

**THE EFFECTS OF UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL VETO
POWER ON STABILITY OF STATES: A CASE STUDY OF SYRIA AND
ITS NEIGHBORS**

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DECLARATION

This project is my own work and has not been submitted before to any other degree at any other institution.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the supervisor.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Dr. Esther Wanjiru Gichuri and my daughter Grace Tsekawe Retta.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of UNSC veto powers on stability of Syria and its neighbors from 2011 to 2019. The central argument of this study is that the UNSC has failed to execute its mandate and restore stability in Syria. While the permanent members contest to maintain their economic and political interests in the country, the Syrian people have been suffering from the scourge of the civil war that forced millions of civilians to flee their homes and claimed more than half a million lives. The study argued that the permanent members failed to adopt resolutions that could have averted the crisis. For example, from October 2011 to December 2019, the Russian Federation, along with China, rejected 14 draft resolutions that sought to end the civil war and terminate humanitarian crisis. As a result, the spillover effect of the Syrian civil war has been detrimental in terms of economic, political and social well-being not only to the neighboring countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon but also to Europe and North America. Adopting resolutions that seek to halt the catastrophe would minimize the spillover effect. The veto power would require renouncing their veto powers in case of mass atrocities and need to reconsider their economic and political interest if it compromises the stability of Syria and its neighbors. To this end, the UN could organize a committee that examines if (1) there has been mass atrocity in Syria and (2) if it requires UNSC interference. Following the failure of the Council to adopt resolutions that could avert the Syrian crisis, there have been a number of reform proposals that sought to bring change in the Council. Nonetheless, since these proposals should be adopted by the permanent members, this subject has been in deadlock. The study concludes that it would be in the best interest of the permanent members of the Council, Syrian neighbors and the international community to take a swift measure and tackle the crisis.

ABBREVIATIONS

NATO	Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization
P5	Permanent Five
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
U4P	United for Peace
UN	United Nations
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees
UNON	United Nations Office in Nairobi
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Russia

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study argues that the UNSC has failed to execute its mandate to save Syrians from the scourge of the civil war. The Syrian Arab Republic has experienced one of the 21st century deadliest armed conflicts (Syria Study Group, 2019; Genser, 2018; Khallaf, 2016; Magri, 2019). Three underlying and two immediate causes have been identified. Longstanding political orientation of the Syrian government, absence of democracy and sectarian divisions among Shiite-Sunni Syrians are widely considered as three underlying roots of the conflict. The expansion of the Arab Spring across the Middle East and the proliferation of anti-government demonstrations inside Syria are regarded as immediate causes of the conflict (Slim and Trombetta, 2014).

To start with the underlying root causes, first, the Syrian government had a close relation with USSR since Syrian independence in 1946. Its pro-Palestinian sentiment put the Assad regime at odds with Western powers and the State of Israel. Second, in addition to its abhorrent policy towards the West and Israel, the Assad regime was also ruthless to internal opposition groups, media critics, and it was intolerant towards Sunni Muslims who sought equal opportunity in government services. Third, the most dangerous threat came from the desperate religious division among Syrians. Assad and his political elites are from Alawites, a minority Shiite sect and his opponents are from Sunni, the majority religious sect in Syria. The Iran Shiite rebel and the Lebanon Hezbollah fighters had made an alliance and fought against Sunni fighters. Shiite and Hezbollah fighters supported the Assad regime as opposed to the Sunni fighters, who sought the deposition of the regime. This created a huge division among the government supporters and opposition groups (Karlm, 2017).

In addition to the underlying reasons that brought the civil war into effect, there were other two immediate reasons: propagation of Arab spring and beginning of anti-government demonstrations in schools. First, the Arab Spring was a catalyst that started in 2010 in Tunisia and had started inspiring Syrian youngsters and civil servants to demand good governance and economic inclusion in Syria in early February 2011. Consequently, second, on 15 March 2011 some teenagers posted a slogan on their school walls. The slogan sought the end of dictatorship

in Syria. The initial protest was peaceful, limited in some areas and was endorsed only by some Sunni groups. When the government started responding swiftly and harshly, the protest escalated rapidly and widely from Deraa to many parts of the country. As the protest continued expanding, the government strengthened its measure and killed more than 60 civilians within 10 days (Adams, 2015; Ford, 2019).

Gradually, the fight between protesters and the government developed into a full-fledged civil war in 2012. From 2013 to 2018, the fight between the government and oppositions attracted foreign powers. The government has received a wide range of support from the Russian Federation. The western powers supported the oppositions and provided military equipment and training facilities. Since 2018, the spillover effect of the civil war has been posing security threat and migration pressure to the neighboring states such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq (Karl, 2017).

Although some people think that the Syrian conflict is declining, the September 2019 United States Institute of Peace report indicates that it is rather escalating rapidly; and the effect has the potential to spread to other Middle East countries and even to Europe and the US if the Council fails to take a swift measure to tackle it (Syria Study Group, 2019). A number of studies conducted in Syria show that more than four hundred thousand civilians were killed by the Syrian government forces since 2011 (Genser, 2018). The death of civilians crossed 500,000 in early 2019. While more than 5 million people left their home and sought shelter in neighboring states of (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq) more than 6.3 million civilians have been displaced inside Syria (Magri, 2019).

According to the 2019 UNHCR report, 11.7 million Syrians must get an urgent assistance from the global community; of which five million Syrians are in acute condition (UNHCR, 2019). This report clearly indicated that the refugee crisis has been affecting bordering states including Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. If the humanitarian crisis continues, Syria could be “a safe haven” for terrorist organizations including ISIS and al-Qaeda, and the refugee crisis will have a substantial effect on the western countries (Syria Study Group, 2019). All these crises call for a swift measure.

Efforts have been made by the UNSC to address the human and economic destruction in Syria. For example, members of the Security Council met in April 2011 to decide on how to respond to the rampant crisis across the country (Zifcak, 2012). Nevertheless, the UNSC has been unable to take appropriate action to the upheaval because of sharp disagreement among its members. The impact of their disagreement on stability of Syria and its neighbors has been deepening (Veen, 2019; Guimarães and Carvalho, 2017: 73).

The UNSC consists of 15 members: 5 permanent and 10 nonpermanent countries. The 5 permanent countries include the Great Britain, the People's Republic of China, France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The non-veto members join the UNSC every two years from six regional blocks, including North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and West Asia. As a result of their ability to disqualify any resolution, the five permanent members (P5) are called veto powers (Mahmood, 2013). The veto powers have been the major hindrance behind the deadlock in the Council (Spain, 2013). From October 2011 to December 2019, 14 resolutions that specifically focused on Syrian crisis were brought to UNSC table for decision. None of those resolutions has been adopted by members of primarily because of the competition between veto powers (Eminue and Dickson, 2013; Zifcak, 2012; Khallaf, 2016). All the resolutions had two objectives: call for cease fire and humanitarian aid.

This study has focused on two specific resolutions that underline the urgency of cease fire and humanitarian aid in Syria. Resolution S/2011/612 is an urge for cease fire between government and opposition and Resolution S/2019/961 is a call for authorization of humanitarian aid for refugees. On 4 October 2011, Britain, France, Portugal and Germany sponsored resolution S/2011/612 that would have urged the "Syrian government and opposition groups to end human rights violations in the country". This resolution was unable to see the light of the day due to negative vote by Russian Federation and China (UNSC, 2011; Wintours, 2019). Most recently, resolution S/2019/961 was sponsored by Belgium, Germany and Kuwait on December 20, 2019. That resolution would have urged the Syrian government and opposition groups to allow "cross-border humanitarian aid". The Russian Federation and China rejected the resolution. Since 2011, this resolution has become the 14th resolution for Russia to squarely reject in order to defend its interests in Syria (Nichols, 2019; UNSC, 2019).

Guided by the two resolutions mentioned earlier, this study has focused on two major disagreements among veto powers: the dispute on cease fire and the contention on humanitarian aid in Syria. In other words, while some members of the Council agreed on the possibility of ceasefire between the government of Syria and the opposition parties and on how to provide support to Syrian refugees along the Syrian border, others (mainly Russia and China) rejected both initiatives (Eminue and Dickson, 2013; Zifcak, 2012; Khallaf, 2016). However, behind these two contentious subjects, reasons for the disagreement among veto powers comprehend complex concerns, and some of these reasons have been attributed to their competing economic, political and military interests in Syria (Habets, 2016; Tan and Perudin, 2019; Veen, 2019; Perra, 2016; Khallaf, 2016).

In this study, the independent and dependent variables are clearly indicated. The independent variable of the study is the effects of UNSC veto power disagreement. This variable includes the dispute settlement procedure among veto powers and the implementation of the two resolutions (Resolution S/2011/612 and S/2019/961). The dependent variable is the stability of Syria and its neighbors. It includes measures taken by the veto powers to maintain the stability of Syria, to solve the disputes on ceasefire and the contentions to authorize in humanitarian aid across the Syrian border.

