Security Council

Research Report

The Question of:

The Situation in the Middle East (Syria)

Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2018

~ fresh ideas, new solutions ~

This Research Report has been updated until the end of August. Please keep in mind that the situation could have been changed.

Introduction

The situation in the Middle East in particular Syria is an enormous issue being discussed by the United Nations. The ongoing civil war and the chemical weapon attacks of Assad have shocked the international community. The war is between three main groups all fighting in order to seize Syria and control the country, these are: Assad and his militia Hezbollah, ISIS (Islamic States Iraq and Syria) and Rebel groups. A conflict between the government and nongovernmental each fighting to seize Syria. The UN has been active on this topic even since the beginning of the war yet have still not come up with a full resolution for the issue, following up many previous attempts to solve the issue. Furthermore, the war has been causing several side effects for the civilians of Syria, firstly being the refugee crisis those escaping from the country, those who have previously been or are still being heavily affected by the air strikes and chemical weapons attacks and the high amounts of lives lost.
Assad has worked with Iran to create his militia Hezbollah to protect him from being taken down, Assad is still the current president of Syria. The civilians have been attacked very often by the Assad Regime with their use of prohibited chemical weapons. The key parties who support Syria and the three different groups are Iran and Russia who support the Assad Regime and the US, Turkey and Saudi Arabia all support the rebels. Western countries are retreating themselves from the conflict, as a prior act majority Western countries were lenient towards the Rebels side, however now are backing away from the conflict in order to leave it to the countries and groups to decide. However, the UK has a certain stand on this conflict which is against Assad due to the constant use of chemical weapons. Assad's constant use of chemical weapons which Russia has been supporting.

The Committee

The Security Council is a forum where the main goal is to discuss matters of international peace and security such as areas in conflict. The council will contain 15 people were 5 of the countries always have a guaranteed seat, these countries are the P5 (Permanent 5) countries: China, France, The United Kingdom, The Russian Federation and the United States of America. These countries have veto-power which means that if one of the P5 member states disagrees to a proposal given then it automatically fails. These P5 countries have a lot of power.
The Security Council has the ability to make binding important decisions unlike the other organs of the UN. A key example of these decisions are the sending on UN peacekeepers to areas of conflict. This can only be certified by the UN Security Council.

Voting
An amendment or resolution needs 9 votes *in favor* in order to pass, and an no vote against from any of the P5 countries. Abstentions are always allowed, even in motions to divide the house.

Ad-Hoc
In the Security Council, there is an Ad-Hoc debate procedure that is used which means that no resolution is prepared beforehand however lobbying is allowed to discuss their countries decisions

before debate. In the Security Council, delegations hand in individual clauses, each clause is debated and it passes or fails. This way a resolution is created. As a delegate, it is very useful to prepare individual clauses in advance.

Pre-Ambulatory/Operative Clauses
The SC is allowed to use certain Pre-Ambulatory and Operative Clauses which other committees are not allowed to use. Those are:

Pre-Ambulatory
Declaring
Deploring

Operative
Condemns
Decides
Declares
Declares accordingly
Deplores
Designates
Strongly Condemns

Key Terms

ISIS- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, this is an extremist group that was created by those who left Al-Qaeda due to a disagreement, from this ISIS grew and became extremely strong. ISIS is a big enemy of the United States of America and there has been several attempts to take down ISIS but have failed.

Rebel Groups- Rebel groups were created from those who rebelled against president Assad, those who did not agree with his views created a rebel group. The rebel group is supported by mainly Gulf-States and the US. The rebels wish to take down Assad.

Refugees- A person who has been forced to leave their home and cross to another border state in order to seek shelter, usually away from conflict. There are thousands of refugees at the moment, and another topic that is being discussed in the human rights committee is the Syrian refugee crisis.

Gulf States- The Gulf States are Israel, Qatar and Turkey, these states were the ones who decided to go on the side of the rebel and begin to aid them. The Gulf states include more countries, 7 in total, however these are just the three that aided the Syrian rebel group.

