



**United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**  
**Study Guide**



## United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations. Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. Ever since its first session in January 1946, the main role of the United Nations Security Council was maintaining international peace and security.

The Security Council has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Five of them are recognized as “Permanent Members” of the Council. These are: the Peoples’ Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The other 10 seats are granted to different UN Member States on rotational basis, with observance of the official UN regional division, and for a 2-year long term of office.<sup>1</sup>

SC resolutions are typically delivered by UN Peacekeepers. They are military forces provided voluntarily by member states and funded independently from the UN Budget. As of 31st August 2015 there are currently 16 peacekeeping missions in operation with 106 245 uniformed personnel<sup>2</sup>. A representative of each of its members must be present at all times at UN Headquarters so that the Security Council can meet at any time as the need arises.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/main-organs/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/>

## Topic A: The situation in Syria

### **Topic introduction**

The situation in Syria is one of the most tremendous issues on the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) agenda in the recent years. It poses a serious threat to the regional and international stability and escalates humanitarian crisis. Starting with a peaceful pro-democratic protest in early 2011, the situation has grown into regional armed conflicts across the nation. Over 3 million registered Syrian refugees has fled into Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey while up to 4 million Syrian have been displaced internally<sup>4</sup>.

### **Overview**

#### **a. Syrian uprising**

More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in four-and-a-half years of armed conflict, which began with anti-government protests before escalating into a full-scale civil war. More than 11 million others have been forced from their homes as forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and those opposed to his rule



battle each other - as well as jihadist militants from so-called Islamic State.<sup>5</sup>

In March 2011 antigovernment protests broke out in Syria, inspired by a wave of similar demonstrations elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa that had already ousted the long-serving presidents of Tunisia and Egypt. In the southwestern city of Deraa, several people were killed on March 18 when security forces opened fire on protesters who were angered by the arrest of several children for writing antigovernment graffiti. Protests continued, and on March 23 more than 20 people were killed when security forces fired into crowds and raided a mosque where protesters were gathered. Soon after ending the emergency law, the Syrian government escalated its use of violence against protesters. On April 22 security forces fired on protesters who had assembled following Friday prayers. As demonstrations continued to spread in Syria, the government increased its efforts to overwhelm protesters with military force, deploying soldiers and tanks to protest sites around the country. By early May the antigovernment protests had reached

<sup>4</sup><http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

Damascus. Protests in the city center were violently suppressed, and Syrian government forces imposed security cordons in several Damascus suburbs in an attempt to restrict the movements of possible demonstrators.

Opposition militias began to form in 2011, and by 2012 the conflict had expanded into a full-fledged civil war.<sup>6</sup>

The rapid advance by the groups' militant fighters threw the region into chaos in 2014 and led to the launch of air strikes on IS targets in Iraq by a coalition of countries headed by the US in August 2014 and in Syria a month later. The jihadist group, which has fighters from across the world, announced the establishment of a "caliphate" - an Islamic state - stretching from Aleppo in Syria to the province of Diyala in Iraq.<sup>7</sup>

## Timeline

<b>January 26, 2011</b>	Hasan Ali Akleh shocked the world by setting himself on fire, as an expression of his objection against the al-Assad's regime;
<b>February 3, 2011</b>	"Day of Rage": protesters using social networks Facebook and Twitter to expressed their opposition to the Syrian Government and demanded reforms that would permit greater political freedom;
<b>March 15, 2011</b>	Demonstrations in numerous major cities across the country;
<b>April 21, 2011</b>	Al-Assad signed the repeal of Emergency Law;
<b>April 23, 2011</b>	The security forces opened fire against the mourners who attended the funerals of the previous day's victims;
<b>June 20, 2011</b>	Bashar al-Assad delivered a speech trying to appease the crowd, promising to proceed with political reform, elections and greater freedoms;
<b>August 14, 2011</b>	The main Mediterranean port city of Latakia was heavily bombard by ships of the Syrian Navy and the tanks of the Syrian Army, killing 26 people;
<b>October, 2011</b>	The assassination of eminent human rights activist Mishaal al-Tammo by unidentified persons;
<b>November 3, 2011</b>	The Government agreed to put an end to the violence;
<b>December 1, 2011</b>	The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated about the total death toll: "We are placing the figure at 4,000. But

