

# **2017 EPIIC BRIEFING PAPER**

## **SYRIA: THE FUTURE**

### **EL PUENTE ACADEMY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE**

### **SYRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL**

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#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

El Puente Academy of Peace and Justice is a school born from community organizers that promotes leadership for peace and justice through the engagement of members (youth and adult) in the arts, education, scientific research, wellness and environmental action. Founded in 1982, El Puente currently integrates the diverse activities and community campaigns of its Center for Arts and Culture and its Community Health and Environment Institute. Organizing in North Brooklyn and beyond, El Puente remains at the forefront of community/youth learning and development issues and as such, initiates and impacts social policy both locally and nationally. El Puente Academy of Peace and Justice takes great pride in being able to represent the nation of South Africa in a manner that will not only help to improve current situations, but ignite change through our institutional goals – peace and justice.

## **B. KEY POINTS**

1. A democratic government organized by the Syrian National Coalition, that honors human rights and removes President Bashar al-Assad and members of the current Syrian government.
2. International humanitarian aid and support in caring for current refugees and an organized approach to the return of Syrian citizens to safe zones.
3. Infrastructure support from neighboring allies in order to rebuild war-torn cities that were once habitable and centers for political, social and economic capital.
4. Security - locally and internationally to prevent allies of the Assad regime from dividing the nation (particularly Russia) into sectional regions that may lead to instability and hostile or violent claims to Syrian land.
5. An international committee and regional meetings between Kurdish leaders, Turkish leaders and the Syrian National Coalition to engage in discussions to resolve tensions in order to support greater Syrian stability through Kurdish involvement and Turkish support to build greater alliances from bordering neighbors against terrorist forces, such as ISIL/ISIS.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

The Syrian National Council seeks to provide greater stability and organized governance to our nation of Syria, but removing President Bashar al-Assad from leadership and bringing him to justice for human rights violations and the deaths to innocent citizens under his regime. Now as the largest member of the Syrian National Coalition, the Syrian National Council is looking to highly influence the Syrian National Coalition which is the internationally known representative of the Syrian people who are opposing President Bashar al-Assad.

It is clear that international players are involved in our current conflict and that especially Russian intervention to stop terrorism has been used a strategy to impose their influence in the region so that Syria can become a location for international disputes with the West. The use of chlorine bleach bombings to kill Syrians from within while using Russian bombings to destroy areas held by opposition fighting forces has led to the destruction of historic cities, such as Aleppo.

We find that through these actions the Syrian people have found themselves either fleeing or dying. We look to stabilize the governance so that we end destruction and allow people to live freely under democratic rule where all Muslims can find a home and live in the practices of their faith based teachings. Below is a summary of how tensions have grown between we (the Syrian National Council) in opposing the dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad.

“Influenced by major uprisings that began elsewhere in the region, and compounded by additional social and economic factors, anti-government protests broke out first in the southern province of Dar'a in March 2011 with protesters calling for the repeal of the restrictive Emergency Law allowing arrests without charge, the legalization of political parties, and the removal of corrupt local officials. Demonstrations and violent unrest spread across Syria with the size and intensity of protests fluctuating. The government responded to unrest with a mix of concessions - including the repeal of the Emergency Law, new laws permitting new political parties, and liberalizing local and national elections - and military force. However, the government's response has failed to meet opposition demands for

Assad's resignation, and the government's ongoing violence to quell unrest and widespread armed opposition activity has led to extended clashes between government forces and oppositionists. International pressure on the ASAD regime has intensified since late 2011, as the Arab League, EU, Turkey, and the US expanded economic sanctions against the regime. In December 2012, the Syrian National Coalition, was recognized by more than 130 countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people. Peace talks between the Coalition and Syrian regime at the UN-sponsored Geneva II conference in 2014 and the UN-sponsored Geneva III talks in 2016 failed to produce a resolution of the conflict. Unrest continues in Syria, and according to an April 2016 UN estimate, the death toll among Syrian Government forces, opposition forces, and civilians had reached 400,000. As of December 2016, approximately 13.5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria, with 6.3 million people displaced internally, and an additional 4.8 million Syrian refugees, making the Syrian situation the largest humanitarian crisis worldwide." (cia.gov)

## **D. ISSUES**

### **COMMITTEE OF GOVERNANCE**

Before the conflict began there were many complaints from the people of Syria about high unemployment, widespread corruption, a lack of political freedom and state repression under President Assad (bbc.com). The Syrians people felt that the government wasn't taking care of these issues and were hardly looking to resolve citizen concerns. "Unemployment Rate in Syria remained unchanged at 14.90 percent in 2012 from 14.90 percent in 2011" (High Unemployment Rates in The Syrian Crisis). In June 2005, the United Nations Development Program found that 30 percent of Syrians (more than five million) lived in poverty, with 11 percent (almost two million) in extreme poverty (Hubbard). These problems still haven't changed and with the current conflict these problems have only grown. Many people are have been forced to leave because their homes are destroyed due to bombings by the Syrian government in multiple cities. Citizens feel they have no voice in determining their leaders with Assad's family being in power for so long. Also, Assad's reign has only proven that laws can be changed just so to keep his family in power.

The Syrian government violates their own citizens. Instead of supporting them and providing aid, they are killing them and torturing them, which forces them into refugee status seeking other nations for a place to live. During this civil war, the government also destroyed many homes giving citizens no choice but to flee areas in conflict. For example "there is abuse in the Assad regime's prison system...at least 10,000 people died in their custody" (Rodgers). Many people died from beatings during interrogations or they died from their injuries. A prisoner was hanged by their wrists for hours, died from suffering bodily mutilation. They were also denied medical treatment even for treatable illnesses. All these things were happening in one prison that was similar to many in the system. This shows that the government is not treating prisoners fairly. The government is not even giving them a chance to live or learn from their punishment and re-enter society. Assad is letting this happen to "his people" even though they are prisoners they are

still apart of Syria and they have families in Syria. Assad is working against his own citizens, which is why we as the Syrian National Council are looking to put a stop to this.

We The Syrian National Council are against the Assad regime because we want a true democratic nation. There are many religions in Syria. Most individuals of the West only recognize the Shiites and the Sunnis. “Both sides agree that Allah is the one true God and that Muhammad was his messenger but one group (Shiites) felt Muhammad’s a successor should be someone in his bloodline, while others (Sunnis) felt pious individuals who would follow the prophet’s customs was acceptable” ([nbcnews.com](http://nbcnews.com)). After the death of Bashar al-Assad, “Syria’s parliament quickly voted to lower the minimum age for presidential candidate from 40 to 34, so that he could be eligible for office. As the successor to his father he continued with his father’s brutal rule of Syria” ([biography.com](http://biography.com)). Currently that Shia have more power in Syria, although they have a Sunni majority. The Alawites (the particular sect that Assad belongs to) maintaining power even though they are only “10-15%” of the population ([wsj.com](http://wsj.com)). Syria isn’t attempting true democracy, they are maintaining power within a bloodline to keep control and particular beliefs. No consideration is taken into what other people believe or how the people in Syria should be treated, they only care to keep power.

