's main town of Douma prompt the US, Britain and France to carry out a wave of punitive strikes on Syrian targets.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Resolution	Date	Concerns
<u>887</u>	29 November 1993	<u>United Nations Disengagement Observer Force Zone</u>
<u>962</u>	29 November 1994	<u>United Nations Disengagement Observer Force Zone</u>
<u>1595</u>	7 April 2005	<u>Syrian occupation of Lebanon</u>
<u>1636</u>	31 October 2005	Assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister <u>Rafic Hariri</u>
<u>2042</u>	14 April 2012	The <u>Syrian Civil War</u> observer force resolution
<u>2043</u>	21 April 2012	Establishes of the <u>United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria</u>
<u>2059</u>	20 July 2012	Renews mandate of <u>Syrian Observer Mission</u> for 30 days.
<u>2118</u>	27 September 2013	<u>Syrian civil war</u> , <u>Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons</u> .

2139	February 22, 2014	Syrian civil war , access for humanitarian aid.
2165	14 July 2014	Syrian civil war , Humanitarian situation in Syria and the establishment of a monitoring mechanism
2209	6 March 2015	Syrian civil war , Chemical weapons in Syria
2254	18 December 2015	Syrian civil war , Cease fire
2268	26 February 2016	calling for a cessation of hostilities and a grant for access to humanitarian workers in Syria
2314	31 October 2016	Extends Mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism to Identify Perpetrators of Chemical Weapons Use in Syria
2319	17 November 2016	Renewed the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism for a further year.
2328	19 December 2016	Demanding Immediate, Unhindered Access for Observation of Monitoring Civilian Evacuations from Aleppo, Syria
2332	21 December 2016	Renewed the authorisation for cross-border aid delivery in Syria until 10 January 2018.
2336	31 December 2016	Calls on all the parties to allow humanitarian agencies rapid, safe and unhindered access throughout Syria
2401	24 February 2018	Calls for a nationwide ceasefire in Syria for 30 days starting from 24th of February 2018.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The International Syria Support Group had agreed to create a six step proposal and agree on:

1. Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and secular character are fundamental
2. State institutions will remain intact
3. The rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, must be protected
4. It is imperative to accelerate all diplomatic efforts to end the war
5. Humanitarian access will be ensured throughout the territory of Syria, and the participants will increase support for internally displaced persons, refugees, and their host countries
6. ISIS and other Terrorist groups, as designated by the U.N. Security Council, and further, as agreed by the participants, must be defeated
7. Pursuant to the 2012 Geneva Communique and U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118, the participants invited the U.N. to convene representatives of the Government of Syria and the Syrian opposition for a political process leading to credible, inclusive, non-sectarian governance, followed by a new constitution and elections. These elections must be administered under U.N. supervision to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, free and fair, with all Syrians, including the diaspora, eligible to participate.
8. This political process will be Syrian led and Syrian owned, and the Syrian people will decide the future of Syria.
9. The participants together with the United Nations will explore modalities for, and implementation of, a nationwide ceasefire to be initiated on a date certain and in parallel with this renewed political process.

Possible Solutions

There is the problem with president Bashar al-Assad, which Syria's future is influenced by the five major international powers - the United States, Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Without the current Syrian military and security forces fighting terrorist groups like ISIS, Al Qaeda and Jabhat al-Nusra, it would be impossible to protect Syria and its people. Therefore, the priority should be to stay away from the Syrian terrorist groups and leave it to the Syrian people to choose leaders through elections and constitutions.

Fighting terrorist groups in Syria is another issue, which may be combated with military partners and the Syrian military, supported by Russia and Iran. However the issue of some US allies supporting the terrorist groups and fighting the Syrian army can be resolved by helping the allies to understand that it is impossible to fight ISIS as well as the Assad government at the same time, and Russia, Iran and the Syrian army need to work together.

1. Decides to extend the objective of the observer team mandate in order to include the supervision and monitoring of the elections by ensuring:

(a) The free and secure access of the Syrian people to exert their right to vote according to national legislation;

(b) That no manipulation occurs during the counting procedures, and that all the process is based on transparency and accountability;

2. Requests the Syrian government to authorize the use of United Nations peacekeepers to protect civilians and deliver aid to those afflicted;

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