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Towards an international strategy against IS / Daesh?

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Introduction

What started more than four years ago as a peaceful uprising in Syria in the wake of the then Arab Spring which swept the region, has become a nightmare. First a civil war, now a war with regional and international dimensions, Syria has become the symbol of an international crisis that seems unsolvable. On one side stands the Syrian Government under the leadership of president al-Assad, a Shia Alawite, helped by the Russian federation initially via arms. Since 30 September 2015, the Russian federation has started its own military campaign – officially against Islamic State / Daesh², but in practice against all who the Assad-government calls “terrorists”. This also entails Al Nusra, which is Al Qaeda in Syria. The

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² IS/Daesh wants to create a sharia based state covering the current Iraq and Syria in phase one, and possibly extended through the entire region of North Africa and the south of Europe in the longer term. These fighters are highly active and successful on the battle field.

question is whether this also involves the Sunni opposition groups, who have been fighting against Assad the last four years. It seems that Russia has created an alliance since September 2015 with all Shia forces in the region; Iran, Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon and the Shia dominated government in Iraq. A ground offensive supported by Russian airpower may be in the cards. On the other side stands a conglomerate of opposition groups, supported by the West, and Sunni states such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. The biggest is the Syrian National Council, which is comprised of Sunnis and Kurds. But there are many other opposition groups that all often seem to disagree with one another. The Syrian National Council wants Assad to leave power indefinitely, and clearly does not want to compromise on this. Over the last year, the threat of IS/Daesh has grown substantially. The US was somewhat frustrated with the Syrian National Council and became more interested with combatting IS rather than Assad. Therefore the US created and trained a new group, the so-called New Syrian Forces, also known as 'Division 30'. The New Syrian Forces are a Syrian paramilitary group trained and equipped by a United States-led coalition and active in the Syrian Civil War. Most of the members were drawn from the 30th Division of the Free Syrian Army. After training, the fighters returned to Syrian rebel groups and are not under international coalition command and control. This initiative has not proven successful. In August, after the first group of fighters re-entered Syria after their training in Turkey, the militia was attacked and routed by Jabhat al-Nusra, which stormed its headquarters and kidnapped a number of its members. In September 2015, 30 NSF-fighters betrayed the US and turned their weapons over to Al Nusra.³ The US strategy is clearly failing. In Iraq, the US has supported the Bagdad government and heavily relied upon Kurdish fighters. Since Turkey has entered the conflict in Syria at the end of July, members of the PKK are now also the target of Turkish forces. Will the Kurds still be the ally of the West in the future? It seems Washington has gambled and supported the Turkish army instead. The Western strategy against IS/Daesh clearly is not working. The military vacuum that has been created has now created an opportunity for the Russian federation to get involved.

The policy of the US, France and the United Kingdom has been to get rid of al-Assad, a position which was initially suggested by the Syrian National Council. In the UN Security

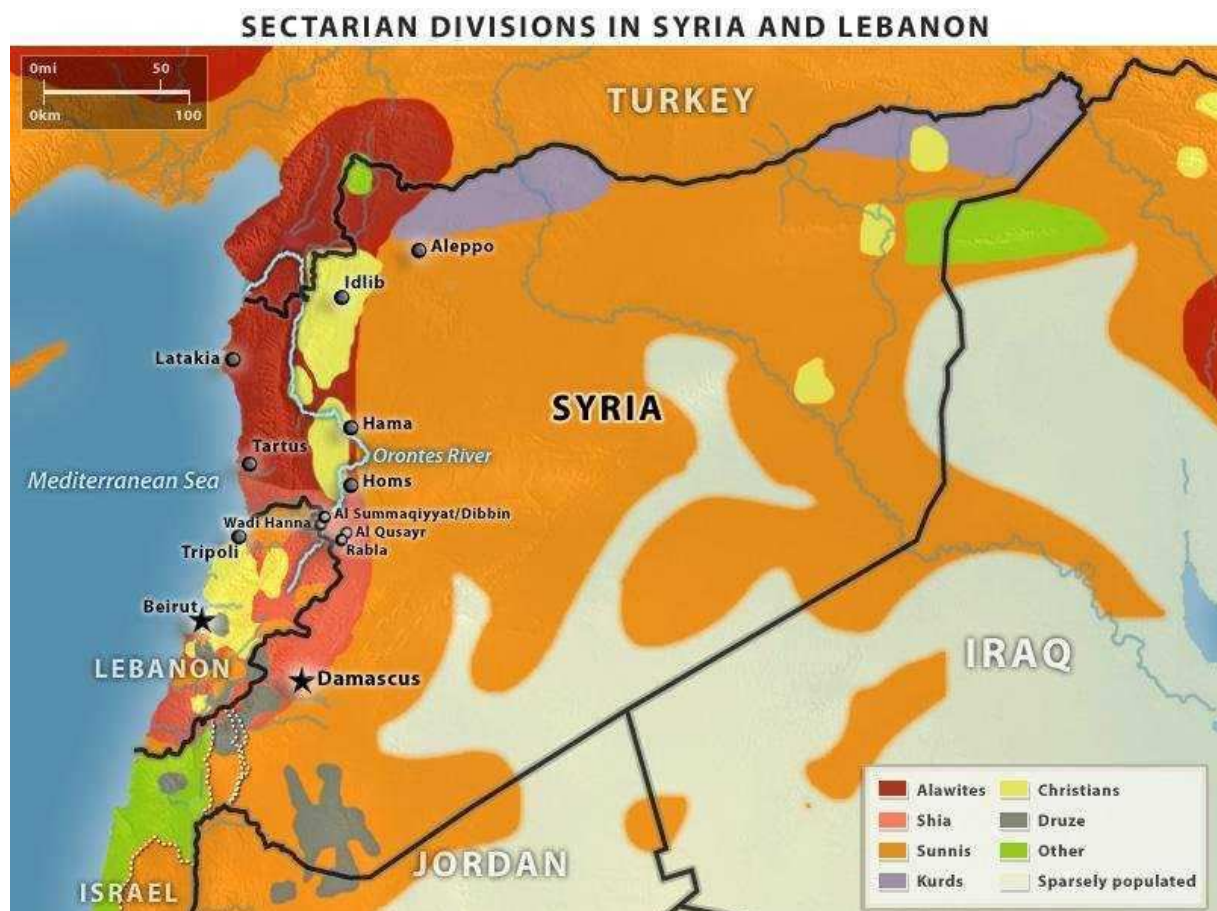
³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11882195/US-trained-Division-30-rebels-betrayed-US-and-hand-weapons-over-to-al-Qaeda-affiliate-in-Syria.html>

