



The Syrian Peace Process: How Syria Can attain Perpetual Peace?



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Abstract *The Civil wars only can end by the total victory of one party against the other or through the table-talks. The progress about the political settlement of the Syrian crisis has stalled, and the Syrian regime did not show preparedness to accompanying its opponents. The regime cannot provoke directly with turkey and United States to asserts its influence in the north and eastern part of Syria. There is no political peace process to bring the fruits to date. As laid out under the United Nations Security Council UNSC in pursuance of 2254 resolution, the Geneva process has stuck. The mediation process under the United Nations is centrally focusing on establishing the legally bounded committee with the equal presentation of all stakeholders in this legal body or committee, significantly the regime, the opposition and the civil society inside Syria. The resolution was passed totally in December 2015, the said resolution drawn on four steps to ensuring the long-lasting resolution of the Syrian conflict.*

Key Words: Syrian Civil War, Peace Talks, Humanitarian Crisis, Refugees, Stability in the Middle East

Syrian Crisis and Desire for Peace

The Assad regime is not much interested in real reforms through the legitimate commission or body; in this regards, the frontline shows Assad's triumph (Lund, 2018). The groups inside of Syrian opposition remain divided, and most of them living outside Syria and demand concessions from the regime at negotiating table. In January 2017, Turkey, Iran, and Russia initiated a peace process on the ongoing conflict in Astana and led the foundation of three de-escalation or safe zone areas (Humud, Blanchard, & Nikitin, 2019). The Astana peace process permitted Russia & the Syrian government to feat gaps in fighting to retake the control of eastern Ghouta in April 2018 & the north part of Homs in May 2018. The Russian and Assad's government violates the 3rd de-escalation zone in the south and western part of Syria, which conveyed distinctly with United States & Jordan (Nauert, 2018). The bloc, including Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, France, and some other western states led by the United States, is still in try to re-initiate the Geneva peace process, but this bloc does not include the major ground players such as Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Washington engaged with Moscow in diplomatic negotiations proposing the road map to make a promise by Russia to influence the regime regarding make progress on the settlement of the conflict, which will acceptable for Washington as well (Weiss & Ng, 2019). The observer's hopeful in 2021 election will be held under the supervision of the United Nations may fulfil the chapter of the Geneva

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peace process and submission of the political shift if the Syrian civil population may cast their votes. But there is another perception that Al-Assad may attempt to use the Elections 2021 to reinforce his privilege to validity. Moscow may also use this opportunity and argue that other states should re-establish their diplomatic ties with Syria and invest in it as well.

Intra-Syrian Dialogue

In February 2012, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) failed to pass the resolution, which was supported by the Arab league to solve the Syrian crisis, but Russia and China opposed in UNSC. The resolution was drafted by the Arab league and outlined as a Syrian commanded political transition to a democratic plural political system in which all citizens are equal regardless of their religion, gender, or affiliations, including the start of talks among the Syrian government and all groups of opposition under the supervision of Arab league following the schedule which is set by the Arab states (UN News, 2012). Russia did not want to change the regime to maintain its influence; that's why it opposed this plan and criticized some council members as well. Many western countries are looked-for to use the Russian channel to pressure Assad to change its position. They were also looking towards Iran regarding its strong influence in Syria, but they can't do so because Tehran's nuclear program was under discussion globally. Later in March 2012, the president of UNSC announced that it gave full support to a joint envoy consisting of the United Nations and Arab League on the Syrian crisis to end the violence in Syria. The former secretary-general of UNO was also part of a special envoy for the Syrian crisis.

