JejuMUN XII

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Security Council

Countering the Resurgence of ISIS in Syria and Iraq

SDG: 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

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Committee Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), established in 1945, is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, tasked with upholding international peace and security. The fundamental duty of the UNSC encompasses promoting peaceful interstate relations via the prevention of conflicts and coordinating collective responses to international threats. The council's scope includes counterterrorism, addressing armed conflicts, sanction enforcement, and other human rights safeguarding duties.

Distinct from other UN committees, the UNSC holds the authority to issue binding resolutions and authorize certain military interventions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Composed of 15 members, the Council includes five permanent members—the United Kingdom, China, France, Russia, and the United States—each possessing veto power, alongside 10 non-permanent delegations - Algeria, Guyana, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Somalia. Each member state has one vote, but the five permanent members hold veto power over substantive measures.

Agenda Introduction

When the US President Donald Trump announced a “100 percent victory” over the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2019, the global community hoped to see the end of one of the world's most brutal extremist groups of the twenty-first century. However, the truth was different: while hundreds and thousands of ISIS fighters were killed and detained during the liberation campaigns that took place in Iraq and Syria, approximately 2,500 highly-trained and experienced combatants remained active in the region. In recent years, the international community has faced the alarmingly increasing ISIS activities, especially in rural areas of Iraq and northeastern Syria.

Whilst ISIS no longer wields strong influence over significant territories, it continues to conduct hundreds of low-intensity insurgencies – ranging from conducting ambush attacks, targeted assassinations, prison breakouts, to attacks on both military and civilian facilities – annually across Iraq and Syria. According to the European Union Agency for Asylum, ISIS launched over 200 and 120 attacks in Iraq and Syria, respectively, between January and September 2023 alone, primarily targeting infrastructure, military bases, and foreigners.

The resurgence of ISIS stems from multiple factors, including ongoing political and socio-economic instability, the continued intervention of foreign military, and a lack of effective governance. Consequently, more than 50,000 people, many of them women and children with links to ISIS, are currently imprisoned in detention camps such as al-Hol and al-Roj in northeastern Syria. With the inhumane conditions and absence of long-term repatriation plans, these camps serve as a vehicle for further radicalization of the civilian population, which often leads them to join extremist groups, particularly ISIS. Meanwhile, in Iraq, ISIS finds local support and recruits in historically neglected and marginalized Sunni regions where the central government still fails to provide a minimum level of security and basic social services.

Letter from the Chairs

Dear distinguished delegates,

We are honored to welcome you to JejuMUN XII's Security Council.

Greetings delegates! I am Bella Kim, a Junior at NLCS Jeju, and it is my honor to serve as the Head Chair of the Security Council. Since beginning my MUN and parliamentary debate journey in 2022, I have participated in a total of 11 conferences, many times as delegates and progressively more as chairs. I hope that this conference will not only provide delegates with an excellent learning opportunity on an issue that is so important in this day and age, but will also allow delegates to have fun and gain a greater understanding of MUN as a whole. Whether you are a first-time MUNer waiting to test the waters or an experienced delegate ambitious to showcase your skills, I encourage you to put forth your perspective in this committee, test your abilities, work hard, and do your best.

Greetings delegates, my name is James Park, a junior at NLCS Jeju. It is an honor to serve as your Deputy Chair for the Security Council in the upcoming JEJUMUN XII. This year would mark my fifth year participating in MUN, and my fifth chairing experience. I understand that delivering speeches on the podium and interacting with the delegates from other schools might be nervous or stressful for some. However, I hope you can overcome such pressure by using such aspects of MUN as an opportunity to not only boost your confidence in public speaking but also build new friendships. As a Deputy Chair of the committee, I will make sure to create an environment where everyone can speak freely and try my best to provide the best guidance for the delegates. I wish you luck in your preparation, and I look forward to meeting you all!

