

## **O'Bryant**

**Country:** United Kingdom

Committee of Governance - Marley

Committee on Strategic Security - Naheem

Committee on Local Security - Irline

Committee on Social Reconstruction - Woyekson

Committee on Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation - Nafiso

Committee on Economic Reconstruction - Khalia

Committee on Cross-Border - Khanh

### **Introduction**

Since the uprisings in 2011 called the Arab Spring that originated from Tunisia and quickly spread throughout the Middle East, Syria's president Bashar al-Assad's regime has made it a priority to keep state agencies running, allowing Assad to claim that the regime is the irreplaceable provider of essential services. Since then, gross and systematic violations and abuses of human rights have been occurring unabated in Syria. As the center of violence that has yet to cease, leaving the nation in panic and unsure of what steps to take next, there is blatant issues with an ongoing plague of weakening communities, refugee camps, and the tense relations between multiple players: the long-serving government of al-Assad (Alawites) against rebels, which ultimately branch out towards the ongoing conflict between Sunnis and Shia groups.

As the Syria crisis enters its sixth year, civilians continue to bear the brunt of a conflict marked by unparalleled suffering, destruction and disregard for human life. 13.5 million people require humanitarian assistance, including 4.9 million people in need trapped in besieged and

hard-to-reach areas, where they are exposed to grave protection threats. Faced with the horror they are unleashing, it is no longer possible to pretend that the international community can stand by. What they are doing is a direct violation of Syrian civilians human rights by repressing the needs of the majority, and trying to silence their cries. Inaction has consequences and the United Kingdom's response to the crisis in Syria is crucial as we do have the capacity to make a difference in Syria if we show the will to act. Over half of the population has been forced from their homes, and many people have been displaced multiple times. Children and youth, millions of whom have known nothing but conflict, comprise more than half of the displaced, as well as half of those in need of humanitarian assistance. Parties to the conflict act with impunity, committing violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

From outside the country, the UK continues to work for a political solution that would establish a democratic Syria and lasting stability for all Syrians. We condemn the brutal violence of the Assad regime and support diplomatic efforts to end the suffering and establish political transition. It is quite imperative for us to all work together in order to answer the cries that erupting from the Syrian people. To continue in not taking any immediate action is a crime against humanity everywhere. We as the United Kingdom with the help of the other delegations seek to support Syria and push them towards a more democratic system of government, which in turn would end the senseless bloodshed. There needs to be some bridge between the Syrian government, and its civilians in order for something to be done and we wish to be that bridge. Therefore, we implore other delegations to not let this horrific crime against humanity continue any further.

## **Key Points**

- (1) Today, all segments of the Syrian population are vulnerable, albeit in different ways.  
Women and girls face risks of sexual violence, exploitation, abuse, harassment, and domestic violence. Men and boys face restrictions on their freedom of movement due to insecurity and lack or loss of documentation.
- (2) The United Kingdom believes that, absent a change on the ground, diplomacy alone is unlikely to end the Syrian war – but at the same time, parliament agrees with diplomatic efforts to advance a country-wide cessation of hostilities and advance a vision for a political settlement.
- (3) The UK combined the SDSR, and the NSS into one program or policy. With two papers, one being focused on domestic and international political agenda and another being focused on providing review to the Government's addressing to many important issues, this current newer strategy should be more effective.
- (4) Mass conflict-induced displacement has led to significant demographic change within Syria. In addition to some 4.8 million people registered as refugees in neighbouring countries, 6.3 million people are displaced within Syria itself. Meanwhile the rate of displacement continues unabated.
- (5) Even though the government has made agreements to not continue to bomb civilian they continue to do so, hence violating their agreement with the UN. These issues have not really been dealt with because no matter what the Syrian government refuses to cooperate.

- (6) The new aid from the British people will be delivered by trusted humanitarian partners who are working on the frontline in some of the hardest to reach places in Syria, including besieged areas such as Aleppo.
- (7) The Syrian economy is on the decline due to the state of the country after the war. Some examples of the issue are the rate of inflation and the declining amount of crude oil.

