



**Dear Delegates,**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2018 University of Central Punjab MUN.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at UCPMUN 2018 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the UCPMUN'18 experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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# **SPECPOL**

## **Special Political and Decolonization**

### **Fourth Committee**

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The Special Political and Decolonization Committee deals with a variety of subjects which include those related to decolonization, Palestinian refugees and human rights, peacekeeping, mine action, outer space, public information, atomic radiation and University for Peace.

With 193 states, SPECPOL has worked with the aim to ensure developing, previously colonized, countries are no more dependent on developed nations for their progress. Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter commits to protecting the rights of people residing in non-self-governing territories defining the mandate for the 4th general assembly. According to the already laid down committee mandate for SPECPOL; issues such as decolonization, peacekeeping and self-determination should be the focus of discussion. Its primary goal is independence and self-sufficiency for every nation state, however, according to its mandate; SPECPOL cannot take military action and most of the resolutions passed are done so as suggestions to the United Nations Security Council to determine whether the plan of action should be implemented or not.

In its current role, the Fourth Committee can be viewed as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) entrance door, since the questions discussed at the Security Council are often assessed earlier by SPECPOL — not only because the committee's approach is broader in terms of international security, but also because it allows all UN member states to be heard before the question reaches other UN instances. This explains the fact that although SPECPOL's resolutions are not binding, they are still very appealing, since they reflect the opinion of the majority of countries regarding substantive matters.

# **AGENDA 1**

## **THE SITUATION IN LIBYA**

### **Introduction**

With an area of almost 1.8 million square kilometres, Libya is the fourth largest country in Africa, with over a million citizens in the capital Tripoli. Of significant International interest Libya has the 10<sup>th</sup> largest proven oil reserves of any country in the world.

Under Authoritarian rule by Gaddafi for decades tribal, regional and religious differences were tightly held back by a suppressive regime with a large military role involved in civilian infrastructure. Despite a very distinct style of leadership maintaining an international reputation for his style of dress and his long and broad speeches he also grew international ire for allegedly sponsoring acts of terror and was eventually removed through an international coalition under the pretence of UN Security Resolution 1973.

The situation that has followed in the aftermath of this civil war, with the withdrawal of powers has been multiple attempts at transitional government undermined by warring conflicts of identity previously contained by the Gaddafi dictatorship.

With increased refugee flows and terrorism growing in the Libya, it is paramount that the International community return to stabilize the situation this new vacuum has created. (L.Fowler, 2016)

### **History**

changing from Persians to Egyptians and Greeks before becoming a part of the Roman Empire. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the area of Libya was mostly occupied by the Vandals until the 7th century, when invasions brought Islam and Arab colonization. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish Empire occupied Tripoli, until Ottoman rule began in 1551. Ottoman rule continued until the Italian occupation of Libya resulted in the temporary Italian Libya colony from 1911 to 1943. In its short life Libya became an independent kingdom in 1951.

A coup in 1969 to overthrow King Idris I began a period of brutal suppression of dissent. Of the most prominent coup conspirator was the figure of Muammar al- Gaddafi a man who would ultimately be able to fully consolidate power in his own hands during the Libyan Cultural Revolution. Under the authoritarian rule of Gaddafi during the following decades the country became isolated on the international floor, especially since properties from former colonial ruler Italy and other countries (like military bases by U.S. and British military, but particularly facilities for oil production) were sequestered and nationalized. He remained in power until the Libyan Civil War of 2011, in which the rebels were supported by NATO powers. Since then, Libya has experienced instability and political violence which has severely affected both commerce and oil production. The European Union is involved in an operation to disrupt human trafficking networks exploiting refugees fleeing from war to Europe. (Bamber, 2001)

The Arab spring and situation afterwards Levant on fire. Oppositional groups and disadvantaged tribes seized the moment and took up arms against the government. In the following months, a civil war between the Gaddafi- regime and the revolutionary movement, in particular the Libyan National Army broke out. When the humanitarian situation seemed to aggravate, a NATO coalition led by the USA and backed by UNSC-resolution 1973 (S/RES/1973) intervened into Libya from March 2011 onwards, in order to protect the civil population (BBC 2011). Together the Libyan National Army and NATO were successful in their fight, which finally led to an overthrow of the Gaddafi-regime in Libya, but the war continued. In the past five years, the political and military situation has become more and more unclear, since two rival parliaments, one internationally-recognized, liberal one in Tobruk and one Islamist-orientated in Tripolis, are striving for the power to rule the country. (infoplease, 2016)