Our main goal is to change Syria into a democratic nation that respects human rights. To do this we would need to first “bring an end to all violence in Syria; to ensure a lawful, inclusive and democratic political transition; to maintain the continuity and preservation of functional state institutions and structures within a democratic and rule-of-law abiding state; to ensure the unity of the Syrian people and territorial integrity and sovereignty of our state; to bring all those responsible for war crimes to account in accordance with international law”([en.etylaf.org](http://en.etylaf.org)). By stopping all the violence in Syria it will show the people that the government is no longer against them and that there isn’t one individual who wields power, but a governance will actually support citizens. This can lead to Syrians coming together and supporting one another to improve the government, since the people will be able to change the ruling structure. This consideration of how citizens live and exist can end high unemployment and poverty. If there is a violation of rights or abuses citizens, there can be reliance on a government who will create consequences because the government is now for the people.

The people of Syria began to protests “in 2011 in the Syrian city of Deraa. Local people decided to protest after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets” ([bbc.com](http://bbc.com)). This particular uprising fell along the other Middle Eastern protests in several nations, known around the world as the Arab Spring. “President Assad gave orders to crush the dissent, rather than tolerate it, and he refused to meet protesters' demands” ([bbc.com](http://bbc.com)). This is what led us to unite and create the Syrian National Coalition. The Syrian people understand that the Assad family keeps control and deny democracy while torturing citizens and even children that is evident through media sources. It is long overdue that Assad must be stopped. Syrians also have seen the killing of protesters while the outside world and neighboring countries just accept these actions. It is clear that Syrians are hurting and want to get treated fairly with dignity. Assad kills off opposing citizens and this obviously isn’t the righteous actions of a president of a democracy. Assad would rather kill his people instead of hearing what they have to say, instead of supporting their needs. As a president we need someone who will look to support and respect the rights of all.

## **COMMITTEE OF STRATEGIC SECURITY**

The Syrian National Council also known as (SNC) were founded to unite in opposition to President Bashar al-Assad and form a political front to support the rights of the Syrians. We are supporting a revolutionary movement in order to achieve freedom of the press, human rights, democracy and judicial independence. The states that are supporting the Syrian government are Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and Iraq which are our enemies, and the states that support the Syrian opposition are the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan. We hold the most seats in the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (Syrian National Coalition). Our enemies are powerful and have greater weaponry and resources.

Many rebels in Syria are foreign fighters from Afghanistan, Chechnya, Libya, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Both the government and we, the opposition movement, have received support military and diplomatically from foreign countries. Foreign involvement has played a large impact in the civil war and an international coalition led by the U.S has bombed targets of the Islamic state of Iraq and the levant (ISIL , also known as ISIS ) group since 2014. According to the article “Syria’s Civil War Explained”, it says in September 2015, “Russia launched a bombing campaign against what it referred to as ‘terrorist group’ in Syria which included ISIL, as well as rebel groups backed by western states. Russia has also developed military advisers to shore up Assad's defences, ‘several Arab states and Turkey have provided weapons and material to rebel groups in Syria’. Many of the fighting comes outside Syria most of the ranks of ISIL include a neutral amount of fighters from around the world ‘the number of Syrian refugees in 2016 was nearly 10 times higher than in 2012, and as of December 2016 “ 4,837,248 total number of Syrian refugees’, Lebanese members of Hezbollah are fighting on the side of Assad, as are Iranian and Afghan fighters” (Salloukh).

The degree to which our group is invested in the future stability and security environment of Syria is highly important because we as a council care for the people of Syria. The matter at hand is that people are going to get seriously injured or even killed if bombs are being dropped in our country. Our highest concern right now is trying to figure out how to make Syria a place that feels like home again for its citizens. By investing economically and socially we can try to bring greater awareness, for example #wesupportrefugees or #allrefugeesarewelcome to show the world in order to develop methods of donations, providing food ,water, clothes and resources The rebuilding process will be necessary to return to civility.

When it comes to supporting a ceasefire, both sides have agreements and disagreements in accomplishing peace. Russia, Turkey, and Iran support nationwide ceasefire in Syria and all three states have agreed to peace talks and support widening a ceasefire across the war-torn country. “Foreign and defense ministers of Iran, Russia, and Turkey agreed on Tuesday to act as guarantors for a Syrian ceasefire deal” (Syria Ceasefire Deal: What We Know so Far). The Syrian National Coalition will not agree to any peace process that includes President Bashar al-assad they want president Bashar al-Assad to sign an agreement to step down as President of Syria. “If they (US and Russia) want to fight terrorism as they say why not get rid of the main problem, the government that is targeting civilians in Syria everyday”, Vice President of the SNC Nagham al-Qaadri told Al Jazeera (Russia, Turkey Broker 'nationwide' Ceasefire Deal). He thinks it doesn't make any sense in having peace talks when the main problem is President Bashar al-Assad.

The countries that border Syria are Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon. Lebanon today is split between supporters and opponents of the Assad regime, the lebanese government “has lent its support for Assad’s promised reforms and in early October abstained from a United

Nations security council vote on a resolution condemning the violence in Syria" (Epatko). This worries Lebanon because if you give the long-standing ties between two countries and the political polarization in Lebanon, Syria's troubles will spill across the border. Israel has observed developments in Syria with unease, Syria has been enemy of the Jewish state for many years, "the Assad regime has proven a stable and predictable enemy compared to the uncertainties of the post-Assad era" (Blanford). Compounding those concerns is the fact that Syria possesses possibly the largest stockpile of chemical weapons in the world and some of which could fall into the hands of anti-Israel militant groups if the Assad regime loses control of the country. On the other hand, Jordan has its own internal conflict "King Abdullah II sacked his government this week in response to growing complaints about the slow pace of promised reforms". The Syrian uprising began in Deraa at town just a few miles north of the border with Jordan whose residents share cross-border tribal ties. Iraq has an ambiguous tone toward Syria "the majority Shiites in Iraq are generally supportive of the Assad regime, which is dominated by Alawites, an offshoot of Shiite Islam". So since Syria's closest regional ally has voiced support for Assad's promises of reform, Iraqi Shiites worry that if Assad falls, he could be replaced by a new regime reflecting the Sunni majority in Syria. Lastly Turkey has seen its regional influence increase significantly in recent months, "once a staunch ally of President Bashar al-Assad, Turkey has come out strongly against the Syrian regime's crackdown, it hosts the Syrian National Council and has deployed additional troops along its border with Syria".

