

CISMUN
2015 

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL
AGENDA: SITUATION IN
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC



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The United Nations Security Council:

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the principal organs of the United Nations and constituted under Chapter V of the United Nations Charter. Broadly speaking, the UNSC bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and stability, and has a number of instruments at its disposal in order to promote peace and stability. It is one of the smallest UN Bodies, with a mere 15 members, but it is one of the most powerful, with the ability at least in theory to redraw borders, recognize governments, and change the very fabric of the international system. The UNSC was designed to address some of the flaws of the UN's spiritual predecessor, the League of Nations, which was often paralyzed as complete unanimity among its members was required in order to be able to act. The SC was designed to act as a quasiexecutive for the UN, and to be able to respond rapidly to international crises as and when they arose. This was actually not too dissimilar from the former League of Nations, which like the modern United Nations, had as its principal organs; a General Assembly of all members, an International (permanent) Court of Justice, and an Executive Council. However, unlike the League's Council, the United Nations Security Council has a far larger set of powers, as detailed below, and enjoys a more comprehensive membership than the League's Executive Council. With the addition of the United States and the Soviet Union as permanent members, the UNSC not only had unprecedented legal powers, but also effectively controlled the balance of power in the world, with the 'hard power' and political will to act. The permanent membership was always intended to represent the most powerful states in the world, but the League's Council was seriously hindered by the fact that the United States did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and that

the Soviet Union was not invited to join. In addition, the 4 permanent members of Great Britain, France, Japan and Italy, who could agree on very few issues, had relatively little power to manage international disputes, particularly when in conflict with the interests of one of their own members, or another powerful state. The historical evidence for this would be the Abyssinia Crisis of 1937 (in which Italy conquered Ethiopia), the Manchurian Crisis of 1931 (in which Japan invaded China), and the German Remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936. The new UNSC had, and still has, many internal issues to resolve, but a lack of power or prestige is not one of them. With the fall of Japan and Italy after WW2, and the decline of the French and British Empires, the USA and the USSR emerged as the dominant superpowers and thus, with France, Great Britain and China, they effectively controlled the balance of power in the world. Though arguably more successful than its predecessor, the UNSC nonetheless has several issues of its own. During the Cold War, the Council was hamstrung once again by power politics, as both sides of the Cold War used the SC to veto any resolutions critical of their own policies, or that would go against their respective national interests. Though there was limited cooperation on some issues, particularly in the developing world, the SC was however unable to resolve several issues, such as the Vietnam War and the Suez Crisis.

Mandate

The [UN Charter](#) established six main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. It gives primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council, which may meet whenever peace is threatened. According to the Charter, the United Nations has four purposes:

- To maintain international peace and security;

- To develop friendly relations among nations;

- To cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights;

- And to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

All members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. While other organs of the United Nations make recommendations to member states, only the Security Council has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.

Composition

The UNSC is today composed of 15 member states. 5 of these member states have permanent seats, and have the ability to veto any resolution that the council proposes. These 5 members are based on the victorious nations of WW2, namely China, France,

Russia, the UK, and the USA. 1 In addition to these 5 permanent members or P5, there are also 10 other states on the Council, which are elected by the General Assembly for 2 year terms. These elections are staggered so that in any given year there will only be 5 seats up for election. The 10 nonpermanent seats are allocated further by region; with the African group allocated 3 seats, the AsiaPacific, Western Europe and Others, and the Latin American & Caribbean Groups allocated 2 seats each, and the Eastern Europe Group 1 seat. For the purposes of balance and relevance, we have somewhat deviated from the current composition of the UNSC for the GIMUN Annual Conference 2015. At the conference the composition of the Council will be as follows: China, France, Russia, USA, UK, Angola, Chad, Chile, India, Jordan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nigeria, Turkey, Venezuela.

Functions

Under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

- To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- To call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- To take military action against an aggressor;
- To recommend the admission of new Members;
- To exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas"; To recommend to the [General Assembly](#) the appointment of the [Secretary General](#) and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the [International Court of Justice](#).

For more information, consult the list of [selected articles of the UN Charter related to the Security Council](#).

