



NCSMUN 2018

UNSC

BACKGROUND GUIDE

"SITUATION IN SYRIA"

Letter from the Executive Board

On behalf of the entire Security Council and Secretariat at the NCS Model United Nations, I welcome you to the simulation of the current Meeting of the Security Council.

This calls for a very detailed research and understanding of the matter at hand. These situations will test your understanding and application of your country's foreign policy, your research skills and foremost, your negotiation skills. It is also important to keep in mind that research does not mean having a lot of information on the topic, but to also have thought actively about it, and being able to bring it into your debate with your co-delegates. Your Executive Board is here to guide debate, and will be taking part in substantive debate only through the updates and questions posed to the representatives.

Regarding Rules of Procedure, I would ask you to be conversant in them but not regard them as strict and unbreakable. We shall aim for a debate based on negotiations, lobbying and documentation instead of just formal debate formats such as GSL and Moderated Caucuses. A Representative in such a meeting will require multiple skill-sets to stay at the top of the game. A neutral and flexible approach will give you a competitive advantage in the changing circumstances. This will be a fast paced committee, and despite the tremendous pressure, it will be a refreshing experience from the usual pace of debate in MUNs. Here, you can take action; you can debate about HOW to take the action instead of only WHY that action is necessary.

If you are well researched and versed in your country's foreign policy, be creative with your solutions, and be proactive! Never be afraid to suggest something out of the box, because it is going to be discussed by your peers if you can lobby. The best experience of being a Delegate at an MUN Conference is completely giving in to become that person and feel their responsibility and dedication to representing their nations. I wish you all the best for the Council!

Faazil Razak (Chairperson)

Akshara (Rapporteur)

Shashank Srinivas (Vice-Chair)

United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with the maintenance of international peace and security as well as accepting new members to the United Nations and approving any changes to its United Nations Charter. Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946.

Like the UN as a whole, the Security Council was created following World War II to address the failings of a previous international organization, the League of Nations, in maintaining world peace. In its early decades, the Security Council was largely paralyzed by the Cold War division between the US and USSR and their respective allies, though it authorized interventions in the Korean War and the Congo Crisis and peacekeeping missions in the Suez Crisis, Cyprus, and West New Guinea. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, UN peacekeeping efforts increased dramatically in scale, and the Security Council authorized major military and peacekeeping missions in Kuwait, Namibia, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Security Council consists of fifteen members. The great powers that were the victors of World War II—the Soviet Union (now represented by the Russian Federation), the United Kingdom, France, the Republic of China (now represented by the People's Republic of China), and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General. The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms. The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.

Security Council resolutions are typically enforced by UN peacekeepers, military forces voluntarily provided by member states and funded independently of the main UN budget. As of 2016, 103,510 peacekeepers and 16,471 civilians were deployed on sixteen peacekeeping operations and one special political mission.

Brief on the Situation in Syria

History of Conflict

Pro-democracy protests erupted in March 2011 in the southern city of Deraa after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets. The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Assad's resignation. The government's use of force to crush the dissent merely hardened the protesters' resolve. By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country. Opposition supporters eventually began to take up arms, first to defend themselves and later to expel security forces from their local areas. Violence escalated and the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and second city of Aleppo in 2012. By June 2013, the UN said 90,000 people had been killed in the conflict. By August 2015, that figure had climbed to 250,000, according to activists and the UN. The conflict is now more than just a battle between those for or against Mr Assad. It has acquired sectarian overtones, pitching the country's Sunni majority against the president's Shia Alawite sect, and drawn in regional and world powers.

The rise of the jihadist group Islamic State (IS) has added a further dimension. A UN commission of inquiry has evidence that all parties to the conflict have committed war crimes - including murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances. They have also been accused of using civilian suffering - such as blocking access to food, water and health services through sieges - as a method of war. The UN Security Council has demanded all parties end the indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas, but civilians continue to die in their thousands. Many have been killed by barrel bombs dropped by government aircraft on gatherings in rebel held areas - attacks which the UN says may constitute massacres. IS has also been accused by the UN of waging a campaign of terror. It has inflicted severe punishments on those who transgress or refuse to accept its rules, including hundreds of public executions and amputations. Its fighters have also carried out mass killings of rival armed groups, members of the security forces and religious minorities, and beheaded hostages, including several Westerners.