Council (UNSC), there was an unwillingness to come to a solution. Western powers blame Russia and China, and the other way around. The result was that all the actors tried to achieve their goals by surpassing the UNSC. The Russian federation delivered heavy weapons and helicopters to the al-Assad regime. Later on, they suggested they would even consider delivering al-Assad modern anti-air S300-rockets, which could be used against “foreign aggression”. Currently the Russians are bringing in MIG fighters, attack helicopters and around 1500 military advisers in Syria, and started to bomb “terrorists” in Syria. NATO is worried about a “A2/AD bubble” being created in the eastern Mediterranean. A2/AD stands for anti-access/area denial. A2/AD is a combination of systems such as surface-to-air missile batteries and anti-ship missiles deployed to prevent forces from entering or traversing a certain area—from land, air or sea.⁴ Hence, the Russians are creating an insurance policy for the troops of Assad, should the West ever want to get rid of his regime militarily. This has seriously complicated matters.

Western powers such as the US, the UK and France made it possible to deliver arms to Syrian opposition groups. Special attention hereby goes to Saudi Arabia and Qatar. For different reasons these countries have embarked on a foreign offensive agenda in the region, using the Arab Spring as an opportunity to create regimes that would be friendly to them. Both countries are delivering arms, and there are signs that their intelligence agencies are also involved. In essence, Sunni countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar are fighting an open proxy war against Shia forces in the region, especially coming from Iran. Hence Yemen has also become an open battle ground during 2015.

In Syria, the Shia are in the minority and hence need support from Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran in the region. The Sunnis are in the majority, but they are not very successful in winning the war because of internal problems. The United States also supports them with training and arms. The position of the Christians and the Kurds is catastrophic in the country. Christians are leaving when they can, the Kurds are now also under fire by Turkey since July 2015. The situation has become extremely complex. The following map offers a good overview of the situation before the war broke out:

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/09/29/top-nato-general-russians-starting-to-build-air-defense-bubble-over-syria/>



Source: Stratfor.com

At the same time, the *humanitarian situation*, both inside Syria (IDPs; internally displaced persons) and outside in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon is very bad. Later in this dossier some recent data are provided on the current situation in this regard. Winter is coming. Some countries such as Jordan and Lebanon are under extreme pressure because of this; the question is how long they will hold out. If they would implode under the pressure, the situation in the region would aggravate rapidly. Even if the international community cannot solve the essence of the conflict, the humanitarian situation has become so pressing that something should be done in order to further prevent an even worse situation. That question also lies before the Emergency Session of the UNSC in Brussels, Belgium in November.

Country profile of Syria ⁵

The Syrian Arab Republic, once at the center of the Ottoman Empire, covers an area which has witnessed invasions and occupations over the ages, from Romans and Mongols to Crusaders and Turks. It is situated in the Middle Eastern region, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Lebanon and Turkey.



