DEMOCRATIC UNION PARTY

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A. Introduction

The Kurdish Democratic Union Party, also known as the PYD, is a left wing political party established by Kurdish activists. Known for their terroristic actions, their main aims are to be able to govern themselves and to have their own self-independent state. Another longing that the PYD wishes to accomplish is to be able to have a pluralist democracy. For that to happen, the PYD wishes for recognition of cultural, national, and political rights for the Kurdish people, and to be able to have their own democratic autonomy for the Kurds. The PYD is based in Syria and is known to be composed of Syrian Kurds. Throughout the Syrian conflict, they have been repressed by the Syrian regime, who they have rejected arming, and have continued to fight for their own state. Fighting for their own state has been difficult for the PYD because of intervention from other countries, which has added more stress and complication to be able to achieve their own state. The PYD has said to reject external military intervention, which will hopefully make their longing for a democratic autonomy for the Kurds easier to accomplish.

Adding to their conflict with Syria, the PYD also has an open hostility towards the Turkish state. Because the PYD is an offshoot of the Kurdistan Worker's Party, known as the PKK, their hostility towards the Turkish state has come from Turkey's imprisonment of the PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan. This action from the Turkish state has caused uprisings from the Kurdish party, causing a belligerent dispute between both groups. The PYD, the left wing organization of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, has also waged armed struggles against the Turkish state for equal rights and self determination for the Kurds in Turkey. The Turkish state

has denied Kurdish rights, and because of their influence over the Syrian National Council, the PYD is worried that they will not be able to achieve their own self-independent state. With Syria and Turkey on their radar, the PYD also has strained relations with Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and the previous leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Massoud Barzani has negotiated with Turkey at the expense of the PKK, a controversial negotiation seen to all Kurds due to their dispute with the Turkish state. As the war trudges on, the PYD has continued to quarrel with Turkey, and debate with Syria.

The PYD, although being an opposition party themselves, declined to join the bulk of Kurdish opposition parties that formed the Kurdish National Council. They have stood somewhat alienated and worked by themselves as an independent opposition party, but over time they have been increasingly willing to negotiate with the other Kurdish opposition parties because they have been losing power, although they still disturb the efforts of the other parties. They have been messing with the other Kurdish opposition groups; not only disturbing their efforts but allegedly kidnapping their leaders as well. They also have been acting as repressors against Kurdish protesters despite being Kurdish themselves. The PYD has been cooperating with the Syrian regime even though the regime oppressed their people for a long time. The PYD also supports dialogue with the regime.

B. Key Points, bulleted
- The recognition of the Kurdish people and their rights by the Syrian Government
- A pluralist democracy- a self-independent state
- Democratic Autonomy for the Kurdish people within Syria
- Syrian, Kurdish and Turkish improvement in social and economic relations
- The establishment of peace in Syria
- Syria taking accountability for previous infractions against the Kurdish people.
- Syria abandoning Kurdish territory in the Hasakah, Aleppo, and Raqqa provinces.

- Social and political reconstruction among the Syrian and Kurdish people

C. Background of your country

Established in 2003 by a group of activists, the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (also known as the PYD) is located in the northern part of Syria. From the 1970s through the late 90s, Kurdish people were generally welcomed within Syria, (despite being heavily discriminated against). In 1998, the Syrian Government banned Kurdish Political Parties of all kinds, giving them very little say or representation anywhere. Soon after this, senior officials in the KDP (another kurdish political group) helped to form the PYD, known today as "The Kurdish Democratic Union Party". The party was officially established in 2003.

The PYD thinks of itself to be peaceful and liberally oriented. It stresses the importance of political, social, economic, and cultural rights for all of its people. One of its proudest pillars is the democratic platform in which it operates on. This is a far contrast from the Syrian government, which widely criticizes and discriminates against the Kurdish group. To add to that, the PYD are big critics of all nationalist uprisings of any sorts. Some examples of this include "Kurdish nationalism" rooted from the Kurdish National Council.

Throughout its presence in Syria, it has been under immense fire from the Syrian government. Throughout its history, the Syrian government has felt very concerned with the PYD's ability to mobilize a crowd and gain attraction. This was displayed in the 2004 Kurdish uprisings, when hundreds of protesters, originating from a soccer game, were met by military force from the Syrian government. In this uprising, more than 100 protesters were killed and many more were left wounded.