The armed rebellion has evolved significantly since its inception. Secular moderates are now outnumbered by Islamists and jihadists, whose brutal tactics have caused global outrage. So-called Islamic State has capitalised on the chaos and taken control of large swathes of Syria and Iraq, where it proclaimed the creation of a "caliphate" in June 2014. Its many foreign fighters are involved in a "war within a war" in Syria, battling rebels and rival jihadists from the al-Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front, as well as government and Kurdish forces. In September 2014, a US-led coalition launched air strikes inside Syria in an effort to "degrade and ultimately destroy" IS. But the coalition has avoided attacks that might benefit

Mr Assad's forces. Russia began an air campaign targeting "terrorists" in Syria a year later, but opposition activists say its strikes have mostly killed Western-backed rebels and civilians.

Parties Involved in the Conflict Details of a few major parties present in Syria Assad Regime The legitimacy of the Bashar al Assad regime has been questioned by many countries, with majority of the western world rejecting his authority to rule over Syria. The protests broke out against him and many opposition groups primarily aim to remove him from power. The regime is currently recognized as the authority that rules over Syria by the UN, with representative in the United Nations provided by the Assad regime. He has access to all of government's resources, including what some speculate to be chemical weapon stockpiles. The regime is supported by countries such as Russia, which provides military support as well; whereas opposition stems from western nations such as USA, UK, and other EU and NATO members. He is supported by groups such as the Syrian Armed Forces, National Defence Forces, and Hezbollah etc. Islamic State is recognized as a terrorist organization by the UN however action to fight it has not taken place properly under the umbrella of the UN due to differences over the modes and type of actions to be taken. It controls a substantial part of Syrian land and even though the government's forces have pushed back, the Islamic State remains in control of a significant portion of territory. It aims to establish a Sharia law ruled state, and brutality and extreme ideologies are hallmarks of its functioning. Free Syrian Army the FSA is the oldest of the groups fighting the Assad regime with its origins tracing back to 2011 when deserters from the Syrian army got together to form an opposing group. It has actively fought both the Assad regime and the Islamic State. However, the funds and support from foreign nations is decreasing and the FSA's influence is diminishing. It continues to fight the regime however, and remains relevant to the conflict. Other Groups There are many other factions and groups supporting the Assad regime, or the Islamic State or fighting any of these parties. These groups hold significance and are funded by various foreign nations. Examples include the independent Syrian Democratic Forces, the Islamic Front, Jabhat-Al-Islam etc.

Introduction to Islamic State Islamic

State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), alternatively known by many names like alDawlah al-Islāmiyyah fī al-ʿIrāq wa al-Shām, the Arabic abbreviation of which is Dāʿash or Daesh, also called Islamic State in Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) and, since June 2014, the Islamic State, transnational Sunni insurgent group operating primarily in western Iraq and eastern Syria. The extremist outfit appeared under the name ISIL in April 2013 and launched an offensive in early 2014 that drove Iraqi government forces out of key western cities, while in Syria it fought both government forces and rebel factions in the Syrian Civil War. In June 2014, after making significant territorial gains in Iraq, the group proclaimed the establishment of an Islamic caliphate led by the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This very group has been one of the greatest security threats that the globe has faced since the World War 2 and the creation of the United Nations. They have successfully captured and controlled large swathes

of land in the middle-east, across borders and employ a varied mix of insurgent and guerrilla tactics to maintain control of the same by targeting key defence and civilian establishments. The Islamic State has been a difficult foe to tackle, primarily because they have evolved from being just an insurgent group, to an organisation that administers and controls large swathes of land while creating their own economy of finances and enforcing their own rules of law which they claim is the law of the one true god.

