



جامعة جورجتاون  
كلية الشؤون الدولية في قطر

Model United Nations

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## **I. ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

The United Nations Security Council was created as a part of the UN charter which created the Security Council among six other main organs. The UNSC has the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The UNSC meets whenever peace is threatened. All the members of the United Nations agreed to accepting and carrying out the decisions passed by the Security Council, because it is the only organ of the United Nations with the power to make decisions that member states are obligated to implement. The first approach that the UNSC takes is recommend the parties involved reach an agreement through peaceful means. If the dispute leads to hostilities, the UNSC's primary concern is bringing the parties involved to stop, it may do so through; issuing ceasefire's or dispatching military observers or peacekeeping forces. If the aforementioned approaches do not work, the UNSC may decide to use enforcement measures that may include; economic sanctions, severances of diplomatic relations, or even military action. The UNSC debates clauses and not resolutions, together the clauses that are passed create a resolution. The only power of veto is reserved for the P5 countries, United States, China, Russia, United Kingdom, and France.

### **I. BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Syrian people have revolted against their government starting January 2011; however matters started to escalate and become of international notice during March of 2011. The only common ideal between the many separate revolts in Syria is the desire to overthrow the president of Syria, President Bashar Al-Asaad. While the separate revolt groups all want to overthrow Asaad, the Hezbollah forces from Lebanon have been supporting the government in attempting to take back the rebel controlled areas. The issue has continued to grab the attention of the international community through continues events, such as the thousands of Syrian civilian children that were killed by both chemical and conventional weapons, used by both sides of the conflict. Resolutions aimed at trying to resolve the issue by supporting the rebels have been vetoed by Russia and China, benefiting the Syrian Regime. The western reluctance has been extremely beneficial to the Syrian Regime.

## **II. DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION OF THE ISSUE**

Syrian citizens started protesting against the president Bashar starting March of 2011, following the Egyptian revolution. The protests started with one man setting himself on fire and small protests turned into violent demonstrations, which still continue today. There is one decentralized 'Local Coordination Committee', which creates documented protests, which include pleading and reasoning with the president to establish more citizen-pleasing laws. It is speculated that the Iranian government according to the United States, is aiding Assad in foiling the protests, while Iran accuses United States of initiating the start of the revolution in Syria.

## **III. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

The government response to the Syrian uprising was continuing the censorship of social networks and media, which could help, facilitate the protests. Water and electricity were turned off in most areas, as well as a limited amount of food in other areas. When this proved to be ineffective the government resorted to violence and killing their own people.

## **IV. HISTORY OF THE ISSUE**

The Damascus Spring was the president's desire for reform in Syria, which he hoped to achieve through debates and discussion, which took place in 2000. In the mid-2000s there were many minor conflicts between the Syrian Kurds and Muslims, which also was a basis of the current turmoil. In addition the president's family is of the minority religious denomination, which is the Alawite sector of the Shiite Muslim faith. Syria has been under their emergency law since 1963.

## **V. GLOSSARY OF THE ISSUE**

- Shabbiha – unofficial enforcers of the Assad regime, who use brutal force and are allegedly in charge of killing demonstrators and rebels.
- Free Syrian Army- soldiers who have left the Syrian national army in order to fight for the people in opposition with the president, the weapons they have acquired aren't nearly as damaging as that of the official military's
- Syrian Emergency Law- a suspension of the rights of Syrian citizens' rights in order to maintain the safety and protection of the government and citizens
- Republic of Iran- has provided the Syrian government with means of censoring and regulating social networks, email, and mobile telecommunication lines.
- United Nations- so far opposes the violence against the protesters and is an advocate for their freedom of speech.
- 1954 overthrow- this deals with Syria specifically, in this year as the parliamentary system was restored, but crucially undermined. However the parliament still remained weak. The power shifted from civil political power to military political power, and that is apparent in the strength of the military in the situation today.