The volatile relationship between the Kurdish and the Syrian government reached a peak with the battle of Hasakah in 2016. Previously, the Syrian government and the Kurdish forces worked together to expel ISIS groups from Hasakah territory, but tensions rose between the two forces. Shortly after, the Syrian government, for the first time since the beginning of the conflict, deliberately launched air strikes on Kurdish territories. Because of this, the Kurdish-Syrian relationship was very low, but finally after nearly 5 years of conflict over Hasakah, a peace treaty was signed, as the Syrian government did not want to lose anymore land than they already had. This allowed for the Kurds to obtain most of the Hasakah province, thus taking control of small military bases, prison and land. However, the Syrian Government still has a small hold on the security and military headquarters, that must be patrolled by civilian police, along with an airport and military base outside of the borders.

While the tensions between the Syrian government and the PYD are strained, the Kurds have strong ties with the US and Russia. The US has been known, over the past several years, to have been supplying the Kurdish militant group with weapons. They believe that the YPG/PYD is a very strong ally to have in the fight against ISIS forces, a belief that has shown to be true. In the 2015 battle over Hasakah, the Kurds, along with the Syrian fighters (this was prior to the Syrian-Kurdish conflict over Hasakah in 2016), were successful in expelling ISIS groups from the territory. This fight, backed by the US-led Coalition, which actually deployed two air strikes in support of the Kurdish advance, has proven that the PYD is very capable in the fight against ISIS.

Another serious supporter of the PYD for the past years has been Russia. Russia, like the US, gives weapons, intelligence information, and has had continuous support of PYD's mission,

along with being the lone party asking for PYD representation in Geneva peace talks. The motive

behind this is access to Syrian politics and leverage over Turkey. After a Turkish air strike

brought down a Russian jet in November of 2015, ties between the two have been strained and

Russia has been waiting for a chance to cripple Turkish president Erdogan. This also stems from

the Turkish-Kurdish relationship, which isn't very strong, as Turkey is not particularly fond of

the PYD. This is due to many reasons, one being that the Kurdish autonomous region, known as

Rojava, is directly along the Turkish-Syrian border. Turkey is cautious of worried Kurdish forces

infiltrating their territory and violence and conflicts have risen because of this. The Turkish also

have a problem with them because the PYD can be somewhat related to the PKK, the group

considered a terrorist by many countries. The PKK, on numerous occasions, has attempted to

take control of Turkish land with PYD weapons given to them from the US. The transfer of

weapons between the two groups is not exactly done on purpose, but it's another reason for the

Turkish to have a distaste for the PYD.

D. Issues
Committee on Governance

Syria's government has been marked by turmoil for decades. After World War I, it was

first part of a French Mandate, then part of the United Arab Republic, then its own nation in

1961, never fully developing national unity as it underwent countless successful and attempted

coups. It has also had issues with Israel taking land in the Golan Heights and while a ceasefire

was issued in the 1970s, Israel still refuses to return the land, further fueling Syrian instability. In

fact, it was the perception of Syrian weakness created by events such as the Israeli seizure that

opened the door for the Assad Regime. Syria's current constitution was adopted in 1973 and

created a republican government but allowed room for an authoritarian president. It was created under Hafez al-Assad who governed Syria from 1970-2000, when his son Bashar al-Assad took up the controls. The regime has met resistance from both Islamic groups, unaccepting of an Alawi ruling, and humanitarians, angered by military power being used in attacks on civilians. Although Syria did experience some increased economic stability during the regime, Syrians were angered by violence and rigged elections. This, in addition to environmental and economic strain caused by drought and continuing religious strain between Alawis and Muslims, led to a very precarious situation that blossomed into civil war following attacks by the government on protesters.

The US has been active in Syrian politics since the Bush administration, when it was openly hostile to the Assad government, even passing the Syria Accountability Act, accusing the nation of promoting terrorism and chemical weapons, and applying sanctions. Today, the US supports the rebels fighting the Assad government (but not ISIS) and has at the very least promised guns to the YPG (the militant wing of the PYD), creating a positive, if not entirely public, relationship with the party.

ISIS has been the predominant force in the region. Its presence has made the situation more complicated because unlike other opposition groups, ISIS has a more international endgame, seizing land in other countries and performing atrocities that has led to international panic. It is also unclear where it fits in- it has attacked both rebels and the government. So while both ISIS and the PYD oppose the regime, the PYD is also fighting ISIS, demonstrating how the civil war is more complicated than 1 side versus another.