Situation in Syrian Arab Republic:

Introduction:

According to the UN, there are two unfolding humanitarian tragedies in the Middle East. While the plight of Gaza has captured the world's attention, the actions of ISIS have gone largely unmonitored.

Firstly, what is ISIS?

ISIS stands for the Islamic State in Iraq and alSham. AlSham is the Arabic word for the Levant – which denotes the landmass of Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. It is a Sunni Jihadist group in the majority Shia Iraq, frequently compared to *Al Qaeda* and the *Al Nusra Front* in Syria.

How did it start?

Although often linked to, and explained through *AlQaeda*, it began life as the independent Army of the Sham in 2000. Created by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the group hoped to spark civil war in the Islamic world; putting it at odds with *AlQaeda*, whose stated mission behind Ossama binLaden was to replace “secular states with a single Islamic political leadership”.

How did the Army of the Sham join with AlQaeda?

Despite their differences, in 2004, the *Army of the Sham* became known as *Al Qaeda in Iraq* (AQI) and merged with binLaden's group. The move was a clear reaction to the US-led invasion. As Lawrence Wright puts it, "for bin Laden, Zarqawi's network offered the opportunity to extend the *Al Qaeda* brand in a field where American boots were on the ground. For Zarqawi, it drew new recruits to the fray, who longed to fight under the *Al Qaeda* black banner"

Is it still associated with AlQaeda?

No. *AlQaeda in Iraq* became ISIS in April 2013. *AlQaeda*, once the centre of the Axis of Evil in the eyes of the Western world, appears to have merely been the cocoon for the monstrosity that is now flourishing. *AlQaeda* has gone to lengths to separate itself from ISIS.

Can it be worse than AlQaeda?

From the beginning, the *Army of the Sham* has shown more bloodlust, a larger appetite for death and greater ambitions than *AlQaeda* could summon. A book outlining the strategy of the group was called "The Management of Savagery"; though it seems a stretch to say they have managed their savagery. As early as 2005, *Al-Qaeda* second in command Ayman alZawahiri worried that the group would "kill all the Shia [Muslims] in Iraq." For ISIS, *AlQaeda* never went far enough.

Who is the Genghis Khan of ISIS?

That title would go to 'emir' AbuBakr alBaghdadi.



Figure 1 Al- Baghdadi

Who is alBaghdadi?

AlBaghdadi, also known as Abu Dua and whose real name is Awwad Ibrahim Ali al Badri alSammarrari, is a 43year old Sunni Muslim who hails from Samarra in Iraq. Reports suggest he was an Islamic cleric at the time of the US invasion. From 2005-2009 he was imprisoned by the USA and in 2011 he was put on the United Nation's terrorist list due to his being responsible for "managing and directing AQI large scale operations". He has been called "the true heir to Osama bin Laden".

What does alBaghdadi and ISIS want?

The group wants a return to an Islamic caliphate – a single Sunni Muslim empire. Within its borders, sharia law would be strictly implemented; an area in which alBaghdadi earned a PhD from the Islamic University in Baghdad.

How much progress has ISIS made in their aims?

ISIS now controls, according to the Patrick Cockburn of *The London Review of Books*, “an area larger than Great Britain [...] inhabited by six million people, a population larger than that of Denmark, Finland or Ireland”. Moreover, it controls much of Syria’s oil and gas reserves. Recently, ISIS captured the Mosul dam in north Iraq – a strategic victory – and has moved west, towards the home of the ancient Yazidi religion. So far, ISIS has proved to be more Golden Horde than traditional terrorist cell.

Who are the Yazidi?

The Yazidi religion is a medley of religions, borrowing from Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism (an older Persian faith). Seen by ISIS as being an unpure religion, *The Guardian* reported that ISIS had sanctioned the indiscriminate killing of the group. ISIS has carried the mission out, with at least 500 reportedly killed, executed and beheaded in merciless examples of brutality and genocidal behaviour. The UN has estimated 40,000 people have fled for the surrounding mountains.

How has the West reacted?