1.2 Problem Statement

This study sought to deal with the lack of specific research on the subject matter. Even though the UNSC substantially surges its meetings and number of draft resolutions that seek to resolve the ongoing Syrian crisis, little has been done to analyze the linkage between the disagreement among members of the Council and the impact of their disagreement on stability of Syria and its neighbors. A number of researchers have undertaken various studies. For example, Arnor, 2012; Khallaf, 2016; Edstrand, 2017; Rath, 2017; Olson, 2017; Clary, 2018; Karodia, 2018; Nortvedt, 2019, have discussed a wide range of issues focusing on, among others, Syrian civil war, UNSC reform and the competition between veto powers on Syria. However, none of these studies discussed the linkage between the veto power disagreement on how to solve the Syrian crisis and the effects of their disagreement on stability of Syria and its neighbors. Therefore, this study focused on addressing the aforementioned gap.

Studies carried out in Syria indicate that more than 500,000 civilians have been killed since 2011. On the other hand, more than 100 meetings were held; and the veto powers rejected dozens of resolutions that requested the Council to take action on the crisis in Syria. For example, since 2011, 141 specific meetings on the situation in Syria were held by the Council members. In addition, 47 resolutions that urged the UNSC to take a prompt course of action to the crisis were brought to the table of member states for decision, of which 24 resolutions were adopted, while 23 resolutions were rejected (UNSC, 2019).

Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in a statement released on 23 December 2019, alarmed about the increasing deadly attack on civilians in north-west Syria that left more than 800, 000 civilians displaced from their homes, of which 30,000 people within a week (UNSC, 2019). According to the Secretary-General, speaking through his spokesperson, a UN mediated political negotiation which stands line with the “Security Council resolution 2254 (2015)”, remains the only feasible course of action to Syrian catastrophe (UNSC, 2019). Yet, the UNSC remains obsolete in this case. It was unable to convince its members and bring them into a common understanding. This inability to mobilize the veto powers has been characterized as imminent problem of inaction (Guimarães and Carvalho, 2017: 73; Spain, 2013). The question remains whether the obsolete United Nations will have the ability to facilitate the Syrian crisis.

Against the Secretary-General’s claim, the disagreement among member states has been surging since 2011, and it seems the countries will not come to agreement sometime soon (Melling and Dennett, 2018). This contradiction puts the success of UNSC facilitation into question. The tragedy is that as the competition gets intensified and the Council becomes obsolete, the civil war escalates widely and rapidly (Li, 2016). This study is therefore important because it seeks to investigate the reason behind the veto power disagreement on Syria and the effects of their disagreement on stability of Syria and its neighbors.

1.3 Research Question

How does the UNSC veto power affect the stability of Syria and its neighbors?

1.4 Research Objective

To investigate how UNSC veto power affects the stability of Syria and its neighbors.

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study has two significant values.

1.5.1 Academic Justification

This study would be pivotal to academics and researchers at global and national level. First, the subject matter has not been adequately assessed globally. There are scholastic researches on veto power deadlock and studies on Syrian conflict separately. Yet, there are no studies conducted on the linkage between the veto power disagreement and the Syrian civil war. Second, the linkage between the disagreement among veto powers and its consequence on Syria has never been adequately researched so far in the University of Nairobi. The researcher went through the University of Nairobi repository, and was unable to find studies conducted on the effects of veto power disagreement on stability of Syria and its neighbors. Therefore, this study will assist researchers who would like to further carry out their research on the veto politics in the Council and its effect in Syria.

1.5.2 Policy Justification

This study would inform Syrian policymakers to understand the root causes of their internal conflicts, and how to respond to those crises. It has been argued that since the disagreement among members of the UNSC has affected the stability of Syria and its neighbors, Russia and the US have created a proxy war in Syria to become hegemony. The findings in this study, therefore, will inform Syrian policy makers to understand the external pressures that have been affecting the country and its neighbors. The study will enable them to craft a policy that protects the Sovereignty of the country and defends the state from foreign intervention. In addition, diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic can both employ the recommendations to defend their interests in UNSC and recommend policymakers to consider the findings. In addition to policymakers in Syria, policymakers in Syrian neighbors and in other countries where national stability is missing following the disagreement among member countries in the UNSC can obtain valuable arguments, facts and figures from this study. Based on this knowledge, they can formulate policies and strategies and mobilize their potential at home. Through this strategy, policymakers

can effectively unravel possible deadlocks among member states in the Council.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The conceptual areas include Syrian civil war, the disagreement between veto powers on Syria, the effects of their disagreement on stability of Syria and its neighbors, and the linkage between the disagreement among the veto powers and the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Nevertheless, the study has not covered the effects of veto power on stability of states across the world. It has exclusively focused on Syria and its neighbors. This is because of time constraints.

1.6.1 Limitations of the Study

Getting appropriate resources and researches specifically in the subject matter was one of the challenges of this study. This challenge was resolved by focusing on the UNSC websites and UN online libraries to find reports, resolutions and decisions on Syria. Obtaining accurate information from the internet was another major drawback of this study. To minimize this, the researcher had to inspect the academic background of the writers and publishers and counter checked from other primary and secondary sources. Time was also a challenge in this study. In order to effectively run with time, the researcher had to formulate a time frame and started as early as possible. Finally, despite all these anticipated challenges, the study findings and recommendations remain crucial for the subject matter.

1.7 Literature Review

Publications and studies that specifically focus on the UNSC veto powers and their impact on stability of Syria and its neighbors have been assessed. The research particularly concentrates on three main areas. First, it analyzed the reasons behind the veto power ambitions to find out why the veto powers disagree on Syria. Second, it assessed how the disagreement between veto powers affects the stability in Syria. Third, it evaluated the possible solution to break the deadlock among veto powers. These are the major focus areas of this study.

1.7.1 Behind Veto Power Ambitions

Scholars such as Dallas (2018), Zulfqar (2018), Adams (2014), Khallaf (2016) and Li (2016) have been stating the relationship between the disagreement among veto powers in the UN Security Council and the ongoing Syrian civil war. They argue that the principles of the UN

Charter, the aspirations of the veto powers and the inherent deficiency of the Security Council remain as the major reasons behind diplomatic deadlocks.

Dallas (2018) argues that the UN Charter under article 27 sub article 3 stipulates that permanent members should cast their affirmative vote in order a resolution see the light of the day. This veto powers principle is the primary reason behind the disagreement between veto powers. The fundamental principle of the veto power implies that even if a resolution gains support from the rest of the world, it will never see the light of the day unless it attracts support from all of the five veto powers. In line with this principle, it happened in the cold war era that the great powers that were in a sharp division (between west and east) were unable to come together and protect international peace simply because the Permanent Members always cast their veto against any resolution they would believe is against their interest. When it comes to Syria and Palestine, the same inaction has been happening for the last one decade (Russia supporting Syrian government and US supporting the opposition) and the Palestinian question (where Russia supports the Palestine and the US supports Israel) (Shraideh, 2017: 138; UNSC working paper, 30 July 2019).

Zulfqar (2018) argues that oil, nuclear deterrence and arms export have been the major interests of the US in Syria. The US interests were brought to the attention of the public when President Donald Trump shocked the world with his comments. His comments were published on The Guardian on 13 November 2019 by Julian Borger. The article narrates about the comment given by the President concerning the US troops in Syria. In the article, Trump clearly stated that “the US troops are in Syria only for the oil”. Trump stood against various claims from higher political representatives who argued that US troops’ presence in Syria was to fight ISIS (Borger, 2019). Trump had given similar comment on 20 October 2019 that justified how the US troops secured the oil in Syria. He said he ordered his troops, “keep the oil”, and they secured it, and further boasted that “we have taken it and secured it” (Crowley, 2019). However, Zulfqar failed to mention the political competitions between US and Russia. This study has investigated the political reasons in addition to the economic competitions between veto powers.

Adams (2014) argues that Russian interests mainly rely on security, arms export and oil. Russian diplomats covertly in the UNSC justify each vote they cast against resolutions on Syria. He argues that overtly Russia wants to defend the sovereignty of Syria from western

intervention. Never has Russia openly discussed its political or economic interest in Syria. According to Adams, although Russia has aimed at defending its “interests and the interests of its allies” in Syria, it has been advancing its interests under the pretext of protecting the sovereignty of Syria. Nevertheless, Adams missed the role of other veto powers in Syria particularly the US. In addition to Russia, this study has assessed the role of the United States in the civil war.

Khallaf (2016) examined the linkage between the controversy among veto powers, the UNSC ability to discard contention and the ongoing crisis in Syria. He found out that the Council has remained powerless since the outbreak of the civil war. Khallaf concluded his analysis that unless the Council breaks the deadlock and responds to the crisis, a devastating human catastrophe will invade Syria and the Middle East which effect may also spread to Europe and the US. He proposed the U4P resolution as solution for the deadlock. Nevertheless, although he explained that competition between the permanent members to maintain their interest in Syria was the reason behind the failure of the Council, he failed to go further and discuss whether the interests of veto powers were economic, political or military. This study will discuss not only the reasons behind the disagreement between veto powers but also their major interests in Syria.

