



# **Park Lane MUN 2019**

## **Security Council Research Paper: Syrian Civil War**

Compiled by: Barbora Liskova and Justin Hart

# Introductions:

## Justin Hart

Hello, all!

My name is Justin Hart, a senior high school student who most recently attended George Washington Academy in Casablanca, Morocco but have just moved (back) to Prague to finish my senior year. I look forward to Co-Chairing the Security Council alongside Barbora and hope to find a pragmatic solution to this tiring and seemingly eternal conflict.

Experience-wise, I attended my first conference when I was 14 at Webster University in Vienna as a delegate in the General Assembly followed by that same conference on the European Council the year after - where I won a special distinction. To save you from further paragraphs, here's a shortened list:

- 2017's PORGMUN - Egypt, African Union - Best Delegate
- TangierMUN - China, Security Council - Hon. Mention
- AddiMUN (Rabat, Morocco) - Chair, Human Rights Council
- MarocMUN (Rabat, Morocco) - Turkey, SPECPOL - Hon. Mention
- BIGMUN (Coopenhagen) - Denmark, SPECPOL
- PORGMUN 2018 - Chair, African Union

Looking forward to meeting all of you!

## Barbora Liskova

Hello!

My name is Barbora Lišková and I am the chair of the Security Council. I am currently studying at Nový PORG and starting the International Baccalaureate Programme. I have attended only two schools in my life time unlike Justin.

I have participated in three MUNs as a delegate, one MUN as a chair and have been organizing PORGMUN for six years, where I am the Deputy Secretary-General at the moment. I will be attending BERMUN in November this year. Other than a MUN delegate I am also a member of our school's student council and our EKOŠKOLA team. I am a delegate at the Česká středoškolská Unie and as I enjoy baking and cooking I organize charity "bakesales" every 3 months at my school.

My personal life is pretty boring compared to the stressful life of an MUN organizer, but I am a dancer and currently learning to play on ukulele and ready to take on the stereotypes that come with it.

I am excited to meet you all and we are looking forward to a fruitful debate!

## Committee:

**The United Nations Security Council** is one of 6 key components that compose the modern United Nations. Having had their first meeting on the 17th January, 1946, the council has been in session for 7 decades. With 6 permanent veto-bearing members, China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States, the council is also composed of 10 non-permanent members elected via geographical regions on a two-year basis. The council is the only UN body that has the ability to issue binding resolutions on member states. Its primary responsibility is the maintenance of peace and security. The Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the United Nations and together with the General Assembly, it also elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

## Nations Present:

1. China
2. France
3. Russian Federation
4. the United Kingdom
5. the United States,
6. Bolivia
7. Côte d'Ivoire
8. Equatorial Guinea
9. Ethiopia
10. Kazakhstan
11. Kuwait
12. Netherlands
13. Peru
14. Poland
15. Sweden

## Key Terms:

*Refugee*: someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A **refugee** has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

*Bashar Al Assad*: Current ruler of Syria, internationally recognized and supported by the Russian Federation

*Arab Spring*: A period in 2011 where both Tunisia and Egypt successfully overthrew their president's. Restored hope for pro-democracy Syrian advocates.

*Free Syrian Army*: Loosely-knit military defectors initially numbering 50,000 in total formerly supported by western nations circa 2017.

*Syrian Democratic Forces*: A multi-ethnic armed conglomeration found primarily in Northern Syria currently supported by western nations with the United States continuing to train fighters in 2018. Considered by some to be a subsidiary of the YPG.

*Recep Tayyip Erdoğan:* Current leader of Turkey. Supporter of the Free Syrian Army and against an independent/strengthened Kurdistan.

*ISIS/ISIL/Daesh:* The terrorist organization founded in Syria by former Al-Qaeda terrorists

*Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi:* The founder and leader of ISIS. Still supposedly alive.

*Iraqi Kurdistan:* A semi-autonomous region in Northern Iraq with a standing army of appx. 200,000 troops.

