

FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Post-war Syria: Strategies for Peace Building, Political Stabilization and Reconstruction.



Message from the Dais:

Dear delegates,

It is with utmost delight that we welcome you to the Beirut Model United Nations (BEYMUN) 2025! Our names are Karim Hariri and Alhaji Alie Sesay, and we will be your chair and co-chair respectively. During the preparations for this conference, we engaged in discussions that formed the foundations of our research.

We will moderate the discussions in this forum, and we hope to bring diplomacy to life through your debates and discussion, fostering a space to learn, challenge ideas, and connect with others who care about the same issues you care about.

Whether or not you have prior diplomatic experience, we assure you of a once-in-a-lifetime experience at this conference. The debates you will have and the acquaintances you will make will be the key to the impact that we are sure you hope to have. Debates should focus on problem-solving and policymaking, and the improvement of international relations should be borne in mind.

Sincerely,

Karim Hariri and Alhaji Alie Sesay,

Honorable Dais

Introduction to The Committee

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee, also known as the General Assembly Fourth Committee (GA4) is the United Nations (UN) strategic framework, tasked with considering, developing, and delivering policies on a range of five issues for inclusive and sustainable development and peacekeeping. The committee addresses matters related to the effects of atomic radiation, information-related topics and issues, peaceful international cooperation in the uses of outer space, and the last two which are most relevant to this year's conference; the UN Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) for refugees from Palestine, and Israeli practices affecting the basic human rights of Palestinians and Arab inhabitants of occupied territories.



The GA4 is vital in promoting and performing peace-keeping operations, policies, and initiatives to promote social welfare, addressing human rights issues, and improving political and economic stability across UN member states. In the context of Syria, GA4 can play a vital role in facilitating discussions on post-conflict reconstruction, political stabilization, and peacebuilding strategies.

GA4's Role in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilization

The shift from externally driven recovery efforts to approaches that prioritize local ownership and capacity building can be emphasized with the argument that sustainable recovery is more likely when local institutions and communities are actively involved in the reconstruction process. This perspective aligns with GA4's mandate to support decolonization and self-determination, the GA4 ensures it plays a pivotal role in advocating for recovery strategies that empower local actors and respect national sovereignty.

Since it first convened in 1961, the GA4 has been an "architect of integrated, directed recovery," filling in the gap of the need for coordinated efforts across various sectors and actors, evident in its strategic role in rebuilding efforts of African countries after the mass decolonization in the Year of Africa. This approach underscores the importance of coherence among humanitarian aid, development initiatives, and political stabilization efforts. GA4, with its broad mandate encompassing political and decolonization issues, has always been well-positioned to facilitate such integrated frameworks by promoting policies that ensure alignment among different UN bodies and international partners involved in post-conflict settings.

Today, there has been politicization of post-conflict recovery, where aid and reconstruction efforts are influenced by the strategic interests of donor countries. GA4 aims to contribute to depoliticizing aid by championing impartial and needs-based approaches to reconstruction, ensuring that assistance is provided equitably and without political conditionalities.

There have been numerous complexities introduced by external interventions in conflicts, including the involvement of military actors and private contractors in reconstruction efforts. The GA4 has always sought caution against the potential negative impacts of such involvement, such as undermining local governance structures and prioritizing short-term security goals over long-term development. GA4 addresses these challenges by promoting guidelines and best practices that ensure external interventions support, rather than hinder, the development of robust and accountable local institutions.

Rules of Procedure

This committee will operate on the basis of the regular BEYMUN rules of procedure. Delegates are required to use the following motions:

1. Setting the Agenda

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to set the agenda in favor of Topic A/B." Yet, this motion will not be used in the conference since there is only 1 topic.

2. Speaker's List

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to open the Speaker's List with a speaker's time of [Y] seconds."

3. Moderated Caucus

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into a moderated caucus to discuss '[Subtopic Y]' for a total time of [Z] minutes, with a speaker's time of [W] seconds."

4. Unmoderated Caucus

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into an unmoderated caucus to [form blocs and alliances / discuss resolutions / work on the working paper or draft resolution / discuss the crisis] for a total time of [Y] minutes."

5. Consultation of the Whole

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into a consultation of the whole to discuss [the recommendations elaborated in the previous unmoderated caucus / the crisis] for a total time of [Y] minutes."