Geneva Talks

The dedicated envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League for Syria initiated a dialogue on the Syrian crisis, and later, it was called as Geneva-I conference on Syria on 30th June 2012. The members of this meeting were the secretary's general of the Arab league & United Nations as well as the representatives of five permanent members state of UNSC, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar & the European Union. The Geneva-I talks concluded with the remarks of these talks will cornerstone for future negotiations. The five permanent member states of the UNSC endorsed the Geneva-I or Geneva communiqué. It is noteworthy that the regime and the opposition groups didn't were in this dialogue, but the countries in this dialogue acknowledged that they consulted in the Syrian regime and opposition groups earlier in this meeting. The communiqué agreed on several guiding principles for future negotiations; the significant among them was about the political transition, which means the establishment of the transitional governing body comprising regime and opposition groups with mutual consent. The regime's executive power is Bashar Al-Assad which is not acceptable by the opposition. In June 2012, after the meeting, Lakhdar Brahimi, former minister for foreign affairs of Algeria appointed as the new chief of United Nations envoy for Syria as a replacement of former chief of envoy Kofi Annan and prepared for another international conference on the Syrian conflict resolution, during this session of talks both contested parties that are the Syrian government and the opposition was present.

Geneva-II

The second phase of the Geneva talks was held in January 2014 in Montreux, Switzerland. That was attended by the forty foreign ministers of different states. The United States presented its view on Syria and stated that Al-Assad has no right to remain in power, and the head of the delegation of Syrian opposition Ahmad Jarba called on the Syrian government to transfer of powers to the transitional body as established in Geneva 1 or Geneva communiqué. The Syrian foreign minister Waleed Al-Mualim stated that, however, no one in the world confers upon the legitimacy of the Syrian president, constitution, or law but except the Syrian themselves. After the two rounds of talks brought no conclusion, the third round of talks was to plan.

International Support Group for Syria

Various groups intend to make efforts for the solution of the Syrian conflict. The group named "Friends of Syria" was established in 2012 based in France. There were around 70 to 114 countries as members and participated in 4 meetings on the Syrian conflict. After that, the group was limited to 11 countries and then referred to as "The London 11" after they met in London in 2013. The group was comprised of 11 states, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UAE, and United States. The main aim of this group to support the opposition groups and the Syrian public in general (Samaha, 2017). In 2015, the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) was established in Vienna along with the 20 states as a participant with an international organization. The significance of this group ISSG was showed as this group co-chaired by Russia & United States, and it includes UNSC permanent members as well many countries that were involved in the Syrian conflict by means of a proxy, while Iran also invited, but the no Syrian delegation was invited to this time. The final session of ISSG was held on 14 November 2015, with the reference of Geneva communique, which was stated that would explore modalities for the cease-fire implementation nationwide along with the Vienna political process. The UNSC endorsed the "Vienna Statements" in pursuance of the full emphasis of the Geneva Communique as the basis for Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political change to attain enduring peace in Syria to end the conflict positively.

Riyadh Opposition Conference

In 2015, the Syrian opposition didn't work much to sort out the conflict in a peaceful manner. They were also divided into various groups and fought with each other. Globally recognized the Syrian opposition group was the Syrian opposition Coalition "SOC", based in Istanbul, Turkey. The group originated from a merger in November-2012 among the various opposition groups. Many of the members in SOC belonged to the prominent Syrian intellectual community and with well-known in the Syrian opposition, and many of them got imprisoned as well by the regime. The final declaration of the said conference

Political Step

The proposed peace process involves the first step as "the political step", the negotiations begin in mid of January 2016 amid the Syrian regime and opposition groups to start the initial phase of political transition. But the direct talks did not happen among the regime and the opposition. The United Nations conducts a total of eight rounds of talks since 2016, in which the representative of the regime and opposition sat in dispersed rooms and did not resolve or resulted yet (UN News, 2019).

Nation-Wide Cease-Fire

The nationwide cease-fire was proposed as the parties take the initial phase of peace talks. The steps towards cease-fire were taken in February 2016, but it collapsed within two months due to the non-serious behavior of both parties. Another cease-fire agreed upon in September 2016, but it was collapsed too.

Drafting of New Constitution

The drafting of the new constitution was initiated in June 2016; for this, a legislative committee has been anticipated along with equal representation from the Syrian government, the groups of opposition as well as civil society. However, the committee has not been decided due to disagreement over the names for membership of the committee.

Elections

The proposal of new free and fair elections to be held by June 2017 under the supervision of the United Nations to ensure transparency & accountability along with all citizens who were eligible

for participation in the case of Syria. But the Elections did not take place to date.

