KMUN 2024

UNHRC

Discussing the human rights violations taking place due to the Syrian civil war and its international implications.

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Human Rights Council at KMUN 2024! We, your Directors, Rushan Shah, and Sanvi Rao are thrilled to be a part of your EB for UNHRC this year. We are both experienced and passionate munners and our shared goal as the DIAS of your committee is to provide a transformative and educational experience for all of you young and passionate delegates. However, you will not be the only ones learning. I want to thank you in advance for the transformative and educational experience that We, ourselves, will have all because of you! We are counting down the days until we get to embark on this exciting journey through 'HRC' together at KMUN 24'.

Model UN teaches students the invaluable skills of negotiating and public speaking, but more importantly, MUN teaches in delegates the intricacies of what it takes to solve the world's most pressing international issues. Throughout this conference, you will be challenged to think outside of the box as you step into the shoes of global leaders, shoes that you one day will actually fill. This is meant to be an educational experience, not just a competition. You will be rewarded in our committee if you cooperate - We value collaboration above all else. There is a way to lead with kindness. This is not the time to be the loudest voice. Instead, be the ears that hear everyone's ideas and bring them together to create a cohesive resolution. We look forward to watching the debate unfold. Please do not hesitate to reach either of us via email if you have any questions at all.

All the best,

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Introduction to the Human Rights Council

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system, founded in 2006 to replace the former Commission on Human Rights. It is tasked with the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide and addressing human rights violations in various regions. The Council is composed of 47 member states, elected by the UN General Assembly for staggered three-year terms, ensuring balanced geographical representation.

Mandate and Functioning: The UNHRC functions as a forum for dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues. It serves as a platform where member states and observers discuss and address human rights violations. The Council reviews the human rights records of all UN member states through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, which occurs every four years. Additionally, the Council appoints special procedures, such as special rapporteurs, experts, and working groups, to investigate specific human rights concerns and provide recommendations.

Key Procedures:

1. **Universal Periodic Review (UPR):** A peer review process where all 193 UN member states' human rights records are assessed. The aim is to improve the human rights situation in every country by offering recommendations and fostering constructive dialogue.

2. **Special Procedures:** These are independent human rights experts assigned to examine specific thematic or country-specific issues. Their reports often form the basis for discussions in the Council.
   The powers of special procedures are:
      i. Undertake country visits.

ii.   Act on individual cases of reported violations and concerns of a broader nature by sending communications to States and others.

iii.   Contribute to the development of international human rights standards.

iv.   Engage in advocacy, raise public awareness, and provide advice for technical cooperation.

b. Special Rapporteurs: These are one of 2 the kinds of special procedures, individual experts appointed by the good offices of the Office of the High Commisioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), these are established by Human Rights Council and generally follow a 3 year mandate.

c. Independent Experts/Working Groups: This is the second kind of special procedures, a group of generally 5 experts are selected by the same means, mandate and time frame.

3. **Resolutions and Recommendations:** The Council can pass resolutions addressing human rights violations and suggest international actions. These resolutions, while non-binding, hold significant moral and diplomatic weight.

4. **Complaint Procedure:** This confidential procedure allows individuals and organisations to report consistent patterns of gross human rights violations to the Council.

Key Aspects:

- **Promoting International Human Rights Norms:** The UNHRC upholds the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other core international human rights treaties.

- **Addressing Country-Specific and Thematic Issues:** The Council regularly discusses urgent human rights situations in specific countries or regions, while also addressing broader thematic issues like freedom of expression, gender equality, and the rights of minorities.

- **Interactive Dialogue and Debate:** Open discussions are encouraged, where member states, observers, and civil society can engage constructively. The emphasis is on building consensus, although voting on resolutions also occurs when consensus cannot be reached.

History & Significance of the Human Rights Council

The United Nations Human Rights Programme (UNHRP) was first established as a department at UN Headquarters in the 1940s. Later, in response to its increasing significance, this section was relocated to Geneva and given the title of Center for Human Rights in the 1980s. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights resulted in the ratification of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which included detailed suggestions for bolstering UN human rights monitoring. As a result, in December 1993, the UN established the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a crucial position that improved the UN's capacity to monitor human rights throughout the world.