This expansion can be drawn parallels to what the Taliban did in Afghanistan but the Islamic State (IS) has become a more efficient and ruthless in terms of how it manages its territory and attempts to continually expand and remain in the limelight by carrying out operations overseas. They have successfully conducted stray attacks by means of recruiting followers and using them to strike fear in the minds of the local populace. Such attacks have been witnessed across America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

What sets the IS apart from the Taliban is their online presence and the ability to draw in a large amount of foreign fighters from across the globe. Their online machinery has given them an extremely broad reach and access to recruits across the globe and the means to radicalise normal civilians to become their foot-soldiers and propagate their method of justice. The Islamic State has also had an extremely strong war chest from the very beginning. They tactically seized oil fields in Iraq and Syria, thereby giving them a revenue model to sustain their operations on ground as well as attacks overseas. Apart from selling oil in the black market, the Islamic State also has several modes to collect donations from their sufficiently wealthy benefactors and their ideological supporters. In addition to this, extortion, kidnappings, smuggling and human trafficking have provided the constant flow of funds for the organisation to engage in.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIL/ISIS uses many of the existing Governorate boundaries to subdivide its claimed territory; it calls these divisions Wilayah. After a series of expansions in 2014, it claimed provinces and controlled territory across Iraq, Syria, Sinai, and eastern Libya. The Islamic State also has members in Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Turkey and Somalia but it does not actually control territory in these areas and merely uses their operatives to conduct attacks and incorporate fear in the minds of the civilians. All a part of the propaganda machine that they have successfully created to draw out more followers and stay in the limelight across the world's media. Their de-facto caliphate, headquartered at Raqqa has in the recent times seen a considerable decrease in territorial control. In its peak, the caliphate had over 100,000 square kilometres of territory under its jurisdiction in the middle-east alone. This has today shrunk to almost half of that size with just a little over 50,000 sq. km under its jurisdiction. Most of the progress against the Islamic State can be attributed to military operations by the various factions involved in the region. The Combined Joint action task force (CJTF) as a part of their operation, Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) conducts regular airstrikes targeting Islamic State positions. The same can be said of the Russians who have been providing the air cover for the Syrian Arab Army on

Syrian soil. The United States of America too, employs a similar strategy where they provide air cover for the Kurdish Peshmerga in their operations against the IS. In addition, both respective militaries have provided logistical assistance in terms of supplying arms and ammunitions for their proxy ground forces. The United States of America also continues to provide arms and ammunition for the Free Syrian Army, who they consider the “legitimate” representative of the people in Syria.

There is however, international contention and opposition to this stance of the United States. Apart from a continuous loss of control over territory in the Middle-East, the ISIS has also lost out territorial control in Egypt and Libya almost completely. At present they control negligible amounts of territory in both these countries. There is also a massive reduction of controlled territory in Nigeria, where Boko Haram, an extremist organisation with allegiance to the ISIS and its Caliph has seen its influence and territorial control shrink considerably. Their enforcement of rigorous laws coupled with their infamous practice of kidnapping school girls and selling them in the flesh market.

