

COLOR KEY: ■ **EVENTS IN SYRIA** ■ **HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST REPORTS** ■ **U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS/STATEMENTS**

2011

MARCH



Inspired by demonstrations across the region, protestors begin demanding democratic reforms. Security forces retaliate by opening fire and violently dispersing the protests.

MAY 10-18

The United States imposes sanctions on President Bashar al-Assad and senior Syrian government officials.

AUGUST 18

President Obama: “For the sake of the Syrian people the time has come for President Assad to step aside.”

OCTOBER 4

The U.N. Security Council considers a U.S.-supported resolution condemning Assad’s government and threatening sanctions. Russia and China veto it.



2012

JANUARY 23

Jabhat al-Nusra announces its formation as Syria’s official al-Qaeda affiliate.

FEBRUARY 4

Russia and China veto a U.S.-backed U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the violence and calling for a political transition.

FEBRUARY 6

The United States closes its embassy in Damascus, citing security concerns.

FEBRUARY 19

U.S. Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham advocate for indirectly arming the Syrian opposition, saying “people that are being massacred deserve to have the ability to defend themselves.”

FEBRUARY 24

At the Friends of Syrian People meeting in Tunis, Secretary Clinton states: “We view the Syrian National Council as a leading legitimate representative of Syrians seeking peaceful democratic change.”

MAY 7

Parliamentary elections are held but boycotted by the opposition.

AUGUST 20

President Obama: “We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized.”

SEPTEMBER 28

The United States says it will supply Syrian opposition rebels with non-lethal aid.

2013

FEBRUARY 28

Enablers of the Syrian Conflict

MARCH 21

The United Nations investigates the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria.

JUNE 13

Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes: “Our intelligence community assesses that the Assad regime has used chemical weapons, including the nerve agent sarin, on a small scale against the opposition multiple times in the last year.”

JUNE 30

How to Stop Doing Business with Russia’s Arm Exporter

JULY 31

5 Things You Should Know About Chemical Weapons and International Law

AUGUST 21

A chemical weapons attack on a Damascus suburb kills an estimated 1,400 people.

AUGUST 26

Secretary Kerry: “President Obama believes there must be accountability for those who would use the world’s most heinous weapons against the world’s most vulnerable people.”

AUGUST 30

President Obama: “[W]hen over 1,000 people are killed, including hundreds of innocent children... and there is no action, then we’re sending a signal that that international norm doesn’t mean much. And that is a danger to our national security.”

AUGUST 31

President Obama calls for Congress to vote to authorize U.S. military action in Syria.

SEPTEMBER 4

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approves a resolution authorizing U.S. military action in Syria in a 10-7 vote.

SEPTEMBER 9

Russia proposes that Syria give up its chemical weapons as a compromise in order to avoid U.S. military strikes.

SEPTEMBER 10

President Obama calls on Congress to postpone voting on the authorization of force resolution as he works out an agreement with Russia.

SEPTEMBER 14

The United States and Russia announce the framework of a deal to eliminate Syria’s chemical weapons.

NOVEMBER 21

Refuge at Risk: The Syria Crisis and U.S. Leadership

2014

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

The first two rounds of peace talks attended by the Syrian government and the National Opposition Coalition begin in Geneva. No progress is made.

FEBRUARY 10

Addressing Barriers to the Resettlement of Vulnerable Syrian and Other Refugees

JUNE 3

President Assad wins elections in government-held areas in Syria.

JUNE 23

The last of Syria’s chemical weapons are shipped out of the country for their destruction as a result the 2013 U.S.-Russia agreement.

JUNE 10

After four days of fighting ISIS seizes the city of Mosul in Iraq.

JUNE 29

ISIS announces a self-declared caliphate with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at its head in the territory it controls in Syria and Iraq.

AUGUST 19

American journalist James Foley is the first U.S. citizen executed by ISIS in Syria. President Obama: “The people of Syria, whose story Jim Foley told, do not deserve to live under the shadow of a tyrant or terrorist.”

SEPTEMBER-JANUARY

ISIS launches an assault on the city of Kobani. The town’s defense becomes symbolic of the fight against the group, eventually involving the Free Syrian Army, coalition airstrikes, and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters.

SEPTEMBER 23



The U.S.-led coalition begins airstrikes against ISIS targets in Syria.

DECEMBER 31

In 2014, 76,000 people die in the Syria conflict, according to the United Nations, making it the deadliest year since the conflict began.

2015

FEBRUARY 17

The United States reaches an agreement with Turkey on training and arming Syrian rebels fighting ISIS.

MAY 21

ISIS takes control of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

SEPTEMBER 30

Russia carries out its first airstrikes in Syria. Its operations target the U.S.-supported non-ISIS opposition.

OCTOBER 8

The United States officially announces the end of its program to train and equip Syrian rebels.

OCTOBER 30

The United States announces it will send special operations forces into Syria to serve in an advisory capacity.

OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 14



The United States, Russia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia initiate Syria peace talks in Vienna which include participation by Iran, but no agreement is reached.

NOVEMBER 19

President Obama, speaking of the Vienna process: “I do not foresee a situation in which we can end the civil war in Syria while Assad remains in power.”

DECEMBER 10

Refugee Resettlement—Security Screening Information

DECEMBER 15

At a press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Secretary of State Kerry: “As I emphasized today, the United States and our partners are not seeking so-called ‘regime change,’ as it is known in Syria.”

2016

FEBRUARY 1-FEBRUARY 3

U.N.-mediated Syria peace talks begin in Geneva, but are swiftly suspended.

FEBRUARY 22

The United States and Russia announce that a partial ceasefire in Syria will start on February 27. The ceasefire does not apply to attacks on U.N.-designated terrorist organizations.

FEBRUARY

The Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Need for U.S. Leadership



MARCH 14-24

U.N. peace talks resume in Geneva. The Syrian regime and opposition delegations agree on 12 common points.

MARCH 14

President Putin announces that Russia will be pulling out the “main part” of its military forces in Syria.

MARCH 24

Secretary of State Kerry after meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow: “We agreed on a target schedule for establishing a framework for a political transition and also a draft constitution, both of which we target by August.”

MARCH 28

State Department spokesperson John Kirby: “There’s been no change on our part on what the future for Assad and Syria need to be... [W]hat the Syrian people need is a government away from him.”

APRIL 13

The next round of Syria peace talks resume in Geneva.