6. Adjourn the Meeting

The delegate of [Country X] motions to adjourn the meeting for [Y] minutes for the purpose of [a lunch break / a coffee break]."

7. Solicit a Third Party

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to solicit [Third Party Y], as they possess relevant information or expertise regarding [Subtopic Z / the crisis]."

8. Press Conference

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into a press conference to discuss [a resolution related to Y / the crisis] for a total time of [Z] minutes."

9. Extend the Time of the Unmoderated Caucus

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to extend the duration of the current unmoderated caucus by [Y] minutes."

10. Introduce the Draft Resolution

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to introduce the draft resolutions with a speaker's time of [Y] seconds per author or co-sponsor."

11. Close Debate and Move into Voting Procedure

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to close the debate and move directly into voting procedure."

(Note: This motion requires a two-thirds majority to pass.)

Written Motions:

1. Right of Reply: Delegates can request the right of reply to another delegate who has offended their country. There is no right of reply to a right of reply.
2. Appeal to the Chair's Decision: If the delegates feel that the chair has made an unfair decision, the delegates can send it as a note to the Chair.

Points:

- Point of Order: Used to correct a procedural or factual mistake. Interruptive, but do not overuse it.
- Point of Personal Privilege: Request to leave or adjust comfort (e. g. , temperature). Interruptive.

- Point of Inquiry: Ask about the rules or current stage. Interruptive.
- Point of Information: Ask a question when the floor is open. Not interruptive.
- Point to Instigate a Debate: Challenge another delegate's resolution stance. Interruptive and subject to chair's approval.

Mapping to the Sustainable Development Goals



• **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**

This goal is at the heart of Syria's post-conflict recovery. It emphasizes the need to build inclusive and accountable institutions, uphold the rule of law, and ensure access to justice for all. As Syria navigates political reform and transitional justice, SDG 16 offers a framework for stabilizing governance, depoliticizing aid, and fostering long-term peace.

• **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being**

The Syrian healthcare system has been severely damaged, with over half of medical facilities non-functional. SDG 3 supports the restoration of health services, access to essential medicines, and emergency response systems. Rebuilding the healthcare sector is vital not only for immediate humanitarian needs but also for long-term societal resilience.

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Millions of Syrian children remain out of school due to infrastructure damage and displacement. SDG 4 highlights the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education as a foundation for peacebuilding and recovery. Rehabilitating schools and ensuring access to learning will be crucial to rebuilding human capital and preventing a lost generation.

- **SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities**

With urban centers like Aleppo and Homs heavily damaged, SDG 11 encourages inclusive urban planning, safe housing, and resilient infrastructure. Reconstruction efforts aligned with this goal can help rebuild Syrian cities in a way that fosters community cohesion, economic recovery, and disaster preparedness.

Introduction to The Topic and Its History

Post-Conflict Syria: Humanitarian Crisis, Politicized Reconstruction, and the Challenges of Reforming a Fragmented Political and Legal System

The Syrian crisis, now over a decade long, has left the nation coping with one of the gravest humanitarian crises and most complicated reconstruction dilemmas in recent history.

As of 2024, the war's devastation has:

- Produced severe infrastructural failure
- Produced socio-economic disintegration
- Produced political fragmentation.
- Brought down local economies
- Devastated the health and education systems
- Destroyed entire communities

Around 6.8 million Syrians were domestically displaced by the conflict, and another 6.7 million became refugees (UNHCR, 2023).

Rebuilding roads and hospitals is only one aspect of Syria's post-conflict reconstruction; another is negotiating a contentious and politicized landscape where political power struggles, legislative changes, and humanitarian recovery all collide. This section examines the extent of the humanitarian situation, how reconstruction has become politicized, and how Syria's current political and legal structures complicate sustainable recovery efforts.

The Humanitarian Crisis: Scale and Scope

Syria's humanitarian disaster remains among the world's most catastrophic



- As of 2024, over 15.3 million people — about 70% of the country's surviving population — require humanitarian aid (OCHA, 2024).
- According to the World Food Program (WFP), 12.9 million Syrians are food insecure and another 2.6 million are at risk, indicating that food insecurity has reached catastrophic proportions.
- This crisis is caused by several factors, such as prolonged wars, currency devaluation, economic collapse, and the loss of agricultural infrastructure. Since 2011, the Syrian pound has lost more than 99 percent of its value, making it extremely difficult for the country's inhabitants to buy necessities (World Bank, 2023).