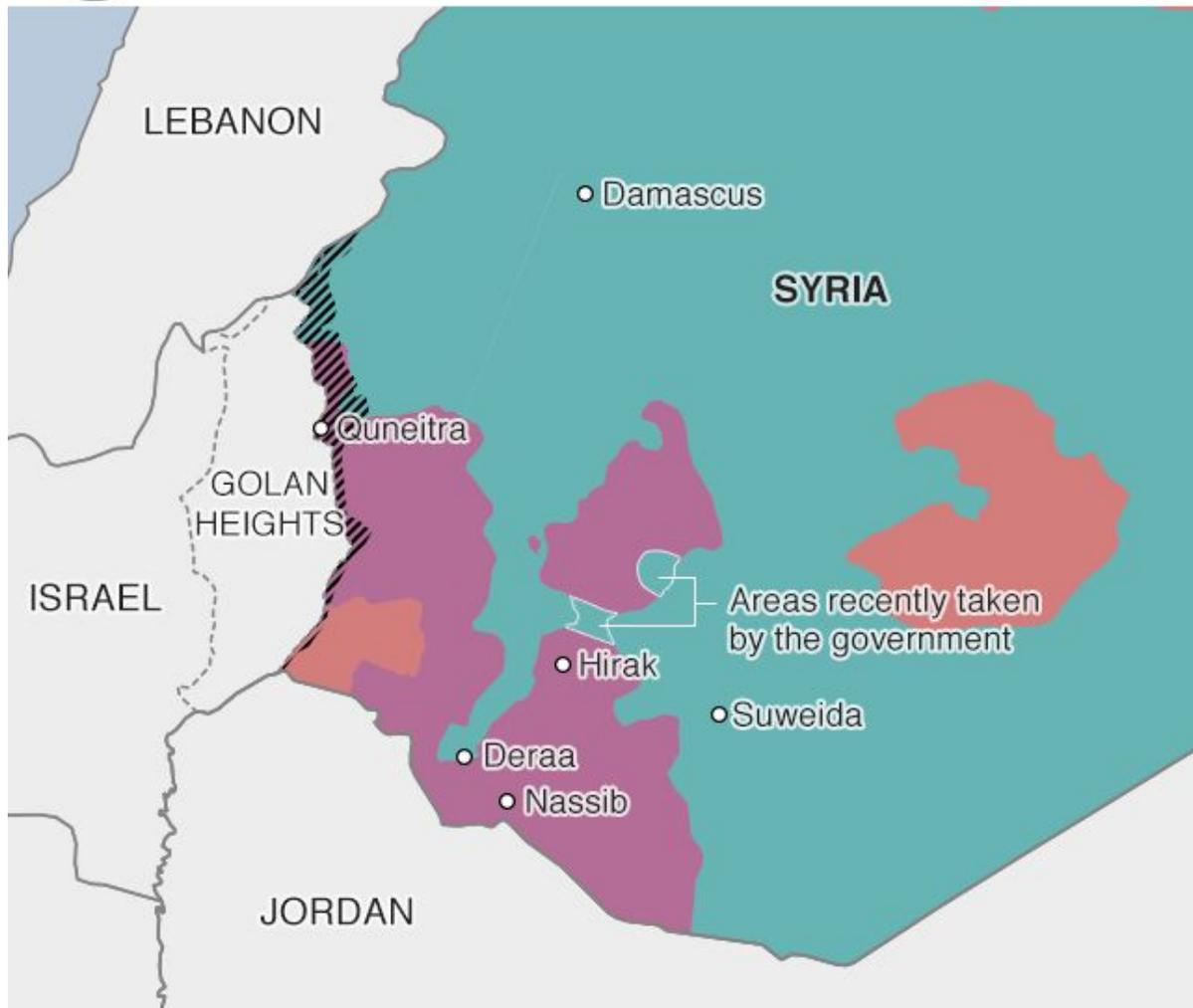
Treatment of Civilians ISIS has released dozens of videos showing its ill treatment of civilians, many of whom had apparently been targeted on the basis of their religion or ethnicity. In the Iraqi theatre of conflict where the Iraqi forces are in the pursuit of removing Islamic State presence from their cities, the Islamic state engaged in carefully planned guerrilla warfare not restricted to tactics such as ambushing, suicide bombing, car bombing, pretending to be innocent civilians caught in the cross-fire or good Samaritans trying to help the army. The ISIS carries out executions on both men and women who were accused of various acts and found guilty of crimes against Islam such as homosexuality, adultery, watching pornography, usage and possession of contraband, rape, blasphemy, renouncing Islam and murder. Before the accused are executed their charges are read toward them and the spectators. They carry out executions in various forms such as stoning to death, crucifixions, beheadings and some are thrown from the top storey of tall buildings.