### **Background Information (on United Kingdom)**

Officially known as United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the nation consists of four countries united under one monarch and government. The countries are England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Each have a distinct culture and feel of their own. England has traditionally been the dominant nation within the UK, often playing a leading role in politics, and has over 80 percent of the share of the total population. The United Kingdom has formed over many centuries through old alliances, conquests, and royal marriages. The UK is governed by a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch. The king or queen is the head of state, and the prime minister is the head of government. The people vote in elections for Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent them.

The United Kingdom still continues to place its efforts in sending aid to Syria. Since made aware of the conflict within Syria, the UK has led the adoption of three resolutions on the human rights situation in Syria as part of the UN Human Rights Council in 2015 and has co-sponsored the UN General Assembly Third Committee Resolution on the human rights situation in Syria, which was also successfully adopted. We support the UN Commission of Inquiry's investigations into human rights violations and abuses in Syria. More widely, the UK continued to play a leading role in addressing the humanitarian situation in Syria. We have now pledged a

total of £2.3 billion in humanitarian assistance to support Syrian refugees up to 2020. This is our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

Through its role in the UN Security Council and the International Syria Support Group, the UK is supporting a peace process which aims to end the violence and achieve political transition away from Asad. UNSC Resolution 2254, adopted 18 December 2015, called for ceasefire planning and an immediate end to attacks against civilians. The UK has been at the forefront of promoting the participation of minority groups, and especially women, in the peace process. We support progress that has subsequently been made on the political track, including the start of intra-Syrian peace talks, cessation of hostilities, and some improvements in humanitarian access. The goal of the UK is to be a mediator between the different groups in Syria, and work to stop the horrific amount humanitarian violations.

However, with the United Kingdom's being generous with humanitarian aid, UK's stance on certain aspects of the Syrian conflict has changed. In early 2014, the UK parliament established the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme (VPRP) in order to provide a route for selected Syrian refugees to come to the UK. Parliament reports that the UK is willing and committed to providing international aid towards assistance.

## **Issues**

### Committee of Governance

The Syrian government was completely uncooperative and did not accurately represent the people. Due to retaliations in response to this false representation, the government had tried to use its power to quiet citizens and all opposers. The United Kingdom has had peaceful relations with the Syrian government before the conflict. The main actors in the current Syrian conflict

appear to be the hostile regime of Bashar al-Assad and those who oppose it. The United Kingdom has no connections to any of the main actors in the Syrian civil war. The United Kingdom does not have any connections to any of the main actors in the Syrian civil war because the U.K has chosen a peaceful approach in dealing with the Syrian conflict. The decision remain neutral while aiding and accepting Syrian refugees is path the United Kingdom has selected. The type of government the United Kingdom is advocating for is a completely Democratic one that accurately represents the people. The military and civilian government of the United Kingdom were allies

#### Committee on Strategic Security

The uprising against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad that began in 2011 has always been disorganized, and it has become increasingly reliant on foreign support. According to a recent estimate by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, an estimated 1,200 rebel groups are currently fighting against the al-Assad government. Anti-Assad rebel groups such as the Free Syrian Army (FSA) have international backers—chief among them Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United States—whom have, since early 2012 repeatedly sought to encourage a centralized rebel leadership by using their control over funding and weapons shipments to coax local commanders into larger alliances. Used interchangeably with FSA, the Supreme Military Command (SMC) has provided wildly varying estimates of the total number of fighters in its member groups. As of June 2013, SMC representative states that the figure is at 320,000.

