



## **Dear Delegates,**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2016 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2016 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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## The Security Council

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Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the United Nations. And, together with the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

Source: <http://www.un.org/en/sc/>

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# The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

## Topic Background

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In 2003, the United States and a coalition of allied nations invaded Iraq in order to remove Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein had been the dictator of Iraq for several decades and had ruled the country with an iron fist. Hussein was captured soon after the invasion, and the nation witnessed a power vacuum as numerous groups within Iraq sought to expand their influence in the country. One such group was Jamaat al-Tahwid wa-i-Jihad which swore allegiance to Osama bin Laden and became Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).<sup>1</sup> AQI was motivated to create a state which observed Islamic Sharia Law in Iraq and was willing to use any means necessary to do so. AQI split from Al Qaeda in 2006 in order to use more brutal techniques to achieve their goal and became the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).<sup>2</sup> In 2013, ISI was able to use the instability which existed within war-torn Syria to conquer territories within that country and became the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).<sup>3</sup> There are many names for this group (ISI, ISIL, ISIS, IS, etc.), but we will use ISIS for the rest of this paper.

ISIS's objective is to take over the world and create a Sunni Islamic State which adheres strictly to its narrow interpretation of Sharia Law. ISIS has captured large swathes of territories within Iraq and Syria and have taken cities such as Fallujah, Ramadi, and Palmyra. In addition to taking territory, the group brutally murders anybody who disagrees with them, mostly by beheading them. To date, it is estimated over 170,000 people have been murdered by ISIS in Iraq alone.<sup>4</sup> The brutality which ISIS operates cannot be overstated. This is an organization which is willing to kill almost everyone on Earth in order to achieve its aims.

One of the most troubling things about ISIS is the rate at which it has grown. As of the beginning of 2015, it is estimated there are over 100,000 ISIS fighters and that number could double by the beginning of 2016.<sup>5</sup> ISIS has successfully utilized modern social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to spread its message of hate by posting photos, speeches, and video clips of beheadings and other violent acts. Thousands of angry people (mostly Sunni Muslims who feel abused) are flocking to Iraq and Syria to join the fight. The movement is also spreading to other countries and has been identified in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Somalia, and Nigeria.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Islamic State Factsheet." Clarion Project. <https://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/islamic-state-isis-isil-factsheet-1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "How Many Fighters Does the Islamic State Really Have?" War on the Rocks. <http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/how-many-fighters-does-the-islamic-state-really-have/>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

The rise of ISIS should enrage every nation in the world and encourage them to fight against it. Western countries such as the United States and other NATO nations are horrified at the gross human rights abuses utilized by ISIS and are also chiefly responsible for accepting burdensome refugee populations. Middle Eastern nations such as Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia are enticed to fight against ISIS because their own very existence and sovereignty is threatened by ISIS. Even countries like China and Russia, who traditionally permit human rights abuses, have become alarmed at the amount of instability ISIS has created in the region and how this instability has affected commerce. In many ways ISIS is the perfect villain: it is extreme, brutal, and unrelenting. It is the duty of the international community to deal with this group and ensure their reign of terror ends quickly.

## Past Actions

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Luckily, the international community has taken note of the serious threat ISIS poses and has worked hard to counter it. Twelve countries (including the USA, UK, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia) have launched airstrikes against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria. Another thirty countries (including such diverse countries as Germany, Chad, Singapore, and Estonia) have aided in defending territory against ISIS invasions and/or arming and training enemies of ISIS. Numerous rebel groups from within Iraq and Syria (such as Jaysh al-Islam, Iraqi Kurds, and the Islamic Front) have targeted ISIS resources. Even other terrorist groups (such as Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Hezbollah) are fighting against ISIS.<sup>7</sup> Though these various groups have done much to beat ISIS back, the group is far from being destroyed and more needs to be done to ensure its demise. Though ISIS poses a threat to nearly every MDG, the ones it most directly challenges are MDGs 2, 3, 4, and 5. Part of ISIS's ideology is the belief in subordinating the rights of women in society. Consequently: girls are not permitted an education, women are expected to forfeit all decision-making to the men who lord over them, and women are not allowed to have a say on their reproductive health and welfare. Also, ISIS does not spare killing women or children when they conquer an area. As long as the men responsible for said women or children defy ISIS, nobody is spared.