Li (2016) who investigated the role of veto powers on the Syrian crisis argued that the Syrian issue should be explained through a realist lens. In his analysis, he found out that it was the veto powers that caused the ongoing catastrophe. In order to safeguard their vested interests, the US supported the opposition group, while Russia provided assistance to Assad government. In addition to their bilateral intervention, they reflected their interests in the Council through their votes. Whereas the US intends to deter Iran’s influence, Russia desires to maintain its influence. Unlike Khallaf (2016), Li suggested the international community to intervene in the ongoing catastrophe. This argument would be convincing at least considering the reason why the veto powers fought in Syria unless to defend their interests. However, Li failed to further discuss details of the interests of the veto powers in Syria. It is the aim of this study to explain those interests based on the general argument why the veto powers disagree on Syria.

1.7.2 Assessment of the Repercussions

Guimarães and Carvalho (2017) examined the relationship between the disagreement among veto powers in the UN Security Council and the ongoing Syrian civil war. They found out that the reason behind the dispute between Russia and the US emerges from their

competition to defend their political, economic and military interests in Syria. Although they uncovered the interests of the veto powers, they failed to discuss the way their interests caused instability in Syria. Although the aspirations of superpowers across Syria and its neighbors are complex and diverse, this study further argues that the “economic, political and military” interests remain at the center of veto powers ambitions and has been explained in detail.

Melling and Dennett (2018) extensively studied the linkage between veto power deadlock and the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Unlike Khallaf (2016) and Li (2016), they discovered that the effects of veto power on Syrian crisis are considered as the squander of veto power by superpowers particularly by Russia and the US. These two countries locked the possible ways of responding to the humanitarian crisis in Syria in order to defend their interests. Melling and Dennett argue that in order to break the deadlock, the Council should apply the U4P resolution. Nevertheless, although they mentioned that veto powers engaged Syria primarily for economic and political control in the region, they repeated unsound argument that resembles to Khallaf (2016) when they failed to describe what interests have those countries had in Syria. Unlike Melling and Dennett, this study has gone further to argue that their economic and military interests have been the driving force behind the disagreement between veto powers in the Council.

Rath (2017) argues that the repercussions on Syria are extensive, and the United States bears huge responsibility for those repercussions. The 2011 US troops’ withdrawal from Iraq and the subsequent neutrality of the US government from political and security engagement resulted in substantial effect on Syria and its neighbors. The application of federalism state structure is the only option to save Syria from complete disintegration. However, Rath failed to argue how the establishment of a new political structure in Syria would be a solution if the cause of the crisis is the US withdrawal. Rath also failed to mention how it would be possible to solve the Syrian without the involvement of the veto powers that compete in Syria. Since the primary objective of the research rests on the critical analysis of the impacts of veto power on Syria, it has specifically focused on multilateral approaches avoiding the bilateral solutions.

Mohamed (2013) argues that the central argument regarding the effects of veto power on Syria implies the failure of the UNSC. Despite the existence of a number of instances that demonstrate success stories in maintaining stability across the world, it has been argued that the

Council has failed many times to safeguard innocent civilians in Syria. Although the reasons behind the failure of the UNSC vary from scholar to scholar, the primary reason behind its failure emerges from the economic, political and military rivalry among veto powers and members states of the Council. This has significantly paralyzed the institution from executing its key duty. Major effects of their disagreement have substantially affected the peace and security of Syria, and its effect is expanding across the Middle East and beyond (Veen, 2019).

1.7.3 Breaking the Deadlock

Scholars such as Wouters and Ruys (2005); Shraideh (2017: 139); Popovski (2015); Okhovat (2011) proposed different approaches on how to reduce the effects of veto powers disagreement on Syria and the deadlock in the Council in order to respond to the crisis in Syria. They suggested reforms including elimination of the veto altogether and enlargement of the UN Security Council. In other words, in order to effectively avoid the gloomy repercussions of veto powers on global stability, the argument has alluded that the veto power should be expanded, restricted or abolished altogether (Shraideh, 2017: 139). Consequently, since the inception of the UN in 1945, the issue of veto power has attracted various stakeholders within and outside the Council that showed interest in the reform process and provided some distinctive proposals such as increasing the efficiency, responsibility and representation of the Council (Gould and Rablen, 2016; Ronzitti, 2010). However, taking the historical stands of veto powers into account, reforming the Council has remained easier said than done (Hurd, 2008; Swart and Perry, 2013; Hosli and Dörfler, 2019: 35).

The “Uniting for Peace” (U4P) is one of the solutions brought to debate. The U4P is the most frequently mentioned resolution in the fight against the deadlock in the Council. Through this resolution, various scholars have tried to break the deadlock of veto powers. Jean Krasno and Mitushi Das (2008: 173) are some of the scholars who came up with the idea of “uniting for peace”. Melling and Dennett (2018) also proposed this resolution as a solution. They argue that it could effectively deal with the deadlock among veto powers on Syria. The central purpose of U4P is that if the Council fails to provide a practical solution to humanitarian crisis due to the veto deadlock, the General Assembly can intervene to protect civilians from the scourge of war.

Carswell (2013) suggests that in order to effectively address the deadlock, the 1950 UN General Assembly resolution can be reexamined to find out the way how to get rid of the veto

competition. One advantage of the U4P is that it accords the General Assembly to intercede in situations where the UNSC becomes inefficient. The UN Security Council has actually failed to ensuring stability in Syria. The argument, therefore, is that the UNGA should be given the remaining chance. In this case, even though the P5 (Permanent five) take the resolution as a threat to their sovereignty, it still remains a viable tool to tackle the veto deadlock.

According to Melling and Dennett (2018), U4P would serve as an alternative key to unlock the UNSC decision making deadlock on the Syrian crisis. Since the Council has been unable to agree on this matter, the General Assembly is the remaining solution to the deadlock. The resolution gives power to decide on how to respond to crisis. The power encompasses undergoing military operations to terminate human catastrophes and ensure stability. This resolution, by giving power to the General Assembly, attempts to introduce an alternative to ensuring stability and breaking stalemates in UNSC.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

1.8.1 Hegemonic Stability Theory

For hegemony stability theorists, one course of action to promote national interest of states can be accomplished through power accumulation and becoming hegemony in the global stage (Gilpin, 2016: 72). Since the possibility of any state to become a hegemony over the international system potentially relies on the ability to advance its sphere of influence, the best way to acquire this ability is through garnering economic and military resources by all means. Then power always enables the state to effectively defend its interest (Donnelly, 2005: 30). In line with this notion, hegemonic stability theorists contend that Russia and the US are competing in Syria to become regional hegemony. One state will always try to advance its interest at the expense of the other. To realize its interests, it may have to control economic resources.

Mearsheimer (2001) argues that there are five distinctive assumptions why great powers compete for power and hegemony: global anarchy, capability, uncertainty, survival and rationality. Anarchy signifies the absence of supra national authority. In order to minimize anarchy, the veto powers compete for hegemony. Capability indicates the offensive military power of states that makes them potentially effective to control resources. Uncertainty is the lack of reliable information of states concerning the intention of their counterparts. Survival implies

the potential of states to protect their sovereign territory from any threat. Rationality suggests the ability of states to perceive their environment.

Keohane relates hegemony to resource control (2005: 32) and realism (136). He argues that if a state seeks to become a hegemonic power in the international system, it should have control over markets and raw material, access to capital and production supremacy. Keohane further argues that hegemony is related to the realism's focus on the idea of power. Nevertheless, he argues that it is not necessarily accurate to relate hegemony to realism. In other words, hegemony can be understood in the idea of state interests and power politics, but it can also be related to cooperation. That is countries that compete to realize global hegemony can entertain their interests in the international system through realism and cooperation. The United States is well known in this case in the postwar era when it sought to dominate the world through its capitalist ideology and cooperation in order to effectively advance its economic and political interests. This move, according to Keohane, is a clear sign to understand that hegemony can be both a realist tendency to control global resources and cooperation among states. According to this theory, Keohane contends that the US is well functioning in the multilateral organizations while competing to maintain its hegemony over the international system.

Mearsheimer (2001) argues that power remains as the top important factor to maintain national wellbeing. In the absence of power, peace becomes unfeasible and security remains substantially threatened. If state sovereignty and existential milieu is potentially threatened, the only option the state could have is to boost its military power (Brown 2005). In line with this principle, Russia has been blocking resolutions brought to the Council to show its power to the US in Syria. When Russia blocks a resolution, the message that the country seeks to convey to the superpowers is that although some believe that Russia is not as strong as the Cold War era, the country speaks loud and clear that it still remains powerful in the world stage.

