



UNSC
COMMITTEE GUIDE

HORIZONS V

Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Caleb Jang and it is my utmost honour and privilege to serve as your director for the United Nations Security Council at this year's iteration of Cahsmun Horizons Model United Nations. On behalf of your Chair, Eva Wang, we hope to create a fun, engaging and collaborative committee with all of you.

I am currently a grade 12 student at Stratford Hall IB world school in my fifth year participating in Model United Nations. Ever since my first conference in 2019, my passion and appreciation for diplomacy, global affairs and comprehensive debates have continued to grow. These conferences have sparked friendships and created unforgettable memories within the MUN community that are priceless that I hope you too can experience.

This year, the UNSC will be discussing the topic: Syrian Refugee Crisis. This crisis involves numerous stakeholders, each with unique perspectives and solutions to approach the conflict as it enters it's 12th year. Syrian refugees throughout the world have unique challenges to each region that create discrepancies in quality of life to millions across the globe. Given the complex and global nature of these topics, I challenge you all to conduct research on your delegation's perspectives and possible solutions with a holistic approach prior to the conference to enable a successful, rich debate.

I wish you the best of luck in your preparations for this conference and I look forward to meeting you all soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at horizons-unscc@cahsmun.org.

Sincerely,
Caleb Jang
Director of the United Nations Security Council
CAHSMUN Horizons 2023

Committee Description

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), established in January of 1946 as a specialised body of the United Nations, prioritises promoting and maintaining global stability. Under this focus, the UNSC has four key focuses: (1) to maintain international peace and security, (2) to develop friendly relations among nations, (3) to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, (4) and to be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations.¹ All resolutions set and agreed upon by the UNSC are binding to all United Nations member states as stated under Article 25 of the UN charter.² While other branches of the UN make recommendations to member states, the UNSC has the power to compel member states to follow decisions of the UNSC.³

The UNSC achieves their targets through multiple avenues, striving to maintain peace and security by having three distinct approaches.⁴ These range from the most passive actions such as undertaking investigations and appointing special envoys to more complex, active actions such as issuing ceasefires and dispatching peacekeeping forces.⁵ In the most severe cases, the UNSC has opted for severe enforcement measures including the establishment of economic sanctions, blockades, severance of diplomatic relations and enacting collective military action.⁶ No matter the severity of their actions, the UNSC has emphasised their priority is to “focus action on those responsible for the policies or practices condemned by the international community, while minimising the impact of the measures taken on other parts of the population and economy”.⁷ Since its first session in 1946, the UNSC has been involved in numerous global conflicts, spanning the Korean War, the Congo Crisis and the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁸

¹<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>

²<https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Security-Council>

³Ibid.

⁴<https://www.cfr.org/background/un-security-council>

⁵<https://www.globalr2p.org/calling-for-a-uns-c-code-of-conduct/>

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

Decisions are made by the council, comprising 15 member states.⁹ This is broken down into five permanent members who hold special voting rights and ten non-permanent member states, each holding a 2 year term in the council.¹⁰ During voting procedures, a minimum of nine affirmative votes must be cast, without any vetoes from permanent members to have the resolution passed.¹¹ To ensure equal representation of countries from around the world, the UNSC has set quotas on the 15 total delegations to provide each continent a voice in the council.¹² The United Nations Security Council also allows for non-council member states to participate in discussions, without the voting privileges of member states.¹³

Topic Overview

On September 2nd, 2015, Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old refugee from Damascus, drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while fleeing with his family to the Greek Island of Kos.¹⁴ When a photo of Alan's body surfaced on Turkish television, it drew international attention to the dire Syrian refugee crisis.¹⁵ Since then, the struggles of Syrian refugees have persisted, reflecting the ongoing challenges and complexities of the crisis.¹⁶

The Syrian refugee crisis has been a direct byproduct of the Syrian Civil War.¹⁷ Beginning in 2011, the Syrian Civil War has presented itself as a profound tragedy of vast proportions.¹⁸ What started as pro-democracy protests in Syria has evolved into a humanitarian crisis backed by global powers.¹⁹ The conflict has been propelled by a variety of causes, resulting in challenges that have far-reaching implications.²⁰ These causes range from the rise in foreign influence aiding opposing sides in the war, the oppressive authoritarian rule under Bashar al-Assad, and the economic impacts of sanctions that have crippled the nation.²¹ As the conflict remains largely unresolved, the war and violence continues to prevent millions of people from accessing their basic needs such as food, water and shelter.²² Beyond this,

⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Security-Council>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <https://time.com/4162306/alan-kurdi-syria-drowned-boy-refugee-crisis/>

¹⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/14/world/middleeast/turkey-syria.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2023/07/13/syria-between-civil-and-proxy-war-the-question-of-terminology/>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/the-syria-civil-war-might-be-ending-but-the-crisis-will-live-on/>

the state of Syria's social landscape continues to worsen.²³ With staggering rates of poverty and instability in the social services, it has pushed Syria into the brink of collapse.²⁴

In a 2023 report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, it estimated that more than 15 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian and protective assistance.²⁵ Of the 15 million people, 6.7 million people are internally displaced, without a stable home or accessible social services that would improve their quality of life.²⁶ Despite being the largest refugee crisis in the world, the lack of media coverage and the static progress of diplomatic efforts have left Syrian's with little support.²⁷ The rise in global conflicts, the slowdown in Asylum progress and the ill preparedness to natural disasters and climate change have all worsened the refugee crisis. Syrian refugees also experience difficulties during their integration into society.²⁸ It is imperative to address the Syrian refugee crisis to ensure refugees are protected and properly reintegrated into society.²⁹

Timeline

July 2000 – Bashar al-Assad was elected as the 19th president of Syria, succeeding his father Hafez al-Assad's leadership since 1971.³⁰ Outsiders were hopeful his election would carry economic and social reforms, however, he continued his father's oppressive governance.³¹

March 2011 – Protests following the torture of 15 students for writing anti-government graffiti erupted in cities across Syria. These peaceful, pro-democracy that coincided with Arab Spring protests were met violence from government backed Syrian security forces.³²

July 2011 – As the violence by the Syrian government escalated, some demonstrators pushed back and incited violence against security forces. Hundreds of military personnel originally part of the Syrian Security force defected, establishing the first rebel group: the Free Syrian Army.³³

²³Ibid.