The United Nations and its organs have repeatedly condemned ISIS and its allies. Through several resolutions, the UN Security Council has asked member states to do what they could to contain ISIS, absorb the estimated 4 million refugees created by the conflict, and to decry ISIS's destruction of cultural and historical relics from the territories they control. Though these are important steps, the UN Security Council needs to authorize organized military action against ISIS. While many member nations have taken up arms against the group, no member has shown the will to do what is necessary to destroy them. The United States is weary of putting troops on the ground as they are trying to remove themselves from over a decade of conflict in the region, Russia is heavily involved with its own domestic priorities and issues concerning Ukraine, and

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<sup>7</sup> "The Astonishing Fifty Four Countries and Groups Battling ISIS." The Daily Mail.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3154680/The-astonishing-FIFTY-FOUR-countries-groups-battling-ISIS-haven-t-crushed-already.html#ixzz3mxuoDI51>

China has been wary to get itself too involved in a Middle Eastern conflict. Without a leading nation willing to champion the cause, intervention against ISIS has been limited.

NGOs have primarily focused their attention on helping refugees escaping ISIS and have coordinated with the UN Refugee Agency to do so. Project HOPE has donated over \$100 million worth of medicine to help men, women, and children in refugee camps.<sup>8</sup> Refugees International is an NGO which lobbies various governments to provide aid to refugees and collaborates with policymakers to promote effective methods for helping refugees from ISIS.<sup>9</sup> Mercy Corps is another NGO which has raised millions of dollars to provide emergency relief (food, water, clothing, shelter) to thousands of refugee families across the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> Though the work these NGOs are doing is extremely valuable, the primary effort to defeat ISIS need to be the main objective.

### **Possible Solutions**

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There are three important questions to consider while debating what to do to counter ISIS:

1. How can the international community stop the bloodshed and prevent ISIS from exacting more carnage?
2. How can the international community improve its response to the refugee crisis stemming from ISIS's advances?
3. How can the international community prevent radical groups such as ISIS from forming in the first place?

It is clear there needs to be a leading force in the fight against ISIS. The United States has been the primary actor in leading airstrikes against ISIS targets, but President Obama is reluctant to put troops on the ground because the American public is wary of getting into another long-term conflict in the Middle East. Many have argued that other Middle Eastern powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia should take on the responsibility of fighting ISIS as it is a conflict which heavily impacts them, exists within their region, and the nature of the conflict involves Islam, which these nations observe. However, there are regional politics at play such as the Sunni-Shia divide and differences of opinions between the governments of the region's largest players: Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Other powers such as China and Russia should be considered, but it is important that any action taken against ISIS is solely for the benefit of the region. Some observers have noted that Russia and China might take this as an opportunity to expand their influence in the region.

The refugee crisis created by ISIS is of immediate importance because there are millions of people who currently lack proper shelter, water, food, education, etc. Every day, thousands of

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<sup>8</sup> "Syrian Refugee Crisis." Project HOPE. <http://www.projecthope.org/where-we-work/humanitarian-missions/syrian-refugee-crisis.html>

<sup>9</sup> "What We Do." Refugees International. <http://refugeesinternational.org/what-we-do>

<sup>10</sup> "Syrian Crisis." Mercy Corps. <http://www.mercycorps.org/tags/syria-crisis>

refugees clamor onto boats or across borders in hopes of finding a peaceful place to live. Many nations have disagreed with how to deal with this crisis because of the sheer number of refugees and uncertainty over how much various countries should be responsible for their care. Some argue the Western countries should take responsibility for them, while others say the Middle Eastern countries should.

In a broader sense, more needs to be done to prevent the radicalization of groups in order to stem violence at its source. People around the world have various cultural biases which can inject them with feelings of superiority, inferiority, and anger. It is important to increase cross-cultural education and understanding so different cultures can come to understand and accept differences. Building this kind of tolerance and understanding of different groups is the paramount method for preventing the rise of the next organization similar to ISIS.

### Further Research

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- [Information on ISIS](#)
- [Information on the Refugee Crisis](#)
- [Information on Mercy Corps and the Refugee Crisis](#)
- [Information on the UN Refugee Agency's Response to the Refugee Crisis](#)

### Questions

1. ISIS has had many names. What was its first name?
2. What are three cities ISIS has captured?
3. How many countries have launched airstrikes against ISIS targets?
4. How many refugees have been created by this conflict?
5. Why did the US and coalition forces invade Iraq?

### Answers

1. Jamaat al-Tahwid wa-i-Jihad
2. Fallujah, Ramadi, and Palmyra
3. 12
4. 4 million
5. To remove Saddam Hussein