



LXIV
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Security Council

Berkeley Model United Nations



Hello, delegates! Welcome to the 64th session of the Berkeley Model United Nations Security Council Committee! My name is Trevor Dowds and I will be your head chair this year. I am so incredibly excited to debate and discuss the issues the Security Council is tackling, and hear the innovative solutions that you each come up with. The Security Council is a dynamic committee with the responsibility of maintaining “international peace and security”. Therefore many of the decisions the Security Council makes are critical to the well being and livelihood of countless people around the globe. It is your job as delegates to come to an agreement on some of the most pressing topics that exist in the world today, and deliver actionable and feasible solutions. It is my dais and I’s hope that you will learn to look at these topics through the lens of countries whose policies may not align with yours and look for ways to find a common ground to build great solutions from.

As for my dais, I would like to take some time to introduce them. I myself am a third year Electrical Engineering and Computer Science major here at Cal. I’ve been involved in MUN for seven years now, and the reason I continue to chair is because the knowledge that you acquire and skills that you gain from MUN can be incredibly impactful. MUN can certainly help you grow as an individual, and as a chair I genuinely enjoy helping delegates learn and sharpen themselves from this experience. As for my interests outside of Model UN, I am also involved in a consulting club on campus called Berkeley Consulting that works with fortune 500 companies, startups and nonprofits to help solve their problems by delivering recommendations. In addition I also do web development on BMUN’s registration web app, Huxley. In my free time, I love to play soccer, surf, ski and play guitar. If you have any questions about our committee, Berkeley or the College of Engineering, please feel free to reach out to me at tdowds@bmun.org!

Furthermore I am joined by Liam Campbell, who is a sophomore studying Industrial Engineering and Operations Research here at Cal and is from the great city of Visalia, CA. This is his first year being involved in BMUN, and he is very much excited to be working with you all. Outside of BMUN, Liam is a part of the Chi Phi fraternity and plays on a few intramural soccer teams. In his free time he loves going to the many classical music performances that the Bay Area has to offer. He also enjoys camping, skiing, golfing, and watching every Star Wars film way too many times. If you have any questions about Cal feel free to reach Liam at wcampbell@bmun.org.

Finally, we have Kendra Singh, the third member of our dais. Kendra is a freshman Economics major and Energy and Resources minor who has been involved in MUN throughout her high school career. Model UN has exposed her to what she is studying now, and she hopes it can do the same for you. Outside of MUN she works for Cal Performances and is involved with service projects with her sorority. In her free time she loves to go to concerts, do yoga, and dance. If you have any questions about Berkeley, her interests, or the College of Letters and Science, feel free to reach out to her at ksingh@bmun.org.

Trevor Dowds



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Topic Introduction

The Syrian Civil War began as an uprising that sparked out of the successful regime change in Tunisia that occurred over December of 2010. Following this change and the wake of several other governmental protests in Northern Africa and the Middle East, the people of Syria began demanding democratic reforms in January of 2011. By March of 2011, the government responded with force to these protests in the city of Daraa costing the lives of at least five people ("Syria: Government Crackdown Leads to Protester Deaths"). The Syrian government's force in suppressing these protests instigated more protests to denounce Syria's President, Bashar al-Assad, for his authoritarian tactics and for Assad to step down. As more protests popped up, the government became more and more violent in how it handled the demands of the Syrian people. This cycle inevitably propelled Syria into a state of civil war by July of 2012, and incited sectarian divisions within Syria, mainly between the Alawite minority and the Sunni majority, giving the conflict a sectarian nature.

The emergence of civil war in Syria from the initial uprising in 2011, has devastated both the people of Syria and countries in the surrounding region. By the summer of 2013, human rights observer reported the use of chemical weapons being used on civilians, although no responsibility was ever claimed ("Syria: The Story of the Conflict"). In addition, the arrival of Islamists such as the Islamic State has weakened rebel forces within Syria who, if not defeated by Assad and his regime, will be defeated by Islamists unless they join their forces. In a speech given by the president of the UN Security Council in March of 2015, the Syrian Civil War is described as the "largest humanitarian emergency crisis in the world today" due to the nearly four million refugees that have fled Syria and the cost of over 200,000 lives to this conflict (Statement by the President of the Security Council).