## **COMMITTEE OF LOCAL SECURITY**

Before the civil war broke out in 2011, Syria was a beautiful place rich with history and culture. It was a place with local security and forms of law and order. There were many groups of security forces which supported Syria in remaining safe.

In the 1950s Syria's 5,000 non-military internal security forces included a National Gendarmerie of 2,800, a Desert Patrol of 400 and 1,800 police forces. The gendarmerie and police were disposed in strategically located posts throughout the country. One desert patrol company was located in Central Syria and the other in Eastern Syria. Equipment was primarily small arms with very few crew-served weapons and no artillery or armored vehicles (Pike).

This is showing how there were many police, security forces and patrols which were providing Syria with the local security they needed. Although Syria's security forces had very little equipment, throughout the years it improved and became more useful for the country of Syria. "But during the 1970s and 1980s these forces assumed a more conventional civil police role; this change in role coincided with increased professionalization and the parallel development of an effective and pervasive internal security apparatus. Nevertheless, the police continued to receive training in such functions as crowd and riot control" (Pike). Additionally, throughout the years, Syrian security forces have become more and more professional as well as organized. It had grown to become more secure due to the fact that these officers were being provided with the training that was necessary for them to become the best local security Syria has had.

Aleppo is the most dangerous city in Syria and also the largest city in Syria, which is located in the middle of this deadly war. Aleppo is also one of the world's oldest inhabited cities. Aleppo was known for its beautiful locations, for example it's commercial shopping centres,

castles, as well as their ancient markets and religious centers. Today, six years into the civil war, Aleppo has become the most dangerous and deadliest city in Syria.

Approximately 3,000 people and more than 40 wounded were brought out of eastern Aleppo during the first two evacuations...the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Syria, Marianne Gasser, said in a statement.

For the majority of the time since then, eastern Aleppo has been plagued by continuous violence, electricity and water cuts and indiscriminate barrel bombings, making it singularly difficult for the local council to govern and provide services for its roughly 300,000 residents, The number is astounding and difficult to comprehend — while no one has an exact figure, the U.N.

estimate puts the death toll of Aleppo at about 400 (Syrian Death Toll).

As you can see, Aleppo is a tragedy, with many deaths and injuries everyday, this city is lacking support in every way and is falling victim to total destruction. These citizens have no choice but to live in a war-sacrificed city and are trapped in the world of civil war. They have to live with facing tragic familial deaths everyday losing their community and those closest to them. Yet, there are some safe zones in Syria for these hurting citizens. “In northwestern Syria, however, two potential safe zones exist outside the Kurdish and government-held areas. The first is centered in the rebel-held Idlib province, the second in the eastern part of Aleppo province, currently under Islamic State control” (Balanche).

Furthermore, since Syria does not have access to medical support, they do in fact receive some kind of help throughout the city. The white helmets are a syrian rescue organization. “73,530 lives. That’s how many people Syrian White Helmets have saved, rushing to the scene of bombings to pull people from the rubble and carry them to safety. What’s amazing is these heroes are just ordinary Syrians — bakers, teachers, tailors — who felt they couldn’t stand by, and threw themselves right into the line of fire” (time). The white helmets are a huge help to the Syrian conflict due to the fact that Syria does not receive any type of medical support at all. These groups save many civilian’s lives each day and make sure they are being protected, safe and away from the war zone. The white helmets are Syria’s helpers, which prevent any more tragic deaths from happening each day.

In the Syrian war, there are many different Syrians involved in fighting the conflict. Some of the fighting groups are small but they are emerged into powerful sources.

Estimated number of fighters: 7,000” (Martyrs of Syria Brigades) There are believed to be as many as 1,000 armed opposition groups in Syria, commanding an estimated 100,000 fighters. The SMC has 30 members, six representing each of five "fronts" in Syria - Northern (Aleppo and Idlib), Eastern (Raqqa, Deir al-Zour and “Hassaka), Western (Hama, Latakia and Tartus), Central (Homs and Rastan) and Southern (Damascus, Deraa and Suwaida). Each front has a civilian-military council and a commander (Aleppo Civilians into Syrian Government-Controlled Areas).

As you can see, these fighters are from foreign countries, and have their own commander which runs their council and helps them succeed as groups.

In consideration of Syria’s absence of support, the country has been struggling with resources around its cities. Syria has poor water management system, which led to reducing Syria’s supply of water. Oil supply is also a concern in Syria. “Oil wells are scattered across the Kurdish areas, in particular in Rmeilan. After the outbreak of the Syrian revolution and with the displacement of the area’s residents to neighboring countries such as Iraq and Turkey, the oil

wells were almost shut down” (al-monitor). This means that after the war began, the oil companies were nearly shut down since the country was involved in fighting. Moreover, Syria’s conflict has had a huge effect on water around neighborhoods. “In September aid agencies warned that Syria’s deteriorating water security would increasingly cause disease and fuel migration, as well as deepen pollution and water scarcity problems over the border in Lebanon. Currently, fighting in the Wadi Barada valley near Damascus has left 5.5 million people in the capital without water” (independent). Syria’s conflict has had a huge impact on its resources for survival socially and economically (water and oil), which ultimately means that after the war is complete, there will be major concerns for whoever leads the nation.

Small arms and weapons play a massive role in the Syrian civil war as well. Due to the fact that these weapons are being distributed around Syria, it is leading to killings and bringing more violence within the country.

Small arms were already plentiful in Syria before the war. The regime built up its stocks through decades of Soviet and Russian support, accumulating an arsenal of more than 2 million of them. Meanwhile, there were estimated to be more than 700,000 in the hands of Syrian civilians. More than 50 types of small arms have been spotted in Syria (Watson).

However, the war has changed this because more people have been dying since these weapons are so deadly. Meaning there is less civilians who are fighting in the war. “Hundreds of thousands of people have died in the war; the UN stopped counting at 191,000 three years ago, but estimates range from a quarter million to at least 470,000. The conflict has uprooted half of Syria’s pre-war population, scattering five million people beyond its borders” (Watson).

There are many different countries that are helping Syria in gaining these weapons. One of the key issues in the Syrian conflict for the past years is the weaponry, which is allowing the fighting to continue. For example, the United States, Canada, and Saudi Arabia play a role in distributing weapons to Syria. However, Russia has had the biggest impact on Syria and its weapons. “Russia has continued to supply the Syrian military with weapons and equipment throughout the conflict. Russia has already reportedly sent advanced Yakhont anti-ship cruise missiles, SA-17 surface-to-air missiles, and short-range Pantsyr-S missile systems”(Who Is Supplying Weapons to the Warring Sides in Syria?).

