**Oasis International School Model United Nations**

**Security Council**

**President :** Youssef Khaled

**Vice-President :** Alia Allam

**Guiding Package**

**Topic 2: Ensuring** political, military, social and economic stability in Syria

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1. **Abstract :**

The conflict in Syria began as an offshoot of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. Sparked on April 29th in the town of Daraa by a group of 13-year-old boys who wrote on the side of their school "The Government must go!", the movement began as an uprising for democracy. But in the past five years, it has since disintegrated into a cauldron of competing rebel groups, terrorist elements, international powers, and religious factions--all with millions of Syrians killed and more millions displaced. El Assad responded violently to these protests by imprisoning dozens of Syrian teenagers that expressed their disagreement with the current regime.

 Following the latter, the situation ran out of control and the rebels were able to resist Assad’s arrests. The arrival of fighters of the Islamic state inflamed the conflict and complicated the resistance of the rebels against the regime and ISIS. In addition, members of the army that rebelled against the regime and took the side of the protesters, led to armed confrontations between the regime and the rebels.

Furthermore, foreign countries notably USA, Russia, China, UK, France, Iran and Turkey began to get involved in the conflict by supporting one of the parties. The involvement of world powers in the conflict gives the latter the characteristic of having an extremely complicated and slow resolution process. Including Geneva conferences, I and II, held in 2012 and 2014 respectively, negations did not lead to any effective conclusions. Syria also has serious consequences for neighboring countries, due to the migration of refugees and the endangerment of certain interests that countries may have with Syria.

1. **Introduction**

The Syrian Arab Republic has a surface area of ​​185.181 km². The political, economic, military and humanitarian state of the latte has been in ruins. More than half of Syria's residents have left their country, giving the green light to extremist terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and the Islamic state. But what remains of Syria today?

Most of the country being devastated by war, the remaining land is disputed among many parties The main actors in this conflict are the Bashar al-Assad (Shiite) regime and the anti-Assad (Sunni) rebels. The Islamic state and the Kurdish forces are also directly involved. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have taken part on the side of the Rebels as well as Iraq, Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah on the side of the Assad regime. The Turkish Kurds and Iraqis are on the side of the Kurdish Forces.

As for the Islamic state, it has more than 30,000 foreign fighters. Each of the actors in this conflict has a specific purpose, but at the same time it is a common goal for all the belligerents to seize Aleppo, the second city in the north of Syria. The aim of Bashar al-Assad's regime is to reconquer the entire Syrian territory and remain in power. The rebels want to overthrow Bashar’s regime. While the Kurds aspire to independence and self-declared themselves as a federal region.

As for the present distribution of the territory, the Islamic state and the Assad regime represent the same area amounting to 35% each, followed by the Kurds who own 18% and the rebels 12%.

1. **Definition of Key terms:**

***Arab spring:*** The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions that spread across the Middle East in early 2011.

***Civil war:*** Is a war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country.

***Chita* :** It is a [branch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_schools_and_branches) of Islam which claims that the Islamic prophet [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) designated Ali ibn Abi Talibas his [successor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_to_Muhammad) ([Imam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imamah_%28Shia_doctrine%29)). Shia Islam primarily contrasts with [Sunni Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni_Islam), whose adherents believe that Muhammad did not appoint a successor and consider [Abu Bakr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr) (who was appointed Caliph through a [Shura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shura), i.e. community consensus) to be the correct Caliph.

***Sunnite:*** Sunni is a branch of Islam that approves the historical order of the first four Caliphs as the rightful line of succession to Muhammad and accept the Sunna as an authoritative supplement to the Koran.

***Chemical weapons:*** are chemical agents, whether liquid, solid or gaseous, that are active because of their toxic (deadly) effects on humans, animals and plants. The danger damages are when these chemicals enter through the skin or consumed in food or drink. Examples of chemical weapons: chemical agents, choking agents, blister agents and blood agents.

1. **Background information:**

**i-Economic situation:**
 The Syrian economy is in danger due to many factors: Inflation rate, GDP, trade deficit. According to “Le Figaro”, since 2011 the Syrian economy has jumped back three decades. This is due to the collapse of almost all the infrastructure, but also the lack of income.

* **Inflation rate :** The inflation rate is assessed by the CPI (Consumer Price Index). According to the SCBS (Syrian central statistics office), since 2010 till 2016, the CPI has increased.
* **GDP:**
 Due to the decline in foreign and domestic trade and the lack of production, the Syrian GDP is only a rough draft of its original image. According to the UN, the Syrian GDP has declined by an estimated 55%, raising the economic loss to $ 259 billion.
* **Trade deficit:**

Because of the closure of the Syrian borders from the neighboring countries (Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon...) and the escalation of the conflict. Syria is heavily dependent on imports from abroad, because it can no longer afford the costs of production within its own territory. This leads to an increase in the trade deficit to 27.6% and a sharp devaluation of the Syrian currency.

**ii. Social situation:**
 One of the main issues that the Syrian society is encountering is the refugee crisis, as more than half of the Syrian citizens had to leave the territory. Furthermore, due to the inflation rate, 80% of the Syrian population is below the poverty line, as they do not have access to their primary needs. The mortality rate is also growing exponentially. The future of the Syrian children is also threatened, as 45.2% of Syrian children have no longer access to education.