<sup>6</sup><http://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>

	the information coming to us is that it's much more", while characterizing the situation in Syria as a "civil war" <sup>8</sup> ;
<b>April 9, 2012</b>	Turkey protested as Syrians had opened fire at border;
<b>April 16, 2012</b>	The first UN monitors arrived in Syria following a Security Council resolution written by the US and backed by Russia;
<b>April 17, 2012</b>	Syria troops bombarded Homs and other rebel areas;
<b>May 3, 2012</b>	Syrian students 'killed at Aleppo protest'. As far as 200 had also been arrested;
<b>May 10, 2012</b>	Two suicide car bombers killed at least 55 people in Damascus and wounded 375;
<b>May 20 2012</b>	Thirty-four people had been killed in shelling by the Syrian army in Hama, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights;
<b>June 4, 2012</b>	The Free Syrian Army called off the ceasefire, further endangering the six point plan proposed by Annan <sup>9</sup> .

### **b. Russian military intervention**

Russia has long provided military advice and equipment to the Syrian government and has sought to preserve Russian access to a naval support facility in Tartus, Syria over a period of decades. Russia has resupplied Syrian forces during the conflict, although Russian officials have stated that they are merely fulfilling existing bilateral contracts. Russian leaders have blocked action in the U.N. Security Council that would have increased pressure on the Assad regime for its conduct, and Russia remains an outspoken critic of what it describes as unwarranted external interference aimed at regime change in Syria and elsewhere. The series of losses suffered by Syrian government forces in 2015 may have contributed to Russia's decision to enter the conflict directly when it did. Russian leaders have offered to engage with moderate opposition elements in an effort to incorporate them into a Syrian government-led, Russian-supported "counterterrorism" campaign, while broad coalitions of opposition groups have condemned Russia's intervention and reiterated their demands for regime change.<sup>10</sup>

Russia began carrying out air strikes in Syria in September 2015 after a request for help from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has clung on to power despite more than four years of civil war.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011121151646992237.html>

<sup>9</sup><http://www.timetoast.com/timelines/the-situation-in-syria>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33487.pdf>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>