Country	Weapons sold to Syria (since 2011)	Syrian refugees accepted
United States	\$7.7 billion	1,434
Canada	\$718 million	2,300
EU nations (UK/Belgium/Denmark/France/Netherlands)	\$882 million	16,066
Russia	\$3 billion	1,395 (temporarily)
Qatar	\$3 billion	0
Kuwait	\$400 million	0
United Arab Emirates	\$215 million	0
Saudi Arabia	\$136 million	0

## **COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION**

Before the war, Syria was known for its mixed community of numerous ethnic groups which included different religious beliefs. Those different groups helped create the different communities which contribute to their sub-groups and economic classes. “Syria also has historically been a sanctuary for little groups of peoples whose differences from one another were defined in religious and/or ethnic terms. Several of these communities were ‘leftovers’ from previous invasions or migrations” (Polk). These groups have been either left behind when many have moved on or from people who have came to conquer the land or attempted to conquer.

Before the war, Syrians have also been committed to their beliefs. Assad’s regime has not accepted anyone or anything to oppose his power as leader of the state. “Authoritarian regimes have traditionally been disinclined to accept any political or social opposition and have been hostile to the development of an independent civil society that could form a counterweight to state power” (Alvarez-Ossorio). This statement explains why Assad would never appreciate true democracy and/or any social uproar of opposition. The current governance only allowed citizens to conduct themselves in a manner they felt comfortable with while respecting their power.

“Ottoman Empire generally was content to have its subjects live by their own codes of behavior. It did not have the means or the incentive to intrude into their daily lives. Muslims, whether Turk or Arab or Kurd, shared with the imperial government Islamic mores and law. Other ethnic/religious “nations” (Turkish: millet) were self-governing except in military and foreign affairs” (Polk).

They never wanted to be constantly being in the Syrians lives and making them feel uncomfortable and also controlled. The different groups were able to make their own moral code of conduct and live by it and be good with it. There were some things they couldn't get around or such as a corrupt government who could outweigh the military and use it to its specific or personal advantages or desires. When it came down to foreign affairs but it also helped keep a balance of the people and the government.

In Syria, religion plays a major part of the Syrian culture. Religious beliefs are the foundation of how they build communities and their moral codes. This devotion to religious beliefs shapes Syrian citizens and determines their personal journeys. Syria has always had many religious groups, and historically it's always been that way. “The freedom of faith is guaranteed. The state respects all religions” (Syrian Constitution). The freedom to faith/ religion is a right granted to each and every person in Syria. They can believe and pray to whoever they see fit while not being judged or mistreated by who and what they choose. “The state guarantees the freedom to hold any religious rites, provided they do not disturb the public order” (Syrian Constitution). So not only should you have the right and freedom to any religion, you should have an entitlement to practices of that religion. What we know is that a minority of the population holds the power since Assad (an Alawite) maintains a regime of control instead of a democratic process. As long as citizens don't disturb or violate national laws or mistreat any other person, they should not be marginalized by authorities. This is not the case in our current Syria.

Before the war had started the Syrian nation held their rights to a very high and honorable platform.

“Freedom is a sacred right and popular democracy is the ideal formulation which insures for the citizen the exercise of his freedom

which makes him a dignified human being capable of giving and building, defending the homeland in which he lives, and making sacrifices for the sake of the nation to which he belongs. The homeland's freedom can only be preserved by its free citizens. The citizen's freedom can be completed only by his economic and social liberation”

(Syrian Constitution).

For the Syrian nation, freedom has the most honor. The fact that they have the ability and right to be free and live a free life is the one thing that they take with great pride and appreciation. They don't take it for granted. “Citizens exercise their rights and enjoy their freedoms in accordance with the law” (Syrian Constitution). This essentially means they practice their rights and they actually take advantage of their freedoms, all while respecting the law. Syria is also dealing with a corrupt government that is oppressing the citizens in Syria. “People's councils are establishments elected in a democratic way at which the citizens exercise their rights in administering the state and leading the society” (Syrian Constitution). They are able to form and lead the society. “No one may be tortured physically or mentally or be treated in a humiliating manner. The law defines the punishment of whoever commits such an act” (Syrian Constitution). The problem with this is that there is dictatorial rule through Assad, who has been torturing his people within prisons and using weapons that cause significant amounts of casualties. The most heinous weapon being used are chemical bombs, which have chlorine bleach in them. That weapon alone has caused mass killings of protesters and opposition in Syria. Even within war weaponry, these weapons are looked down upon by the international community and Assad, with the support of Russia, continues to use them consistently without repercussions. Therefore, Bashar Al Assad clearly and blatantly does not respect the Syrian Constitution or the rights of his people whatsoever and continues to disrespect human lives.

The United Nation (U.N) is currently one of the Syrian National Councils closest and most beneficial outlets. “The United Nations continues to manage a huge humanitarian relief effort. But the government continues to impose unconscionable access restrictions; it has removed medical supplies from aid convoys and deliberately starved and collectively punished communities it regards as sympathetic to the opposition” (Ki-Moon). The United Nations constantly goes back and tries to help the people. Resources like food and water to medical supplies. They have been very helpful for those trying to make it out of war torn cities who are innocent civilians in the midst of civil war chaos. This corrupt and oppressive dictator has been a barrier for the United Nations' support of civilians by not allowing them to enter areas or continuing fighting while humanitarian aid is in process. Assad has taken away medical suport to those people suffering and he's continued to torture citizens. The United Nations has not given up but has decided to remove those on humanitarian missions due to the unsafe locations and lack of cooperation from the government. “I will soon name a new Special Envoy to pursue a political solution and a transition to a new Syria” (King-Moon). The President of the United Nations believes that there can be and will be a solution to this problem of the government vs. the people. He believes that Syria can become new again, that they can become what it used to be or even better, but the problem of civil unrest and unrelenting dictatorship must find resolution to support citizens and end violence.

Before the war many Syrians had the right to have and own property. “Individual ownership includes property belonging to individuals. The law defines its social task in serving the national economy within the framework of the development plan. This property should not be used in ways contrary to the people's interests” (Syrian Constitution). You can have and own

property or a business but citizens must keep in mind that the economy must also benefit in some form. "Individual ownership may not be expropriated except for public interest and in return for just compensation in accordance with the law" (Syrian Constitution). Also, the ownership of the property cannot be taken away, except if it is being sold to another person. If it is taken away you will also be given back money for that loss of the property. Yet, in this current regime, we know that decisions are ultimately up to Assad and the current government.

Before the war Syria had beautiful, lively buildings and was culturally diverse especially in the city of Aleppo. Many people lived in homes similar to what we know and experience in the United States. One thing though is that people also live in beehive caves. "Made from dirt, mud, stones and straws, the beehive houses were a 3,700 BC creation in Syria, but still adopted and used for living and storage purposes by the Syrian people...It is mostly found in the deserts and rural farming areas of Hama and Aleppo" (Younes). They keep very cool in the heat and can keep out the rain. These homes are shaped and look just like beehives and they are in fact very popular.