While the United Kingdom has suspended all services of the British Embassy in Damascus and all diplomatic personnel have been withdrawn from Syria, from outside the country, the UK continues to work for a political solution that would establish a democratic Syria and lasting stability for all Syrians. The UK has provided over \$2.3 billion to Syria and

neighboring countries of many refugees. In 2016, efforts were made to provide clean water, food, medical care and blankets to millions of Syrians, including those who have fled Aleppo, been caught up in the current fighting and displaced in neighbouring Jordan. Since 2010 the national security strategy has revolved around the array of potential problems for the United Kingdom's government. UK wants to focus on risks presented by terrorism, cyber warfare, and international military crises such as the one in Syria which they have partially withdrawn from. The UK does support a the agreement of ceasefire made by Russia and backed up by Turkey that the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), regarded by the UN as Syria's main opposition body, has confirmed.

The increase of efforts to contain the flow of foreign recruits to extremist groups in Syria and Iraq have shown limited impact. The increase in foreign fighters is not uniform throughout the world; certain regions and countries have seen more significant rises than others. With ISIS, the United Kingdom, regarding the situation with Syria & the Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS), openly condones the long-standing atrocities enacted by the internationally recognized terrorist organization. A coalition of 68 countries are engaged in international efforts to counter ISIS. The military campaign in Iraq and Syria is just one aspect of that broader strategy which also includes measures to restrict the flow of foreign fighters, stop foreign financing, provide humanitarian assistance to Syria and strategic communications (propaganda, public diplomacy and psychological operations) intended to counter ISIS' ideology.

In terms of Syria's relations with countries on its borders before and during the conflict, Israel is watching events in Syria very closely, where a change in regime would carry with it major repercussions. Although technically in a state of war with Syria since 1948, the border between Israel and Syria had been Israel's quietest since the last time the two countries fought in

1973. That changed with the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, with shells and gunfire hitting the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, triggering Israeli return fire. While President Assad's regime is strongly backed by the Lebanon-based Islamic militant group Hezbollah, which sits in the Lebanese government. Thousands of Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon have crossed into Syria to help the Syrian army against rebels.

Since 1946, the Syrian Army has played a major role in Syria's governance, mounting five military coups (two in 1949, including the March 1949 Syrian coup d'état and the August 1949 coup by Colonel Sami al-Hinnawi), and in 1954, 1963, 1966, and 1970. It has fought four wars with Israel (1948, the Six Day War in 1967, the October War of 1973, and 1982 in Lebanon) and, Black September in Jordan, 1970. But, even before the civil war in Syria, the military has always been extremely dysfunctional, and is always interfering with the country's domestic politics. At this point in time the U.K feels it's time to strike. Recently the UK has organized a plan to send an airstrike on an Islamic State in Syria. They had peace talks that got off to a rough start and was described as a "war of words" and was unsolved. They want to put an end to the past years of bloodshed. The rebel groups decided not to meet President Bashar Al-Assad which only brought tension to the peace talks. What the UK needs to do in order to aid the situation in Syria is convince the US to intervene, which will allow Britain to do the same, and the U.K. will then feel more inclined to intervene themselves.

#### Committee on Local Security

The United Kingdom calls upon all State members to understand clearly the interests and imperatives driving the major players in this conflict, and we must understand, too, that the battlefield dynamics will heavily condition the prospects of any political settlement. Ending the bloody war in Bosnia in the 1990s involved getting the major external powers with stakes in the

outcome – the United States, the Europeans, and Russia – to agree on basic outlines of a settlement and impose it on the parties. But imposing it on the parties required a shift in the balance of power on the battlefield, brought about by Croat military victories and ultimately a NATO bombing campaign. Bosnia also required a large-scale, long-term United Nations presence to separate the factions and to enforce and implement the agreement.