So far, the reaction has been largely apathetic. Most of the attention here has been lavished on British residents who have left the country to join the ‘jihads’ and what threat they pose should they return. However, the recent attack on the Yazidi and the wavering strength of the Kurdish resistance has forced the West’s hand. Obama has ordered airstrikes, while Britain has airdropped aids to the Yazidi’s seeking refuge in the mountains.

How successful has the Kurdish resistance been?

Until the latest assaults, the *peshmerga* (the Kurdish militia) had been the only real force in the way of ISIS. Both America and Iraq fear an emboldened Kurdish population would declare independence from Iraq. Pleas for military support from Kurds have accordingly fallen on deaf ears and the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nuri alMaliki has even begun illegally cutting it from Iraq's oil revenue. ISIS is already beginning to overpower the *pehmerga*.

What can be done?

ISIS completely transforms the political landscape. It straddles, in the most dangerous way, the border between a state and a terrorist cell. It flies in the face of conventional wisdom. It can't be negotiated with, not because one can't negotiate with terrorists but because alBaghdadi is an elusive leader, one with no compelling reason to negotiate. On the other hand, there is no hunger in the West for another war in Iraq. ISIS and its successes were built on ruins of the last invasion.

ISIS poses a major threat; one that the West is only now waking up to.

Timeline:

21 August 2013

Hundreds of people are killed when rockets filled with the nerve agent sarin are fired at several districts in the Ghouta agricultural belt around Damascus. The international community expresses outrage at the most significant confirmed use of chemical weapons against civilians since Halabja in 1988. Western powers say Syria's government could only have carried out the attack, but President Assad blames rebels.

14 September 2013

Facing the prospect of US military intervention, President Assad agrees to the complete removal or destruction of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal by a joint mission led by the UN and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by 30 June 2014.

The destruction of chemical agents begins in October 2013 and the first container of chemical weapons is transferred to a ship at the Mediterranean port of Latakia in January 2014.

20 October 2013

At least 30 people are killed by a suicide truck bomb blast at a checkpoint in the central city of Hama. The attack is one of at least 27 suicide bombings that take place in Syria during 2013, leaving some 400 people dead. Their frequency increases in line with the growth in power and influence of extremist jihadist groups like alQaeda's affiliate in Syria, the alNusra Front, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Isis).

November 2013

Syrian government forces launch a largescale air campaign on oppositionheld parts of the northern city of Aleppo and its surrounding countryside. Unguided barrel bombs typically constructed from oil drums, gas cylinders and water tanks, and filled with high explosives and scrap metal are dropped indiscriminately from helicopters on denselypopulated areas. The attacks kill hundreds of civilians.

19 November 2013

At least 22 people are killed in a double suicide bombing outside the Iranian embassy in the Lebanese capital, Beirut. An alQaedalinked jihadist group, the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, claims responsibility and says it will continue attacks until Iranian forces leave Syria. Iran has sent advisers to help the Syrian military and is the main backer of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia Islamist group whose fighters have played a key role in helping turn the tide in President Assad's favour.

30 December 2013

Isis fighters and allied tribesmen capitalise on tensions between Iraq's Sunni Arab minority and its Shia Arabled government by taking control of the city of Falluja and seizing parts of nearby Ramadi, the capital of the western province of Anbar. The move comes after Prime Minister Nouri Maliki, widely accused of pursuing sectarian and authoritarian policies during his two terms in office, orders security forces to break up antigovernment protest camps. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis are displaced by the violence.

January 2014

Syrian rebels from the Islamic Front, an alliance of hardline Islamist groups, alNusra and the pro Western Free Syrian Army launch a joint offensive against Isis fighters, angered by their attacks on fellow rebels and abuse of civilians. Thousands of people are killed in the rebel infighting, which allows government forces to consolidate their control of southern and central Syria. Isis is pushed out of much of Aleppo province, but is able to hold on to its stronghold of Raqqa province.

29 April 2014

The OPCW launches a factfinding mission to investigate allegations that chlorine gas has been used in more than a dozen attacks in rebelheld areas of Hama and Idlib provinces. In every case, barrel bombs were allegedly dropped from helicopters. After they exploded, casualties reportedly began displaying symptoms typical of chlorine poisoning. In June, the inspectors say they believe toxic chemicals such as chlorine are being used in a "systematic manner" in the Syrian conflict.