The UNHRP has expanded in both size and reach since its founding, especially following the 1948 ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first global articulation of fundamental civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights was this Declaration. International human rights law has evolved over time to cover new topics, providing marginalised groups including indigenous peoples, the LGBTI community, and individuals with disabilities with increased protection. The importance of human rights in maintaining international peace, security, and development initiatives has been reaffirmed with the creation of organisations like the Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court as well as the support of business-related human rights standards.

The Agenda

Discussing the human rights violations taking place due to the Syrian civil war and its international implications. This is the agenda of KMUN's UNHRC 2024.

The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011 as part of the broader wave of protests across the Arab world, has become one of the most devastating and complex conflicts in recent history. What started as peaceful protests against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad quickly escalated into a full-scale civil war, involving multiple factions, external powers, and

-state actors. The war has not only destabilised Syria but has also had far-reaching consequences for the region and the international community.

Human Rights Violations in Syria: Since the outbreak of the conflict, the human rights situation in Syria has been marked by severe violations, with all parties involved—government forces, opposition groups, and extremist factions—committing atrocities. Some of the most critical human rights violations include:

1. **Targeting of Civilians:** Syrian government forces, as well as rebel and extremist groups, have been accused of intentionally targeting civilians. Indiscriminate bombings, including the use of barrel bombs and chemical weapons, have resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of non-combatants.

2. **Torture and Enforced Disappearances:** Arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearances have been widespread, particularly in government-controlled areas. Human rights organizations have documented the systemic use of torture in Syrian prisons, including in facilities run by the Syrian intelligence services.

3. **Sieges and Starvation:** Both government and rebel forces have employed siege tactics, cutting off food, water, and medical supplies to civilian populations. The deliberate use of starvation as a weapon of war has been condemned as a violation of international humanitarian law.

4. **Attacks on Medical Facilities and Personnel:** Hospitals, clinics, and ambulances have been targeted throughout the conflict, violating international protections afforded to medical personnel and facilities under the Geneva Conventions.

5. **Use of Chemical Weapons:** There have been numerous instances of chemical weapon use, most notably the 2013 Ghouta attack, where sarin gas was used, killing hundreds. Despite international efforts to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons stockpile, such attacks have continued, sparking global outrage.

6. **Forced Displacement and Refugees:** The war has resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in modern history, with more than 13 million Syrians displaced, both internally and as refugees in neighbouring countries and beyond. This has put

immense strain on host countries and sparked political debates on immigration, security, and human rights worldwide.

International Implications *(learn more about this in the Impact on Stakeholders sub-section of the study guide)***:** The Syrian conflict has not only been a national catastrophe but also a geopolitical flashpoint, with numerous international actors involved, further complicating the situation and exacerbating human rights violations.

1. **Foreign Intervention:** Countries such as Russia, Iran, and Turkey have played significant roles in the conflict, often pursuing their own strategic interests. Russia and Iran have supported the Assad regime militarily, while Turkey has been involved in both supporting rebel groups and conducting operations against Kurdish forces in northern Syria. Western countries, including the United States and members of the European Union, have conducted airstrikes against ISIS and provided humanitarian assistance, while also supporting certain rebel factions.

2. **Terrorist Groups:** The power vacuum created by the war enabled extremist groups such as ISIS and the al-Nusra Front (affiliated with al-Qaeda) to gain territory and influence. These groups have been responsible for extreme violence, including mass executions, sexual slavery, and the destruction of cultural heritage.

3. **Refugee Crisis:** The massive influx of refugees fleeing Syria has posed significant challenges to neighbouring countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. The crisis has also reached Europe, sparking political debates on asylum, security, and integration policies.

4. **Global Security Threats:** The Syrian war has heightened global security concerns, particularly with the rise of ISIS, which has conducted terrorist attacks worldwide. The conflict has also drawn in foreign fighters, creating a potential threat of radicalised individuals returning to their home countries.