## UK, Russian and US-led strikes in Syria

### US-led coalition air strikes

UK

☀ 3 Feb-23 Feb 2016

☀ 3 Dec 2015-2 Feb 2016

Other coalition forces

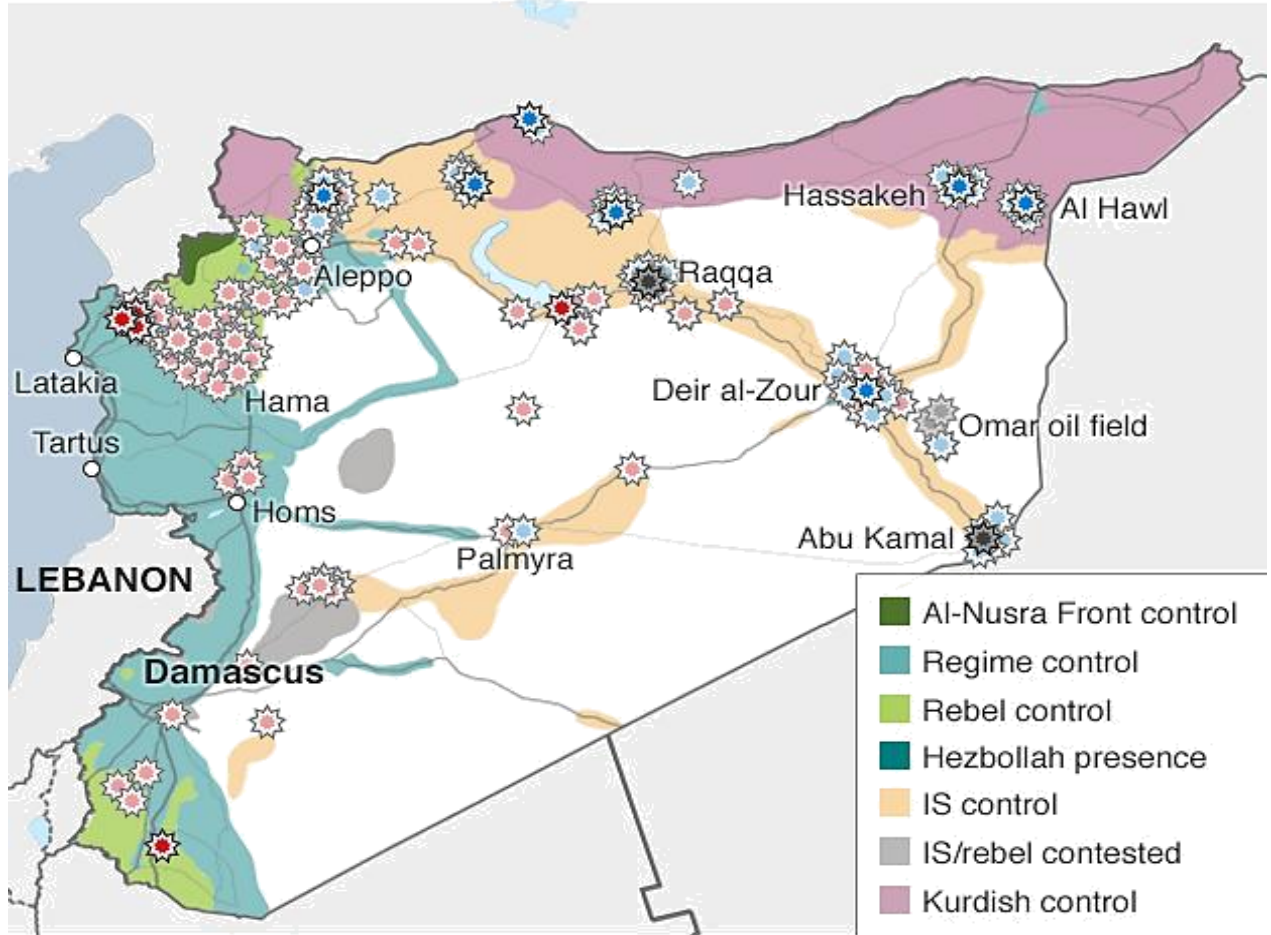
☀ 4 Feb-23 Feb 2016

☀ 30 Sep 2015-3 Feb 2016

### Russian air & cruise missile strikes

☀ 26 Jan-16 Feb 2016

☀ 30 Sep 2015-25 Jan 2016



Source: Institute for the Study of War, US military, UK MoD, French Defence Ministry. Locations may have multiple strikes

BBC

## Measures taken by the UN

Since the protest actions occurred in Syria in 2011, the Security Council has convened several public debates, and expressed its serious concern on this issue. The first resolution regarding the issue was not adopted until April 2012. Several attempts to respond the issue earlier were hindered by China and Russia.<sup>12</sup>

The resolution 2042, the foremost resolution concerning the Syria situation, was adopted on 14 April and authorized the deployment of 30 military observers to Syria. It also reaffirmed the Council's support to the Joint Special Envoy of the UN and the Arab League, and the Envoy's Six-Point Proposal.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> UN Security Council, Draft resolution 612 (S/2011/612) (2012)

<sup>13</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2042 (S/RES/2042), (2012)

On 21 April, the adoption of resolution 2043 established a United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNMIS) for an initial period of 90 days, comprising an initial deployment of up to 300 unarmed military observers.<sup>14</sup>

On 30 June, the Geneva Communiqué issued by the Action Group for Syria outlined steps for a Syria-led political process.<sup>15</sup>

In July 2012, resolution 2059 was adopted, renewing the mandate of UNMIS for a final period of 30 days.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, in the same month, another draft resolution aiming to carry out the Council's actions under the Chapter VII, sponsored by France, Germany, Portugal, the US and the UK, was vetoed by Russia and China. On 19 August 2012, the mandate of UNMIS was expired, due to its further renewal conditions, cessation of the use of heavy weapons and a reduction in violence by all sides, had not been achieved. In March 2013, the chemical attacks in Aleppo province claimed dozens of lives.<sup>17</sup>

The Council members unanimously adopted resolution 2118 that affirmed that the use of chemical weapons under any circumstance violated the international law on 27 September, condemned the use of chemical weapon, and further required Syria to comply with decisions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical weapons (OPWC) Executive Council on the destruction of chemical weapons. The resolution also called for the convening of the Geneva II peace talks and endorsed the establishment of transitional governing body in Syria with full executive power.<sup>18</sup>