Besides this, there are several current problems: First of all, the collective security disaster: in comparison to neighbouring countries like Egypt or Tunisia, there has been a complete overthrow of former political structure and security architecture. This has been the unintended consequence of the formation of modern Libyan state in 1951, and membership in one of the 130 tribes and family clans that have played an important role for Libya's politics. Without the authoritarian forces of Gaddafi in power and with a large portion of the security apparatus discredited and distrusted, the Libyan people have orientating themselves along this ancient feudal system. Adding to this new set of allegiances since 2011, a huge proliferation of arms took place; making it unlikely that tribes will lay down their arms voluntarily or accept another tribe gaining too much political influence since there is the threat of being disadvantaged in the future. After the downfall of Gaddafi, new political and military actors filled the gap the former regime left: at every corner new brigades, militias and local councils sprung up; every one of them with own particular interests. Among these local interests not all have been tribal and among the most worrisome for the international community a rising threat in much of Libya has been the emergence of the Islamic state, a powerful force with dedicated zealots and a network around the country. As they are located in the strategic middle of the country hindering the political process, it is difficult to conceive a peace processes without their defeat first, especially as few if any international government could accept the inclusion of such militants in a future state. They also resurface as a threat in other countries such as neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt and as events at the Bataclan in Paris go to show can even threaten stability in Europe. (BBC, 2011)

## **TIMELINE**

- 19 November 2011: Libya declares liberation. Mustafa Abdel Jalil, the leader of the National Transition Council, declares the liberation of Libya eight months after the uprising against Gaddafi's 42-year rule began.
- 7 July, 2012: First free elections in decades. Libya's 2.8 million registered voters elect a 200-seat General National Conference to replace the unelected National Transitional Council that ruled the country after the revolution.
- 11 September, 2012: Attack on US consulate in Benghazi.

- 18 February, 2014: Armed groups tell parliament to quit. Multiple standoffs between rival armed groups develop a day after the country marked three years of revolution.
- 2 March, 2014: Injuries as protesters storm parliament.
- 17 May, 2014: Launch of 'Operation Dignity' in Benghazi by ex-general Khalifa Haftar
- 19 May, 2014: Armed group attacks parliament, Al-Qaeda-inspired Lions of Monotheism Group said it would fight forces apparently loyal to a renegade Libyan general, Khalifa Haftar, after they attacked parliament and suspended its activities.
- 2 June, 2014: Fighting in Benghazi continues, fighting breaks out between Ansar al-Sharia, a salafi-jihadi group, and forces loyal to General Haftar.
- 17 December 2015: Members of both the House and the Congress sign the UN-backed peace proposal, known as the Libyan Political Agreement. It stated that a unity administration, the Government of National Accord (GNA) should be formed, consisting of a Presidency Council (of individuals named by the UN) that would choose a new cabinet. Fayeze Al-Serraj was designated as Prime Minister of the GNA. But the agreement was signed by less than half of building of further support imperative.
- 23 December 2015: The UN Security Council unanimously passes Resolution 2259, in which it recognises the GNA as the sole legitimate government of Libya.
- 4 January 2016: The Presidency Council of the new GNA holds its first meeting in Tunis, with a deadline to relocate to Tripoli by 17 January 2016, currently this has only manifested in the control of a navy base in the capital.
- 10 June 2016: Government backed troops seize the IS stronghold of Sirte. (Al Jazeera, 2014)

## **Competing factions**

The competing loyalties of many Libyans to tribe and region, not to mention religious conviction have created a myriad of groups, often changing in power and influence leading to many such groups rising and falling, making it hard to identify not only minor actor but leading ones as well, since many forces have been known to switch sides.