²⁴<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9381/>

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷<https://www.amacad.org/publication/syria-cnn-effect-media-policy-making>

²⁸<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/what-russian-invasion-means-syria>

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bashar-al-Assad/Unrest-and-civil-war>

³¹Ibid.

³²<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/14/syrias-war-explained-from-the-beginning>

³³<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFpanWNgfQY&t=62s>

February 2012 – Iran provides billions of dollars in aid, military supplies, and intelligence information to Syrian Security forces to withstand Western sanctions. This was the first instance of foreign influence in the Syrian War and began the development of Syria as a proxy war.³⁴

June 2012 – In response to Iran’s funding, many gulf states including Saudi Arabia and Qatar provide funding to rebel groups. In addition to this, Turkish military forces provided logistical and military support to Rebel forces, further escalating the conflict.³⁵

March 2013 – As the violence and conflict in Syria escalate, many citizens in Syria are forced to flee their homes away from fighting. While many flee to Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, the majority of 5 million refugees remain as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)³⁶.

August 2013 – Chemical attacks by the Syrian government kill an estimated 1,400 civilians and injure over 3,600 people. This drew international condemnation by the Human Rights Watch and launched investigations surrounding the violations of International Humanitarian Law³⁷.

September 2014 – The United States, in partnership with Arab countries, expanded their air support for rebel fighters in Syria. At the same time, Russia conducted its first airstrikes in Syria while supporting Bashar al-Assad and his government.³⁸

June 2014 – Following its establishment in 2013, ISIS, a detachment of the Syrian Rebel fighters, launches attacks between the border of Syria and Iraq. During this time, the group fought primarily against Kurdish forces in Northern Syria and formed a Caliphate region.³⁹

March 2015 – As the prospect of Syria’s future becomes less safe, waves of migrants leave Syria to European and Middle Eastern Countries. Since the start of the civil war, an estimated 4 million refugees have left Syria.⁴⁰

August 2016 – During the battle for Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, a record number of airstrikes by government and rebel forces forced thousands to flee in the span of two months. At this time, roughly 5 million refugees have left Syria.⁴¹

³⁴<https://www.vox.com/2015/9/14/9319293/syrian-refugees-civil-war>

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶<https://www.unhcr.org/news/unhcr-syria-2015-end-year-report>

³⁷<https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/09/10/attacks-ghouta/analysis-alleged-use-chemical-weapons-syria>

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jul/09/syria-refugees-4-million-people-flee-crisis-deepens>

⁴¹<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-refugees-idUSKBN1710XY>

July 2017 – During a G20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, an agreement was reached to reduce violence in the southern regions of Syria by implementing ceasefires. Although the ceasefire temporarily reduced hostilities, the violence would later on continue and intensify.⁴²

October 2019 – US military forces have been forced to withdraw from Northern Syria. This prompted Turkish forces to capture territory formerly protected by U.S forces and incited a power grab with more violence between Turkish, Kurdish and Syrian against each other.⁴³

September 2022 – High inflationary pressures in neighbouring countries including Turkey, and Lebanon disproportionately affected Syrian refugees living in these regions, making the cost of food and medicine increasingly inaccessible for these marginalised communities.⁴⁴

February 2023 – A magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck the border between Turkey and Syria, killing more than 50,000 people and exacerbating an already dire crisis in the region. Refugee camps for those seeking asylum in Turkey and other European countries were severely damaged.⁴⁵

April 2023 — The Human Rights Watch Organization reveals that Syria refugees living in neighbouring countries are starting to be deported, despite the violence and conflict in Syria continuing.⁴⁶

⁴²<https://apnews.com/article/europe-middle-east-russia-syria-united-states-government-eea310ccb6e04e0580759d4ce36e778b>

⁴³<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/us/politics/mark-esper-syria-kurds-turkey.html>

⁴⁴<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844022012932>

⁴⁵<https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disasters/2023-turkey-syria-earthquake/>

⁴⁶[https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/05/lebanon-armed-forces-summarily-deporting-syrians#:~:text=\(Beirut\)%20%E2%80%93%20The%20Lebanese%20Armed,Human%20Rights%20Watch%20said%20today.](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/05/lebanon-armed-forces-summarily-deporting-syrians#:~:text=(Beirut)%20%E2%80%93%20The%20Lebanese%20Armed,Human%20Rights%20Watch%20said%20today.)