On the other side of the conflict, Russia has supported the Assad regime, giving weapons to the cause, as have Hezbollah and Iran. Other Assad supporters have included North Korea and Iraq (although less so now than in the past). While China claims to be neutral, it vetoed UN resolutions condemning Assad, making its position in the war more complicated.

The most important relationship the Democratic Union Party has with any country currently active in Syrian politics is Turkey. The resentment of Turkey held by the PYD is so deep that it would most likely refuse to cooperate with them in plans for Syria's future. Turkey sees the YPG, the militant wing of the PYD, as connected to the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party), a group fighting for Kurdish independence in Turkey which is seen by the UN as a terrorist organization. This has led to Turkey shelling the YPG, which has angered the PYD and other nations that view the YPG as an important attack force against ISIS. The PYD is also angry at Turkey for erasing the identity and rights of Kurds in Turkey (e.g. calling them 'mountain Turks') as well as jailing the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, in 1999. Kurds in Syria have even accused Turkey of using attacks on ISIS as a cover for actually attacking YPG and PKK forces. This relationship may be important in Syria's future as hostilities between the groups may impede, or at least charge, democratic proceedings.

The Democratic Union Party believes in an overhaul of the Syrian constitution. All goals for the future of Syria for the party hinge on the recognition of the Kurdish people. They support the creation of a constitution that recognizes the rights of the Kurds (deep hostilities running between the party and Turkey demonstrate the worse case final scenario for the PYD- a denial of the existence of the Kurds as a separate cultural and ethnic entity). Perhaps surprisingly, the PYD does not hold Kurdish independence as an utmost goal. Rather, they wish for autonomy within a

Syrian operating under a pluralist democracy. The executive authority allowed by the current government set up proved to be a conduit for Assad's war crimes. Pluralist democracy is their prefered alternative as it focuses on a balance of interests by dispersing power among governing groups. For example, the United States was set up as a pluralist democracy, creating a balance of power between multiple branches, out of mistrust of the power wielded by King George. As for autonomy, The Democratic Union Party is happy to remain a part of this future Syria as long as Kurdish regions are allowed to make decisions for themselves, following 'democratic autonomy', a model that also focuses on the democratic process at a local level. While the PYD has shown a propensity for being willing to listen to outside ideas in recent years, for example supporting the UN's Annan peace plan, it wishes for this democracy to be reached without external military intervention. They support a peace made by Syrians that allows Syrian voices, especially those of the Kurds, to be heard.

Committee on Strategic Security:

Today, Syria's national security environment is run by the Syrian government under Assad, Syria's president who is the topic of the Syrian war's controversy. In 2010, Assad had created four major branches of security forces: Military Intelligence and Air Force Intelligence, the Political Security Directorate (PSD), under the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the General Intelligence Directorate (GID). These four major branches of Syria's national security force operate independently and are free from control of the legal system, but all four branches inhibit the internal discord and monitor individual citizens of Syria. Although the MOI controls the divisions of police forces, the Syrian MIlitary Intelligence is known to use force against the people participating in revolts, and also are known to use live ammunition and fire tear gas at

demonstrators. Nationally, Syria's security is guilty of repeatedly breaking The Emergency Law by carrying out arrests in secret, assigning cases in arbitrary manner to military, security, or criminal courts. Although Syria's national security environment is rather feeble currently, the Syrian government has proven success in accomplishing its stability and security within its borders, and terrorist attacks on Syrian soil have not been common lately, but rather rare. Over the years, there has been incidents of militant groups attacking Syrian targets, which forced the Syrian authorities to strengthen their efforts to prevent attacks. Currently, Syria has laws concerning counterterrorism and terrorism financing/money laundering, but they are only used against groups who are seen as a threat to the regime. Some important groups who are involved in this conflict are the rebel groups, criminal gangs, and tribes in Syria. These groups emerged in the beginning of the Syrian war which started from a main conflict between two groups-those who wanted Assad as president, and those who did not.