To best summarize the current situation Libya is now divided between two governments and two parliaments, the internationally recognized one sitting in Tobruk and another one in control of Tripoli, the government in Tobruk is internationally recognized and UN supported. Both however maintain control through a variety of different groups which have been known to switch sides, and neither have complete control over Tripoli or Benghazi. For sake of clarity the competing factions will be defined between the General National Congress an Islamist parliament unrecognized internationally in control of most of Tripoli and a large portion of the west of the country. The other the House of Representatives based in the East.

Additionally the UN established a Presidential Council created to replace both governments however it has failed to achieve this goal in around a year of resistance. Effectively there are 3 governments in Libya presently. (BBC, 2015)

## **Eastern Libya**

Government: House of Representatives

- Prime Minister: Abdullah al-Thinni
- Capital: Tobruk
- Foreign allies: Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Saudi Arabia

Aligned military support: the Libyan National Army/Operation Dignity of Gen. Khalifa Haftar

Maj-Gen Khalifah Haftar, who in May 2014 launched Operation Dignity against Islamist groups, and had largely operated alongside but outside the military's official ranks, was appointed army commander by the House of Representatives in March 2015.

The LNA is supported by various units, including militias (see below) and the Special Forces, al-Saiqa, which declared their support for Gen Haftar at the time of his announcement of Operation Dignity. Along with the government forces' Tanks Battalion, the al-Saiqa forces have been particularly targeted by Islamist militia attacks. (Beggin, 2016)

## **Zintan, al-Sawaiq, al-Qaqa Battalions**

Additionally the The Zintan, al-Sawaiq and al-Qaqa brigades are anti-Islamist militias that operate especially in the west of Libya.

The powerful Zintan militia supports the internationally-recognized authorities and has clashed on numerous occasions with Libya Dawn. It continues to detain

Saif-al-Islam al-Gaddafi, the son of the former leader who was sentenced to

death in Tripoli last year, in the western city of Zintan, while most other Gaddafi- era officials are held by pro-Islamist forces in Tripoli.

The al-Qaqa and al-Sawaiq battalions are also pro-official authorities and anti- Islamist. They attacked the GNC in Tripoli soon after Operation Dignity was announced in May 2014.

## **Other major players in Eastern Libya**

Even in eastern Libya, the House of Representatives and Haftar's forces without opposition. The Revolutionary Shura Council was formed as a response to

broad offensive in 2014. A coalition of Islamist militias, the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council is made up of groups including Ansar al-Sharia, the 17 February Brigade and the Rafallah al-Sahati Brigade.

Ansar al-Sharia militants have been present since the overthrow of Gaddafi in 2011 and have been continuously battling the Libyan National Army (LNA) of the internationally recognized government based in Tobruk. The group also has a presence in Derna and Sabratha in the west of Libya. The militia has been accused of involvement in the attack on the US consulate in September 2012 in which Ambassador Chris Stevens was killed and is listed by the United States as a terrorist organization.

## **Western Libya**

*Government:* General National Congress

- *Prime Minister:* Khalifa al-Ghwell
- *Capital:* Tripoli
- *Foreign allies:* Turkey, Qatar and Sudan
- *Aligned military support:* Libya Dawn

## **Libyan dawn**

Libya Dawn is a grouping of pro-Islamist militias that in summer 2014 attacked Tripoli International Airport and went on to seize large parts of the capital. (BBC, 2016) The militia alliance can be viewed as the "armed forces" of the General National Congress (GNC), the former parliament which has been reconvened in Tripoli. Libya Dawn, which has acquired military planes, controls virtually all coastal cities, from Misrata to the border with Tunisia as well as cities further south, including Gharyan, Nalut and Jadu in the mainly Berber mountain range of Nafusa. Many of its fighters came from the city of Misrata, but in the last year the powerful militias based in that city appear to have drifted from the Libya Dawn coalition. Recently there appears to have been a rift within the militia over support for the UN-sponsored talks and the proposed Government of National Accord, which seeks to unite the rival governments. (Shah, 2011)

*Other major players:*

## **Libyan Petroleum Facilities Guard**

In recent months, the Libyan Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) has become more prominent due to regular clashes with IS militants.