The central argument this study seeks to note is that the hegemonic competition between the veto powers in the Council to advance their power and economic interests in the Middle East may have created a proxy war in Syria. This proxy war has not only affected the veto powers ability to decide on issues that matter but also endangered the peace and security of the Syrian public. It will continue affecting the Middle East and Europe unless it is addressed as soon as possible (Guimarães and Carvalho, 2017: 73). While liberalists may argue that

institutions such as the UNSC can intervene to conflicts, realists argue that institutions are less capable to ensure stability. They argue that since institutions are “built to promote the material interests of the powerful countries”, states should not trust institutions and remain idle (Donnelly, 2005: 47). Instead of putting trust on institutions and putting themselves in danger, states should build their own power to effectively defend themselves from aggressors. Yet, critics argue that while realists remain ardent to criticize the ineffectiveness of institutions to ensuring stability, their arguments are inadequate (Dunne and Schmidt, 2014: 102).

This study attempts to find out whether hegemonic stability theory has any relevance and influence in stability of Syria and its neighbors. This is primarily because although any member of the veto powers ought to collaborate for collective measures to maintain stability of states, their economic interest and realist tendency may hinder them from pursuing the principle of collective action. And their membership to the UN may not oblige them from pursuing their own self-interest for two reasons. First, the membership of the state in the UN is on voluntary basis. Second, the state has the right to quit its membership at any time (Weber, 2005: 14). It is therefore possible that the realist behavior of the state that pushes them for hegemony has remained uncompromised by the UN Charter which makes it hard to challenge decisions passed by any of the veto powers.

1.8.2 Application of Hegemonic Stability Theory

Hegemonic stability theory is appropriate for this study because it describes the real motivation behind the contention of superpowers on how to address the Syrian civil war. The veto powers, particularly the Russian Federation and the US are competing with each other to become a single dominant power in Syria. While competing to assert their hegemonic power to the world, the veto powers also seek to advance interests in the country. The effects of their competition are well understood in the UNSC when they repeatedly failed to reach a consensus on how to approve a ceasefire and authorize humanitarian aid in Syria. Furthermore, while hegemony and interest remain at the center of their discussion in the Council, the crisis in Syria escalating leaving millions of Syrians between life and death and pushing millions to flee their homes to become refugees in neighboring countries.

The argument is that in order to effectively ensure their hegemony, states compete to control resources. This in turn strengthens their military capability that safeguards their

dominance in the international system. All these motivations have been widely witnessed in the case of the veto powers competition for hegemony in Syria. In other words, the major reason behind veto power disagreement on Syria and their competition for hegemony in the country emanates from their vested political, economic and military interest. The veto powers, particularly, Russia and the US aspire to assert their global hegemony and control resources in Syria. This aspiration has escalated into a proxy war confrontation among veto powers.

Okhobot (2011) and Mahmood (2013) argue that Russia and the US have created proxy war in Syria. Their political, economic and military ambition throughout the region coupled with their aspiration to become hegemony heightened the proxy war. These countries effectively employ veto power to disqualify any resolution mainly to safeguard their hegemonic aspirations (Dallas, 2018; Wouters and Ruys, 2005). Therefore, hegemonic stability theory is an appropriate lens to analyze the hegemonic competition among veto powers in Syria. This study has explained how hegemonic aspiration has been involved in Syria to the effect that it destabilizes Syria and its neighbors.

1.9 Definition of Concepts

1.9.1 Veto Power

Veto power is defined as the right and ability of the veto powers to reject any resolution (Mahmood, 2013; Okhobot, 2011; Dallas, 2018; Wouters and Ruys, 2005). In this study, veto power suggests the decision-making jurisdiction of UNSC permanent members.

1.9.2 Hegemony

Hegemony is defined as the supremacy of a single state over the rules of the international system (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2014: 57). This study employs the definition of hegemonic stability as a political, economic and military competition among veto powers in Syria.

1.9.3 Hegemonic Stability Theory

This theory is defined as the aspiration of superpowers to establish an international system that promotes their economic and political interests (Keohane, 2005: 32, 136). In this study, hegemonic stability theory is interpreted as a competition among veto powers to promote their interests in Syria.

1.9.4 Resolution

The term resolution is defined as an official assertion or position or collective decision of the UN organs (UNSC, 2019). In this study, the term resolution indicates the two Security Council resolutions S/2011/612 and S/2019/961 that were brought to the Council for vote on 4th October 2011 and 20th December 2019 respectively.

1.10 Research Hypothesis

There is a correlation between the UNSC veto powers disagreement and the instability of Syria and its neighbors.

1.11 Methodology

The research methodology includes research design and its justification, study area, study area selection; target population, data collection method, data validity, reliability and data analysis. This research is conducted on the Syrian civil war.

1.11.1 Research Design

Longitudinal research was employed in this study. It has enabled the researcher to assess the historical background that has created the Syrian crisis. There are three reasons why longitudinal research suits with the study. One of the reasons is that the crisis in Syria emerged from a longtime political and social dynamics that included complex religious factions. Another reason is that the Arab Spring expanded across the Middle East before it actually entered into the Syrian soil. Lastly, the superpowers particularly Russia and the US have had a longstanding political and economic interest in Syria that goes back to the Cold War era. Taking all these reasons into consideration, this study has employed the longitudinal research design.

1.11.2 Study Area Selection

Syria was selected for three reasons. First, studies indicate that the conflict in Syria is labeled as the most destructive conflict (Melling & Dennett, 2018; Charles River Editors, 2016). Second, Syria indicates the extent of the effects of veto power disagreement on stability of states (Veen, 2019; Guimarães and Carvalho, 2017: 73). Third, Syria has become an exact illustration of the inherent ineptitude of the UNSC to break the deadlock among its members (Spain, 2013). This study seeks to find out the reason behind the disagreement among veto powers on how to

intervene in Syria and how the UNSC failed to manage the disagreement.

1.11.3 Target Population

In order to collect relevant information, the major targets of the study were institutions such as the UNSC, the United States Institute for Peace (Syria Study Group), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees, Human Rights Watch and International Organization for Migration. For scholarly articles and analysis on the subject, this study also discussed magazines and publishing institutions such as Chatham House, Brookings, The New York Times, The Guardian, New Yorker, Foreign Policy and Foreign Affairs magazines. It has also assessed media institutions such as CNN, BBC and Aljazeera.

Another target of this inquiry was the Security Council Affairs Division. This body comprehends three branches: The Secretariat, the Subsidiary Organs and the Practices and Research Branch. These branches were used as sources of information for veto power disputes and their consequences on stability of Syria because daily activities and major operations of the Council are well recorded through these branches.

The major focus of the study was the two resolutions. The first resolution was S/2011/612 which was sponsored by Great Britain, France, Portugal and Germany on 4th October 2011. The second resolution was S/2019/961 which was sponsored by Belgium, Germany and Kuwait on 20th December 2019. These two resolutions were the central targets of the study because both resolutions clearly indicate the disputes between veto powers in the Council and how their contentions affected the stability of Syria. Therefore, focusing on these resolutions has enabled the researcher to explain the major essence of the study.

1.11.4 Data Collection Methods

This study is based on desk research, and it employed qualitative research method. Under this method, secondary sources have been extensively explored to garner accurate information. The acquisition of accurate information has enabled the researcher to find out how the deadlocks in veto power politics affect the stability of Syria and its neighbors. The secondary sources were used to collect data from scholarly arguments, veto power positions and disagreements. To this end, the study has gathered information from literatures and websites.

Secondary sources have been gathered from the UNSC websites which are rich with online materials such as resolutions, notes, reports, news, statements, press releases, exchange of letters and daily publications. On this website, all the meetings held by members of the UNSC on the crisis in Syria have been recorded and can be easily accessed for free. Not only the meetings but also their main outcomes are available. The votes given by member states on how to solve the Syrian problem are well recorded and are provided in the website. This includes both countries that cast positive votes in favor of the resolutions and countries that cast negative votes against them. In addition to meetings and voting records, the website is also rich with statements given by the president of the Council.

In order to effectively capture the major tenets of veto power competitions and their repercussions on peace and security of states, the researcher has analyzed these resources. This has enabled the researcher to clearly identify the main reasons behind the veto powers contentions in the Council.

1.11.5 Data Analysis

The researcher employed qualitative method in this research. Qualitative research includes ‘summarizing key findings, explanation, interpretation and conclusion’ (Kombo and Tromp, 2018: 118). Hence the study analyzed the key findings in the topic, explain and interpret major concepts related to veto powers controversies and how it affects the wellbeing of Syria and its surroundings. Data collected from secondary resources was analyzed to measure the relation between veto powers divisions in the Council and their ramifications on the Syrian society.

1.11.6 Data Validity and Reliability

Information that was gathered in this research has been subject to verification. The purpose of verification was to ensure consistency and accuracy, to avoid misinformation and prejudice. The researcher has relied on authentic facts, reports and details to corroborate the validity of this research. To this end, the researcher has focused on the central arguments, theories, aims and major questions of the study. This helped the researcher to desist from collecting invalid and unnecessary information which may substantially affect the study.