Source: The World Factbook

Syria has a very complex sociopolitical make-up. It is home to diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Christians, Druze, Alawite Shia and Arab Sunnis, the last of who make up a majority of the Muslim population. This demographic mosaic is further complicated by divisions within many of these groups. As has often been the case in similar situations throughout history, the relative stability that the country enjoyed from 1970 until 2010 had little to do with the people's sense of a common identity.

⁵ This part is strongly inspired from the Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook 2013-14, Washington DC, 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> and from the BBC country profile available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703856>.

Rather, it was a direct consequence of the dictatorial ruling in place at that time (see below). Once the authoritarian system began to implode, the country easily slipped into a civil war.

Following World War I, France acquired a mandate over the northern portion of the former Ottoman Empire province of Syria. Modern Syria gained its independence from France in 1946. The new country however lacked political stability since it was driven by the conflicting interests of the above-mentioned various groups, and experienced a series of military coups during its first decades. Syria united with Egypt in February 1958 to form the United Arab Republic. In September 1961, the two entities separated, and the Syrian Arab Republic was reestablished.

In November 1970, Hafiz al-Assad, a member of the socialist Baath Party and the minority Alawi sect, seized power in a bloodless coup and brought political stability to the country. The Baath government was based on a strong authoritarian rule and a strong anti-Western policy, particularly under President Hafiz al-Assad from 1970 to 2000. Following the death of President al-Assad, his son, Bashar al-Assad, was approved as president by popular referendum in July 2000 and renewed for another term in May 2007.

Influenced by major uprisings that began elsewhere in the region (i.e. the so-called Arab Spring uprisings) anti-governmental protests broke out in the southern province of Dar'a in March 2011. Protesters called for the repeal of the restrictive Emergency Law allowing arrests without charge, the legalization of political parties, and the removal of corrupt local officials. The protests rapidly took on a more formal nature when the opposition began to organize political and military wings for a long uprising against the Baath government. As 2012 wore on, the stand-off escalated into civil war, with factions from the governing elite signaling the steady collapse of central authority. Since then demonstrations and unrests have spread to nearly every city in Syria, but the size and intensity of protests have fluctuated over time. The government responded to the tumult with a mix of concessions - including the repeal of the Emergency Law and approving new laws permitting new political parties and liberalizing local and national elections - and force. However, the government's response has failed to meet opposition demands for Assad to step down, and the

government's ongoing security operations to quell unrest and widespread armed opposition activity have led to extended violent clashes between government forces and oppositionists.

International pressure on the Assad regime has intensified since late 2011, as the League of the Arab States (Arab League), the European Union (EU), Turkey, and the United States of America have expanded economic sanctions against the regime. Lakhdar Brahimi, current Joint Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) and the Arab League on the Syrian crisis, in October 2012 began meeting with regional heads of state to assist in brokering a cease-fire. In December 2012, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces was recognized by more than 130 countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people. Unrest persists in 2013, and the death toll among Syrian Government forces, opposition forces, and civilians has topped 200,000 since 2015.

The Syrian Crisis

While the international community continued to be disunited over its response to the armed conflict, the latter's scope and intensity as well as its humanitarian consequences reached an unprecedented level. There is, on the one hand, an armed conflict filled with violations of all kind causing the humanitarian situation to be increasingly ruthless. On the other hand, one can witness a lack of response from the international community to deal with these issues – the result of years of stalemate between the great powers. Only since the summer of 2015 did the United States of America and the Russian federation start talking again to each other on the question of Syria. The rise of Islamic State/Daesh actually seemed to foster an impetus for a convergence of opinion on Syria. Both countries agreed that IS was a joint threat, but they differed on the strategy how to deal with it, and especially also whether the regime of Bashar al-Assad could be an instrument against this threat.

Civil war

The Syrian conflict has been growing in intensity and scope for more than three years, with the UN estimating more than 200,000 dead and millions displaced. The prospect of a resolution remains uncertain with the fighting intensifying around strategic locations and the opposition becoming more fractured. In July 2012, the ICRC officially declared the Syrian conflict a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) since the hostilities had spread all over the country. Consequently, the fighting in Syria falls under the Common article 3 to the Geneva Conventions regime, with both sides obliged to respect the laws of war. Common article 3 lists the minimum obligations that have to be respected during NIAC. These basic rules include the protection of persons not taking active part in hostilities. In addition, these recall the prohibition of torture and cruel and inhumane treatment and the obligation to take care of the wounded. These minimum requirements are furthermore complemented by customary IHL rules and by human rights guarantees.

