

THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA AND ROLE OF KEY ACTORS: THE FUTURE SCENARIO

Sher Afzal Khan

Faculty of Aerospace Sciences & Strategic Studies,
Air University, Islamabad
libsolisb@gmail.com

Saba Kiran

Faculty of Aerospace Sciences & Strategic Studies,
Air University, Islamabad
sabakiranraja@gmail.com

Mansur Umer Khan

Faculty of Aerospace Sciences & Strategic Studies,
Air University, Islamabad
Dr.mansurkhan@yahoo.com

Abstract

In light of the involvement of several parties, including state and non-state organizations on a national, regional, and international level, this study seeks to examine the complex dynamics of the Syrian conflict. The Syrian Crisis' potential future is examined, along with the people involved, their viewpoints, and their worldviews. Following the study of the documents, a qualitative approach was used to assemble a plethora of data on the topic as well as all the players and components that contributed to the Syrian conflict. Pro-Assad, Anti-Assad, and Non-aligned players are found to be divided into these three groups. Islamic State has a unique position in the conflict by engaging in combat with both pro and anti-Assad factions. According to the report, the intricate interaction between multiple state and non-state players in the Syrian war on all scales, from the regional to the global, will continue for the foreseeable future.

Keywords: Syrian Civil War, Assad Regime, Middle East, Proxy, Conflict.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Middle Eastern rebellion, often known as the "Arab Spring," started in Tunisia in the latter days of 2010, continued through 2011, despite the utter instability of the nation, and continued until March 2020, when it entered its tenth year. The "Arab Spring" has had a significant influence on both regional and global politics [1]. For a variety of causes, including dictatorial control, corruption, People in the

region rebelled against the long-standing authoritarian authorities due to issues such as a lack of democracy, a lack of accountability, a less free society, falling economic well-being, religious differences, etc.ⁱ Middle Eastern nations experienced sociopolitical unrest as a result of the rebellion in the area. The turmoil is quite evident in all of its cross-border sociopolitical expressions. The region's long-standing governments changing is one of the most notable expressions [2]. The demonstrations led to the toppling of the regimes of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. The significant protests that cast doubt on the legitimacy of the countries were so large that not even the governments that survived could put an end to them.ⁱⁱ In an effort to defend their separate countries, the regimes responded elsewhere by striking back hard against the demonstrators. The use of force by state officials turned the protests into violent, protracted battles. As civil conflicts broke out in Middle Eastern nations including Syria, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen, the situation got increasingly dangerous. Millions of lives in the area are at danger due to the power struggles between many stakeholders and the stark socio-political differences, which has created a worrying human security scenario. With the spread of a deadly phenomenon like Islamic State, the conditions in the area continue to deteriorate. With regard to resolving the dilemma, the civil unrest and insurgency in the area, together with the participation of foreign players, have made the situation more complicated [3]. In this sense, the Syrian crisis, in which there are more than a dozen players in the war ranging from internal state (non-state actors) to international level, may be

considered the most important example to comprehend constantly increasing complexity in the lethally unstable area (regional and international actors). [4].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The principal subject of discussion about Assad was the tyrants' plans to respond decisively in the aftermath of the toppling of the dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt. Particularly the Assad regime presented the protests as terrorist actions conducted by radical Islamists. Bashar al-Assad used a tiny military squad to carry out his offensive operations against his foes. Additionally, the Syrian military exploited pro-Assad militants well to expand their authority across the nation.ⁱⁱⁱ The opposition's involvement in this vital circumstance was essential, and given that it is composed of individuals from various ethnic, political, and religious backgrounds, it might help transform the variety into a sense of national identity. The disagreement cannot be fully addressed without creating a solid political system or structure, and the opposition is capable of managing the situation. The collapse of the Free Syrian Army prompted the emergence of several new organizations, according to a thorough review of Syria's dispersed opposition. The division of Sunni sympathizers into two regional groups, the Pro-Muslim Brotherhood (Qatar and Turkey) and the Anti-Muslim Brotherhood, further exacerbated the issue (Saudi Arabia) [5].