Historical Analysis

Historically, peace and stability within Syrian governance has been weak.⁴⁷ Numerous government takeovers and military coups have crippled the nation's growth and instigated instability.⁴⁸ In the early 1970s, Hafez al-Assad, father of Bashar Al-Assad, initiated a coup labelled the "*Corrective Movement*" to instate Hafez and his military ministry into power.⁴⁹ His governance drew controversy, as government funds were diverted to loyalists of Assad, and any opposition towards the government was met with imprisonment or repression.⁵⁰ By instilling fear in everyday life, he was able to continue to hold power for over 29 years with little opposition.⁵¹

Following his death, he named his successor to be his son, Bashar al-Assad.⁵² Although his rise into power promised social and economic reforms, Bashar continued to hold his father's authoritarian governance.⁵³ His first decade in power was characterised by severe censorship, public executions, discriminatory policies, and extensive public monitoring carried out by the Ba'athist Secret Police.⁵⁴ His power would be challenged in the 2010s when a wave of pro-democracy movements known as the Arab Spring spread across the Middle East and Northern Africa.⁵⁵ In Syria, uprisings were not as prominent in comparison to neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, acts of defiance still occurred, including the painting of pro-democracy graffiti by 15 students which were met with torture and imprisonment by the Syrian Government.⁵⁶ In mid March of 2011, the treatment of these students by Syrian police escalated protests.⁵⁷ In Hama, protests drew nearly half a million people onto the streets to demonstrate their opposition to the oppressive regime and show their advocacy for their freedom of speech in hopes for governmental reforms.⁵⁸ These protests were met with severe backlash with local media reporting that military forces opening fire on peaceful demonstrators and the government detaining, and torturing protestors.⁵⁹ By November 2012, UN reports showed that nearly 3,500 protestors were

⁴⁷<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/29/syria-war-refugees-europe/>

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/pity-the-nation-assessing-a-half-century-of-assadist-rule/>

⁵⁰<https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war>

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-assad-family-nemesis-of-nine-u-s-presidents>

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/07/16/wasted-decade/human-rights-syria-during-bashar-al-asads-first-ten-years-power>

⁵⁵<https://www.usip.org/syria-timeline-uprising-against-assad>

⁵⁶<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/15/middleeast/daraa-syria-seven-years-on-intl/index.html>

⁵⁷<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/7/8/half-a-million-protest-on-streets-of-hama>

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

killed by the Assad government.⁶⁰ By the end of the year, estimates of protest casualties reached 5,000.⁶¹ As the violence continued, countries including the United States, Germany, and France, called on Bashar al-Assad to step down.⁶²

During the protests, many soldiers originally part of Syrian Government Forces defected, forming the Free Syrian Army.⁶³ The Free Syrian army would be the first official opposition to the Assad government, having an estimated 75,000 soldiers part of the militia group.⁶⁴ During the mid-2012s, Iran started to support the Assad government indirectly by providing weapons, logistical aid, and financial support to continue fighting rebel fighters.⁶⁵ Saudi Arabia and other gulf states who were key opponents to the Iranian government supported Rebel fighters.⁶⁶ This provision of aid to both sides escalated the Syrian Civil War to become an advanced, proxy war.⁶⁷ As this funding ramped up, the warfare became more destructive and caused further displacement, due to having access to chemical weapons, cluster bombs, and drones from their supporting country.⁶⁸ This was a key turning point in the war and caused refugee rates to sharply increase. By December 2012, the total number of Syrian refugees reached 500,000 and by March 2013, that number had doubled, reaching a total of 1 million refugees.⁶⁹

During the start of 2013, ISIS, a detached group from the Syrian Free Army was formed and quickly captured territory across the Northern regions of Syria and Iraq.⁷⁰ Although ISIS mainly focused its advancements against Kurdish forces in the Northern region of Syria, its destruction of developed nations through terrorist attacks shifted many developed nations' focus from the Syrian civil war onto eliminating ISIS forces.⁷¹ As ISIS forces captured more of Northern Syria, refugee numbers continued to increase and reached 2.5 million.⁷² Although most Syrian refugees left to neighbouring countries, many still attempted the

⁶⁰<https://www.ctvnews.ca/un-says-3-500-dead-so-far-in-syria-uprising-1.722860?cache=300>

⁶¹<https://www.cnn.com/2011/12/12/world/meast/syria-unrest/index.html>

⁶²<https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Syrian_Army

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/10/8/gulf-states-increase-arms-to-syrian-rebels-over-russian-intervention.html>

⁶⁸<https://snhr.org/blog/2019/08/19/54151/>

⁶⁹<https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/syrian-refugee-crisis-facts>

⁷⁰<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/11/isis-origins-anbari-zarqawi/577030/>

⁷¹<https://www.vox.com/videos/2017/8/14/16125970/isis-syria-after-iraq-mosul>

⁷²Ibid.

crossing of the Mediterranean Sea to enter Europe.⁷³ This contributed significantly to the European Migrant Crisis which saw millions of refugees attempting to seek asylum in Europe and crowding frontline countries.⁷⁴ By mid 2015, the conflict stemming from the four primary military organisations: The Syrian Government, Free Syrian Army, ISIS Forces, and Kurdish Forces pushed a total of 4 million refugees out of Syria⁷⁵. ISIS would later be defeated in 2019, but the fighting associated with the Syrian Civil War continued.⁷⁶ The fall of ISIS prompted many developed countries who had shifted their efforts during the Syrian Civil War to fighting ISIS to leave Syria altogether.⁷⁷

Current Situation

Deportations of Refugees from Neighboring Countries

Neighbouring countries, which initially offered refuge to fleeing Syrians are now grappling with the strain of hosting large numbers of displaced individuals.⁷⁸ In many countries, the burden of hosting refugees has grown dire, with some countries resorting to deporting refugees to relieve this burden, raising alarming concerns from human rights organisations.⁷⁹ By deporting refugees back into their war torn homes, it violates fundamental humanitarian norms but also exposes vulnerable refugees to further dangers.⁸⁰ Syrians who were forced to return risk being exposed to the violence of the ongoing conflict, and have limited access to basic services, and an inadequate housing system.⁸¹ Even if these refugees are not deported, they are subjected to extreme prejudice and are villainized in their host countries.⁸² In Lebanon, a small country of 5 million people, hosts nearly 1.5 million Syrian refugees.⁸³ However, economic pressures and political unrest in Lebanon has exacerbated the instability in the nation, with Syrian refugees being the scapegoat for this crisis.⁸⁴ Starting in April 2023, thousands of Syrian refugees have been forcibly deported back to Syria, with these refugees often unable to find housing and