1.11.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher has strictly followed the reference rules and regulations of the University

of Nairobi and has refrained from any unethical academic conduct. The researcher has adhered to and respected the Departmental guidelines of the University of Nairobi throughout this research.

1.12 Chapter Outline

The study has five chapters. Chapter one included background of the study, statement of the research problem, research questions, research objectives, justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, definition of concepts, research hypothesis and research methodology. Chapter two covered the historical background of the study focusing on the linkage between veto power disagreement in the UNSC and its impact on stability of Syria and its neighbors. Chapter three assessed the effects and responsibility of Syrian instability. Chapter four discussed the major challenges of the UNSC veto power reform process. Chapter five presented summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: SYRIAN CONFLICT: FROM DOMESTIC VULNERABILITIES TO UNSC INTERVENTIONS

This chapter involves two parts. The first part discusses the genesis and historical development of the Syrian conflict focusing on the long-standing historical dynamics, social factions and political factors that created conducive environment for emergence of the civil war. The second part evaluates the degree of global intervention to the human crisis following the eruption of the civil war.

The first part looks at the major pushing factors that led the country up to the beginning of the conflict in late March 2011. These factors include the historical relation of the Syrian regimes with the USSR and the western powers particularly the United States. It then discusses the long-standing religious factions between the Sunni and the Shiite Muslims. Another factor that will be discussed here is the authoritarian tradition of the regime which had been responsible for the deprivation of democratic rights, rule of law and freedom of speech in the country. These realities were looking for a good opportunity that would be a reason for their eruption. Then the good opportunity came in 2010 in Tunisia when a teacher put fire on himself and ignited the Arab Spring starting from North Africa that spread across the Middle East. Surely but slowly, the Arab Spring made its way to Syria awakening the young civilians to pour to the street to protest the Assad regime.

The second part examines the reaction of the global stakeholders after the civil war erupted in 2011. It specifically focuses on the actual diplomatic negotiation of the UNSC and its response to the crisis in an attempt to execute its mandate. It also assesses the disagreement among veto powers and examines if the veto power had affected the stability of Syria. This further gives crucial analysis in the case of veto power restraint during humanitarian aid and cease fire. The central argument is that the disagreement between veto powers has been blocking the Council from adopting resolutions that could have minimized the crisis in Syria. This study particularly focuses on that aim of the Council to allow humanitarian aid and cease fire in Syria. It argues that blocking resolutions that required humanitarian aid and ceasefire is against the purpose of the UN Charter which stipulates the responsibility of member states to maintain stability and protect humanity from the scourge of war.

2.1. The Partition of the Middle East

Khan and Khan (2018) examine how the division of the Middle East (formerly part of the Ottoman Empire) by western powers was a fundamental reason for the present crisis of the Middle East as a region and Syria as a nation. Until the end of the 19th century, Syria was part of the Ottoman Empire with broader geographical landscape that includes Jordan, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon and Palestine. During the WWI, the Ottoman Empire had close relation with the Germans which made it hard for the western powers to create relation with the Empire. Consequently, the French, the British and the Russians conspired how to destroy the Ottoman Empire. In 1915, the French and the British rulers held a diplomatic meeting, discussed the partition of the Empire and reached an agreement to divide and take their part peacefully. Following the agreement, the British government took Iraq and Palestine in which Israel and Jordan were identified later. The French government took Syria and Lebanon. This division later got a legal ground and was effectively formalized through the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations in 1919. The French stayed as colonial masters of Syria until the country got its independence on 24 October 1945. The most dangerous consequence of this division was that the western powers did not consider the cultural, ethnic, and religious and sect based differences of the people in the region. It was drawn without any consideration of the people who lived in the area for millennia. This division then became a timing bomb in the region, and the civil war was just a matter of time.

After Syria got its independence in 1945, the country developed an anti-western and anti-Israeli sentiment and pro-Russian, pro-Palestinian policy which put the country in direct contrast with the western powers. This was much expected taking the historical trauma the country had with its colonial masters into consideration. In addition to the division of the Ottoman Empire (the Middle East) between Great British and France, the French had introduced a harsh colonial policy in Syria. In order to rule Syria to their best interest, the French introduced a divide and rule policy. Through this policy, they systematically favored the minority ethnic and religious groups against the majority in order to create hostilities between communities and to ultimately divert the growing opposition against their rule. The most important part of this historical development is that the French divisive policy and its subsequent impact was well understood by the Syrian rulers even after the country's independence which made them

suspicious of the western powers altogether.

2.2. Religious Factions and Economic Marginalization

Lakitsch (2018) argues that religion has effectively aggravated the Syrian conflict. The longstanding faction between Sunni and Shiite Muslim sects has been creating a rift between the Syrian public and the ruling elite. The Syrian President Bashir Al Assad and his family stood in favor of the Shia Alawite, a minority Muslim sect that holds only ten percent of the total population. Most of the ruling elites follow this religious sect because of historical favor they acquired from French colonial masters. Nevertheless, the Sunni Muslims are the majority and the broader religious group in the country and count more than fifty percent of the total population. As a result of the historical religious injustice, the country's major opposition groups and Islamic jihads come from this Sunni religious sect. The Sunni opposition groups get extensive support from regional actors and Sunni majority such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey and Qatar, and global actors mainly western powers such as the US, the UK and France, among others.

According to Lakitsch, the religious division took its root during the French colonial era in the 1920. The French divided the Greater Syria and introduced independent areas and groups such as Lebanon, Damascus, Alawite, Aleppo, Christian (Lebanon) and Druze. In order to rule the region easily, the French favored political leaders from the Christian, Alawite and Druze minorities and empowered them over the Sunni majority. The Alawite took upper hand over politics since the 1920s. They controlled the most important political and economic seats successfully excluding the rest of the people from any significant participation in the country. This created a dangerous rift between Sunni and the Alawite that persisted until today.

In addition to religious factions, economic marginalization has significantly affected the stability of Syria. Nasser and others (2013) conducted an extensive analysis focusing on the root causes of the rampant conflict in Syria. They made a ground interview including Syrian refugees and paper-based assessment in the area. They found out that the conflict was mainly the result of economic inequality between citizens that has existed for a long time. While the Syrian economy was in a good shape in terms of GDP, there had been an economic marginalization in the country where the political landscape was in favor of some groups over the other. To the minorities such as Alawite and Druze, the economic exclusion was extremely tragic. The economic exclusion

had left significant number of communities outside the economic circle. Particularly after the introduction of new economic policy in 2000s, the economy was creating a huge bridge between some bourgeois and the extreme poor. The gap was widening as the economy excludes the poor and favors the elite. As time passed, it had become quite obvious that this economic inequality could fundamentally lead to social faction across the country. Before March 2011, the poverty driven social division had escalated into a full-flaged dissatisfaction. The public had already started welcoming the Arab Spring into the country. The unemployed youth and the marginalized groups were ready to fight against the government.

2.3. Authoritarianism as a Push Factor

According to Khan and Khan (2018), in a country where political, social and economic marginalization is deeply rooted for quite some time and political power is inherited through ethnic line, it is hard to expect a situation where democratic institutions are well built, and human rights entertained, and freedom of speech maintained. To the opposite, when Assad took power in 2000, many hoped that he would bring change in the country. Assad had strong affiliation to western liberal thought. He had spent many years in the west including the US and the UK where he went school in different academic institutions. When he took power, he tried to introduce some liberal thoughts such as the rule of law, freedom of speech and press freedom and integrated them into his policies. Before Assad, democratic and human rights were expected to where the Syrian government had never introduced a democratic political structure. There has never been free and fair election. Freedom of speech and press freedom are not well entertained. Oppositions and critiques get arrest and jailed indefinitely, and some of them murdered without due process of law. The government is ruthless to journalists who critic against the extrajudicial killings and crime against humanity.

From 1945 to 1971, the country was in a political crisis. Leaders could not have a life span of more than one year due to coups and political conspiracies that made the regime unstable. After General Hafez Al-Assad took power in 1970 as Syrian Prime Minister and later in 1971 as president, the country gained much better stability and even successive economic development. However, Hafez's government was extreme ruthless to opposition groups. His intelligence and security branch were harsh towards the critics who majority of them came from the Sunni religious group. Those who demand equality, freedom of speech and respect for their

human rights were killed without due process of law, sentence to death, brutally tortured and disappeared from their home for unknown reasons. They Sunni therefore had a hostile resentment towards Hafez's government.

2.4. The Spread of Arab Spring in the Middle East

The Arab Spring erupted in Tunisia in 2010 after Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old street vendor, who had lost hope whatsoever in his country, set fire on himself to express his distress after his cart was seized by the government. His action sparked nationwide anger and protest against the government that could not provide job and democracy to its citizens. Tunisians who had longstanding resentment and hate poured to the streets. The economic hardship and the lack of democratic institutions were extremely discordant to the extent that the people demanded regime change and fundamental policy reforms. It became clear that unless their demands were addressed by the government, the protest would bring total chaos and system collapse in the country which could be difficult to restore.