On 11 October 2013, to response the necessity to eliminate Syrian chemical weapons program, the Security Council authorized the establishment of a Joint Mission of OPWC and the United Nations.<sup>19</sup> However, not until August 2014 had the chemical weapons been entirely destroyed.<sup>20</sup> Acknowledging the humanitarian situation was worsening, on 22 February 2014, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2139 to demand all parties in Syria to allow humanitarian access across conflict lines.<sup>21</sup> On 14 July 2014, resolution 2165 further authorized cross-border or cross-line access for humanitarian aid without state consent.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2043 (S/RES/2043), (2012)

<sup>15</sup> The Final Communiqué of the Action Group for Syria, 30 June 2012

<sup>16</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2059 (S/RES/2059) (2012)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/19/syria-rocket-attacks-chemical-weapons>

<sup>18</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2118 (S/RES/2118) (2013)

<sup>19</sup> UN Security Council, Letter from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/603) (2013)

<sup>20</sup> UN-OPCW Joint Mission Press Release, "Ninety-six percent of Syria's declared chemical weapons destroyed – UN-OPCW mission chief", September 4, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2139 (S/RES/2139) (2014).

<sup>22</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2165 (S/RES/2165) (2014).



On **26 February 2016**, the Security Council unanimously endorsed the cessation of hostilities agreement aimed at ending five years of bloodshed in Syria.

The 15-member Council approved resolution 2268 (2016), endorsing the deal announced in the Joint Statement by the United States and the Russian Federation, Co-chairs of the International Syria Support Group. The resolution demanded that all parties to the agreement live up to its terms, and urged all Member States to use their influence to ensure that parties to the conflict fulfill their commitments and create the conditions for a durable and lasting ceasefire.

### **Aspects to think about:**

1. What's your country position on the conflict?
2. What measures can be taken by the Security Council to stop the war?
3. Should other countries deploy their troops in the conflict zone? Why? Why not? Should Security Council introduce its own military force to cease fire in Syria?
4. What are the implications of this conflict on the neighboring countries in the region/international community?

### **Further reading**

1. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33487.pdf>
2. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>
3. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>
4. <http://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>
5. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/06/201168175624573155.htm>
6. <http://www.timetoast.com/timelines/the-situation-in-syria>
7. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/russias-syria-interventionmay-force-choice-on-obama-act-or-yield/2015/10/07/a88f9996-6d16-11e5-9bfe59f5e244f92\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/russias-syria-interventionmay-force-choice-on-obama-act-or-yield/2015/10/07/a88f9996-6d16-11e5-9bfe59f5e244f92_story.html)
8. <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/solution-to-syrian-conflict-must-come-from-the-air>

## Topic B: Expanding the Membership of the Security Council

### Topic introduction

The debate about reforming the UN Security Council is about as old as the UN itself. This is mainly due to the fact that from the very beginning in 1945 the dominance of the five permanent members (the so-called P5 countries: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) was enshrined in the UN Charter when they assigned themselves the prerogative of the veto. Back then, in addition to the P5, the Council was composed of six non-permanent members that were elected for a two-year term and did not have veto power. In 1965, the number of elected, non-permanent seats without veto power was extended from six to ten, bringing the Council up to its current configuration. This remains the only Security Council reform involving an amendment of the Charter that has ever been adopted.<sup>23</sup>

### Overview

For many years, some member-states have been advocating expansion of the Security Council, arguing that adding new members will remedy the democratic and representative deficit from which the Council suffers. Disagreement on whether new members should be permanent or have veto power has become a major obstacle to Security Council reform. Brazil, India, Japan and Germany want a permanent seat in the Council, and have threatened to reduce their financial or military troop contributions to the UN if they are not rewarded with permanent member status. African countries have also expressed the need for permanent African representation in the Council to bring an end to the hegemony of northern industrialized nations in the powerful UN organ.<sup>24</sup>

The following **terms** are used to discuss the issue:

**G4 (*Group of Four*)** includes Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan - four countries which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council;

**GRULAC (*The Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries*)** is a non-binding dialogue group that brings together 33 member countries of the

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/200-reform/52474-reforming-the-working-methods-of-the-un-security-council-the-act-initiative.html>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/membership-including-expansion-and-representation.html>

United Nations Organization that are in this region in order to be coordinated and to create awareness regarding different topics<sup>25</sup>;