The United Kingdom believes that, absent a change on the ground, diplomacy alone is unlikely to end the Syrian war – but at the same time, parliament agrees with diplomatic efforts to advance a country-wide cessation of hostilities and advance a vision for a political settlement. A full-scale ceasefire could create more space for political bargaining, and in the meantime reduce human suffering and mitigate the spillover effects of the ongoing violence. Right now, however, the Assad government and its patrons in Tehran and Moscow have no interest in a sustained cease-fire, because the battleground dynamics continue to shift in their favor. They used the partial ceasefires of the past weeks to consolidate territorial gains from opposition forces and to further weaken those forces through continued air attacks. Without agreement amongst the various governments around the table as to which fighting groups constitute terrorist organizations, a ceasefire will inevitably disadvantage opposition factions as the Assad regime targets them in the name of counterterrorism. That will likewise advantage the most extreme among the rebel factions as well as jihadi groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda's affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, who will all continue to use force to acquire and hold territory and to force their political opponents and inconvenient civilians off the field. Likewise, some suggest that the sectarian nature of the conflict, and the deep investment of regional powers in backing their preferred sides, mean that it is not possible to hasten an end to the war at all, and that it must be allowed to

“burn itself out.” This policy option is infeasible for the United States, from moral, political, and security standpoints.

The scale of death and destruction already, over nearly five years of war, should shame the conscience of the world. Those seeking to escape this misery deserve our succor, and those seeking to end the carnage deserve our support. And it is beyond question that Bashar al-Assad and his allies are the ones responsible for the vast majority of this death, destruction, and displacement. Practices of security can be the state apparatus, the military, and militias. The objective – safety – can refer to the safety or security of a range of collectives including the state, political parties, and ethnic groups, while individual security refers to the general safety of inhabitants and the protection of human rights. Comparing the security situation in so-called ‘rebel-held’ areas of Syria where alternative governance structures have emerged, examining the security approaches of Local Administrative Councils and Rebel Councils in Deir Azzor, Manbij, Dera, and areas dominated by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) is essential. The UK argues that security and safety are strongly influenced by authority formation and the nature of deals and relationships involved in the formation of these nascent authorities. Security in these areas is strongly influenced by the Syrian government, which disrupts collectives that threaten its own collective security while giving limited support to those which serve its agenda of retaining power. It also demonstrates the limited utility of the ‘regime’ vs. ‘rebel-held’ dichotomy, as rebel groups at times must accommodate the Syrian state in limited ways for instrumental purposes.

#### Committee on Social Reconstruction

Prior to the Syrian civil war, social structure and order was fairly decent. 90% of children went to school and 8.5 children in 10 achieved literacy. The state was hosting the refugees from

Palestine and Iraq before they were the ones exporting them. Civil society didn't really impact daily life in Syria, communities weren't pitted against each other. If anything, they worked as a unit to fight the tyrannical government in place. Institutions like religion were never the primary reason why the conflict initially arose.

Local society in Syria was progressing much more than bordering nations before the SCW. It is one of the few countries in the region that guarantees freedom of religion in their constitution, though it isn't entirely impartial, as their president is required to practice Islam. Onlookers see the conflict as one based off of religion, when really it's a matter of the people being against a dictatorial government. Citizens went from having many rights, like the fact that they could protest peacefully, a right practice in our country quite often, to the citizens of being killed if they showed any demonstrations or uprisings to the government.

Initially, the Syrian government really do anything to particularly enforce human rights, but as the country descended into war, the government was a faction that participated in the violence. They participated in deliberate and indiscriminate attack on civilians of the various factions *against* the government. Syria is not part of the United Nations and is not associated to any international treaty limiting them to protect any human rights. According to the Index of Economic Freedom, Syria has the lowest rating in the entire Middle East, in the subcomponent of property rights. Properties are hardly protected and can easily be expropriated by the Assad regime. Before the war however, it wasn't common for the government to do that, but not there is an incentive for the government to do it, they do. Prior to the conflict, housing was already sparse, especially as a result of a recent drought. Nevertheless, it is still in decline, with most of the country being unemployed (70%), and the country's currency plummeting straight down. Transportation in Syria, now and even before the conflict, was hard to come by. Traveling from

city to city was very difficult unless you had a car, which wasn't something accessible unless you were wealthy, which wasn't very common unless you worked for the government or another powerful institution.

