



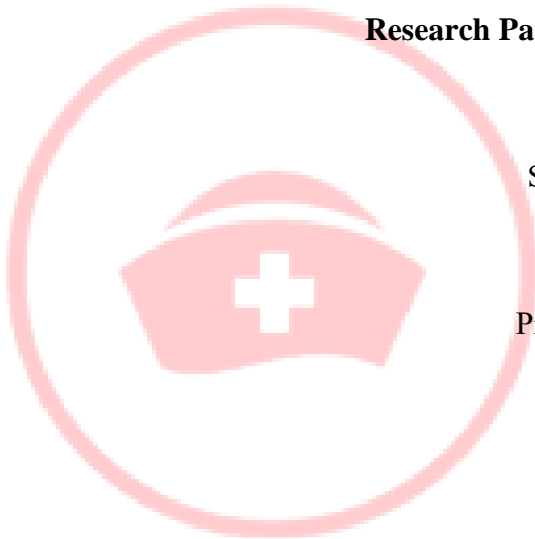
Research Paper: The Syrian Civil War

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Research Paper: The Syrian Civil War

Syria is an Arab Republic located in Western Asia, bordering the Mediterranean Sea and Lebanon to the West, Iraq to the East, Turkey to the North, Israel to the Southwest, and Jordan to the South. The country has been of interest to many researchers and humanitarians due to the constant fighting between the government forces headed by President Bashar al-Assad and the rebel forces. President Bashar al-Assad has ruled the country under a semi-dictatorship regime since 2000. The country has been of attention to unions such as the United Nations and countries such as the United States, Europe, and Iran, who are interested in establishing a peaceful resolution to end the civil war. The media, including BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera, have covered the tragedy in Syria, addressing the woes of innocent citizens, internally displaced persons, refugees, war victims, severe bombings, and the atrocities of Assad's government (Jenkins, 2014). Numerous reports and research articles have been written to address the military conflict in the country that has had adverse effects on the country's international relations, social environment, and economy. Consequently, the war has escalated over the recent five years, which has seen the rise of numerous ethnic and religious groups and fighters. One of the most popular rebel groups is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda, which use armed conflict and terror to address political ideologies. Since its inception, Syria has been recognized for its unstable political conditions due to the intense conflict between Syria's religious, social, and political groups (McHugo, 2015). This paper examines the history of the civil war in Syria, highlighting its causes, consequences, and interventions.

Causes

The Syrian civil war is complicated, attributed to the changing dynamics and the people involved, including contradicting alliances, the international community, and rebel groups. The

modern civil war in Syria today dates back to several historical events that amalgamated the instability in the country. For instance, in 1967, Syria lost a section of its territory-Golan Heights-to Israel after a short war between Israel and the neighboring States(McHugo, 2015). However, the Syrian Civil War is mostly a result of the March 2011 events during the Arab Spring in Deraa city. On 1 March 2011, school-going teenagers were imprisoned for spraying anti-government graffiti and 'freedom' slogans on school walls. The opposition against Assad's regime resulted from the increased discontent with the repressive regime and poor economic state in the Middle East (Jenkins, 2014). After the imprisonment of the teenagers, the civilians protested against the government.

As the protests ensued in Syria, the government launched a crackdown against the protesting civilians. Later, in mid-March 2011, the forces fired on a peaceful gathering at a funeral. Yet again, the forces raided a mosque used as a hospital during the war, and the attack led to the death and injuries of innocent citizens (McHugo, 2015). The move by the government is viewed as the inability of Assad's regime to establish legitimacy. The protests aimed to press the government to establish a democratic regime that respected human rights and contributed to the economy's growth by providing citizens with jobs. Assad's forces were brutal, as indicated by the atrocious massacres that caused several mass arrests, killings, and torture. The conflict between the government and the civilians raged on, resulting in chaos in Syria and civil war. The war escalated with the rise of sectarian battles. For instance, in 2012, the Nusra Front, a rebel group, was born out of the al-Qaeda sectarian group. The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency reports that more than 1,000 rebel groups had emerged in Syria by 2013 (Mohamed, 2012). Besides, the Syrian conflict has escalated with the uprising of diverse political and religious groups and the sectarian

differences between the government and the opposition. The war has become a humanitarian crisis that has stolen the debate and spotlight in media and international communities.

