

**Forum:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Question of:** Measures to Alleviate the Syrian Refugee Crisis

**Student Officer:** Ashley Hong, Deputy Assistant President

---

## Introduction

The Syrian refugee crisis was caused by a combination of many factors, including economic hardship, human rights violations, war and civil war, and environmental issues.

One of the main causes of the refugee crisis was the Syrian civil war that started in 2011. The war was triggered by the government's violent response to protests in the country that had been held because of Syria's high corruption and unemployment rates, and a lack of political freedom. Moreover, such protests began to spread nation-wide with citizens being inspired by the then-recent 'Arab spring' uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Some protests were also held in support of specific incidents such as a group of teenagers in Daraa, a southern town of Syria, getting arrested for anti-government graffiti were also prevalent. Although most of these demonstrations started as peaceful protests, tensions rapidly escalated following the government's crackdown on any political or social dissent. The once peaceful demonstrations quickly became marred with blood and violence between security forces and civilians, officially triggering the civil war in March of 2011.<sup>1</sup> The tensions between the pro-democracy party and president Bashar al-Assad continued to rise, which resulted in the formation of hundreds of rebel groups and use of deadly forces from both parties. By July of the same year, the Free Syrian Army had been assembled by army veterans and many civilians who had taken up arms to join the opposition.<sup>2</sup> Even in the present day, after 11 years of conflict, division among ethnic and army groups continues to exacerbate the crisis.

As a result, the Syrian refugee crisis began as people were forced to escape entire villages as war rampantly broke out nation-wide. With armies targeting various locations, more than thousands of people fled to neighboring countries to protect themselves from the onslaught of the brutal attacks from all parties. By mid 2011, 10,000 to 15,000 refugees from Syria had crossed the Turkish border, while more than 5,000 were returned to Syria and placed in newly built camps. Aside from the population of refugees

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Syrian Conflict Explained," Shelter Box, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.shelterbox.org/syria/the-syrian-conflict-explained/#:~:text=The%20conflict%20in%20Syria%20dates%20back%20to%202011.&text=Inspired%20by%20the%20%27Arab%20spring,the%20dissent%20C%20protests%20erupted%20nationwide.>

<sup>2</sup> "Why Has the Syrian War Lasted 11 Years?," BBC, last modified March 15, 2022, accessed July 23, 2022, [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229.](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229)

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

that were returned, thousands more were estimated to have been displaced and relocated in other regions such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Libya.<sup>3</sup> As of now, these numbers have only increased to create the largest and most serious humanitarian crisis in history. According to the UNHCR, “More than 6.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee their country since 2011 and another 6.7 million people remain internally displaced. The vast majority – approximately 5.5 million refugees – have found refuge in neighboring countries, primarily in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.”

However, problems still arise in the refugee camps as violence, humanitarian issues, and other disasters impact these refugees. For example, in Idlib, Syria’s northwest region, thousands of Syrians were displaced in refugee camps after tents and other food supplies were destroyed by torrential rains and strong winds. An estimate of 25,000 tents had been destroyed, impacting at least 140,000 people. Violence has also been a prominent issue in such camps with reports showing that additional outbreaks of violence had caused another million people to flee the camps again during December 2019 and February 2020.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, another significant issue that should be addressed is the living conditions of the refugees. Although several camps have been constructed for the refugees both within Syria and the neighboring countries, a vast majority, almost 92 percent of the refugee population, live in rural and urban settings. The biggest struggle for refugees in these urban areas is the instability that comes with the very limited access to basic services and high unemployment. According to the World Bank, more than 70 percent of refugees live in poverty, which reflects these issues, added on with the fact that COVID-19 has worsened these circumstances.<sup>5</sup> They also reported that the impact of the pandemic was detrimental to the refugees as “an additional one million Syrian refugees, along with 4.4 million members of their host communities in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq, were pushed into poverty in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic”. As the humanitarian crisis worsens in camps, people also become more exposed to exploitation risks like early marriage, child labor, and gender-based violence. The limited access to basic services such as water, food, and hygiene products also makes the overcrowded refugee camps more vulnerable to the virus as it is difficult to maintain public health. Lastly, in regards to the younger generations who have experienced war, it is essential to acknowledge that childrens’ rights are also an

---

<sup>3</sup> Yedioth Internet, "Syrian Refugees Continue to Flock to Turkey," Ynet News, last modified June 24, 2011, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4086653,00.html>.

<sup>4</sup> "Syria Refugee Crisis Explained," USA for UNHCR, last modified July 8, 2022, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/#What%20is%20happening%20in%20Syria%E2%80%99s%20northwest%20region%20%E2%80%93%20specifically%20in%20Idlib%20%E2%80%93%20right%20now?>

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR, "World Bank - UNHCR MENA Study: COVID-19 Compounding Misfortunes," Operational Data Portal, last modified December 17, 2020, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/83865>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

important factor in resolving the crisis as more than a third of the teenage population in the camps do not have access to education.