The group's politics are unclear, although it may be described as a parastatal force that is broadly supportive of the GNC. It is led by Ibrahim Al-Jadran who has condemned IS, although his brother is said to be an IS commander. (BBC, 2011)

## **Jihadist groups**

## **IS-Islamic State in Libya**

A major development on the ground in Libya in 2015 was the emergence of ISIL.

ISIL built on an existing presence in the eastern city of Derna, a long-time jihadist hub, where groups active pledged allegiance to IS and took over local administration buildings. Although ISIL was driven out of most areas of Derna in July 2015 it went on to seize "complete control" of the central coastal city of Sirte, the birthplace of former leader Muammar Gaddafi. In June, the group's official radio station, al-Bayan, which is already operating in Syria and Iraq, reportedly began broadcasting from Sirte. IS has managed to strike in Tripoli and Benghazi by launching high-profile one-off attacks, for example those targeting embassies and hotels in Tripoli in January and February 2015, and most recently on a police training base in Zliten, near the capital.

(Infoplease, 2016)

### **Libyan Migration Crisis:**

The ongoing instability and violence affecting Libya has resulted in massive internal displacement. The practice of travelling to Europe through Libya via the sea has been going on for over a decade now however there has been a considerable influx recently. According to a report by the Economist, one of the reasons for the increase in migrants is the European Union's agreement with Turkey to take back any Syrians who might have made it as far as Greece, as a result of which the more perilous central Mediterranean crossing from Libya to Italy has once again become the main migrant to Europe. In most instances, migrants remain stranded in Libya and experience extreme insecurity, including arbitrary arrest by non-State actors, detention for indefinite periods of time, bonded labour, harassment and become easy targets for smuggling networks which promise safe travel to desperate people willing to embark on a dangerous trip by sea to Europe.

The International Organization of Migration developed a Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM Libya.) The Matrix uses mobility tracking, flow monitoring and maritime incidents date base to provide accurate and timely information on the locations and movements of internally displaced people, returnees and migrants. The data and results produced by DTM are used to coordinate targeted and evidence-based humanitarian assistance and advocacy. The most recent report released by DTM Libya covering the periods of July and August has identified and located 348,372 IDPs, 310,265 returnees, and 276,957 migrants in the country. (IOM, 2016) The most notable changes observed since the previous round include an increase in the number of returnees, and a subsequent decrease in IDPs, to Benghazi following the reduction of conflict in many districts, as well as other districts of Derna, Az Zawiyah, Gwalesh, Sabha, As Sidr and Kikla.

There has been an increase in almost 150,000 migrants arriving to Europe since last year. As of 31<sup>st</sup> August, there were 278,327 migrants that arrived to Europe by sea, during the same reporting period there were 3,168 people recorded dead or missing. 106,461 migrants arrived to Italy and 2,726 deaths were recorded along the Central Mediterranean Route. (Franzsika, 2016)



## **Points the resolution should address:**

The Libyan crISISIL has been on-going for more than 5 years now and numerous UN resolutions and attempts by the internal community have not been particularly successful in reaching a viable solution to rid the resource rich lands of North Africa off conflict.

On the onset, it seems straight forward for the UN to mitigate talks and form a united government to handle the solution in Libya. However, despite the efforts of UN's mediator Martin Kobler, the ongoing peace talks face a number of challenges particularly of time and consensus.

There have also been a number of agreements, most important of which being the Libyan Political Agreement of Skhirat, Morocco which brought together majority of the Libyan delegates to the political dialogue facilitated by the United Nations, and a wide range of representatives of Libyan society, municipal leaders and heads of political parties, as an important step towards peace and reconciliation in Libya, and welcomes the endorsement in principle of the Libyan Political Agreement by the House of Representatives on 25 January 2016. This resolution further needs to address many of the deep rooted issues from a fresh political standpoint, while making recommendations to the Security Council to initiate measures outside the scope of SPECPOL.

Some key issues the resolutions should address are listed as follows.

## **Restoring Political Architecture**

Since Gaddafi's downfall in 2011, the fight for power has been going on between the governments at Tobruk and Tripoli. The United Nations has been working for months on a national unity government, but this will not be successful unless two conditions are met. First, all factions must be on an equal footing. As long as the government in Tobruk enjoys international recognition, it will have no incentive whatsoever to share power. The demands of the unofficial political forces must also be taken into account to reach a unanimous agreement over a Government of National Accord.

