UNSC

STUDY GUIDE

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CONFLICT AND SECURITY IN IRAQ, SYRIA, ISRAEL & PALESTINE

ROTMUN
MMXVIII

Humza Nadeem Jami

Secretary General

Humza Nadeem Jami will be serving as the Secretary General for the Rotaract Model United Nations Conference 2018. Jami, as he likes to be known, is a graduate of the Lahore University of Management Sciences, where he was a senior member of the LUMUN Society's Secretariat and Travelling Model UN Team. Prior to this, he was a former Head Delegate at the Lyceum School's Debate Team, one of the powerhouses of the country.

As a member of the LUMUN Secretariat, Jami is famous for the most technologically innovative and immersive crisis experiences Pakistan has ever seen - having designed and chaired Harry Truman's National Security Council as part of the country's first ever Joint Crisis Cabinet (JCC) in 2016, and a Twitter integrated real time UN Security Council in 2017. As a part of the LUMUN Travelling Model UN Team, he reached the pinnacle of his career when he won a Diplomacy Award at the Harvard World Model UN Conference hosted in Panama City, Panama in March 2018 (as seen in the picture above).

Jami has been doing Model UN since January 2011, and cannot be more excited to welcome you to ROTMUN! He is an original graduate and a two time Best Delegate winner at the original Rotaract Model UN Conference that occurred between the years of 2010 and 2012, hosted by the Rotaract Public Speaking Forum.

His vision for the conference is simple: to bring the best and the absolute best of the country inside the halls of IBA City Campus for the most uniquely immersive delegate experience offered at any Model UN Conference in the country. He is inspired by the ROTMUNs of yore, where high levels of academic integrity and learning were the core of Model UN as an activity, which he finds an opportunity to revive this year. He will be flying in chairs from the best corners of the country to achieve this.

Jami feels Model UN has become an activity that has become very elitist, very exclusionary, and has lost its roots in intellectual political dialogue. All of that will return in due time at the 2018 edition of the Rotaract Model United Nations Conference under his leadership to foster Socratic dialogue using this activity.

Uwais Parekh

Under Secretary General

Uwais graduated from Cedar College in 2018 and is currently in the midst of figuring stuff out in his gap year. Usually found in bed with a bag of Doritos while he goes hours into the night being engrossed with Video Games

Uwais served as the Head of the Model UN wing of Cedar Union, Cedar's Public Speaking & Debating Society in his last year where he captained the Model UN Team to multiple landmarks at conferences such as LUMUN, MUNIK & HUMUN.

He has also been a long serving member of the Destiny Model United Nations Society, having served as the Vice President & the Academic Curator for their annual Conference, apart from that Uwais somehow managed to garner an Experience of more than an acceptable amount of Public Speaking & Debating Events; be they Model UNs, Parliamentary Debates or Moot Courts, at the obvious expense of his GPA

Being an Immense Believer in the change that is only plausible through discourse and engagement with Ideas. Uwais absolutely cannot wait to give it his all to ensure that aspiring policy makers have the suitable environment to participate in dialogue that helps them explore the diplomat present within themselves in the Country's best emulation of the Chambers of the United Nations

Maheen Naveed

Under Secretary General

Maheen is currently in her first year pursuing an MBBS degree at Ziauddin University but likes to spend her free time imagining all the possible, completely unrelated careers she can go into after she completes her MBBS. She is a graduate of the Lyceum School, where she was Head Delegate of the Debate Team and regards that time as one of her most cherished.

During her tenure as a member of the Lyceum's Debate Team, she has won awards at local and international conferences including LUMUN, ROTMUN, MUNIK and Harvard MUN; the former at which she was awarded a Best Delegate at UNSC and the latter at which she was awarded Honourable Mention twice.

She is looking forward to helping create a conference that is centred on the classic MUN values of energetic debate, impeccable policy making and above all, a return to the high standard of academic intellect and argumentation theory that is expected of delegates attending the hallowed halls of a ROTMUN conference.

She hopes that ROTMUN is the experience of a lifetime for it's delegates, and wishes you the best of luck in October!

Zarak Asim

Committee Director

Zarak Asim graduated this year from LUMS, majoring in Political Science with a focus on global policy and foreign affairs. He has been an active part of the circuit since 2011 and since that time, has collected many indomitable achievements to his credit.