Hokayem repeatedly emphasized the significance of regional powers, especially Iran, which backs the regime, and Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which support the opposition.^{iv} The United States' hypocrisy was highlighted by Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami in their book *Burning Country* since they only publicly intervened after ISIS struck Syria. Along with attacking ISIS, the US also targeted another anti-Assad Islamist organizations. The Syrian crisis was gradually and continually changed by both internal and exterior influences, although the capacity of Assad was consistently challenged more by domestic or internal politics [6].

The crisis in Syria should not just be understood from a single, personal perspective; rather, it is important to take into account deeply ingrained historical patterns.

The European Union has continued to play a role in resolving this situation and has even sanctioned Syria and ended its alliance with that country. However, it was discovered that by adopting such measures, EU diminished its influence in the area, and that Europe's withdrawal from the region worsened the problem, especially as it related to the refugee crisis and extremism [7].

2.1 The conflict actors who support Assad

A diverse combination of local, regional, and extra regional entities make up the Pro-Assad. The majority of the pro-Assad troops are made up of local Shiite, regional, extra-regional, and Syrian government forces.

2.3 State of Syria

With the help of its friends both within and outside the country, the Assad administration has managed to survive among all the turmoil by using an exceptionally harsh policy against the rebels. Indeed, the Assad regime's supporters' unwavering backing made the possibility of the regime's survival on all fronts viable. In truth, the Assad regime's alleged use of chemical weapons caused hesitation among its allies in giving the crucial backing.^v However, against all chances, the Assad administration has received significant assistance from Russia, Iran, and the tenacious Hezbollah in the political, economic, and military spheres. Actually, each side is working with the Assad administration to further its own strategic goals in light of local, planetary, and global dynamics. While the allies' assistance has helped the Syrian government retain some degree of territorial integrity, the phenomena of reliance has also grown [8].

2.4 Iran

One of the most ardent supporters of the socialist-secular-nationalist state of the Arab world is the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has a theocratic background. The coalition really

represents a distinct regional political trend in the Middle East. Both countries have certain common strategic objectives as well as difficulties posed by regional and international entities. Both nations have successfully engaged one another in order to achieve their respective goals. Syria and Iran have a close strategic alignment on issues like Palestine and Lebanon even before the Syrian crisis started. Both Syria and Iran provide a difficult and convoluted nexus for Israel and other regional and international organizations due to the strategic depth provided by Hamas and Hezbollah. Historical studies demonstrate that Iran often enters Syria to help Hezbollah, a big opponent of the Israeli military [9].

Iran has backed the Assad administration in its fight against the opposition forces from the very beginning of the war. To protect the Assad government, it has stationed soldiers on Syrian territory. It has also extended its assistance by routinely sending supply planes to Damascus. As the battle develops, several armies from the area and beyond have joined it to further their own strategic objectives Iran put in a lot of effort to assist the Assad government in the face of any opposition. For the Iranian state to have a strong enough hand to counter the aggressive opposition being led by Saudi Arabia in regional geopolitics, a friendly Damascus government would be quite beneficial at this moment. In addition to sending its regular military personnel and providing heavy military support to defend the Assad regime, Iran has used its influence to persuade Shiite non-state actors and fighters from the Middle East, South Asia, and other regions of the world to travel to Syria in order to further their objectives [10].

2.5 Hezbollah

Hezbollah, one of the most potent non-state actors, with Iran's assistance has bolstered the Assad regime's resistance against Sunni troops and their supporters. Hezbollah, a predominantly Shiite movement, once enjoyed great popularity in the Arab world for its armed struggle against Israel, but this popularity has since declined due to its involvement in the Syrian conflict, as the Arab world now views it as a party to the Sunni-Shiite conflict due to its active

support for Iran and Syria. In reality, the alliance between Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah was clear even before the Syrian crisis began, when Syria served as a conduit for the transfer of Iranian weapons to Hezbollah for use against Israel. Hezbollah is now engaged in combat against the opposition groups in Syria with Iran and Russia. The willingness of Iran and Russia, in the framework of a potential alternative for peace building, is, nevertheless, a determining factor in the future existence of the dynamic non-state actor in the nation [11].