Media coverage on the events in Syria suggests the violation of at least some of the above mentioned laws. In addition, numerous NGO reports have argued that civilians are not only being killed in the course of action, but instead may have been directly targeted or even tortured and executed. Even more so, according to the Chief executive of the NGO for child protection Save the Children, "Syria's children are perhaps the greatest victims of their country's conflict"⁶. Child protection is indeed of increasing concern with reports of killing and maiming; sexual violence including rape; torture; arbitrary detention; recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups.⁷ All of the above represent grave violations of IHL most probably leading up to war crimes. It has been put forward that those responsible for these violations should be held accountable. In this sense, prosecution before the International Criminal Court could offer a solution. That is, if the UNSC were to decide on the referral of the situation to it since Syria is not party to the Rome Statute. Reports also indicated that the fighting in Syria spilled over into Iraq, Turkey and particularly Lebanon and the occupied Golan Heights which constitutes a further threat to the stability in

⁶ Oliver Holmes, 'Syria's children shot at, tortured, raped: charity report', Reuters, 13 March 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/13/us-syria-crisis-children-idUSBRE92C03N20130313> (3/10/2013)

⁷ Regional analysis Syria, March 2013, available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/regional-analysis-syria-28-march-2013> (3/10/2013).

the region and eventually world peace. The international community has strongly condemned the widespread violations of international humanitarian law and human rights by the Syrian authorities as well as by the different armed groups.

The constant violence has forced more than four million to flee the country, fueling a refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe. The country is so unstable that a definitive count of deaths is not possible, but several groups are trying to document how many Syrians have died, and what killed them. Syrian warplanes and helicopters have blasted civilian targets like mosques, schools and shopping markets in insurgent-controlled areas with barrel bombs — large containers filled with explosives and projectiles — and other weapons.

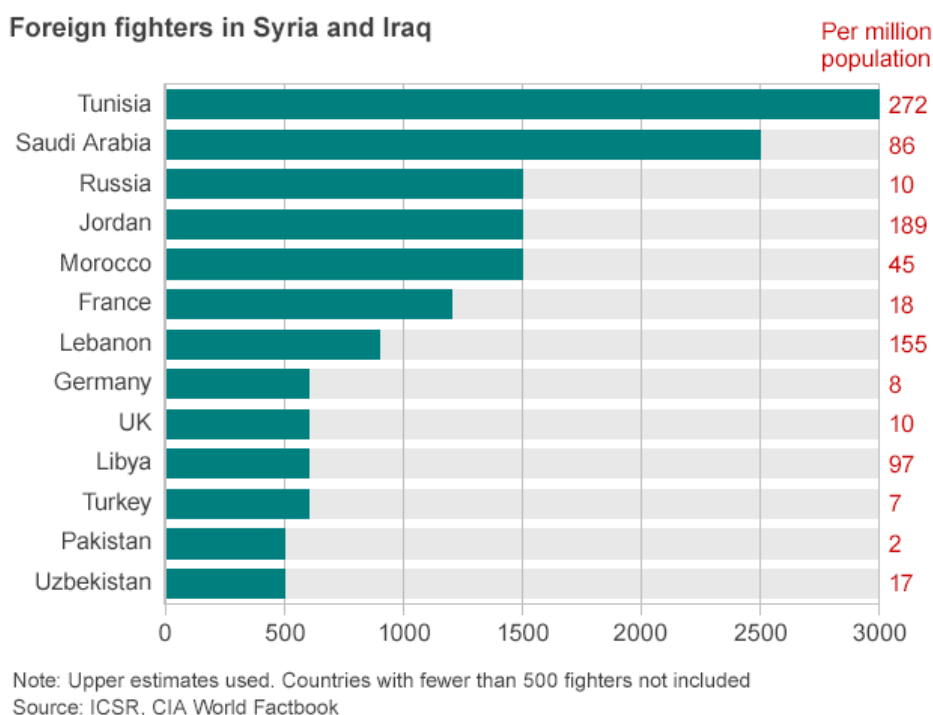
The rise of Islamic State (aka: IS, ISIS, Daesh) ⁸

IS can trace its roots back to the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian who set up Tawhid wa al-Jihad in 2002. A year after the US-led invasion of Iraq, Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden and formed al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which became a major force in the insurgency. After Zarqawi's death in 2006, AQI created an umbrella organisation, Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). ISI was steadily weakened by the US troop surge and the creation of Sahwa (Awakening) councils by Sunni Arab tribesmen who rejected its brutality.

Baghdadi, a former US detainee, became leader in 2010 and began rebuilding ISI's capabilities. By 2013, it was once again carrying out dozens of attacks a month in Iraq. It had also joined the rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, setting up the al-Nusra Front. In April 2013, Baghdadi announced the merger of his forces in Iraq and Syria and the creation of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS). The leaders of al-Nusra and al-Qaeda rejected the move, but fighters loyal to Baghdadi split from al-Nusra and helped ISIS remain in Syria. At the end of December 2013, ISIS shifted its focus back to Iraq and exploited a political stand-off between the Shia-led government and the minority Sunni Arab community. Aided by tribesmen and former Saddam Hussein loyalists, ISIS took control of the central city of Falluja.