On a regional level, Syria has been a battleground for a proxy war between Shia powers and their allies (Iran, Russia) and Sunni powers and their allies (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, US). Both of these sides wish to see a power friendly to their interests at the head of the Syrian state and have used local forces to ensure their goals are realized. For Iran and Russia, Islamists such as Hezbollah and the Islamic State have played a role in weakening rebel forces. However it also has given these powers the opportunity to turn around and join the fight to stop forces such as IS



in order to gain credibility in the international community. For the US, in supporting its ally Israel and Israel's less than friendly relationship with Iran, Sunni nations traditionally enemies with Israel have in some cases found themselves working with Israel towards a common goal in Syria and against Iran.

Overall the Syrian Civil War is a multi-faceted conflict with humanitarian, diplomatic, economic, political and militaristic dimensions. However at the center of all these aspects are the violent demands by the people of Syria for democratic change, and Assad and his regime's violent responses to these demands. Therefore in order to have a productive dialogue on this topic and to develop effective solutions we must fully understand the nature of these demands. Furthermore, in order to understand the nature of these demands, we must look at their historical significance and the story that has led to this point in the conflict.



Background

Our story begins following the conclusion of World War I. Prior to the arrival of European powers in the 19th century, different sects that lived in the Middle East lived separately from each other but lived under the rule of the Ottoman Empire (Osman). When World War I broke out, the Allied Powers roused these sects to fight the Ottoman Empire in order to defeat the Central Powers under the promise of “the complete and definitive liberation of peoples so long oppressed by the Turks” (Mazower, 168). However the British and French had other plans, and in 1916 a secret agreement known as the Sykes-Picot agreement was concluded that divided the former Ottoman empire into what is now modern day Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon. Under this agreement France would maintain control over Syria and Lebanon while the British held influence over Iraq, Jordan and Palestine (Osman).

The League of Nations legitimized the influence given to France by the Sykes-Picot agreement when it made Syria a French mandate on September 29, 1923. From 1923 to 1946, France exercised control over Syria, and took any necessary means to subdue challenges to their influence. During that time, the largest challenge to their influence was the Arab nationalism that France and Britain had roused to defeat the Ottoman Empire during World War I. But now that that same nationalism was challenging their authority, the French deliberately incited sectarian divisions within Syria to suppress the Arab nationalism France itself originally created (Fildis, 148). To do this, the French empowered minorities such as the Alawites and the Druze by giving them their own autonomous states in addition to military power that was used to suppress any nationalistic movements conducted by the Sunni majority. These policies of the French mandate prevented very early on the development of any cohesive Syrian identity because of the sectarian divisions that were perpetuated by the French.

When the French left Syria after World War II in 1946, the Sunni elite of the time became the head of the government. As a result, many of the rights and privileges minorities like the Alawites enjoyed under French authority were taken away as they were reconciled back to Syrian citizenship (149). In addition, without French influence Arab nationalism began to grow. This Arab nationalism was primarily Sunni based, and to Shia minorities like the Alawites was not an inclusive movement. This drove many of the Alawites of the time to join the Ba’ath party



because it was an ideology that promised “minority communities equality on the basis of being an Arab and not a Sunni” (151).

From 1946 to 1971, coup after coup drastically shaped Syrian leadership. Sunni leadership in Syria essentially cannibalized itself during this time due to Sunni leaders eliminating each other for power. As they eliminated each other, minorities began to rise in the ranks to fulfill their positions until in 1963 when the Ba’ath party overthrew the Sunni leadership in a bloody coup that subsequently subordinated the Sunni majority of Syria and engendered distrust towards the Ba’ath party and the Alawites (152). This coup grew out of and further contributed to the sectarian divisions originally incited by the French, and began a bitter resentment towards the Alawite leadership.

This resentment continued to grow throughout the authoritarian rule of Hafez al-Assad. Hafez al-Assad came to power in 1971 after staging a bloodless coup within the Ba’ath party and remained president of Syria until his death in 2000. During that time he followed what can be viewed as a Soviet style of governing as the Soviet Union allied with him due to the socialist ideologies the Ba’ath party picked up in 1953 ("Profile: Syria's Ruling Baath Party - BBC News"). Assad ran a suspicious, single party police state that was stable, but was also known to spy on its own people in order to find and sometimes kill critics of the government under the 1963 emergency law ("Syria’s Emergency Law Lifted After 48 Years"). Resentment towards Assad’s authoritarian rule took its fullest form in 1982 in the wake of protests that had spawned from the 1979 Iranian revolution. In the city of Hama, Muslim extremists began killing Ba’ath party officials and called for a nationwide insurrection. The Syrian military responded violently and “leveled half the city” of Hama killing at least 10,000 residents (MacFarquhar). For Assad, he claimed such an act was necessary to end years of Muslim Brotherhood terrorism, however the lives lost due to Assad’s authoritarian tactics could never be forgiven by the Syrian people (MacFarquhar).