⁷³<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39528673>

⁷⁶<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/23/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-isis-caliphate>

⁷⁷Ibid

⁷⁸<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/17/syrian-refugees-in-fear-as-lebanon-steps-up-deportations>

⁷⁹<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/jun/27/we-fear-leaving-the-house-lebanon-and-turkey-step-up-deportations-of-syrian-refugees>

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrian-refugees-deported-lebanon-face-arrest-conscription-say-relatives-2023-05-01/>

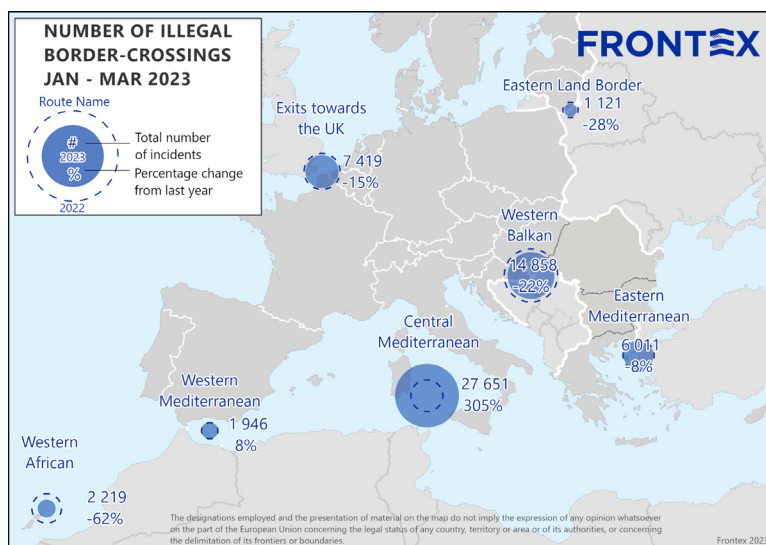
⁸²<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/04/turkey-syria-refugees-blamed-coronavirus-economic-turmoil.html>

⁸³<https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-plight-and-politics-of-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon/>

⁸⁴Ibid.

basic necessities.⁸⁵ In Jordan, security forces have expelled tens of thousands of Syrians over the years with their justification for this deportation being criminal activity or failure to report to authorities.⁸⁶ However, these allegations have not been backed up, with many deported refugees having committed no wrongdoing.⁸⁷ In Turkey, recent elections villainizing Syrians as responsible for the economic challenges in the country have forcibly pushed Syrian refugees back home.⁸⁸ Even if the government does not undertake any deportations, the prejudice that refugees experience on a daily basis has prompted nearly half a million Syrian refugees to return to their conflict riddled country.⁸⁹

Refugees and Asylum Seekers' Search for Safety in Europe



*Figure 1*⁹⁰

As the conflict persists and conditions remain dire in neighbouring countries, some refugees and asylum seekers are once again looking to Europe as a destination for safety and stability.⁹¹ European nations are faced with the challenge of addressing this renewed influx of refugees and asylum seekers.⁹² The experiences of the 2015 refugee crisis have led to a range of responses, from pro-immigrant policies and humanitarian support to closed border, nationalist policy dividing the European Union.⁹³ The situation underscores the

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶<https://apnews.com/article/jordan-syria-refugees-civil-war-return-4a87a2f77db9e6099306db7554898062>

⁸⁷<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/fled-syrias-shattering-civil-war-now-syrian-refugees-101510793>

⁸⁸<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-syria-refugees-forcibly-deported-en-masse>

⁸⁹<https://newlinesinstitute.org/turkey/protecting-syrian-refugees-in-turkey-from-forced-repatriation/>

⁹⁰<https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/detections-in-central-mediterranean-up-three-fold-in-the-first-3-months-of-2023-fBX34V>

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/08/20/sunak-britain-migrant-crisis-italy/>

⁹³<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34278886>

need for comprehensive, coordinated approaches that prioritises the protection of human rights while addressing the concerns of host communities.⁹⁴ 2023 was marked as the deadliest year for refugee sea crossings of the Mediterranean since 2017, with the first 3 months of 2023 reporting nearly 54,000 illegal crossings.⁹⁵ ⁹⁶ This alarming uptick in sea crossings is a prelude to another refugee crisis nearing.⁹⁷ European countries are considerably wealthier and have the opportunities that would equip Syrian refugees with a brighter future; however, sentiment and policy for Syrian refugees has made their asylum process extremely difficult.⁹⁸ As a result, refugee camps have begun to fill up again, asylum seekers wait in desperation for refugee status, and thousands make the decision to illegally cross, jeopardising their lives in search of safety.⁹⁹

Internally Displaced Persons

The significant displacement caused by the Syrian Civil War has forced millions of Syrians to leave their homes due to violence and insecurity.¹⁰⁰ Although many refugees left for countries in the Middle East and Europe, a large portion of refugees remain in Syria.¹⁰¹ An Internally Displaced Person (IDP) can be defined as an individual who is forced to flee their home, but still resides within their home country's border. Currently, there are an estimated 6.9 million refugees in Syria considered as IDPs.¹⁰² These IDPs face challenges similar to refugees, including poor housing and employment provisions and limited access to food and water. The IDPs remain within Syria's borders, subject to varying degrees of safety and protection.¹⁰³ Commonly, IDPs have formed makeshift communities, with temporary housing and basic sanitation services being somewhat available, with the quality and capacity being ill-suited for the scale of IDP camps.¹⁰⁴ However, these refugee camps are by no means sustainable, having poor safety and reliant on humanitarian aid to be operational.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, educational opportunities are often disrupted, particularly for children, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty for vulnerable individuals.¹⁰⁶ These refugee camps have grown immensely in size, which has become a safety risk for those living in these camps for a variety of reasons.¹⁰⁷ Firstly, the spread of diseases in these