In some areas, particularly in Kurdish-controlled northeast Syria and opposition-held Idlib, where humanitarian access is obstructed by regional entities and the Syrian government, famine-like conditions continue to exist. In early 2023, UNICEF reported that over 2.5 million Syrian children were acutely malnourished, while barely 50% of healthcare facilities nationwide were functional (UNICEF, 2023).

Another major concern is water insecurity; cholera and other waterborne disease epidemics have been caused by the devastation done to half of Syria's water infrastructure (WHO, 2023).

These vulnerabilities were exacerbated by the 2023 earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, which destroyed already precarious infrastructure in Aleppo, Latakia, and Idlib. Syria's already dire humanitarian situation was made worse by the earthquake, which caused about \$5.1 billion in direct physical damages, according to the World Bank's 2023 Joint Damage Assessment (World Bank, 2023).

Politicization of Reconstruction Efforts

Syria's post-war reconstruction has become highly politicized, with rival domestic and international parties using recovery initiatives to gain political, economic, and territorial clout. The authoritarian and sectarian legacies of the war have been strengthened by this politicization, which has also impeded an efficient and fair recovery.

President Bashar al-Assad's Syrian government has asserted its position as the only rightful authority in charge of rehabilitation. It has strictly regulated access to reconstruction permits and aid, rewarding loyalist districts while excluding areas controlled by the opposition. Laws like Decree No. 66 (2012) and Law No. 10 (2018), which effectively legalize demographic engineering and punish oppositions, permit the government to seize property from displaced communities under the pretense of urban redevelopment (Human Rights Watch, 2018). In particular, Law No. 10 gives the government the authority to reconstruct entire districts and evict absentee property owners, the majority of whom are displaced opposition sympathizers. This disenfranchises millions of people and strengthens regime control.



Geopolitical rivalries are intertwined with Syria's rehabilitation on a global scale. In return for their assistance throughout the fight, Russia and Iran, two of the Assad regime's most important military and political allies, have attempted to land major reconstruction contracts in the transportation, energy, and agricultural sectors. Many viewed Russia's 2018 push for reconstruction financing and refugee return as an attempt to legitimize Assad's rule without enacting significant political change (International Crisis Group, 2019). On the other hand, Gulf nations and Western nations have tied reconstruction assistance to concrete political changes that support UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015), which demands democratic elections, constitutional changes, and a ceasefire. International aid delivery has become divided as a result of the ensuing impasse, with humanitarian help frequently being limited or manipulated according to political affiliation.

Navigating this atmosphere has presented difficulties for UN-led humanitarian missions as well. Russia and China have frequently rejected or limited UN Security Council cross-border humanitarian missions, which circumvent Syrian government control to provide aid to areas controlled by the opposition. As a result, millions in northeast Syria and rebel-held Idlib are even further isolated and dependent on meager assistance supplies from Turkey and Iraq (OCHA, 2023).

The Role of Syria's Political and Legal System in Post-Conflict Reform



Significant barriers to inclusive and long-lasting post-conflict transformation exist in Syria's current political and legal environment. Using vast security and intelligence networks, the Assad government's highly centralized, authoritarian structure has consistently stifled dissent and disenfranchised opposition parties. This structure was further solidified during the war as loyalist business elites and pro-government militias gained power in return for assisting in the survival of the state. This firmly established power structure must be addressed in any post-conflict stabilization process. The independence of state institutions is undermined by the 2012 Syrian Constitution, which is still in force and gives the president broad control over the military, security forces, and judiciary (International Commission of Jurists, 2020). The dictatorship can solidify its power and marginalize opponents by using this centralized control to direct property rights, legal procedures, and reconstruction resources.

Little real progress has been made in political reform efforts through the Geneva and Astana procedures, and later the UN-facilitated Constitutional Committee (formed in 2019). Conflicts over power-sharing, election processes, and transitional justice have caused the committee entrusted with writing a new constitution to stall. Civil society organizations and opposition members contend that reconstruction will only result in the restoration of the oppressive status

quo in the absence of real legal reforms and security sector reorganization (Carnegie Middle East Center, 2022).

Furthermore, there is still a significant bias in favor of regime-aligned people and organizations in the legislative system controlling reconstruction, especially regarding property rights and compensation for displaced people. Laws like Decree No. 3 (2018) limit legal recourse mechanisms and permit the government to demolish conflict-damaged buildings without informing displaced owners (Syrian Legal Development Program, 2021). Due to this legal disenfranchisement, millions of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees may never again be able to retrieve their property or take part in the country's rebuilding.