**IGN (*Intergovernmental Negotiations*)**<sup>26</sup>;

**NAM (*Non-Aligned Movement*)** is a group of states which are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. As of 2012, the movement has 120 members<sup>27</sup>;

**OEWG (*Open-ended Working Group*)** is a group established to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Security Council<sup>28</sup>;

**P5 (*Permanent Five*)** denotes five permanent members of the UN Security Council, i.e. China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States;

**PGA - *The President of the General Assembly***;

**S5 (*Small Five Group*)** is a likeminded group that has put forth recommendations for Security Council reform, mainly on the Working Methods of the Security Council. Comprised of Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Singapore, the Small Five Group (S5) has presented various draft resolutions since 2008 calling for Security Council reform<sup>29</sup>;

**UfC (*The Uniting for Consensus*)** is a movement that developed in the 1990s in opposition to the possible expansion of permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council. It aims to counter the bids for permanent seats proposed by G4 nations and is calling for a consensus before any decision is reached on the form and size of the Security Council.

## Measures taken by the UN

All the main measures taken by the United Nations Security Council are introduced in the timeline below. The timeline summarizes Security Council reform efforts in the General Assembly since 1992.

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25 <http://www.ialcsh.org/en/management-and-follow-up/grulac/>

26 <http://centerforunreform.org/?q=IGNreform>

27 <http://www.nam.gov.za/background/background.htm>

28 <http://centerforunreform.org/sites/default/files/Timeline%20November%202015%20final.pdf>

29 <http://unelections.org/?q=node/2385>

## Timeline

<b>11 December, 1992</b>	Security Council reform was added to the agenda of the General Assembly's 48th Session;
<b>3 December, 1993</b>	The resolution A/RES/48/26 established the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG). Positions immediately included expansion with new permanent and/or non-permanent seats as well as a new category of elected seats with a longer term than 2 years. Veto restraint and improvements in the Council's working methods were also brought up. <sup>30</sup> However, this informal Working Group quickly became deadlocked in its reform efforts, as it had to operate on the basis of consensus; <sup>31</sup>
<b>20 March, 1997</b>	Paper by the Chairman of the OEWG, Ismail Razali, in the form of a draft resolution was distributed. The resolution called for adding five permanent and four non-permanent seats. New permanent seats: two from industrialized countries, 1 from African developing countries, 1 from Asian developing countries, 1 from GRULAC developing countries. It did not include extension of veto power to new seats. After 10 years the situation could be reviewed. Also contained language on improved working methods. Italy and NAM were key to halting effort;
<b>1 December, 1998</b>	Counter push to Razali's effort: Mindful of Chapter XVIII of the Charter of the United Nations and of the importance of reaching general agreement as referred to in resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, determines <i>not to adopt any resolution or decision on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, without the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the Members of the General Assembly;</i>
<b>2000</b>	In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, Heads of State and Government resolved, in respect of ongoing deliberations on Security Council reform, to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects;
<b>2 December, 2004</b>	Then SG Kofi Annan - under the agenda item "Follow-up to the Millennium Summit" - distributed the report from the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: it proposes two models, A & B (Model A provides for six new permanent seats, with no veto being created, and three new two-year term non-permanent seats, divided among the major regional areas; Model B provides for no new permanent seats but creates a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year nonpermanent (and non-renewable) seat, divided among

30 <http://centerforunreform.org/sites/default/files/Timeline%20November%202015%20final.pdf>