*Kurdistan People's Party:* A militant Kurdish-nationalist group deemed to be a terrorist organization by Turkey. Allegedly has ties to the Syrian Democratic Forces and other Kurdish-aligned groups.

## **Major Parties Involved:**

### **Iran:**

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been ever-supportive of Syria's current regime led by Bashar Al-Assad - arming Iranian militias in the North of Syria and supporting Hezbollah (who have taken a direct roll in Syria) near Lebanon in addition to direct Iranian involvement. Through such groups, Iran has aided the Assad regime in retaking strategic cities including: Aleppo, Raqqa, Damascus, and Latakia.

### **United States:**

Following the outbreak of the war in 2011, the United States was quick to support the rebel 'Free Syrian Army' but withdrew such support in 2017 following Donald Trump's election. Initially, the country conducted airstrikes, but gradually began to actively train specific groups following the decentralization of the FSA. As it stands, several independent groups claim to compose the formerly defector-led army but have no affiliation with groups also claiming to be part of the force. To further that, the US has directly bombarded the regime in retaliation to alleged chemical weapons attacks carried out by Assad.

Read: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43769332>

### **Russia:**

In what many claim to be a Middle-Eastern power grab, the Russian Federation has supported the Assad regime since early 2011 with direct military involvement beginning in 2015 beginning with anti-ISIS airstrikes.

### **Turkey:**

Due to difficult relations with Iran and Russia (after they shot down a Russian aircraft, claiming it intervened into their territory) and a tense relationship with the US over Syria (where Turkey engaged in combats with the Kurds), Turkey's position in the conflict is precarious and uncomfortable. Turkey invaded Northern Syria in what they claimed to be a defensive measure against the PKK who allegedly controlled the border with Turkey, a group who they deem as a terrorist threat to their nation.

### **Iraq:**

The US intervention in Syria caused insecurity and fear of it strengthening IS militants present near the Iraqi-Syrian borders. The government is taking measures to protect the borders and the

prime minister was assured by the US president that together with their allies Syria and Russia, the IS militants will be taken care of.

## **The Kurds:**

### ***Syrian Kurds***

While receiving military and diplomatic support from the US-led coalition, the multi-ethnic group fiercely resists Turkish military operations, however, their position is dependent mainly on the US's behavior in the conflict.

### ***Iraqi Kurds***

In the semi-autonomous state of Iraqi Kurdistan, there are approximately 200,000 equipped Kurdish fighters known as the 'Peshmerga' who control the area and were one of the primary forces responsible for the deterioration of ISIS in Iraq. The Iraqi army is forbidden by law to enter Kurdistan. Despite this, the two forces collided in 2017 at the Battle of Kirkuk following a tense standoff during the Kurdistan independence referendum.

## **Timeline of events:**

**March 15, 2011:** Demonstrations break out in the city of Daraa after security forces detain a group of boys accused of spray-painting anti-government graffiti on their school walls. Security forces open fire on the unarmed protesters, killing four. The brutal crackdown by President Bashar al-Assad's forces provokes more protests. Security forces reportedly claiming some 60 lives up to March 28.

**August 18, 2011:** US President Barack Obama calls on Assad to resign and orders all Syrian government assets in the US to be frozen. However, Syria Conflict Continues to Spread

**July 19, 2012:** The fighting spreads to Aleppo, the second-largest city in Syria. Chemical weapons threat. Obama warns that if Syria uses chemical weapons, it will have "enormous consequences" that will change his thinking about intervening in the country's civil war.

**March 19, 2013:** A (sarin nerve) gas attack kills 26 people, half of them government soldier. Both the government and the rebel forces accuse each other of using the prohibited gas.

**August 21, 2013:** A far deadlier sarin gas attack kills hundreds in the rebel-held suburbs of Damascus. The Assad regime is blamed.

**August 31, 2013:** Obama announces he'll ask Congress for authorization to strike back against the Syrian government, but the Republican-controlled legislature fails to act.

**September 27, 2013:** The UN Security Council threatens to use force against Syria if it doesn't destroy its chemical weapons stockpile.