To name a few, he holds the honour of being one of the first Pakistanis selected in the capacity of an ACD at Harvard World Model UN. He has chaired two committees at LUMUN; most recently, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit on Transnational Warfare at LUMUN 14, and as Head of Crisis Staff for the Joint Crisis Cabinet at LUMUN 13. He was also Committee Director of the United Nations Security Council at IVYMUN'17.

He's looking forward to welcoming you in October, where he hopes you'll take an active part in creating an engaging atmosphere of learning within the committee.

Conflict and Security in Iraq, Syria, Israel and Palestine

Introduction

This year the United Nations Security Council at ROTMUN will be fast-paced and innovative, urging on delegates to step out of their comfort zones and debate on a topic that combines some of the most volatile regions in today's political landscape, to come up with unorthodox yet sustainable solutions to the conflict crisis in these regions. The tried and tested approaches will be challenged, diplomacy will be put to the test and original frameworks for lasting peace and rehabilitation put forward by you, the delegate, will be discussed and, hopefully implemented.

So what makes the Security Council the United Nations' first line of defence in countering global crises and what constitutes its intimidating reputation beyond the United Nations? There are some stark differences between the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations. In contrast to the 193-member GA, the Security Council's membership is a comparatively sleek fifteen. While other bodies have a set schedule of meetings, the Security Council may convene at a moment's notice to address international crises as soon as they arise. And although words like recommend, urge, and encourage abound in international legislation, the Security Council is the only branch of the United Nations that has the power to make binding decisions that apply to member states. As mentioned above, it's membership consists of fifteen member states, including the P5; China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States, all of whom not only enjoy a consistent voice on the Council, but also possess the power to veto a resolution introduced in the committee. The other ten rotating members of the Council serve in two-year terms, with three members hailing from Africa, two from the Latin America, the Asia-Pacific, and Western European and Others regions respectively, and one from Eastern Europe.

Under the United Nations Charter, the mandate of the Security Council includes the following powers, duties and responsibilities[1]:

- To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- To call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- To take military action against an aggressor;
- To recommend the admission of new Members;
- To exercise the trusteeship of functions of the United Nations in strategic areas;
- To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

To the delegates of this year's simulation of the Security Council; be prepared for exciting and dynamic sessions that, in the spirit of the urgency of the conflict in our titular regions, will mirror the high-pressured environment of the actual Security Council, and will compel delegates to think on their feet in the strong eventuality of crisis scenarios.

This study guide aims to provide you with an understanding of the topic on which to base your research, and which direction debate should take in the committee sessions. It should not be used as a delegate's only resource within a committee.

Statement of the Problem

There are some common threads that connect the conflict situations in Iraq, Syria, Israel and Palestine. Collectively, they constitute a fraction of the Middle East and the beginnings of unrest in these regions can be traced back to the post-World War I arbitrary demarcation at the hands of the Western Allied powers after the fall of the Ottoman Turkish Empire.[2] The Arab Spring was a significant catalyst in mobilizing protests and heightening nationalistic sentiment and is the forerunner to many of the modern day movements in these regions calling for greater transparency and accountability in politics. Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Israel are also plagued by extremist groups, both home and foreign based. The Kahane Chai (Kach) in Israel, an extremist organisation that aims to expel Arabs from the biblical lands of Israel and thus restore the religious sanctity of Israel, the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) in Syria, which aims to overthrow the Syrian government and create a Sunni Islamic State, Hezbollah in Iraq, which aims to topple the Iraqi government and establish a Shiite Islamic State, and Hamas in Palestine, which aims to liberate Palestinians from Israeli occupation.[3] They share an uneasy relationship with each other, and the history and transnational politics of these regions are tied so closely together that to exacerbate conflict in one region would have a direct impact on the other three regions; in refugee migration, cross-border violence, illegal arms trafficking, and protests. The transnational politics of these regions will be explored in more detail, but delegates are reminded that in order to tackle any one of these issues, a broader understanding of the history of all is needed.