The protest then quickly spread across many North African Arab states and then rapidly proliferated to the Middle East including Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Iraq. The youngsters and the economically, socially and politically disadvantaged section of societies came together and started calling for regime change and fundamental reforms. In Egypt, for example, protestors were able to bring regime change and fundamental policy reform as they requested initially even though there were dissatisfactions with reforms. In Libya, the protest gradually escalated into full-fledged military clashes between rebel groups and the central government which successfully led to the demolishing of the later. In Syria, the protest could attract a number of regional and global actors that played their role in the crisis and continued shaking the security apparatus of the Syrian regime until the clash developed into a civil war. In Iraq, the protest brought not only a regime change but also a complete collapse of the Iraqi regime and the national administration of the country altogether. The protest had become extremely harsh in Iraq to the extent that it left the country without functional government and effectively creating a huge gap for unexpected terrorist organizations to take the place.

Taking the depth of its consequences into account, political commentators argue that the Arab Spring opened a Pandora-box that had been suppressed for decades by authoritarian

regimes across the Middle East. The hunger for democratic governance, and broadening the rule of law, freedom of speech and press freedom, and ensuring respect for fundamental human rights had been a long-awaited Pandora-box in the region. As it has been discussed earlier, the economic hardship due to extreme poverty, unemployment and lack of infrastructure, and religious and ethnic divisions in many states including Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Syria and Iraq have fueled the revolution and triggered to quickly expand across the region. When the revolution started in those countries, they tried to contain the spread through certain political and economic adjustments. These reforms, however, were not fundamental and they were extremely shallow; they could not buy the hearts and minds of the protesters. Against this move, governments started responding harshly by killing and arresting protesters. This harsh response further escalated the protest across the Middle East.

2.5. Anti-government Demonstrations and Instability in Syria

Deutsch and Singer (1964: 390) define state stability in two ways. One way of this definition comes from both systemic and individual state of affairs. A stable system implies the absence of hegemony, the existence of independent member states and the absence of war. A stable state is one that functions independently and that effectively maintains its territorial integrity. According to the given definition of systemic stability, in order for the international system to be stable, there are two preconditions. First, there should not be a hegemonic power who dictates the behaviors of states. Second, as opposed to a hegemonic state, there should be independent states that operate based on their respective policies and interests. In the absence of these two preconditions, it is highly likely that there might be war between competing states unlike the criteria of a stable system that requires prevalence of peace. In this regard, the current international system can be well understood as a system that rests under the US hegemony. In the case of Syria, however, there are competing powers that seek to ensure their hegemonic power in the region.

According to Slim and Trombetta (2014) the Syrian protest was peaceful in the beginning until the government started taking harsh measures on peaceful protesters. The anti-government demonstrations started in March 2011 mainly in schools. A group of teenage students in a town called Daraa, southwestern Syria, posted antigovernment painting on a wall that immediately ignited harsh reaction from the security forces. The students were arrested and

tortured. The arrest sparked instant protest across the city to which the government security forces again responded swiftly and harshly and killed several peaceful protesters. The protest then spread gradually to areas such as Homs, Latakia and Idlib before it controlled the whole country. This led to the bloody civil war that claimed over half a million civilians and persisted for almost ten years.

Kavlick and others (2015) argue that the reason why the civil war persisted for so long is because of the interest of the external and internal players in the civil war. The major players have no interest to build democracy and rule of law in the country; they rather would like to maintain their political power. For the minority Alawite, taking control of the power in Damascus is considered as the struggle for survival. If the rebel groups from the majority Sunni seize power, the Alawite well believed that it would be the end of their existence. The minority rebel groups that include Al Qaeda and ISIL, among others, have had resentment over the Alawite minority who controlled power for decades effectively excluding the other ethnic and religious groups. Among those extremely marginalized from the political economy of Syria are the Sunni majority who count seventy percent (70%) of the total population. Taking this situation into consideration, the Alawite, who count ten percent (10%) of the population and controlled the most important political and economic seats in the country, understood that it would be against their survival to lose their position and their political, economic and security monopoly. Thus, they fight until their last breath and this has made the civil war last for so long.

According to Kavlick and others, there have been a number of external factors that aggravated the Syrian conflict. The Syrian conflict has been extremely complex due to the involvement of a number of foreign actors including regional players and hegemonic powers. According to the Global Conflict Tracker (2020), Syria has become a center of gravity for the global powers in their competition to test their military and political capability and maintain their interests. The country is now a field for the proxy war currently undergoing between the west and the east mainly between Russia and the US. While the Assad regime gains support from Russian and Iran, the opposition groups have been assisted by the western powers including the UK, France and the US and their allies such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In addition political and economic interests, the proxy war has further brought extreme concern to the western powers and their allies including the expansion of terrorist groups such as ISIS, the

widespread conflict between the Assad regime and opposition parties, and the full-scaled involvement of Turkey in the fight against the Syrian Kurds.

2.6. Veto Powers and Syrian Civil War

The situation in Syrian attracted the attention of a number of global institutions such as the UN. The UNSC set a meeting in March 2011 to discuss the situation. In the meeting, member states strongly urged the Assad regime to immediately stop attacking its own unarmed citizens, stop arresting innocent civilians without due process of law and urged to unconditionally release prisoners and informed to the international community that the Syrian civil unrest embodies a huge potential to escalate into a large scale national and regional disaster unless it is contained as soon as possible. It called upon both the ruling group and the people at large to come to negotiation and maintain order in the country.

The tragedy however has been the UNSC inaction to intervene and save civilians from the scourge of war. The Council's decision making process has been extremely sluggish to the extent that it has never been able to make a decision that could substantially minimize the civil war, urge fighting groups to cease their fire, adopt a resolution that permits humanitarian aid through cross borders and bring criminals into justice. The Council's decision-making process has been unable to enforce ceasefire between the fighting parties, allow humanitarian aid to those in need, and halt horrific attack on civilians across the country. This complete inaction primarily comes from the Council's ineffective diplomatic negotiation which has made it impossible particularly for the veto powers come to a common understanding on how to intervene in the crisis. From October 2011 to December 2019, 14 resolutions that exclusively focus on the situation in Syria were tabled for discussion. All of them were rejected by Russia and China effectively blocking the decision-making process indefinitely. This therefore implies the significance of understanding the Council's diplomatic negotiation and aspirations of its decisions in order to look at the possible ways to unlock the diplomatic deadlock. In this sense, the UNSC decision-making process and the veto power politics has been briefly discussed as follows.

Since the civil war started in 2011, the veto powers have been unable to come to a common understanding on how to end the crisis. Even though the veto powers are divided between West

(US, France and UK) and East (the Russian Federation and China), all veto powers have always come up with diverging interests into the negotiation. However, even though their categories have been examined, their interests and positions have not been well explained. In addition, while the interests of Russian, China and the US in Syria are articulated in various literatures, the interests of France and the UK are not well discussed. All permanent members avoid mentioning their real interests in Syria when they negotiate in the UNSC. They all argue that it is their duty to protect the wellbeing of the Syrian public from the scourge of war. In other words, the veto powers concealed their vital interests in Syria throughout the negotiations in the Council regularly mentioning that they have been there to defend the sovereignty of the country to decide on its own internal affairs. They argued that their positions are always meant to protect the best interest of the Syrian public. While the UN Charter allows permanent members to advance and defend their interests in the Council, none of the five veto powers have ever mentioned their real interest. Instead, they repeatedly argue that they are responsible to maintain global peace and security, and their position in Syria is part of this responsibility. Thus, veto powers have complex sometimes contradicting interests in Syria that have been longstanding challenges in the Council. Some of their interest include, among others, economic (oil and trade), security (deterrence of terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda) and regional hegemonic competitions particularly between Russia and the United States.

While Russia and China explicitly support the sovereignty of Syria from foreign intervention as per the principles of the UN Charter, the United States, the United Kingdom and France explicitly supported the Council's to protect human rights violations in the country. Nevertheless, scholars such as Staudenmeyer (2014), Eminue and Dickson (2013), Wong (2012), Strong (2015), Chalmers (2015) and Youssef (2017) argue that all the five permanent members of the Security Council take position on the case of Syria based on their national interests. Position of each member of the Council has been discussed as follows to depict the main reasons behind the veto powers members.

2.6.1. The United States

Staudenmeyer (2014) argues that there are a number of strategic reasons that pushed the US to take a position on Syria. One of the ultimate objectives of the US is to prevent its national enemies such as the Syrian regime from possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). This

can be achieved by making sure that the Syrian regime is economically weak at home and politically isolated from the international community and global powers such as Russia and Iran. Imposing wide ranging sanctions on the regime could possibly undermine the foreign relation of the country. Another strategic interest of the US government in Syria comes from the necessity of weakening terrorism in the region. This strategy would assist to block the spillover effect of the terrorist organizations in the region and possibly in the West. The other US interest in Syria could be containing the influence of Iran and Russia in the Middle East in general and Syrian in particular. The US strongly believes that the downfall of the Assad regime would effectively diminish the strength of Hezbollah and deter the Iran spread in the region. This can be only achieved if the Shia alliance which is the backbone of the Syrian regime is entirely destroyed. The Shia alliance gets strong support from the Iran regime and involves a number of rebel groups and jihadist organizations.