Turkey is the largest host country for both Syrian refugees and all refugees in general with 4 million refugees in total, while 3.6 million out of them are Syrian.<sup>6</sup> Although Turkey had been one of the major countries who had their doors open for Syrian refugees in the past 10 years, they recently banned Syrian refugees residing in Turkey from traveling to northern Syria. The Turkish government also set up a new quota to limit the number of Syrians that were allowed in a city by implementing a policy that allows no more than 25 percent of a neighborhood's population to be non-Turks.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, a program called Syrians Under Temporary Protection (SUTP) aids refugees as it grants temporary protection to Syrian nationals, refugees, and stateless persons, who came to Turkey from Syria after April 2011.<sup>8</sup> In regards to the economic impact of refugees in Turkey, they decrease informal employment and increase formal employment, but also increase unemployment as natives and Syrians fight for the same job opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

To alleviate the refugee crisis at hand, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has passed 27 resolutions on Syria or largely related to Syria since 2012. These resolutions not only entail for the investigation of war crimes that killed hundreds people during the war that is still raging on, but also to call upon humanitarian aid for refugees that need access to basic necessities like food and water.<sup>10</sup> Following the COVID-19 global pandemic, the UNHCR expanded their program for Syrian refugees to “provide protective equipment to hospitals and health clinics, distribute medicines and support the construction of quarantine areas and hygiene facilities.” They also financially aided almost 800,000 Syrian refugees to ensure that internally displaced and stateless people are still protected and addressed in the COVID-19 vaccination programs.<sup>11</sup>

## Definition of Key Terms

---

<sup>6</sup> Kelly Petillo, "Turkey's Open Door Closes: How Europe Can Better Support Syrian Refugees," European Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 9, 2022, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/turkeys-open-door-closes-how-europe-can-better-support-syrian-refugees/#:~:text=Syrian%20refugees%20represent%20the%20vast,officially%203.6%20million%20are%20Syrian.>

<sup>7</sup> Petillo, "Turkey's Open," European Council on Foreign Relations.

<sup>8</sup> "Temporary Protection in Türkiye," UNHCR, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://help.unhcr.org/turkey/information-for-syrians/temporary-protection-in-turkey/#:~:text=What%20is%20temporary%20protection%3F,by%20the%20Government%20of%20T%C3%BCrkiye.>

<sup>9</sup> Oğuz Esen and Ayla Ogus Binatli, "The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Turkish Economy: Regional Labour Market Effects," *Social Sciences* 6, no. 4 (October 28, 2017): [Page #], <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6040129>.

<sup>10</sup> "Syria," UN News, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/focus/syria>.

<sup>11</sup> "Syria Refugee Crisis," USA for UNHCR, accessed July 23, 2022, <http://SYRIA REFUGEE CRISIS>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

### **Displacement**

Displaced people are people who have escaped their countries or left their homes due to reasons such as but not limited to war, conflict, famine, drought, and other natural disasters. This term relates to the issue at hand as people were displaced by the Syrian civil war.

### **Refugee**

Refugees are people who have escaped or fled their country because of conflict or persecution that makes it unsafe to stay in one's country. This term relates to the issue at hand as the agenda discusses the refugee crisis of Syria.

### **Reintegration**

Reintegration programs aim to adjust people into new environments. In regards to the agenda at hand, it is necessary to focus on how the reintegration of refugees into host countries can be improved to alleviate the living conditions of refugees.

### **Asylum Seekers**

“An asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right.”<sup>12</sup>  
This term relates to the issue at hand as people were forced to seek asylum in other countries during the Syrian refugee crisis.

### **Stateless People**

Stateless people are people who don't have a citizenship to any country, meaning that they are “not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law”. Some people may be born stateless, or become stateless.<sup>13</sup>

## **Timeline of Key Events**

### **March 15, 2011 - Ongoing - Start of Syrian Civil War (Syrian Day of Rage)**

---

<sup>12</sup> "Refugees, Asylum-seekers and Migrants," Amnesty International, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Ending Statelessness," UNHCR USA, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/ending-statelessness.html>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

Inspired by the Arab Springs movement, anti-government protests against the new president Bashar al-Assad erupted nationwide as people raised their voices against the dictatorship of the al-Assad family. There were a variety of protests happening throughout the cities, each focusing on different topics. For example, in the Southern part of Syria, protests were being held in support of teenagers who had been arrested. Specifically, a group of 15 teenagers were arrested and tortured by police for vandalizing public property with anti-government graffiti. Similarly, protests in other regions called for the release of political prisoners, political reform of the corrupted government, and abolition of the 48-year emergency law.<sup>14</sup> The tension between the government and people escalated further when the government's security forces started to disband mobs with live ammunition, tear gas, and assault. For example, on March 20, security forces repressed a group of protesters that had burned down the headquarters of the Arab socialist Ba'ath Party with live ammunition. The result of this violent response to protesters was the death of seven police officers and fifteen protesters.<sup>15</sup> The ultimate result of all of these minor protests was the "Friday of Dignity" on March 18, where mass protests broke out across several major cities. These protests continued until March 25, resulting in the total death of at least 70 protesters by police forces.<sup>16</sup> With all of these events combined, the conflict between the government and protesters evolved to an armed conflict as the protesting parties also joined forces to form the Free Syrian Army by July of 2011.