5. **Diplomatic Stalemate:** Numerous peace initiatives, including the Geneva peace talks and efforts by the United Nations, have failed to bring about a lasting resolution. The involvement of multiple international actors with competing interests has hindered diplomatic progress.

International Humanitarian Response *(learn more about this in the solutions subsection of the study guide)* **:** The international community has been active in responding to the Syrian crisis, although efforts have often been hindered by political divisions. Key international responses include:

1. **UN Resolutions and Investigations:** The UN has passed multiple resolutions condemning human rights violations in Syria and calling for ceasefires. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria has been tasked with investigating war crimes and human rights abuses, documenting numerous violations.

2. **Humanitarian Aid:** International organisations such as the UNHCR, UNICEF, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been providing essential humanitarian aid to those affected by the war, including refugees, displaced persons, and vulnerable populations.

3. **International Criminal Justice:** There have been calls for accountability for the perpetrators of war crimes in Syria, with some advocating for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute individuals responsible for severe human rights violations. However, efforts to refer the situation to the ICC have been blocked by political divisions within the UN Security Council. As Syria is not a part of the Rome Statute, limiting ICC jurisdiction.

As delegates of the UNHRC, your task will be to address these complex and interrelated issues, focusing on how the international community can effectively respond to the human rights violations taking place in Syria, while considering the broader implications for global peace, security, and human rights.

Timeline of Events

Key events in Syria

1946-1970: Early Independence and Political Instability
Syria gained independence from France in 1946, marking the end of French rule. In 1947, the

th party, an Arab nationalist party, held its first congress. After Syria's defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, political instability ensued, leading to a series of military coups between 1949 and 1954. Syria briefly merged with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic in 1958, but this union dissolved in 1961. The Baʿth party came to power after a 1963 coup, followed by internal factional struggles until Ḥafiz al-Assad seized power in 1970.

1970-2000: Assad's Rule and Regional Influence

Under Ḥafiz al-Assad, Syria became a major regional player, engaging in wars with Israel (1973), intervening in the Lebanese civil war (1976), and being designated by the U.S. as a state sponsor of terrorism (1979). Domestic unrest grew in the 1980s, leading to the brutal suppression of Islamist uprisings, particularly in Ḥamāh (1982). Assad solidified his control until his death in 2000, when his son Bashar al-Assad succeeded him as president.

2000-2010: Bashar al-Assad's Rule and Regional Tensions

Bashar al-Assad's initial presidency raised hopes for reform, but by 2001, he had initiated crackdowns on reformists. Tensions with Lebanon escalated, leading to the withdrawal of Syrian troops in 2005 after the assassination of Lebanese PM Rafiq al-Hariri. In 2010, Syria imposed restrictions on the niqāb in schools, signalling continued government control over social and religious matters.

Uprising in Syria 2011 onwards

2011: Inspired by regional uprisings, small protests begin in Syria. Arrests of children in Darʿā spark larger protests. Security forces crack down violently, with dozens killed. Protests spread, and the death toll rises despite Assad's lifting of the emergency law. International sanctions start as the violence continues. Reports emerge of soldiers defecting to form the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Thousands flee the violence. Assad blames foreign conspiracies. The UN estimates 3,000 deaths. Russia and China veto a UN resolution condemning Syria. Global sanctions expand.The Arab League suspends Syria and imposes sanctions. By the year's end, over 5,000 people are reported dead.

2012: In 2012, the Syrian Civil War saw intensified conflict and diplomatic efforts. The UN ended its monitoring mission in August, and UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi expressed pessimism about peace prospects in September. The Syrian opposition formed a new

...lition, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, in November, gaining international recognition. The year was marked by increasing destruction, including a fire in Aleppo's historic market and growing humanitarian crises.

2013: 2013 saw rising violence and international involvement. By January, the UN reported 60,000 deaths. March allegations of chemical weapons use near Aleppo went unverified. The U.S. considered military action in August following alleged chemical attacks in Damascus suburbs. A diplomatic resolution emerged in September with a U.S.-Russia plan to control Syria's chemical weapons. The year ended with over 100,000 reported casualties.