Interlinking Humanitarian and Legal-Political Challenges



The legal and political barriers to reconstruction and the humanitarian catastrophe are not separate issues; rather, they are intricately linked. Legal disenfranchisement hinders the return and reintegration of displaced populations, while the manipulation of assistance distribution for political leverage intensifies suffering among vulnerable communities. Rebuilding homes, schools, and hospitals for displaced people has not been given the same priority as luxury buildings and military facilities in places like Eastern Ghouta and Homs

(Amnesty International, 2020). This strategy runs the risk of escalating social differences, extending displacement, and threatening national reconciliation.

In this context, international actors are faced with a conundrum. Funding reconstruction without legally binding assurances of fair assistance distribution and legal reform runs the risk of strengthening authoritarianism and incentivizing war crimes. On the other hand, refusing aid worsens humanitarian crises and destabilizes nearby nations that are home to sizable refugee populations, such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey.

Prominent Aspects

A) The Syrian Healthcare System

The Syrian healthcare system is in disaster due to a lack of medical personnel, medical supplies, and facilities being destroyed. Immediate attention needs to be provided to rebuilding the health infrastructure and enabling access to fundamental services. According to the United Nations, more than 90% of individuals residing in Syria are living under the poverty line; at least 13 million of these people don't have convenient access to or cannot afford reasonably nutritious food.

B) The Syrian Education System

Millions of children's education has been affected by violence. School rehabilitation and access to high-quality education are essential for the country's future. Approximately 2 million students are not attending school because of the destruction or damage to more than 7,000 schools. Human Rights Organization.

C) Syrians' Rights to Safe Water and Sanitation

Restoring these services is essential to prevent disease outbreaks and ensuring public health because water infrastructure has been seriously harmed. Since 2011, over two-thirds of water treatment

plants, half of pumping stations, and a third of water towers have sustained damage.

D) Syrians' Rights to Decent Work and Economic Growth

The economy has crumbled, with widespread unemployment and inflation. Reconstruction efforts should focus on establishing job opportunities, helping small businesses, and restoring crucial economic sectors. Once accounting for 14% of the GDP, the tourism industry has witnessed a 94% decline in revenue because of the conflict.

E) Reduced Inequalities

All communities must gain equitably from reconstruction, regardless of their political or ethnic allegiance. Reducing inequities is crucial to averting future hostilities and fostering national cohesion.

F) Effects of Conflict on Syria's Urban Centers and Communities

Aleppo and Homs are two urban centers that have sustained significant damage. To create resilient communities, reconstruction efforts must prioritize sustainable urban planning, housing restoration, and infrastructure reconstruction. According to World Bank estimates, as of January 2022, the total damage in all Syrian cities that were analyzed was between \$8.7 and \$11.4 billion, with physical infrastructure sectors accounting for 68% of the loss.

G) Peace and Justice System in Syria

The protracted conflict has seriously undermined Syria's institutional structure. Establishing open governance systems, upholding the rule of law, and encouraging inclusive political processes are all necessary for reconstruction. Scholarly research highlights that cultures that have strong institutions after a conflict are less likely to revert to violence (Collier et al., 2003).

International Actions



The international community's response to the Syrian conflict has been multifaceted, involving humanitarian relief, diplomatic negotiations, peacekeeping efforts, and strategic partnerships. As the situation in Syria transitioned from active conflict to fragile recovery, international actions shifted to prioritize post-conflict reconstruction, political stabilization, and long-term peacebuilding. This section explores the major initiatives and interventions led by key international actors, with a particular focus on United Nations Security Council resolutions, interagency partnerships, and data-driven strategies for rebuilding post-war Syria.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has adopted numerous resolutions aimed at addressing the conflict in Syria, both during the height of hostilities and in the ongoing efforts at reconstruction. Notably; Resolution 2254 (2015) called for a ceasefire and a Syrian-led political process facilitated by the UN and laid the foundation for a political transition through the drafting of a new constitution and elections under UN supervision. This resolution remains the central international framework for political stabilization in post-war Syria, resolution 2642 (2022) extended cross-border humanitarian assistance into Syria, highlighting the international commitment to meeting basic needs even amid contested governance structures, resolution 2585 (2021), and its successors expanded humanitarian access and established mechanisms for transparency and monitoring aid delivery, ensuring that assistance reaches vulnerable populations without being exploited by political actors.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a key role in supporting displaced Syrians and reintegrating returnees. In collaboration with sister agencies like UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR has coordinated multi-sectoral responses to meet both humanitarian and development needs in post-conflict Syria. Key efforts include but are not limited to the following; repatriation and reintegration of refugees returning to Syria, helping them access housing, civil documentation, and basic services—critical components of long-term peacebuilding. In cooperation with development agencies, UNHCR supports small-scale reconstruction, vocational training, and resilience programs that empower communities and rebuild trust in public institutions. Ensuring the rights of displaced individuals, including property restitution and legal identity restoration, has been a major international priority, especially in areas where governance remains fragile or contested. These partnerships represent a shift toward a “nexus approach,” where humanitarian relief, development, and peacebuilding are integrated to create sustainable outcomes for post-war societies.