Internationally, Russia, the PYD (the Democratic Union Party), the U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are known to be highly internationally involved. The PYD primarily wants their own self-independent run state, but because they are using force to gain land, many see them as terrorists. The PYD's main enemy is Turkey, and because Syria recently allied with Turkey, the PYD is now fighting two states. The U.S. has allied with the PYD and is sending them weapons and materials across from overseas, while at the same time Russia is supporting the PYD. Overtime, more states and countries have been involving themselves into the Syrian conflict, resulting in the number of foreign fighters in Syria rising. Since June 2014, the number of foreign fighters has risen from 12,000 to at least 27,000 foreign fighters. Currently, the PYD is not particularly interested in the future stability and security environment of Syria because they

are dedicated to execute their goal of self-independent rule. They would rather not have Syria's government be stable because the more stable the government, the harder it will be to obtain more land to create their own state. Although the PYD would not particularly be interested in the future of Syria's government, they would be support a ceasefire, but under terms. The PYD's goal is to not kill people, but to be able to rule their own state. If all fighting stopped and a peace treaty was negotiated, the PYD would not protest against it, but would support it if it allowed them to have their own self-independent state without any interference by Turkey, Syria, or other countries who oppose their group.

   Before the conflict, Syria's borders were rather weak and not very secure. Within the past year, Turkey has been helping to tighten security at Syria's border and to strengthen it, but even with their help Syria's border still has many weak points. Syria's relation with its bordering countries has been on and off and has changed from before the conflict. Syria's relationship with Turkey before the Syrian war was not well, but as the war went on, they decided to help each other out to defeat the PYD. Iraq and Syria have been long time allies, with Iraq sending Assad financial support throughout the war. As of Jordan and Lebanon, Syria's relation with these two countries has been fair for many years, but both countries have recently started to become more upset. Bombs have been dropped in Jordan and Lebanon, which Jordan and Lebanon respond with fear for their country's fate. Throughout the war Syria's army has progressively become weaker and weaker. Their role before the war was to shut down unrest in Syria, and to monitor Syria's border controls. Even before the war Syria's military was fairly weak, and throughout the war they have gotten frailer as time continued. Recently, they have been getting more feeble due to terrorist forces such as ISIS. ISIS has imposed challenges for Syria because Syria has to now

worry about fighting another group, on top of all the groups they are fighting currently. Because ISIS is a stronger and bigger group who are seen as terrorists, Syria has had to take their attention away from other obstacles and disputes that they need to focus on, which results in weakening their country as a whole. Overall, Syria's strategic strategy is working to improve and strengthen to finally put an end to this war, but because of its origin fragility, it has been hard for Syria to invigorate and reinforce their government, country, and strategic strategy.

Committee on Local Security

The formal name for the homeland of the Kurds is called Kurdistan. It ranges from, southern Turkey, through syria, into Iraq, and all the way into portions of Iran. Throughout time, this was considered to be a fairly safe place, where many different religions groups lived (with the occasional clash here and there) However, by the 1900s when imperialism and conquering of the middle east, the Kurdish people were some of the first to feel very displaced and out of sorts. The had no definite region that was bound.

Some major cities in Kurdish lands are Qamishli, and Al Hasakah. Located on the northeastern syrian border, the city of Qamishli is one of the "Kurdish" cities that goes back centuries. Prior the war, the population of the city is roughly 200,000. Some of the major sights were the turnish mountain and the Qamishli Granaries. The local government in place was run by Assad. Throughout the years, there have been few incident relating the war here and on occasion there have been some skirmishes. However, most recently, the city was involved in something called the Battle of Qamishli. The battle of Qamishli was a violent urban battle between the asayish police and the national defense forces. In April of 2016, the national defense forces attacked the police forces in the city of Qamishli. This was at a local checkpoint, so soon after,

heavy fire and sniper fire erupted. This battle lasted for roughly a week. However what happened in it was truly unbelievable. During this, the Asayish police forces fire right back. They came in with military equipment, tanks, and ground soldiers. There rolled into town and wreaked havoc. At this time, the local security of the cities was all but diminished. Car bombs went off, snipers shot their guns. Many innocent civilians were caught in the crossfire of all this. To add to this, the Asayish police force also came in and took down all sorts of Assad posters in the city. This was now truly a civil war with little to none local security in it whatsoever. on 22 April there was a ceasefire. According to the ceasefire agreement, each side will keep the territory under its control. The ceasefire gave the Kurds control of more territory in Northern Syria. By the end of all of this, over 30 civilians were killed and over 30 armed syrian guards were killed.