Therefore, the role of the United States in the Syrian civil war has been immense since the revolution started in 2011. Even though the US explicitly argued its primary interest remained to be the protection of civilians from the scourge of war, Straudenmeyer argues that the role the country had been playing emerged from its economic and political interests in Syria as it has been discussed earlier. To achieve these goals, the major position of the US has been changing throughout the course of the conflict. During the Obama Administration, for instance, the US government stated that there would no stability in Syria unless the Assad regime left office without precondition. The country had been clearly stating its position in the UNSC and on bilateral basis repositioning itself from protection of civilians to economic interest then to regime change. Nevertheless, the US has had a deeply rooted economic and political interest in Syria that has never changed through time. To the record, the country has preferred to depict itself in the UNSC nothing but as the major human rights defender and peace and security promoter in Syria. Ultimately, the US sought to overthrow the Assad regime.

For example, on 4 October 2011, Neil MacFarquhar, in his article published on The New York Times argued that the United States, alongside its Western allies, requested to remove the Assad regime through the 2011 resolution that was rejected by Russia and China. The then US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice, accused Russia for rejecting the resolution in order to maintain its interests and continue selling military equipment to the brutal regime at the

expense of the innocent civilians who had been murdered, tortured and imprisoned without due process of law. The US had said that it would support the Syrian government to reform its policies and to execute its responsibility to protect its citizens from violence. If the government fails to execute its mandate to protect civilians from war atrocities or if the government is part and parcel of the disaster, the international community through the UNSC should immediately intervene to prevent civilians from the scourge of the civil war.

2.6.2. The Russian Federation

Eminue and Dickson (2013) argue that Syria offers five strategic values to the Russian Federation. First, Russia has built a military base in Syria that strategically maintains its naval vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. This would eventually mean Russia can easily provide its military equipment to Syrian government which is vital to the economy of the former. Second, Russian intervention in Syria could assist Putin to divert the growing challenging against his regime in Moscow. This would definitely assist Putin to mobilize public support in Russia which has been shadowing for quite some time. Third, there have been societal connections with Syria. For example, there are many Russians residing along the Syrian border who seek protection from the Russian government. In addition, the Russian Orthodox Church might have pushed the Russian government to intervene in Syria to protect the Orthodox Christians in Syria. The Russian and Syrian Orthodox Christians have had strong relations that existed a long time. Fourth, Russia doesn't want to allow religious extremism to spread across the Middle East particularly in Syria because it might directly affect its peace and security across the border. Fifth, Russia would like to challenge US presence in the Middle East and its bilateral approach to boost its economic and political interests in the region. Six, the failure of western interventions to bring peace in Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq has forced Russia to support the Syrian government. In other words, Russia believed that the failure of western intervention in those countries might repeat itself in Syria.

MacFaquhar (2011) argues that Russian position on Syria has been loud and clear. First, Russia opposes any attempt to overthrow the Assad regime arguing that it is against the interest of the Syrian people. It also contends that it is against the principle of the UN Charter that prohibits any foreign interference in the internal affairs of member states. To this end, members of the Council should respect the sovereignty of Syria. Second, Russia rejects any resolution that

holds only the Assad regime responsible for the civil war and exempts the opposition groups from criticism. According to the Russian representative to the UN Vitaly Churkin who spoke on the Council's meeting in 2011, resolutions that attempt to address the Syrian crisis should hold both the government and the opposition groups accountable for the catastrophe. The representative accused Western powers including the United States for providing financial, technical and military training support to the opposition groups in order to create instability in the country. He asserted that the groups that were creating havoc and destroying the stability of Syria were western backed extremists, not the people of Syria.

2.6.3. The People's Republic of China

Adam Tyler published an article on The Washington Post on 27th March 2017 concerning the relationship between China and the Syrian regime. He argued that China has economic and security interest in Syria. Security wise, China has a threat from the Uighur rebel groups that pour to the Middle East including Syria for jihadist training. These are Chinese minority ethnic groups that have posed serious security challenge to China. In addition to containing the security threat from the Middle East, China also would like to advance its economic interest through participating in the reconstruction of Syria in the post-war period. From the Syrian side, the Assad regime has been grateful with China for its rejection of resolutions that would negatively affect the interests of Syria. In addition, the Syrian regime would like to use China as a political tool to counter western influence in the country. In response to this demand, China, alongside Russia, has rejected a number of resolutions that requested the UNSC to intervene in the Syrian crisis.

Since the outbreak of the civil war, China had been dormant throughout the civil war calculating its political and economic interest in Syria. Nevertheless, China was actively following the situation in Syria through the UNSC. Even though it had not clearly substantiated its interests, the country was able to stand with its ally the Russian Federation on the matter. The position of China has been similar with Russia despite in some areas that focused on economic matters. Even though China has never initiated its own resolution, it has stood with its ally Russia in areas where the western powers requested military intervention and strict sanctions. This doesn't mean China has no interest whatsoever in Syria. It only means it would rather prefer to support the Russian position instead of sponsoring its own resolution.

Following its stance on the Syrian conflict, there are examinations that sought to analyze the real interests of China in Syria.

Wong (2012) argues that China has economic interests in Syria including oil and market. The country has been undergoing gas extraction and current has in a number of oil companies in the country. It has invested billions of dollars through its companies and through its state financial institutions. For China and its multi-national corporations, leaving Syria to national collapse and western intervention would mean willing to lose all these investment and huge interest rates. In addition, its inability to protect its companies and its economic allies in the Middle East would create frustration in its national companies and foreign partners. China is also keen to use the Syrian market for its industrial products.

2.6.4. The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, among the countries sponsored resolution S/2011/612 in 2011, urged the Syrian government and opposition groups to end human rights violations in Syria. France, Germany and Portugal were the other states that drafted the resolution. Representatives from the British government expressed their concern in Syria and always sought to address the Syrian civil war, protect human rights and rule of law. However, despite British explicit position in the UNSC to adhere to its global responsibility in the maintenance of peace and security, scholars such as Strong (2015) and Chalmers (2015) argue that Britain has sought to maintain a number of interests in Syria. What reasons did Britain force to look for military intervention in Syria?

Strong (2015) discusses three possible reasons that pushed Britain to promote UNSC intervention in Syria. The first reason comes from the conception that Britain considers itself in the international system. The British political elites consider the country as an active political player in the global issues. For example, member of the British parliament argued that Britain should not wait for the UNSC approval for its military operation in Syria because Britain is a global political player and strong defender of human rights violations. Another argument from some members of the parliament was whether British move to defend global human rights is really in the best interest of the British people having its historical involvement in the area. While some members strong support British move, others strongly oppose the movement.

The second reason for British interest to intervene in Syria was that it considers itself as a global defender of the liberal ideals such as rule of law, human rights and democracy. However, this notion attracted strong critic from the British political elites. The politicians including parliamentarians argued that the British global intervention would do harm to human rights protection than good. Particularly, mentioning the historical consequences that western military intervention created in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, members of the British parliament argued that the British intervention in Syria has nothing to do with restoration of democracy and human rights in the country.

A third reason for the British interest to intervene in Syria comes from its strong alliance with the United States. According to Strong, the British supported the US to show its alliance in this situation even though this move was considered as a political approach to legitimate the US intervention. Most importantly, the British parliament squarely opposed the move mentioning that let alone Britain, even the US didn't have any feasible interests in Syria that could drive the country to war. Strong argues that despite the political implications, Britain is not able to influence the US when the British parliament was quite hesitant David Cameron's request to participate in the airstrike in Syria while the US had already started the operation.

Chalmers (2015) argues that the British interest in Syria emerges from its fear of the terrorist organizations in the regional including al-Qaeda and ISIS and its commitment to protect its allies. An instance for this is that the British government sought to start military operation in Syria in 2015 to show its support to France after the Paris terrorist attack. The British also wanted to effectively address the terrorist threats in the Middle East from the groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. However, the parliament questioned the British interest in Syria. While most of them appreciated the British to stand with its allies, they questioned whether there is any benefit the country would get from the operation. They argued that if the operation would not get support from the Syrian public, the operation should be considered as useless since it has missed its main target. Going back to the history of British military intervention in Libya and Afghanistan, members of parliament recalled that the intended peace didn't come in those countries and the people were not appreciative of the military intervention.

2.6.5. France

Youssef (2017) argues that France had a long historical alliance with the Syrian regime it started opposing the Syrian government in March 2011 when the latter killed dozens of civilians after a conflict erupted in the country. France took a swift measure in opposing the regime that made it the first western power to stand against the Syrian regime. It then started supporting the UNSC move towards sanctioning the regime. It also began to assist opposition groups in Syria which put it in sharp contrast with the Russian Federation that promoted the UNSC neutrality from the Syrian affairs. The French government was also publicly announcing its positions in Syria to be fighting terrorism, providing humanitarian support, promoting the UNSC positions and fighting human rights violations.