8 May 2014

city of Homs. The withdrawal from the Old City marks the end of three years of resistance in the city, once dubbed "the capital of the revolution". Much of Homs fell to the opposition in 2011, but over the next two years government forces gradually regained control by subjecting areas to continuous siege and bombardment.

10 June 2014

Six months after seizing Falluja, Isis militants launch a major offensive in northern Iraq. They overrun the country's second largest city, Mosul, in only two days as 30,000 soldiers drop their weapons and flee. Emboldened, the jihadists advance southwards with the support of Sunni Arab tribesmen and other militant groups, seizing a series of towns, military bases and oil refineries before being stopped not far from the capital, Baghdad. Nouri Maliki rejects calls from Sunni Arabs, Kurds and fellow Shia Arabs to step aside as prime minister.

23 June 2014

The joint OPCWUN mission announces that the removal of Syria's chemical weapons material is complete. It also says Syria has destroyed all declared production, mixing and filling equipment and munitions. In August, the US says all of the most hazardous chemical agents have been destroyed on board a cargo vessel, the MV Cape Ray. The remaining chemicals will be destroyed at Finnish and British facilities.

29 June 2014

Isis declares it has established a "caliphate" in the territory it controls, stretching from Aleppo in northwestern Syria to the eastern Iraqi province of Diyala. The group says its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, will be known as Caliph Ibrahim and it will be renamed the Islamic State (IS).

1 August 2014

A deadly battle erupts between the Lebanese army and jihadist militants from Syria after they seize the Lebanese border town of Aarsal in response to the arrest of one of their commanders. Dozens of people are killed before a ceasefire is negotiated and the militants withdraw. Aarsal is home to tens of thousands of the 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

2 August 2014

IS fighters push further into northern Iraq, overwhelming lightlyarmed Kurdish Peshmerga forces that had moved into areas abandoned by the Iraqi army. The town of Sinjar is overrun and the strategically important Mosul Dam, which supplies water and electricity to much of Iraq, is seized, and get within 40km (25 miles) of Irbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Tens of thousands of people flee their homes, particularly members of religious minorities. Some 50,000 Yazidis become trapped on Mount Sinjar without food or water, triggering an international aid operation.

8 August 2014

The US launches air strikes against IS militants near Irbil and around Mount Sinjar, its first direct involvement in a military operation in Iraq since American troops withdrew in late 2011.

11 August 2014

Iraq's Shia Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Haidar alAbadi, is asked by the country's president to form a new government including leaders of all religious, ethnic and political factions. The move is initially rejected by Nouri Maliki, but he agrees to step down after Iran makes clear he has lost its support. Tribal sheikhs and clerics from Iraq's Sunni heartland offer Mr Abadi conditional backing.

13 August 2014

Islamic State militants launch an offensive in northwestern Syria, capturing several villages and moving to within 50km (30 miles) of oppositioncontrolled suburbs of the city of Aleppo and within striking distance of key rebel positions leading to the Turkish border.

18 August 2014

Supported by US air strikes, Iraqi troops and Peshmerga fighters retake the Mosul dam. US President Barack Obama confirms the US is beginning a longterm strategy to help defeat Islamic State.

20 August 2014

Islamic State publishes online a video showing the killing of James Foley, an American journalist who was abducted in northern Syria in 2012. The group says his death is revenge for the US military intervention in Iraq. The group is believed to be holding as many as 20 foreign hostages.

9 November 2014

Iraqi officials claim [Baghdadi is injured](#) in a coalition air strike.