Before the crisis, healthcare was on the rise, with life expectancy being 73 years old, only 18 deaths per 1000 in terms of infant mortality, and government expenditure on healthcare was only at 2.9%. Since Assad came into power in 2000, he dramatically increased expenditure on education, made it free and compulsory (thus accessible to more people in the country). Early Childhood Education has grown and provided by the government, and post-secondary education came at a modest fee if students did well on exams. Mental health care wasn't the necessarily the best in the world in Syria, but knowledge and attention to it was on the rise, there were only 70 psychiatrists in a nation of 21 million people; it was another casualty as a result of the war. The two facilities in the country have been dramatically altered, with one hospital in Aleppo being shut down completely, and another near Damascus where they have limited resources, and limited staff along with several security concerns. Those who live in the capital are the only ones who could potentially even access the healthcare, and the rest of the country being bombarded is virtually without any attention.

#### Committee on Economic Reconstruction

Before the bloodshed of the civil war in Syria, the country's economy was diverse. The most important sectors include agriculture (22 percent of the economy), industry and excavation (25 percent), retail (23 percent), and tourism (12 percent), according to 2009 figures quoted by the Syrian Central Bank. Given its centralized state before the war, Syria was in urgent need for decentralization and for a new governance structure. A decentralization took place during the war as a result of the division of the country and separation of many regions from central

government control. This decentralization led to the formation of many rebel groups, most notably the Islamic rebels. Islamist rebels and extremist groups have seized control of most of Syria's oil and gas resources, a rare generator of cash in the country's war-battered economy, and are now using the profit to write off their fights against one another as well as President Bashar al-Assad, according to American officials.

While the oil and gas fields are in tremendous decline, control of them has increased the fortunes of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, and the Nusra Front, both of which are offshoots of Al Qaeda. This discrepancy between fortunes has led to masses of people suffering due to the high wealth disparity. Along with wealth disparity Syrian government is fighting to gain back control which took some time. After so much suffering, Aleppo is officially back under Syrian government control (as of late). Syrian state TV announced Thursday (this past Thursday) that the evacuation of the city's formerly rebel-controlled areas was complete, with the departure of the last opposition fighters and civilians from former strongholds in Aleppo's eastern sector.

The economic crisis through which the Syrian government is going led to a drop in the local currency, the Syrian lira, by almost half. This led to a rise in inflation. For example, the price of a butane cylinder (normally used for heating homes) has reached 2,500 liras in some areas as of March 2013, if available at all. One of the factors that contributed to the drop in the local currency is the government's decision to quadruple the amount of printed notes compared to the end of 2010 and was helped in that by the Russian government. It is likely that the Syrian government is receiving external funding from allies like Iran and Iraq, and this could be one of the reasons why the regime has not collapsed. Russia also allegedly provides the Syrian regime with weapons. Despite economic sanctions, the Syrian minister of petroleum announced that the

government signed in early 2012 a deal with Iraq to export a daily amount to Syrian oil worth \$25 million. The Syrian economy would be faced with many challenges with the fall of the regime, especially in restoring security, unifying the different military factions and embarking on a process of disarmament.

Government income from oil made up about 20 percent of total budget revenue in the years leading up to 2011, but by the second half of that year the conflict had taken a heavy toll on the oil industry. By autumn 2011, EU sanctions banned the import of oil from Syria—most exports had previously gone to Europe. By the time the government could find new buyers, the war had started to disrupt oil production and most foreign companies had withdrawn.

According to periodic statements from the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, crude oil production dropped to an average of 164,000 b/d (barrels per day) in 2012 and to just 28,000 b/d in 2013. Recent ministry statements indicate that production is now only 14,000 b/d, although this figure does not include output from rebel-held areas. In relation annual spending on healthcare is just 5 percent of GDP, a slight increase from the 2.5 percent estimated as of 1999, but considerably less than neighbouring countries. According the World Health Organization, Jordan spent 9.8 percent and Lebanon 11.6 percent of GDP on health in 2004.