Syria was a place where citizens could travel from one city to another and is filled with history and ancient buildings. "Inhabitants of the various parts of what became Syria could move without feeling or being considered alien from one province of the Ottoman Empire to the next" (Polk). The original people in the cities that another person would come to can go comfortably and within their rights. "Every citizen has the right to move within the state's territory unless forbidden to do so by a judicial sentence or in implementation of public health and safety laws" (Syrian Constitution ). Therefore meaning they had the right to go from one place to the other but if there was some kind of restriction it would have been of one a criminal sentence, two a health problem, or three and most importantly a threat of the people's safety in that city.

In Syria, history and understanding your culture is a huge part of the Syrian society, they hold it and take great honor in it.

"The educational and cultural system aims at creating a socialist nationalist Arab generation which is scientifically minded and attached to its history and land, proud of its heritage, and filled with the spirit of struggle to achieve its nation's objectives of unity, freedom, and socialism, and to serve humanity and its progress" (Syrian Constitution).

We, the citizens of Syria, want the youth to understand that they should be be proud of their nation. We want the youth to make sure they hold their freedom and appreciate it because not everyone is free and we do not know when our freedom or our homes will be taken.

Before the war, the people of Syria did have access to health facilities. Which means they had access to Hospitals to get medical treatment and check ups , places for women to give birth, places to make sure you had access to dental hygiene and mental health professionals. "Before the conflict, Syrian society had reasonably well- developed medical facilities, although the quality and quantity of mental health facilities were low" (Immigrant Manitoba) Although they didn't have many of those places, they were utilizing resources and helped many people. Now that the war has started those places are now no longer there at all and now the people don't have access to any of them.

Before the War Syria has struggled with supporting citizens with mental health issues. A low number of mental health facilities didn't help all citizens who needed care. "Even before the revolution Syria suffered from a lack of medical staff with mental health training" (Baladi). Not only is the number of facilities being low, the most devastating part is that the staff has little to no training. Before the war so many people needed mental health support, but now there is a loss

of patients due to the conflict and it can be safe to project that there will be many more with mental health concerns due to the war itself.

## **COMMITTEE OF ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION**

Syria has gone through many downfalls as a country dealing with criticism, terrorism, sorrow, and national tragedies. Syria has been in civil war since 2011 and because of this “an estimated 400,000 Syrians have been killed and as of December 2016, 4.81 million Syrians have fled the country and 6.3 million people are displaced internally” (Syrian Civil War Fast Facts). Protesters have been fighting against the power of the government’s abuse of human and civil rights.

The population of Syria is broken down into age groups, religions and even languages. The age groups consist of “0-14 years: 31.95%, 15-24 years: 19.65%, 25-54 years: 39.03%, 55-64 years: 5.26%, and 65 years and over: 4.11%” (cia.gov). There are many ethnic groups as well as religions with the majority being Muslims that includes Alawites, Sunnis, and Shiites while the smallest of minorities are either Christian or Jewish. Since there several sects of Muslims, with only one leader who is of the Alawite sect, Syria is labeled as an unequal society. Since there are different races, cultures, religions, Syrians are socially divided instead of being whole. By “bringing credible societal representatives together will certainly not end the military confrontation immediately, but it could create the basis for a new social contract, and thereby, change the political dynamics of the conflict” (Perthes). If society leaves behind their differences and unite, there can be a revolution that creates equality. By fighting together, it gives them more power and can overcome all the problems with the president and gain their civil rights.

Economy plays a huge role in Syria’s troubles. Due to the Syrian war, “the country’s economy was diverse. The most important sectors include agriculture (22 percent of the economy), industry and excavation (25 percent), retail (23 percent), and tourism (12 percent)” (Mahamid). As you can see, before the war Syria had some of it’s supporting the overall economy and running in the right path. The economy was in decent condition until the “government expenses included 700 billion lira, 451 billion for general expenses including 90 billion for the army and 267 billion for developmental projects, making up around one third of the budget. This means that the budget of the Syrian government had suffered from a deficit estimated at 122 billion lira before the start of the conflict” (Mahamid). This evidence shows Syria was already in debt before the war started because of the government expenses. The government and of course President Bashar al-Assad, only cared about remaining in power and in control instead of helping improve the economy and citizens’ well being. The only way Syria can rebuild is to find other alternatives or international trade partners and allies to provide aid and support the development of the economy to pay off their debt.

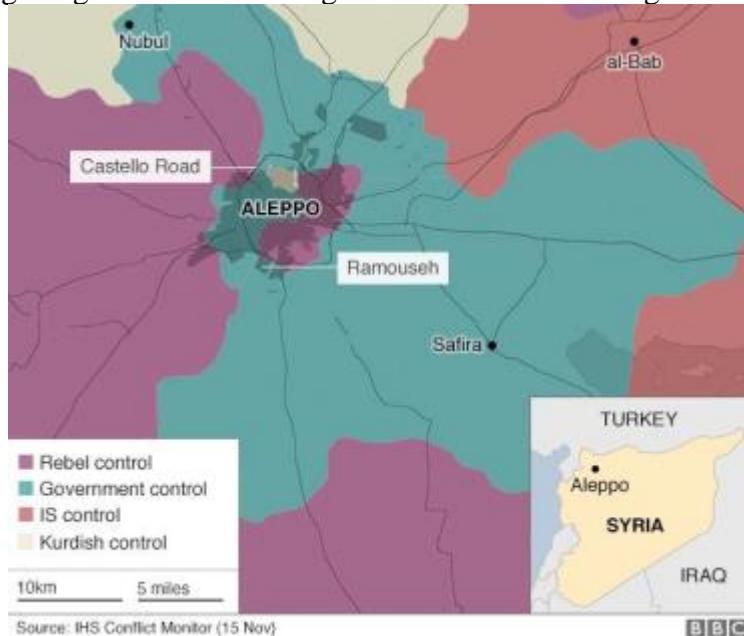
Syria is a country with many resources. Syria is the “156th largest export economy in the world. In 2014, Syria exported \$824M and imported \$6.11B, resulting in a negative trade balance of \$5.28B” (Syria). This is very important because by trading with other countries it can repair the economy once again. Some of the top exports are “crude oil, minerals, petroleum products, fruits and vegetables, cotton fiber, textiles, clothing, meat, live animals, and wheat” and some import goods are “machinery and transport equipment, electric power machinery, food and livestock, metal and metal products, chemicals and chemical products, plastics, yarn, and paper” (Syria Export, Import and Trade).