31 <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/10180.pdf>

	the major regional areas);
<b>2005</b>	For the 2005 World Summit, draft resolutions had been produced by the African Group (A/59/L.67), Group of 4 (A/59/L.64), and Uniting for Consensus (A/59/L.68), but none garnered enough support. Africa promoted permanent seats with veto rights extended immediately. The G4 (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) promoted permanent seats with the veto not to be used until a review would take place. UfC Updated November 2015, page 3 preferred only adding 10 non-permanent seats;
<b>September, 2008</b>	Decision 62/557 adopted by consensus on Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters;
<b>2011</b>	G4 sought written support for a draft resolution that simply called for expansion with both permanent and non-permanent seats and improved working methods, without delving into details and not including all five key issues of 62/557. G4 afterwards claimed it was just to create momentum;
<b>2012</b>	S5 (Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland) submitted a draft resolution on working methods under the agenda item dealing with follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. The UfC was strongly against, and especially pressure from the P5 caused the withdrawal of the resolution. The sponsors had at least a simple majority for their resolution, enough in their opinion because changing the Council's working methods does not involve amendment of the Charter. S5 dissolved after this effort;
<b>2013-2014</b>	PGA John Ashe created an Advisory Group which produced a concise text. It was not accepted as a new negotiation text by Africa, UfC, and some permanent members - ostensibly for reasons related to process rather than substance;
<b>2014-2015</b>	PGA Sam Kutesa did not reappoint Tanin as Chair and appointed Amb. E. Courtenay Rattray from Jamaica instead, stressing that he wanted text-based negotiations to start. In September, at the plenary meeting where the continuation of the IGN had to be approved, Member States agreed that during the 70th session, the IGN would be "building on the informal meetings held during its sixty-ninth session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States reflected in the text and its annex circulated by the President of the General Assembly in his letter dated 31 July 2015..." Some countries saw this as an endorsement of the text produced by Rattray and as substantive progress, while others regarded it as a mere technical roll-over decision;

<b>October, 2015</b>	The new PGA Mogens Lykketoft appointed Amb. Sylvie Lucas of Luxembourg instead. <sup>32</sup>
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## **Possible solutions**

There is an opinion that: *“the current members of the Security Council do not represent the epicenter of world power in the 21st century. Countries like Brazil, India, Japan, Germany and the Persian Gulf Bloc have a lot more relevance and influence in the global scene. UK, France are colonial powers of the past with no real economic or military influence as they once had. At the same time, while pushing for greater representation of all geographic regions of the world in the Security Council, there needs to be a debate on the issue of veto. In the past, the veto has been a major hurdle in many UN peace keeping missions and interventions and thus it makes it very difficult for the Council to push through resolutions”*; *“All permanent members work for their own block, talk about their interest. If Security Council expand all members will be added and all region will be able to take about their problems, agenda etc. In this way global problems will be easy and North-south problems vs. highly developed countries differences will be less.”*

At the same time, some suppose that the UN Security Council should not be expanded: *“There are no important countries that should be on the council except the ones that are already on it. It would not make sense to add more countries, because then a lot of other small countries that are not important would want to join.”*<sup>33</sup>

## **Aspects to think about**

1. Should the UN Security Council be expanded? Why? Why not?
2. Is there a need to increase the number of permanent members (P5)?
3. The veto is held by the five permanent members. Should other countries have the right of veto?
4. Is it necessary to review regional representation (Permanent membership to certain countries of regions such as Africa and the Middle East, which currently receive minimal representation in the council)?

## **Further reading**

1. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/10180.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> <http://centerforunreform.org/?q=node/681>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-the-u-n-security-council-be-expanded>

2. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/membership-including-expansion-and-representation.html#a2013>
3. <http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-the-u-n-security-council-be-expanded>
4. [http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/sc\\_bodies.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/sc_bodies.shtml)
5. <http://centerforunreform.org/sites/default/files/Timeline%20November%202015%20final.pdf>

## Topic C: Islamic State and global terrorism

### **Topic introduction**

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (also known as: ISIL, IS and Daesh) is a radical militant group made up of fundamentalist Sunni Muslims and foreign jihadists. So far they have terrorized millions of people for their goal of achieving the Islamic state in the Middle East ruled by the strict sharia law.

They occupy vast territories in Syria and Iraq, but their supporters are located in more places around Middle East and Africa. They are known for the massive atrocities they have committed. The leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is a self-proclaimed caliph of the caliphate they are attempting to establish.<sup>34</sup>

### **Overview**

The group that calls itself the Islamic State can trace its lineage to the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, in 2003. The Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi aligned his Jama'at al-Tawhidw'al-Jihad with al-Qaida, making it al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI).<sup>35</sup>

ISIL has already been designated as terrorist organization by the UN in October 2004<sup>36</sup>. After the seizure of a significant amount of territory in Iraq and Syria - inhabited by approximately eight million people - in the summer of 2014, ISIL proclaimed a worldwide caliphate, assuming its leader Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the successor of the prophet Mohammed to have religious, political and military authority over Muslim populations worldwide<sup>37</sup>. It was estimated that only in February 2015 more than thirteen thousand foreign fighters joined Sunni Arab antigovernment extremist groups, including the Islamic State, in Syria.<sup>38</sup>