Security Council Presidential Statement expressed concern over the worsening security situation and political divisions in Libya.

## **Human Rights and State Rebuilding**

As is with any conflict struck region it is important to take initiatives to restore the stature of Libya in a political, social and economic context.

Efforts should be focussed at a reinstating political structure and a constitution that protects the human rights of all, including women and members of all communities and people living under vulnerable conditions, and to ensure the participation of all members of society, including civil society organizations, as far as possible, in the process of drafting the constitution.

These are some of the points that have been addressed in UNHRC Resolution A/HRC/RES/31/27 as released on 20, April 2016.

## **Migration and Maritime Tragedies**

The acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking into, through and from the Libyan territory and off the coast of Libya, which undermine further the process of stabilization of Libya and endanger the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. There is no sustainable solution to this crisis. As long as migrants and refugees in Libya are caught between a deadly civil war and the rising threat of the Islamic State (ISIL), they will continue to try to cross the Mediterranean no matter what.

## **Acknowledge increasing threats**

The Islamists are expanding the areas under their rule and getting closer to the oil fields, probably to destroy them. They rely on heavy weapons and have a portion of the coastline under their control for potential traffics of both men and weapons. The more the Libyan factions fight amongst each other, the stronger ISIL becomes, There is also a threat of the chemical weapons that have been stocked since Libya's chemical weapons program under Gaddafi is trying to get the Rabta chemical plant back on its feet. These threats were recently addressed in the security council.

resolution S/RES/2298 of 22 July, 2016. It is important that the international community intervenes and removes these threats before the matter gets out of hand.

## **Call on the international community for support**

It is very important for the rest of the world particularly Arab league members to come together on this issue and cooperate to initiate a string of efforts that could potentially resolve the situation in Libya without military intervention. It is important to take inspiration from existing Security Council resolutions and look into what has worked in other countries as well.

## **AGENDA**

### **THE SYRIAN CRISIS & THE RISE OF ISIS**

#### **History of the Conflict**

Since World War II, the Syrian conflict has resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. More than 200,000 Syrians have lost their lives in the last four years as the armed conflict continues in the region. This conflict began with an anti-government uprising in the region. It started as a part of the Arab Spring and rebels soon gained force and vigor. These protests escalated causing a serious civil war which resulted in 11 million people becoming homeless.

In March 2011 Pro-democratic protests began in the city of Deraa in the southern region of Syria when some school students were arrested for painting revolutionary slogans. Demonstrations continued to increase as the security forces open fired and killed several activists. These revolutionaries spread nationwide calling for the resignation of President Assad who continued to use force to crush them. In a matter of five months, scores of Syrian citizens had taken to the streets referring to themselves as the Free Syrian Army and armed themselves to protect themselves from government forces trying to suppress them. By 2012 fighting had reached the capital, Damascus, and by 2013 it was declared by the UN that 90,000 people had lost their lives in the conflict. By August 2014, the figure had more than doubled and continues to rise to date. The issue continued to get more complicated as the division was not just between the government and the rebels, but there were increasing divisions between secular and Islamist fighters and different ethnic groups.

The mass protests did not begin with the aim to restore the Caliphate, but they began due to a sudden realization amongst the youth as to how they were living in a state where they were deprived of their rights. The Free Syrian Army wanted a democratic system which could only be possible if President Assad resigned.

Over the years as protests grew from peaceful to violent, the radical Islamists started taking over. ISIS sought for geographic, territorial power and this power vacuum in Syria gave the militants their way to establish it. They spread like a mutating virus all over Syria proving to become an increasing threat for the West. As the government responded fiercely, Syria ended up being divided into territories occupied by the Regime, Islamist extremists and the rebels.

Another way the Syrian Civil war helped the Islamic State become stronger was the fact that the civil war hampered the recruitment process of local forces to fight the militants. Even though the U.S has been trying to recruit people to fight the extremists, but Syrians are more concerned about Assad than about fighting the Islamic State hence limiting the number of recruited fighters.