Failure of Talks

The war of slow destruction between the overseas sponsored armed opposition groups & the Syrian administration, reinforced by Iran, to a reduced scope of Russian ground play along with. In 2015, though, Syrian administration sufferers required accrued to the opinion that Al-Assad recognized openly that his military ought to commence withdrawing. Nevertheless, it was the Iranian influence, who thru the supplication for Russia to straight engaged in the fight. General Soleimani, deployed by Iran in Iraq and the head of the Al-Quds brigade, had paid a visit to Russia to persuade President Putin to deployed the Russian forces in Syria and case the Assad regime downfall (Bassam & Perry, 2015). The subsequent positioning of Russian aeroplanes & more superior operational forces steadied the hostile, retrogressive tendency of a failing Syrian armed forces position. One more round of Geneva peace dialogues in 2016, which delayed as the Syrian government is once more forbidden any political negotiations, have confidence in that with Russian and Iranian support, it could be protected further on the battlefield than at the spread of good gestures on the table. Moreover, by this time, the United States prominence had loosened from pressurizing the Assad to engaged in talks. President Obama was more concerned regarding fighting with ISIS in the eastern part of Syria & forbidden retorting to the Russian boom in the western part of Syria. Whereas the Russians crushed the anti-regime opposition in the west of Syria, the United States crushed ISIS in the east of Syria. Russia, along with United Nations & United States support, appealed for cessation of hostility sectors in the western part of Syria. The further modest carrying weapons by opposition groups and their supporters acknowledged the zones, but the Syrian regime with changing notches of support from Russian, Iranian governments & Hezbollah Lebanon based confronted & seized three out of the four zones as one in 2016 and one in 2018. During 2019, solitary, the last remaining zone in Idlib province, persisted in opposition's control. As its enemies strengthened in the western & eastern parts of Syria, the Assad's regime had slight encouragement to cooperate at United Nations peace talks. The distinct representatives of the United Nations included Staffan de' Mistura, tried and able to arrange two or more sessions of peace talks in 2017, but these ended with no noteworthy development. In December 2017, de' Mistura openly held responsible the Syrian regime for rejecting to dialogue with the groups & commended Russia to place pressure on Al-Assad to make some soft corner regarding the peaceful settlement of the Syrian conflict.

Civilian Protection

The Assad government has intentionally and frequently attacked citizens in Syria with both conventional & chemical weapons. Simultaneously, it has thoroughly used rape, anguish, disappearances, and illegal imprisonments as weapons of war. The United Nations autonomous commission of investigation revealed in 2016 that the Syrian government's activities defined the "crimes against humanity" and "extermination" (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2016). The Syrian government, with foreign support, has not only blown up hospitals & humanitarian groups but also detained and beaten the medical staff (Amnesty International, 2012). The attacks by using barrel bombs remainders a symbol of Assad's fierce war with its citizens. Earlier convicts have exhausted the fears of life inside Assad's secret detainees' camps (Amnesty International). Prisoners are not permitted to sleep or express without go-ahead, lockups are congested, dead bodies are left to decomposition & torment is routine. Though various states, as well as the United States, emphasized the status of civilian's rights defense in their press announcements and over the embassy efforts with Russia and the United Nations as well, the American armed forces responded to the regime when it was used of Sarin gas, a lethal nerve element. There have been no suspected or inveterate Sarin gas attacks by the Assad's regime after the American military strikes, while there are accusations that the regime has subsequently used other chemical weapons. The regime has constantly used conventional weapons to target and kill civilians.

It is extremely questionable that the Assad's regime will be apprehended to account for its war crimes in Syria. Assad determined not to appear to face the International Criminal Court (ICC). While Syria not ever joined the ICC, so the chief prosecutor of ICC can't pledge an inquiry. Recommendations from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which might be pledge one, have been barred by Russia_(Barnard, Hubbard, & Fisher, *As Atrocities Mount in Syria, Justice Seems Out of Reach*, 2017). There are further possibilities to chase impartiality, mostly over the use of "worldwide authority", & top-level hearings on the European side as well, have generated inadequate outcomes. A combined German-French inquiry leads to the apprehension of three former Assad's regime officers, two detained in Germany & one in France in February 2019 (Cumming-Bruce, 2019). French establishment has also initiated international apprehension warrants for former Air Force intelligence administrator Jamil Hassan of Assad's regime (Associated Press, 2019), the national security chief of regime Ali Mamlouk also held for collusion in war crimes in these apprehension warrants.(Barnard, 2019).