Sexual Violence and Slavery There are many reports and allegations of sexual abuse and enslavement in ISIS controlled areas, of women and girls, predominantly from the minority Christian and Yazidi communities. According to one report, ISIS' capture of Iraqi cities in June 2014 was accompanied by an upsurge in crimes against women, including kidnap and rape. A Baghdad-based women's rights activist, Basma al-Khateeb, said that a culture of violence existed in Iraq against women generally and felt sure that sexual violence against women was happening in Mosul involving not only ISIS but all armed groups. A United Nations report issued on 2 October 2014, based on 500 interviews with witnesses, said that ISIS took 450–500 women and girls to Iraq's Nineveh region in August, where "150 unmarried girls and women, predominantly from the Yazidi and Christian communities, were reportedly transported to Syria, either to be given to ISIS fighters as a reward or to be sold as sex slaves". In mid-October, same year, the UN confirmed that 5,000–7,000 Yazidi women and children had been abducted by ISIS and sold into slavery. Somewhere around 2015, The Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights announced that ISIL had killed over 150 women and girls in Fallujah who refused to participate in sexual jihad. Even today, one of the primary tactics of

the IS to erase ethnic minorities is by killing the men, capturing the women and children and indoctrinating the children into the caliphate. The women are either re-married to the jihadists or sold into slavery. The IS believes that this ensures the practicing of other faiths or beliefs die out as the minorities lose their cultural and religious identity.



■ Syrian government ■ Syrian rebel forces ■ Islamic State group
▨ UN Disengagement Observer Forces



Beheadings and Mass Executions

An unknown number of Syrians and Iraqis, several Lebanese soldiers, two Japanese citizens, multiple Kurdish fighters, two American journalists, one American and two British aid workers, one French citizen, several Afghans and three Libyans have been beheaded by the Islamic State. ISIS uses beheadings to intimidate local populations and has released a series of propaganda videos aimed at Western countries. They also engage in public and mass executions, sometimes forcing prisoners to dig their own graves before shooting lines of prisoners and pushing them in. ISIS was reported to have beheaded about 100 foreign fighters as deserters who tried to leave Raqqa. Fear of execution is what prevents several IS fighters

who have had a change of heart from leaving. Several deserters have shared accounts of gruesome torture in the past.

United Nations' Stance on Islamic State

The authors of a UN report accusing the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria called on the international community to bring the group's leadership to justice. Rolando Gómez from the UN human rights commission mentioned that the report recommended activating mechanisms to bring the commanders of ISIS, including leader and self-styled "caliph" Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi—whom the report said wielded "absolute power" over the group—before an international tribunal such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, a Brazilian diplomat and member of the team that drafted the report, told reporters that ISIS's commanders had "acted wilfully" in perpetrating the crimes, for which they were "individually criminally responsible." The 70-page report, based its findings on interviews with over 300 victims and eyewitnesses, as well as evidence from documents, photographs and video footage released by the group itself. It said the group was committing "egregious violations of binding international humanitarian law and the war crime of murder on a massive scale" in areas under its control in Syria, including the "mass killings of captured fighters and civilians."

Lama Fakih, Syria and Lebanon researcher at Human Rights Watch, told Asharq Al-Awsat the extensive first-hand and eyewitness reports collected by the UN document would form credible body evidence that could be presented to an international court such as the ICC. She added that the report also recommended bringing figures from the Syrian regime of President Bashar Al-Assad to justice, also for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The UN Security Council already proposed such a move in May 2016, but it was vetoed by members Russia and China. Some of ISIS's crimes documented in the report included mass shootings, crucifying and beheading civilians, and stoning women, recruiting child soldiers, forcing minorities to convert to Islam, as well as taking women as slaves and forcing them to bear children to the group's fighters. The report also found that the group was depriving food and medical aid to around 600,000 people in northern areas of Syria under its control. Meanwhile, the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights—which monitors the conflict in Syria through a network of observers on the ground—said in press release on Friday ISIS had crucified and beheaded a member of the group for stealing money from "state coffers" in the city of Mayadin in the eastern Deir Ezzor province. A photograph posted by the Observatory, purportedly of the man, showed him apparently crucified, with his head at his feet. A sign attached to his torso said his death had been order by "Amir Al-Mu'mineen" (the Commander of the Faithful), a traditional alternative moniker for "caliph," and which ISIS now uses to refer to its leader Baghdadi.