### **July 2012 - Ongoing - First Syrian Refugee Camp in Jordan**

In July, as millions of Syrians fled to neighboring countries from the war raging on in their home country, the first refugee camp opened up in Jordan. With more than 142,000 initial refugees, Jordan officials were reluctant to set up a camp to avoid the Syrian president's anger, establishing the camps to prevent the impression that all Syrian refugees were openly fleeing from the civil war to Jordan. However, this also pressured Jordan as the sheer number of people that had fled to the country, as well as the thousands of people that kept flowing in, was far too many for them to support sufficiently. The camps quickly experienced a shortage of supplies in water and electricity, as well as a general lack of basic infrastructures like medical care or education. In addition, Jordan reached out to other countries and called for the aid of the international community due to the country's serious shortage in water resources and

---

<sup>14</sup> The New York Times, "Officers Fire on Crowd as Syrian Protests Grow," The New York Times, last modified March 20, 2011, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/world/middleeast/21syria.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Holliday, "The Struggle for Syria in 2011," Institute for the Study of War, last modified December 2011, accessed July 23, 2022, [https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Struggle\\_For\\_Syria.pdf](https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Struggle_For_Syria.pdf).; Gabe Kahn, "Bloody Syrian Protests Continue," Israel National News, last modified March 21, 2011, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/143026#.VdOFupexImE>.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Slackman, "Syrian Troops Open Fire on Protesters in Several Cities," The New York Times, last modified March 25, 2011, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/26/world/middleeast/26syria.html>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

electricity supplies caused by the militant bombings that cut off their supply of power plants from Egypt.<sup>17</sup> As of now, Jordan has become one of the countries with the biggest refugee camps for Syrians, hosting the two Za'atari and Azraq camps. The Za'atari camp, the larger of the two, houses 81,000 refugees as of January 2022.<sup>18</sup>

### **September 22, 2014 - United States Intervention in Syrian Civil War**

The United States of America (USA) led an intervention in the Syrian Civil War in support of the Syrian rebels and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) against the Syrian government. The US-led military operation also consisted of militaries from France, Turkey, Canada, Jordan, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) led by the US was also a part of several military aid operations in support of the government opposition group of Syria. Although the US only provided non-lethal, humanitarian aid such as food rations and pickup trucks for the Free Syrian Army in the beginning stages of the war, they moved on to providing financial support, intelligence, and training (link). However, the first time that the United States directly intervened in the civil war was on April 7, 2017, when they launched 59 missiles into Syria, aimed at the Shayrat Airbase. This attack was executed as a response to the Khan Shaykhun chemical attack, which occurred on April 4th, under President Trump's administration.<sup>19</sup> After this first initial attack from the US, they proceeded to carry out a series of direct attacks on Syria from May 2017 to February 2018. Trump also administered that the US military would maintain its substantial presence in Syria.<sup>20</sup> In the following years, the US made several decisions to both remain and withdraw some of their soldiers from Syria, but made the final statement that around 400 American troops would remain, garrisoned, as a contingency force in Syria.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> "France 24," Jordan Opens Its First Syrian Refugee Camp, last modified July 29, 2012, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/20120729-jordan-opens-first-syrian-refugee-camp-syria-unrest>.

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR, "Refugee Camps," UNHCR Jordan, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/jo/refugee-camps>.

<sup>19</sup> Dan Lamothe, Missy Ryan, and Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "U.S. Strikes Syrian Military Airfield in First Direct Assault on Bashar Al-Assad's Government," The Washington Post, last modified April 7, 2017, accessed July 23, 2022, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-weighing-military-options-following-chemical-weapons-attack-in-syria/2017/04/06/0c59603a-1ae8-11e7-9887-1a5314b56a08\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-weighing-military-options-following-chemical-weapons-attack-in-syria/2017/04/06/0c59603a-1ae8-11e7-9887-1a5314b56a08_story.html); Barbara Starr and Jeremy Diamond, "Trump Launches Military Strike against Syria," CNN Politics, last modified April 7, 2017, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/06/politics/donald-trump-syria-military/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Borger, Patrick Wintour, and Kareem Shaheen, "US Military to Maintain Open-ended Presence in Syria, Tillerson Says," The Guardian, last modified January 17, 2018, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/17/us-military-syria-isis-iran-assad-tillerson>.

<sup>21</sup> Sara Cook and Kathryn Watson, "Several Hundred Troops to Remain in Syria," CBS News, last modified February 21, 2019, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-troops-peacekeepers-to-remain-in-syria/>; "US Looking for Allies to Replace It in Syria, Says Sen Graham," Ahval, last modified February 15, 2019, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://ahvalnews.com/lindsey-graham/us-looking-allies-replace-it-syria-says-sen-graham>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

### **September 2014 - Russian Aid for the Syrian Government in the Syrian Civil War**

Russia had been involved in the war since its beginning by supporting the administration of President Bashar al-Assad. They provided the Syrian government with both political and military aid through an operation named “Mission in Syria”. Their deployment of military forces to Syria in 2015 was significant as it marked the first time that Russia had officially engaged in an armed conflict outside of their territory since the Cold War of 1991.<sup>22</sup> As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Russia was also able to prevent the resolutions calling for the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad and imposing sanctions on the country by vetoing all the drafted resolutions.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, Russia began to become more directly involved in the conflict by using armed forces after the president gained authorization from the Federation Council of Russia.<sup>24</sup>