Another major city in Kurdish lands is Al Hasakah. Al Hasakah, or Hasakah is a city located in northwestern Syria. With around 200,000 residents, it is one of the top 10 largest in all of Syria. This city has been in the heat of the crossfire during the syrian civil war. This all started when a local resident poured gasoline on himself and set himself on fire. This was meant to be an acte against the syrian government. To add to that, the local security at a time was very strict. Only certain people were allowed in or out of the city. However, this was soon changed after the battle of Hasakah. During this time, the syrian government was losing lots of land to ISIS. They bombed and bombed part of the land where ISIS was occupying. Soon after this a local security system was put into effect. It was called the Hasakah security box. This was an area where there were government run, (and government meaning syrian, not any other political party) jail, immigration office, and government agency. This was a local security provision to deter efforts of the civil war. With this in place, they jailed rebels, and knew exactly who was fleeing and

coming into certain areas of the country. On August 16, 2016, a small skirmish erupted into the third Battle of al-Hasakah between the Syrian government and Rojava for al-Hasakah. After a week-long battle, Rojava secured control over 95% of the city. Another interesting thing about this city is it is quite Christian. This in the past had been a local security issue. However, throughout the course of the civil war, there has been much less conflict between christians and muslims in the heat of all the war efforts. Throughout its long history, Kurdish governments have been supporting and dealing with local security problems. However now with the war these problems and solutions seem increasingly dire.

Committee on Social Reconstruction

Syrian society has been divided into three systems of organization based on ecological factors for thousands of years, and these three systems are the town, the village, and the tribe. They are closely interrelated, but each has its own variation of Arab culture. The town system's role is well known to all, as urban life is essential to society of the region considering the cities are among the most ancient in the world and are centers of commerce. The village system, comprised of peasant farmers, has a position of recognized value considering the importance of agricultural commerce, but they are the least admired out of the three. The tribes have been widely known and admired throughout history for their unique culture and way of life, even though they have been suffering the changes that come with technology and Western influence. These groups have differences in their ways of lives, from their clothes, food, and home furnishings to their accents and religious customs; these differences lead each system to view the others as socially distinct. This social distance grew along with Western influence, as Western customs, languages, and ideas were adopted in the cities while the villages remained unfamiliar

with them, until only in recent years when modern transportation and mass communication was introduced in the villages. Even with these differences, the three systems have long depended on each other and provided each other with services and products. The town supplies manufactured goods, governmental services, education, justice, and financing from commerce. The village supplies agricultural products and food. The tribe provides navigation for travelers and traders in the desert and offers protection. They were expected to continue to work in this way before the conflict came into play, but what was also expected was that the long-established distinctions would blur as Syria modernized.

Civil societies played almost no role in Syrian daily life before the war because of the regime's hostility towards the development of an independent civil society that could counter the state's power. There has been systematic repression towards all independent parties by the Baath party which was established by Article 8 of the Syrian Constitution. But, there has been continuous effort by small groups of people to change the way the political system is. People also collaborated with activists and aid workers to call for nonviolent activism and help with aid programs, but this activism has had consequences. Activism can get you expelled from university, fired from your job, and arrested, because being an aid worker in Syria is a crime. The Assad regime has been cracking down on activists and aid workers, and many civil activists find themselves in bad situations.

In legal terms, there was religious freedom in Syria, as Syrian law and the Syrian constitution protects the freedom of religion of Syrian citizens. But, this doesn't prevent tension and acts of hate towards minorities. All political procedures are carried out in the philosophy of Islamic thought, which doesn't give much room for other religions to have a say and can cause

upset, and these tensions between religious groups can affect carrying out the law. For example, proselytizing was not illegal so missionaries at times attempted to get people to convert, but they were often jailed because the regime felt threatened. Also, conversions to Christianity caused agitation in the community, and Christians were often discriminated, sometimes violently, which caused them the need to relocate to other places. Syria is very close to ethnical homogeneity, with 80 percent of the population being Arab. Religious differences are tolerated on a large scale, but those that want complete homogeneity tend to react. Minorities tend to retain their distinct cultural and religious identities. Most groups of minorities tend to be fine, but the Kurds have been persecuted in Syria and throughout the Middle East for their distinct culture and language.

Syria has a very poor human rights situation. Their freedom of expression, association, and assembly are strictly controlled. Human rights activists and those who criticize the government have been imprisoned and harassed. The Baath party controls all press; journalists and bloggers have been arrested and tried for publishing opinions and press. There is extensive internet censorship; websites are banned for political reasons and people are arrested for accessing these websites. The government monitors internet use and detains those who express opinions or report information online. Women and ethnic minorities face discrimination. Homosexual relationships are prohibited and homosexuals are arrested. People can't leave the country without permission and an exit visa. Many of these prohibitions have to do with the regime's unwillingness to let people express ideas about government and the regime for fear of people uniting against the regime or undermining their authority. Also, Syria has repressive policies towards Kurds. They prevent Kurdish political and cultural gatherings and arrest Kurdish activists that want recognition and political rights. Syria has multiple security services

that detain people without arrest warrants and refuse to disclose whereabouts for weeks and sometimes months. Syria's constitution guarantees gender equality, but penal codes contain provisions that discriminate against women and girls.