2.6 Lebanon

Lebanese social services are understaffed and underfunded as a result of the crisis in Syria, which has also had a significant effect on Lebanon. a circumstance for which the nation is inadequately prepared. Additionally, it has exacerbated the standoff between Hezbollah and the Free Movement and stoked Sunni-Shi'a tensions at the local and national levels. Due to its support for the Syrian government, the latter is in a precarious position. On the other hand, Hezbollah fears that a complete victory by the Syrian opposition may result in President Bashar al-ouster. Assad's. It is worried about the possibility of a post-Assad Sunni-dominated period that supports Hezbollah in Lebanon. As a result, some groups in Lebanon are concerned that Syria may one day develop into a powerful Sunni state [12].

2.7 Israel

Israel has decided not to become involved in the Syrian war. Regardless of this, any political agreement that permanently establishes Iran as a prominent player would unavoidably raise concerns. Sunnis in Iraq may become less concerned and re-align with the Baghdad government if Iran is unable to threaten Israel's northern borders, which would destabilize Lebanese and Jordanian affairs [13]. Given the likelihood of an Iran-dominated Syria and a future weapon transfer to Hezbollah through Damascus, Israel should tread cautiously. Israel fears that Hezbollah-created asymmetric battles may result in significant civilian casualties for its people.

2.8 The United States

Despite American claims to have no direct interests in the Syrian crisis, maintaining Syria is crucial to the country's national security. ISIS being able to launch attacks from safe havens in Syria is something that worries everyone that there would be a worldwide refugee crisis, and that the war may spread to other nearby nations. Despite its previous diplomatic failures, a political agreement led by the US would be perceived as the US making up for its lack of credibility in the area. However, the United States' robust participation without taking into consideration the regional political circumstances might cause more issues [14].

Today, two US approaches to Syria may be outlined: the Obama administration's strategy and potential effects of Trump's presidency on Syria and the Middle East. The US has not militarily involved in the crisis, in contrast to Russia. However, Salafi radicalism has always been its main source of worry. Obama's presidency saw a significant shift in US strategy against ISIS while maintaining a feigned interest in Assad's ouster. Compared to his predecessor, Donald Trump seems to give fighting extreme organizations a higher priority. This might serve as evidence to support an agreement with other nations. It is to be expected that the American administration will be more understanding of the Assad regime [15].

2.9 Russia

Since the start of the conflict, Russia has taken on a dual role that sometimes contrasts with it and other times enhances it. Russia backed the Assad regime and participated in the conflict on the one hand, while also serving as a mediator for almost every imaginable diplomatic accord. Syria's military presence in the Mediterranean, in particular the Tartus naval station, is known to Russia. Syria's location in relation to the gas pipeline is presumably another consideration. Given that it is home to over 20 million Muslims, Russia views radical Islamist organizations as a danger to the stability of its own internal politics. Furthermore, according to Russia, Syria runs the danger of degenerating into a failed state if President

Bashar al-Assad is ousted without a universally agreed-upon replacement. ISIS will be able to cement its positions thanks to these safe havens. In September 2015, the Assad administration started an intensive military operation against the opposition in addition to giving him military equipment [16].

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, hundreds of civilians have died as a result of airstrikes since that time, including children. However, the balance of power in Syria was significantly impacted by Russian air assistance, Iranian participation on the ground, and the limited engagement of the US and many European nations. Without Russian balancing measures, the government would have had a difficult time surviving the civil war and regaining the areas it had earlier lost. However, Russian Federation really backed a political solution that mostly benefited the government. The ceasefire that was established in Astana in late December 2016 and is still in effect today is thanks in large part to Russia. A 85-article draught constitution was also submitted by Russia in Astana in January 2017, albeit it was unofficial and rejected by all parties involved, including the government [17].

2.10 The UN and the EU

On June 16, 2012, the UN halted its operations in Syria due to an uptick in violence. Since then, it has played a significant role in both diplomatic attempts to broker peace via the "Geneva Process" and humanitarian aid to Syria. In December 2015, it also approved Resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council, which supports a timeline for the Syrian peace process. A peaceful political resolution that enables the nation to rebuild is welcomed by the UN. On the other hand, the Syrian war has a significant impact on the European Union due to the issue surrounding the refugee crisis. Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has worked tirelessly to change this, but despite consistently condemning attacks on civilians, supporting a diplomatic resolution, enacting sanctions against the offenders, and being a sizable donor to

the international community, it has had little impact on politics [18].