### **December 21, 2016 - United Nations General Assembly Establishes the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Investigate Syria War Crimes**

The United Nation General Assembly established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIM) after the adoption of resolution A/71/248 in order to investigate and prosecute individuals who have committed serious crimes since March 2011 under the International Law. The IIM was established by the General Assembly in order to effectively refer the Syrian War situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Although the Security Council made several attempts to refer the situation to the ICC prior to creating the committee, it was vetoed by other nations. Thus, the IIM now assists in collecting evidence and preparing the according documents to testify the crimes committed in Syria, particularly war crimes and crimes against humanity and genocide. It is important to recognize that the IIM is not a tribunal nor a court, and also does not have any prosecutorial powers. The group’s aim is to not directly judge perpetrators but to aid the jurisdictions of suspected perpetrators of crime in Syria.<sup>25</sup>

## **Position of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies**

---

<sup>22</sup> Maria Tsvetkova and Anton Zverev, "Ghost Soldiers: The Russians Secretly Dying for the Kremlin in Syria," Reuters, last modified November 3, 2016, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-insight-idUSKBN12Y0M6>.

<sup>23</sup> Steve Gutterman, "Russia Won't Back U.N. Call for Syria's Assad to Go," Reuters, last modified January 27, 2012, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-russia-idUSTRE80Q0I620120127>.; Luke Harding, "Russian Vetoes Are Putting UN Security Council's Legitimacy at Risk, Says US," The Guardian, last modified 2011, accessed July 23, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> "Why Isn't Russia Singling Out ISIS in Syria? Because It Never Said It Would," The CS Monitor, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2015/1014/Why-isn-t-Russia-singling-out-ISIS-in-Syria-Because-it-never-said-it-would>.

<sup>25</sup> "Who We Are," International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://iiim.un.org/who-we-are/at-a-glance/>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

### **United States of America (USA)**

The United States of America is one of the most actively involved nation of the Syrian refugee crisis as a country that is aiding the democratic party of the conflict, as well as the fact that they are one of biggest providers of refugee humanitarian aid. Since the beginning of the crisis in 2012, the country has provided more than 11.3 billion dollars in humanitarian aid as of 2022, and has promised an additional aid of approximately 700 million dollars in 2020. The funding provided for the country includes providing for basic services such as food, health kits, water, shelter, and hygiene products.<sup>26</sup> However, the United States has been criticized for not implementing adequate refugee policies to accommodate the Syrians fleeing the country. As many countries such as Jordan, Canada, and Germany have implemented policies to accept refugees and alleviate the situation, the United States did not accept as many refugees or enact any policies that would legally aid the Syrians. As a comparison, the neighboring country of US, Canada, took in a total of approximately 75,000 refugees by 2021 and had settled them in the country while the United States took in a total of 23,300 refugees since 2011.<sup>27</sup>

As mentioned previously, the United States is also heavily involved in the conflict as they have provided the Free Syrian Army and several other democratic parties with financial and military aid. Starting with only providing non-direct aid such as food rations or army pick-up trucks, they became more officially and directly involved as they launched joint operations with other countries and also deployed a part of their army into Syrian territory.

### **Jordan**

Jordan is the country with the second most Syrian refugees by hosting 670,000 refugees and asylum seekers, according to the UNHCR. A big portion of Syrian refugees flee to Jordan because it is a neighboring country of Syria, and they also have established refugee camps in the country. As of 2022, they have a total of 5 refugee camps, but the majority of Syrians living in these camps, approximately 85 percent, live below the poverty line. However, the Jordanian government has taken steps to alleviate this extreme poverty situation by increasing job opportunities for refugees through the Jordan Compact, which was a political declaration signed by the European Union (EU), the government of Jordan, and the World Bank in 2016 of February.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the social views of Syrian refugees within the country

---

<sup>26</sup> "Syria," USAID, last modified February 28, 2022, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.usaid.gov/syria>.

<sup>27</sup> Natalie Kalata, "Syrian Refugees Reflect on a Decade of War and Their New Lives in the Toronto Area," CBC, last modified March 15, 2021, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/syrian-refugees-reflect-on-a-decade-of-war-and-their-new-lives-in-the-toronto-area-1.5947946#:~:text=Approximately%2075%2C000%20Syrian%20refugees%20have,fo und%20a%20home%20in%20Toronto>.

