

AMERICAN MODEL UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL



ISSUES AT AMUN: FALL SECURITY COUNCIL UPDATE

2015 AMUN International Executive Committee

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THE CONTEMPORARY SECURITY COUNCIL: FALL UPDATE

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For each topic area, Representatives should consider the following questions. These questions should assist Representatives in gaining a better understanding of the issues at hand, particularly from your country's perspective:

- How did this conflict begin? Is this a new conflict or a re-ignition of a previous conflict?
- How have similar situations and conflicts been peacefully resolved?
- What State and regional actors are involved in this conflict?
- If there are non-State actors involved in a conflict, are there any States supporting them? If so, which ones?

The Contemporary Security Council topics below are current as of September 2015 and are not all-inclusive of what the Council might talk about at Conference. With the ever-changing nature of international peace and security, these topics are a guide to help direct your research for your State's position.

THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE

Representatives from Ukraine and the European Union (EU) met in February 2013 to discuss a political and trade agreement, including provisions that Ukraine institute changes regarding electoral and justice matters. Ukrainian President Viktor F. Yanukovich declared that the issues could be resolved by the November EU deadline. Problems with the agreement arose, however, when Russia, unhappy about Ukraine's new relationship with western Europe, increased customs inspections on Ukrainian imports. While President Yanukovich still supported closer ties with the EU, the resolve of many in the President's political party began to wane as increased inspections and delays started to affect many Ukrainian businesses. Additionally, the Ukrainian Parliament stalled on the decision to release former Prime Minister Yulia V. Tymoshenko from prison, a change required by the EU before the political and trade agreement could be signed. On 21 November 2013, President Yanukovich announced that Ukraine would suspend its plans to sign the EU agreement and would, instead, pursue closer ties with Russia.

The announcement sparked outrage in many European capitals and spawned protests in Kiev. On 30 November 2013, rioters in Independence Square were attacked by police officers as they attempted to break up the protests with truncheons and tear gas. This incident provoked thousands more protesters to take to the streets against the Yanukovich government. These demonstrations culminated in the 8 December blockade of the presidential headquarters and control of strategic intersections in Kiev. The following day, troops from the Ministry of the Interior and police forces began pushing protesters back beyond the presidential headquarters. Meanwhile, the international community

increased pressure on the Yanukovich government to respond to protesters' demands. On 15 December, the EU suspended negotiations with Ukraine after President Yanukovich failed to address protester and international concerns.

In February 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian Special Forces to extract President Yanukovich from Ukraine. The decision came the day after President Yanukovich signed an agreement with protesters that would keep him in power through the end of 2014 and would demobilize the police presence. In spite of the agreement, protesters continued to call for Yanukovich's resignation by the following morning and threatened continued armed attacks against the government if this demand was not met. Upon learning that President Yanukovich had fled to Russia, the Ukrainian Parliament removed him from power and began working to set up a provisional government until elections could be held.

The situation worsened when protesters in the Ukrainian province of Crimea called out to rejoin Russia just days after the Moscow Parliament began talks to federalize Ukrainian provinces, so those regions could have more autonomy. The idea soon garnered broad support within Crimea, including within the Crimean Parliament. On 28 February, Ukrainian officials accused Russia of invading Crimea with roughly 16,000 troops and trying to incite further violence in Ukraine. Russia denied these charges and noted that the troop movements were in line with any agreement made with the Ukrainian government for troops stationed in the area. On 6 March 2014, the pro-Russian Crimean Parliament set a date of 16 March for a referendum on whether to secede from Ukraine and become part of Russia. The referendum passed overwhelmingly, but was denounced by several Western States and the United Nations General Assembly, with Russia blocking Security Council action on the issue. In response, several States placed sanctions on Russia, hoping to discourage Russia from further interference in Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukrainian elections were held in May 2014 and Petro Poroshenko was elected President. President Poroshenko announced that he would push for early parliamentary elections and would work to mend ties with Russia, with reconciliation contingent on Russia's recognition of Ukraine's territorial claim to Crimea. Even with these gains, violence continued in eastern Ukraine between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russia rebels. The violence intensified on 17 July when Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over Ukraine, killing everyone aboard. Western States believed rebels in eastern Ukraine were responsible for the attack and responded with new sanctions on Russia, while the United Nations called for an independent investigation into the incident. Violence continued throughout the summer, with intensified fighting in the south



and east near Russia's border, leaving thousands of people dead or displaced.

