



# NOVICE 43

## HUNTINGTON BEACH HIGH SCHOOL



### Security Council #2

### Syria

Chair 1: Avery Wiley  
Chair 2: Stephanie Nguyen  
Chair 3: Andre Bolanos

# Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations Program, we would like to welcome you to our Novice 43 conference!

Our annual Novice conference upholds the principles and intended purpose of the United Nations. Delegates can expect to partake in a professional, well-run debate that simulates the very issues that those at the United Nations discuss every day. Both novel and traditional ideas will be shared, challenged, and improved.

It is our hope that all delegates will receive the opportunity to enhance their research, public speaking, and communication skills as they explore the intricacies of global concerns through various perspectives, some of which may be very different from their own. We hope their experiences here give them new insight and values that they can apply outside of the realm of Model UN for the betterment of the world community.

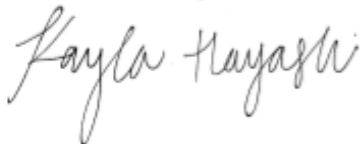
Although we will be entertaining a new style of a virtual conference, we hope all delegates will experience a fruitful and enhancing debate. Please do not hesitate to approach our Secretariat or Staff Members with any questions or concerns that you may have throughout the day. We wish the best to all our participants and hope that they may share a fulfilling experience with us! Enjoy the conference.

Sincerely,



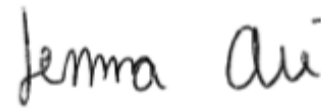
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**Summer Balentine**  
*Secretary-General*



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**Kayla Hayashi**  
*Secretary-General*



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**Jenna Ali**  
*Secretary-General*



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**Hailey Holcomb**  
*Secretary-General*

## Meet the Dias

### Avery Wiley

Hi Delegates! My name is Avery Wiley, I am currently a junior and this is my third year in MUN at HBHS. I love staying active and being involved with sports both on and off campus and I play both field hockey and soccer for the high school while also playing on a club soccer team outside of school. After school, I work as both a surf instructor for a surf camp called Corky Carroll's down at Bolsa Chica State Beach and a hostess/food runner for a small restaurant and brewery called Matter of Craft. In my very limited free time I enjoy going to the beach, hiking, and going on road trips to places like Malibu, Big Bear, San Onofre, Catalina Island and many others with my friends. I also really enjoy listening to and discovering new music. I am super excited to meet all you guys in committee and I wish you good luck on your papers! Happy researching and see you in April!

### Stephanie Nguyen

Hey everyone! My name is Stephanie, and I am a junior here at HBHS. Through my three years of being in MUN, I have enjoyed researching a number of pressing issues and ways that I can solve them. This has made me realize that I would love to travel the world and possibly be a journalist one day. Aside from MUN, I love to read all kinds of books. I have a blog where I write whatever comes to my mind, and I want to write a book one day. I also enjoy sewing, swimming, and watching an unhealthy amount of cheesy rom coms. I'm so excited to meet everyone in committee, and I hope you all enjoy the conference! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to send us a message at the email below!

### Andre Bolanos

Hi my name is Andre Bolanos I am a junior and this is my third year of MUN at Huntington Beach High School. I enjoy many things like playing video games, eating, listening to music such as Mitski, Kpop, and Nicki Minaj which I would consider myself a barf. When I go out to eat I am very picky with where I eat but my favorite places to eat include Chipotle, McDonalds, and Chick Fil A. I am as well a kpop stan some groups that I mainly listen to are IZ\*ONE, LOONA, Twice, Blackpink, GWSN, and WJSN and if any of you guys want new songs to listen to I have a list. My favorite lyric that Nicki has rapped is "What's your name? B O B? So, they are calling you BOB Stop playing, you know I'm known for the Bob"" I do not do any extracurricular activities at HB except for learning ASL. As of right now I know two languages and am learning two languages which include English, Spanish, Chinese, and American Sign Language. Good luck with your papers and hope you have fun at the conference and like my fellow chairs and I. I hope to have a great debate and can not wait to be your chair.