<sup>28</sup> Julia Morris, "Extractive Landscapes: The Case of the Jordan Refugee Compact," *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 36, no. 1 (April 25, 2020): [Page #], <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40623>.; UNHCR, "Jordan Issues Record Number of Work Permits to Syrian Refugees," UNHCR USA, last modified January 25, 2022, accessed July 23, 2022,

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

seem negative as “85 percent of Jordanian workers believe that Syrians should not be allowed to enter Jordan freely, and 65 percent believe that all Syrians should live within refugee camps”, according to a report by the International Labor Organization.<sup>29</sup>

### **Russian Federation**

Russia has mainly been related to the issue at hand due to their military involvement in the Syrian civil war. As mentioned above, they aid the administration of President Bashar al-Assad, and now have been militarily assisting the regime by deploying armed forces in 2015 for the first time since the Cold War. In addition, they also further used their power in the United Nations Security Council to veto any resolutions that condemned the President. Although they have made attempts to come to peace by negotiating with the opposing party, as well as with other countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom, Russia has ineffectively come to consensus. Following the unsuccessful attempts, they have been reported to target and launch air strikes on public facilities such as schools or hospitals as well.<sup>30</sup>

### **Islamic Republic of Iran**

Similar to Russia, Iran is a country in support of President Bashar al-Assad. They have also provide aid to Russia in form of technical assistance, military training, and deploying combat troops.<sup>31</sup> More specifically, Iran launched a large-scale training mission by utilizing its Quds Force, Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces, law enforcement forces, and intelligence services for the Syrian government. Employing the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IGRC) for the mission in Syria was significant as it showed Iran’s willingness to expand its military forces outside its borders, as the IRGC is the branch of Iranian armed forces that is responsible for national security.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the Iranian government has been helping different militant groups to take direct combat roles in the armed conflict by backing up the Lebanese Hezbollah fighters, as well as recruiting militia fighters from Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Pakistan for IRGC-sponsored paramilitary organizations.<sup>33</sup>

### **People’s Republic of China**

---

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/1/61effaa54/jordan-issues-record-number-work-permits-syrian-refugees.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Alexandra Francis, "Jordan's Refugee Crisis," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last modified September 21, 2015, accessed July 23, 2022,

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/09/21/jordan-s-refugee-crisis-pub-61338>.

<sup>30</sup> Ziad Jaber and Brinley Bruton, "Russian Hand Seen behind Increased Bombing of Syrian Hospitals," NBC News, last modified February 18, 2018, accessed July 23, 2022,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/russian-hand-seen-behind-increased-bombing-syrian-hospitals-n847961>.

<sup>31</sup> Will Fulton, Joseph Holliday, and Sam Wyer, "Iranian Strategy in Syria," Institute for the Study of War, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/iranian-strategy-syria>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Phillip Smyth, "Iran's Afghan Shiite Fighters in Syria," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, last modified June 3, 2014, accessed July 23, 2022,

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-afghan-shiite-fighters-syria>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

China maintains a neutral stance in the Syrian refugee crisis by providing substantial amounts of humanitarian aid of approximately more than 100 million dollars since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. Their assistance was not only limited to general humanitarian aid to Syria, but also included more than ten million dollars of aiding the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, they contributed over 80 million dollars to neighboring countries of Syria to help them aid the refugees flowing into their territory.<sup>34</sup> In political terms, China has been supporting the Syrian refugees, but has not supported a specific side of the conflict. Rather, they have shown their strong hopes for the mediation of the conflict by expressing their support for the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria to make impartial mediation between the parties in Syria.<sup>35</sup>

Despite this show of support, China has also been accused of supporting the President's party in the armed conflict as they are one of the main supplier for the President's ally, Iran. Evidently, it was found that 31.7 percent of arms exports has been supplied by China since the sanctions that were imposed on the country. The arms export from China mostly consisted of surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems of HongQi-7 and Crotale R440 models, which was 85 percent of the Syrian import of arms from 2000 to 2014. Hence, as Iran is one of Syria's most prominent or active ally supplying them with arms, China is responsible for exacerbating the conflict as they continue to provide arms for Iran.<sup>36</sup>

### **United Nations (UN)**

The United Nations has been one of the biggest contributors for humanitarian aid as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been helping Syrian refugees by increasing accessibility to basic services such as clean water, food, medical care, and shelter. Specifically, they have been handing out insulated tents, cash for medicine, winter clothing, and thermal blankets. Not limited to only physical support, the UNHCR also provides psychosocial support for those suffering from the conflict in Syria mentally as well.<sup>37</sup> The Security Council has also adopted 27 resolutions in Syria both directly addressing Syria or relating to Syria in attempts to alleviate the refugee crisis. The resolutions mainly call for increased humanitarian assistance and condemns the government's acts of violence. such as the use of chemical weapons against their citizens. Moreover, the Security Council had tried to refer

---

<sup>34</sup> "China in Syria: Aid and Trade Now, Influence and Industry Later?," COAR, last modified July 11, 2022, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://coar-global.org/2022/07/11/china-in-syria-aid-and-trade-now-influence-and-industry-later/#:~:text=Based%20on%20public%20data%2C%20it,USD%20to%20support%20neighbouring%20states>.

<sup>35</sup> "China's Position on Syria Issue," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Botswana, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cebaw/eng/zt/CHNDIP/t1076201.htm>.

<sup>36</sup> David Volodzko, "How China Helped Cause the Syrian Refugee Crisis," The Diplomat, last modified September 14, 2015, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/09/how-china-helped-cause-the-syrian-refugee-crisis/>.