On top of the imports and exports, natural resources are important in this country, even if majority have been extracted and sold. An example of this is oil which is one of the most coveted

natural resources. Oil, “has proved to be a boon for the extremists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, who have seized control of most of the oil-rich northern province of Raqqa. The oil is controlled by crooks and extremists who sell it for a bargain wherever they can find a buyer. The group typically sells crude to middlemen as well, who resell it to the government but sometimes sells it directly to the government” (Hubbard). By stealing Syrian oil, the economy is also under threat due to terrorist groups. They could use the oil to find trading advantages instead of contributing to the economy which could construct homes, hospitals, schools, libraries, and more. This threat to government oil only increases the country’s debt and puts future stability in doubt.

Syria has a centralized economy because its “economy suffers from low investment and inefficient public sector enterprises, thanks to centralized and restrictive government control” (Syrian Economy). There is not enough money invested into the sectors to support the public because of the way the government controls the economy. Since the government can say and contribute how much money is used to support Syria, it gives Assad the power to control how government funds will be used at any given moment.

Areas like Aleppo, are controlled by the government and “Syria's commercial and industrial hub has been divided roughly into two since 2012, with the government controlling the west and rebels the east” (Aleppo Civilians into Syrian Government-Controlled Areas ). This is a big problem because the civilians have to obey the government in order to survive. It takes a toll on civilians, especially in Aleppo, since the city has been destroyed and has no support from the government to reconstruct their city since it has been government decisions to consistently bomb and sacrifice Aleppo for war purposes. This picture below shows how economy is broken into parts, one being the government in charge and the other one being the rebels.



Industries in Syria provide important resources that people use on a daily basis. The Syrian industrial sector “contributed 22 percent of the GDP (gross domestic product) in 1997 and 20 percent of the labor force in 1996. State-owned organizations dominate heavy industry. Mining and quarrying (mostly oil) generates about 28 percent of gross industrial output, followed by the agro-food and chemical industries. The textiles and clothing industry comes next, and accounts for about 12 percent of industrial output” (Syria). Some sectors rely on buying their goods in these industries. If the economy becomes decentralized then the industries would run

the risk of being dominated by a few who would profit and control the production of goods. These products help with trade and if adequately produced, could support the stabilizing of the economy.

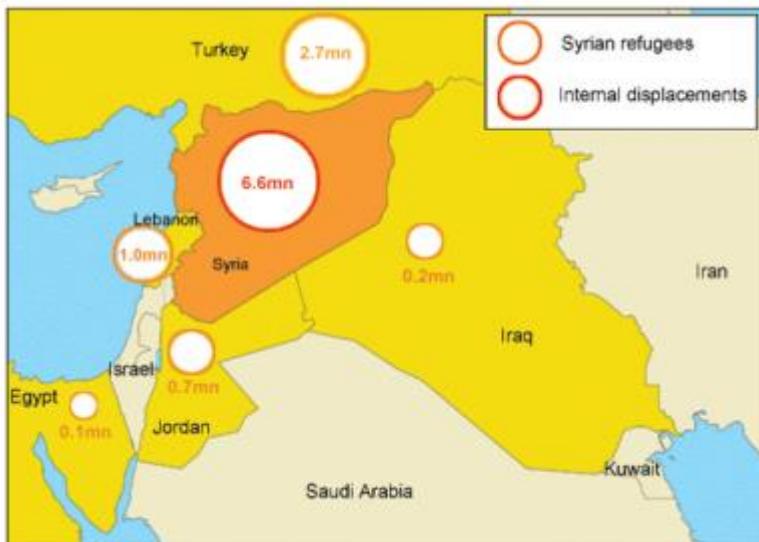
Before the war employment to the civilians were reasonable. It shows that in “2009, 15.2 percent of the employees in Syria were active in the agricultural sector, 32.5 percent in industry and 52.3 percent in the service sector” (Syria: Distribution of Employment).

Working has not been been a solution for the Syrian people. Since the war destroyed everything for the civilians, “almost three million Syrians lost their jobs during the conflict, which meant that more than 12 million people lost their primary source of income, it said, and unemployment surged from 14.9% in 2011 to 57.7% at the end of 2014” (Syria’s War: 80 percent in Poverty). There were no ways for Syrians to continue to work or find jobs which they depended on. The unemployment rate has “significantly increased during the last three years; as a result of barbaric bombings on private and public properties that were out of the regime domain, and thus caused shutting down many factories and companies that used to recruit millions of people; who are now jobless, especially in Aleppo and Damascus cities” (High Unemployment Rates in the Syrian Crisis). Since big factories and companies shut down, there would be a lack of resources for the Syrians to use, as well as businesses not having a workforce to sustain profits for their business.

Syrian banks have suffered “with the depreciation of the Syrian pound by 75 percent compared to the U.S. dollar as of 2014, the central bank had to intervene. It injected and sold foreign currencies in the market, in an attempt to ease pressure on the Syrian pound. The currency depreciation gradually continued” (al-Mahmoud). Since the war destroyed the cities and left the country with a huge deficit, the value of money has fallen. The banks looked to support the people through economic problems. By doing this, it helped the Syrians to get their basic needs when they had access to them. It is still important for the banks to provides civilians with financial help which they haven’t from the government.

Due to the Syrian war, the economy has gotten worse and Syria’s “pre-war population was around 22 million, but an estimated 4.8 million refugees have left the country to date, a number that’s equal to about 22% of that initial population as well as about 6.6 million refugees have been displaced” (Holodny). The graph below shows how refugees do not get support instead they are being displaced, forcing to leave their homes and have no shelter. This includes

millions of children not being able to go to school and the infrastructure being destroyed.



Syria's economy is going to remain in turmoil and in order to fix this problem, "\$48 billion is required for the reconstruction of Syria; the Partnership Conference for Investment in Syria the Future estimated the amount at \$60-200 billion by the end of 2012. This means that Syria needs 25 years to reconstruct what has been destroyed during the conflict" (alarabiya.net). This means that the government must plan to fund the damaged areas. Homes must be rebuilt, refugees must be welcomed back to Syria, support for education, improved medical facilities, infrastructure, employment opportunities, agricultural investments, increase the value of the currency, improve banks, develop importing and exporting partners, and get financial help from the country's allies to decrease the deficit. If that were not enough, Syria still needs to deal with social upheaval and future revolts and terrorist activity which always threatens economic growth.

## COMMITTEE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

Throughout the year, Syrian families have been ruled by a dreadful government who strike fear into their own people. Since 1971 Syria has been run by the Assad family, it was first run by President Hafez Al-Assad who died in 2000, since then Syria has been lead by his son Bashar al-Assad. Both men abused their power and violated human rights. Hafez al-Assad was responsible for the Hama massacre that killed "20 to 40 thousand residents of Hama were killed after a little more than three weeks" (Reports). It seems that the Assad family are corrupt, willing to kill in order to gain or remain in power. Civilians have decided to assemble to protest so their voices could be heard. Citizens are tired of dealing with a lack of freedom. Having Bashar al-Assad as President and refusing to meet the civilians' is the reason for our current conflict and lack of peace.