2.11 Other Non-State Actors

Shiite militias from all throughout the area back Iran and Hezbollah in their conflict with Sunni troops. The pro-Assad troops see the Shiite militias as a key asset, and they have been instrumental in giving them the upper hand against the opposition forces. Shiite militias' protection of the area's sacred sites was one of their primary goals, and in doing so, they provided the Assad government with essential and all-encompassing support. By waging a ferocious battle throughout Syrian land against the Sunni forces supported by the US, These foreign Shiite combatants more than made up for the massive material and non-material losses suffered by the Assad troops [19].

2.12 Assad regime opponents

The Assad regime's adversaries include a complex amalgam of local, regional, and extra regional groups. The majority of the resistance troops are made up of local and regional Sunni fighters who are assisted by western friends. The opposition is made up of liberal elements who want a pluralistic Syria on the one hand, and extreme religious organizations that want a nationalistic fundamentalist state on the other. It's interesting to note that the US and its Western allies support the diverse character of the opposition groups, whether they are fighting the brutal IS or the Assad dictatorship [20].

2.13 Qatar and Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia and Qatar have both seen a decline in their once significant influence on the dispute in recent years. In the early years of the conflict, they all financed different rebel combat organizations and were ardent supporters of the anti-Assad opposition. By supporting many competing organizations rather than one, they contributed to the rebels' frailty. Qatar, in particular, used a "scattergun" strategy. The rivalry between these two Gulf States has also split the opposition, with Doha supporting the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) together with its ally Turkey and Riyadh

supporting the MB's foes. When Saudi Arabia took over the SOC from Doha in 2013, it effectively put a stop to Qatar's significant engagement in Syria. But soon, Saudi influence also diminished. Some of this was beyond of Saudi Arabia's control; once Russia interfered, Riyadh saw the changing terrain. Saudi Arabia was also preoccupied with the conflict in Yemen, which began in 2015, and the embargo of Qatar, which began in 2017. Riyadh finally ended its backing for the armed rebels shortly after Donald Trump did as a result of rising friction with its former partner Turkey, which replaced the monarchy as the primary backer of rebels [21].

Since 2013, Qatar has mostly replicated and supported Turkish policies in Syria, playing a limited role. But Saudi Arabia has revised its strategy. The UAE, a close friend, stated in late 2018 that it was restoring its Damascus embassy, which had been shut down in protest along with other Arab embassies in 2011. Bahrain and Kuwait, two further Saudi allies, said they would soon follow. This was also a trial run for Saudi Arabia to reestablish relations, even if the UAE had its own objectives. Even the possibility that Saudi Arabia would consent to al-reinstatement Assad's into the Arab League after his suspension in 2011 has been floated. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are driven by the desire to diminish Damascus' dependence on Riyadh's arch-enemy, Iran, by re-engaging al-Assad and investing in rebuilding. They could also want to outwit Turkey, whose continued backing for the MB and Qatar has enraged it. At a time when Ankara seems to be becoming more helpless outside its borders, strengthening its influence in Syria may have some benefits. Al-Assad is unlikely to leave Iran, however, and his government has a long history of receiving funding from the Gulf without providing anything in return [21].

3 FUTURE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

While there is increasing agreement that multi-party elections are inevitable, the key topic that has generated several discussions is the nature of the new government's "power distribution." The methods of "horizontal and vertical power distribution" have both been taken into account as potential futures for Syria.^{vi}

Federalism has not come up in the talks between the parties so far. On the premise of administrative decentralization, there seems to be broad agreement in how to run a country's affairs. In accordance with Article 8 of the HNC's Executive Framework for a Political Solution, which was published in September 2016, it underlines its commitment to "give the people of each governorate and district a role in governing their local affairs." The same declaration also pledges to take efforts "to protect their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural rights" and acknowledges "the Kurdish struggle" (Article 6). However, all of these privileges and local autonomy will be granted "within the framework of the state and people's unity" (Article 8) [22]. On the other hand, local councils as grassroots groups, successfully expressing the democratic participation concept even today in Syria, are also anticipated to play a significant role in Syria's future (Article 50). Planning, industry, agriculture, economy, commerce, education, etc. are all covered by their responsibilities as outlined in Article 51 of the Executive Framework, but security is not mentioned in any way [22].