General Overview

The Syrian conflict has been going on for 6 years and is split into 4 main sides;(or 3 without the Kurds) Assad, Kurds, ISIS and Rebels. The countries of Syria, the US and Russia are fighting in this conflict as one of the conflicts in the middle east. It all began with a peaceful Arab demonstration where the president (dictator) of Syria Assad declared shots to be fired against these protestors. The rising of the rebels is where this began, the protests protested again after this shooting incident and some soldiers from the Syrian regime join the protests against president Assad. The rebels

were formed, a group of Syrians who fought against President Assad, also known as the free Syrian army. Extremist from other places of the middle East began travelling to Syria in order to join the rebels (extremist uprising) for example Jihadists from Iraq who joined the rebels. In 2012 the two groups forms a group called Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, kurdish Syrians living in the north gather arms and they too begin rebelling against Assad. By 2012 the situation in Syria is terrible with the uprising of rebellion groups who would later turn into terrorist groups. Syria is a dangerous place by this point so president Assad then decided to call their ally Iran for help where Iran sent in thousands of soldier troops from their own army. On the other side of the Middle-East Gulf States such as Qatar and Turkey begin to supply the rebels of Syria. Later on a militia group names Hezbollah created by Iran a lebanese group of soldiers begin to fight the Syrian Rebel group to support Assad.

Why did the Gulf States fund Rebels in Syria?
Israel Gulf states main enemy was Iran who was the ones successfully aiding Assad in his fight against Syrian Rebels and aided Assad with the militia group of Hezbollah. The Gulf States are enemies of president Assad and so aid the rebels, those who are rebelling against Assad (an anti government group).

In 2013, the conflict has now been split into two main political sides; the ones supporting the rebels which are the Gulf States and the ones supporting Assad. In April 2013 the Obama administration, the USA, after seeing Assad's horrible actions, sends a secret order to the CIA to train Syrian rebels and equip them with weapons and money. However at the same time the US contacts the gulf states to stop aiding the extremist groups (rebels), their suggestion got ignored and Gulf states continued to keep funding the groups. In the following August, the Assad regime is reported to be using chemical weapons against the civilians in Syria and the extremist groups. This was an international anger arising in countries where people protested against the use of the chemical weapons, thousands of children and families lay dead in streets. The US intended on responding to Assad's action however then backed out.
By now Russia was backing Assad and the US was opposing them, therefore meaning the Gulf states allied with the US and Assad and Iran allied with Russia.
A few weeks later, the US sends troops from order of the president to the CIA, into Syria to the rebels thereby meaning that the US is now an active participant in the war. Later on in February 2014, people from the Al-Qaeda group break away forming their own new group which would later on be an enemy of Assad and an enemy of the Rebels, the group calls themselves ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). ISIS mainly fights the rebels and Kurds and less of Assad. In september the US decides to respond and act against ISIS by bombing them, one year before, they had planned to and almost bombed Assad. This time the US went through with their plans for bombing the extremists and the airstrikes were publically announced by president Obama.
The pentagon (US defense system) decides to train the rebel groups well Iorder to fight against the extremist group of ISIS, rising and becoming dangerously big as time passs. The pentagon agrees to only train troops against ISIS and not Assad. Further speaking, after several attempts the plan from the pentagon fails proving the strength of ISIS and how ISIS had now become a bigger enemy of the US compared to Assad.

The current situation in the middle east Syria region

An on going civil war in Syria is still continuing with the main groups fighting are Assad and his military group Hezbollah, Syrian rebels and ISIS. Each of these groups are trying to take over the country to be in control.

The latest current updates have been that Assad has once again used chemical weapons. Since Donalds Trump came into presidency, he decided to cancel all interactions with the Syrian situation and the rebels, However, after the chemical weapon attack, Trump decided to act, he directly attacked president Assad with air raides. This has taken another turn because up until this act, the US was only focused on fighting against ISIS to stop the development of the extremist group.

Major Parties Involved

There are a few main parties who are involved in the situation in the middle east Syria. Obviously Syria is the main one however there are countries supporting the various groups in the conflict.

The United States of America- The US has been active on this conflict ever since they began secretly aiding the rebels with telling the Gulf States not aid the rebels any more (the request was denied by the Gulf States), Obama was against Assad's regime and his attacks using chemical weapons, furthermore after the development of the new extremist group ISIS who became the new enemy of the US. The US attempted many ties to stop ISIS and get rid of the group, each which failed.

Current states of the major parties involved;

United States-
Who do they support?
The United states current day with President Trump is against Assad's government regime. The new plan for President Trump is to pull out an military aid being sent to Syria. Still discussing the positive and negative impacts of this action, the US is still currently sending troops to fight in Syria against the Assad regime and ISIS.
What do they want?
The US plans to destroy and take down IS (Islamic State) in both Iran and Syria. Since the US is an ally of Israel, another goal is to protect ISrael from any inconveniences caused by the IS, and to take down Assad's regime.

Syria- The main situation is about Syria, how Syria is being split and there is a civil war between 3 main groups; Assad Regime, rebels and ISIS. Syria is still in civil war, with cities destroyed, millions of civilians dead due to the air attacks and the chemical weapon attacks. Thousand feeling as refugees to countries such as Libya.