## **Opposition Groups**

One of the rebel groups is the Syrian National Council (SNC), which is supported by Turkey. The SNC is opposed to a military intervention but nevertheless is calling for international support to protect Syrian citizens. The National Co-ordination Committee (NCC), a left leaning group, is strongly opposed to any kind of military intervention. Instead they are calling for further sanctions and stronger diplomatic pressure on the Assad regime. They are the only opposition group that agrees to having a dialog with the government under certain conditions. The Free Syrian Army was formed in August 2011 by army deserters based in Turkey and led by Riyad at-Asaad, a former air force colonel. Col. Asaad claims to have as many as 40,000 men under his command. However, analysts believe there may be no more than 10,000. They are also still poorly armed, and many have only basic military training. Nevertheless, a growing number of defections, partly caused by sectarian division, are weakening the military, strengthening the FSA and increasing violence. Most soldiers within the FSA are Sunni, while Assad is Alawite, who is closely connected with the (Iranian) Shiites to overthrow President Bashar at-Assad. The rebels continued to fight against the Syrian army, that is better equipped and has much more soldiers to defend their positions. The Syrian resistance remains highly fractured both politically and militarily. However, in November 2012, several opposition factions came together to form an umbrella group known as the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. The alliance, formed after months of division among competing groups, opened the door to greater foreign financing and military aid. The group, which replaced the troubled Syrian National Council is committed to several principles including national sovereignty and independence, unity of country and people, ousting the Assad regime, and a civil and democratic society. The coalition has been recognized by more than 100 nations, including most world powers, with the exception of Russia and China. The coalition took the Assad regime's seat at the Arab League summit in Dubai and opened its first embassy in Qatar in March 2013.

## **Syria and its Allies in the Region**

Bashar at-Assad is supported by two important actors in the Middle East: Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah. Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah stated: "Syria has real friends in the region and the world that will not let Syria fall in the hands of America, Israel or Takfiri groups." Hezbollah fighters have been engaged in Syria helping the government from early on in the 25-month uprising. While initially their presence had been officially denied by the Syrian Government, it has become by now more open as well as large-scale. Funerals of killed Hezbollah fighters are now a regular occurrence in Lebanon. Iran is often called Syria's closest

## Internal Displacement within Syria

The UN estimates that there will be 3.45 million Syrian refugees in the region by the end of 2013; unfortunately, all present indications are consistent with this target being met.' In addition, as of September 2013, there were at least 4.25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) many of whom have been displaced multiple times in search of safety. This means that almost one-third of Syria's people have been forced to leave their communities. It should be noted that those who are displaced may not be the individuals most in need in Syria. In fact, it is likely that those who are unable to leave their homes — because they are elderly, disabled or simply lack the resources to move — are the most vulnerable. Those who are displaced, however, do have certain identifiable needs which require assistance.

relationship between those displaced inside Syria and refugee movements into neighboring countries. Many of those turning up as refugees in Jordan and Lebanon report having been displaced within Syria before making it across a border. There are also reports of Syrians returning from other countries — either because of a perception that security back home has improved, because they want to check on relatives or property or because conditions in host countries are so bad.

## Refugee Crisis



As the civil war escalated, more than four million Syrian refugees fled to neighboring countries; Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. This is one of largest refugee exoduses in recent history. Some also fled to more distant areas near the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf. Despite the ceasefire and the Kofi Annan Peace Plan in April 2012, the flow of refugees continues to increase resulting in the Turkish Foreign Minister demanding action by the UN and international community and urging Assad to stop the use of force.

One of the increasing concerns was the fear of exploitation of women and children in these refugee camps. In Arsal, the army had been conducting wide raids and burning camps, and torturing refugees. These gross human rights

violations were strongly condemned, but four years have passed and refugees continue to cross into European Union member states and other regions. Countries not just accepted the refugees, but played their role by providing Aid to help these homeless war victims. Moreover, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees helped ensure the rights of refugees were provided and humanitarian efforts were effective.

## **War Crimes and Humanitarian Crises**

According to a UN commission of inquiry, gross human rights violations have been occurring since March 2011. These include murder, rape, torture and enforced disappearances. Rebels and government forces have been accused of creating problems for civilians through blocking access to food, water and medical facilities.