Consequences

The civil war is evidence of violence and violation of civil and human rights that has led to mass killings of Syrians. Although Article nineteen stipulates that citizens have freedom of expression, the Syrian government has violated the recommendation by violently attacking the demonstrators. Moreover, Article 5 asserts that citizens have a right not to be treated cruelly (Mohamed, 2012). On the contrary, the arrested teens were subjected to torture at Damascus. Despite the pledge for release by their families, the government remained insensitive, which led to protests calling for the release of the teenagers. Besides, the continuing civil war has affected social life with the inaccessibility of inadequate resources such as food, water, and other luxuries. The mass violence has limited the available resources in rural areas and cities, such as Deraa, which was under siege during the Arab Spring. The consequence of inaccessibility to resources is the economic downturn that has affected the domestic and international economy (The Toll of War, 2017). Domestically, mass infrastructure destruction has occurred, leading to the closure of industries, impeding trade and investment, increasing unemployment, and preventing children from attending school (Berti, 2015).

The Syrian civil war is highly mocked for the cruel and violent attacks on innocent civilians. Since March 2011, more than 250,000 Syrians have died fighting for their rights (Carpenter, 2013). Notably, not all of the dead civilians were involved in the protests; many were innocent civilians. The European Commission describes the Syrian Civil War as a horrific event and humanitarian crisis that has led to millions of internally displaced persons, millions of refugees fleeing into other countries, and the death of over 220,000 Syrians. The European Commission

reported that approximately 13 million civilians needed humanitarian assistance. Besides, the former President of the United States-Barrack Obama-proposed, the need for humanitarian intervention in Syria (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2018). With millions of Syrians seeking asylum in neighboring countries such as Turkey and Greece, a security threat arises since terrorist groups such as ISIS target to exploit the refugees to launch terrorist activities in other countries(Hokayem, 2014). Berti (2015) mentions that the controversial exploitation of refugees by rebel groups has caused other countries to limit the entry of more refugees. The rising number of refugees and internally displaced people is a humanitarian crisis affecting the international aid agencies, host countries, and the Syrians.

Intervention

Various alliances have projected that the Syrian war will continue soon despite the peace resolution efforts by international agencies and countries such as the United States. The recent Paris attacks, the terrorist activities by ISIS, and the raging violence in Syria have gained the international community's attention (Jenkins, 2014). As Assad's regime continues to violate human rights, the United States and the international community face a controversial situation in finding a legitimate and legally justifiable strategy to use force against Syria. Mohamed (2012) asserts that the United States and the international community have been forced to remain silent due to the Syrian war's complex nature. One of the pressing issues in addressing the civil war is the elimination of ISIS and the removal of Assad's political regime. ISIS continues to spread its terroristic activities backed by funding from the Gulf States, presenting the need for an immediate purge of the militant group. However, the Syrian war continues to grow with the raging sectarian and proxy conflicts. Besides, it is more controversial, considering that Iran and Russia support the Syrian regime.

On the other hand, the U.S., Turkey, and the Gulf States are attempting to contain ISIS (Hokayem, 2014). The growing atrocities and intervention by contradicting alliances make the Syrian war more complex. ISIS threatens international security and peace, and their terroristic tactics violate human rights. The United Nations needs to authorize and empower the U.S. troops to use military force and lethal power to fight ISIS. However, it is a concern that fighting the troops may lead to World War III (Carpenter, 2013). Recommendably, the International arena should find a peaceful resolution to curb the rise of more deaths and human rights violations. Although there are several causes of the war, the Syrian government has played a greater role in escalating the war; thus, it would be vital for the regime to step down to benefit the citizens and instate a new democratic government.

Conclusion

The Syrian conflict is a result of several historical events that instigated instability, chaos, turmoil, and political distrust in Syria and the conflict in the modern era. The war has had several consequences, such as violation of human rights, displacement of civilians, economic downturn, and mass death. Despite the intervention by the international community, the war may keep escalating, which may lead to World War III while attempting to find a solution to the conflict. The recent steps by the international community to establish a solution framework, including political transition and ceasefire, may help end the war. Nonetheless, it is a great challenge to effectively implement the framework; thus, restoring peace in Syria may not be expected in the near future.

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