**All Papers are due on April 18th, 2021 by 11:59pm to**  
**[sc2novicemun@gmail.com](mailto:sc2novicemun@gmail.com)**

## Conflict in Syria

### BACKGROUND

The roots of the Syrian conflict date back to the post World War I period after the collapse of the Ottoman empire. As part of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, French and British imperial powers established borders within the Middle East, grouping diverse ethnic and religious groups within the same territory. Because of this, French colonialism had initially set the tension for modern-day Syria, becoming the breeding grounds of today's war. The Alawites, a minority Muslim sect, representing only 12% of the population, had rose to power by building up a symbiotic relationship with France. The French had welcomed the Alawites as part of the newly constructed military and promoted them to higher government positions, seeing that they would rely on European colonists to maintain control, and having a minority group in power as opposed to the majority Sunni Muslims, theoretically, seemed less likely for revolt or opposition.<sup>1</sup> However, for Syria, that was not the case. Following Syria's independence, Syria joined with Egypt, becoming the United Arab Republic, which was only a short lived union. Eventually, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party seized power in Syria. As a result of the coup known as the Baath Revolution, the Syrian military took over in 1963 with the dominance of an Alawite concentrated government. In 1970, Hafez al-Assad overthrew de facto leader, Salah Jadid, and when he came to power, virtually all the top power brokers in that nation were Alawites, creating a dangerously precarious political system.<sup>2</sup>

Hafez al-Assad ruled for the next 30 years where he modernized the nation, building up the Syrian military with the aid of the Soviet Union and gaining popularity through his various actions geared towards public works. However, he gained a large opprobrium and political dissenters often disappeared or were eliminated by arrest, torture, and execution.<sup>3</sup> The infamous 1982 Hama Massacre is a prime example of the brutal Assad regime. When the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni Islamist political force mounted a rebellion in Hama, Assad ruthlessly suppressed it, sending over 12,000 government forces and army units who killed tens of thousands of innocent Syrians as a means to purge the city of anti-government rebels.<sup>4</sup> On June 10, 2000, with the death of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father promising he would be different with the people. Only a couple months into office, Basshar al-Assaf released 600 political prisoners, a sign to many of his intention to advance democratic reforms. However, this was far from the case. Assad began tightening free speech and isolating the economy with no plans on democratic rule.<sup>5</sup>

With the Syrian Civil War being at the centerpiece of the new period of protests in the Arab nations known as the Arab Spring, the war was a crucial moving point for the protests. As a series of pro-democracy uprisings enveloped largely in Muslim nations, the Arab Spring showed the need for a more suitable government and more effective social and political changes. The Arab Spring lasted for two years from 2010 to 2012 which helped influence the need to protest against the officials of Syria, calling for the resignation of Bashar Al Assad.<sup>6</sup> However, despite these protests, the Assad regime responded with a brutal crackdown on dissenters, initiating a reign of terror and sparking a civil war. Since 2011, the Syrian Civil War has stemmed into a major international issue with political turmoil rampantly running the nation. Due to early revolts towards President Bashar al-Assad and his government, the civil war has spiraled into an



uncontrollable mass destruction<sup>7</sup>. The revolts against Assad called for the expulsion of the government and the need to install a better governing system which all started with the deaths of thousands of people by the hands of the government. To stay in power, Assad often resorted to repressive measures including the disappearances of citizens and the constant bombardment and sieges of cities.<sup>8</sup> Torture prisons and camps were created for the government to brutally kill, torture, hang, and systematically deprive “missing” people of food, water, medicine, and medical care. For example, the Saydnaya Prison is where the Syrian state quietly slaughters its own people. Since 2011, over 13,000 civilians have been killed in secrecy at Saydnaya with the bodies taken in truckloads to mass graves.<sup>9</sup> Syrian civilians face the brunt of the war's impact. According to the UN World Food Program (WFP), most of the nation is living with food insecurity with more than 80% of the population living below the poverty line. Economically, the conflict has decreased Syria's GDP to \$226 million.<sup>10</sup> In addition, as of early March 2021, Syria's currency plummeted to a record low value of 4,040 pounds to the dollar on the black market in comparison to 700 at the beginning of the year.<sup>11</sup>