Since February 2014, more than 6000 civilians have been brutally killed by barrel bombs dropped by government forces on rebel held areas. These mass atrocities have increased due the presence of Islamic State that has been accused by the UN of waging a terror campaign in Eastern and Northern part of Syria. Hundreds of public executions and amputations have taken place. Beheaded hostages also included not just the rival armed groups, but also many westerners.

According to a report published by UN by March 2015, the estimated total economic loss due to the conflict was \$212 billion leaving more than thirty percent of the Syrian population below poverty line. Syria's welfare, medical and education systems are in a state of collapse as rebels and jihadists continue to fight the government.

## **Chemical Weapons**

By August 2013, rockets were being fired and hundreds of people lost their lives in these attacks. It was claimed by the West that these attacks in districts around Damascus were in fact the actions of the Syrian government supported by its ally Russia. This resulted in a threat of military intervention by the US forces. As the threat of international intervention increased, President Assad agreed to completely destroy the chemical weapons present in Syria. This destruction of chemical weapons' arsenal was part of the initiative led by United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Despite the operation, in July 2014 there were reports of harmful toxic chemicals being used to kill people. Capitalizing on the chaotic situation the use of force caused, the Islamic State that grew out of Al-Qaeda in Iraq took control of swathes of territory across northern and eastern Syria and neighboring Iraq. This resulted in more air strikes, but this time they were US — led air strikes inside Syria to destroy IS. However, IS continued to grow and the rebel groups continued to give them that power vacuum they required to attain supremacy since instead of fighting together the rebel groups remained deeply divided in rival alliances such as The National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces backed by many different factions.

## **Past Actions**

Peace initiatives were taken in January 2014 when US, Russia and UN convened a conference in Europe to implement the Geneva Communiqué 2012. This was an internationally backed agreement and called for a transitional governing body in Syria formed based on mutual consent of both parties present.

The talks were known as Geneva II and seemed to create a difference, but they broke down within two rounds and the Syrian government was blamed because it refused to discuss demands of the opposing side and insisted on focusing on fighting “terrorists” — a term they used to describe rebels.

## **UN Resolutions and the Arab League**

An overview of the most recent UN Security Council resolutions will result in the notion that the UN seems incapable of bringing the world to an agreement on the Syrian crisis. Nevertheless it should be mentioned again that all three attempts to pass a strong resolution which could have led to sanctions against Syria were vetoed by the Chinese and the Russian delegations in the Security Council. This happened on the 4 October 2011, 4 February 2012 and on the 19 July 2012.<sup>ii</sup>

The Arab League on the other hand has been actively engaged in what is going on in Syria. The Arab League, starting from its Council Resolution 7438 (Plan of Action) on the 2nd of November, 2011 has been trying for the stopping of violence in the affected region and enabling Arab watchdog agencies to station themselves within the affected regions and help NGOs bring supplies to the relevant areas.

## **Efforts by other Countries**

### **The United States of America**

The US has launched air strikes against ISIS in Iraq and Syria since the end of August. Under the Obama Administration the United States have been calling for Assad’s resignation since August 2011, and have pressed the United Nations Security Council to condemn the Syrian government. They also have recognized the National Coalition of Revolution and Opposition Forces (SOC) as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and provide nonlethal assistance to the Coalition and an affiliated Supreme Military Command Council (SMC). Furthermore, the US provides humanitarian aid to international organizations supporting Syrian civilians and nonlethal support to unarmed and armed elements of the Syrian opposition. The Obama Administration believes that a negotiated political settlement is required and has prepared military plans to secure Syria’s stockpiles of chemical weapons, if necessary. In May 2013 Obama reiterated his objective as to continue the efforts to increase pressure on the Assad regime, to provide humanitarian aid, to strengthen the moderate opposition and to prepare for a democratic Syria without Bashar at-Assad. Fawaz Gerges, director of the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics, recently explained that “the United States is operating on two levels - the first level is to basically try to see whether America and Russia can reach a political settlement ... to ease Assad out of power as opposed to a frontal attack, as has been the case, to remove Assad by force. We should make no mistake about the second level on which the American government is operating - that is to keep up the pressure on the

Assad government, to increase its support for the armed opposition and the political opposition.”