Future Prospects of Syrian Peace Process

The Syrian crisis has risen to a critical instant which triggered a grave humanitarian catastrophe; it has been considered the prime catastrophe after WW-II. The combined efforts of the global civic have unsuccessful in halting blood-shedding in Syria as well as displacing more and more civilians inside or outside the country, which is a very grave and alarming situation for the rest of the world. Millions of Syrians are miserable in immigrant camps with the lowest living standards since the starting of the civil war. The world leaders have accomplished a big disappointment in terms of efficiently handling this crisis, specifically, as time laps are going, the number of internally and externally displaced Syrians are on the upsurge, and these expatriate persons become a basis of the vast burden on societies & economy of the host country as well. When immense crises arise like the Syrian crisis, the global actors can't hinge exclusively on gathering and allocating the resources for handling them. Somewhat, the international powers or stakeholders in the Middle East must pursue further effective methods of conflict handling or be solving. Consequently, assimilating the large-scale methodical strategies is an unavoidable course of action to handled such grave and complex issues. The following measures can be proven fruitful to ease the escalation and also ease the life of the general public in Syria as well as the outside.

Establishment of IDPs Framework

The most important factor in sorting out any conflict included civilians to ease their lives as before the emergence of the crisis. In the Syrian crisis, due to unrest, a large number of Syrians forcefully leave their homes and migrated to neighboring and some European countries. So, the safe return of the Syrian migrants to their homes for that constant and peaceful settlement is also required (World Vision, 2021). The coming back of immigrants is not just the physical movement of the masses crossways the borders. Somewhat, primarily, it needs assurances of wellbeing & security, a satisfactory political structure as well as access to basic needs of daily life. Deprived of these, a comprehensive intended homecoming of refugees to Syria may be shown deceitful (Forced Migration Review, 2014). The framework should be found based on three integrated principles, the recognition of the refugee crisis politically, the role of justice in the permanent settlement of the refugee's crisis, and the acceptance of the need to uphold the refugee's rights.

A Peace Center for Settlement

The formation of de-escalation sectors will not be affected in substantial permanency, neither it will lead the basis for maintainable peace (MoFA Russia, 2017). Presently, the Russia, United States, Iran, Turkey, & Jordan, as well as Egypt, but to some extent, all have compasses of their own goals in Syria, a genuineness partially eased by the Astana dialogues (DW, 2019). Consequently, although the concentration of the war may decrease in the coming future, the condition on the pulverized

will be far. The parties' discordant schemas have upstretched concerns that the resettlement of the Syrian crisis may be complex by politically, sectarian wise, and ethnically contemplations (United States Institute of Peace, 2020). Additionally, a particular emphasis on taking an end to the military operations which are backed by foreign powers also, deprived of addressing the war's origins & the altered the power infrastructures in Syria, bring the forthcoming conflict nearly predictable. A political change course that delivers exemption to person respondent of racial cleansing and crimes contrary to humankind would not permit for an impartial political fight, nor would its protection discrete rights and human self-esteem. Censoriously, it would also weaken universal standards of justice and liability. The formation of new political & security structures that human self-respect will be essential to dodge a rebirth of viciousness.