⁸ This part is fully based upon a BBC NEWS source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>

In June 2014, ISIS overran the northern city of Mosul, and then advanced southwards towards Baghdad, massacring its adversaries and threatening to eradicate the country's many ethnic and religious minorities. At the end of the month, after consolidating its hold over dozens of cities and towns, ISIS declared the creation of a caliphate and changed its name to Islamic State. In February 2015, US Director for National Intelligence James Clapper said IS could muster "somewhere in the range between 20,000 and 32,000 fighters" in Iraq and Syria. But he noted that there had been "substantial attrition" in its ranks since US-led coalition air strikes began in August 2014. In June 2015, US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken said more than 10,000 IS fighters had been killed. To help mitigate the manpower losses, IS has turned to conscription in some areas. Iraqi expert Hisham al-Hashimi believes only 30% of the group's fighters are "ideologues", with the remainder joining out of fear or coercion. A significant number of IS fighters are neither Iraqi nor Syrian. In May 2015, a state department official estimated that the group had attracted more than 22,000 foreign fighters from more than 100 countries. Studies by the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) and the New York-based Soufan Group suggest that while about a quarter of the foreign fighters are from the West, the majority are from nearby Arab countries; Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Morocco.



IS fighters have access to, and are capable of using, a wide variety of small arms and heavy weapons, including truck-mounted machine-guns, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns and portable surface-to-air missile systems. They have also captured tanks and armoured vehicles from the Syrian and Iraqi armies. Their haul of vehicles from the Iraqi army includes armoured Humvees and bomb-proof trucks originally manufactured for the US military. Some have been packed with explosives and used to devastating effect in suicide bomb attacks. The group is believed to have a flexible supply chain that ensures a constant supply of ammunition and small arms for its fighters. Their considerable firepower helped them overrun Kurdish Peshmerga positions in northern Iraq in August 2014 and the Iraqi army in Ramadi in May 2015.

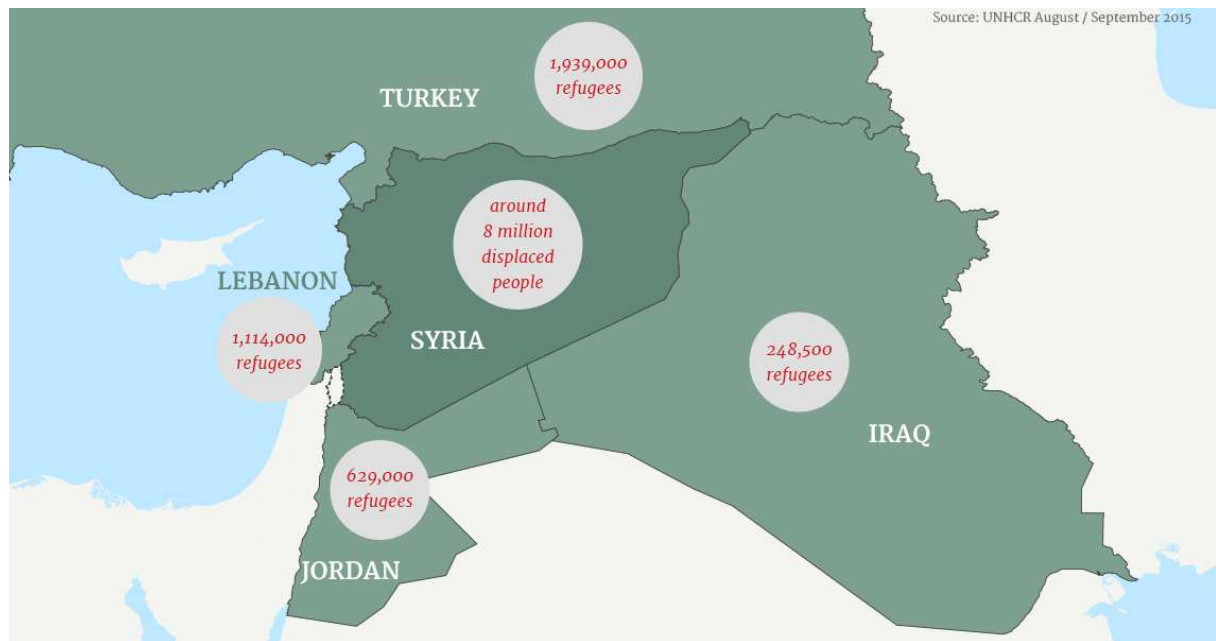
The militant group is believed to be the world's wealthiest. It initially relied on wealthy private donors and Islamic charities in the Middle East keen to oust Syria's President Assad. Although such funding is still being used to finance the travel of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq, the group is now largely self-funding. The US Treasury estimates that in 2014 IS may have earned as much as several million dollars per week, or \$100m in total, from the sale of crude oil and refined products to local middlemen, who in turn smuggled them in Turkey and Iran, or sold them to the Syrian government. But air strikes on oil-related infrastructure are now believed to have diminished such revenue.