2014: In 2014, Syria saw significant territorial and international shifts. The Geneva II conference in January ended without progress. By June, Syria's chemical weapons were removed under a U.S.-Russian agreement. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) declared a caliphate and expanded its control. In September, the U.S. and Arab allies expanded their air campaign against ISIL in both Iraq and Syria.

2015: The year 2015 brought increased international military involvement. Russia began air strikes in Syria in September, supporting the Assad regime. ISIL's capture and destruction of Palmyra in May highlighted the group's impact. The year was marked by intensified conflict and humanitarian challenges, with significant displacement and destruction.

2016: In 2016, Syria experienced intense fighting and territorial changes. Syrian forces, supported by Hezbollah and Russia, retook Palmyra in March. The conflict in Aleppo escalated, with a brief cease-fire collapsing in September. By December, the Syrian government declared victory in Aleppo, a significant win for the Assad regime.

2017: 2017 saw notable international military actions. The U.S. struck Shayrat air base in April in response to a chemical attack in Khan Shaykhun. Syrian Democratic Forces, supported by U.S. airstrikes, captured Al-Raqqah from ISIL in October. Pro-government forces also expelled ISIL from Dayr al-Zawr, consolidating regime control.

2018: In 2018, the Syrian conflict continued with international responses. In April, the U.S., U.K., and France conducted airstrikes on Syrian chemical weapons facilities after a chemical attack in Douma. Syrian forces intensified efforts to reclaim territory from rebels, achieving significant gains in the southwest region by mid-year.

2019: The year 2019 saw further military and political shifts. Turkey launched an offensive in northeastern Syria in October, targeting Kurdish forces. This move followed the U.S. decision to withdraw. The conflict in Idlib continued with Syrian government forces and Russian airstrikes, despite a cease-fire agreement in October, leading to ongoing humanitarian challenges.

2020: Turkey and Russian-backed Syrian government forces clash after dozens of Turkish soldiers are killed. A cease-fire is brokered by Turkey and Russia. Turkey launches an offensive into the Kurdish region of northeastern Syria, following the U.S. decision not to oppose such an incursion.

2021: The Syrian government declares the retaking of most of southern Syria, including Daraa province, which had been held by opposition forces. U.S. President Joe Biden's administration continues sanctions on Syria, including measures targeting the Assad regime's economic activities.

2022:

The UN reports that the humanitarian situation remains dire, with continued displacement and economic hardship exacerbated by the ongoing conflict. The Syrian government announces new reconstruction projects in areas under its control, despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

2023:

The UN launches a new appeal for humanitarian aid due to worsening conditions, including food shortages and health crises. Peace talks involving the Syrian government, opposition groups, and international stakeholders resume with limited progress, focusing on constitutional reforms and a potential ceasefire.

2024: On the 13th anniversary of the conflict, UN officials, including Geir Pedersen, call for a renewed focus on a comprehensive political solution, emphasising the need to address both humanitarian and political issues. The UN reports continued suffering and displacement, with efforts to address humanitarian needs ongoing amidst sporadic violence and political negotiations.

Impact on Stakeholders

The Syrian civil war has had profound and multifaceted impacts on a variety of stakeholders, each experiencing unique challenges due to the ongoing human rights violations. Understanding these specific impacts will allow for a more comprehensive approach to addressing the humanitarian crisis.

1. Syrian Civilians:

   ○ Direct Impact: Syrian civilians are the most affected by the conflict, facing daily threats to their lives, homes, and livelihoods. Indiscriminate bombings, chemical attacks, and sieges have resulted in mass casualties and trauma. Civilians have been subjected to torture, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearances, particularly in areas controlled by the Assad regime.

   ○ Humanitarian Crisis: The lack of access to basic necessities like food, clean water, and medical care has exacerbated the suffering. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly, face heightened risks of exploitation, gender-based violence, and human trafficking.