September 2014 saw positive actions taken toward ending the conflict: a ceasefire was announced, the Ukrainian Parliament granted greater autonomy to separatist regions and the EU proposal was ratified unanimously by Parliament. Parliamentary elections were held in October under the auspices of the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and were consistent with democratic commitments even though Crimea and other rebel-held regions did not participate in the vote. In response, rebel communities announced their own parliamentary elections to be held on 2 November. The international community decried these elections, setting the stage for more conflict.

As the winter of 2014 approached, the United Nations called the humanitarian situation in Ukraine dire, recognizing that thousands of displaced persons would be without safe harbor and access to social and medical services. In December 2014, the United Nations Development Program executed an initiative to deliver aid to displaced persons, especially those in war-torn areas of the country. However, violence in the country continued to thwart efforts by the United Nations and OSCE to provide humanitarian aid to civilians and monitor the ceasefire.

In February 2015, the Minsk Agreement was adopted by Ukraine, Russia and other interested parties to help stem the violence in the eastern portions of Ukraine. This Agreement contained provisions for a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weaponry by both sides to create a demilitarized zone and constitutional reform in Ukraine, among other things. The Security Council adopted Resolution 2202 on 17 February, calling on all parties to implement the Minsk Agreement. By April, OSCE had noted that the ceasefire was holding and that there was a good chance for peace. While this was true in many parts of the country, there were still pockets of resistance and non-compliance with the Minsk Agreement. Additionally, over 1.3 million people had been internally displaced with aid frequently unable to reach those in conflict zones.

On 29 July 2015, the Security Council debated Draft Resolution 562, which called for an international tribunal to prosecute the people responsible for downing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 in July 2014. Russia vetoed the Draft Resolution, stating that it did not consider the downing of the airplane to be a matter of international peace and security. Meanwhile, violence remains an issue in parts of the country with infighting starting to break out amid the separatist groups, which experts warn could increase the dire nature of the humanitarian situation in the region. In response, the United Nations World Food Programme has begun cash distributions to nearly 60,000 internally displaced people to boost the economy and instill a sense of normalcy in people's lives.

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THE SITUATION IN THE SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Violence and civil unrest in Sudan and South Sudan spans the past several decades. Sudan has a long history of infighting, with dozens of tribes and the government fighting for control and influence. The region has endured two north-south civil wars since 1962. The Darfur region of Sudan has been fraught with violence for more than a decade, with parties clashing over political control, sovereignty, and land and water rights. South Sudan, which seceded in 2011, has also experienced infighting between different ethnic groups. The government of South Sudan continues to struggle to put an end to violence within its borders. The civil war continues between the majority ethnic group, the Dinka, and the minority ethnic group, the Nuer. Between Sudan and South Sudan lies the oil-rich Abyei region, which both States claimed as their territory following South Sudan's independence.

SUDAN AND DARFUR

Between 1983 and 2011, more than two million Sudanese died, four million were displaced and at least 600,000 fled the country as a result of the north-south civil war. The majority of the fighting was between the southern rebel force, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), and the Sudanese government. In 2004, the United Nations Security Council approved a special Political Mission, the United Nations Advance Mission in the Sudan (UNAMIS), to facilitate contacts between involved parties and to prepare for the introduction of a United Nations peace support operation. In response to escalating violence in Darfur, the Security Council assigned additional tasks to UNAMIS, including: reinforcing efforts by the international monitoring team led by the African Union, activating inter-agency humanitarian mechanisms and facilitating the work of international monitors in the area. The Southern-aligned SPLM/A continued to clash with the northern Sudanese forces over southern autonomy and independence until 2005. In January 2005, a comprehensive peace agreement was reached between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, though South Sudan did not become independent for six more years. Also in 2005, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1590, approving the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) focusing on political support for the peace process, security, governance, and humanitarian and development assistance, among other goals. In 2006, the UNMIS mandate was expanded in the Darfur region to include a peacekeeping force of up to 18,600 troops to protect civilians, despite strong opposition from the Sudanese government.