Innovative academic contributions have added rigor to the design of international reconstruction strategies. One key study—Postwar Recovery in Syria: A Prioritization Framework—developed a data-driven methodology to guide reconstruction efforts based on the severity of damage, community needs, and available resources. Some major insights include prioritizing infrastructure, i.e. rebuilding health centers, schools, and basic utilities is identified as a first-line strategy to enable the return of civilians and restore normalcy. The study also emphasizes participatory reconstruction—engaging local actors to avoid “top-down” rebuilding that may replicate patterns of exclusion or injustice. Given Syria’s vast reconstruction needs and limited donor willingness, the framework encourages targeting areas with high return potential for displaced persons, while balancing equity across regions to avoid re-igniting sectarian divisions.

The incorporation of such research by UN agencies and international donors represents a growing trend of evidence-based post-conflict recovery—a promising shift toward more strategic and context-aware interventions.

From high-level diplomacy to grassroots rebuilding, international actions in Syria represent a patchwork of efforts—each informed by distinct mandates, priorities, and capabilities. The GA4, while not directly involved in operational aspects, plays a vital role in assessing these actions through the lens of political decolonization, peacebuilding norms, and self-determination. Understanding the diversity and complexity of these international engagements is critical for designing policies that support Syria's long-term transition to peace and stability.

Key terms:

- United Nations (UN)
- United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA)
- General Assembly Fourth Committee (GA4)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- Year of Africa – 1960 is termed the 'Year of Africa' because of the large number of African countries that managed to break from colonial rule and gain independence. From January to December 1960, 17 African nations claimed independence, which is about 32% of the total number of countries in Africa today.

Conclusion

A humanitarian catastrophe, a politicized reconstruction environment, and an authoritarian political and legal structure that is opposed to real reform are all impeding Syria's recovery. An integrated response that tackles both immediate humanitarian needs and

systemic political imbalances is necessary to overcome the conflict's legacy of displacement, infrastructure destruction, and socioeconomic collapse. Reconstruction, however, runs the risk of recreating the circumstances that led to Syria's decline into conflict in the absence of significant legislative reforms, protections for property rights, and depoliticized aid channels. Humanitarian aid, legal accountability, inclusive government, and significant constitutional change must all be balanced in a lasting peace and recovery process. These goals are yet unattainable in the midst of continuous power battles.

Recommendations

Delegates are recommended to:

- Explore the possibility of supporting data-driven governance and reconstruction using satellite & AI tools.
- Debate the need for multilateral sanctions review based on humanitarian impact.
- Explore how creating a decentralized reconstruction fund linked to SDGs would affect the issue at hand.
- Promote the involvement of local civil society actors in reconstruction planning to ensure inclusivity and accountability.
- Encourage legal frameworks that protect displaced persons' property rights and prevent demographic engineering.
- Discuss the role of UNESCO and other cultural bodies in protecting Syria's heritage sites during reconstruction.

Questions to Consider

1. How can the international community balance accountability with reconstruction?
2. What is the role of regional actors in stabilizing Syria?
3. What are the strategies that could be applied to depoliticize reconstruction?

4. How can human rights protections be ensured during refugee returns?
5. How can the risk of reinforcing authoritarian structures during reconstruction be mitigated?
6. Should reconstruction aid be contingent on political reform, or should it be unconditional?
7. How can donors coordinate efforts to avoid overlapping or contradictory recovery programs in Syria?

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