   ○ Displacement: More than 6.8 million Syrians have been internally displaced, and over 5.6 million have fled the country, creating one of the largest refugee crises in the world. Civilians often lack the means to relocate safely, forcing them into overcrowded and under-resourced refugee camps or urban settings in neighbouring countries.

2. Refugees and Host Countries:

   ○ Neighbouring Countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan): Turkey hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees, with over 3.6 million, while Lebanon and Jordan have taken in over 1.5 million and 670,000, respectively. These countries are under immense strain, facing challenges in providing adequate resources such as housing, healthcare, and education for refugees. Social tensions between host communities and refugees have also risen due to competition for jobs and resources.

- ○ Europe: The refugee crisis has extended beyond the Middle East, with Europe receiving a significant influx of Syrian asylum seekers. This has sparked political debates around immigration, national security, and integration. In several European countries, the arrival of refugees has fueled the rise of populist, anti-immigration political movements, complicating efforts to provide humanitarian assistance.

3. The Assad Regime:
   - ○ Political Survival: The Assad regime, despite facing international condemnation for human rights violations, has maintained control over key parts of Syria with the support of allies like Russia and Iran. For the regime, the war is seen as a fight for survival against domestic opposition and foreign intervention. The government has used repressive tactics, including chemical attacks, to crush dissent and maintain power.
   - ○ Economic and Political Isolation: The regime faces severe international sanctions, limiting its access to global markets and exacerbating the economic collapse of Syria. Although the government remains in power, its ability to rebuild and govern is hampered by the damage to infrastructure and a weakened economy.

4. Opposition Groups and Rebel Forces:
   - ○ Fragmentation and Extremism: Initially united in their opposition to Assad, rebel groups have splintered over time, with many factions turning to extremist ideologies. Groups like Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and ISIS have exploited the chaos, leading to human rights abuses within areas they control. The fragmentation has weakened the overall opposition, limiting their capacity to negotiate or form a cohesive government.
   - ○ Human Rights Violations: Rebel forces have been responsible for their own share of human rights abuses, including arbitrary killings, forced recruitment of child soldiers, and targeting of civilians. This has complicated international support for these groups, as backing opposition factions has the potential to inadvertently fuel further violations.

5. International Actors:

- ○ Russia and Iran: Both Russia and Iran have played key roles in propping up the Assad regime. Russia's military intervention in 2015 tipped the balance of power in Assad's favour, allowing the regime to regain critical territory. Russia's airstrikes, however, have drawn international criticism for indiscriminately targeting civilian areas, resulting in numerous human rights violations. Iran, on the other hand, has supported Assad primarily through financial and military assistance, while deploying militias to fight on the ground.
- ○ Western Countries (USA, EU): The United States and European Union have focused on combating ISIS while supporting moderate rebel groups. They have also provided substantial humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees. However, Western countries are often criticised for not doing enough to protect civilians from Assad's atrocities, with diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict repeatedly stalling. Additionally, international sanctions on Syria have contributed to the country's economic collapse, impacting civilians more than the regime.
- ○ Turkey: Turkey has intervened in northern Syria, primarily targeting Kurdish forces, which it views as a security threat. This intervention has had a destabilising effect on the region, with accusations of war crimes by Turkish-backed militias. Turkey's actions have also been criticised for worsening the humanitarian situation in Kurdish-held areas. However, safe zones have been constructed for refugee relief.

6. Kurdish Forces (SDF/YPG):
   - ○ Autonomy and Human Rights Concerns: Kurdish forces, particularly the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the People's Protection Units (YPG), have controlled large swaths of northern Syria. They have been instrumental in the fight against ISIS, receiving support from Western nations. However, Kurdish forces have been accused of human rights abuses, including forced displacement of Arab populations and recruiting child soldiers. Turkey's military operations in the region have also put Kurdish forces in a vulnerable position, threatening the stability of their autonomous regions.