Human rights violations committed against Syrians has increased over the last 6 years. There has been rising death rates and millions of displaced refugees. The reasoning for the massive death rates began when protesters demanded against government laws. "The Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, responded to the protests by killing hundreds of demonstrators and imprisoning many more" (Jazeera). It was the Syrian government's responsibility to find the most effective way to solve the social issues. Yet, "the [Syrian] government has committed the crimes against humanity of extermination, murder, rape or other

forms of sexual violence, torture, imprisonment, enforced disappearance and other inhuman acts," it continues" (Blanford). As you can see the Syrian government has been destructing the trust between citizens and government. Even children are sacrificed, as "several dozen boys and girls between the ages of eight and thirteen who were taken from their homes and used as human shields" (Syria's War: 80% in Poverty). Besides that kids has been victims of killing, unpredictable arrest, torture and sexually abused.

Many people will ask themselves if President Assad has faced any consequences. The United States is planning to attack Syria because of the use of chemical weapon. "The United States possibly allies are preparing to launch military strikes against Syria in response to Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons" (Kittrie). That threat now seems unlikely under the Trump administration and their possibly lean toward relations with Russia who supports the Assad regime.

"An aid convoy and warehouse of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are bombed; no one claims responsibility. The strike prompts the UN to halt aid operations in Syria. As government forces take control of most of Aleppo from rebel groups, Turkey and Russia broker a ceasefire for eastern Aleppo so that civilians can be evacuated. The UN Security Council holds an emergency session amid reports of mounting civilian deaths and extrajudicial killings. The ceasefire collapses less than a day after it is implemented"(CNN).

Chemical weapons have also been used on civilians. Poisonous gas is one of the major weapons used by the Syrian government toward citizens, which caused "as many as 386,000 people have been killed, including nearly 14,000 children, says the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights" (worldvision.org). The Syrian government is punishing civilians for opposing government rule leaving everyone in danger. The right to live has been taken away from the Syrian civilians.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is "an international tribunal formed in 2002 for the prosecution of crimes against humanity." (ICD) The International Criminal Court is not an effective agency because crimes committed against innocent people won't be resolved. If it was effective they would support ending major crimes committed against Syrian refugees. As you can see, the crimes are increasing, so this agency and others need to intervene and find safe locations for those refugees fleeing Syria. "The report includes the story of an elderly detainee who died after being hanged by the wrists for over three hours, and multiple accounts of detainees who died from suffering bodily mutilation under torture and being denied any subsequent medical treatment" (Kittire). Situations like these wouldn't be happening if the International Criminal Court was an agency that worked. The ICC has authority to prosecute war crimes such as the use of chemical weapons attacks. Since Syria is not a part of the International Criminal Court, they can't find justice. "So long as the Assad regime remains in power and refuses to subject itself to ICC jurisdiction, the ICC can only prosecute chemical weapons use in Syria if the United Nations Security Council refers the case to it" (Kittire). Based on the UN's decision to remove those providing humanitarian aid, this seems unlikely.

Religion plays a big role in the Syrian cultural. Religion also plays an important role in the conflict in Syria. Before the war, Syrian culture and religion was made up of "Arab 90.3%, Kurdish, Armenian, and other 9.7%" (cia.gov). This can cause conflict between the different sects since their faith based practices vary. In term of religious identity, Syrian civilian percentages are that "Alawites constitute about 12 percent of the 23 million Syrians. Sunni Muslims, the opposition's backbone, make up about 75 percent of the population"(Rodgers). President Bashar Al Assad belong to Alawites, which means his beliefs oppose most of the

Syrian population. The top positions are held by Alawite soldiers while most of the rebels are Sunni Muslims. A President should not rule a democratic country based on what he believes religiously, but we know that for many in the Syrian communities, this is the basis for government, leading to inequality.

The Syrian government's protection of minority communities is not effective. Minority communities are constantly in danger. Some of those civilians were able to move to another country. "About 7.6 million people are internally displaced, with 4.2 million refugees in neighboring countries" (hrw.org). This shows that nobody in Syria is safe and there is a lack of protection. This crisis has been left many with no place to go since Syria is all they know.

During the civil war, the government has targeted specific communities and cities. The communities attack are areas where rebels live. "The Syrian government has launched attacks on rebel-held areas around several cities, including Homs and Damascus suburb, according to opposition activists and a monitor" (Perthes). The Syrian government attacks these areas because rebels organize there and arm themselves to combat the government violence. These are not the only areas they attack, Aleppo is another city attack by the Syrian government. Aleppo has been destroyed and there is no security, civilians are not protected anywhere they go. This civil war became a war with religious consequences because the Syrian government has destroyed places of worship. "Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III Laham said last year that more than 1,000 Christians had been killed, entire villages cleared, and dozens of churches and Christian centres damaged or destroyed" (Rodgers). The government will attack anyone that is part of the Sunni Muslim religion. Christians couldn't practice in their churches since they were destroyed and/or damaged.

## **COMMITTEE ON CROSS BORDER ISSUES**

The countries that are on Syria's borders are Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Jordan. The relationship that Iran has with Syria has been on-going since 1979. This alliance grew by having common enemies. They both have certain needs that they share, "together the regimes stand a better chance at survival—without having to accommodate either domestic or foreign demands for change" (Iran and Syria). Along with this they also had seven different phases that they had to go through:

- Phase one - The New Alliance which took place on 1979 - 1982.
- Phase two - The zenith of Syrian-Iranian power, 1982-1985,
- Phase three - Alliance tensions and consolidation of the axis, 1985-1988,
- Phase four - Containment of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, 1988-1991,
- Phase five - Alliance cooperation in the post-Cold War period, 1991-2003,
- Phase six - Reinvigoration of the alliance after the Iraq war, 2003-2011,
- Phase seven - The Arab Spring and Syria's Civil War, 2011 -...

Phase seven is still going on to this day. Israel and Syria have remained in opposition due to Israel's attacks on Syria. "In 2003, Israel used American aircraft in a strike on a Palestinian refugee camp just outside of Damascus. It was the first of a sequence of humiliating attacks that the Syrian armed forces were unable to prevent" (Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad). The reason why Israel attacked Syria was because Syria failed to meet the demands that Israel imposed. Turkey and Syria did not have a good relationship even though they bordered each other. "For most of the last century, Turkey and Syria's relationship was 'extremely bad'...Turkey was an imperial power starting in 1517-known as the Ottoman Empire - and by the time nationalism began to take root in Syria at the turn of the 20th century, the turks

began to be seen as oppressors” (Syria and Turkey: A Complex Relationship). They also had problems over water resources because Turkey claimed the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This created greater conflict due to the fact that both Syria and Iraq did not have enough water for their people.