Ethnic cleansing, systematic rape and the deaths of thousands have plagued the Darfur region. Despite United Nations' efforts in the region, Darfur remains in a state of humanitarian and security crisis, with little to no progress toward ending the conflict. The United Nations estimates that around 450,000 people were displaced due to the violence in 2014 alone, placing the total number of displaced peoples at close to 2.5 million since the start of the most recent civil war in 2003. Following consultations in Ethiopia in November 2006, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) augmented the existing African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and deployed an unprecedented joint peacekeeping operation in Darfur: the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). UNAMID was originally authorized by Security Council Resolution 1869 in July 2007 with 19,555 military personnel, 6,432 police and a significant civilian component. The mission was reauthorized in June 2015 for one year. The United Nations reports that this year more than

200,000 individuals have been displaced due to attacks, mainly in the Jebel Marra area of North Darfur.

The International Criminal Court has alleged that Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has been ordering the repression and ethnic cleansing of the Darfur region's non-Arab population (e.g., ethnic groups such as the Fur, the Masalit and the Zaghawa), resulting in genocide. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for President al-Bashir in 2009, but he refutes the charges and refuses to turn himself in. Following South Sudan's independence in 2011, the Sudanese government terminated the presence of UNMIS in Sudan, including the Darfur region. However, there is still a large UNAMID peacekeeping force present in Darfur, despite the Sudanese government's efforts to restrict its operations. In June 2015 the United Nations voted to remain in the Darfur region until June 2016. President al-Bashir won another five-year term in April 2015 in a vote marked by low turnout.

SOUTH SUDAN

In 2011, South Sudan became the world's newest country, with 98.83 percent of election participants voting for independence. Following this vote, the United Nations Security Council established a new mission, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), to assist with the transition.

Ethnically-charged attacks broke out in South Sudan's Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity and Upper Nile states, among others, in December 2013. The fighting has been primarily between the Dinka, President Salva Kiir's ethnic group, and the Nuer, the ethnic group of his rival, Riek Machar; it has been about ethnic and political differences, as well as an overall lack of resources (e.g., food, cattle, etc.). Within weeks, almost 500,000 persons were displaced within South Sudan and around 74,300 people had crossed into neighboring countries. These numbers continued to grow, with total displacement by the end of February 2014 reaching 900,000 persons, some 167,000 of whom crossed into neighboring countries. The number of civilians classified in the "acute" or "emergency" categories of food insecurity increased from 1.1 million to 3.2 million.

Despite the peace agreement, infighting between ethnic groups continues to cause unrest in the country. In 2014, UNMISS reprioritized its mission to the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring and support for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Currently, some 120,000 people are sheltered in United Nations compounds there, while the United Nations estimates that the number of people in need for 2015 will include an anticipated 1.95 million internally displaced persons and a projected 293,000 refugees.

Security Council Resolution 2206, passed in March of this year, outlines sanctions against South Sudan, including, but not limited to, a travel ban on South Sudanese entering other Member States and freezing South Sudanese assets in Member State territories. However, South Sudan President Salva Kiir has dismissed the threat and effect of sanctions and reiterated his willingness to continue battling the country's rebels. Between July and August 2015, 800 South Sudanese refugees were moved to the Abyei region between Sudan and South Sudan in response to the humanitarian and food crises in the South Sudanese state.



The People's Liberation Army (SPLA)—formerly known as the SPLM/A—and associated armed groups carried out a campaign of violence against the population of South Sudan's Unity State, a South Sudanese state in the Greater Upper Nile region, reportedly killing civilians, looting and destroying villages, and displacing over 100,000 people. In July 2015, the African Union Peace and Security Council announced that, should it become necessary, it would deploy an African force and institute a number of harsh sanctions in order to end the ongoing violence in the country. This prompted Riek Machar to sign a peace deal on 17 August, and President Kiir to sign on, albeit with reservations, on 26 August.