Syria is party to several treaties and declarations on the protection of citizens. One is the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," which commits all parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, such as right to life, freedom of religion, speech, and assembly, electoral rights, and rights to a fair trial. Over time, the meaning of this has come to very little, as it is not followed. Syria is also party to the "Convention on the Rights of the Child," which protects all the rights of children. Another group of people protected is disabled people, because by signing the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," Syria agreed to intend to protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities.

Property rights were very poor in Syria, along with all other rights, with private property being very weakly protected. The court systems are very corrupt and inefficient, so issues have been dealt with without involving any governmental powers. The problems are on a higher scale, involving expensive property, such as housing. The government, on occasion, has taken properties and businesses from their political opponents without legal reasons. Housing was provided for by the working members of each family.

The education systems in Syria were suitable. There is mandatory education from grades 1-9 for boys and girls, which was also free. The basic education system is solid, and the curriculum is determined by the ministry of education. At the end of the 9 years, the students would complete their national examination that determines whether they may proceed to general or vocational schools. Students that proceeded to vocational school would take a baccalaureate

and get an associate degree to get a job. Students that proceeded to secondary school had the option to continue on to multiple options for universities and higher education to get an assortment of degrees.

The health systems in Syria were solid. At the village level, there were rural health centers. At the district level, there were larger health centers that also contained specialized physicians. There was a small district hospital in each district with room for 50 patients. At the provincial level, there were urban health centers that had specialized physicians and dentists, and helped with control and prevention of diseases, care for chronic diseases, and health education. There are large hospitals and specialized hospitals, and a network of ambulances and drug distribution services. The government was working to ensure availability of services in urban and rural areas, and services were offered free of cost to citizens at the government clinics and health centers. Over 95% of the rural population had access to health centers for primary care, and 70% have access to secondary care services. Public health centers were well accessible, with a good number of staff and beds. Vaccination is nationally available as well. But, Syria suffers with providing mental health assistance, there is very limited access for those who need it.

Committee on Economic Reconstruction

Prior to the start of the conflict, the Syrian economy was a diverse system consisting of mainly oil and agricultural production. Oil production contributed to nearly 25% of the GDP, producing approximately 334,000 barrels of oil per day (in 2009) and employing ⅓ of the population, making oil a necessity for the Syrian economy. Agricultural growth of wheat, barley, and cotton (cotton being the main cash crop) were the other big money makers for the Syrian economy, accounting for 22% of the GDP in 2009. Reports conducted by the CIA show that the

estimated Syrian GDP in 2005 was $63.9 billion and the per capita GDP was estimated at

$3,500. In 2010 the estimated population of Syria was 21.9 million, consisting of 35.6% ages

0-14, 60.9% ages 15-64, and 3.5% at 65 years and older. A 2004 estimate showed that 20% of

the population was the below the poverty line and had an 8.3% unemployment rate, so while the

people of Syria were not rich, the majority had a steady income.

In 2010, before the conflict arose, the Syrian government had full control, as it was a

centralized government, over the sale and extraction of resources, those resources mainly being

oil. The public sector, also fully controlled by the state, is composed of oil, banking,

construction, electricity, chemicals, textiles, and food processing. Though Syria makes a

substantial profit from the revenue of oil production, agriculture, etc., it's ability to remain within

the limits of its budget has wavered in the past. A 2005 report shows Syria's revenue at $5.6

billion and expenditures at $6.5 billion, creating a total public debt of 45%. This total budget was

distributed among different sectors of the government such as the military (23.6%), public health

(2.3%), education (9.2%), and the greatest amount on economic affairs (44.0%). Overspending in

military expenditures was the main cause of debt to the Syrian government.

Due to the dwindling of monetary resources and deposits in Syrian banks, there was a

huge reduction of nearly $16 billion in reserves (2011). In fact the Syrian bank system is so

underdeveloped that businessmen in Damascus have to establish accounts in different countries.

There is also criticism with The Central Bank (the bank that issues currency) being so closely

related to the Assad regime and that the laws restrict the exchange of currency so much. The start

of the civil war has done nothing to help this cause, making the banks, among many other things,

plumett. This can be seen very clearly shown through the substantial increase in unemployment.