Jordan's relationship with Syria is one of fear. Jordan is afraid that if they make a wrong move they can provoke a hostile response from Bashar al-Assad and this could lead to an attack. “It is also known that if Assad remains in power Jordan will have nowhere to run” (Syria: The View from Jordan). Because of this fear, Jordan views Syria as an intimidator. In order for them to feel some sort of safety they have begun “to guard against violence spilling over into the country, the Jordanian army is being mobilized in greater strength along its borders” (Syria: The View From Jordan). This fear has made them start securing their borders so they can defend their country from Syrian attacks.

Lebanon has a connection to Syria because Syrian troops are stationed there. “In less than a month, all Syrian regular army troops stationed in Lebanon since 1976 had been pulled back into Syrian territory” (Syria and Lebanon: A Brotherhood Transformed). This caused humiliation for Lebanon. Both Iraq and Syria are two neighboring countries that “seized power in the late 1960s, deposing weak and unpopular dictatorships” (Iraq and Syria: The Dilemma of Dynasty). Syria decided to not act into war that was going on between Iraq and the foreign countries but they did not know that so many Iraqi refugees would later end up moving to Syria.

During the conflict both Syria and Turkey improved their relationship in 2003 when the United States invaded Iraq. “Assad was worried about an invasion of his own country, and began looking to shore up his local alliances, including Turkey” (Syria and Turkey: A Complex Relationship). Turkey agreed to join forces with Syria because they thought that what the United States had done (invading Iraq) was wrong. Both Turkey and Syria could put their differences aside and work together. Lebanon was doing well maintaining a “relative stability despite the full-tilt civil war that has torn apart its largest neighbor and former military occupier, Syria, for more than a year and a half” (5 things you need to know about Lebanon and Syria). They were doing well until the killing of Lebanon's top intelligence official, Brig. Gen Wissam al-Hassan. Lebanon suspected that Syria was the one in charge of the death of the intelligence official. This caused Lebanon to publicly oppose Bashar al-Assad.

Iran is trying its best to keep President Bashar al-Assad in power so they are helping by “providing essential military supplies to Assad, primarily by air” (Iranian Strategy in Syria). They are willing to do whatever it takes to keep Assad in power because if Assad was to fall then he would also take the power that Tehran has with him. At the same time “Iraqi Shi'a militants are also fighting in Syria in support of Assad” (Iranian Strategy in Syria). Iraq also helped Syria because they also want Bashar Al-Assad to remain in power. “Jordan is trying to maintain a harmonious relationship with international and regional parties that can help them deal with this difficult situation in a way that does not harm the country's political, social, or economic stability” (Where does Jordan stand on the Syrian Crisis?). Jordan has been trying its best to not get involved in Syria. They have allowed refugees from Syria to enter Jordan and stay at its northern border, while warning, “One should not confuse Israel's combination of puzzlement and a generally measured intervention in the Syrian civil war, with a lack of profound concerns regarding its potential impact on Israel” (Five years that changed Israeli-Syrian relations forever). Israel has not fully involved themselves because they fear the conflict spilling over into territory like Golan Heights or that it might end up going even deeper into the country and that would cause huge damages for their people.

Syria is also historically known to be a sanctuary to small groups of people of different religions and ethnicities. "Several of these communities were 'leftovers' from previous invasions or migrations...Syria was already a refuge for a quarter of a million Palestinians and about 100,000 Iraqis who had fled the war occupation" (Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad). It was easier for the refugees to enter and start living Syria prior to the conflict because they did not need any type of visa or paperwork to enter Syria. Even though there were many refugees that entered the clear majority were from Iraq.

The current refugees attempting to leave Syria live in both camps and cities but mostly camps where kids don't have toys to play with or where families don't have enough to eat. Many are barefoot and wondering without knowing what they are stepping on. "Three million Syrians have become refugees abroad and 6.5 million more have fled their homes for other locations within the country (a group known as "internally displaced people," or IDPs)—all told, roughly 43 percent of Syria's pre-war population of 22 million" (Almost Half of Syria's Population Has Been Uprooted). Refugees must wait for trucks with water to arrive for them to have clean water to drink to be able to survive the conflict.

Turkey seems to be Syria's biggest border help because they are so close in distance from their shared border and much of the heavy conflict. "Turkey and Syria share a 910 km border. It is impossible to regulate all of such a long border" (Turkey and Border Security). In addition, guarding the borders would be difficult because they allow people in without paper work.

Turkey was responsible for helping to keep Syria's borders safe. "Border security is an urgent issue for Turkey's national security. However, it is very difficult for Turkey to secure its border for two main reasons. First, during the 2000s, the Turkish government has positively used globalization as a foreign policy tool...Second, Middle Eastern borders were artificially drawn by the West." (Turkey and Border Security). They were responsible because not only were they protecting the Syrian border but their own as well to prevent the entry of foreign fighters, who would want to commit and attempt to join the Islamic State which stands for IS or what we know as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).

Before the conflict started, Syria was already having trouble with having enough resources to maintain its people. "According to the team of researchers, the water crisis – caused by decreasing winter rainfall and increasing temperature – has probably been worsened by human-driven climate change" (Syria, The Environmental Crisis Behind the Civil War). Pollution is causing the climate to become worse which is leading to an increase in the temperature. This may not seem so bad but when you look at it from the point of view of people that depend on winter and the rainy seasons to have crops. It becomes a greater problem because they don't have food. Not only that but "while drought is not the only cause of the Syrian conflict, the idea is that it has helped drive up social unrest. It increased unemployment, exacerbated famine and water scarcity, and forced farmers from their homes and into cities, where violence began" (Is the Syrian Conflict Linked to Climate Change?) At first Syria did not have a problem with refugees entering until they saw that more and more kept on entering and that caused its people to lose their jobs and violence to break out. Not only were jobs lost, but many were losing their homes as well. This also causes problems because the lack of water makes farmer lose their crops so they start to move into the cities to find jobs.

Many problems were starving because many people from the neighboring countries were entering and that was causing Syrians to become unemployed. Also "the environmental causes of wars shouldn't be underestimated, since food and water will play an ever more important role in coming years" (Syria, the Environmental Crisis Behind the Civil War). Many of us believe that

war only cause people to lose their homes and loved ones but we don't stop to think that war also destroys where people grow their crops and contaminates their water resources. "Syria proves how the effects of environmental degradation and global warming can significantly affect countries' political stability, with consequences on a global level" (Syria, the Environmental Crisis Behind the Civil War). Climate change is a huge problem for the long-term effects on the Syrian people post-war because their survival is dependent upon the future crops and land.

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