

Situation in Syria

Forum: Security Council

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Introduction

Since the Spring of Arab in 2011, Syria has never been the country of serenity. The conflict between the government and citizens became something more than a democratic protest when all the state and non-state stakeholders grew in every places, using violence and oppression to achieve their own ends. The conflict resulted in 500 thousands death and 13 million internally and externally displaced people. This one of the worst conflict in modern history started to be riddled with yet another sign of war. On October 2022, twenty soldiers were injured by bomb in Damascus, the capital of Syria. On November 2022, ten people were killed and seventy seven was injured by rocket attack in Idlib, middle of the new Syrian rebels, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), against the Syrian government.

While the conflict continues, the lives of civilians in Syria are still exacerbating. For people who live under this condition, neither the government nor the rebels are trustworthy. Extreme Jihadist groups are known for its brutality, while the government has been accused for years of using illegal chemical weapons and undiscriminated attack in disputed areas. In order to condemn these activities, many state and non-state agents enforced implements such as direct military intervention or diplomatic and economic sanctions, but the situation is not seemed to be alleviated.

Background & Problem Raised

On Spring of 2011, democratic protests called Spring of Arab swept the public in middle east countries, and so did Syria. The protest claimed that it is unbearable to live under current socio-economic condition where people's voices are forced silent and riddled with unbridled poverty. The Syrian government counteracted with force, and it occurred severe casualties and rebound on the regime. Citizens who participated in the protests were soon called terrorist, and Syrian National Coalition, military group as an opposition to the government, was established. In November 2012, the opposition occupied Aleppo, the second largest city in Syria, and the regional conflict received great international attention. Pro-government Assad forces and the opposition, therefore, went into a great immediate contact. Nearby countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey closely engaged in the conflict by providing ample ammunitions and weapons to the opposition groups which became fragmented into many factions. Although these factions like Jaysh al-Islam, Free Syrian



Syrian National Army probing an air-stricken area

Army, Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, and Army of Conquest all wanted the government to fall, they had different motivations which complexed the situation of the war.

The tide turned, however, when the extreme jihadist group called ISIS involved in the conflict. ISIS not only aimed to annex the whole territory of Syria but also targeted the West and believed that they were central to the current ‘mess’ of the world. Committing crimes like murder, sexual assault, public bombing, and hostage killing, ISIS began to emerge as a major terrorist group in Middle East. As it expand its influence and area, western countries especially like US, UK, France, and Arab allies saw this expansion as a serious international issues because the influence of ISIL was reaching arbitrarily to both other civilians and combatants. Thus, conducted airstrike aiming ISIS. However, after some serious efforts were made by various vested interests, ISIL started to diminish in its power from 2016. US started to support Kurdish group, and Turkey entered the conflict in order to support the Free Syrian Army. On the contrary, Russia accepted the call from the Syrian government to conduct airstrikes to oppositions.

While the constant upheavals, Syrian people in the disputed areas lost life, home, and family. It is easy to grasp the how much social attention and status these people have. When the

president Assad was interviewed by BBC about the non-discriminatory bombing in disputed areas, he said that if there is any Syrian citizen in the area, he or she would have crossed the border and came to areas controlled by Syrian government. This is obviously not the case in reality because some people simply can not cross the border full of bullets, some people identify themselves as refugee, and some people have no choice but to either proactively or inevitably engaged in rebel groups.

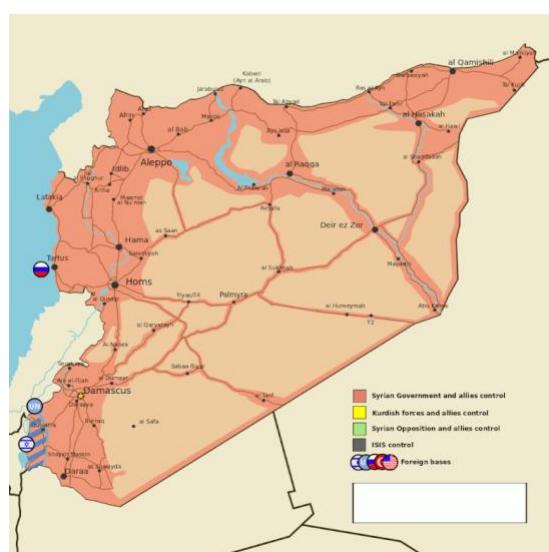
The condition under these people live in the disputed area is dire. The hospital is paralyzed by overwhelming patients and lacking both

material and human resources. They do not have safe sanctuary to protect themselves from assault, let alone decent job opportunity or education chance to subsist their livings.

International Actions

United States and European Union collectively imposed series of sanctions from Aug 2011 until now. Canada, Australia, Switzerland, the Arab League has also imposed financial, trade and transport sanctions including asset freezing and travel bans to main political figures allegedly under various accusations. In order to effectively deal with the situation in Syria, United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) was once established in a short term with three hundred unarmed military observers. However, the mission was unsuccessful because of the UN Security Council failed to make a sustainable resolution for extended periods.

In the Arab League comprising, Syria was banned from the league and were publicly criticized. As a consequence, Syria still remains suspended from the Arab league. Therefore, its



absence of right and status to engage in trade in unit of a league enabled it to stay independent from surrounding countries.