Hello Delegates, my name is Lily Kim, and I am a sophomore at NLCS Jeju. It is my honor to serve as your associate chair for the Security Council in this iteration of JEJUMUN XII. By this time, I will have participated in a total of 12 conferences and my third year in MUN. I sincerely hope this conference will provide an opportunity for delegates to meaningfully engage not only diplomatically, but also to enjoy yourselves and make the most of this experience. I wish you all luck in your preparations for this conference and believe in your abilities. I look forward to meeting you all.

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Key Terms

ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)
A Sunni jihadist group with a particularly violent ideology that calls itself a caliphate and claims religious authority over all Muslims.

Insurgency
Rebellion against the government, often using irregular military tactics such as ambushes, assassinations, or bombings.

Al-Hol
The largest detention camp in Syria, holding over 50,000 displaced people. Close to the southern outskirts of the town Al-Hawl and the Syria-Iraq border, the camp is nominally controlled by the US-backed Syrian democratic forces (SDF), but is mainly run by ISIS, who use the camp for recruitment purposes.

Al-Roj
A smaller, but similar camp near the Syrian-Iraqi border. It holds mainly women and children, and is largely under strict Kurdish control.

Yazidis
The endogamous religious group is indigenous to Kurdistan. They are a minority frequently persecuted by ISIS in what has been described as genocide. Many were enslaved and killed during the height of ISIS's activity.

Caliphate
An Islamic state historically led by a caliph, a religious and political leader.

Sunni Marginalization
The social and political disadvantages faced by Sunni Muslims in various countries, manifested in the form of limited educational resources and restrictions on entering political spheres.

Insurgency
An active revolt or uprising.

Historical Background

The ISIS insurgency today traces back to the aftermath of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, which effectively dismantled the Ba'athist regime and devastated the national political framework. This resulted in a security vacuum susceptible to the emergence of various insurgency groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)'s precursor, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, led to governmental collapse and civil unrest, creating vast ungoverned spaces that provided further ground for jihadist expansion. Eventually, in 2014, ISIS seized Mosul and declared a caliphate, expanding its territorial control to include regions across Iraq and Syria, encouraging the influx of foreign terrorist gangs. ISIS continues to carry out mass atrocities and economic looting, predominantly in the rural areas of northern and western Iraq, particularly in the Nineveh, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Diyala provinces, and the Deir ez-Zor region of eastern Syria.

In response, an organized mobilization of forces has been conducted internationally. The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2170 in 2014, which condemned ISIS criminal activity and urged member states to curb the influx of foreign fighters. Concurrently, the US led a coalition to defeat ISIS and internationally requested humanitarian aid. Following the Paris attacks of 2015, Resolution 2249 was adopted to call for all necessary measures against ISIS strongholds. The UNDP also organized programmes in Iraq centered around post-conflict stabilization, primarily involving the restoration of basic services for displaced populations. The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) was established in 2017 to hold ISIS accountable for war crimes and atrocities.

Current State of Affairs

Whilst ISIS is no longer in control of a former caliphate, it remains one of the persistent threats to peace and security in the Middle East. As of mid-2025, approximately 1,500 to 3,000 fighters continue to conduct hundreds of low-intensity insurgencies, ranging from conducting ambush attacks, targeted assassinations, prison breakouts, to attacks on both military and civilian facilities, annually, primarily in rural areas and along the border regions of Iraq and Syria. For instance, ISIS launched over 200 and 120 attacks in Iraq and Syria, respectively, between January and September 2023 alone, and these attacks targeted infrastructure, military bases, and foreigners.

Recently, on June 25th, ISIS launched a suicide bombing on a Christian church in Damascus, leading to the death of 25 civilians. This tragic incident best represents the recent shift in the major targets of the ISIS terror attacks from territorial conquest to the urban infrastructures, religious minorities, and major religious events such as the 2025 Akitu festival terror.