Kidnapping also generated at least \$20m in ransom payments in 2014, while IS raises several million dollars per month through extorting the millions of people living in areas under its full or partial control, according to the US Treasury. IS is believed to raise at least several million dollars per month by robbing, looting, and extortion. Payments are extracted from those who pass through, conduct business in, or simply live in IS territory under the auspices or providing services or "protection". Religious minorities are forced to pay a special tax. IS profits from raiding banks, selling antiquities, and stealing or controlling sales of livestock and crops. Abducted girls and women have meanwhile been sold as sex slaves.

Humanitarian situation

Within Syria the humanitarian situation deteriorates on a daily basis as millions of Syrians are driven deeper into poverty. In addition, the ability of the Government to provide basic services is eroded.⁹ This complicates the protection of citizens, widespread fighting affects Syrians countrywide, in a State lacking law and order.¹⁰ Concerning the humanitarian situation two elements are to be flagged. First, the problem of the access of humanitarian aid. Second, the situation of displaced persons and refugees and the pressure they bring on neighboring countries.

Here are the latest figures coming from the International Committee of the Red Cross:

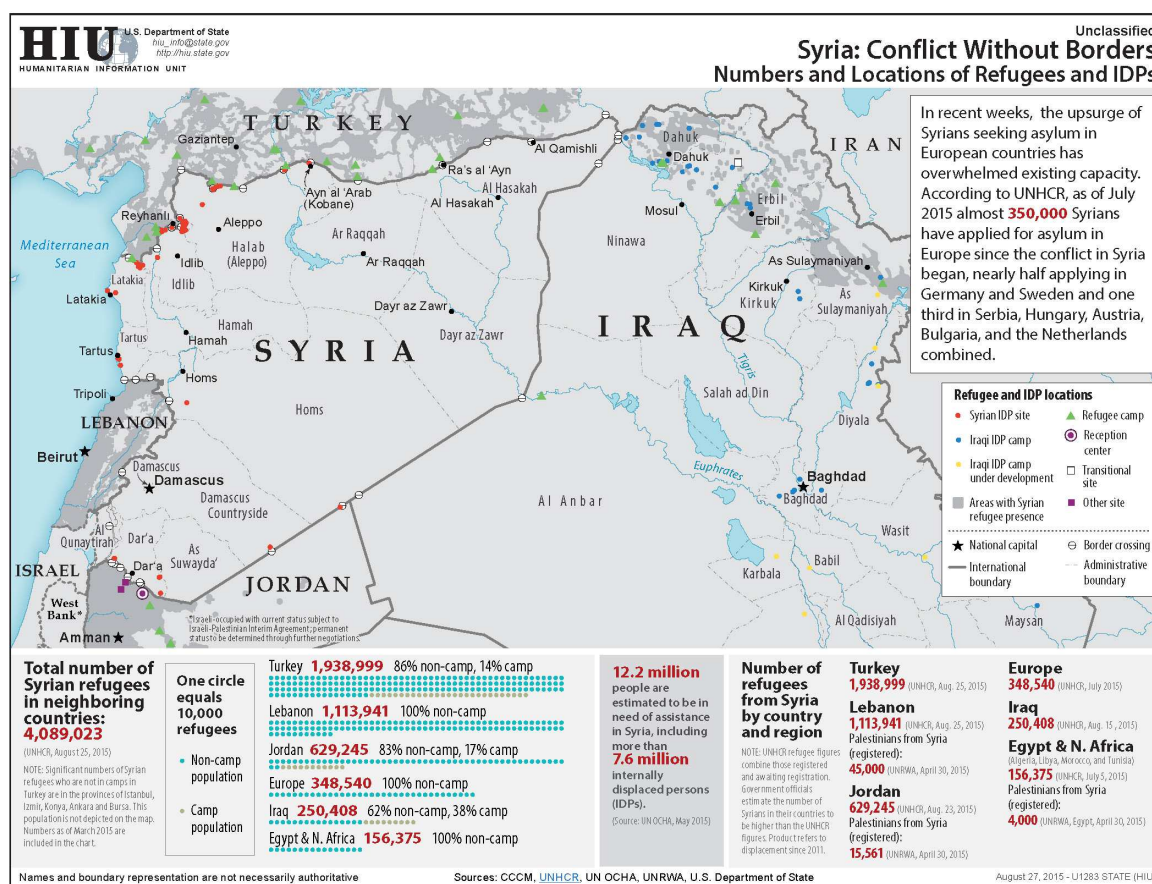


Source: International Committee of the Red Cross

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The US Government recently published these data and map:



