

Security Council

Study Guide

Bringing the end to the conflict in Syria and resolving Turkish occupation of Northeastern Syria

The conflict in Syria began on 15th of March 2011 as a wider movement known as the Arab Spring protests. The unrest quickly turned into a civil war waged between the loyalist of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and various opposing forces. Currently, the war is still being fought between several factions including the Syrian Armed Forces, alliance of Sunni opposition groups (known as the Free Syrian Army) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The decade long conflict saw intervention of several foreign countries including Iran and Russia supporting the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States conducting airstrikes against ISIL as well as limited number against pro-government and government targets. The conflict saw approximately 500 000 people dead and an exodus of estimated 6 million refugees which created a severe refugee crisis in 2017 which continues since then. International organizations have accused all sides involved of violating human rights and the conflict escalated tensions between the United States and Russia. Initiative to accommodate peace were taken by United Nations in the form of March 2017 Geneva peace talks on Syria but fighting has continued.

As part of the war in Syria, in 2019, Turkey has conducted an offensive into north-eastern Syria against the Syrian National Army. The conflict resulted in the displacement of 300 000 people and Amnesty International reported the occurrence of war crimes committed by Turkey. Since then, Turkey resolved to occupying Northeastern Syria. The operation and subsequent occupation were met with mixed responses from the international community. Russia condemned the occupation and deployed troops, several European countries imposed arms embargo on Turkey and US imposed sanctions on Turkish ministers and senior government officials in response to the occupation. The Turkish invasion followed a surprising pullout of US forces from Syria ordered by former US president Donald Trump; however, the US played a significant role in establishing an initial cease fire in return for the complete withdraw of SDF from its positions on the Syria-Turkey bordered. The ceasefire was further extended after negotiations took place between Vladimir Putin and Turkish president Erdogan. Since then the captured area remains a Turkish occupation zone.

Additional sources:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/ten-years-civil-war-syria>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1088672>