ABYEI REGION

The Abyei Region is a disputed territory between Sudan and South Sudan that has seen intense clashes between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan, as well as local ethnic groups, since 2008. The Ngok-Dinka, a non-Arab ethnic group native to the southern part of the region, and the Misseriya, a nomadic Arab ethnic group from the northern part of the region, have long fought for control of the area. The Ngok-Dinka held a unilateral referendum in 2013, voting to join South Sudan. This vote has never been recognized by the Misseriya tribe or by the Sudanese government. South Sudanese officials have been carrying out a diplomatic campaign to convince the international community to recognize the result of the referendum. The Misseriya migrate south into Abyei from Sudan for half the year seeking water and pasture for their cattle. Cattle raids, killings and revenge attacks are frequent and brutal in Abyei. The Misseriya have been known to abduct Ngok-Dinka children. In 2011, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was sent to monitor the implementation of a demilitarized zone in the region, as per Security Council Resolution 1990. While both States agreed to remove their military presence, neither has done so. Abyei has seen at least five attacks since January 2015, with hostility rising again between the region's majority and minority ethnic groups. In July 2015 the United Nations Security Council voted to extend UNISFA until December 2015.

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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SYRIA

Civilian protests began in March 2011, when residents took to the city streets of Deraa to protest the torture of students who had put up anti-government graffiti. The protesters also called for the following reforms: resignation of President Bashir al-Assad; allowing political parties in the country; granting equal rights to the Kurds; and other political freedoms, such as freedom of the press. Syrian security forces responded to the protests, shooting into the crowds and killing several people.

After the shooting, President Assad announced several conciliatory measures, including releasing dozens of political prisoners, dismissing the government and cancelling the state of emergency that Syria had been under since 1963. Unappeased, protests spread to other communities and fighting escalated between protesters and government forces. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon deplored the violence on both sides and called for the Syrian government to guarantee protesters the right to freedom of expression. However, by May, Syrian forces had moved into the city suburbs surrounding Deraa, Banyas, Homs and Damascus to suppress protesters. Violence continued unabated with several attacks by Syrian government forces on peaceful



protesters and in residential neighborhoods across the country. These attacks brought condemnation from the Security Council in August 2011, with the Arab League suspending Syria and imposing sanctions in November.

On 1 December 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, announced that the deteriorating situation in Syria was now close to a civil war, especially with the defection of government soldiers. These defectors, who called themselves the Syrian Free Army, claimed to represent thousands of other defected soldiers spread throughout Syrian communities. Western States urged caution to protesters, stating that violence would play into President Assad's hands and allow him greater freedom to react in kind. Pillay called on the Syrian government to stop violating human rights and initiate investigations into such acts, as several hundred thousand were either dead or displaced due to the ongoing conflict.

In January 2012, the Security Council discussed the Syrian situation, but no progress was made on stemming the violence. A resolution calling for Syrian regime change was debated, but was vetoed by China and Russia. The violence was so egregious that the Security Council passed Resolution 2043 to form the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS). UNSMIS was originally enacted for 90 days to monitor the cessation of violence in the country; the mandate was extended for another 30 days in July 2012. Unfortunately, Syria had not worked toward enacting a peace plan for the country and the mandate expired on 19 August 2012.

Meanwhile, the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) became concerned that the Syrian government had chemical weapons at its disposal. These fears were confirmed on 23 July 2012 when Syria announced that it would only use chemical and biological weapons against foreign attack, but not against its own people. However, in December 2012, opposition forces claimed that chemical weapons were used in an attack on the city of Homs, which killed six rebel fighters after they inhaled smoke during the battle. President Assad denied these claims, stating that Syrian opposition forces were responsible for the attacks after taking over several key Syrian installations. An attack in the city of Aleppo in March 2013 prompted President Assad to call for an investigation into the attack after chemical weapons were used. Although Assad called for an investigation, in April, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that Syria had restricted access to sites and failed to agree to the scope of the United Nations inquiry.

On 21 August 2013, a large-scale chemical weapon attack was perpetrated in the suburbs of Ghouta. President Assad finally relented and allowed United Nations inspectors on site to determine if sarin gas was used. In September, United Nations weapons inspectors confirmed the use of sarin. The Security Council passed Resolution 2118 requiring the destruction of all of Syria's chemical weapons. The text stated that "no party should use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, or transfer chemical weapons." A joint team of United Nations and international inspectors arrived in Syria on 2 October ready to begin dismantling Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons. The Syrian government cooperated fully with the inspectors and met the 1 November deadline for destruction of chemical weapon production equipment. The OPCW announced an ambitious timeline to have all of Syria's chemical weapons destroyed by 30 June 2014 in the safest way possible, with the

first shipment to leave Syria by 31 December. However, because of the volatile situation in the rest of the country, the first shipment did not leave Syria for destruction until 7 January 2014. On 23 June 2014, the OPCW announced that 100 percent of Syria's chemical weapons had been removed, bringing congratulations from around the world for the effort.