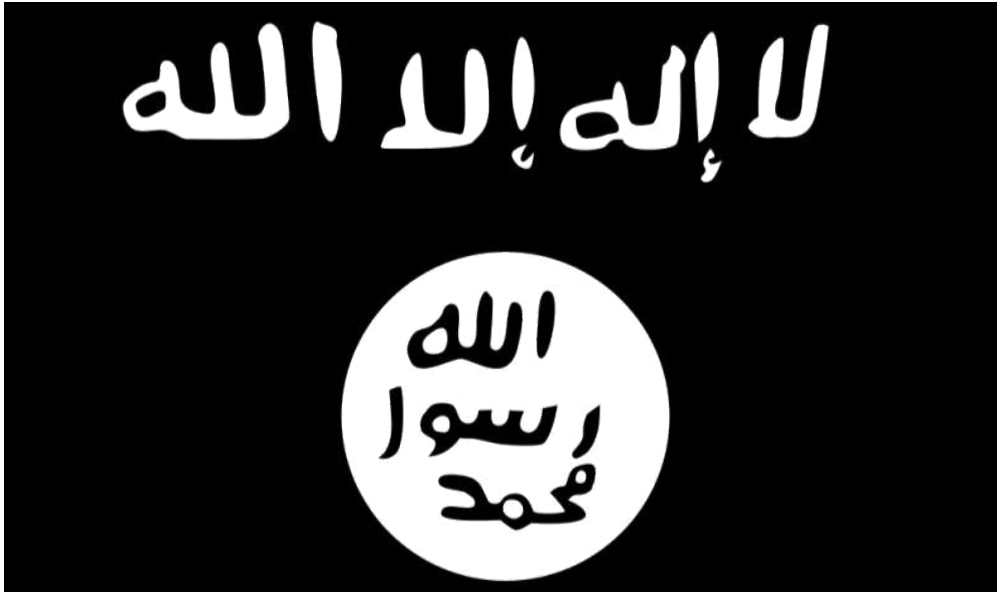


Figure 2 The ISIS Flag

16 November 2014

IS releases a video showing a mass beheading of Syrian soldiers and announcing American aid worker [Peter Kassig](#) has been executed.

15 December 2014

[Man Haron Monis](#), a self-professed Muslim cleric with a criminal record for sexual assault, takes 17 hostages at a Sydney café claiming to [act on IS's behalf](#). Two people and the attacker die after police storm the premises.

24 December 2015

IS militants shoot down a Jordanian warplane near Raqqa, Syria, [capturing the pilot](#), Lieutenant Muath Safi AlKaseasbeh.

711 January 2015

Islamist militants carry out separate deadly attacks in Paris, France. A video emerges showing one of them, [Amedy Coulibaly](#), declaring his allegiance to IS.

26 January 2015

Kurdish fighters retake full control of Kobane, successfully pushing back IS militants.

20 January 3 February 2015

IS demands \$200m from Japan (£127m, €178m) in ransom for hostages [Kenji Goto](#) and Haruna Yukawa. Negotiations for their release also involve Jordanian pilot alKaseasbeh and Iraqi female militant Sajida alRishawi. After a number of conflicting statements, IS beheads the two Japanese hostages and burns al-Kaseasbeh alive. Jordanian authorities execute alRishawi a few days later.