Transnational Politics

Syria has fraught relations with the State of Israel over territorial claims of the Golan Heights and Israel's right to pump water from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. These tensions have escalated and de-escalated in the past, with the signing of the July 1949 Armistice Agreement and declaration of Demilitarized Zones, which created a temporary ceasefire in the conflict until the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. From 1964 to 1966, Syria attempted to dig a canal that would divert freshwater from the sources of the Jordan River before they entered Israeli territory, which led to a series of skirmishes between Syria and Israel that precipitated the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and extended Israeli occupation of additional Syrian territory. Following the war, Syria agreed to the UN

Security Council Resolution 338, which called for an acceptance of resolution 242 and this became the basis of renewed peace negotiations between Israel and Syria. The 1990's marked a calmer time for bilateral relations, including the landmark Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in October 1991 that both countries participated in, until negotiations broke down following the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000 and Syrians continued to provide a safe haven for known Palestinian militant groups. In recent years, tensions between the two states have soured due to

increased Israeli interventionist policies in the Middle East. In the beginning of February, Israel intercepted an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) of Iranian manufacture that entered it's airspace. In response, Tel Aviv triggered a set of multiple attacks against Syrian and Iranian targets, in Syria. In the process, an Israeli F-16 fighter was shot down.[4] Over the past two years, Israel has carried out over 200 attacks in Syria targeting suspected arms transfers and deployments by

Iranian forces and their Lebanese Hezbollah allies, both Damascus's partners in Syria's civil war.[5] Syria has also played an active role in the Palestine resistance by providing refuge to over 526,000 Palestinian refugees since 1948.[6] Palestinians have fought in Syria on behalf of both the regime and the rebels. The conflict has deepened ideological and political wedges between Palestinians and complicated their patchwork of international alliances. Moreover, as various proxy battles are waged within Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, the Palestinian refugees there are now enduring an underreported humanitarian crisis. The Syrian government armed, financed, and protected various left-leaning Palestinian guerilla groups that were established in Yarmouk during the 1960s. Two of these groups included the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist group founded in 1967, and the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Council (PFLP-GC), established in 1968 as a splinter group from the PFLP. The Assad regime has also funded Islamist Palestinian movements.[7]

Iraq and Israel do not have any formal diplomatic relations, a position that the Iraqi government established in 1948 when it refused to recognise Israel and declared war on the state. Since then the two states can be said to be in an extended state of war. Relations between the two have further deteriorated over the years when in 1981 the Israeli air force bombed a civilian nuclear power plant under construction in Iraq, citing it a threat to it's national security,[8] and Iraq fired 42 modified SCUD ballistic missiles at Israel during the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein was widely revered in Arab nations for his anti-Israel stance and has supported several Palestinian guerrilla and militant organisations, and during the last Second Intifada Iraq subsidized families of Palestinian martyrs (including suicide bombers).[9]

Israel and Palestine share a contentious, almost seven decade long history that makes both states crucial regional players in the Middle Eastern political spectrum, and key global players in territorial conflict management, human rights violations and the refugee crisis. On 14 May 1948, the United Kingdom gave up its mandate of the territory of Palestine, and the Jewish political leaders declared the independence of the State of Israel. Almost immediately after, fighting broke out between the Arabs and Israelis, and soon troops from neighboring Arab states entered the region to come to the assistance of the Palestinians. Many attempts were made by the Security Council to establish negotiations, and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was set up to act as an observer in the Middle East, where members remain to this day. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was founded by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, and it works to carry out direct relief and works programs for Palestinian refugees, funded voluntarily by the Member States of the UN.[10]

On 1st October, Amnesty International denounced a planned demolition of a West Bank village and forcible transfer of its residents to make way for illegal Jewish settlements as a 'war crime that lays bare the Israeli government's callous disregard for the Palestinians,' as some 180 residents of the Bedouin community of Khan-al Ahmar, east of Jerusalem, face being forcibly evicted and transferred by the Israeli army. This comes as just the most recent example of Israel's policies of settling Israeli civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, destroying property and forcibly transferring Palestinians living under occupation, which is in direct violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and are war crimes listed in the statute of the International Criminal Court.[11]

Timeline of Key Events

The following timeline highlights key events in the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Syrian Civil War and the ongoing fight against ISIS in Iraq.[12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20]