The United Nations has expressed the danger of this expansion in different held meetings stating its concern regarding the recruitment of foreign fighters by ISIL, El-Nusrah Front (ANF) and other cells, affiliates, or derivatives of Al-Qaida. In the 7272<sup>nd</sup> meeting the United Nations Security Council stated that *“as designated by the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011), recognizing that the foreign terrorist fighter threat includes, among others, individuals supporting acts or activities of Al-Qaida and its cells, affiliates, splinter groups, and derivative entities, including by recruiting for or otherwise supporting acts or activities of such entities, and stressing the urgent need to*

34 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-vs-islamic-state-vs-isil-vs-daesh-what-do-the-different-names-mean-9750629.html>

35 <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/what-is-islamic-state-iraq-and-syria/>

36 <http://web.archive.org/web/20131019134254/http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10263.doc.htm>

37 <http://www.dw.de/isis-declares-leader-al-baghdadi-caliph-of-the-muslims-changes-name/a-17745538>

38 <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state/p14811>



*address this particular threat” - Security Council at its 7272nd meeting - 24 September 2014 .*

### **Timeline of the ISIS Activities**

<b>May 2007</b>	Iraqi officials reports the death of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, head of the Islamic State in Iraq;
<b>April 2008</b>	Footage of AQI trainings released;
<b>June 2009</b>	Alleged-AQI bombings;
<b>April 2010</b>	Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi takes the reins of ISI;
<b>March 2011 to March 2013</b>	Pro-democracy unrest in Syria evolves into a revolution that erupts into a civil war. Islamist groups including Al-Qaeda and the Nusra front. Fighters loyal to Baghdadi cross into Syria exploiting the power vacuum to seize territory. At the same time ISI starts carrying out a long spate of bombings in Iraq;
<b>January 2014</b>	ISIS begins making advancements in the Iraqi towns Fallujah and Ramadi in the Anbar Province;
<b>June 2014</b>	ISIS proclaims that it is establishing a caliphate and names their caliph as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi;
<b>August 2014</b>	Make advancements in Syria including capturing a government air base;
<b>December 2014</b>	The Iraqi government and the leadership of the Kurdish Region sign a deal on sharing Iraq's oil wealth and military resources, amid hopes that the agreement will help to reunite the country in the face of the common threat represented by Islamic State;
<b>February 2015</b>	Jordanian fighter jets carry out airstrikes over Syria, reportedly hitting ISIS training centers and arms and ammunition depots in ISIS's de facto capital, Raqqa;
<b>March 2015</b>	Boko Haram, the Islamist militant group in northern Nigeria pledges allegiance to Isis. Isis accepts. Isis takes responsibility for a suicide bombing that kills 137 people and wounds over 300 in Yemen;
<b>April 2015:</b>	Fighters in Isis’ Wilayat Khorasan province claim responsibility for a suicide bombing in Afghanistan that kills 33 people and injures over 100;
<b>May 2015</b>	Isis kills 300 Yazidi captives in Iraq. The group claims an attack in Garland, Texas, where two gunmen opened fire on a contest to draw the Prophet Mohamed. Abu Alaa Afri, the deputy leader of Isis, is killed in US-led coalition air strike. Isis takes control of the ancient city of Palmyra, Syria;
<b>July 2015</b>	The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reports it has received a video showing

	<p>ISIS militants executing 25 captives in the Syrian city of Palmyra.</p> <p>As Iraqi civilians celebrate the end of the Ramadan holiday in Diyala Province near Baghdad, ISIS detonates an ice truck in a crowded marketplace, killing at least 120 people and wounding at least 160 more;</p>
<b>August 2015</b>	<p>ISIS destroys antiquities in the historic city of Palmyra in Syria, including the nearly 2,000-year-old Temple of Baalshami. The UN Cultural Agency UNESCO called the destruction of Palmyra an "intolerable crime against civilization."<sup>39</sup></p>

## Measures taken by the UN

In 2014, during the chaos in Syria, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has controlled many parts of Syrian and Iraqi territory, and has carried out a series of deadly attacks based on its extremist ideology. Its expansion and violent actions are severely eroding the humanitarian situation within Syria and Iraq. To address the crisis brought by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Security Council passed the resolution 2170 on 15 August 2014, condemning with strong terms the terrorist acts of ISIS and its continued gross, systematic and wide spread of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. The Council called upon all the Member States to take national measures to stop the recruitment by the ISIS of foreign fighters, and further reaffirmed that all States shall prevent any support of arms and related material to the IS and its associated individuals or groups.<sup>40</sup>

On 24 September 2014, with the lead of US President Obama, the Security Council unanimously adopted the resolution 2178 to counter the terrorist acts carried out by the Islamic State.