While the United Nations was working to rid Syria of chemical weapons, efforts were being made to stop the violence still rampant throughout the country. Several hundred thousand more had died during fighting in 2013, with millions more displaced with no access to the aid convoys from donor countries. Peace talks in Geneva failed to produce results, as the Syrian government refused to discuss a transitional government. Fighting intensified throughout 2014, with both sides receiving military supplies from outside sources. The increased fighting contributed to a greater number of refugees and internally displaced persons. The situation deteriorated further as the Islamic State gained ground in Syria, through its franchise the al-Nusra Front, and neighboring Iraq, branding itself a caliphate and holding onto several important resources, including oil fields. With winter's approach in December 2014, the Security Council renewed an aid delivery program to Syria to help the thousands without access to food and other necessities.

At the beginning of 2015, there were signs of progress in conversations between groups in Syria, including a commitment by the Syrian government in February to "freeze" fighting in Aleppo, where chlorine gas had been used. On 6 March 2015, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for an international investigation into the use of weaponized chlorine gas in Syria to bring the perpetrators to justice. Nevertheless, fighting continued in the region, causing grave humanitarian concerns for millions of residents, many trapped by the violence on both sides. By June 2015, attacks against civilians in cities such as Aleppo had surged, with human rights violations on both sides, especially the use of barrel bombs on civilians. While violence continues unchecked, the Security Council has moved forward, passing Resolution 2235 establishing a mechanism to identify chemical weapon perpetrators in Syria and to impose measures under Article VII of the United Nations Charter for violations. The Council is optimistic with the unanimous adoption of the resolution, but knows there is more to do to ease the increasingly devastating situation in Syria.

In August, the Security Council demanded that all parties to the conflict cease all attacks against civilians and the indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas. Additionally, the Council called for both sides to work together to resolve the political crisis, including establishing a transitional government with full executive powers, made up of current government and opposition forces. The call for a solution to the crisis was enhanced after reports from a Palestinian refugee camp outside of Yarmouk, Syria, noted a threefold increase in typhoid cases in just a couple of days; this number is only expected to rise with increasingly warm temperatures and lack of access to water supplies.

THE ISLAMIC STATE

While the Islamic State has had many incarnations since its inception in the late 1990s, it can trace its present roots to the fall of the Saddam Hussein government in Iraq in 2003. After the defeat by United States forces, the majority Sunni population was marginalized from Iraqi politics. This disenfranchisement pushed Sunnis to form non-governmental



militias, one of those being the Islamic State in Iraq (ISIS). ISIS acted as an insurgency inside Iraq, attacking Western forces in the hopes of expelling them and returning Sunni patrimony. In 2004, ISIS began a limited partnership with al-Qaeda that would last until 2014. During the “Surge” of US forces in Iraq from 2007-2010, the ISIS forces began to retreat from areas where they no longer had popular support from the communities and were losing ground to the US troops. This retreat created a calm in the region and US troops withdrew in 2011.

With this second withdrawal of US troops, ISIS was able to begin unification under the Islamic State banner or the destruction of those groups not willing to unify with them. By 8 April 2013, ISIS had led several horrendous attacks inside Iraqi territory, causing the United Nations Mission in Iraq to express concern at the rising violence. The violence was appalling to many groups sympathetic to ISIS goals and they began to distance themselves from ISIS and even fight against them. When this violence spread through Syria, ISIS and al-Nusra Front militants began fighting against each other, causing al-Qaeda to disown ISIS in January 2014. As the violence escalated, United Nations officials called the attacks war crimes, noting that over 2,000 people had been killed or injured by Islamic State forces in only a two week period in June 2014. The human rights violations perpetrated by Islamic State forces included the persecution of and violence against minorities in northern Iraq and the Kurdish population on the Iraq/Syria border. In June 2014, ISIS pronounced itself a caliphate known as the Islamic State (claiming exclusive political and theological authority over the world’s Muslim population) after seizing the Iraqi cities of Mosul and Tikrit. These seizures gave the Islamic State access to oil fields in both Syria and Iraq, triggering a Security Council Presidential Statement stressing the obligation of all States to prevent and suppress the funding of terrorists.