1947	The United Nations partitions Palestine into two states: a Jewish state (56%) and an Arab state (43%). Jerusalem will become an international city (1%)
1948-49	Israel declares statehood and is recognised by the US and 32 other states at UN First Arab-Israeli War. 'War of Independence' for Israelis and *al naqba* ('the catastrophe') for Palestinians Historic Palestine is now divided into Israel, Gaza (under Egyptian control), and the West Bank (under Jordanian control)
1958	Yasser Arafat, later chairman of the PLO, founds a Palestinian national liberation movement by the name of al- Fatah
1964	Palestine National Council convenes in East Jerusalem and establishes the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
1967	The Six-Day War. Israel defeats Egypt, Syria, and Jordan and occupies Gaza and the West Bank. Israel controls 100% of historic Palestine UN resolution 242 calls on Israel to withdraw from the territories but it fails to comply
1980-88	Iran-Iraq war results in stalemate
1981	Jun: Israeli air raid destroys Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak near Baghdad
1987	The Palestinians rise up in the first non-violent Intifada('uprising'), calling for self-determination and an independent Palestinian state
1988	PLO declares independent Palestinian state, recognized by over 100 nations at UN, but not by US
1990	Iraq invades and annexes Kuwait, prompting the first Gulf War. Forces withdraw in 1991
1991	The US, joined by the USSR convenes Middle East peace talks in Madrid Iraq subjected to weapons inspection programme
1967-93	Israeli settlements grow in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem (called the Occupied Palestinian Territories by the United Nations)

1993	Oslo accords are signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization but illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories double by 2000
1994	Feb: Baruch Goldstein, a Jewish extremist, opens fire on Muslim worshipers in the Hebron mosque and two weeks later, Hamas answers with suicide bombings inside Israel. Violence is on the rise. Jul: Arafat arrives in Gaza and the newly formed Palestine National Authority (PNA) is charged with the administration of the territories and implementation of the Oslo Accord
1996	Benjamin Netanyahu appointed PM Negotiations over final status issues (borders, security, the status of Jerusalem, and the return or compensation of the refugees) slowed down because B. Netanyahu fundamentally opposes the Oslo process.
1998	Oct: Wye River Memorandum on the implementation of the 1995 Oslo Accords, brokered by President Clinton is introduced Oct: Iraq ends cooperation with UN Special Commission to Oversee the Destruction of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Dec: US and British Operation Desert Fox bombing campaign aims to destroy Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes
2000	Peace talks sponsored by United States President Bill Clinton at Camp David between Israel and the Palestinian Authority fail Palestinians launch the second intifada (uprising) to protest the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank
2002	UN weapons inspectors return to Iraq backed by UNSC resolution 1441
2003	US-led invasion topples Saddam Hussein's government, marks start of years of violent conflict with different groups competing for power
2004	Israel builds a fence/wall in West Bank that they say is protection against Palestinian terrorism. The Palestinians say that the wall/fence imprisons them and takes more of their land The International Court of Justice rules that the fence/wall is illegal. US hands sovereignty to interim government in Iraq

2006	Islamic State of Iraq forms from what remains of Al Qaeda in Iraq
2008-09	Israel military incursion into Gaza results in the death of hundred of Palestinian civilians Release of a new version of the Geneva Accord
2011	Mar: Day of dignity protests in Damascus and Daraa; security forces fire on and kill protestors, triggering violent unrest May: In response to worsening unrest, al-Assad deploys army in major cities; USA, EU tighten sanctions; Assad announces amnesty for political prisoners Aug: Obama calls for Assad to step down, freezes Syrian government assets Oct: Russia and China veto UNSC resolution condemning Syria Fatah and Hamas form alliance
2012	Feb: New Syrian constitution approved in referendum that establishes a multi-party system, opposition leaders call the vote a sham Apr: Ceasefire brokered by Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan takes effect; UNSC Resolution 2043 establishes 300-member UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) to monitor the ceasefire and ensure implementation of Annan peace plan Jun: UN monitoring mission suspended in light of escalating violence Aug: UNGA resolution demands that Assad resign, UNHRC accuses Syria of war crimes, Obama warns against use of chemical weapons Nov: Opposition forces unify into National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces; Israelis fire on Syrian artillery in Golan Heights Dec: USA recognizes National Coalition as legitimate government of Syria
2012-2014	New peace discussions between Israel and Palestine Authority sponsored by the United States fail
2013	Islamic State of Iraq relocates to Syria and is rebranded the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