These deficits are growing as Syria's demographics experience massive change. Syria's population of 19 million is growing at 2.5 percent a year, around 475,000 people, while the influx of up to 1.5 million Iraqi refugees has further swelled the population by around 8 percent since 2003 and put an unsustainable strain on public services. The now three-years-old conflict in Syria began as a peaceful protest for human dignity and political reform. While citizens were inspired by the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain, Bashar al-Assad's regime drew its lessons from these events and decided, very much from the outset, on what it called a "security

solution" (al-hal al-amni), i.e. the brutal repression of any popular protest by military force. The regime's reaction triggered defections from the armed forces and a militarisation of the uprising. From mid-2011, the conflict evolved into a civil war, a bloody struggle for power *In Syria*, which increasingly became overlaid with a regional struggle for Syria.

Besides existing ethnic and sectarian differences, Syrian society is also arranged along tense social and economic class divisions. The class structure is characterized by a high degree of maldistribution of wealth, meaning that much of the wealth is concentrated in the hands of the few, while large numbers of people live in poverty. Moreover, there is a high correlation between wealth and sectarian-ethnic background. The upper income group is composed of Alawite high-ranking officials, military officers, Sunni landowners, small industrial business owners, and important merchants. The middle-income group is made up of most Alawite and Sunni government officials, shopkeepers, professionals, and farmers. The lower income group is made up of Alawite workers, peasants (farmers who do not own all the land they cultivate), and employees.

Although the Ba'athist Syrian government has directed its welfare policies at easing social problems, an estimated 20 percent of the Syrian population still lives under the poverty line. In the last 30 years, the pace of change from an agricultural to an industrial economy and the accompanying migration of people to the cities has worsened income distribution and caused the high-poverty shanty-towns (poorly constructed temporary housing) on the edge of populous cities. The contraction of the Syrian economy and the emergence of a war economy have had a profound impact on the stratification and composition of the Syrian business community, and the elite in particular. In the short and long term, sanctions, sustained capital flight, the reduction of enterprise assets, and the dramatic reduction of production and exchange throughout the country

have adversely affected the established prewar business elite. They have seen their fortunes shrink and many have even left Syria for neighboring countries.

Simultaneously, however, the new war economy has fostered the rise of a new conflict elite whose wealth is directly tethered to the continuation of violence. While these actors do not carry arms or directly perpetrate violence, they are, undeniably, beneficiaries of the strife. Many are important players in ensuring the flow of goods between different parts of Syria and transactions between regime-held areas and the outside world, including borderlands between Syria, Turkey, and Iraq. Some have gained spectacular wealth and influence in a very short time. This new conflict elite will have profound impacts on Syria's future and further add to Syria's stinging past.

Similarly the UK's stance on Syria conflicts stemming from the war is that Assad doesn't have to step down immediately. He was given a six-month period in which he could remain in office. From there he will be charged with war crimes. However, the UK has an unfavorable view of ISIS and feel as though they may extend airstrikes to the country.

#### Committee on Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation

The history of the al-Assad regime is full violence and massacre. The al-Assad family is a part of the Alawite minority of shiites in Syria and has attempted to suppress the majority of its population, the Sunni Muslims. For the last 40 years, al-Assad forces have conducted several massacres. Since the rule of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father, Syrians have been subject to human rights abuses. After taking power through a military coup in 1970, Hafez received aid from the Soviet government to build up Syrian military forces and suppress the masses. Since the al-Assad family has taken power the amount of human rights violation is insane, due to the constant opposition from the people who want a government that will actually adhere to the masses. So

some of these people who oppose the government are also carrying out serious abuses including attacking civilians, using child soldiers, kidnapping, and torture. This has turned into a cycle of abuse in which both sides are creating major violations in human rights.

### **Human rights violations that are occurring:**

The list of war crimes and gross violations go on, but a major one is that the Syrian government continues to use air attack, and terror to control citizens. The government persisted in conducting indiscriminate air attacks, including dropping large numbers of improvised barrel bombs on civilians in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2139 passed on February 22, 2014. Even though the government has made agreements to not continue to bomb civilian they continue to do so, hence violating their agreement with the UN. These issues have not really been dealt with because no matter what the Syrian government refuses to cooperate. We and the UN have tried to come up with these agreements to promote peace, but the Syrian government with the help of Russia is not allowing for us to aid Syria as a whole.