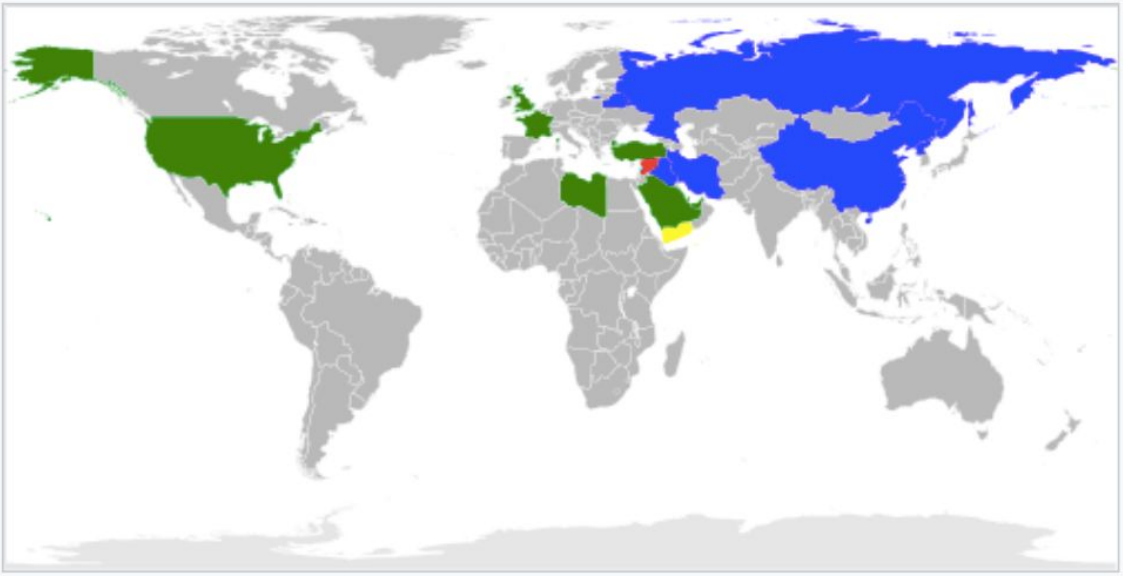
Iran- Iran is with Assad's regime and Iran supplied Assad with a militia group ames Hezbollah who protect Assad against the rebels. Iran is an ally of Assad along with the Russian Federation. Iran is one of the main allies of Assad.

Iraq- Where Al-Qaeda was based in and where ISIS then evolved from, from ex-members of AL-Qaeda due to some disagreements in the group. Iraq still has extremist group Al-Qaeda however is a smaller part of the conflict compared to ISIS or the Syrian Rebels.

Russia- Russia is a big ally of Assad and has been continuously supporting Assad instead of helping to stop the conflict, according to some representatives of the UN, Russia has done nothing in order to stop the previous chemical weapon attacks on civilians. Russia still wants to keep Assad and his regime his ally.

Qatar, Israel and Turkey- These are the member of the Gulf States, who have aided the Syrian rebels in order to act against their enemy Assad.

Countries with Military involvement in the conflict;



Map of world and Syria (red) with military involvement.

Syria

Countries that support the Syrian Ba'athist government

Countries that support the Syrian Opposition

Countries where support is divided between the Syrian Ba'athist government and the Syrian Opposition

As seen here the only western country involved militarily in the conflict is the United Kingdom which support the Syrian opposition (against the Assad regime)