	Mar: US and Britain pledge non-military aid to rebels in Syria
	Apr: Britain and France inform the UN that Syria has used chemical weapons against rebels
	Aug: UN chemical weapons inspectors arrive in Damascus
	Sep: Russia proposes that Syria give up chemical weapons to international control; UN finds convincing evidence of chemical attack and adopts resolution 2118; Rebel groups form alliance to create an Islamic state separate from the western-backed coalition
	Oct: Assad allows international inspectors to destroy chemical weapons stockpile on basis of a US-Russia agreement
	Dec: US and Britain suspend "non-lethal" support for rebels in northern Syria
2014	Jan: ISIS takes control of Raqqa, Syria, which becomes its de-facto capital; UN peace talks between Syrian government and Syrian National Coalition in Geneva fail because of refusal to discuss a transitional government
	Feb: UN Security Council unanimously adopts UNSC Resolution 2139 calling on the Syrian regime and the rebels to cease attacks on civilians and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid
	Jun: ISIS takes control of Mosul, Iraq
	Sep: The U.S., Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Jordan begin airstrikes on ISIS in Syria
2015	May: ISIS controls half of Syria's territory & all Iraq border crossing points
	Jun: Kurdish fighters take back key town of Tal Abyad, Syria
	Oct: Iraqi forces regain Iraq's largest oil refinery from ISIS
2016	Operation to retake Mosul begins. Iraqi forces retake east side in December and, in February, begin operation to retake west side
2017	Jun: U.S.-backed coalition announces offensive to retake Raqqa. Iraq reclaims mosque in Mosul, and the Iraqi Prime Minister claims that the caliphate has fallen
	Jul: Iraqi PM declares that Mosul is fully liberated

		Oct: ISIS is driven from Raqqa, its de-facto capital in Syria
	2018	Apr: 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

Case Study: Iraq

In the case of Iraq and indeed for Syria, the State of Palestine and even Israel, it is important to analyse how far interventionist policies by Western countries have culminated in gains and losses; in the areas of political and economic stability, national security, and protecting fundamental human rights. A US-led coalition, which has run a military campaign against Islamic State's self-proclaimed caliphate in Iraq and Syria recently acknowledged the deaths of 1,059 civilians from its aerial bombings, but a UK-based monitoring group has put the death toll as high as 9,947 civilians.[21] While the government has been successful in ending IS territorial control in Iraq, however, pockets of resistance and sleeper cells continue to operate, mostly from remote and unwieldy terrain, making it difficult for military forces to eradicate them.[22] The biggest challenge for Iraq now is upholding security and creating stability in the areas now recaptured from IS.

ISIS' ranks are dwindling, but they remain a force to be reckoned with. According to recent US intelligence estimates, the group has between 15,000 and 20,000 fighters left in Iraq and Syria. Even more troubling is the growth of ISIS-affiliated groups around the world. In West Africa, Boko Haram, featuring nearly 10,000 fighters as of 2015 estimates, has pledged allegiance to ISIS and been absorbed into the 'caliphate' as the West African Province. In Libya, the Islamic Youth Sharia Council joined ISIS as yet another alleged province, featuring over 5,000 soldiers and controlling former Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte. Attacks in Yemen have dropped off since their peak in 2015, but ISIS' affiliates in Egypt and Turkey continue to wreak havoc.

There have been stark humanitarian ramifications as well. Since the start of the Syrian civil war, nearly 4.7 million refugees have spilled across neighboring borders to escape the violence. Among those refugees, 2.6 million had fled to Turkey, 1 million to Lebanon, and over 630,000 to Jordan. 6.6 million have been displaced internally, amounting to over 11 million total fleeing their homes. That accounts for over half of the country's pre-war population. 250,000 people have been killed in the conflict, with half of that number believed to be civilians. In western Iraq, there has been a shortage of fuel, food, and medicine for months; according to the UN, 10 million Iraqis, one-third of nation's population, are in need of humanitarian aid. 3.4 million residents have been displaced as a result of the conflict, with 2.6 million suspected to have fled the country as a result.

Pressing concerns for internal conflict in Iraq at present seem to be prevailing military tensions, and the current political deadlock between the central government in

Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which are likely to continue to strain the security situation within the Kirkuk governorate if opposing parties do not come to an agreement. The political uncertainty over the governance of Kirkuk might trigger new bouts of ethnic tensions amongst segments of the population, mainly between Kurds and Turkmens. The volatile

situation in Hawija following the fall of IS's last territorial bastion in Iraq also raises concerns about attacks from IS sleeper cells and other pockets of resistance, each looking to take advantage of prevailing local grievances and shifting military alliances to further their own objectives of destabilising the security situation.