When Hafez al-Assad passed away in 2000, his son Bashar al-Assad stepped in as president and was seen by many to be a potential positive change for Syria. In his first year as president he launch a variety of reforms including releasing hundreds of political prisoners, allowing an independent newspaper, and easing restrictions on free speech and assembly (“Bashar al-Assad”). This ‘Damascus Spring’ as it became known ended quickly though. Many of his critics began calling Bashar al-Assad out for not keeping his promises. His failure was



largely due to the shambled economy he inherited from his father, and also the encouragement he received from his family to suppress the dissent that was mounting against him ("Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: Facing down Rebellion - BBC News."). By 2001, many freedoms were once again being refused and emergency law was quickly being reinforced.

When the Arab Spring occurred in 2011, to many Syrians it offered the opportunity to demand the civil liberties that had been refused to them for almost the last 90 years. For many it was an opportunity that "happens once every 200 years" due to the entirety of the Syrian people having the same demands for freedom and human rights (Alvarez-Ossorio). As protests began to spread, the crackdowns by the government became more violent, and as the crackdowns became more violent the protests spread quicker.

The first semblance of opposition to the government came in July of 2011 when seven defecting officers from the Syrian Army made a public announcement of their desertion. These officers deserted in order to protect the Syrian people from Assad's "armored killing machine" (Landis). They called on all Syrian Army members to defect and join what they called the Free Syrian Army. In order to gain legitimacy and support from the international community, the FSA also needed a political arm, and soon the Syrian National Council was formed in October of 2011. The SNC envisioned Syria to be a "democratic, pluralistic and civil state", and by April of 2012 was gaining international recognition as the umbrella organization for all Syrian rebel groups ("The Syrian National Council."). However by the end of summer 2012, the opposition forces were facing serious criticism from the international community for their inability to effectively unite against Assad. As a result the Syrian National Coalition was formed in November of 2012 to be more diverse and inclusive than the Syrian National Council ("The Syrian National Council.").

A major turning point in the war came in the summer of 2013 when it was reported that chemical weapons had been used. In August of 2013, hundreds of people were killed in the suburbs of Damascus when sarin nerve gas was released ("Syria: The Story of the Conflict"). The use of chemical weapons has had a drastic affect on the trajectory of the war. For the rebel forces, the Syrian National Coalition became increasingly irrelevant after the US refused to conduct airstrikes in Syria in response to the these chemical weapon attacks ("Their Own Men"). The rebel forces felt that the Coalition had failed to work with the international community to provide them more support. This opened up the door for Islamists and extremists to recruit from



moderate rebel groups by offering them better support and benefits than what the Free Syrian Army was offering. Many of these extremist groups offer monthly salaries and food installment to their fighters, while the FSA didn't have the resources to provide food stipends (Banco). However for moderate rebels that decide not to join the forces of extremist militants, these militants are often better armed and will ruthlessly kill those who don't join them.

Since Islamists emerged in Syria following the wake of chemical weapon attacks in August of 2013, the Syrian Civil War has taken on a whole new dimension. Due to the Islamists success in either recruiting or killing moderate rebels, much of the territory that rebels have gained before the summer of 2013 has subsequently been lost. For example in September of 2012, the rebels had captured border crossings on the Turkish border in the Raqqa province in Syria ("Syrian Rebels Seize Control of Border Crossing on Frontier with Turkey"). By August of 2014, the Islamic State had captured the entire Raqqa province, and has since taken large swaths of land in the north of Syria ("Syria Profile - Timeline - BBC News"). This currently leaves Syria in an incredibly violent spot more than four years since protests initially broke out with moderate rebel groups, extremist militants and the Syrian Army each fighting each other.