<sup>37</sup> UNHCR, "Syria Emergency," UNHCR USA, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html#:~:text=What%20is%20UNHCR%20doing%20to,thermal%20blankets%20and%20winter%20clothing>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

the Syrian Civil War situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the war crimes that occurred since the beginning of the war in March 2011. However, as countries supporting the President's regime continued to veto the request, the United Nations established the IIM, which is the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, to assist the jurisdictions of Syrian Civil War crimes.<sup>38</sup>

### **Syria INGO Regional Forum (SIRF)**

The Syria INGO Regional Forum (SIRF) is the only regional International NGO body that is devoted to helping the Syrian crisis that works across Syria and in neighboring Syrian refugee-hosting countries. The group has 75 members and 15 observers, and is composed of one representative, which is currently hosted by the Mercy Corps, and an elected board of six regional or advocacy directors. The SIRF representative serves as the "main external interlocutor for all regional humanitarian and development inter-agency coordination mechanisms led by the Regional Refugee Coordinator, the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator and the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria." The main purpose of the organization is providing joint messaging to regional UN agencies and communities, host countries and governments; organizing and representing INGOs; promote advocacy opportunities to members; and encouraging Syria and neighboring countries to share and exchange data on humanitarian assistance.<sup>39</sup>

## **Suggested Solutions**

In order to effectively alleviate the Syrian Refugee Crisis, solutions should focus on both the root cause of the crisis and the situation within refugee camps. First, solutions should be aimed at finding ways to reduce the number of refugees currently fleeing Syria by mitigating the tensions between parties in the Syrian Civil War. Second, solutions should be drafted in order to call for additional humanitarian aid for the increasing number of refugees in host countries, as well as establishing infrastructure in rural refugee camps to ensure the basic rights of refugees.

Concerning the ongoing Syrian Civil War, there are many directions that solutions could lead to, with the most obvious scenarios being that either the current government or the opposition party rules the country. However, these two scenarios are unlikely as they have been unable to come to peace despite several attempts to settle the conflict. Hence, it is necessary to find a solution to de-escalate the heightened tensions between the opposing parties and bring the country to peace. Reflecting on the previous examples of decreasing the tension, the United Nations hosted a series of peace talks in 2017, which were

---

<sup>38</sup> "Syria," UN News.

<sup>39</sup> "Welcome to the Syria International NGO Regional Forum," SIRF, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.sirf.ngo/#:~:text=Scope-,SIRF%20is%20the%20only%20regional%20International%20NGO%20body%20dedicated%20to,neighboring%20Syrian%20refugee%2Dhosting%20countries.>

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

the Geneva IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII peace talks on Syria. The peace talk was participated by the Syrian government and the representatives of all the opposing parties. Although the Geneva peace talks were more successful than other attempts since no parties walked away during the entire duration of the talks, minimal progress was made in relieving the conflict. Ultimately, the peace talks fell out when one of the participating parties, the Kurdish National Council (KNC), withdrew from the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). The HNC was the group that represented the entire opposition parties in the peace talks, but the KNC withdrew as they did not agree to the HNC's policies which they believed to be against federalism, and against ensuring the rights of Kurdish.<sup>40</sup> As shown in this example, conflict arose within a single party, leading to an overall negative effect as the consensus between larger parties were broken. Thus, a new structure for peace talks should be established, where participants holding similar beliefs in the conflict do not end up internally conflicting with each other. This could be done through ways such as implementing smaller negotiation sessions between individual opposition parties to gather groups of similar beliefs into one party for the larger peace talk involving the Syrian government. Another solution to resolve any potential conflicts is to encourage communication between parties through establishing hotlines.

Secondly, the conditions of the refugee camps should be improved to be able to properly care for refugees, including providing education and medical services. Some of the most basic problems in the current refugee camps are the insufficient amount of food. Not only do refugee camps not have enough food to sufficiently provide for all residents, but some have been reported to give out expired food from not receiving aid for prolonged periods. Many other camps also do not have enough tents to give shelter to refugees, making the refugees have to cram in a small tent, with some living without a roof even in extreme climates. However, more seriously, most refugee camps do not provide medical services for injured refugees or those with diseases. This is exacerbated with the lack of hygiene in camps, which makes refugees more susceptible to diseases. As a result, this cycle leads to an endemic within the camps. Additionally, many refugees suffer not only physically but also mentally from the rigorous journey of escaping the country and witnessing the war. Children in particular may have more severe traumatic experiences as they have seen the war at a younger age, often being separated from their family as well. Since most refugee camps do not have mental care facilities, the solution for the crisis should also be directed towards addressing the mental healthness of refugees.

Therefore, multiple steps need to be taken in order to comprehensively resolve these problems. To begin with, the most urgent need in refugee camps is shelter and food. As mentioned earlier, people are

---

<sup>40</sup> Wladimir van Wilgenberg, "Syrian Kurds Not United behind Opposition Delegation to Geneva Talks," Al-Monitor, last modified January 26, 2014, accessed July 23, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/01/syria-kurdish-geneva-ii-delegation-opposition.html>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

not getting enough food or space as most camps are overcrowded with the influx of refugees. Hence, it is of utmost importance to request for humanitarian assistance in supplying food and shelter. With these two supplies, it ensures that refugees are at least able to get adequate shelter and nutrition, helping them recuperate from the effects of the war or fleeing the country.