Therefore, frameworks for strengthening security in Iraq post-US withdrawal should focus on the relationship between the KRG and the government of Iraq; including negotiations on settling common disputes, bilateral table talks on the future of governance, confidence-building measures and improving relations with bordering countries. A deliberate pace of US withdrawal from contested areas should also be discussed in the committee, as well as the extent of US involvement in a military advisory capacity post withdrawal.[23]

Case Study: Syria

The bloody history of the Syrian Civil War on its own carries a heavy weight, but the involvement of major powers like Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the U.S., a complex knot of local and sectarian disputes among armed opposition groups, ISIS, the al-Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, and government forces endangers the nation's future. It remains one of the most infamous conflicts in the current geopolitical landscape, in terms of its far-reaching effects. The displacement of refugees both inside and outside Syria account for over 11 million civilians, prompting the UNHCR High Commissioner, Fillipo Grandi, to call Syria "the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time, a continuing cause of suffering for millions which should be garnering a groundswell of support around the world."[24]

The extent of the atrocities committed have been oft-condemned by the United Nations, and the past seven years of the conflict have seen some truly abhorrent instances of blatant human rights abuse at the hands of the Syrian government, the rebels and international players. The Houla massacre, in which 108 civilians died during a Syrian-government backed crackdown, was a significant flashpoint in the conflict for several reasons: first, it was considered by many to be the single worst attack against civilians in the uprising until that point; second, it elicited the first sharply-worded Security Council condemnation, of the "strongest possible terms," in a non-binding statement; third, it underscored the deep shortcomings of a six-week-old UN ceasefire plan implemented to bring an end to the bloodshed in Syria; and fourth, a UN statement issued on behalf of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan declared that the massacre was "a flagrant violation of international law and of the commitments of the Syrian government to cease the use of heavy weapons in population centers and violence in all its forms."[25]

In August 29th of this year, as the Syrian government prepared to launch an offensive against militants in the province of Idlib, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned that there could be a 'humanitarian catastrophe' if a full-scale military operation were to be launched there, while almost 2 million in Idlib were in need of humanitarian assistance.[26] The UN special envoy to the Syrian conflict, Staffan de Mistura, called for humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians before an attack on the estimated ten thousand militants in Idlib.[27] This is the most recent example of how military operations in Syria are planned and launched with minimum inventory of threat to civilian life, and are often orchestrated at a moments notice to beat out foreign parties, such as Iran, Turkey and the United States.

Past UN action on Syria has yielded poor results. On 25 March 2012, Kofi Annan, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and League of Arab States to Syria, proposed a six-point plan that was accepted by Syria and endorsed by this Security Council. The six points were as follows:

1. "Commit to work with the Envoy in an inclusive Syrian-led political process to address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people, and, to this end, commit to appoint an empowered interlocutor when invited to do so by the Envoy;
2. Commit to stop the fighting and achieve urgently an effective United Nations supervised cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties to protect civilians and stabilize the country. To this end, the Syrian Government should immediately cease troop movements towards, and end the use of heavy weapons in, population centres, and begin pullback of military concentrations in and around population centres. As these actions are being taken on the ground, the Syrian Government should work with the Envoy to bring about a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties with an effective United Nations supervision mechanism. Similar commitments would be sought by the Envoy from the opposition and all relevant elements to stop the fighting and work with him to bring about a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties with an effective United Nations supervision mechanism;
3. Ensure timely provision of humanitarian assistance to all areas affected by the fighting,and to this end, as immediate steps, to accept and implement a daily two-hour humanitarian pause and to coordinate exact time and modalities of the daily pause through an efficient mechanism, including at local level;
4. Intensify the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons, including especially vulnerable categories of persons, and persons involved in peaceful political activities, provide without delay through appropriate channels a list of all places in which such persons are being detained, immediately begin organizing access to such locations and through appropriate channels respond promptly to all written requests for information, access or release regarding such persons;
5. Ensure freedom of movement throughout the country for journalists and a non-discriminatory visa policy for them;
6. Respect freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully as legally guaranteed."[28]

Many Syrians embroiled in the violence criticized the plan for not being stringent enough and thus for allowing Syrian security forces more time to carry out its campaign of executions. On 19 August 2012, the UNSMIS mandate finally came to an end. It is now up to this executive body to decide whether the Syrian civil war is beyond diplomatic redress and warrants direct military intervention or whether Security Council consensus regarding the conflict can still be achieved—and expeditiously so.