7. Terrorist Groups (ISIS, HTS):

- ○ Rise of Extremism: The collapse of state authority in parts of Syria allowed terrorist groups like ISIS and HTS to gain control over significant territories. These groups have committed extreme violations of human rights, including mass executions, slavery, and the destruction of cultural heritage sites. ISIS, in particular, used social media to recruit foreign fighters, spreading its influence far beyond Syria's borders.
- ○ Global Threat: The rise of ISIS posed a direct threat to global security, leading to military interventions by a coalition of countries, including the United States and European nations. Even after the territorial defeat of ISIS, its ideology and networks of fighters remain active, creating ongoing security concerns worldwide.

Solutions

Proposed Solutions for Syria:

1. **Political Resolution:**
   - ○ **Comprehensive Political Solution:** UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen emphasises the need for a comprehensive political solution to restore Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, allowing Syrians to live in dignity and shape their future.
   - ○ **Confidence-Building Measures:** Actions such as step-for-step confidence-building measures, advancing constitutional talks, and achieving a nationwide ceasefire are recommended.
2. **Humanitarian Efforts:**
   - ○ **Increased Aid:** The UN highlights the need for durable solutions beyond humanitarian aid due to the immense suffering and displacement crisis in Syria.
3. **Response to Recent Disasters:**
   - ○ **Earthquake Impact:** The recent earthquakes have compounded the crisis, emphasising the urgency of addressing humanitarian needs and the potential for these events to act as a turning point for political progress.
4. **Support for Children:**
   - ○ **Malnutrition Crisis:** UNICEF warns of rising malnutrition among Syrian children, with a significant increase in severe acute malnutrition and stunted

growth. Urgent action is needed to address these issues and alleviate the suffering of millions of young Syrians.

5. **Call to Action:**
   ○ **Collective Responsibility:** There is a call for all stakeholders to demonstrate determination and pursue lasting peace to enable Syrians to rebuild their lives.

Key Actors

Syrian Government: Led by President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian government is the primary actor in the conflict. Assad's regime has maintained control over significant parts of Syria, including major urban centres like Damascus and Aleppo. Supported by Russia and Iran, the government has utilised both conventional military tactics and chemical weapons to suppress opposition forces. The regime's goal has been to restore and consolidate control over the entire country, using both military force and strategic alliances to achieve its objectives.

Rebel Groups: The Syrian opposition consists of various rebel groups, ranging from moderate factions to extremist organisations. Initially unified by a common desire to overthrow Assad, the opposition has since fragmented into numerous factions, each with its own agenda and foreign backing. Groups like the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and the Syrian National Coalition sought to establish a democratic government, while more radical elements, such as the al-Nusra Front and later Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, pursued Islamist agendas. The diversity within the rebel ranks has complicated the conflict and efforts toward a unified opposition.

Kurdish Forces: The Kurdish forces, primarily the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the People's Protection Units (YPG), have been significant actors in northern Syria. They have sought autonomy and control over Kurdish-majority areas, particularly in the northeast. The SDF, which includes Kurdish, Arab, and other ethnic fighters, has been a key ally of the United States in the fight against ISIL. Their control over territory has led to tensions with Turkey, which views Kurdish groups as extensions of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), a recognized terrorist organisation.

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL): ISIL, also known as ISIS, emerged as a major force in the Syrian Civil War by capturing large swaths of territory in both Syria and Iraq. Known for its brutal tactics and radical ideology, ISIL declared a caliphate in 2014 under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The group's control over cities like Raqqa and Palmyra, along with its dissemination of propaganda and destruction of cultural heritage, made it a significant actor

the conflict. International coalitions, led by the U.S., targeted ISIL with military operations, eventually leading to the group's territorial defeat by 2019.

Russia: Russia has played a pivotal role in the Syrian Civil War, intervening militarily in support of the Assad regime since September 2015. Russian airstrikes and military support have significantly bolstered the Syrian government's capacity to reclaim territory from rebel and ISIL forces. Russia's involvement has also influenced diplomatic negotiations and the broader geopolitical landscape of the conflict, positioning it as a major power broker in Syria.