Federalism is not mentioned or even suggested in the UN Special Envoy's Paper on Points of Commonality. The Social Contract of the Rojava in northern Syria is the lone exception. Despite having the name "Social Contract of Rojava," it smells like separatism. Despite its questionable democratic credentials, it is essentially ready-made material that might be deployed in the event that any vision of self-determination came to pass. Fundamentally valuable is the fact that, other from the "social compact," all other debates about Syria's future have been focused on a united nation that recognizes Syria as a sovereign state and protects its geographic integrity.

According to the idea of a united Syria after the war, there should be a significant amount of decentralization and strengthening of the local government infrastructure. Additionally, ethnic and sectarian groups must to have political representation at the federal level. Even while a two-chamber system could be the best option in this case, the Russian suggestion to choose representatives based on their

religious or ethnic identities would only serve to exacerbate existing tensions. Therefore, planting the seeds of political inaction. The job of monitoring the prevention of discrimination might be given to an upper house. However, no official positions at the executive level should be distributed based on sectarian or ethnic preferences. Additionally, there are certain ambiguous provisions in the same upper chamber known as the Constituent Assembly in the draught Syria constitution issued in January 2017 that might be read as allowing for federalism (Article 40) [23].

Due to Syria's pre-war centralized character, the nation urgently needs decentralization and a new administration system. As a consequence of the nation's fragmentation and the exclusion of many areas from central government power, there has been a de-facto decentralization. Significantly, local governments were established in these areas to guarantee the population's access to basic amenities like electricity and water, and some even started Sharia courts. These decentralizations, however, were chaotic and illegitimate; they were managed and funded by warlords using forced levies and extortion, smuggled money, and money from outside backers. Only half of Syria's landmass, or around 15 million people (65%), is now governed by the government [24].

In terms of promoting a better governance framework for Syria post-conflict, an all-inclusive decentralization that addresses the political, administrative, and fiscal spheres could be a suitable scenario. This would improve participatory governance, improve service delivery, and lead to the realization of balanced development [25]. Decentralization should encourage local council participation, guarantee that the local population's voice is heard in the process of development and reconstruction, and ensure that essential services are provided to affected areas as envisioned in the Executive Framework of the HNC. Despite this, decentralization still has a difficult task ahead of it due to the emergence of warlords in rebel areas, the fear of local political and social strife, the confluence of internally and externally displaced people, the global fight against ISIS, and

divisions within regional and global powers. All of these regional difficulties and global conflicts converge in Syria [26].

4 CONCLUSIONS

The sociopolitical dynamics of Middle Eastern countries in particular and the international system in general have changed as a result of the "Arab Spring." This also applies to the Syrian war, which is altering its patterns in accordance with the periods as well as the alliances between the many state and non-state entities participating in the battle. The actors may be broadly categorized into two groups: those who support Assad and those who oppose him. In actuality, the conflict's various regional and extra regional actors are pursuing their individual strategic goals. Because it is waging war on every participant in the Syrian conflict, IS's role has continued to be quite unique. Additionally, the situation is changing due to recent events in which IS has lost the majority of its control as well as the senior leadership and Turkey has been more outspoken in its opposition to Kurds. The pro-Assad forces, particularly those from Iran, have made tremendous progress in establishing their power and influence in Syria. On the other hand, Iran's own citizens have begun to voice concerns about the nation's hegemonic and regional influencing policies as a result of the ever-increasing pressure of US economic sanctions. It is crucial to start an extensive dialogue about the situation in the entire region with the participation of local, regional, and international actors. Without addressing the strategic and structural factors that facilitate these organizations' existence, ad hoc solutions that target, engage, or assist them are unlikely to have any long-term possibilities for success. The EU nations might act as facilitators in this respect by considering all the parties and their constant roles in the overall regional context.

REFERENCES

[1] N. E. Williams, & E. D. Carlson, Conceptualizing the Syrian Refugee Crisis and Migration during Armed Conflict. In E. D. Carlson & N. E. Williams Comparative

Demography of the Syrian Diaspora: *European and Middle Eastern Destinations* (Springer, Cham, 2020)

[2] M. Muzaffar, M. Afzal, & Z. Yaseen, Current Arab Spring: A Wave of Democratic Revolution in the Arab World, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, vol. 2 no 21-34, 2018

Martini, J., York, E. & Young, W. *Syria as an Arena of Strategic Competition*. (Rand Corporation), 2013

[3] C. E. Humud, & C. M. Blanchard, Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response (CRS Report No. RL33487). 2020. Available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33487.pdf>.