As the war has gone on in Syria the death toll as of 2016 is about 470,000. More than 1 in 10 Syrians have been wounded or killed since the beginning of the war in 2011. According to a new report that finds a staggering 470,000 deaths have been caused by the conflict, either directly or indirectly (Human Rights Watch). The sad thing about this is that the people that are suffering the most are civilians, who want nothing more but just to live out their lives peacefully. Another major human rights violation that is occurring is Syrians getting displaced, because it is no longer safe for them to live in their country. According to local groups, more than 640,000 people live under long-term siege in Syria. The conflict has led to a humanitarian crisis with an estimated 7.6 million internally displaced and 4.2 million refugees in neighboring countries. This issue is growing, because as the war continues Syrians continue to flee and a lot of countries are

not willing to take in these refugees. As of November over 4.2 million Syrian refugees had registered had registered in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. In 2015, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon all implemented measures to restrict the numbers of refugees entering their countries. So there are millions of people without a home, food and safety.

### **Accountability in other countries**

In Chile Impunity for past and continuing human rights violations remained a concern. Legal proceedings relating to allegations of past crimes under international law and other human rights violations continued; in a few cases, those involved were imprisoned. For much of the year, cases of unnecessary and excessive use of force by the police continued to be dealt with by the military courts. However, a law passed in November excludes civilians from military jurisdiction. Abortion remained criminalized in all circumstances, although some steps were taken to decriminalize it in limited circumstances. The ICC has been accused of only targeting the African continent; and secondly, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has no enforcement mechanism against the state parties who refuse to cooperate with the court. The ICC is not doing its task of trying to help the international community, and are not persecuting groups/countries that commit heinous crimes. The purpose of the ICC established in 2002 is to ensure that crimes against humanity and mass atrocities do not occur with impunity. But they continue to let the conflict in Syria to go on for six years, so the ICC is not effective. Syria was somewhat a mixed society because there was a lot of ethnic diversity in Syria, and they had many ethnic groups such as Kurds, Turkomans, Circassians, and Palestinians. But in terms of religion they were not a mixed society with 74% of the population being made up of sunni muslims, and were not really accepting of the small population of shiites. During the war there are two religious groups that are struggling to coexist together, sunni and shiites. Although 74% of the

Syrian population is Sunni, the government is comprised of the minority which are shiites. So this caused a lot of tension between the two, and that incited a back and forth clash. That threatens to destabilize Syria, and neighboring countries. The UK stresses the need to prioritize humanitarian and protection needs such as civilian protection and access to basic services. We seek to focus on establishing a more democratic Syria by getting regional and sub-regional area agreements which will allow less human right's violations to occur as well as improve humanitarian access.

### Committee on Cross-Border

Syria's borders have been in dispute many times throughout history, especially as the result of the Arab-Israeli War. Despite numerous attempts to establish a demilitarized zone, there have been violent clashes over the territory. The Hatay Province is generally understood to lie within Turkey, although Syria has never officially ceded the area to its neighbor. The borders between Syria and Lebanon and the Golan Heights area between Israel and Syria are also in dispute. As of 2015, Golan Heights has mostly been occupied by Israel. Despite this, some may still consider it Syrian territory. For these reasons, the common meeting point of Israel, Syria and Lebanon remains unclear. Before the civil war started in 2011, Syria's open-borders policy, followed by other countries in the region (Turkey and Lebanon), made it the destination of hundreds of thousands of refugees, primarily from Iraq. By the end of 2010, according to UNHCR, over 1,300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, were housed in Syria. According to the FMR Iraq Special Issue, the influx of refugees (namely Iraqis) has had an extreme effect on all facets of life in Syria, namely on their infrastructure and economy.