The complexity of the civil war has gained international recognition, drawing in several major foreign players. For Assad's government, Russia and Iran remain key supporters with both nations providing military aid and deploying hundreds of troops to back Assad's regime. In 2015, Russia first intervened in Syria, conducting airstrikes against “terrorist” targets, but US allegations have countered these claims and have accused Moscow of directing airstrikes against non-Islamic State (IS) rebel forces who are fighting against the government. Meanwhile, the Kremlin has blamed US officials of campaigning against IS groups in order to slow down Russian military advances. Because Syria is Russia's closest ally in the Middle East, Moscow is motivated to ensure Assad stays in power so that they can continue their military influence in the region including an important military airbase in Latakia and a naval base in Tartus. In regards to Iran, the nation's alliance with Syria benefits them against regional rivals, specifically Israel and Saudi Arabia. Through this alliance, Iran strategically ensures that Syria facilitates transportation of weapons to Hezbollah, who also opposes Israel. Thus, Iran's involvement in the war is more geared towards political advantages.<sup>12</sup> On the side of what they consider the “moderate” rebels groups, western powers including the US, UK, and France have prioritized a non-lethal approach since the jihadists assumed a dominant force in the armed opposition. In addition, Turkey and several Gulf Arab states continue to support the opposition. Since the onset of the civil war, Turkey has played a large proponent with a goal of using rebel factions to contain the Kurish People's Protection Units (YPG) that dominates the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).<sup>13</sup>

Despite the extreme humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the decade long war and the fact that Assad controls most of the country, experts have expressed doubts about the end to the war which has only increased in complexity given the significant investments by outside powers like Russia and the US. Seeing that a peaceful protest and simple confrontation between the people and the government has completely evolved into a bloodthirsty geopolitical quagmire, the Syrian people hold little optimism for the future of their country. In addition, the UN Security Council is paralyzed by pro-Assad Russia and China wielding veto power that has prevented meaningful action to end the crisis. Therefore, careful negotiations and exploration of previous failed and successful efforts need to be addressed because if effective actions are not taken soon, it may simply be too late for Syria.

## UNITED NATIONS ACTION

The United Nations Involvement in Syria began on April 27th, 2011 four months after the conflict began, when a public debate was facilitated by the Security Council<sup>19</sup>. Two days later the Human Rights Council (HRC) passed the first official United Nations document regarding Syria that encompassed the guidelines for starting investigation on the developing conflict. This direct effort from the Human Rights Council along with a zero tolerance statement from Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon led to Syria withdrawing from the HRC in May of 2011<sup>20</sup>. Because there is great international disagreement regarding the conflict in Syria and due to the disagreement between Russia and the United States who both hold veto power in the Security Council, the UN effort has been stunted and few documents have been agreed upon. Although there is argument regarding the political situation in Syria, the international community has agreed that humanitarian assistance and a halt of bloodshed is needed in the country and thus S/RES/2268 granted humanitarian workers the right to work in Syria free of threat and provided protection and safety to humanitarian efforts to help those currently struggling, the resolution also called for a cessation of hostilities proving the grandiose need for the end of casualties<sup>21</sup>. Once again regarding helping those suffering in Syria is S/RES/2043 which calls upon neighboring countries to involve themselves in humanitarian efforts, take in Syrian refugees and provide them with asylum<sup>22</sup>. S/RES/2043 also established the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) which originally was created with the goal of providing Syria with a strict ninety day cleanse from violence but was eventually given a thirty day extension that did not prove as successful as planned and led to the cessation of the mission on August 19th, 2012<sup>23</sup>. Once Al-Assad's regime began using chemical weapons in 2013, the UN became more involved in the protection of civilians and the illegal use of mass weapons; adopting the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and creating a relationship with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on October of that same year. S/RES/2209 states that in unison with the punishments created by the CWC and previous UNpublished document S/RES/2118, which cooperated to lay out the overall international rules regarding chemical weapons; that the use, development, production, acquirement, stockpiling, or retaining of chemical weapons is henceforth prohibited in Syria<sup>24</sup>. S/RES/2235 was passed later when Syria was found guilty of violating the previously agreed to Chemical Weapons Convention, this resolution created a Chemical Weapons Council in Syria and gave them the power to facilitate and address chemical weapon related issues alongside the OPCW<sup>25</sup>. The UN will continue its involvement in Syria and documents have been passed as recently as July of 2020, evident in S/RES/2533 which allowed for border crossing into Turkey for Syrians seeking immediate asylum<sup>26</sup>. Through cooperation and enhanced humanitarian effort, the United Nations plans to keep its presence in Syria and work towards the international goal of peace in the middle east.