Concerning the first point, gravely concerned by the deepening 'humanitarian tragedy' in Syria, the United Nations Security Council has been urging all sides of the conflict to immediately provide access for humanitarian aid.¹¹ Indeed, the magnitude of the humanitarian tragedy caused by the conflict in Syria requires immediate action to facilitate safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance across the entire country.¹² Access of humanitarian aid has been a big problem in the Syrian conflict from the very beginning. It is important to recall that according to customary law rule 55 (applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts): *"The parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which*

¹¹ UN Security Council urges all sides in Syrian crisis to immediately provide access for humanitarian aid, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46174&Cr=&Cr1=#.Uk0lb2zCTcs> (3/10/2013)

¹² Ibid.

is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction, subject to their right of control".¹³

In the midst of this grave humanitarian tragedy, more than 4 million Syrians have fled their homes, taking refuge in neighboring countries or within Syria itself.¹⁴ The large-scale exodus of refugees continues at a pace outwitting humanitarian response planning in neighboring countries. Absorbing the massive influx of refugees has been an enormous challenge for Syria's neighbors, with strong implications for the stability of the entire region. At the same time an exodus has started from August 2015 onwards in the direction of the territory of the European Union, in particular such countries as Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands and others. Remarkable is that countries such as the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia do not harbor any refugees within their own territories.

Diplomatic efforts by the UN

On 10 July 2014, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that he had appointed Steffan de Mistura as the new special envoy tasked with seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Syria. He also represents the Arab League in finding a diplomatic solution. On 29 July 2015, de Mistura gave a briefing to the UN Security Council. In it, he proposed to "*operationalise the Geneva Communiqué*".¹⁵ De Mistura intended to invite Syrians to parallel, simultaneous, thematic discussions through intra-Syrian working groups addressing the key aspects of the Geneva Communiqué, as identified by them in the first phase of the Consultations:

- *Safety and Protection for All: which means including ending sieges, how to do so, ensuring medical access and releasing detainees;*

¹³ http://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule55 (6/10/2013).

¹⁴ Syrian Refugees: A snapshot of the crisis – in the middle east and Europe, <http://syrianrefugees.eu/> (3/10/2013)

¹⁵ Download via the full Geneva Communiqué via this link:
<http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Syria/FinalCommuniqueActionGroupforSyria.pdf>

- *Political and Constitutional Issues: including the essential principles, transitional governing body and elections;*
- *Military and Security Issues: including combatting terrorism in an effective inclusive way, cease-fires, and integration;*
- *Public Institutions, Reconstruction and Development in an effort to avoid what happened in Iraq and elsewhere where suddenly institutions disappeared and the country got into a major difficulty. Those institutions should continue to deliver public services under a top leadership acceptable to all, and acting in accordance with principles of good government and human rights.*

De Mistura mentioned before the UNSC that his consultations have gone some way towards identifying existing common ground. They also still hold the promise that a set of formal negotiations could convene after preparing the ground, if there is a political will. The Geneva Consultations have been loud and clear on the profound risks of failing to act now, including the increasing risk of a multi-generational conflict that, with each passing month, reduces the prospects of ever restoring Syria as a unified state, let alone making it even harder to establish a political process. Since the end of July however, the military situation on the ground has severely complicated things. Is a political and diplomatic track still viable?

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The Role of the Security Council in this Case, and Your Role

In light of all these developments, **it is decided that the UN Security Council (UNSC) will again convene to assess the current situation, and possibly to vote a resolution on this topic.** It is important for all delegations to distinguish the different security dimensions embedded within this case.

The Emergency Session of the UNSC (VVN MUN) on the topic *‘Towards an international strategy against IS / Daesh?’* will be held in Brussels from 26 to 29 November 2015. **The following negotiation questions are on the agenda;**

1. *What solution can be found to manage the current humanitarian situation, both internal and external?* What urgent measures should be taken to further avoid a worsening of the situation? Not only limit yourself to words, but also to concrete actions, commitments, money, support of humanitarian organizations, etc. Could *‘safe havens’* be a solution, or not? What about overflight rights, logistics, personnel, etc.? What is the time table? Winter is approaching very fast and the situation on the ground is more dire every day.
2. *Is it possible to find a final political solution for the Syrian crisis as a catalyst to building a real international strategy against IS?* What should the new Syria look like? How to create a new balance between the different ethnical groups (Alawites, Sunnis, Christians, Druze, Kurds, etc.)? Should Assad be allowed to remain in office, to fight IS? What about the Iranian proposal to make Assad ceremonial president and create a new transitional government in which the *‘moderates’* of all ethnical-religious groups are represented? What about the interests of the external parties (the US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc.)? Are confidence building measures an option to create more trust between the parties? If yes, what kind of solutions?