**October:** Syria signs on to the Chemical Weapons Convention; this prohibits it from producing, stockpiling or using chemical weapons.

**June 23, 2014:** The OPCW announces that it has removed all of the Syrian government's chemical weapons. Threat of hidden chemical weapons by the ASSAD regime.

**September 23, 2014:** The US launched limited airstrikes against "Islamic State" militants inside Syria.

**September 30, 2015:** Russia actively enters the conflict and carries bombing attacks against Assad opponents (accused of deliberately bombing civilian targets, including hospitals).

**The war begins to move steadily in favor of the Assad regime.**

**February 28, 2017:** Russia and China veto a UN Security Council resolution calling for sanctions against the Syria government in response to its use of chemical weapons.

**April 4, 2017:** 58 people killed in a nerve-gas attack, however, victims show telltale signs of a chemical weapons attack. Witnesses claim the attack was carried out by Russian or Syrian jets, the allegations are denied by both parties involved.

**April 6, 2017:** The US fires a barrage of cruise missiles at the military base and US President Donald Trump, defends the attack, calling it a "vital national security interest of the United States."

**May 9, 2017:** Trump approves military plans to arm the Kurdish YPG as part of the effort to retake the Syrian city of Raqqa from IS militants. Washington considers the YPG crucial to defeating the IS in Syria, but Ankara views the group as an extension of the Kurdish PKK militant group, which is considered a terrorist organization.

**July 7, 2017:** Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin agree to a limited ceasefire in three war-torn provinces in southwest Syria.

**July 9, 2017:** The ceasefire takes effect.

**July 23, 2017:** Syrian warplanes bomb the suburbs of Damascus, just one day after the military had declared a cessation of hostilities in the area.

**January, 2018:** Turkey launches an assault on northern Syria to oust Kurdish rebels controlling the area around Afrin. It seizes the town in March.

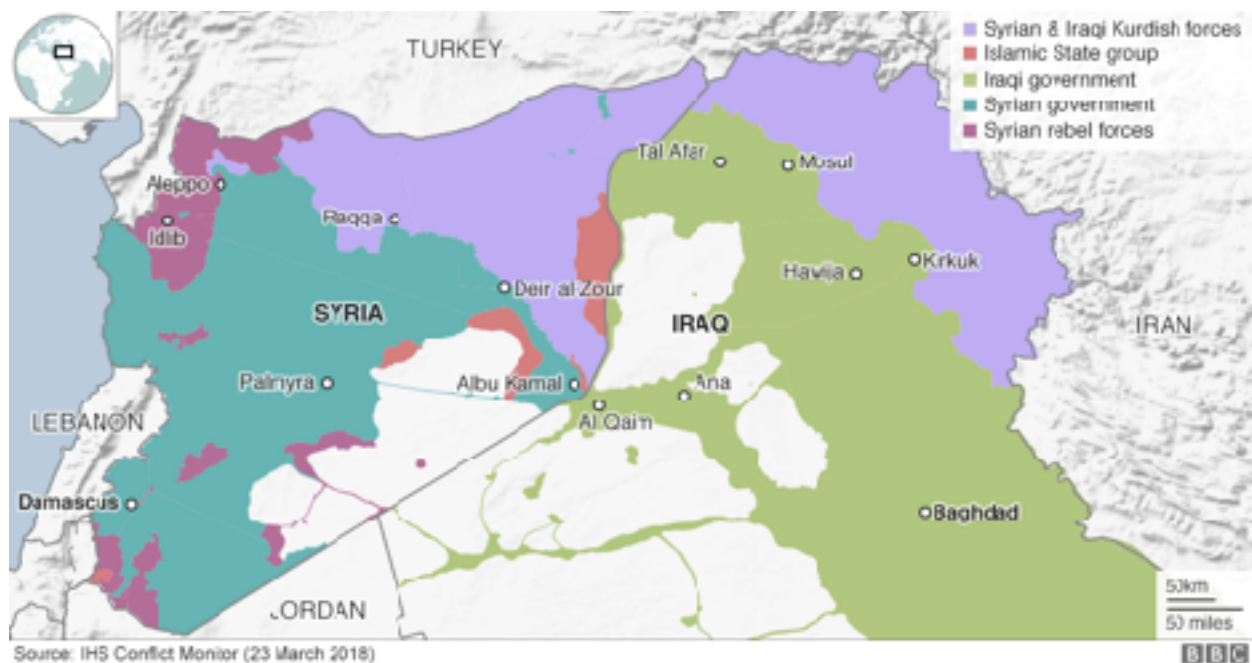
**February, 2018:** Government launches a ferocious assault on Eastern Ghouta, the final rebel-held enclave near Damascus.