The previous 8.3% unemployment rate skyrocketed to nearly half the population (2016), the 20% below the poverty line has developed into 82% of all people. A huge part of the problem is the government spending, as the country is not making anything even remotely close to the amount it needs in order to relieve themselves of their debt. Many other factors such as the refugee crisis and the occupation of ISIS in Syria have contributed to the diminishing of the country's economics.

Failed relationships and rising tensions between Syria and other countries have created less trading opportunities, as have loss of control over certain areas due to ISIS and Kurdish occupation. Droughts, that started a little before the conflict began, in Syria have also led to a serious decline in agricultural exports. Between 2006 and 2011, 75% of farms failed due to the unrelenting drought, showing that the Syrian people were already out of luck before the violent outbreak. The decrease in agriculture has also had a serious impact on the people, leaving them hungry and hardly able to get by. The unreliable electricity grids do nothing to help this either, only helping to perpetuate the poverty and hunger in Syria. Even if people are able to find work, the violence and fighting has caused a fear in people, who are now afraid to step outside their house in, as it's likely that they might never come back. Essentially, as long as the conflict continues the Syrian economy will be unable to dig itself out of the hole it created and will remain in debt.

Committee on Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation

The Syrian government, one of the most notorious governments for disregarding human rights over the past decade has repeatedly carried out deliberate and discrete attacks on civilians while armed opposition groups use child soldiers to kidnap, torture, rape and deliberately force

civilians to cooperate. Islamic extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and, ISIS have contributed to the undermining of human rights which thus has led to a death toll of over 250,000 people and over 7.5 million people displaced worldwide as a result of lack of cooperation. Syria, ruled by the Assad regime, has been recently facing many insurgent attacks and in an effort to prevent further attacks had abandoned dedicating efforts to focus on the Northeastern Kurdish military groups. However, as the Islamic state and other Radical Arab insurgent groups ceased to capture Syrian territory, the government felt the need to declare a 5 year long war in the Hasaka province against the Kurds. The Battle for Hasaka was the first time the state of Syria had ever conducted an airstrike on Kurdish territory and signaled a volatile time period. According to various Kurdish sources, it must be noted that several hundred Kurds have been put in prisons notorious for torture, a 1993 fire, and for its negligence of Kurdish and human rights.

After the five year war in Hasaka both the Syrian and Kurdish governments reached a peace treaty in order to prevent further Syrian losses of land. More importantly, for the Syrian government to potentially receive an ally in Turkey by preventing Kurdish colonization on Turkish borders. In doing so, the Kurds have taken over a significant portion of the Hasaka province and thus many small military bases, prisons and land. However, the Syrian government still controls an airport and a military base outside of borders along with a civilian patrol force. Although the Kurdish militia is that much closer to freedom, many citizens refuse to celebrate knowing the lack of justice and human rights the Syrian government had previously provided.

In various other countries fresh from a civil war, such as in Chile it can be seen that government providing amnesty only leads to further hostilities in a developing nation. During the Chilean dictatorship of Pinochet, many opposition groups and protests had lead to

disappearances and death. Pinochet's successor, Aylwin proposed a law that only the military and conservative right agreed with, which was to pardon and host many private trials for military officials who were had raped, tortured and killed. Many families felt offended at the lack of fair trials and deliberated against the pardons of an unfair trial, in order to change the law. Other examples of countries dealing with Justice can be seen when France, Britain, Russia and America performed a criminal trial on men who were major criminals in World War II rather than an execution without trial. This was the first trial conducted by many countries at once and was held in Nuremburg, Germany. Men were prosecuted under crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity during World War 2, thus proving to be an effective and just strategy at prosecuting criminals. The next two tribunals similar to this where the Rwandan and Bosnian tribunals. However many new issues arose with these two, especially dealing with the fact that these tribunals took place after World War II, so the laws may have changed. It must also be noted that the Bosnian trials were conducted during a time when Bosnia and Yugoslavia had not split, thus identifying similarly to Syria and the internal conflict within these countries. Many of the post Nuremberg treaties have been quite effective at the job of addressing war and genocide, however there are issues relating to when to consider a crime as "Genocide" and at what point must there be a interventionary tribunal to address this issue.