3. *In absence of a political solution, can military measures be taken to destroy IS more effectively?* How to deal with the problem that multiple states are currently flying their own sorties over Syria, and soon perhaps also over Iraq? Can the military strategies of the US, France, Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia be integrated, if so how? What about conventional weapons and arms deliveries? Are the great powers willing to establish a ban on these in an effort to limit IS's access to weapons? Should also measures be taken in finance and the patrolling of borders (e.g. Turkey) to limit the smuggling by IS of oil and historical artefacts – so as to cut off their finances? How can the international community prevent that even more foreign fighters are joining IS in the first place?
4. *Should the international community agree upon a 'Marshall Plan' for the region now, so as to give the people in the region some perspective for the future?*



Beware that the abovementioned negotiation questions are interconnected. The United Nations Security Council will convene in an **Emergency Meeting in Brussels** in an attempt to develop a common answer from the international community to this volatile crisis. A Plenary Session will give

each of the member-countries of the UN Security Council an opportunity to influence the course of current international politics. Some other countries will also be invited by the 15 to have a say, although they will themselves not be deciding parties. You will act as the Ambassador of one of the 15, or of an invited delegation. Be aware, however, that negotiations constitute a *dynamic process*; it will be up to you to defend the interests of your country/delegation! You and only you will also be answerable for your actions to your own Government upon returning to your capital.

Thus, much is at stake... It will therefore prove crucial that you reflect in advance about the strategy you will follow during the deliberations. For this purpose, you will be asked to write a *position paper* in preparation of the Emergency Meeting. The position papers will be officially distributed in advance. The strategy papers however should be considered top secret material which can only circulate *within* and *not between* delegations.

It is very probable that the UNSC will move from a formal setting to an informal setting during its deliberations. This is called '*caucusing*', a setting which can be suggested by one or more of the delegations. There are two forms of '*caucusing*'; moderated and unmoderated. Both are informal ways of negotiating. The difference can be stated quite simply; (1) a '*moderated caucus*' is led by the presidency around the negotiating table, (2) an '*unmoderated caucus*' can be seen as an interaction between delegations away from the negotiating table (the presidency thus has no role to play in an '*unmoderated caucus*').

When you return to a formal setting, be aware that a resolution is adopted if 9 out of 15 votes are in favour and if there is no veto. Any amendments will be voted upon before the resolution has become final. In procedural matters, a veto cannot be used. The presidency calls the meeting to order and as it proposed this emergency session of the Council, he/she will speak up first. After this opening address the permanent members will take the floor, followed-up by the non-permanent members.

The final goal of the negotiations should be the drafting of a UNSC resolution. If this would ultimately prove politically and/or technically unattainable, the negotiating parties can draw up statements, on their own or as a group. If a resolution is attainable, the negotiating parties can also issue explanatory statements. *Last but not least*, if certain countries were to agree upon separate '*secret*' deals during the Emergency Session in Brussels, the parties involved will be asked to disclose the content of their arrangements during the evaluation *after* the negotiations, so that a full *group-evaluation* of the political process can be made, all the cards on the table.

A final piece of advice; be aware that the negotiations can also be affected by '*new developments on the ground*'. You must therefore '*be prepared for anything*'.

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Beware of the Dynamics in the Decision-making Arena!

The Emergency Session of the UNSC (VVN MUN) on the topic '*Towards an international strategy against IS/Daesh?*' will convene in the city of Brussels.

The UN Security Council consists of five permanent members (the so-called “P-5”, with veto powers); **the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.**

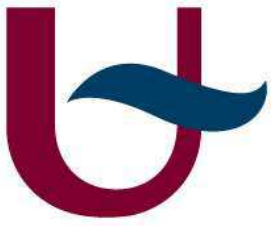



Furthermore, the UNSC consists of an additional ten non-permanent members; currently **Angola, Chad, Chili, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Spain and Venezuela.**

In addition, a number of delegations will also be invited to the work of the Security Council during the negotiations, a representative of the following countries: **Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Arab League, UNHCR and the International Committee of Red Cross.**

Be aware that these invited delegations can be a source of advice and/or exert informal pressures on the negotiations. However, they do *not* have any voting powers in the UNSC...

At the end of the day, it will thus be upon the 15 to (try to) decide upon an international course of action to safeguard peace and stability. The presidency of the Security Council will be observed by a number of professors, together with 2 vice-presidents (assistants).

The distribution of the delegations among the different Flemish universities is as follows:

 Universiteit Antwerpen	 Vrije Universiteit Brussel	 UNIVERSITEIT GENT	 KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN
Russian Federation	France	United States of America	People's Republic of China
			United Kingdom
Angola	Chad	Nigeria	Jordan
New Zealand	Malaysia	Spain	Chili
		Lithuania	
		Venezuela	
Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	Iraq	Iran
UNHCR	Turkey		Syria
International Committee of the Red Cross	Arab League		

Good luck!