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/12/eu-records-rise-number-trying-reach-bloc-across-mediterranean>

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-looks-tighten-borders-keep-unwanted-migrants-away-2023-02-09/>

⁹⁹<https://www.npr.org/2020/02/18/807150232/satellite-photos-show-rapid-growth-of-syrian-refugee-camps>

¹⁰⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/world/middleeast/syrian-war-refugees.html>

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²<https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/syria>

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴<https://www.iemed.org/publication/half-a-country-displaced-the-syrian-refugee-and-idp-crisis/>

¹⁰⁵<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/syrian-refugee-camp-supplies-are-low-isis-fears-run-high-rcna58288>

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/irrc_99_16.pdf

camps has grown immensely, exacerbated by the lack of healthcare access in these camps.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, they have become the target of conflict, with reports showing the use of cluster bombs against these refugee camps killing hundreds of people.¹⁰⁹ The lack of accountability and consequences for these war crimes have allowed these actions to continue.¹¹⁰ Addressing their needs requires a comprehensive approach that ensures safety, access to services, education, and livelihood opportunities, while recognizing the broader complexities of the crisis.¹¹¹

Ongoing Conflict

Despite entering its 12th year, the fighting has continued to displace thousands of Syrians.¹¹² Currently, Syria's territory is held by three primary groups: The Syrian Regime, Syrian Opposition and Syrian Democratic Forces.¹¹³ Over the past 3 months, the Assad government has captured vast territory as funding from gulf states to rebel groups have decreased.¹¹⁴ However, the fighting has intensified as the Syrian government pushes further and further into opposition held territories, predominantly near the southwest part of Syria.¹¹⁵ Although the Assad Regime has been capturing more territory, it is still unclear when the fighting will end.¹¹⁶ Additionally, the risk of the continued oppression associated with the Assad regime has the potential to intensify asylum seeking in neighbouring countries.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸<https://news.cornell.edu/media-relations/tip-sheets/already-vulnerable-syrian-refugees-face-threats-infectious-disease#:~:text=%E2%80%9CEven%20before%20the%20earthquake%2C%20Syria,disfranchised%20populations%20and%20refugee%20camps.>

¹⁰⁹<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/syria-deadly-attacks-affecting-idp-camps>

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/19/assad-gets-warm-welcome-as-syria-welcomed-back-into-arab-league>

¹¹⁵<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9378/>

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

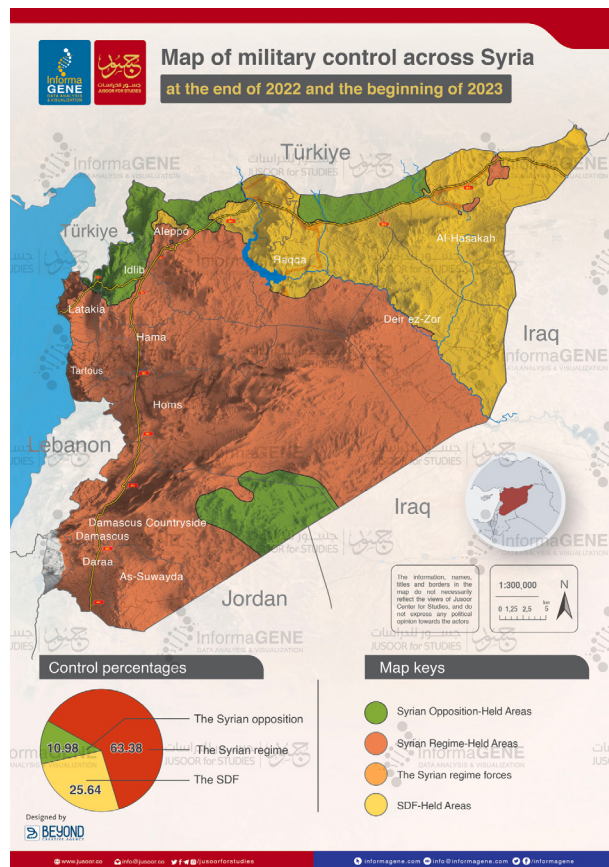


Figure 2¹¹⁸

UN Involvement

The UNSC has played a major role in creating peace in Syria.¹¹⁹ Even though the council has passed 29 resolutions over 12 years, there has been minimal implementation and the Syrian government has directly violated many of them.¹²⁰ Additionally, over 17 resolutions on Syria have been vetoed, including the call for the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad and the enforcement of an Arab League Peace plan which were vetoed by Russia and

¹¹⁸<https://jusoor.co/en/details/map-of-military-control-across-syria-at-the-end-of-2022-and-the-beginning-of-2023>

¹¹⁹https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/page/1?ctype=Syria&cbtype=syria#038;cbtype=syria

¹²⁰Ibid.