The Council condemned the violent extremism and required all the Member States to prevent and suppress the recruitment and travel of foreign fighters for terrorist groups.<sup>41</sup>

In February 2015, The United Nations Security Council banned all trade in antiquities from war-torn Syria, threatened sanctions on anyone buying oil from ISIS, also known as the Islamic State and Al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front militants and urged states to stop kidnap ransom payments. The 15-nation council unanimously adopted a Russian-drafted resolution, which is legally binding and

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/isis-syria-tombs-1.3215865>

<sup>40</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2170 (S/RES/2170) (2014).

<sup>41</sup> UN Security Council, resolution 2178 (S/RES/2178) (2014)

gives the council authority to enforce decisions with economic sanctions. It does not authorize using military force.<sup>42</sup>

On 17 December 2015, unanimously adopting Resolution 2253 (2015), Security Council expands sanctions framework to include Islamic State in Iraq and Levant. The Council, through the text, reaffirmed that those responsible for committing, organizing or supporting terrorist acts must be held accountable, and urged States to provide full coordination in investigations or proceedings involving ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

Further, the Council decided that States would take appropriate measures to promote enhanced vigilance by their nationals, persons subject to their jurisdiction and entities incorporated on their territory, to prevent ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and groups from obtaining, handling, storing, using or seeking access to all types of explosives or raw materials that could be used in their manufacture.<sup>43</sup>

### **Possible solutions**

There is an opinion that Islamic terrorism can be stopped by swift strikes: *“Swift strikes must be delivered to behead these masterminds and leaders of these terrorist groups followed by more of an effort to police the regions by the people of those countries.”*<sup>44</sup>

However, some think that *“Destroying a rogue state altogether gets rid of the problem—but as we saw over the past decade in Iraq, what comes next might be worse, especially if the state collapses all at once. If Russia gets more serious about destroying the Islamic State and finding a way to hasten the departure of Assad, the Islamic State will have done the world a favor.”*<sup>45</sup>

So far, the United States and its allies have opted for something between containment and swift destruction: strangulation. Working with a mix of local militias in Syria and Iraq, the allies are slowly tightening the noose around the Islamic State’s neck, taking territory on the periphery and moving toward its stronghold in western Iraq and eastern Syria. It has been a slow, agonizing process, but it has produced results: The Islamic State has lost a quarter of its territory over the past year. The glacial pace has been harshly criticized, but it has the virtue of giving enemies of the Islamic State time to absorb newly liberated cities without having to take charge of the entire territory all at once.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/1.642279>

<sup>43</sup><http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12168.doc.htm>

<sup>44</sup><https://www.quora.com/How-do-you-stop-global-Islamic-terrorism>

<sup>45</sup><http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/11/17-how-isis-declared-war-on-the-world-mccants>

<sup>46</sup><http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/11/17-how-isis-declared-war-on-the-world-mccants>

## Aspects to think about

1. How has your national government protected its citizens from such groups?
2. How to stop global Islamic terrorism?
3. How can your government reduce the influence of ISIS within a country and worldwide?
4. What are the roles of the regional stakeholders in the Islamic conflict?
5. How can the region be stabilized?

## Further reading

1. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/IndependentInternationalCommission.aspx>
2. <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/sc-res.shtml>
3. [http://www.worldmun-hd.de/cms/upload/HNMUN\\_2015/HeidelbergNational2015-StudyGuide\\_SC.pdf](http://www.worldmun-hd.de/cms/upload/HNMUN_2015/HeidelbergNational2015-StudyGuide_SC.pdf)
4. <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state/p14811>
5. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50067#.VgmUrstVikp>
6. <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/iraq/>
7. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/1.642279>
8. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>
9. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/what-is-islamic-state-iraq-and-syria/>
10. <http://leedsmun.com/events/2015/9/24/the-question-of-islamic-state>