Some proposed solutions to the conflict include the possibility of armed external intervention, a UN embargo and referral of President Bashar al-Assad to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The issues to consider with armed intervention is by drawing a comparison to the 2011 military intervention in Libya; first, the population of Syria is three times as large as Libya's and concentrated military intervention without planned evacuation will have devastating effects on civilian life, second, the opposition in Syria is deeply fragmented and disorganized and a hypothetical multi-state coalition effort in Syria could not rely on allying with a unified and coordinated Syrian opposition force to dislodge Assad from power, and third, armed intervention does not have unanimous regional support in Syria. UN embargo would immediately freeze all funds, assets, and economic resources belonging to Assad and his regime on UN member states' territories and halt member states' direct or indirect supply or transfer of arms to Syria, but such a course of action will likely invoke strong dissent from Russia. Referring President Assad and the situation in Syria to the ICC might help expedite the process of justice, but the Security Council would have to prevent a possible Russian or Chinese veto on this course of action.

Case Study: Israel-Palestine conflict

What makes the question of Palestine one of the most difficult and plaguing issues for the community of international diplomats is the violence that has had a strong foot-hold throughout the region from the birth of the conflict. The combative wings of various political organizations in both Israel and Palestine both contribute to the prolonged
hostility in the region and also at times become readily labeled as terrorist organizations. While there is not universal or United Nations backed specific definition of what constitutes a terrorist organization, it is widely accepted that acts of terrorism are akin to the deliberate killing of civilians and non-militant persons. Many of the suicide bombers and independent hostiles are young men and women, who so believe in the cause of their homeland that they are willing to kill other civilians like themselves, laying down their own lives in the process, in order to make a statement or to fight for what they believe. They may not view their actions as acts of terror, but heroic patriotism. In order for a tenable peace to be established throughout the region, it is necessary for both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to openly and repeatedly denounce these movements and to take steps to combat terrorists, both foreign and of their own nation. Targeted killings of suspected terrorists, such as those that Israel has reportedly carried out, also must be stopped.

It must be remembered that the political disputes and the question of international security are not the only crises of the region; the economic and humanitarian plight must also be considered. Currently, exports from Gaza are not permitted by Israeli authorities and the people of Gaza are completely dependent on international humanitarian assistance for survival. Decades of bombings and air raids have destroyed much of the arable land, straining one of the main forms of livelihood. Furthermore, there are 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons reported in the Gaza Strip and 722,000 in the West Bank.

It is crucial to realize why the peace processes have so often broken down. The first, and primary, reason is because of border disputes between Israel and Palestine as well as de- mands from each nation for the other to completely demilitarize. Because there is an underlying lack of trust between the two, it is exceedingly difficult to agree to a compromise, as each does not fully believe that the other with uphold its side of the resolution. Furthermore, the issue of refugees also has become an important failing point of several peace agreements; the fact that so many Palestinians have been displaced by the conflict and that both Israel and Palestine have mixed Israeli-Palestinian populations makes drawing boundaries and ensuring the stabilization of society difficult.

Past UN actions have yielded significant results in the recognition of the plight of the Palestinian people. In 1974, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 3236 (XXIX). This resolution was invaluable to the mission of the Palestinian people, as it reemphasized their nonnegotiable right to self-determination and national sovereignty in an independent state, and reasserted the right of the Palestinian people to "return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted." Furthermore, this resolution called for the Security Council to negotiate and cooperate with the Palestinian Liberation Organization; while the state of Palestine was not officially recognized, this demand legitimized the political representation of the Palestinian people. In 1991, world leaders met in Madrid to try to compose a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Peace Conference on the Middle East. While the conference took place outside of the jurisdiction of the United Nations, it was fully backed by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who told the Security Council that he fully recognized the conference as it was in line with the principles of Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). By mid- 1993, however, little progress had been made and the peace talks seemed to come to a standstill. The 1950 Uniting for Peace Resolution, or General Assembly Resolution 377 (V), expanded the

mandate of the General Assembly by granting it the power to consider any matter that is deemed a threat to international security in the event that the Security
Council cannot effectively address it due to a lack of unanimity of its members. If such is the case, the General Assembly must convene within 24 hours, in what has come to be known as an Emergency Special Session (ESS) and may reconvene as it sees fit. The 10th Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was first convened in April 1997 in order to address the deteriorating situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and reconvened in 2009, when it passed a resolution that reaffirmed the demands of Security Council Resolution 1860 and called for "the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, and...for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout the Gaza Strip of humanitarian assistance, including food, fuel and medical treatment."