Concerned UNSC Resolutions

- UNSCR 2107 – Situation in Iraq and Kuwait
- UNSCR 2108 – Tensions in the Middle East
- UNSCR 2110 – Situation in Iraq
- UNSCR 2115 – Situation in the Middle East
- UNSCR 2118 – Chemicals weapons in Syria
- UNSCR 2129 – Combating Terrorism
- UNSCR 2123 – Situation in Middle East
- UNSCR 2139 – Humanitarian aid in Syria
- UNSCR 2165 – Humanitarian situation in Syria and the establishment of a monitoring mechanism
- UNSCR 2169 – Condemns ISIL, reaffirms and extends the mandate of UNAMI
- UNSCR 2170 – Threats to international peace and security caused by ISIL and al Nusra Front

Timeline of Events

- March 2011: Protests erupt in the city of Daraa over security forces' detention of a group of boys accused of painting anti-government graffiti on the walls of their school. On March 15, a protest is held in Damascus' Old City. On March 18, security forces open fire on a protest in Daraa, killing four people in what activists regard as the first deaths of the uprising. Demonstrations spread, as does the crackdown.
- April 2011: Security forces raid a sit-in in Syria's third-largest city, Homs, where thousands of people tried to create the mood of Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicentre of protests against Egyptian autocrat Hosni Mubarak.
- Aug. 18, 2011: President Barack Obama calls on Assad to resign and orders Syrian government assets frozen.
- July 18, 2012: A bombing at the Syrian national security building in Damascus during a high-level government crisis meeting kills four top officials, including Assad's brother-in-law and the defence minister.
- July 2012: Fighting spreads to Aleppo, Syria's largest city and its former commercial capital.
- Aug. 20, 2012: Obama says the use of chemical weapons would be a "red line" that would change his calculus on intervening in the civil war.

- March 19, 2013: The Syrian government and opposition trade accusations over a gas attack that killed some 26 people, including more than a dozen government soldiers, in the town of Khan al-Assal in northern Syria. A U.N. investigation later finds that sarin nerve gas was used, but does not identify a culprit.
- May 2013: Lebanon's Hezbollah group officially joins the Syrian conflict with government forces by attacking and later capturing the border town of Qusair.
- Aug. 21, 2013: A chemical attack in the eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus kills hundreds of people. The U.S. and others blame the attack on Syrian government forces. Obama threatens punitive strikes but later backs down.
- Sept. 27, 2013: The U.N. Security Council orders Syria to account for and destroy its chemical weapons stockpile, following a surprise agreement between Washington and Moscow, averting U.S. strikes.
- Oct. 14, 2013: Syria becomes a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, prohibiting it from producing, stockpiling or using chemical weapons.
- June 23, 2014: The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons says it has removed the last of the Syrian government's chemical weapons. Syrian opposition officials maintain that the government's stocks were not fully accounted for, and that it retained supplies.
- June 30, 2014: Islamic State group declares caliphate in areas it controls in Iraq and Syria.
- Sept. 23, 2014: The U.S. launches airstrikes on Islamic State targets in Syria.
- March 28, 2015: The north-western city of Idlib falls to Islamist groups led by al-Qaida's affiliate, known as the Nusra Front.
- May 6, 2015: Assad acknowledges serious setbacks for his military.
- Sept. 30, 2015: Russia begins launching airstrikes in Syria in support of Assad's forces.
- August 2016: Turkish forces cross into northern Syria, capturing areas along the border from the Islamic State group.
- December 2016: Syrian insurgents evacuate rebel-held eastern neighbourhoods of the northern city of Aleppo after a Russia-backed government offensive.
- April 4, 2017: At least 58 people are killed in what doctors say could be a nerve gas attack on the town of Khan Sheikhoun in the rebel-held Idlib province. Witnesses say the attack was carried out by either Russian or Syrian Sukhoi jets. Moscow and Damascus deny responsibility.
- April 6, 2017: The U.S. fires a barrage of cruise missiles into Syria in retaliation for the Khan Sheikhoun attack, in the first direct American assault on the Syrian government.
- May 2017: Rebels withdraw from the last neighbourhood they controlled in the city of Homs, once dubbed the capital of the revolution.
- Jan 20, 2018: Turkey begins a major military operation against Kurdish fighters in Syria's northern enclave of Afrin.
- February 2018: Syrian government forces launch a massive operation to drive rebels from eastern Ghouta.