Such resurgence has been fueled by the fall of the Assad regime in late 2024 in Syria and the gradual withdrawal of the US forces from the region, which created a power vacuum. Moreover, following the outbreak of greater-scale conflicts such as the Russo-Ukrainian War and the heightened tensions between Israel and the Islamic states, the international pressure, which ISIS received over the last decades, has been lifted, and this is giving ISIS time to regroup and remilitarize itself to regain power in the region.

The ongoing political instability in the Middle East, particularly the power vacuum in Syria following the fall of the Assad regime, deterred the counter-terrorism efforts, while detention camps like Al-Hol, which accommodate former ISIS fighters, remain overcrowded and lacking resources, posing a risk of organized prison breaks. Furthermore, growing tensions over the Middle Eastern region and the radicalization of certain states have created loopholes in the intelligence between the regional countries and thwarted numerous collective counter-terrorism initiatives, making it much more difficult to eradicate ISIS's influence over the region.

Though ISIS no longer controls large territory, its attacks are becoming more frequent and deadly.. Without proper regional and international cooperation, initiatives, and global attention, the situation is going to be rapidly exacerbated, just like it was decades ago, as ISIS gradually expands its influence.

Stances of Parties

United States
The United States seeks to prevent the resurgence of ISIS and has been leading the 89-member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS since 2014. With roughly 2,500 troops in Iraq and another 900 in Syria, the United States continues its counterterror operations even after ISIS lost territorial control in 2019. Under different regimes of presidents, the US involvement in combating ISIS resurgence has been varied: Under Obama's regime, airstrikes were launched against ISIS (August 2014), while under the previous Trump regime, much reduced military action took place. However, more recently, the US government has affirmed a hardline stance against ISIS, announcing the killing of a key political leader in Iraq.

Iraq
After regaining control of cities including Mosul, Tikrit, and Fallujah, Iraq officially declared the defeat of ISIS in December 2017. Despite this, ISIS continues to be present in rural northern and western Iraq, more specifically in the provinces of Diyala and Nineveh. Iraq's mainstream military response to ISIS is led by the Iraqi Security Forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces, composed primarily of Shia militias. Under the Global Coalition, Iraq hosts around 2,500 US troops and receives auxiliary support from the NATO mission in Iraq.

Russia
Russia has been the Syrian government's primary military supporter since 2015. As Chief of General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Valery Gerasimov announced in early January 2017, the Russian Air Forces had carried out a total of 19,160 combat missions and delivered 71,000 strikes during intervention in the Syrian civil war. Although framed as anti-ISIS operations, a number of these attacks have been directed at areas controlled by other groups, which led to the understanding that Russia's actual military goal is to help Assad handle all opposition. In 2024, Russia suffered deadly attacks led by ISIS-K at Crocus City Hall. This massacre led to 145 deaths.

Syria
ISIS's presence in Syria has undergone a reduction after ISIS lost its territorial stronghold in Baghouz in 2019, yet in regions such as Homs and Raqqa, its presence is still much felt. Due to the political division within Syria, with the majority of the West and South regions controlled by the Assad Regime, Syria remains vulnerable to ISIS re-emergence. The Assad regime of Syria has publicly asserted multiple times that it is the only legitimate authority capable of national protection and demanded the withdrawal of foreign troops, particularly those of the US and Turkey, from handling military affairs, including the ISIS situation.

Turkey
Located to the north of Syria, Turkey shares their southern border with Syria. Turkey's primary objective has been to keep its borders safe from attacks conducted by not only ISIS, but also other rebel Kurdish groups in Syria, such as the YPG (suspected to be connected to the Kurdish group PPK, which has been in a hostile relationship with the Turkish government). Notable

actions taken by Turkey against ISIS include the Operation Euphrates Shield of 2016-2017, where Turkey aimed to remove ISIS from the shared Turkish-Syrian border, and Operation Olive Branch of 2018, which intended to remove Kurdish YPG forces from the Afrin region of Syria. Despite Turkey's efforts to remove Kurdish terrorist groups, the efficacy of Turkey's actions in eradicating ISIS forces specifically has been questioned, as many of the groups Turkey has been targeting were engaged in combat with ISIS.