## CASE STUDY: The Refugee Crisis: Idlib

As the Syrian Civil War enters into its second decade, millions continue to suffer at the hands of the brutal regime with the numbers barely reflecting the actual cost in human life. Beyond the fight against the rebels for territory, Assad's administration has waged a ruthless war on civilians—countless dead from preventable diseases, starvation, disappearances, summary executions, torture in death camp. The circle of suffering extends beyond the dead with millions of refugees who have fled the repressive nation.<sup>27</sup> According to the UN High Commissioner for

Refugees, over 13.4 million Syrians are in dire need of humanitarian aid, 6.7 million are internally displaced, and 6.6 million have fled abroad with a majority seeking aid in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan.<sup>28</sup> Approximately 92% of refugees who have fled to these neighboring countries live in rural and urban settings; However, more than 70% of these refugees live below the poverty line with a limited access to basic services, education, and job opportunities with a very slim possibility of returning home. Poverty and unemployment have been exacerbated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic with millions unable to meet basic needs such as access to clean water, electricity, food, and medicine. In addition, the economic downturn continues to pose as a protection risk with many forced to turn to child labor, human trafficking, gender based violence, early marriage, and other forms of exploitation.<sup>29</sup> Idlib is the center of one of the worst refugee crises in the entirety of the Syrian conflict. As a strategically important province, it borders Turkey to the North while also straddling highways running south from Aleppo to Damascus and west to Latakia. In addition, it is the last stronghold of rebel and jihadist groups who have tried to overthrow Assad since 2011. Idlib and the surrounding areas are symbolically critical for Assad with Jasmine El-Gamal, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council saying that the Syrian regime has “been very clear it will not stop until it has regained every inch of Syria that it can regain.” The recent years of the conflict has produced an influx of displaced people, doubling its population to three million<sup>30</sup>; Now, hundreds of thousands must flee again with the UN estimating that over one million have been displaced as a result of the uproot of violence in Idlib. However, even with a large number of refugees—a majority being women and children— seeking aid in neighboring countries, Turkey has sealed its border. Already hosting almost 4 million Syrian refugees, Turkey has allocated \$30 million between 2011-2018 on refugee assistance which is more than any other nation. Refugees hoping to cross the border run the risk of being shot and thus, have been confined to the crowded communities and dire conditions of Idlib. Because the intensification of violence has accelerated mass displacement to the north, Idlib is a dangerous area considering that it has been the target of numerous air raids and bombing by Assad’s administration.<sup>31</sup>

Considering these conditions, it is important to understand that the humanitarian aspect of the refugee crisis cannot be solved if the stability and protection of Syrians from Assad’s regime is not first addressed.

## QUESTIONS

1. What stance does your country take in regards to the Syrian Civil War? Or if your country is neutral, what actions does your country believe should be taken to mitigate the violence in Syria?
2. Does your country accept Syrian refugees? If so, what has your country done about effectively providing for refugees? If not, does your nation have any policies toward refugees in general, and can those policies be applied to countries affiliated with Syria?
3. Has your country previously engaged in any other Middle Eastern conflicts and if so, are their approaches applicable to the situation in Syria?
4. Does your country partake in any UN sanctioned humanitarian aid missions or are they open to involve themselves in humanitarian funding/efforts in the future?
5. What is your country's stance on the use of chemical weapons? Have they ever been involved in any chemical weapons related issues? Have they ratified the CWC? Do they believe the use of chemical weapons is validated in Syria?
6. Was your country ever affected by the Arab Spring? If so, how did they respond? If not, what precautionary measures did they take, if any?



## ENDNOTES

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