China.¹²¹ This veto power has sheltered Syria from any accountability or implementation of resolutions.¹²²

In March 2011, Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon released a statement condemning the tyrannical actions of the Syrian government on protesters.¹²³ This was followed by the establishment of the Kofi Annan Peace Plan that was a joint solution by the Arab League and the UN.¹²⁴ On April 14th, 2012, Resolution 2042, aiming to send observers to conflict zones was passed unanimously, becoming the first involvement of the UNSC in the conflict.¹²⁵ Numerous resolutions continuing to focus on humanitarian aid and condemnation of the Assad government have been passed, but the extent of the UNSC has not gone further.¹²⁶ On February 24th, 2018, the UNSC passed a resolution issuing a nationwide ceasefire in Syria for 30 days, but the fighting continued, defying the supposedly binding agreements of UNSC resolutions.¹²⁷ This was widely regarded as the UNSC's most severe enforcement measure.¹²⁸ Following this, the council has been unsuccessful, with only two resolutions over 5 years regarding the conflict in Syria being passed.¹²⁹

NGOs have also played a critical role in aiding this conflict. Organisations such as the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders and the International Rescue Committee have provided medical, humanitarian and housing aid throughout the conflict.¹³⁰ That being said, the extent of their involvement has been severely limited due to the conflict impacting operations. In September 2016, the Red Cross hospital in Aleppo was a target of an airstrike, killing 20 civilians and 1 doctor.¹³¹ Additionally, these NGOs are often ill equipped to address the complex and dire challenges on the ground.

Possible Solutions

The cause of this crisis has three main factors, each requiring a unique solution to be resolved.

¹²¹<https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-a-un-general-assembly-meeting-following-russias-veto-of-a-un-security-council-resolution-on-the-syria-cross-border-humanitarian-mechanism/>

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³<https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/03/370012>

¹²⁴<https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/special-envoy-syria>

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/24/un-security-council-votes-unanimously-syria-ceasefire>

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰<https://www.lawyeringpeaceclass.com/ngos-working-in-syria>

¹³¹<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/syria-attack-humanitarian-convoy-attack-humanity>

Addressing the Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War has been a key driver of the conflict and violence experienced in Syria that pushes thousands of people away from their homes.¹³² Both the Syrian Government Forces and Rebel Fighters have continued to neglect the safety and security of citizens living in conflict zones and both sides are responsible for the insurmountable casualties and displacement caused by the war.¹³³ Likewise, countries directly supporting the Rebel or Government forces through military, financial, or logistical aid are continuing to fuel this crisis.¹³⁴ Although the UNSC has been involved in providing humanitarian aid and issuing ceasefires, the council has yet to pass a resolution regarding any military involvement.¹³⁵ In addition to this, the council has been split in which sides it supports, with Russia and China supporting Bashar al-Assad and the USA, France and UK supporting the Free Syrian Army.¹³⁶ In recent years, the solution to divide Syria into autonomous confederation zones has been popularised, given the failure of past agreements in addressing the Civil War.¹³⁷ This solution would split Syria into two sovereign nations, providing governance to both the Assad government and the opposition coalitions.¹³⁸ Countries currently supporting either side could also help administer or fund humanitarian aid without opposing or being in direct conflict with each other and promote the stability in the region. However, this solution would carry setbacks on both sides. The Assad regime would lose territory and control over parts of its country while Rebel fighters would not stop the authoritarian power from continuing. Nevertheless, the continual safety and security of these two independent zones would not be guaranteed, with either side having the power to continue the war at any moment. In a similar manner, the council can also consider mutually reducing its funding to these conflicting sides.¹³⁹ The Syrian Civil War has been a proxy war, propped up by resources from opposing countries including those in the UNSC. By mutually reducing resource and military commitments in the region, the fighting would be less intensive with weapons being of limited supply and thereby attempting to fizzle the war out. This would be contingent on an agreement from both sides to reduce their influence, or else it would further destabilise the nation. Mediators within the council may be used to ensure the reduction in support for Syria from opposing sides is properly enacted.

¹³²<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/syria>

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴<https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/9880vt65s>

¹³⁵<https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/syria/#:~:text=The%20grave%20situation%20across%20Syria,directly%20violated%20many%20of%20them.>

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/3-strategies-to-address-the-syrian-civil-war/>

¹³⁸<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/16/world/middleeast/syria-kurds-force.html>

¹³⁹<https://tcf.org/content/commentary/politics-memory-ten-years-war-syria/>

Employment and Housing Provisions for Refugees

In recent months, stability for Syrian Refugees living in neighbouring countries has been significantly disrupted.¹⁴⁰ In host countries, refugees often experience discrimination when trying to access employment and social programs. Additionally, countries have begun deporting Syrian refugees back into conflict zones, jeopardising their safety and livelihoods.¹⁴¹ These countries hosting Syrian refugees are often underdeveloped and lack proper funding to support entirely new populations which is used to justify their deportation.¹⁴² Syrian refugees should have access to basic housing and social services. It is imperative that these host countries of Syrian refugees are provided with adequate funding and resources to allow Syrian refugees to stay in neighbouring countries and experience an adequate quality of life.¹⁴³ This could be achieved through multiple avenues. Firstly, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders, and the International Rescue Committee working directly in Syria can be provided funding to help aid Syrian refugees access essential services and temporary housing.¹⁴⁴ In refugee host countries, either governments, or NGOs working to help refugees settle into their host country and provide employment can also be provided the resources to do so. Recognizing and addressing the economic burden that refugees have on host countries can help reduce deportations of Syrian refugees and improve general sentiment towards in hosting countries. Likely, funding these projects may be costly with developed countries footing the cost for these projects.¹⁴⁵ However, wealthier countries will need an incentive to fund this project so that the outcomes are mutually beneficial. These incentives can include a redistribution of refugee quotas from developed countries, where a host country agrees to accept a greater number of refugees in return for financial assistance. Another incentive for developed countries to provide aid and accept refugees could involve offering preferential trade agreements or tariff reductions to countries hosting significant numbers of refugees. This trade incentive could enhance economic opportunities for both the host country and the developed nation, promoting stability and growth in the region while providing the refugees with better prospects for employment and self-sufficiency. It is important to note that there must be oversight to ensure any funds are diverted to helping refugees and potential quotas are fulfilled and accounted for by intake countries.