Iran

Iran remains firm that ISIS, being a radical Sunni extremist group targeting Shia Muslims and Iranian-supported allies, is a serious threat to Shia communities in Syria and Iraq. By backing the Assad Regime in Syria and training Shia militaries such as the Badr Organization and the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq under the umbrella of the Popular Mobilization forces, Iran continues to play a significant role in combating ISIS. While Iran's contributions to ISIS eradication are clear, Iran has been accused of expanding their territorial control in regions within Syria and Iraq. Their presence in such regions has led to the escalation of tension between Sunni populations and the United States

United Kingdom (UK)

The United Kingdom has been a member of the US-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS since 2014. Through Operation Shader, the Royal Air Force of the UK has initiated around 1700 airstrikes targeting ISIS-dominated regions such as Mosul and Raqqa. The United Kingdom has suffered domestic attacks by ISIS-inspired terrorists, with attacks including the 2017 Manchester Arena Bombing, which resulted in 22 deaths. Continued terrorism, such as the 2017 London Bridge attack, has inspired the UK to domestically introduce the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act of 2019, which allows the prosecution of any who travels to or supports conflict zones in Syria.

France

France has adopted a hardline stance against ISIS, particularly after suffering the November Paris Attacks of 2015, where over 130 people were killed. Through Operation Chammal, the French component of the US-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, France has been launching airstrikes at ISIS-held regions in Iraq's Anbar province and Deir ez-Zor of Syria. In regard to France's ground presence, France has deployed approximately 1000 troops to support Iraqi forces, especially units based at Mosul and Erbil.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is firmly against ISIS and has recognized it as a direct threat to the region's stability and Sunni Islamic legitimacy. Its concerns extend to Iran using ISIS as a tool for chaos and destruction to expand its influence through proxies in Iraq and Syria. The nation has joined the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS and adopted stricter anti-terror laws, openly funding and supporting groups such as the Sunni tribal groups in Iraq and the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC). Saudi Arabia's contributions to counter terrorist measures have been deployed both domestically and internationally.

Germany

A mix of an influx of refugees and terror attacks on European soil has formed ISIS as an enemy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Concerned with the ongoing conflicts, Germany has emphasised humanitarian measures. The nation has provided non-combat military support to Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq and extended their services to UN and EU stabilization efforts, focusing on infrastructure. Germany has also hosted refugees from Iraq and Syria, all while participating in NATO missions in the region.

Qatar

In an official sense, Qatar opposes ISIS. Despite this, they have previously been accused of funding extremist groups in Syria to counter Assad's regime and Iran's influence. Whilst balancing soft power influence, Qatar also attempts to maintain regional relations. Qatar has denied the allegations of financing ISIS, but has admitted to funding some rebel groups early on in the conflict. The nation has taken part in coalition strikes and invested its time in general counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. Its focus on reconstruction and damage control in post-ISIS swept areas shows its dedication to protecting its security.

Egypt

In Egypt, ISIS stands as a threat due to both domestic and religious factors. Especially in consideration of ISIS's affiliation with the Sinai Peninsula and the impact it has had on potential tourism numbers and national security. Egypt has dedicated itself to military efforts in the Sinai, including Wilayat Sinai. They have also joined forces in Arab League counter terrorism measures, alongside cooperation with their international partners, such as Russia and France, in data and intelligence sharing. Their advocacy for a healthy, politically rooted solution that has Syria maintaining the state, opposing Islamist militias, and their involvement.

Jordan

Jordan's monarchy remains a major concern with the rise of ISIS and the group's interest in expanding its influence. The nation shares its north-eastern border with both Iraq and Syria and has faced numerous ISIS-inspired attacks. Jordan has taken part as a major player in the United States-led coalition and independently took action through the deployment of airstrikes and trained Syrian rebel groups.