With an increase in violence due to the arrival and spread of Islamists, proxy powers have become more involved in protecting their interests in Syria. In September of 2014 the US began conducting airstrikes within Syria with the help of their Western allies. The objective of these air strikes have been to "degrade and ultimately destroy" the Islamic State ("Obama Outlines Plan to Target IS Fighters."). However Russia and Assad's allies have questioned the legitimacy of these air strikes given that the Syrian government never authorized the US to conduct these strikes, sighting it as a violation of Syria's sovereignty. The continuation of the US and its allies' airstrikes has further prompted Russia to begin coordinating airstrikes in Syria in September of 2015. Russian officials have indicated that their forces are supporting the Syrian military "in its legitimate fight with terrorist groups", however the US has expressed its own concerns over Russia targeting non-IS rebel controlled areas (McDonnell). Regardless of the effectiveness of these air strikes in eliminating the violence created by the Islamic State, ultimately the military involvement of the US and Russia has cost the lives of countless innocent civilians. In addition it has further hardened the non-alignment of their interests in Syria, closing the space for any meaningful dialogue on resolving the conflict.



UN Background

The scale of violence within Syria has garnered significant responses from almost all members of the international community. However as a collective whole, the UN has struggled to alleviate much of the turmoil that affects the Syrian people and the surrounding region. Within the Security Council, the veto powers of Russia and China have severely limited any significant effect the UN can have in Syria. Since the conflict began in March of 2011, Russia and China have wielded their veto power four times blocking any response to the mass atrocities committed by both sides of the conflict (Adams). The Security Council's inability to act due to the veto has led many UN member nations to call into question the system of the veto especially in a situation where the UN has a responsibility to protect populations facing mass atrocities.

Much of what the UN has done in Syria has either been rhetoric or has failed to yield any positive results. In 2012, Kofi Annan put together a six-point peace plan that was passed with Security Council Resolution 2042. This plan determined that the only viable solution to the Syrian Civil War was a political one that led to the development of an inclusive government that met the needs of all the Syrian people (United Nations, Security Council). However in order to successfully implement a political solution, both parties of the conflict need to abide to a ceasefire in order to engage in a discussion. This is why a month later the Security Council passed Resolution 2043 which called for the cessation of violence in Syria and established the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) to bring about a sustained cessation of violence and work with the opposition and the regime to put into place the six-point plan (Security Council Resolution 2043). On April 21, 2012, the UNSMIS was established by Resolution 2043, but by August of 2012, the Security Council allowed the mission's mandate to expire due to the failure of the mission to establish a ceasefire and to implement the six-point peace plan ("UNSMIS Background - United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria"). The UNSMIS failed to establish a ceasefire mostly due to the unwillingness of the regime and the opposition to sit at the same table together. It is at the point of convincing both sides to put their weapons down that the UN has failed to bring peace and security to Syria.

Where the UN Security Council has agreed with respect to the Syrian Civil War is the use of chemical weapons. When the first chemical weapon attack took place on August 21, 2013 in



Damascus, the entirety of the international community was appalled including Syria's allies Russia and Iran. In response the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2118 in September of 2013 which "endorsed the expeditious destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme" by June of 2014 ("Security Council Requires Scheduled Destruction of Syria's Chemical Weapons"). The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) ensured the implementation of Resolution 2118 and helped Syria to remove its entire chemical weapons arsenal by June 2014, and by September of 2014 the OPCW had declared its mandate complete ("OPCW-UN Joint Mission Draws to a Close"). However, despite this enormous removal, allegations are still circulating about chemical weapon attacks within Syria along with chemical weapon development in facilities the regime failed to declare to exist to the OPCW (Loveluck).

Throughout the course of the conflict, the UN has also failed to bring Assad's regime and the opposition together to engage in any kind of dialogue for peace. The Security Council's initial attempt was through the Annan Plan in 2012. However when the ceasefire broke down due to violations by both parties, any hope for a negotiation between the opposition forces and regime was shattered. Following the passage of the Resolution 2118 to remove Syria's entire chemical weapon stockpile, the momentary sense of unity in the Security Council opened up a space where it felt a discussion between relevant parties on the conflict could be impactful. This led to what has been known as the "Geneva II" talks in January of 2014. However, throughout these talks there was "no progress on a single substantive issue...while the opposition and government delegations traded insults beside Lake Geneva" (Adams). The talks served no benefit except as a temporary distraction from the war while an estimated 1900 Syrians died (Adams). The failure of the Geneva II talks furthered showed the unwillingness of the opposition forces, the regime, and relevant parties like the US and Russia to work together to help the Syrian people.