### **How Syria's Conflict affects neighbors:**

Out of all of Syria's neighboring countries, Lebanon has been directly affected the most. Sectarian tensions in Lebanon have been exacerbated by those in Syria, and fighting has spilled across the Lebanon-Syria border. Deadly fighting between Alawites and Sunnis have erupted in neighbouring areas of Lebanon's second largest city, Tripoli, and the fall of President Assad's regime would threaten to ignite more widespread clashes. Meanwhile, Turkey has stressed its worries that the violence could trigger a civil war and turn the Kurdish-populated northeast Syria into a base of support for the PKK, a Kurdish separatist movement seeking a homeland in parts of southeast Turkey. Tension between the two countries has risen with Turkey fearing about the possible use of chemical weapons against it by Syria, prompting the US to deploy patriot missile batteries along the Turkish-Syrian border.

Iraq, a country already at risk with sectarian violence escalating at its deadliest levels over the past few years, the Syrian civil war threatens to destabilize the nation. The majority Sunni-led fight against Bashar al-Assad has emboldened Iraq's Sunni minority. The government in Iraq fears that areas occupied by predominantly Sunni Muslims could become a safe haven for al-Qaeda-linked Sunni militant groups in Syria. As with other neighbouring countries, there has been a steady influx of Syrian refugees into Iraq, raising fears the unrestricted flow could make Iraq's security situation worse. Already hosting 500,000 Palestinian refugees, there is now a large number of Syrian refugees, fuelling social tensions and putting an additional strain on its infrastructure and resources. Like Iraq, Jordan is hosting approximately 500,000 officially registered refugees from the war in Syria (as of May 2013). The UN has said this number was likely to triple by the end of the year 2013. On the other hand, Israel is watching events in Syria very closely, where a change in regime would carry with it major repercussions. Although technically in a state of war with Syria since 1948, the border between Israel and Syria had been

Israel's quietest since the last time the two countries fought in 1973. Israel fears are advanced weaponry being transferred from Syria to the Lebanon-based Islamic militant group Hezbollah and an end to President Assad's rule though would also lessen Iran's ability to back anti-Israel militant groups in Syria.

### **Cross-Border Initiatives:**

Since then, countries that border Syria have been committed into giving aid and accepting refugees. For example, Jordan, under UN Security Council Resolution 2165/2191 and in line with the "Whole of Syria" approach, Jordan-based actors, including UN agencies and their implementing partners, continue to deliver lifesaving assistance to populations in needs in the southern Syria. Alongside vastly inflated food prices, inadequate shelter, fuel shortages and electricity cuts, and disrupted access to clean water, among other factors, this has generated considerable humanitarian needs within both IDP and other conflict-affected communities. Similarly, Turkey has placed its efforts in the The Whole of Syria approach, which brings together humanitarian actors working from inside Syria and neighbouring countries aiming at increasing the effectiveness of the response. Once a staunch ally of President Bashar al-Assad, Turkey has come out strongly against the crackdowns due to the Syrian regime, working hard to provide additional troops along its border with Syria. Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2165 on 14 July 2014, UN organizations and implementing partners based in Turkey and Jordan have together dispatched 104 consignments, comprising 2,027 trucks of food assistance, non-food items, health and medical supplies, water, hygiene and sanitation-related assistance.

### **United Kingdom's Stances:**

As the conflict is prolonged, it will also continue to spread to neighboring countries. The expanding Syrian refugee crisis highlights the differences among countries that welcome desperate migrants and those that don't. Some 4.1 million Syrians are fleeing a homeland riven by more than four years of civil war. Currently, the United Kingdom plays a leading role in the Global Coalition in aiding Syria during the conflict and wholeheartedly supports the "Whole of Syria" approach. The UK calls upon all fellow Member States to adopt a resolution of strategically ending the crisis with not only threats from militant groups but as well as providing aid to displaced people and refugees. With ongoing plagues of weakening communities, refugee camps, and the tense relations between the government and the people of Syria (as well as conflicts with different Islamic sects and bordering countries), it is in the best interest to bring awareness towards the situation of Syria.