Withdrawal of Foreign Support of Armed Groups in Syria

For long-lasting peace, it is necessary to draw the foreign support provided by various international powers like Moscow and Washington as well as other neighboring countries such as Iran and Lebanon (Rumer, 2019). The continuous foreign support to the regime and the armed groups of opposition complicates the situation. Before going to deal with any peace settlement, it is unconditional to shows neutrality by both America and Russia. Both should support the political restructuring of Syria and take all stakeholders in and outside Syria on board. For dealing with ISIS and other banned organizations, both states should work in partnership so that constant internal stability is achieved (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Turk-Kurd Settlement in Northern Syria

Turkey launched the military operation in the Kurd majority area against the PKK in northern Syria. While the united states also support the local Kurds against the Turk military operation. Turkey interpretations or perceived the SDF governing over Manbij as a threat, and the United States contends that Kurdish rudiments of the SDF have solitary to the east side bank of the Euphrates & To assure Turkey (Jasim, 2021). The United States will have to validate to Ankara that it will outline & enforce vibrant and reliable preventive settings on the extension of the Kurdish control over the territory, which affects Syria. In repetition, that means Washington must be eager to bring a total SDF drawing out to the east bank of the Euphrates & impulsion for the attachment of political establishments Turkey can live within the de-facto independent management of SDF administered parts of north and east of Syria.

Back Door Diplomacy & De-Escalation

To end the conflict in Syria, the international powers should re-engage in talks, especially Russia and the United States, to pursue the course of desire goals. There is a need to initiate the diplomatic process with the active participation of all stakeholders. The multi-lateral meetings can be fruitful in this regard. The initiation of back-channel diplomacy with Russia by the American side, because most probably no agreement will be reached on the most sensitive crisis of the century. To reach any conclusion, the United States should start the back-door discussions with Russia to brought all parties to the table. Most importantly, the stability will be assured by Russia from Assad's side that he would not collapse in exchange for a cease-fire among the government and the opposition armed forces. The initial goal of diplomacy should pursual the cease-fire and end the offensive operations from both sides, including the air raids by the regime.

Conclusion

We have understood that Syria has gone over a massive social and political shift, subsequently becoming president of Hafez Al-Assad in 1970. Whereas the war has permanently been a compound phenomenon, our insight of war established by the time to develop progressively complex. Presently, it is possible to examine the war from lots of diverse perceptions and not just concentrating on the physical violence or the position of its stakes. This study enlightened the

intra-state proxies on other than home ground and how these proxies make Syrian civil war into a complex crisis, rendering to the level of fierceness and the role of the involving actors. The Russian-American confrontations are the remnants of the Cold War, and the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan can easily be analyzed in this study. The Russian behavior towards its ideological expansionist and the dream of retaking the status of great power internationally, especially in middle-east to counter the American influence. The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 also shows that the American military presence in the region is not unknown. Both powers made their blocs fight the battle in Syria. Russia has pledged its support for Assad, and the United States wants democracy to end Assad's regime; for this, it supports the opposition groups they are also armed against the regime's forces. In this total scenario, the civil population badly affected as the confrontations gradually increasing. The massive crowd of Syrian immigrants hit the border of Turkey, Greece, and other neighboring countries. Just because of the intensification of the conflict. Both powers have their allies in the middle east, especially in the case of Syria, which made the situation more worsen than earlier. These actors are state actors, and some of them are non-state actors. The countries supporting the Assad regime are Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon, while the countries are supporting Syrian opposition groups such as United States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and other western democracies. The domestic political situation inside Syria is not in favor of anyone, the regime is opposing the gradually increasing voices of the public regarding the reforms, but the Assad's regime forcefully silent they and the ally helps him to do so. The growing Russian-American antagonism in Syria worsens their relations, especially in the United Nations security council. The western bloc presented sanctions against Assad in UNSC every time Russia vetoed them. The non-state actors take advantage of this antagonism, re-establishing their sanctuaries in Syria just as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and its affiliated groups these groups are in the fight with the Russian-backed regime and the United States. Washington seriously considers these groups as a terrorist threat to his homeland security. They believe that they just stopped at this point before they attacked them as they do in 9/11. The conflict becomes more complex and multi-dimensional. Whenever the Syrian conflict melt-down, it will emerge as a broken state and seized economy with the foreign occupation in north and east part of Syrian territory. The key parts of the country that are in control of government are impenitent. The United States will sooner or later pull out as eastern Syria is not intentionally significant for their national security interests. The United States also fails to apply the western democratic model rejecting the authoritarian regime.