The United Nations Security Council has identified that an "inclusive and Syrian-led political process" is the only sustainable solution for the crisis in Syria (Statement by the President of the Security Council). However this solution cannot be realized until the violence in Syria has ceased enough for the UN and all relevant parties to cooperate together. It is bringing to a pause the violence within Syria where the UN has failed. As we have seen, the UN has failed at this point due to the veto powers of Russia and China, and also due to the opposition and



regime forces being unwilling to abide by any ceasefire that can open up space for an effective dialogue. In addition with the arrival of Islamists such as IS on the scene, putting an end to the violence within Syria seems even more unreachable now than any time since the conflict started. This has left the Security Council in a difficult position moving forward.



Case Studies

1. The Economic Considerations of the Syrian Crisis

Syria faces global economic challenges that influence government leadership and decision-making that the United Nations must recognize in order to properly evaluate the situation. The examination of how economic factors drive political change expands our understanding of the underlying social issues that Syria faces.

Up until the end of the twentieth century, Syria had historically operated under a socialist economic structure. The majority of industry was controlled by the state and the nation did little to integrate itself into the growing world economy. Over time, Syria experienced a gradual increase in GDP, but also increasing inflation and stagnant wages. With a quickly growing population and consequent need for rapid economic growth, Syria implemented a shift towards privatization and participation in the world economy under Bashar Al-Assad at the beginning of the twenty first century.

Starting in the mid 2000s, Syria's reform of its economic policy led to significant changes within the nation's economy (US State Dept.). Assad's decriminalization of private banking in 2004 led to the creation of four different banks, allowing citizens to have greater access to loans and competitive interest rates. Additionally, an easing of government oversight and restrictions prompted a massive surge in small business across Syria. As a result, citizens were able to experience greater employment and access to a wider variety of cheap goods and services.

However, the Syrian government still kept a large portion of its bureaucratic network in place, which led to the manipulation and eventual corruption of many corners of private industry. For example, the Central Bank reports that, today, private Syrian businesses receive only 7% of lending from Syria's banking sector (Marshall). Also, the emergence of a more economically and politically independent middle class prompted the political regime to reenact restrictions in order to retain power. Recent laws have increased Syria's minimum paid-in-capital requirement to 33%, which has greatly limited the ability of new businesses to establish themselves. The



unemployment rate of working-age Syrians is now over 15%, and is much higher for younger workers (Trading Economics).

The Syrian government also continued to maintain control over its oil and agricultural industries, which account for 40% of the nation's GDP. The state's exploitation of oil reserves has led to the expectation that Syria will be a net importer of petroleum by 2020 (World Bank). And the mismanagement of the nation's agricultural infrastructure in a time of severe drought has greatly depleted water supplies, limiting the average Syrian citizen to use only 300 cubic meters of water per year. On top of this, the Assad regime's actions in the Syrian Civil War have led to the implementation of severe economic sanctions from the Arab League and most of the West, but not Russia and China. These sanctions have made Syria's goal to integrate itself into the world economy extremely difficult, forcing it to do without many raw materials and specialized goods that it previously had access to.

Pressured by a rapidly growing population, Assad's regime has attempted to expand Syria's economy through a shift toward privatization and greater participation in the world economy. At the same time it has also maintained and utilized an expansive web bureaucratic network in order to retain power. What has resulted is semi-successful transformation of the Syrian economy that has been stifled by heavy government involvement and the outbreak of civil war.

2. The Healthcare Considerations of the Syrian Crisis

The Syrian crisis is unique in that the healthcare system has been used as a tool for war. Currently, government policy mandates that all health professionals withhold medical care to any persons related to the opposition, no matter how critical their condition may be (Footer, pp.9). Since the aid of opposition is considered a criminal offense, hundreds of doctors and nurses have been arrested and killed. This plays a large role in international involvement as it affects how aid can be delivered to victims of the Syrian Civil War. It also raises the question of how to address entities that are violating international law in regards to healthcare.

Recently the government has utilized a strategy of targeting medical facilities to prevent injured civilians from receiving any type of care. According to reports from the Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), between March 2011 and December 2014, there have been 224 attacks of



175 separate facilities. In this same time period, there have been at least 30 instances of barrel bomb use on medical facilities and a total of 585 medical personnel who have died at the hands of the government. (“Syria: Attacks on Doctors, Patients, and Hospitals”)

This strategy has spurred the creation of an underground medical system. This system uses sandbags to make makeshift emergency rooms, with little to no sanitation or supplies available. Because the locations of makeshift attacks are unknown, attacks on these underground facilities are not always recorded, and so the recorded number of attacks tend to be lower than reality. These medical facilities hardly have running water, and electricity, blood fusions, and anesthetics are also extremely scarce resources. For example, in Aleppo there was no running water for all of the first half of 2014 and 75% of medical personnel were forced to leave (Kaplan, 2015). Therefore the existing medical infrastructure within Syria is not conducive for international aid to effectively assist persons in medical need.