## **Russia**

Russia, as a close ally of the Syrian regime under President Bashar al-Assad remains refusing to sanction tougher action against Damascus by using its veto powers on the UN Security Council. Despite the international condemnation of the Syrian regime, Russian President Vladimir Putin has so far displayed no sign that Moscow is preparing to abandon its ally. In May 2013, John Kerry, US secretary of state, and Putin agreed to establish an American-Russia peace conference. In the same month Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, said that Russia was completing its delivery of surface-to-air missiles to Syria. However, he emphasized that “Russia is not planning to sell that which it has sold a long time ago, and is completing supplies of the equipment - which is anti-aircraft systems, according to the already signed contracts”. Lavrov said earlier that Moscow did not plan to sell its advanced S-300 air defense system to Syria, but left open the possibility that it could ship such systems to Damascus under an existing contract. Moscow has long been accused of propping up Assad and supplying Damascus with military hardware. The draft resolution that came as a result includes condemning Syrian authorities and accepting the opposition Syrian National Coalition as a party to a potential transition.

## **United Kingdom**

Together with the US, the UK wants to increase the pressure on Syrian President Bashar at Assad. After a recent meeting with President Obama, the British Prime Minister David Cameron said that he ruled out tougher action in Syria but pledged to double non-lethal aid to the Syrian opposition. Cameron also declared that he fully backed the outcome of a meeting between the top US and Russian diplomats this week who agreed to make a joint effort in search of a solution. According to Cameron the UK’s ultimate aim is that of halting the bloodshed, allowing the Syrian people to elect a government and preventing a growth in extremism.

## **Peoples’ Republic of China**

China, which along with Russia, has vetoed three UN Security Council resolutions criticizing Assad’s government, strongly condemns the ongoing violence in Syria. However, China warns against foreign action in Syria and says that the abandonment of Mr. Kofi Annan's six- point peace plan could plunge the country “into the abyss of full-scale war”. In a recent statement China’s foreign ministry emphasized once more that China opposes the use of military force and believes any country’s sovereignty should be respected. Also China wants to maintain restraint and avoid any actions that would escalate tensions.



## **France**

France has with Britain sought to lead European diplomacy on Syria, notably with proposals to drop an existing EU arms embargo on the country to allow arms supplies to the rebels. Its priority is to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis and wants to prevent Bashar al-Assad from remaining in power. This involves establishing a transitional government with full executive powers, formed on the basis of mutual consent. France also welcomes the outcome of the meeting between U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian President Vladimir Putin, in order to make progress toward a process aimed at achieving a negotiated settlement of the Syrian crisis.

## **Canada**

It has sent about 60 members of the Canadian Armed Forces to Iraq. Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) also provided airlift support to Albania, delivering 230 tones of military supplies to Iraq. It has also, sent \$15-million for security.

## **Iraq**

Iraq has authorized France to use its air space and welcomed coalition support in battling ISIS.

## **Jordan**

Jordan has destroyed several ISIS targets through air strikes in Syria and has also worked to cut off funding to extremist and terrorist organizations.

## **Saudi Arabia**

It has participated in air strikes in Syria. Has frequently condemned ISIS and given \$100-million to the UN Counter-Terrorism Center and \$500-million in humanitarian aid.

## **United Arab Emirates**

The country has taken part in air strikes on Syria. With other Persian Gulf nations has condemned ISIS and offered support to the coalition.

## **France**

Bombed a warehouse occupied by ISIS in Iraq. French Air Force has also carried out reconnaissance flights over Iraq and vowed to take part in future air strikes “if needed.” It has also sent 59 tones of humanitarian cargo to Erbil, further deliveries due soon,

## **Germany**

Germany has sent 40 paratroopers to Iraq to provide weapons training to Kurdish fighters. Germany has also been sending 16,000 assault rifles, hundreds of anti-tank weapons and armored vehicles — enough to arm 4,000 Peshmerga soldiers. Some Kurdish fighters are also being trained in South Germany. Furthermore, Germany has been sending 36 tones of

humanitarian aid.

