Forum: Special Conference

Issue: Measures to facilitate peace discussion with remaining ISIS groups in Syria

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Introduction

The United Nations Human Rights Council emphasizes that people on our planet have a sacred right to peace, and that the implementation of such peace is a fundamental obligation of all states to ensure a just world. When President Donald Trump came to office, he advocated a complete 'annihilation' and destruction of terrorist groups with the use of force. However, diplomatic action may be a preferable negotiation to violence. Negotiations leave room for a peaceful end to the War on Terror and deter the further growth of future violent extremist groups.

Violent extremists don't just cause death and destruction; they also poison societies with hateful ideologies and hinder peaceful development, dialogue and cooperation. The complexity of terrorism makes the UN unable to properly respond to the countless acts of terror committed every year. It has now been clearer than ever that it will be impossible to eradicate terrorism completely through military force.

ISIS is among the most prominent and infamous extremist groups in the world. The Syrian terrorist organization was first formed in 2004 with the primary aim of removing Western occupation and replacing it with a Sunni Islamist Regime. ISIS's intention was to create and control a new state, known as a caliphate, governed by Islamic law. By seizing territory in Syria and northern Iran, ISIS established a new 'Islamic State' and, by mid 2014, controlled a considerable amount of land and resources. However, thanks to continual attacks by international coalition forces, ISIS has lost the majority of its territory and continues to operate in an extremely limited capacity in a few remaining pockets of control. The number of ISIS fighters operating in Syria and Iraq is estimated to be as high as 30,000. It is the United Nations' obligation to relieve the suffering of the civilians who continue to live under the control of the Islamic State and help develop a peaceful world for them and their family.

Definition of Key Terms

ISIS

ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) originated 2004 in response to the Western military occupation of Iraq. ISIS has continued to grow in momentum since the start of the Civil War in Syria and has gained thousands of supporters across the world. In 2014, ISIS took control of Fallujah, Mosul and Tikrit. ISIS has continued to commit heinous war crimes and has been responsible for many human rights abuses, including filed public executions,

torture and rape, human trafficking and slavery, and killing UN troops and international aid workers. ISIS believes in a type of Islam called the Prophetic Methodology, which means following the prophecy and example of Mohammad in extreme detail. The creation of a caliphate has been one of its key aims—a caliphate is governed by a chief Muslim, who would be considered as a religious successor to the Islamic prophet, Muhammad. Ultimately, ISIS would spread, influence, amass more and more territory. Residents of the territory would be forced to conform with the same practices as ISIS and executed if seen as a threat to the prophecy.

Peace discussions

Peace discussions refer to negotiations and discourse with representatives of relevant and important organizations alongside the United Nations. Unlike the past threats and war against ISIS, peace discussions would prioritize ending the destruction of towns and violence against innocent civilians.

General Overview
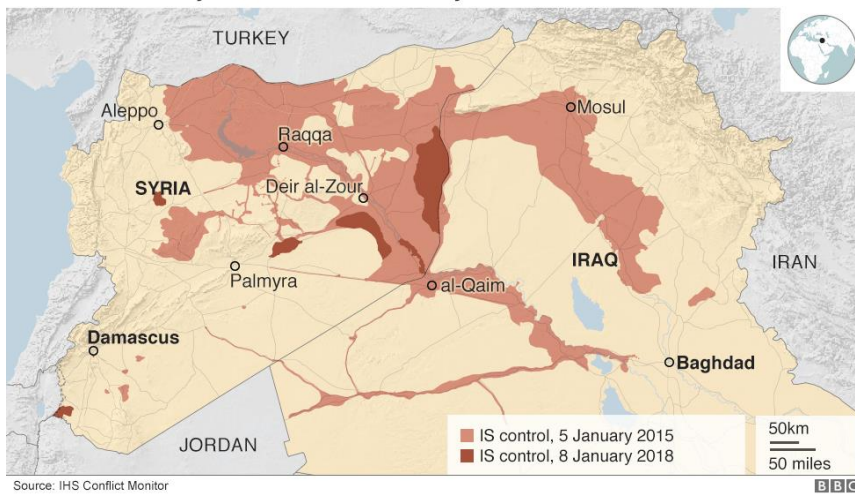
Terrorism in the Middle East

In August 30th, 2016, 72 mass graves in areas liberated from ISIS control were discovered. In the grave, 15,000 bodies were found. The rise of violent extremism continues to devastate the world in many ways. To understand how to solve through peaceful discussions - which has not been yet implemented by the United Nations, it is important to understand the background of ISIS and its extreme influence over the world.

The Rise of ISIS

The US-led military operation in Iraq to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein, the death of Saddam Hussein, and the disbanding of the Iraqi military has led to widespread anger and resentment towards the Western World and its interventions among the Iraqi citizens. This resentment, along with the chaotic regime change, destabilised the entire nation. By 2010, divides between Sunni and Shia Muslims were extensive and unaddressed. The two groups are divided by important ideological differences. The Sunni Muslims practiced in the traditional and direct things the Prophet Muhammad said, did, agree to or condemned. Unlike the Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims believes in the Ali, who they believe was Muhammad's successor as the head of Islam.