Timeline of Events

2011 March- Assad decides to fire against peaceful Arab protests, hundreds dead and triggered anger to arise.

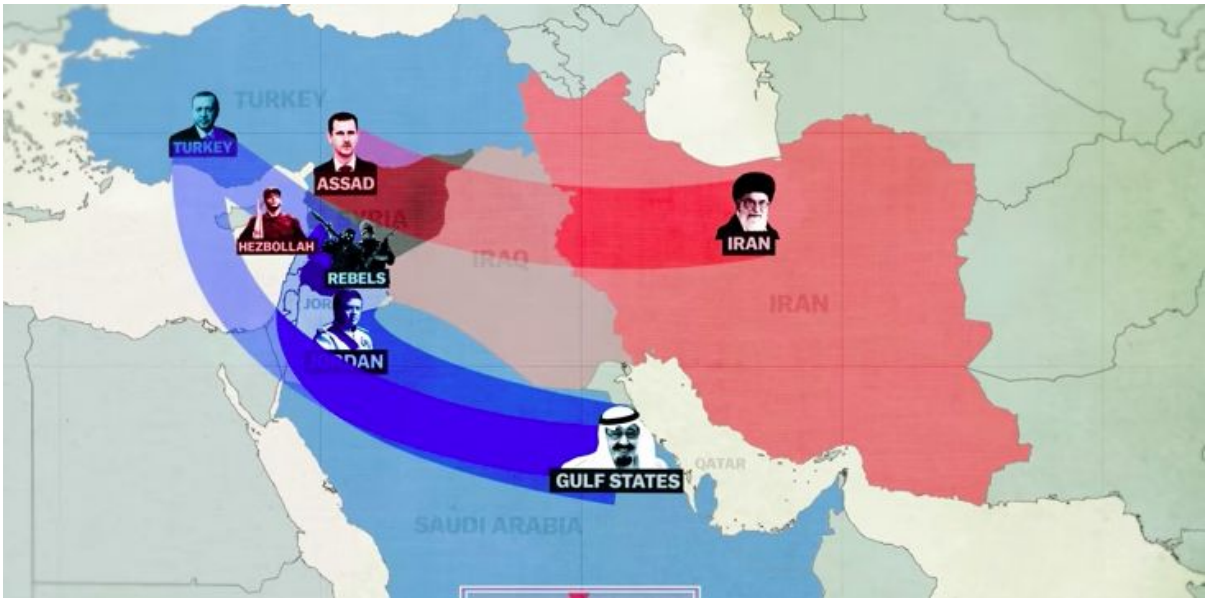
July 2011- Protests rise again and decide to reprotest back, some Syrian army troops join these protests against President Assad. This then provokes the uprising of a new group names the rebels made up of anti-government civilians. The cause being a civil war.

2012- More extremist group begin forming such as a new branch of Al-Qaeda and the Kurdish.

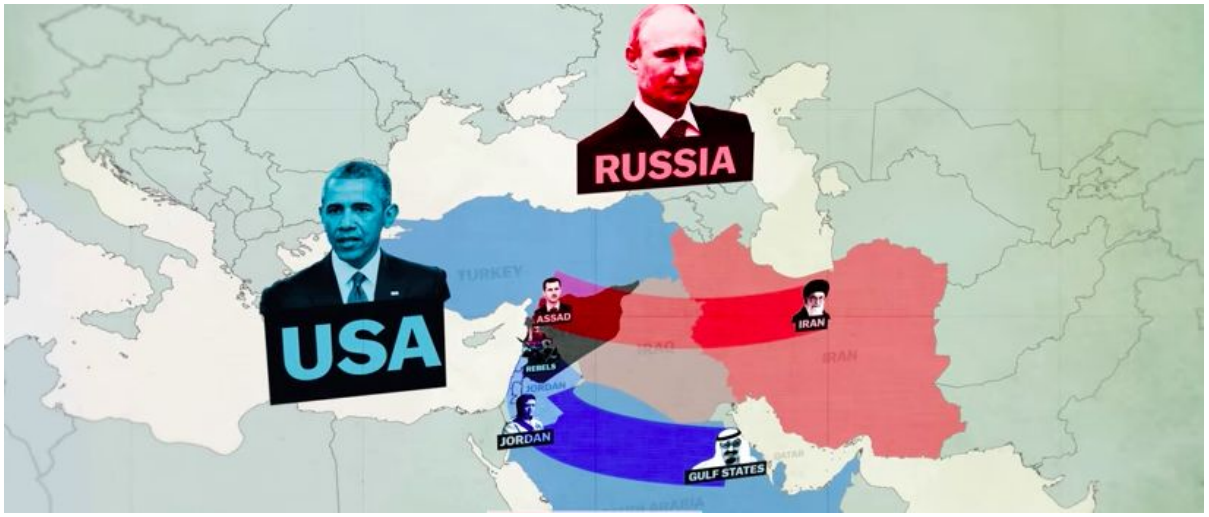
2012- Assad receives aid from Iran and military support. At the same time Turkey and Qatar aid the rebel groups in Syria in order to work against president Assad.

2012- Hezbollah, a Lebanese militia group who is fighting with Assad and is sent by Iran, invade the rebels. This urther beings the civil conflict between the two main groups, the Kurds also begin to uprise and begins a conflict between Kurds, rebels and Assad's regime.

January 2013- In 2013 it is clear that the conflict has been split into two main groups, with the anti-government (Syrian Rebels and the Gulf states) and the Government of Syria (Assad and Iran).