In August 2014, senior United Nations officials warned that continued violence and territorial seizures by the Islamic State could trigger a humanitarian tragedy. By the time the town of Sinjar, Iraq, was captured by Islamic State forces, the United Nations estimated that over 200,000 people had already been displaced by the violence in the region. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called upon all Iraqis to assist the displaced and reminded all parties to the conflict of their obligation to ensure humanitarian access to those displaced by the violence. On 15 August 2014, the Security Council passed Resolution 2170, condemning the human rights violations by extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. Additionally, the Resolution placed sanctions on individuals within the Islamic State. The Security Council also passed Resolution 2178, preventing travel and support for foreign terrorist fighters.

In October 2014, the United Nations called for international action to prevent a massacre of civilians, and the Security Council called for a “common effort” to defeat Islamic State forces. The United Nations called on Syria and Iraq to protect holy and historic sites from destruction, while religious leaders were called on to condemn the violent methods of the Islamic State. In mid-November, United Nations officials warned that the Islamic State was building a state of terror through fear and a growing humanitarian crisis that impacted over five million people in Iraq alone.

By early 2015, the Islamic State was in control of several key areas in Syria and Iraq, including oil fields. On 12 February 2015, the Security Council passed Resolution 2199 condemning trade with terrorist

groups in oil and antiquities, as well as the paying of hostage ransom fees. The Resolution also threatened further targeted sanctions and reminded States not to assist the Islamic State with cash or other resources. Although Iraqi forces had made some gains against the Islamic State, by the end of March, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted there were still vast challenges ahead and that the area would need the support of the world community. In June, the Security Council was informed by an expert from the Human Rights Council that they would need to take immediate action to help civilians in daily fear for their lives in the war-torn regions of Syria and Iraq, especially given the reports of genocide perpetrated by the Islamic State forces. Currently, over eight million people live in a state of fear due to systematic violations of human rights in Islamic State-controlled areas. As the United Nations works to combat Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State has started moving beyond those areas, claiming a bombing in Saudi Arabia in August that killed a dozen people and another one in eastern Iraq that killed 58 people in an area thought to be free of Islamic State forces.

YEMEN

On 22 May 1990, North and South Yemen united, forming the United Republic of Yemen. The transitional government was comprised of members of both former governments, with Ali Abdallah Salih remaining in power as President. Parliamentary elections were scheduled for November 1992, but were ultimately pushed back to 1993 as the transitional government was unable to reconcile the two different forms of government into one functioning system. Mistrust was still evident between north and south Yemenis when Vice President Ali Salim al-Baid left Sanaa, the capital, in August 1993, after stating that the south was being marginalized and attacked by the north. These attacks culminated in a civil war in 1994 with north and south fighting for control of the country. The northern forces laid siege to Aden in the south, cutting off water and food supplies to the one million people living in the region. By July 1994, Aden had fallen and leaders of the southern uprising had fled the country.

Throughout the 1990s, there were several protests and attempts to undo unification by southern Yemenis. These protests reached a peak in 2004 when the Houthi and Yemeni government forces began sustained fighting in the province of Sa’ada. The Houthi were originally a non-violent anti-government organization from the northern part of Yemen that had protested economic discrimination and had been very critical of President Salih’s decision to side with the United States in the 2003 war with Iraq. The conflict between Houthi and Yemeni government forces continued until the death of Hussein al-Houthi (the organization’s leader) in September 2004. Conflict continued to rise up at times between the two forces, but took on a new dimension in August 2009 when the Yemeni government initiated Operation Scorched Earth.

Operation Scorched Earth was a full mobilization by government military forces to crush the Houthi rebellion. In September 2009, the United Nations Children’s Fund expressed concern about the hundreds of thousands of civilians being driven from their homes into refugee camps and the rising civilian death toll. However, President Salih launched two massive assaults in October and November, hoping to deprive the rebels of local support networks. While the Yemeni forces were battling in the north, other forces were working against the Salih government in the south.



Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the local affiliate of al-Qaeda, had mainly focused on foreign targets while being critical of the Salih government, but this changed in July 2008 when security forces in Saiyun were attacked by an AQAP suicide bomber. This began a series of AQAP-coordinated attacks against political targets in Yemen. Additionally, AQAP began supporting the southern Yemeni call for secession by the al-Hirak, a nonviolent political group in southern Yemen. President Salih lumped all three organizations together and called on the international community to help in his fight against internal terrorism. In February 2010, President Salih signed a ceasefire agreement with northern rebels, which lasted until December 2010 when 3,000 soldiers were killed in an attack by Houthi rebels.

Protests broke out in many Arab countries during early 2011, including in Yemen. While some countries like Tunisia had relatively peaceful protests and transitions of power, the violence in Yemen intensified. In March 2011, police snipers opened fire on protesters in Sanaa, killing more than 50 people. Senior government and military officials announced their backing for the protest movement. President Salih, citing concerns that the unrest in the country could lead to civil war, implemented a state of emergency. Fighting continued through the summer of 2011 with President Salih being injured in a rocket attack in June.

In October 2011, the Security Council passed Resolution 2014, calling on President Salih to step down and for all parties to cease fighting. In November, President Salih handed over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, and a unity government was formed, including a prime minister from the opposition. Hadi was elected President in February 2012 elections, and the government worked on reforms to the political process, including drafting a new constitution, over the next two years. The national dialogue culminated in a February 2014 decision by a Presidential panel for Yemen to become a federation of six regions.

In July 2014, tribesmen blew up the country's largest oil pipeline, and the President's cabinet called for an increase in fuel prices. Instead, in response to renewed protests by Houthi rebels, President Hadi dismissed his cabinet and overturned the increase. The rebels continued the protests for two weeks and moved on the capital, Sanaa, in early September, capturing the city. The United Nations brokered a peace deal wherein the Houthi rebels agreed to remove fighters from cities under rebel control once a new national unity government has been formed.

In January 2015, the Houthi rebels rejected a constitutional proposal by the government and placed President Hadi and other government officials under house arrest. President Hadi resigned in protest and fled to Aden. Houthi rebels announced that they intended to dissolve Parliament and replace it with a national council that would select a new president. These changes incurred the wrath of many political parties in Yemen and drew the ire of foreign States, as well as the United Nations. The Security Council passed Resolution 2201 on 15 February calling for the Houthi rebels to withdraw from government and security institutions.

In March 2015, the Islamic State carried out two suicide bombings in Yemen, killing 137 people. These attacks, in addition to the Houthi rebel march towards southern Yemen, inspired a Saudi Arabian-led coalition of air strikes against Houthi targets and a coalition naval blockade. By 13 May, a tenuous ceasefire was proposed by Saudi Arabia and accepted by the Houthi rebels. Five days later, Saudi Arabian air strikes

resumed. Fighting continued between the Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabian forces through mid June when United Nations-sponsored peace talks were held in Geneva. Unfortunately, no peace agreement was reached because the Houthi rebels would not agree to a ceasefire until coalition air strikes had stopped, and the Yemeni government delegation would not agree to peace until the rebels had withdrawn from the territory they had seized.

As fighting continued throughout the summer, the United Nations declared a humanitarian emergency in Yemen, noting that nearly 20 million people are in need of basic humanitarian aid such as food, water and medicine. Saudi Arabia and the Houthi rebels announced that a pause in the fighting would take place to allow aid to reach citizens, but fighting continued; as a result, the first aid ship would not dock until 22 July. After Saudi-backed Yemeni forces took control of Aden on 22 July, Saudi Arabia announced a five day halt in military operations to allow aid to reach nearly six million people in danger of starvation. In August, fighting resumed and the United Arab Emirates forces joined Saudi forces in Aden, pushing Houthi rebels even further from the city.

The humanitarian crisis is worsening as well. On 12 August, American-based charity Mercy Corps stated that uncollected garbage piling up in Yemeni cities was contributing to the spread of dengue fever and malaria, as soil and water are being infected and attracting pests. Over 8,000 people have contracted dengue fever in the last five months, with cases of typhoid and malaria being reported as well. Continued fighting has also pushed Yemen to the brink of famine and millions of hungry women and children are facing starvation. Fighting is not only stalling aid deliveries, but reaching Yemen's interior has proven difficult. Additionally, Doctors Without Borders stated that more than 65 civilians were killed in a Saudi-based airstrike in the city of Taiz, making it one of the more deadly attacks since the conflict began. Finally, the International Committee of the Red Cross suspended its operations in Aden on 25 August after gunmen stormed the office and demanded money. The Red Cross has relocated personnel, but the pause in relief efforts could impact nearly one million people in the city.

