

I. Addressing the Recent Developments in the Syrian Conflict

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has worked steadily in their efforts to ensure peace and democracy permeate throughout the Middle East. Since 2014, our nation has been involved in military operations within Syria in an effort to promote such democratic norms. However, the recent developments by both the Republic of Turkey and the Syrian government are troubling. Given the mission of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to uphold peace and security, the body must make addressing the new developments in Syria its utmost concern.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) rose to notoriety in 2014 following a string of beheadings and conquests throughout the region. Concurrently, the Syrian Civil War began to intensify, giving ISIL a prime breeding ground to fester their support among individuals bearing the ramifications of the conflict. Shortly thereafter, the United Kingdom joined the United States in airstrikes within Syria and Iraq, in an attempt to remove ISIL from the region. Since the attacks, ISIL's territory has been drastically reduced, and more than enemy 9,000 fighters have been killed. The United Kingdom has worked closely with the United States, our fellow allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) in an effort to fully neutralize the threat of ISIL within the region.

While there have been great strides throughout the region, the recent destabilizing efforts by Turkey have been troubling. Following the cessation of United States military operations in Syria, approximately 80,000 Turkish forces moved further into North Eastern Syria. The Turkish forces, being in direct conflict with the SDF, have been accused of forced displacement of the predominantly Kurdish population, and in some extreme cases, of ethnic cleansing by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The United Kingdom has recently placed an arms embargo on Turkey, and is considering economic sanctions in coordination with our allies. The British delegation strongly supports United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (*S/RES/2254*) and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2401 (*S/RES/2401*). These resolutions, which were passed in 2015 and 2018 respectively, established parameters for a cease fire and subsequent UN-monitored elections. While *S/RES/2254* and *S/RES/2401* were groundbreaking in their unanimous effort to promote peace in Syria, Turkish forces in the region defied, on numerous occasions the orders of the UNSC, thus rendering little solution towards the conflict. The UNSC must diligently monitor the situation to ensure the protection of the Kurdish people, as well as the well-being of non-associated civilians.

The UNSC must order an immediate cease fire akin to that of *S/RES/2401*, however, the body must place further measures which ensure the prohibition of Turkish troop deployments beyond their previously defined safe zone. The powers and funding of the *United Nations Special Envoy in Syria* must be expanded to ensure proper monitoring mechanisms are put in place. By improving the scope of the *Special Envoy*, the UNSC can faithfully implement the provisions established in *S/RES/2254*. Given the rapid nature of the conflict, relevant United Nations organizations must be adequately equipped to fully implement *S/RES/2254*. However,

the UNSC must stand ready to take action against Turkey if necessary. While the United Kingdom stands with our NATO ally, their aggressive actions against the Kurdish people and unwarranted conquest into North-Eastern Syria cannot go unnoticed by the UNSC. The body must be ready to strongly condemn, and if necessary, place unanimous sanctions against Turkey.

II. Mitigating Further Conflict in the Kashmir Region

The ongoing dispute between Pakistan and India in the Kashmir region is one of the most long standing active conflicts in the world. Since the United Kingdom granted independence to these two states in 1947, they have both laid claim to the region, fighting three major territorial wars in the years 1947, 1965, and 1999. The Indo-Pakistani War of 1947 established what is now known as the Line of Control (LOC), which partitions roughly a 3rd of the territory under the control of Pakistan. Today, tensions continue to rise. Earlier in 2019, 40 Pakistani soldiers were killed by a terrorist group with ties to the Pakistani government. In retaliation, India and Pakistan exchanged airstrikes, and a Pakistani pilot was taken captive. While the pilot was later returned in March, tensions remain high as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently stripped the Indian Kashmir region of its autonomy under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, formally institutionalizing it as an Indian union territory. Given the presence of nuclear weapons in both India and Pakistan, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) must take extraordinary efforts towards mitigating the conflict between these two states.

Given the United Kingdom's long colonial history with both India and Pakistan, the British government has sought a hands off approach towards internal resolution. Nonetheless, given the fairly large population of Kashmiri and Mirpuris citizens living within the United Kingdom, the issue holds close to many within the nation. The United Kingdom has played a crucial role as a mediator during times of crisis. During the first Indo-Pakistani War, the United Kingdom supported United Nations Security Council Resolution 47 (*S/RES/47*) and later United Nations Security Council Resolution 80 (*S/RES/80*). These two resolutions called for a demilitarization of what is now the LOC, while granting northern regions local autonomy. These resolutions failed, as neither India nor Pakistan abided by the requests of the UNSC. Since, the UNSC has only worked to mitigate conflicts in the region retroactively. While there has not been a full-scale conflict since 1999, human rights abuses have been rampant in the region, and both India and Pakistan have been accused by certain actors of committing genocide, using child soldiers, and inhumane methods of torture. Sources from various human rights groups and the governments of Pakistan and India estimate that there have been between 50,000 to 100,000 deaths in the region since 1990. The revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution opens the door for additional human rights abuses on either side, and requires additional United Nations oversight.

The United Kingdom reaffirms its desire to see a bilateral, internal solution agreed upon between India and Pakistan; however, the UNSC must act as a mediator in these negotiations to ensure the conflict is resolved properly. Furthermore, the UNSC should appoint a special envoy for Kashmir, fully funded and equipped with contemporary monitoring technology to report on allegations of human rights abuses. By providing a general shield of oversight, the United Nations can organize an effective deterrent to further escalation. Most importantly, the UNSC should preemptively invite India and Pakistan to the negotiating table to resolve any tensions that may arise as a result from the revocation of Article 370.