South Africa which had previously been dealing with racial issues of Apartheid has begun the restoration and social reconstruction by developing Truth and Reconciliation committees (TRC). The Human rights and Violation (HRV) committee deals specifically with determining who are the victims of Apartheid and the extent of the damage and violations caused. This information is then addressed by the Reparation and Reconstruction committee

(R&R) and provide victim support, and policy proposal. The last committee is the Amnesty Committee (AC), specifically dealing with amnesty of those who may have committed a crime during Apartheid and may want freedom from prosecution. While these three sects of committees developing specifically to target the needs of those who are suffering, it has thus allowed for a gradual restoration in peace.

The international criminal court, as seen in both Rwanda, Bosnia and other post-Nuremberg trials, generally generally has favorable outcomes. However, many of the issues relating to these tribunals arise from the fact that it is situated mostly around the African unions. It is also important to address the fact that the International Criminal Court cannot force countries into joining the the organization and thus renders it harder to establish a more effective method of prosecuting and establishing equal and international rights for people.

Relating to these countries, Syria has also predominantly been known to have a constitution that protects the rights of religion. However of late it has become quite difficult to decipher whether or not the ongoing war is purely a religious battle or a political one. The president of the country is also an Alawite Muslim, one of the larger minority populations in the country next to Sunni Muslims. The government avoids declaring positions based off of religion, however many other minority groups such as the the Kurds and other Insurgent groups have been persecuted in the past. It can also be seen that even though there is ambiguity over whether or not there is religious conflict, in 2012 a Shia opposition group was seen burning down a Shia Mosque in protest. However, similar occurrences have happened to all of the religious groups thus indicating that although there is religious and social persecution, it is not directed towards any specific group, thus making Syria a dangerous foreground.

Committee on Cross-Border Issues

Prior to the conflict, Syria already had strained relations with bordering countries. The countries that border Syria are as follows: Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey. Syria had a poor relationship with Israel due to the fighting over Golan Heights, as well as the fact that Syria refused to acknowledge the Israeli State. The two countries have been in a state of war since Israel's establishment in 1948. Syria's relationship with Iraq has been somewhat positive, as they have had a long time border, and new political friendships were beginning to form prior to the war. Syrian troops began occupying Lebanon in 1976 on behalf of the Maronite Christian Phalangist militia during the Lebanese Civil War, ending in April 2005. Relation between leaders began in 2009, when President Bashar Al-Assad of Syria invited Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri to stay in Damascus.

Syria hosted large numbers of refugees from all around bordering countries prior to the conflict. When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, many residents fled to neighboring countries, almost two million. Out of those two million, approximately 1.5 million had fled to Syria by 2015. The refugees are offered free access to emergency health care, as well as education. Instead of being held in camps, an estimated 80% of Iraqi refugees are settled in Damascus, the capital of Syria. Syria has an open border policy, meaning that no visas are required to enter the country. Other countries whose refugees took shelter in Syria included Somalia, Afghanistan, and Sudan. Many refugees were able to gain access to Syria through the help of the UNHCR, the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Due to Israeli airstrikes, masses of Lebanese Refugees were forced across the Syrian border in 2006, as many as 140,000.

Prior to the war, the Nasib Border Crossing was the international border crossing in between Syria and Jordan. This border was used to control exports. In 1916, the border between Syria and Turkey was established, during the Partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. In 1948, Israel was established, creating a border between Syria and costing it the region of Golan Heights. Syria still refuses, as it did then, to recognize Israel as a nation. The border between Iraq and Syria prior to the war was a big source of illegal smuggling. In May of 2006, Syria was urged by the Security Council to agree to delineate the Syrian-Lebanese border. Syria has been accused many behind the scenes involvement with terrorist groups, including Hezbollah and Isis. In 2003, it was said that Hezbollah receives its military funding and support from Syria. From 1976 to 1982, Syria faced a series of terrorist attacks, known as the "long campaign of terror".

Severe drought hit Syria between 2007, and 2010, destroying farming and worsening political instability. The increase in temperature, paired with decreased amounts of rainfall are putting many farmers out of work. During the war, the increase in airstrikes worsened chemical air content, as well as increased pollution, which only exacerbated the dry lands. Agriculture being a main source of Syrian income, the economy was left in ruins after the drought due to its severity. Since the start of the conflict, more research has been done looking into the effects of climate change. The environmental problems, as well as the possibilities of drought increased with the new knowledge of global warming. After the drought, Syria was robbed of many of its naturally abundant resources. Crop failure is one of the many problems that only increased during the time of war in Syria.

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