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THE SITUATION IN LIBERIA

Liberia has long been plagued with violence and instability. In 1990, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), a rebel militia led by Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor, began an insurrection against the government marking the start of the First Liberian Civil War. After the government’s forces were defeated, the NPFL splintered into various



factions and began fighting for political control of the country. This prompted intervention from the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECMG) under a mandate from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to intervene. In 1995, a peace deal between several of the warring factions was reached, and Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor was elected President in 1997. President Taylor supported the procurement and sale of blood diamonds and illegal timber exports to fund military pursuits in other West African countries, leading Liberia to be labeled as a pariah state. Despite the 1995 peace deal, civil war continued to plague Liberia, with an estimated 250,000 people killed and almost one million refugees fleeing to neighboring countries between the years of 1989 and 2003. Another comprehensive peace agreement was reached in 2003, with President Taylor going into exile in Nigeria in August of that year. He was extradited to The Hague in 2006 and in April 2012 he was found guilty of 11 charges by the Special Court that included terror, murder and rape.

Following President Taylor's exit from the Liberian government, in Report S/2003/875 the Security Council recommended the deployment of a peacekeeping operation in Liberia to facilitate the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and assist with the governmental transition. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, recommended that the Council authorize the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation with a troop strength of up to 15,000, including: 250 military observers; 160 staff officers; up to 875 United Nations police officers and an additional five armed units each comprising 120 officers; and a significant civilian component and necessary support staff. Security Council Resolution 1509 established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in September 2003, consisting of up to 15,000 United Nations military personnel (including up to 250 military observers and 160 staff officers), and up to 1,115 United Nations police officers (including units to assist in the maintenance of law and order throughout Liberia), and the appropriate civilian component. UNMIL has the following mandates: protection of civilians, humanitarian assistance, reform of security and justice institutions, human rights promotion and protection of United Nations Personnel. The Security Council renewed UNMIL until September 2015 in Resolution 2215. This Resolution states that the Government of Liberia will assume fully its complete security responsibilities from UNMIL no later than 30 June 2016. Liberia has taken steps to fulfill their role in this arena, with Prince B. Mullah, the Deputy Police Director for Operations, announcing in August 2015 that the LNP would recruit at least 8,000 new officers to boost their strength from the present number to over 12,000 officers by 2017 to maintain law and order during the presidential and general elections.

In 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected the 24th President of Liberia. She was elected for a second six-year term in 2011. Since the 2005 elections, the Liberian government has struggled to curb corruption and provide essential services to the country's people. The capital remains without electricity and running water. Corruption is widespread and unemployment, illiteracy, and gender-based violence are endemic. Illegal logging and timber exports are on the rise, despite the catastrophic environmental effects on the country's forests. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) was completely demobilized following the most recent civil war, and, despite United Nations mandates that the armed force resume responsibility for security of the country, the AFL remains generally ineffective today. The Liberia National Police (LNP) has been

deemed equally ineffective, with only 4,700 officers serving the entire country.

In 2014, there was a massive outbreak of Ebola virus in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, among other West African countries. In Liberia alone, an estimated 10,672 people were infected, and 4,808 of those infected died of the disease between September 2013 and August 2015. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that, at the peak of transmission, the country was reporting 300 to 400 new cases per week. In May 2015, due largely to the actions of President Sirleaf, the World Health Organization's involvement, and, eventually, strong financial and logistical support from the international community, WHO declared Liberia free of Ebola virus transmission. While single cases have since arisen, the situation has been downgraded from its "outbreak" classification. The country is still struggling to recover from the devastating outbreak.

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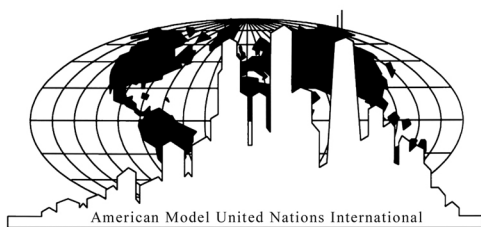
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