Iran: Iran is a key ally of the Assad regime, providing military support, including funding, weapons, and advisors. Iran's involvement has been driven by its strategic interests in maintaining a Shia axis through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon, where Hezbollah operates. Iranian support has been crucial for the Assad regime, particularly in sustaining long-term military campaigns and countering various opposition and extremist groups.

United States: The U.S. has been involved in the Syrian conflict primarily through its campaign against ISIL and support for Kurdish forces. While initially reluctant to engage directly in the Syrian Civil War, the U.S. led a coalition against ISIL, conducted airstrikes, and provided support to various opposition groups. The U.S. involvement also included diplomatic efforts and sanctions aimed at pressuring the Assad regime to negotiate and address humanitarian concerns.

United Nations (UN): The UN has played a central role in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Syria and seeking a political solution to the conflict. The UN's efforts include coordinating aid, advocating for ceasefires, and facilitating peace talks. The UN Security Council has passed resolutions aimed at ensuring humanitarian access and pressuring warring parties to negotiate. Despite these efforts, achieving a comprehensive peace has been challenging due to geopolitical divisions among Security Council members and the complex nature of the conflict.

European Union (EU): The EU has been actively involved in responding to the Syrian crisis through humanitarian aid, diplomatic efforts, and sanctions. The EU has provided substantial funding for relief operations and supported initiatives to address the refugee crisis resulting from the war. It has also imposed sanctions on the Assad regime and worked to support diplomatic solutions through various international forums. The EU's involvement reflects its commitment to addressing the humanitarian impact of the conflict and seeking a political resolution, though its efforts have been complicated by internal divisions and differing member state priorities.

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Delegates, here are a few more sources you can add to your research list that will ameliorate the thoroughness of your research:

1. **Human Rights Watch - Syria**

   https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/syria

   This provides detailed reports on human rights violations committed by various actors in Syria, including government forces, rebel groups, and external powers.

2. **Amnesty International - Syria Reports**

   https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/

Amnesty International offers a comprehensive view of the human rights abuses in Syria, including reports on unlawful killings, torture, and the plight of refugees.

3. **The New Lines Institute - Syria Analysis**

https://newlinesinstitute.org/syria

This source focuses on geopolitical analysis, providing insight into the shifting interests of international actors involved in the Syrian conflict and their influence on the situation.

4. **ReliefWeb - Syria Updates**

https://reliefweb.int/country/syr

ReliefWeb is an excellent resource for humanitarian updates, covering ongoing crises, refugee situations, and efforts by international aid organisations.

5. **United Nations - Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria**

https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/index

This UN report provides legal frameworks and analysis of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violations of international human rights law in Syria.

Glossary

Declaration - A non binding written instrument, in international law, it is a set of international/internationally recognized principles.

Thematic - Relating to a particular theme, in this case a particular area of scope as a general area of issue

Extremists - A general, more broader term used for terrorism, it is not an outrightly recognized term on the international forum.

Factions - A small group or groups with particular stances and sides, generally in the political sense, but in this case includes terrorist factions etc.

Combatants and Non-Combatatants: As mentioned in the Geneva Convention, all members of the armed forces of a party to the conflict are combatants, except medical and religious personnel. Any individual or entity not fitting this description is a non-comabtant.

Arbitrary - In this case, unlawfully, without reason.

Siege - A military tactic where forces surround a physical structure forcing those within it to surrender.

Displaced Persons - Individuals forced to relocate and move away from their original place of residence due to armed conflict or other factors.

Ceasefire - A mutual agreement between parties to an armed conflict to stop all acts of violence for peaceful purposes.

Accountability - State or Non State accountability refers to acceptance for an intentional or unintentional wrongful act.

Niqab - A type of garment worn by Islamic Women similar to hijab

Veto - A power given to the P5 Nations of the United Nations Security Council, where a no vote of any of the P5 on any non procedural resolution means that the entire resolution fails.

Sanction - Include economic, military or legal sanctions which are imposed on state or non state actors that commit intentionally wrongful acts.

Dear Delegates, that's the end of this study guide, please feel free to reach out to us in case you have any questions! Research well! All the best!