**April, 2018:** 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.

## OVERVIEW:

The Syrian Civil War has raged for years since March 2011 following violence in Daraa, where dozens of civilians were killed following widespread protests in Southwestern Syria. After further political instability, Assad initially capitulated and attempted to appease protesters by granting them the right to peacefully protest and repealing the 46-year old state of emergency. These measures were largely ineffective, and the war raged on with the formation of the Free Syrian Army composed of defectors who refused to fire on protesting civilians. Initially, the FSA was supported by numerous Western nations including NATO until it's eventual decentralization in 2013/14 when insurgent extremist groups began using the title and the central command structure fell. Today, only remnants remain of the FSA despite a newly-formed Turkey backed group numbering 25,000 soldiers.

During the chaos of the revolution, ISIS arose and seized weak provinces including Raqqa, Aleppo, and other major cities in both Syria and Levant, hence their eventual name 'ISIL' (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). With immense success, their territory grew until 2015 when forces united in their opposition to the Islamic State and gradually pushed them back to small pockets in Syria.



# Security Council Resolutions:

## 2012:

*Authorized the deployment of 30 military observers*

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Syria%20SRES%202042.pdf>

*Established the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria*

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Syria%20SRES%202043.pdf>

## 2013/14:

*Adopted unanimously by the Council and required the verification and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles, endorsed the establishment of a transitional governing body in Syria with full executive powers.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2118.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2118.pdf)

*Demanded that all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, allow humanitarian access in Syria across conflict lines, in besieged areas and across borders and expressed the intent to take further steps in the case of non-compliance.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2139.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2139.pdf)

*Authorised cross-border and cross-line access for the UN and its partners to deliver humanitarian aid in Syria without state consent and established a monitoring mechanism for 180 days.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2139.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2139.pdf)

*Condemned the recruitment by ISIS and al-Nusra of foreign fighters*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2170.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2170.pdf)

*Expanded the counter-terrorism framework by imposing obligations on member states to respond to the threat of foreign terrorist fighters.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2178.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2178.pdf)

## 2015:

*ISIS and Al-Nusra's illicit funding via oil exports, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2199.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2199.pdf)

*Condemned the use of toxic chemicals such as chlorine, without attributing blame; stressed that those responsible should be held accountable.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2209.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2209.pdf)

*Recommended the establishment and operation of a UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.*



[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2235.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2235.pdf)

*Called for member states to take all necessary measures on the territory under the control of ISIS to prevent terrorist acts committed by ISIS and other Al-Qaida affiliates.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2249.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2249.pdf)

*This was the first resolution focused exclusively on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. It was adopted unanimously.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2254.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2254.pdf)

*Endorsed the cessation of hostilities and called for the resumption of political talks.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2268.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2268.pdf)

## **2016/17/18:**

*Endorsed the cessation of hostilities and called for the resumption of political talks.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2268.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2268.pdf)

*Welcomed efforts by Russia and Turkey to end violence in Syria and jumpstart a political process.*

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2336.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2336.pdf)

*This was a resolution, adopted unanimously, demanding a cessation of hostilities in Syria.*

## Sources:

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2. <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/27/world/meast/syria-civil-war-fast-facts/index.html>
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8. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43769332>