**iii- Political situation:**

The political difficulties in Syria have been the main source of tensions in the conflict. Challenges to Bashar al-Assad's regime and the confrontation of the army has resulted in approximately 9,000 deaths. The numerous foreign interventions as well as the many alliances that have been created, have complicated Syria’s political position, since USA, UK, France, Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia are backing the rebels against the regime. On the other hand, China, The Russian Federation, Iran, and Iraq, are supporting the Assad’s regime. Each of the alliances stated above provide their allies with all the military, and financial supplies. In addition, the refugee crisis that has increased exponentially in the last few years, has caused controversy in the international community.

**iv - Military situation:**

The military situation has been very complex. Since both sides have been launching air strikes that caused thousands deaths, and severe injuries of thousands of Syrians. Some victories of the Syrian army were noticed in the west of Aleppo. The military situation has been unsafe and unstable and will continue to be if the UNSC does not seek solutions to this conflict. It is a crisis that is also characterized by an overlapping and often unclear assortment of allegiances backed by regional and international actors and associated support structures.

1. **Major Countries involved:**

 Russian Federation:

The Russian federation is considered as one of the main countries involved in the Syrian conflict. Russia has proved to be one of Bashar El-Assad’s main allies. Russia also provides financial assistance by supporting the government’s plan to repay debts. In addition, of its military support to al Assad against terrorists and the rebels.

Turkey:

Turkey plays a very important role against the Bashar al-Assad’s regime. It hosts more than 2.5 million Syrian refugees, but many foreigners go through Turkey to join the jihadist territories and the Islamic state. Also turkey is one of the financial supporters of the rebels.

United States of America:

 The USA is considered the founder of the international coalition against ISIS and was one of the first countries to take the initiative to fight ISIS. It has provided military training to the rebels, and financed 45 million dollars to the rebel’s forces to fight El Assad’s regime. In addition, they provided them with necessary weapons.

France:

 France is one of the countries committed to fight against Bashar al-Assad’s regime. Even if it did not follow the US decision to airstrike the jihadist forces but was very supportive of the international coalition.

Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia has been on several occasions accused of indirectly financing rebels, till this day part of the international coalition asking for the departure of the Assad regime.

People's republic of China:

 China is backing the Assad regime since February 2017, it blocked a bid by Western powers to impose sanctions over accusations of a chemical weapons attack. Also, China provided El Assad’s regime with security equipment in the last decade.

United Kingdom:

 In a major blow to David Cameron’s authority in 2013, MPs voted against the Government to take military action in Syria against Assad’s regime to deter the use of chemical weapons. It has been determined to ensure stability in Syria.

Iran:

Iran and Syria are close strategic allies, and Iran has provided significant support for the Syrian government in the Syrian civil war, including logistical, technical and financial support, as well as providing military troops. Iran sees the survival of the Syrian government as being crucial to its regional interests. Iran’s supreme leader, Ali Khamenei has been strongly in support of the Syrian government.

Jordan:

Jordan is against the Syrian government and began its involvement in the Syrian civil war on the 22nd of September 2014 with airstrikes targeting Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) targets, and escalated its interventions after the murder of Muath al-Kasasbeh, a captured Jordanian pilot by ISIL, in early 2015.

1. **Major organisations involved:**

***International Small Arms and Ammunition Guidance Platform (ISAP):*** Is made to collect and organize implementation efforts based on the goal that has to be achieved on arms and weapons management in response to user’s information feed.

***Médecin Sans Frontière (MSF) :*** Provides medical needs to the wounded and refugees in very harmful circumstances of war or medical bases are often targeted. It launched several medical campaigns in Syria in order to cure the wounded people.

**VI- UN involvement:**

 Since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, the United Nations has adopted many resolutions, that most of them were declined because of the usage of the veto power, 8 times by the Russian federation and six by China. Also there were several conferences in Geneva in January and February 2014, called “the United Nations Geneva Conference on Syria”. These negotiations aimed to ensure stability by ceasing fire in Syria.

1. **Possible solutions**

The United Nations Security Council should seek for sustainable and efficient solutions such as :

* Reinforcing peaceful negotiations between representatives of the popular movement and the regime, observed by the united nations security council.
* Creating a plan to destroy any kind of arsenal of WMDs present in Syria, since several reports claimed that the Syrian rebels and the regime used chemical weapons against the Syrian civilians.
* Cut any kind of oil routes passing through Syrian territory. The major source of income of IS has been it's oil.
* Develop more ground forces than fighting through air bombings. At present, Syrian army seems to be the only “major" force fighting the IS militants on ground.
1. **Guiding questions:**
2. How could the countries cooperate to find a solution or a compromise that would bring stability to Syria?
3. How is it possible to settle the Syrian political conflict while saving its people?
4. How can we prevent terrorist organizations from being able to aggravate the situation in Syria?
5. How does the Syrian conflict have repercussions on its neighboring countries?
6. What can be done to aid the Syrian people who can not return home?
7. What is your country’s position regarding this topic?
8. **Useful links:**
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* VOX, « Syria's war: Who is fighting and why », (7th of April 2017), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFpanWNgfQY&t=216s>, consulted on the 27th of August 2017
* VOX, « What happens after ISIS falls?», (2nd of August 2017), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ltr7x8nO2M>, consulted on the 25th of August 2017
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* The Guardian, « The war in Syria explained in five minutes », (18th of September 2013), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5H5w3_QTG0&t=137s> , consulted on the 27th of August 2017
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* ZHOU, Laura, «China;s role in Syria’s endless civil war», (7th of April 2017), available at: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2085779/backgrounder-chinas-role-syrias-endless-civil-war> , consulted on the 6th of August 2017
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