The Stances of the P5 Nations

United States of America

United States was among the first countries that recognized the seriousness of the Syrian conflict and took military action. US supported Kurdish forces in Syria, and was a main actor to drive out the ISIL in expansion from 2016. Historically, both Obama and Trump administration attempted to assist the oppositions with providing ration and trucks to training and equipment. Although US troop withdrew from the land in 2019, it did not lose contact with the Kurdish forces. Since then, US keeps watchful surveillance over the sudden situation in Syria.

United Kingdom and France

Both UK and France have experience of direct military involvement by implementing precise airstrike during the conflict in 2018 as a sign of castigation toward Syrian government regarding the use of chemical weapons to civilians. They also did the same for containing ISIL groups from expansion. Currently, the embassy for diplomatic interaction with Syrian government is closed for both countries, as they officially supported opposition groups.

Russian Federation

From the beginning of the conflict, Russia helped the Syrian government with military aid and direct involvement to the conflict. Russia actively deployed military contractors and operators as Chvk Wagner that protected Assad regime. It seems to be in favor of Syrian government continuously because the advantage that Russia gains by deploying soldiers to Syria were great, such as obtaining control over Eastern Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea. However, countries close to US seriously condemned Russia for allegedly killing at least five thousands civilians through bombing, targeting deliberately of civilian infrastructures like building, school, and hospitals.



President of Syria Assad

China

Unlike other P5 nations, China did not have any military operation in Syria. In terms of economic relationship, since Syria has been banned in the Arab League, Syria independently signed the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum with China, which facilitates multilateral coordination between them. It also criticized US castigating the Syrian government, but not much happened between China and Syria.

Problem Raised

Using Non-Discriminatory Bombing using Illegal Weapons

Many times during the conflict from 2012, the Syrian government was mainly accused of its violent treatment to citizens' peaceful demonstration and using illegal weapons of mass destruction indiscriminately. According to the investigation from GPPi research institution, there has been more than three hundreds chemical attacks to civilians from the beginning of the conflict. To this point, president Assad claimed that there is always inevitable unintended civilian casualty in death. However, the data organized in Arms Control Organization shows that Syria deliberately destroyed civilian infrastructure solely for political and military purposes. However, this problem is not solely blamed for pro-government military agents. There are many small and big non-state military agents, so-called terrorists or vigilantes, possessing and using illegal weapons as well.

Safety of the Civilians Living in the Disputed Areas

Areas especially around southern part of Syria is a strategic cite of stronghold rebels. People who live in this area are always under constant exposure to life threat and deprivation of necessities. There are limited supplies everyday on their hands. Medical care and job opportunities are obsolete. Even crossing the border to areas held by Syrian government for the safety is not an easy task.

Possible Solutions

According to the UN Six Point Plan from 2012, one of the earliest international measure to alleviate the Syrian conflict, "It also required a range of other steps by the Syrian Government to alleviate the crisis, including humanitarian access, access to and release of detainees, access and freedom of movement for journalists, and freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully. The plan embodies the need for an inclusive Syrian-led political process to address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people." As written above, both the fundamental rights of citizens and current war situation should be resolved:



Child and Missile Disposal

1. Retaining or reinforcing economic, diplomatic sanctions,
2. Increasing humanitarian aid like rations and subsidization.

Although the issues are fully recognized, political researchers estimate that if there is no new action or change of policy from the Syrian government, it is hard to achieve any fundamental solution. Therefore, it is a mission of the UN Security Council to judge the current accusation toward the Assad government and take strong measures.

Glossary

Political Asylum: the right to live in a foreign country that is given by the government of the country to the people who left their own countries for political purposes

Sanction: an economic or military coercive measure adopted usually by several nations in concert for forcing a nation violating international law to desist or yield to adjudication

Ceasefire: an economic or military coercive measure adopted usually by several nations in concert for forcing a nation violating international law to desist or yield to adjudication

Opposition: a political party opposing and prepared to replace the party in power

Dispute: a verbal controversy or physical combat

Municipality: a primarily urban political unit having corporate status and usually powers of self-government

Non-Discriminatory Bombing: a bombing attack without differentiating military combatants and civilians

Timeline

Jan 2011 A.D. – Large scale protest for endorsing democratic government called Spring of Arab broke out in the Middle East.

March to July 2011 – Syrian government respond to the protest with violence, calling them terrorists.

Aug to Sep 2011 – United States and European Union impose sanctions to main political figures in Syria.

Jul to Nov 2012 – Opposition force captured the city Aleppo and Syrian National Coalition was founded.

April to Aug 2013 – Hezbollah and ISIS took part in the conflict and become a major threat to the Syrian government.

Jan to Feb 2014 – Peace talk in Geneva fails.

June 2014 – President Assad became re-elected and ISIS Aleppo declares a country from Aleppo to eastern Iraq.

Sep 2014 – US and Arab allies start a airstrike against ISIS in Syria.

Sep to Oct 2015 – Russia airstrike and US deploy special force to support Kurdish.

Aug to Dec 2016 – Turkey enter Syria to support the Free Syrian Army fighting ISIS and contain Kurdish YPG units.

Dec 2016 – Syrian government took back Aleppo.

April to August 2017 – Civilians dead due to chemical attack, Israeli media reveal that more than 100 since 2012.

Jan April 2018 – Turkey conduct military operation in Kurdish territory and gas bombs in Eastern Gouta.

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October 2019 – US stepped out with its troops from northern Syria. Syrian army again entered north eastern area.

February to Nov 2022 – Bombing and rocket attack were reported to military combatants.

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