## **VI. CURRENT STATUS**

The nation is currently in turmoil, the Syrian Free army continues to clash with the 'loyalist' army. The United Kingdom has implemented sanctions on the Syrian

government in order to pressure the nation into compromising with the protesters. The United Nations stated on 2 January 2013 that the war death toll has exceeded 60,000 deaths. According to the opposition activist groups, approximately 46,070 and 59,215 people have been killed. 1,000 government officials have been killed. As of October 2012, 28,000 have been reported missing or have been abducted by security forces. On October 2013, over 115,000 people have reportedly been killed in Syria, including 23,000 rebel fighters, 6000 children and 4000 women. Over 1.7 million Syrians have been forced to seek shelter in neighboring countries. Hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees have fled their home country to escape the violence and torture. Many international organizations have accused the government and the Shabiha of violating and breaching human right laws.

**Supporters of the Syrian National Coalition (not all countries included):**

- Qatar
- Turkey
- Saudi Arabia
- France
- Australia
- UK
- USA
- Argentina
- South Korea
- Luxembourg
- Free Syrian Army

**Supporters of the Syrian government (not all countries included):**

- The Syrian armed forces (Syrian Army, Syrian Navy, Syrian Air Force, Republican Guard)
- Shabiha
- Jaysh Al Shaabi
- Iran
- Russia
- China
- Pakistan
- People's Republic of North Korea
- Revolutionary Guards
- Hezbollah
- Iraqi Shi'ite Militias
- Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-GC)

**VIII. RECENT EVENTS**

After attempts to intervene with the Syrian conflict, the Geneva II conference hopes to resolve the situation. With constant disagreement about which Representative Syrian party

should be present: US secretary of state, John Kerry stated that the Anti-Assad rebels had to make their own decision about joining the negotiating table. One of the main reasons for this conference is to arrive at a mutual consent amongst all the countries so that Assad and his regime would play no role in the future of the government. Obstacles with the sensitive situation arose when Russia and China refused to explicitly call for the Syrian leader's departure.

An attempt to solve this issue has been submitted by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2012. This was a six point peace plan, calling for UN observers to enter Syria attempting to ensure the compliance of peace by all parties involved in Syria. While this plan was passed by the Security Council, it failed to resolve the issue and observer mission was suspended before it was supposed to expire due to fear that the presence of the observers caused more violence.

John Kerry stated that Bashar Al-Asaad should "hand over every single bit of his chemical weapons to the international community in the next week" in a press conference on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2013, in order to avoid military action from the United States. Russia then brokered an agreement with Syria ensuring that Bashar Al-Asaad sign on to the Chemical Weapons Convention. While this is a step forward for the Syrian government in cooperating, it would take around a year if not more to begin the disposal of the chemical weapons in Syria, which only adds on to the fear that the Syrian government did not declare all of its stockpiles.

## **IX. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

In order to get the government to listen to and compromise with the revolutionaries, nations need to start, and continue, in some cases to place sanctions on the Syrian government. Other nations should help take part in organizing the revolts, due to the limited and regulated social networking in Syria. The United Nations should send in peacekeepers, to support demonstrators, and or assist in the overthrowing of the Syrian government. There also needs to be a way to eliminate the 'Emergency Law' currently controlling Syria.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- 1) Is it right to consider the war in Syria a civil war? If so, does this indicate a balanced and evened out fighting between two defined groups?
- 2) Why has the international community failed to act against the Syrian government in the wake of the chemical weapons violations?
- 3) Did the war in Syria expose a new indirect cold war between Russia and the United States?
- 4) Is post-war state building even a consideration at the moment? Seeing that there is no clear trajectory for the duration of the war
- 5) What international mechanisms can be adopted for the return of refugees after the eventual end of the war?
- 6) Do you believe that Syria will be segmented and federated? There are claims that the war can only end with the creation of an Alawite state, a Sunni state and possibly a Kurdish state.

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