Perhaps the rise of ISIS was inevitable in this circumstance, as hateful ideologies thrive in times of conflict and turmoil. In July 2012, Syria was engulfed in a civil war of large magnitude. What started as a war between the government and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) became more dangerous and complicated as new forces and groups joined the fight. the United States initiated its first direct military action against the Syria government, accusing dictator Bashar al-Assad of using chemical weapons on civilians. ISIS was able to gain easy access to weapons during this time of conflict, and occupied large swathes in northern and western Iraq and proclaimed the creation of a caliphate known as the Islamic State. Since then, the lure of security and community drew thousands of new recruits from around the world. By mid 2014, ISIS controlled a vast amount of resources including oil fields, grain stores, stockpiles of weapons, and a population of seven or eight million people.

The Fall of ISIS

Territories ISIS has lost since 2015

ISIS is estimated to have lost roughly 60,000 members since 2014 and, although its ideologies still pervade through the nation, most territories once occupied by ISIS have been recaptured due to US-led coalitions and the cooperation of the Iraqi government. The training camps seem to be gone. The recruitment propaganda in Europe has seen a significant decrease. After the fall of ISIS in the battle of Mosul in 2017, it has not gained control of any major territories. Many factors led to the decline in ISIS's power, most notably the strengthening of the Iraqi government, ISIS's loss of territory and inability to show proper results to its members, and the fierce brutality of its own community that led to Sunni tribes declining to help or receive help from ISIS. However, many experts suggest that ISIS has not been defeated, and instead are trying to change and adapt to the new situation. With their remaining members, ISIS is finding new sources of revenue and rebuilding command-and-control. ISIS militants still retain control of a small swath of land near the Euphrates River. Despite its setbacks, the group still has a great presence in Syria, commanding groups of zealous and deadly fighters, including many who went into hiding after the fall of its caliphate.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has five main functions according the UN: to provide leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General from across the United Nations system; to enhance coordination and coherence across the 38 Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Forces; to strengthen the delivery of United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to member states; to improve visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts; and to ensure that due priority is given to counterterrorism across the United Nations system and that the important work on preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the Strategy.

The 2012 Consolidated Framework in the Fight against Terrorism is a document which highlights operational principles and identifies the strategic focus of the OSCE's role to guide future activities. It aims to

contribute to global efforts to eradicate terrorism, facilitate communication, and strengthen cooperation with key partners and organizations. OSCE's Action in countering terrorism (VERLT): The OSCE has been very active in countering terrorism with the EU and Middle East by holding annual conferences within the necessary members, creating frameworks and guidelines, and ultimately brainstorming more effective ways to eliminate the threat of terrorism. There has yet to be any peaceful discussion with ISIS and the United Nations.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
November 13th, 2015	ISIS carries out the Paris attack, in which a series of bombers and shooters terrorized the streets of Paris. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attacks and the death of 130 people.
March 22th, 2016	Brussels bombings. Another simultaneous attack carried out in the Brussels Airport and a nearby Metro station killing 32 people and 300 people injured.
February 12th, 2015	EU leaders call for specific counter-terrorism measures. EU leaders agreed on a statement to guide the work of the EU and the member states in the coming months. The statement called for specific measures, such as: The adoption of a European Passenger Name Records (PNR) directive, increasing cooperation in the fight against trafficking of firearms and terrorist financing, working to detect and remove internet content promoting terrorism or extremism, addressing crises and conflicts and engaging more with third countries on security issues, and promoting cooperation with the UN and with other global and regional initiatives.
November 21st, 2016	The council adopted methods and conclusions on the prevention of radicalisation in Europe. These methods are: undermine and challenge the existing violent extremist ideologies; counterbalance these ideologies by appealing non-violent alternatives; involve and cooperate with service providers in the fight against illegal hate speech and to support families in contact with younger tens who are more susceptible to radicalisation.
August 23rd, 2018	An audio message released by Leader Baghdadi of ISIS contains a 55 minute recording where a man admits that ISIS groups are losing and urges his followers to carry on with the fight.

December 19th, 2018   President Donald Trump rapidly withdraws American troops from Syria, with tweet saying that ISIS has been defeated..

Possible Solutions

Establishment and support of international communication centers such as the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism to promote international cooperation and communication to relevant organizations. The creation of an effective mode of communication and establishing opportunities such as conferences for representatives of violent extremist groups to have regulated discourse with the UN. Since many violent extremists' resentment originates from anger towards the world as they feel violated or angered from actions committed to them, actively sending across messages to prioritize the security and peace of nations and its civilians and affirming the commitment to the protection of all human, sovereignty, integrity and respect towards the specific nation's culture, especially when working with countries where their culture is an extremely important factor for their ideas and beliefs such as Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan.

Terrorism is the expression of radical and extreme ideals. Most people who are recruited and radicalized are individuals that have been marginalized by society and angry at the world they live in. ISIS gained momentum due to the Western hatred that spread due to the Iraq war. Marginalized and angry citizens are susceptible to terrorism, with promises of revenge and the creation of a better world without the ones that marginalized them. The best way to facilitate this in a peaceful manner is to speak directly to radicalized members of extremist groups help rehabilitate and educate better alternatives than terrorism that leads to unspeakable destruction. Education programs and communication between ex-terrorist members will help promote a peaceful alternative to dealing with the political and social marginalization suffered by many radicalized members. By understanding the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations, younger children will recognize the fundamental rights they are entitled to and better modes to express any anger and resentment. Helping marginalized citizens and terrorists understand that there are many, many alternatives without needing to resort to extreme methods, is a potential solution and opportunity to facilitate peace discussions.

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