Because of the poor conditions of Syria’s medical infrastructure, health conditions have begun to deteriorate in Syria as well. Vaccine administration has dropped 90%, making diseases that were once uncommon rampant (Kaplan). In the last year, there have been 4,200 cases of measles, while in 2010 and 2011 there were no cases at all (Kaplan). Non-communicable diseases, such as asthma and diabetes, have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths because of the lack of doctors and medication to treat them (Kaplan). The World health Organization estimates the rate of injury to be approximately 25,000 people per month (Kaplan). Nearly 50-75 trauma cases are seen by one facility a day, and one surgeon has reported that if a procedure takes more than 2 hours, they let the patient die because of massive overload of patients (Footer, pp. 20).

The strategy the government is employing is a direct violation of the Geneva conventions. The specific rule that is being violated in this case is medical neutrality. This mandates “the protection of medical personnel, patients, facilities, and transport from attack or interference”, “unhindered access to medical care and treatment,” “the humane treatment of all civilians,” and finally “nondiscriminatory treatment of the injured and sick” (“The Principle of Medical Neutrality”).

Health workers in Syria are in critical need of psychological and financial support, as they undergo torture and horrible experiences during this time with no compensation at all. Furthermore, several medical students in Syria have not yet completed their training and could



potentially provide medical support as well. Finally, the practice of medical neutrality and unhindered humanitarian aid would help the international efforts of the UN and other countries be effective in the area. The targeting of civilian areas and infrastructure (including facilities) would only be the first step in alleviating the problem at hand.

3. The Situation of Refugees in Syria

The aftermath of the Syrian violence has slowly forced Syrian citizens out of the region into neighboring nations such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey. This creates serious concerns for humanitarian assistance, economic distress, and the emergence of unsuitable living conditions and gender violence that the Security Council must appropriately identify and address. We will examine the mobility and intensity of the growing refugee crisis.

Current estimates suggest that over 100,000 people this past year have fled from Syria into Istanbul. Furthermore, displacement is expected to be long-term as extensive economic development and infrastructure planning is needed after a Syrian peace ceasefire is achieved (Dahi). For example, in Jordan and Lebanon, annual GDP growth rates have dropped from 8.4% to 1.4% and 5.5% to 2.7% respectively (Dahi). Deeper into the displaced populations in satellite refugee cities, poverty pockets, districts with over 25% of the population living below the poverty line, have steadily increased by 22 to 32 in two years (Dahi). Political leadership, rather than viewing these concerns as reason for greater economic development spending, argue that greater spending policies will encourage the permanence and crutch of the refugee influx. These actions have deepened the need for humanitarian assistance and living condition improvements for the 750,000 current Syrian refugees displaced (Salopek).

Syrian refugees also face a significant increase in gender-based violence that demands the attention of international humanitarian action. Although quantitative data is not extensive, agencies have evaluated that the lack of housing, food and water, and limited economic opportunities contribute to greater sexual violence, rape, and intimate partner violence as reported by focus groups conducted by the International Rescue Committee and ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality (Anani). Although these forms of violence can be found structurally in existing common practices and culture, the inadequate living conditions have intensified several forms of gender violence. Previous actions have focused on holistic



preventative and protection initiatives in the Syrian refugee crisis regions, the scatter of these resources prevents their accessibility. As a result, the level of utilization of these new humanitarian assistance problems is fairly low (Anani).



Question to Consider

1. What might Syria and the surrounding region look like if Assad were to be removed?
2. What is the responsibility to protect? Does the UN have a responsibility to protect Syria's population from the mass atrocities they are encountering, or is that a violation of Syria's sovereignty? Assess both sides of the argument.
3. Considering Russia and China's use of veto power in this conflict, what are the arguments for and against reforming the veto? What are some alternatives, and what are other topics that have been delayed similarly by veto power?
4. What other topics do you think the Security Council should discuss in committee?



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