One of the most blatant issues that must be addressed is that of the territorial disputes that have fueled the Israel-Palestinian conflict for decades. Some of the major attempts at peace accords have collapsed because they have failed to specify how the territory of the original Palestinian mandate will be controlled or how the government of the territories will function. In this regard, it is crucial to set a specific plan for how both Israel and Palestine will coexist as independent states, how the territory will be divided between the two, and the process by which the region will transition into this two- state solution. An example of such as solution is that of establishing the two states based upon the pre-1967 borders. This solution will be difficult to endorse, as B. Netanyahu is adamant that such a settlement will be a threat to Israeli security and that it would not be able to properly secure its borders. Any resolution that the United Nations considers must also outline the means by which a complete cessation of hostilities can be achieved in the region, whether by international actors of individual state enforcement. In order to address the economic crisis and issue of refugees, a solution to consider could include heightened security for centers of humanitarian aid or headquarters of non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, it could be worthwhile for a resolution to set specific time frames for reconstruction in the Palestinian territories.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

- How can the United Nations Security Council work to settle the border disputes between Israel and Palestine?
- What is the status of Palestine in the larger international community and the United Nations?
- How can a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Palestine be enforced and maintained? Should an independent state of Palestine be demilitarized?
- Is either Fatah or Hamas a more legitimate wing of the Palestinian government? How does the fact that the Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas while the West Bank is controlled by Fatah and the Palestinian Authority affect the formation of an independent state of Palestine? How should the United Nations go about recognizing either, or both, of these parties? How does this two-party situation affect the international standing of Palestine and the peace process?
- What should be the status of Jerusalem? Should it be divided between Israel and Palestine? Should it be an international entity, not a part of any state?
- Should a peace agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbor states be incorporated into the resolution? Is this necessary to maintain security in the region?
- What can be done to alleviate the economic crisis in Gaza and the West Bank?
- Should either Israel or Palestine be subject to punitive action because of the destruction and violence it has afflicted on the civilian population?

- What can be done to relieve the refugee and humanitarian crises of these regions? What measures can be implemented to protect the well-being of the civilian populace going forward?
- What is the mandate of the United Nations in terms of intervening in an intrastate conflict? Does national sovereignty or humanitarian protection take precedence?
- What should be the role of UN Peacekeepers in intrastate conflicts? The role of IGOs and NGOs? Regional bodies?
- Should independent states be allowed to intervene unilaterally on one side of the conflict? Should they be able to place embargoes or other punitive measures against one party?
- What specific measures can the United Nations take to help nations recover from civil wars and rebuild society?
- What is the role of the United Nations in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding?
- What humanitarian action can be taken before, during, and after and civil war to best aid innocent civilians?
- Is a political solution to the Syrian crisis still possible, and does it present the optimal course of action from this Security Council? if so, what will form the basis of a new political process in Syria? What recommendations will the Council make regarding transitional governing bodies and elections for both Syria and Iraq?
- How can the Security Council clearly and confidently delineate the central perpetrators in the ongoing violence?
- Should Bashar al-Assad be recommended to the international Criminal Court?
- Is armed intervention a feasible and effective approach in Syria?
- How does the Security Council plan to coordinate with other united Nations agencies to address the issue is Syria, and what other resources does it intend to employ?
- How will the Security Council continue to engage foreign ministries of Syria's neighboring countries, which have become embroiled in the violence?
- How should the Security Council define 'terrorism'?
- What precedence should be given to territorial claims of the Kurdish in Iraq?

Bloc positions

In the case of the conflict in Syria, the committee can find itself divided between the following; the supporters of the Assad regime, prominent of which are Iran, Russia, and China, Western countries and NATO members who are in favour of a new Syrian regime, and nations bordering Syria, such as Turkey, who have ongoing border disputes with it's regime.

In the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the prominent blocs will be those headed by the allies of Israel, including the US which has openly acted in favour of Israel but has also condemned some of its actions, and allies of the Palestinian Authority, including countries of the EU.

In the case of Iraq, prominent bloc positions would be of those countries that have differing views on how national security should be strengthened and the Iraqi military should be trained, as well as the extent of representation of minorities in the developing political system, and the intervention of foreign stakeholders vs. the UN.

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