Next, education facilities should be implemented in camps for children who have not finished their schooling. This would entail establishing elementary, middle, and high schools that would ultimately give students quality education with a high-school diploma that would make them eligible for applying to universities. As many children are unable to finish their education due to the war and moving to a different country, it is important that refugee camps are able to rekindle the hope for refugees to be able to accomplish their dreams. By requesting aid from related NGOs like the UNICEF or the SIRF, more schools could be built in refugee camps, with teachers and teaching materials provided related organizations such as Teachers Without Borders or the World Refugees School. Teachers for these camps could be recruited primarily by teachers who are voluntarily willing to work in rural and potentially dangerous areas. Teachers who already speak the languages commonly spoken by Syrians would also be preferred as they would already be able to communicate with students without additional support. This would include the official languages of Syria, which is Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, and English. The school system for refugees could also be incorporated into making corresponding resettlement programs in host countries. By economically or diplomatically incentivizing the host countries' governments to create agreements or MOUs with local universities, the program would allow refugees to get access to higher education, while also simultaneously granting them a legal status that would eventually lead to gaining full citizenship.

Furthermore, career centers could also be created alongside schools in a similar manner as them in order to alleviate the high unemployment rates among Syrian refugees. The career centers could provide a multitude of services from consulting and lecturing sessions to training seminars to cultivate the refugees to be more integrated into the host country society and gain jobs. The center could hold training seminars curated for a variety of audiences such as classes made for different age groups or any other category that would allow Syrians to best learn and acquire new skills for employment. Similar to the aforementioned school system, the experts for consulting, lecturing, and training sessions would be based on volunteers who are willing to serve for refugees' welfare.

Penultimately, tackling the medical care aspect of refugee camps, both Syrians in Syria and refugees in other countries have limited access to healthcare due to a lack of resources and instability of the general situation due to the war. As sanitation and hygiene is not maintained, as mentioned before,

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

there is an increased need for medical attention but not enough doctors or other medical professionals to match the needs. Moreover, as most refugees only have temporary or no access at all to insurance or healthcare at all in camps, it is important to find ways to be able to help refugees, especially those that already have diseases that need constant care.

Lastly, in order to alleviate the Syrian refugee crisis, the two most important points to consider is facilitating positive communication between the combating parties, as well as delivering specific humanitarian aid for different services to refugee camps. To accomplish this, it is important to be aware that various countries have already provided substantial amounts of aid for Syria already. Therefore, it is crucial to remind MEDCs and other relevant NGOs that the refugee crisis still hasn't been resolved, and that additional support and aid is necessary. Through ways such as raising awareness on the specific problems of the refugee crisis and the refugee camps, requesting humanitarian aid for different sectors of service would be more feasible. Also, hosting international and local campaigns for Syrian refugees on World Refugee Day could also help the refugee crisis to gain more attention in the global community over other more recent issues.

## Bibliography

### Bibliography

Borger, Julian, Patrick Wintour, and Kareem Shaheen. "US Military to Maintain Open-ended Presence in Syria, Tillerson Says." *The Guardian*. Last modified January 17, 2018. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/17/us-military-syria-isis-iran-assad-tillerson>.

"China in Syria: Aid and Trade Now, Influence and Industry Later?" COAR. Last modified July 11, 2022. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://coar-global.org/2022/07/11/china-in-syria-aid-and-trade-now-influence-and-industry-later/#:~:text=Based%20on%20public%20data%2C%20it,USD%20to%20support%20neighbouring%20states.>

"China's Position on Syria Issue." Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Botswana. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cebw/eng/zt/CHNDIP/t1076201.htm>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

Cook, Sara, and Kathryn Watson. "Several Hundred Troops to Remain in Syria." CBS News. Last modified February 21, 2019. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-troops-peacekeepers-to-remain-in-syria/>.

"Ending Statelessness." UNHCR USA. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.unhcr.org/ending-statelessness.html>.

Esen, Oğuz, and Ayla Ogus Binatli. "The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Turkish Economy: Regional Labour Market Effects." *Social Sciences* 6, no. 4 (October 28, 2017): 129.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6040129>.

"France 24." Jordan Opens Its First Syrian Refugee Camp. Last modified July 29, 2012. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20120729-jordan-opens-first-syrian-refugee-camp-syria-unrest>.

Francis, Alexandra. "Jordan's Refugee Crisis." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Last modified September 21, 2015. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/09/21/jordan-s-refugee-crisis-pub-61338>.

Fulton, Will, Joseph Holliday, and Sam Wyer. "Iranian Strategy in Syria." Institute for the Study of War. Accessed July 23, 2022. <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/iranian-strategy-syria>.

Gutterman, Steve. "Russia Won't Back U.N. Call for Syria's Assad to Go." Reuters. Last modified January 27, 2012. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-russia-idUSTRE80Q0I620120127>.

Harding, Luke. "Russian Vetoes Are Putting UN Security Council's Legitimacy at Risk, Says US." *The Guardian*. Last modified 2011. Accessed July 23, 2022.

Holliday, Joseph. "The Struggle for Syria in 2011." Institute for the Study of War. Last modified December 2011. Accessed July 23, 2022.