China

China's main concern is the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Uighur militants joining ISIS, then returning to their home country to spread the influence and culture of terrorism in Xinjiang. China has evaded military entanglement abroad and has maintained its strict dedication to non-intervention, even in the face of pervasive foreign terrorism. However, the Assad regime in Syria works with the Iraqi government. In the interest of economic affairs, Middle East stability is crucial to China's own stability, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The presence of ISIS threatens crucial factors to the project, including investments and energy supply chains. In response, China has made attempts to share intelligence with Middle Eastern countries to track extremist networks, extending their services through humanitarian aid for reconstruction, all while voting against ISIS initiatives in official UN spaces.

India

Few Indian nationals have taken an interest or part in ISIS in comparison to other countries, but their concern has pressured the country to take some action. ISIS-linked plots, such as Kerala, have increased Indian vigilance online. India has millions of citizens working in the Gulf, and ISIS's rampant instability threatens the security of those employed, affecting factors such as remittance flow and the economy. India has maintained friendly ties with Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, but its primary concern lies in the fear that Pakistan may exploit ISIS chaos to stir anti-India terror networks. In response to these fears, India's plans have been mainly community-based.

Possible Solutions

One possible solution to counter the resurgence of ISIS in Syria and Iraq is to establish a regional intelligence-sharing mechanism and a joint counter-terrorism task force. While international cooperation has succeeded in reducing ISIS's influence and its territorial control, the group continues to launch multiple attacks through covert cells and cross-border networks. Particularly, the long-standing regional tensions and instability in the Middle East have fueled their growth. Delegates may consider proposing a multilateral framework involving Middle Eastern countries, such as not only Iraq and Syria but also the rest of the members of the council, supported by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNCT) or the Counter-Terrorism Committee under the Security Council. This framework could be used to facilitate real-time intelligence sharing on ISIS activities, financing routes, and recruitment patterns so that it can prevent further expansion of ISIS across the region.

Moreover, rehabilitation and reintegration of former fighters who are detained in multiple prison camps, such as Al-Hol and Al-Roj, could be effective in addressing the long-term threat posed by ISIS. Many of these individuals, especially women and children, have not been formally charged with crimes and are prone to re-radicalization due to poor living conditions. Therefore, delegates may delve into the establishment of organised, structured reintegration programmes, which could be done in cooperation with different UN bodies such as UNDP and UNICEF, and local NGOs.

Questions to Consider

1. Despite military operations proving effective in reclaiming ISIS territory, they were not necessarily successful in bringing long-term stability. To prevent ISIS resurgence, should the UN gear its focus more to rebuilding civil infrastructure and supporting the regional government at the expense of less emphasis on counterterrorism military operations?

2. Detention camps (e.g, Al Hol) currently hold thousands of ISIS-affiliated individuals, including women and children. Should the international community continue repatriation or continued detention, and how can this process be conducted ethically and securely when certain countries refuse to reaccept their citizens?

3. What role should non-state actors (for instance, the militia, international NGOs, Kurdish forces) play in post-ISIS stabilization, and how does your country secure cooperation with such groups?

4. Even in regions where ISIS influence has been managed, sectarian division and political conflict remain. Should the UN extend its responsibility to handling such social and structural root causes, and if so, through what means?

5. In the aftermath of the ISIS defeat, certain territories have large populations with limited access to education, economic opportunity, and healthcare services. Should counterterrorism resolutions extend to include the long-term development measures, or should such goals be left to other UN bodies?

6. Following the territorial defeat of ISIS, sleeper cells in the region continue to conduct attacks. Should intelligence sharing among members of the UNSC be made mandatory in the UNSC resolution?

7. Online propaganda remains a predominant tool for attracting ISIS sympathizers worldwide. What responsibilities do big tech companies have in monitoring terrorist related content, and how should the UNSC propose binding regulations for such content on digital platforms?

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