Aiding Internally Displaced Refugees (IDPs)

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²<https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/03/economic-burden-or-opportunity-how-syrian-refugees.html>

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴<https://www.rescue.org/press-release/32-ngos-urge-un-security-council-renew-critical-syria-cross-border-aid>

¹⁴⁵<https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/opportunity-rebuild-life-how-access-employment-helps-syrian-refugees-become-self>

Since the start of the conflict in Syria, the violence has displaced millions of people out of their homes.¹⁴⁶ While some refugees fled to other countries, roughly 6.9 million displaced persons stayed in the country and continue to experience instability on a daily basis.¹⁴⁷ This internal crisis has been exacerbated by natural disasters such as wildfires, storms and earthquakes which has made these IDPs even more vulnerable.¹⁴⁸ Without a stable home, IDPs have resorted to living in refugee camps within Syria.¹⁴⁹ In these camps, there is little access to clean water, consistent food sources and adequate medical care.¹⁵⁰ Even if the Syrian Civil War continues, the treatment of IDPs cannot and these discrepancies in quality of life must be addressed. Establishing more permanent settlements that are equipped with clean water, food supply and access to medical aid is crucial to rebuilding Syria.¹⁵¹ These settlements can replace existing temporary shelters to allow IDPs to live in more habitable, stable homes. In addition, creating these communities could reinstate employment and educational opportunities for Syrians living in these newly established communities. Finding and securing regional developers is the first step, no matter which funding method the council chooses and would ensure these settlements can be properly developed. Moreover, the council can either approach this through individual country investments as many have done before, or through a unified, collective investment that would all aim to establish more permanent residences for these IDPs. Following the footsteps of independent investments such as the Belt and Road initiative from China and the Build Back Better World by the USA, these projects have helped improve developing nations infrastructure and economy in return for diplomatic and future economic integration.¹⁵² Although Syria has joined the Belt and Road Initiative, this funding can be significantly expanded to improve the living conditions of those living in Syria as IDPs. Alternatively, the council can provide a unified investment through loans or trade agreements that would bolster relations and economic ties following a post-war Syria.¹⁵³ No matter which form of investment is decided, it is imperative that these new settlements are protected from any conflict or IDPs will continue to experience instability, limiting community rebuilding efforts.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸<https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2023-turkey-and-syria-earthquake-faqs#:~:text=In%20Syria%2C%20the%20earthquake%20exacerbated,people%20in%20Syria%20and%20Turkey.>

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰<https://equityhealthj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12939-022-01626-3>

¹⁵¹<https://doi.org/10.38027/iccaua2021307n6>

¹⁵²<https://diplomatist.com/2022/02/04/syria-joins-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/>

¹⁵³<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/8/it-is-time-to-rethink-how-we-deliver-aid-to-syria>

Bloc Positions

Russia and China

Russia and China are the only two countries within the UNSC to actively support Basar al-Assad.¹⁵⁴ Russia has been continually supplying Syria with weapons and even conducting joint military operations against rebel fighters.¹⁵⁵ Likewise, China has been expanding trade with the Assad government through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which indirectly fuels the fighting in Syria.¹⁵⁶ Both Russia and China will likely be proponents of the Assad government's military operations and its national sovereignty.¹⁵⁷ They will be in favour of any end to the conflict that puts the interests of the Assad government ahead of those of rebel groups supported by the West.¹⁵⁸ That being said, these countries have historically been less accepting of refugees entering their countries.¹⁵⁹ Instead, they would likely be proponents of rebuilding efforts aligned with pre-existing trade agreements such as the BRI. These investments would help rebuild homes and improve access to social services to displaced refugees that subvertly increases their soft power and influence in the region. Expanding Syria's economy and reducing sanctions would also increase job opportunities and help rebuilding efforts to make Syria less reliant on foreign aid in the future.¹⁶⁰

Europe

Historically, European countries have accepted the most refugees compared to other developed nations.¹⁶¹ Their close proximity to the Middle East combined with the stability and opportunities present in Europe have made it a key destination for Syrian refugees.¹⁶² However, the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine War has seemingly put a pause on Syrian migrants while accepting those from Ukraine despite asylum applications continuing.¹⁶³ Although below the peak of the refugee crisis, sea arrivals of migrants in frontline countries reached its third highest rate in 2023, signalling a dire crisis ahead.¹⁶⁴ To prioritise the protection of refugees, these countries may consider implementing a safer and more efficient asylum process to address the refugee crisis. This includes providing a safe

¹⁵⁴<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-un-idUSKBN1YO23V>

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶<https://www.voanews.com/a/china-s-belt-and-road-risk-in-syria-may-reap-big-rewards-/6415768.html>

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/syria-china-assad-financial-rescue-unlikely>

¹⁵⁹<https://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-china-forgotten-refugees-2017108-story.html>

¹⁶⁰<https://coar-global.org/2022/07/11/china-in-syria-aid-and-trade-now-influence-and-industry-later/>

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²<https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/04/europes-great-challenge-integrating-syrian-refugees.html>

¹⁶³<https://abcnews.go.com/International/europes-unified-ukrainian-refugees-exposes-double-standard-nonwhite/story?id=83251970>