[https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Struggle\\_For\\_Syria.pdf](https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Struggle_For_Syria.pdf).

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

Jaber, Ziad, and Brinley Bruton. "Russian Hand Seen behind Increased Bombing of Syrian Hospitals."

NBC News. Last modified February 18, 2018. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/mideast/russian-hand-seen-behind-increased-bombing-syrian-hospitals-n847961>.

Kahn, Gabe. "Bloody Syrian Protests Continue." Israel National News. Last modified March 21, 2011.

Accessed July 23, 2022. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/143026#.VdOFupexImE>.

Kalata, Natalie. "Syrian Refugees Reflect on a Decade of War and Their New Lives in the Toronto Area."

CBC. Last modified March 15, 2021. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/syrian-refugees-reflect-on-a-decade-of-war-and-their-new-lives-in-the-toronto-area-1.5947946#:~:text=Approximately%2075%2C000%20Syrian%20refugees%20have,found%20a%20home%20in%20Toronto>.

Lamothe, Dan, Missy Ryan, and Thomas Gibbons-Neff. "U.S. Strikes Syrian Military Airfield in First

Direct Assault on Bashar Al-Assad's Government." The Washington Post. Last modified April 7, 2017. Accessed July 23, 2022.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-weighing-military-options-following-chemical-weapons-attack-in-syria/2017/04/06/0c59603a-1ae8-11e7-9887-1a5314b56a08\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-weighing-military-options-following-chemical-weapons-attack-in-syria/2017/04/06/0c59603a-1ae8-11e7-9887-1a5314b56a08_story.html).

Morris, Julia. "Extractive Landscapes: The Case of the Jordan Refugee Compact." *Refuge: Canada's*

*Journal on Refugees* 36, no. 1 (April 25, 2020): 87-96.

<https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40623>.

The New York Times. "Officers Fire on Crowd as Syrian Protests Grow." The New York Times. Last modified March 20, 2011. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/world/middleeast/21syria.html>.

Petillo, Kelly. "Turkey's Open Door Closes: How Europe Can Better Support Syrian Refugees." European Council on Foreign Relations. Last modified May 9, 2022. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://ecfr.eu/article/turkeys-open-door-closes-how-europe-can-better-support-syrian-refugees/#:>



## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

"Temporary Protection in Türkiye." UNHCR. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://help.unhcr.org/turkey/information-for-syrians/temporary-protection-in-turkey/#:~:text=What%20is%20temporary%20protection%3F,by%20the%20Government%20of%20T%C3%BCrkiye>.

Tsvetkova, Maria, and Anton Zverev. "Ghost Soldiers: The Russians Secretly Dying for the Kremlin in Syria." Reuters. Last modified November 3, 2016. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-insight-idUSKBN12Y0M6>.

UNHCR. "Jordan Issues Record Number of Work Permits to Syrian Refugees." UNHCR USA. Last modified January 25, 2022. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/1/61effaa54/jordan-issues-record-number-work-permits-syrian-refugees.html>.

———. "Refugee Camps." UNHCR Jordan. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.unhcr.org/jo/refugee-camps>.

———. "Syria Emergency." UNHCR USA. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html#:~:text=What%20is%20UNHCR%20doing%20to,thermal%20blankets%20and%20winter%20clothing>.

———. "World Bank - UNHCR MENA Study: COVID-19 Compounding Misfortunes." Operational Data Portal. Last modified December 17, 2020. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/83865>.

"US Looking for Allies to Replace It in Syria, Says Sen Graham." Ahval. Last modified February 15, 2019. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://ahvalnews.com/lindsey-graham/us-looking-allies-replace-it-syria-says-sen-graham>.

van Wilgenberg, Wladimir. "Syrian Kurds Not United behind Opposition Delegation to Geneva Talks." Al-Monitor. Last modified January 26, 2014. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/01/syria-kurdish-geneva-ii-delegation-opposition.html>.

## 25th Annual Session of the **Seoul Model United Nations**

Volodzko, David. "How China Helped Cause the Syrian Refugee Crisis." The Diplomat. Last modified September 14, 2015. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://thediplomat.com/2015/09/how-china-helped-cause-the-syrian-refugee-crisis/>.

"Welcome to the Syria International NGO Regional Forum." SIRF. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.sirf.ngo/#:~:text=Scope-,SIRF%20is%20the%20only%20regional%20International%20NGO%20body%20dedicated%20to,neighboring%20Syrian%20refugee%2Dhosting%20countries.>

"Who We Are." International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism. Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://iiim.un.org/who-we-are/at-a-glance/>.

"Why Has the Syrian War Lasted 11 Years?" BBC. Last modified March 15, 2022. Accessed July 23, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229>.

"Why Isn't Russia Singling Out ISIS in Syria? Because It Never Said It Would." The CS Monitor.

Accessed July 23, 2022.

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2015/1014/Why-isn-t-Russia-singling-out-ISIS-in-Syria-Because-it-never-said-it-would>.

Yedioth Internet. "Syrian Refugees Continue to Flock to Turkey." Ynet News. Last modified June 24, 2011. Accessed July 23, 2022. <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4086653,00.html>.