[4] S. Heydemann, Tracking the "Arab Spring": Syria and the Future of Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 24 no 4, pp. 59-73.2013.

[5] B. Berti & J. Paris, Beyond sectarianism: Geopolitics, fragmentation, and the Syrian civil war. *Strategic Assessment*, vol. 16, no 4, pp. 21-34, 2014.

[6] Martini, J., York, E. & Young, W. *Syria as an Arena of Strategic Competition*. (Rand Corporation), 2013

[7] Blanchard, C. M., Humud, C. E., & Nikitin, M. B. D. Armed conflict in Syria: Overview and US response 2014 Congressional Research Service

[8] League of Arab States. Arab League Council Resolution 7444, 2012. Available at: http://www.lcil.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/LCIL/documents/arabspring/syria/Syria_60_AL_Council_Resolution_7444.pdf

[9] E. Zisser, The Syrian Army: Between the domestic and the external fronts. *Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal*, 5 vol. no 1, 2001. Available at <http://www.rubincenter.org/2001/03/zisser-2001-03-01/>

[10] Z. Yaseen, M. Muzaffar, & S. Naeem, Resurgence of Russia: A Case Study of Syrian Crisis, *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, vol. 5 no. 2, 2019

[11] B. Berti & J. Paris, Beyond sectarianism: Geopolitics, fragmentation, and the Syrian civil war. *Strategic Assessment*, vol. 16 no 4, pp. 21-34, 2012.

- [12] H. Wimmen, and M. Asseburg, Civil war in Syria: external actors and interests as drivers of conflict. SWP Comment 2012 Available at: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2012/C43_ass_wmm.
- [13] A. S. Okay, Turkey's post-2011 approach to its Syrian border and its implications for domestic politics. *International Affairs*, vol. 93, no. 4 pp. 829-846, 2017.
- [14] V. Bohman, Syria: A state of imbalance and war: A case study of the civil war in Syria. Bachelor Thesis: Swedish National Defence College 2016 Available at: <http://fhs.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:901211/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- [15] A. Mensur, "Future of Syria" IEMAD Available at: <https://www.iemed.org/publication/future-of-syria/#section-possible-scenarios-for-future-political-settlement-of-syria-TxQIL>
- [16] C. Çakmak, M. Ustaoglu, & M. Ustaolu, Post-Conflict Syrian State and Nation Building: Economic and Political Development. (Ney York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
- [17] Z. Yaseen, M. Muzaffar, & S. Naeem, Resurgence of Russia: A Case Study of Syrian Crisis, *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, vol. 5 no. 2, 2019.
- [18] B.F. Salloukh, The Arab uprisings and the geopolitics of the Middle East. *The international spectator*, vol. 48 no. 2, 32-46, 2013.
- [19] M. Muzaffar, M. Afzal & Z. Yaseen, Current Arab Spring: A Wave of Democratic Revolution in the Arab World, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, vol. 2 no. I, 21-34, 2018.
- [20] A. S. T. Okay, post-2011 approach to its Syrian border and its implications for domestic politics. *International Affairs*, vol. 93, no 4 pp.829-846, 2017.
- [21] V. S. Bohman, A state of imbalance and war: A case study of the civil war in Syria. Bachelor Thesis: Swedish National Defence College 2016 Available at: <http://fhs.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:901211/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- [22] A. Mensur, Future of Syria" IEMAD Available at: <https://www.iemed.org/publication/future-of-syria/#section-possible-scenarios-for-future-political-settlement-of-syria-TxQIL>
- [23] C. Çakmak, M. Ustaoglu, & M. L. Ustaol, Post-Conflict Syrian State and Nation Building: Economic and Political Development. (Ney York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- [24] Z. Yaseen, M. Muzaffar, & S. Naeem, Resurgence of Russia: A Case Study of Syrian Crisis, *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2019.
- [25] B. Berti & J. Paris, Beyond sectarianism: Geopolitics, fragmentation, and the Syrian civil war. *Strategic Assessment*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 21-34, 2014.
- [26] League of Arab States. (2012, January 22). Arab League Council Resolution 7444. Available at: http://www.lcil.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/LCIL/documents/arabspring/syria/Syria_60_AL_Council_Resolution_7444.pdf