SYRIA TERRITORY MAP: JAN. 10, 2015

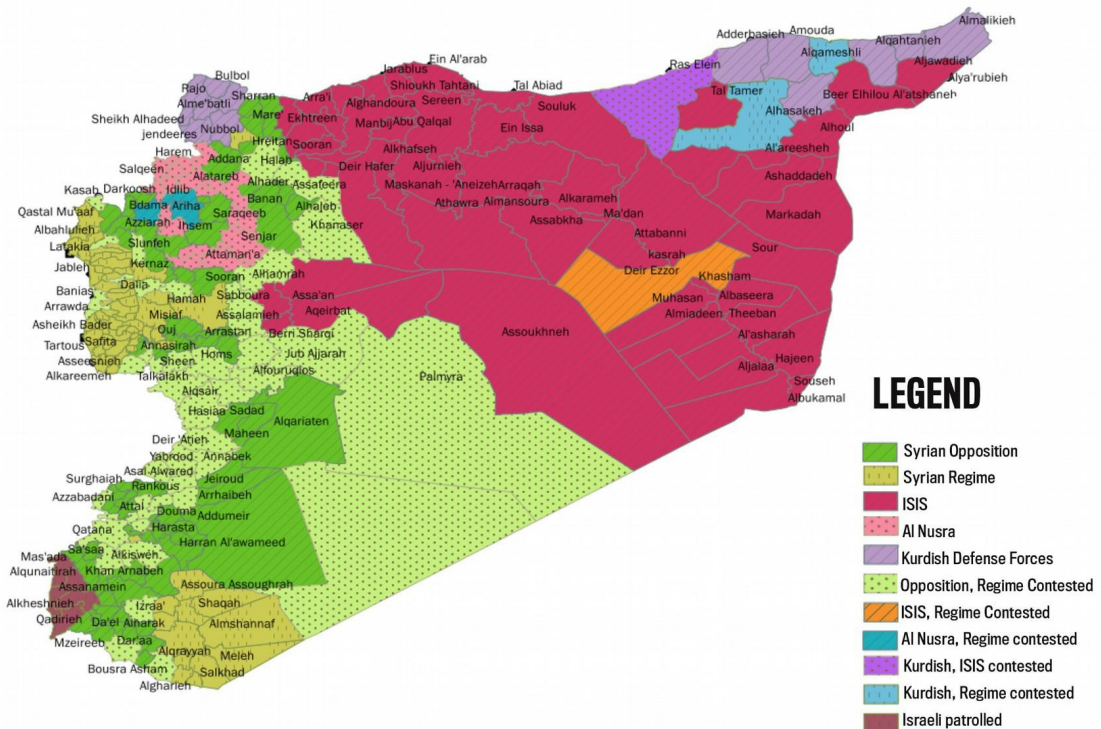


Figure 3 Areas Controlled By ISIS in Syria

Country positions:

The League of Arab States (LAS):

LAS during a meeting in September vowed to take all measures to tackle IS. However, up till now they were not really proactive: LAS endorses US lead coalition and UNSC actions to fight IS, however, does not take any proactive measures to solve the issue.

Some of the individual Arab states have pledged to help Iraqi government fight IS. For example, Iran has conducted air strikes in Iraq, which helped to leave 2 towns IS free. Though using very similar methods as the United States of America (US), both Iran and US deny any military coordination.

The People's Republic of China:

China said that it has offered the Iraqi government in Baghdad whatever help it can give to suppress the violence emerged by extremist militants in Iraqi provinces. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that Beijing is watching security developments in Iraq closely after ISIL militants captured two more towns in a sweep south. China is the top foreign player in Iraq's oilfields, which are the largest in the Middle East open to foreign investment, and has a natural interest in the country's stability. "China is paying close attention to the recent security situation in Iraq and we support the Iraqi government's efforts to maintain domestic security and stability. We hope that Iraq can return to stability, safety and normality as early as possible," Chunying said. State-run China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China's biggest oil and gas producer, has three projects in Iraq, in the south and southeast of the country.

The United States of America lead coalition:

The US began air strikes against IS in Iraq on 8th of August 2014. Since then, the Coalition (formally consisting of 62 countries) has carried out more than 600 air strikes in Iraq. Most of the countries enlisted in the Coalition do not have any direct active involvement in the air strikes, and are enlisted mainly as supporters and endorsers of the measures. US willingness to launch air strikes to Syria caused some controversy, especially because of the ongoing situation in the country. At first, Russia was objecting any possible air strikes into Syria. However, the fast advancement of IS and increasing negative media attention IS received overcame any pressures from Russia. Hence, more than 500 air strikes were carried out by the US with Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates since 23rd of September.

Russian Federation:

Russia has remained silent over this topic. Having not been invited to the coalition, and having a unique relationship with Syria and Iran, Russia has still not played any role in the elimination of ISIS. Russia is an ally to Syria. Russia could potentially change the speed and efficiency of the coalition, however has chosen not to do so.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom's national interest lies in supporting a sovereign and democratic Iraq to resist threats, offering assistance where necessary, and working with others to prevent the spread of terrorism in Iraq and throughout the region. They are taking action in three areas: promoting political unity among those who support a democratic Iraqi state and stability in the region; offering assistance where appropriate and possible; and alleviating humanitarian suffering. We have made it clear that this does not involve planning a military intervention by the United Kingdom. The rise of sectarianism and religious intolerance is fuelling instability in the Middle East. This has been compounded by the brutality of the Assad government, whose relentless war against its own people has created an opening for extremists. That is why the UK will continue to support the moderate opposition in Syria who have had the courage to fight directly against ISIL and other extremists, as well as urging the Iraqi government to take the political and military steps required to defeat such groups in Iraq. We are also working to reinforce stability across the region, including through providing significant security support to the governments of Lebanon and Jordan, as well as £243 million in humanitarian assistance to those countries. The UK will intensify its efforts in the coming days and weeks to tackle this serious threat to international peace and security.