The American people are not much informed about what their armies are doing in Syria to compel Iranian forces from Syria with negligible resources. The Russian, Syrian and Iranian nexus is well organized in Syria rather than the United States and with its Gulf allies. The domestic challenges are also associated with local governance and enduring peace, which does not seem possible yet in Syria. Russia was continuously busy in military build-ups in Syria. The international donor agencies may not be able to provide fair humanitarian aid to the IDPs because of Assad's regime, while the government is not focusing on the social and economic situation of the Syrian citizens as well. To stop the future recruitments of extremists from the IDPs, to must take steps towards the upgrading of their living standards. The international community is not much pursuing this conflict which is a serious concern of the Syrian peoples. Russia takes a broader view of what a consider to be terrorist groups than the United States does. The allied Russian political-military resourcefulness in Syria, with a bombing drive from 30 September, provision of Iranian backed Hezbollah Syrian military pulverized assaults, and summoning of international meetings to try & sheltered the Assad government, has changed the dynamics of the fifty-six-month Syrian crisis. The effects of the involvement are noteworthy & are both countries explicit, inside and outside of Syria & in the association among the countries, societies, and organizations. The Russian-supported attacks have made imperfect advantages against both armed protestors and the Islamic State. Though, the military effects of the interference are improbable to be conclusive despite the wide bombing, the supply of unconventional battleground gears and armor, and the positioning of troops as 'consultants' near the war zone. In its place, Moscow is possible to express a choice as to whether it phases up its pledge, including extra military bases further

inside Syria, the use of more wide-range bombers & cruise missiles, and the invasion of additional ground forces. Politically, the Russian inventiveness has reached the prompt goal of a temporary international acceptance of President Assad's holds power & the elimination of any situation to his future in plans for an eighteen-month evolution. Though, it is improbable despite a similar, high-profile determination by the United States that a political resolution will be accomplished, given the break between the regime & Syrian opposition and rebellious group, as well as scepticism & contradicting moves by states such as Saudi Arabia & Turkey. Certainly, this nonexistence of resolve, the most important effects on states in the region and elsewhere are expected to be continuing political, financial, & social contests prices. These will diverge, rendering to the level of participation in and familiarity with the Syrian conflict. The Russian interference has already prolonged Turkey's frontline political contribution, predominantly after Turkey put down a Russian jet near the Turkish-Syrian border on 24 November.

Saudi Arabia is also walking up its participation as the ally of the Syrian opposition, together openly concluded over and try to foster an opposition and armed rebel bloc, and confidentially through providing arms assistance to rebel groups. Iran's assets in & costs from the Syrian war have escorted by the Russian involvement, predominantly through the booster of war zone commanders and troops as well, Iranian leadership of Hezbollah and overseas militias, its consular firmness on Assad's retaining of power. Other nations have been more vigilant in their political standing. Iraq's government has held a "coordinating center" comprising Russia, Iran, and Syria's representatives, otherwise keeping a consideration on the IS in Iraq. While Jordan and Lebanon are forced by fears over further spillover of the conflict, the Gulf states are together admiring the Saudi lead and suspicious of any posture opposing it. This attention is covered by economic and social significance. The Lebanon-Jordan aspect further contests with large populaces of Syrian refugees for the reason that of cuts in international funding, which are probable to continue into 2016, in Lebanon's case, local fierceness among the security forces and armed groups near the Syrian border. Despite a United States government's determination for a political resolution by the end of March 2016, there is improbable to be any alteration in this condition deprived of considerable changes in the approach to communication and conciliation. These embrace the credit of territorial control by each side of the Assad government, the opposition, and rebels Kurd groups in the conflict. The de-facto partition bargains space for the merging of situations for discussion, such as the progress of capacity building in opposition-controlled areas for domination, judicial systems, reconstruction, & provision of local services. States and other players in the Syrian conflict must incite humanitarian crises in the short-term period, but humanitarian aid can be no more than a slight comforting if it is not part of a political process which at the least leads to endangered zones, certain admittance for relief providers.

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