April 2013- After hearing about the horrific actions of Assad, the US sends a secret order to the CIA in order to aid the Syrian Rebels who were the anti-governmentalism.
August 2013- Assad horrifies the rest of the world provoking acts of disapproval as the Assad Regime uses chemical weapons against the civilians and rebels which kills more than 1700 civilians.
September 2013- Obama responds to the use of Assad's chemical weapons and announces that the US will in fact respond to this chemical attack by Assad and do something to stop the progression and growth of the chemical weapons in Syria. However the plan fails and the USA ends up not acting upon the attack from the Assad Regime.
September 2013- Russia decides to support Assad and threaten the US which makes them step down from acting against Assad. Now the conflict adds two P 5 countries, the United States of America and The Russian Federation.



December 2013- the USA sends troops to fight with the Syrian rebels therefore the USA is now an active participant in the Syrian civil conflict.
February 2014- The formation of ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) occurs, soon becoming an extremely dangerous extremist group. A small group of people from the Al-Qaeda group break off and form ISIS becoming an enemy of Al-Qaeda and Syrian Rebels or Kurds.
September 2014- The US recognizes ISIS as a major terrorist groups and sends out air strikes against it, ISIS now becoming a bigger enemy of the US rather than Assad.
April 2015- Assad's regime does a chlorine attack on the civilians, over 200 Syrians are killed in these attacks
July 2015- The US Pentagon sends troops to Syria once again in order to train Syrian troops to fight against ISIS only and not Assad, this is because ISIS is now a key problem and enemy of the United States.
August 2015- The Security Council passesa resolution to investigate the uses of chemical weapons in Syria.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

There have been several attempts to resolve this issue, as mentioned earlier, the United Nations Security Council and general assemblies have created several resolutions in order to solve this conflict issue. Resolutions that were produced:
A/RES/61/27 - This resolution was on the Syrian Golan heights, the splitting of the land and the situation of the groups.
S/PRST/2015/25- This resolution was passed by the UN Security Council, it was a statement from the president of the Security Council with clauses regarding the situation with ISIS.
A/C.3/70/L.47- This resolution was passed by the General Assembly in November 2015, about the humanitarian rights of civilians living in Syria.
S/RES/2393- This was a resolution passed by the UN Security Council regarding the cross-border and coss-aid. The resolution was about the refugees and the humanitarian aid needed as well as protecting the civilians of Syria. The resolution was passed in December 2017.

More resolutions that have been passed by the United Nations Security Council are:
SC/12066- About the Al-Qaeda extremist groups
A/RES/71/248- General Assembly, regarding the prosecution of those who have committed serious crime which has will be informed to the international court of law.

The Future

The coming future. In the coming future there are many things that can be done in order to end the Syrian conflict. Firstly the two main sides, backed by the Russian and the USA needs to settle a ceasefire, a truce between the two sides to stop the fighting, this will also save the civilians who live in Syria. Secondly a new UN branch can be opened which concentrates only on the Syrian conflict situation in the Middle East. A bi annual report can be created, a report created about the situation in Syria in order to keep track of the conflict. Destroying the use of weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons in order to stop the high deaths of civilians. A UN investigation should be set up amongst the new branch, sent into Syria to investigate the chemical weapons, cooperating with companies such as the OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) in order to stop the use of chemical weapons. Additionally, creating a new branch to stop terrorist extremist groups such as ISIS from developing.

Important Decisions a Resolution Must Take

There are several decisions that this resolution must take in order to be successful. Firstly, before making any solutions to the problem of the conflict, you must think about the causes of that certain solution and what effects it would have on each major party involved on the country. Furthermore, consider the opinions of mainly the P5 countries because with one disagreement, they have the ability to use their veto-power to fail the solution. Consider the following questions in order to brainstorm some solutions during your period of research:

1. How will ISIS be dealt with?
2. Will Assad be dealt with if so how?
3. Will your solutions have bias towards one certain side of the conflict?
4. Will your solution include any other UN committees such as human rights in order to deal with the refugee crisis?
5. In what way will the conflict be dealt with that does not evoke any other worsening of groups
6. Will the UN fund anything, if yes then what?

Clauses much address each country, the resolution should apply to all countries which are included in the UN and should be considerate of them.

Further Reading

Websites:
The link below is some general information about the current crisis and which land is whose:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27838034

The following link below shows which countries have signed into the prohibition of chemical weapons (the OPCW) meaning that the government has agreed to the prohibition of any chemical weapons and they will be/have been destroyed by this organisation.
https://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/member-states/

This video shows a representative of the United Kingdom who is talking about the UK on the situation in the middle east:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43lSQZj79vI

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