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

passage and transportation of refugees, providing them with refugee status to prevent backlog and reintegrate them into society through employment and housing provisions.¹⁶⁵ These can include border passages through Turkey, airlifting refugees out of conflict zones or establishing safer, sea networks to connect Syrian refugees into Europe. That being said, European countries with stricter border policies may be opposed to these measures. Some European countries have provided support for Syrian rebel groups that oppose the Syrian government since the conflict began.¹⁶⁶ Although they will likely continue supporting rebel groups, these nations would also want to see an end to this conflict by establishing peace talks and agreements involving both sides to reach consensus.¹⁶⁷ By adopting solutions mentioned above, it would allow these countries to divert funds originally supporting military efforts to redevelopment measures. These could include redevelopment measures and the establishment of stable jobs and homes that would provide economic and social opportunities to those living in post-war Syria and have a more optimistic outlook.¹⁶⁸

Middle East

The Middle East currently holds the majority of Syrian refugees and many refugee camps and settlements. In recent years, countries including Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan have begun deporting Syrian refugees back into conflict zones.¹⁶⁹ With this in mind, these countries will likely be strongly opposed to accepting more refugees.¹⁷⁰ These countries have been heavily involved in supporting the war through the provision of weapons and financial aid.¹⁷¹ With the majority of Middle Eastern countries supporting rebel groups fighting against the Assad regime, they will want a solution to prioritise the rebel fighters.¹⁷² Given their close proximity to the fighting, they would strongly support a resolution to this war.¹⁷³ Likely siding with European and Western nations, they would want to ensure any resolution to the war opposes the repression of the Syrian government and prioritises the wellbeing of the Syrian people. That being said, some Arab nations have begun forming diplomatic ties with Syria, including its inclusion into the Arab League.¹⁷⁴ Middle Eastern countries would also be in favour of rebuilding efforts to exert their influence and soft power in Syria.¹⁷⁵ Wealthier nations in this bloc may consider funding

¹⁶⁵<https://www.msf.org/migration-how-stop-rising-tide-death-mediterranean>

¹⁶⁶<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-syria-crisis-eu-idUKBRE91H0GT20130218>

¹⁶⁷https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/stories/12-years-war-syria-suffering-without-end-aid-across-borders_en

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰<https://www.refugeesinternational.org/statements-and-news/us-un-must-push-back-against-arab-league-plans-for-premature-return-of-refugees-to-syria/>

¹⁷¹<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34479929>

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/8/how-has-the-world-reacted-to-syria-rejoining-the-arab-league>

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/rebuilding-syria-middle-east-s-next-power-game>

infrastructure and housing developments that would bolster the reformed Syrian economy and allow the country to rebuild following the aftermath of the Syrian Civil War.¹⁷⁶

Africa

Although the majority of African countries have condemned the Bashar-al Assad's government, many of them continue to hold diplomatic ties to the regime because of the prospect of development and economic growth expected in post-war Syria.¹⁷⁷ Given the developing nature of many of these countries' economies, they may not be able to house refugees. Rather, these countries would advocate for developed countries to provide humanitarian and medical aid to refugees through multiple outlets including NGOs or direct aid.^{178 179} However, many countries in this bloc may not have the necessary funds to support such projects and would turn to developed countries to fund such projects.¹⁸⁰ Countries in this bloc can still be involved by designing the framework and approving such projects within the council. They are proponents of ending the conflict in Syria, focusing on a peaceful, negotiated resolution that ensures the rights of all Syrians.¹⁸¹ Their continued diplomatic engagement can allow for a more nuanced approach, seeking stability while working with both sides of the conflict.¹⁸² These African nations are committed to promoting lasting peace in the region.¹⁸³

The Americas

With the exception of Canada, The Americas involvement in accepting Syrian refugees has been minimal.¹⁸⁴ Their involvement in this crisis has been primarily in supporting humanitarian projects and opposing the oppressive Assad government.¹⁸⁵ Although not directly involved in fighting, the US and its allies have continued to supply Syrian rebel fighters with weapons and funding despite scaling back its operations in the nation in 2019.¹⁸⁶ When approaching this crisis, these countries will want to focus on preserving human rights and protecting refugees.¹⁸⁷ First and foremost, establishing more permanent, safe housing for refugees can focus on rebuilding the country and allowing Syrian refugees living in IDP camps to have a better quality of life. If willing, these countries can also accept refugees and create transportation networks to allow Syrian refugees to arrive in North

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/syria-normalizing-relations-arab-countries-who-will-benefit>

¹⁷⁸<https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2013/09/11/syria-a-view-from-africa/>

¹⁷⁹<https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2013/09/11/syria-a-view-from-africa/>

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹<https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/statement-of-the-africa-forum-on-the-situation-in-syria.pdf>

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-russias-wagner-group-doing-africa>

¹⁸⁴<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/syrian-refugees-face-a-grim-future-without-international-policy-shifts/>

¹⁸⁵<https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/jun-15-2023-united-states-announces-920-million-additional-humanitarian-assistance-people-syria>

¹⁸⁶<https://www.vox.com/world-politics/2023/6/15/23669622/syria-900-us-troops-forever-war-isis-assad>

¹⁸⁷<https://theglobalamericans.org/2016/04/syria-vote/>

America.¹⁸⁸ Lastly, some countries, particularly those in South America, have maintained diplomatic relations with Syria and may be willing to negotiate with the Assad government for a more peaceful resolution to the war.¹⁸⁹

Discussion Questions

1. What are some possible barriers that may hinder a refugee's ability to be reintegrated into society? What strategies can be used to mitigate these barriers?
2. Should countries be allowed to deport Syrian refugees?
3. How can IDPs living in Syria gain access to a safe, permanent home?
4. What outlets should this council prioritise when funding humanitarian aid projects?
5. How should the council end the conflict while recognizing the priorities of both sides of the Syrian Civil War?
6. In what ways can governments be held more accountable for war crimes?
7. How can the council divert Syrian refugees to developed countries that may have anti-migrant policies?

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¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/latin-america-silent-over-war-in-syria/1115543>

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