Small-arms ammunition used by ISIS By year and country of manufacture

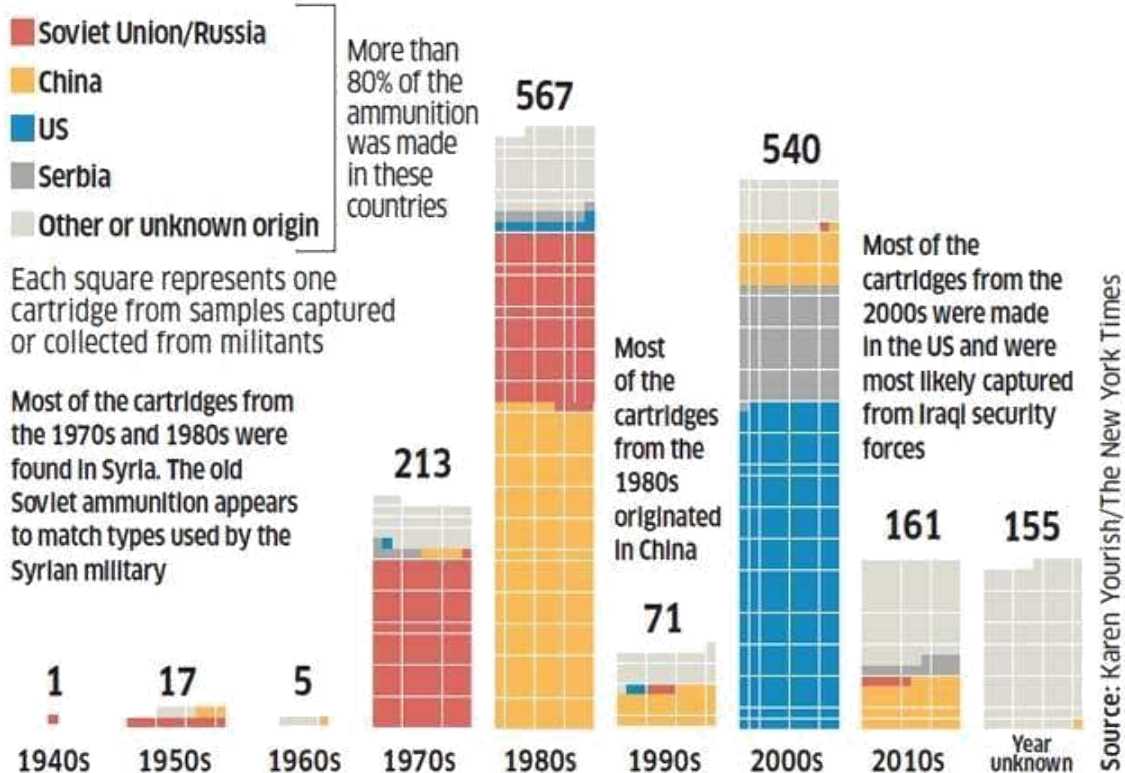


Figure 4 Ammunition used by ISIS

Questions to consider:

Questions to consider Having the list of recent measures of UNSC in a form of Resolutions, actions of US and the Coalition, and lack of action from LAS, the delegates are expected to come up with new solutions and measures, and reach a compromise among UNSC members.

Should the main action be lead by US?

Should LAS play a larger role?

What can UNSC do to combat IS?

What new could UNSC include in a resolution?

What can be done to preserve the integrity and stability of Iraq?

Are both, the integrity of the Iraqi territory and the political stability of Iraq feasible or rather mutually exclusive?

What support should be provided to the Iraqi government?

How should the international community address the territorial consolidation of Kurdistan?

What effect would a sovereign state of Kurdistan have on the stability of Iraq and the Middle East?