According to Youssef, the French government advanced its major interests in the UNSC even though its explicit diplomatic arguments were meant to protect the Syrian public from the scourge of the civil war. Generally, despite the explicit arguments in the Council, the French government has had three interrelated interests in Syria. First, it sought to restore its influence in the Middle East in general and Syria in particular as it used to do during the colonial times. Second, it wanted to step in replacing the EU which has refused to intervene throughout the civil war. Third, France also got frustrated by the Obama foreign policy in Syria and Trump's alliance with Russia. These three factors further significantly affected the foreign policy of France in Syria in the areas of immigration, terrorism and oil politics. In this regard, fighting against terrorism, managing refugees from Syria and maintaining its oil interest in the Middle East in general and Syrian in particular have become fundamental foreign policy principle of the French government.

CHAPTER THREE: Assessment of Syrian Instability and Its Effect

This chapter assesses the major impacts of veto powers disagreement on the stability of Syria and its neighbors. Since the conflict started in 2011, the veto powers have been directly and indirectly involved in the Syrian crisis. Directly, Russia and the US have had an extensive support to Assad regime and the rebel groups respectively to maintain their economic and political interests in the country. Indirectly, the veto powers have been consistently casting their votes creating a diplomatic deadlock in the Council. In both cases, the socio-economic impacts of the veto powers have been wide-ranging and complex. The chapter also examines the spillover effects of permanent members' contentions in the Council and the Syrian civil war on Syrian neighboring countries. The Syrian refugees have posed economic, social and security threats to host countries. There are instances in countries such as Jordan and Lebanon that the local community develops discomfort and distrust towards the Syrian refugees following the pressure on job opportunities and public services.

3.1. Failure of Ceasefire and Humanitarian Aid

When the UNSC failed to adopt the 2011 resolution that focused on ceasefire in Syria, it had become plain that the Council had put itself in a diplomatic deadlock where the permanent members extensively abuse their veto power (Melling and Dennett, 2018). The UNSC has cancelled 14 resolutions that focused on the crisis in Syria in particular and in the Middle East in general specifically since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011 until December 2019. All of these resolutions were rejected by members of the Council primarily by Russia in some resolutions with China's support. This diplomatic deadlock has attracted a number of criticisms on the Council. On the one hand, the inaction of the Council to bring the fighting groups into common understanding or to impose sanction to ceasefire and protect civilians from the scourge of the civil war and held those caused human suffering accountable for their human rights violations, has been at the center of the critic.

On the other hand, following the inaction to end civil war in Syria, the legitimacy of the Council has been questioned, and the total elimination of the veto power has been proposed (Melling and Dennett, 2018). This comes after a number of diplomatic negotiations on how to solve the Syrian crisis failed to bring positive result. The most intriguing critic is that the Council

has been unable to convince its members to execute their own mandates. Members of the Council have been mandated by the UN Charter to maintain peace and stability and save humanity from the scourge of civil war. They have the responsibility to avert violence, protect innocent civilians and create a mechanism to bring peaceful solution to disputes. If fighting groups fail to agree, members of the Council are entitled to impose sanctions and protect civilians from further atrocities. Nevertheless, the Council has failed to address all these challenges in Syria. The table below shows the draft resolutions tabled at the UNSC and rejected by Russia and China.

Table 1: Draft Resolutions Rejected by Russia and China

	Date	Draft	Subject	Vetoed by
1	4 October 2011	S/2011/612	Human rights violations	Russia and China
2	4 February 2012	S/2012/77	Human rights violations	Russia and China
3	19 July 2012	S/2012/538	Peace Plan	Russia and China
4	22 May 2014	S/2014/348	Reference to ICJ	Russia and China
5	8 October 2016	S/2016/846	Cessation of air strike	Russia
6	5 December 2016	S/2016/1026	Cessation of hostilities	Russia and China
7	28 February 2017	S/2017/172	Sanction on chemical weapons	Russia and China
8	12 April 2017	S/2017/315	Investigation on chemical weapons	Russia
9	24 October 2017	S/2017/884	Joint Investigative Mechanism	Russia
10	16 November 2017	S/2017/962	Joint Investigative Mechanism	Russia
11	17 November 2017	S/2017/970	Joint investigative Mechanism	Russia
12	10 April 2018	S/2018/321	Use of Chemical Weapons	Russia
13	19 September 2019	S/2019/756	Humanitarian intervention	Russia and China
14	20 December 2019	S/2019/961	Humanitarian aid permit	Russia and China

(UNSC, 2019)

Syria has been in dire situation since the eruption of the civil war in 2011. According to Syria Study Group (2019) and Magri (2019), the Syrian catastrophe has become the most tragic civil war after the Second World War. In the last nine years, more than half a million Syrians

were killed; six (6) million innocent civilians were internally displaced; more than six (6) million people left their homes and became refugees in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and outside the region including Europe, North America (Alshoubaki and Harris, 2018). While international humanitarian organizations and UN agencies have been undergoing joint operations to respond to the humanitarian crisis across the country, the parties currently engaged in the civil war including the Russian backed Syrian government and western backed opposition groups failed to reach an agreement. Not only the fighting groups but also members of the UNSC have failed to come to a common understanding in ending the civil war.

The reasons why the veto powers failed to agree on the Syrian civil war have attracted a number of scholars. They argue that even if the veto powers have never mentioned their real interests in Syria, a number of researches indicate that they have contradictory interest in the region. While some of the veto powers focus mainly on political interests, the others are keen to maintain their economic interest. For example, Seoka (2015) argues that when Russia and China rejected 14 resolutions (Russia 14 and China 7) from 2011 to 2019, they have never mentioned their unilateral economic or political interest in the Council. However, the UN Charter states that permanent members have an inalienable right to defend their interests.

In the meantime, the fate of millions of Syrians still staggers an awkward situation. There are multiple circumstances that determine the subsequent state of affairs of Syrians (Magri, 2019). First, the end of the civil war remains a pending concern, and its solution requires common understanding among domestic, regional and global actors. Second, reconstruction and bringing the country back to its previous status requires billions of dollars which stretches not only beyond the capacity of the country but also holds an economic implication that challenges the willingness and commitment of the international community and global financial institutions. Third, even if the civil war ends at any time in the future, the fate of millions of Syrians refugees currently offered temporary shelter in neighboring countries and Europe is yet hard to predict. If there are chances to bring them back to Syria, there should be a plan to rebuild their homes; build schools, hospitals and social institutions which require a wide range of participants from security, economic and social perspectives (Syria Study Group, 2019).

3.2. Social and Economic Collapse

The humanitarian and economic catastrophe had affected millions of Syrians and neighboring countries. As it has been discussed in chapter two, there is a strong relation between the inaction of the UNSC veto powers and the socio-economic collapse of Syria. The UNSC failed to adopt a draft resolution in 2011 that aimed at averting the mass atrocities, human rights violations and socio-economic collapse including roads, hospitals, schools and other public institutions in Daraa and gradually elsewhere in the country. The Council discussed the crisis in April 2011 during the Israeli-Palestinian meeting in which the US, UK, France and Germany expressed their grave concern. A week later in April, the Council held an exclusive meeting on the Syrian crisis that uncovered the gross civilian injuries and socio-economic destruction. In August the same year, they again discussed the Syrian catastrophe in a broader and organized manner even though no tangible document had been issued to curb the situation. On 4th October 2011, the Council tabled a draft resolution that requested the end of the crisis. However, the resolution was rejected by Russia and China (Saira Mohamed, 2012). This resolution could have called upon the Syrian government and the rebel groups to stop fighting immediately. The Council brought this resolution in the middle of the socio-economic destruction of Syria.

A group of UNDP researchers conducted a wide range of assessment in 2013 and 2014 on the socio-economic impact of the civil war on Syrians and the region in the general (UNDP, 2015). They concluded that the gross humanitarian and socio-economic crisis in Syria had never happened elsewhere in the world after the Second World War. The civil war left the country without major frameworks such as feasible infrastructure, trained human labor, public facilities and national institutions. This would make it extremely hard for the government and the global community to rebuild the country to its previous status.

The social and economic crisis has fundamentally affected Syria. While the social fabrics, religious institutions, community structures and collective frameworks have disintegrated, the economic crumble has exacerbated the national catastrophe to the extent that restoration would be extremely challenging in the future. Besides, there have been four major socio-economic catastrophes of the civil war across the country. The first major disaster was witnessed on the tragic destruction of human resource during the conflict which caused half a million deaths, millions of injuries and millions innocent civilians to leave their homes. This in turn caused a

human resource gap in the economic development of the country seriously damaging the production capacity of the country. Second, the civil war dismantled the national economic frameworks. Roads, schools, hospitals and social institutions have been destroyed. The physical infrastructures and social systems have collapsed leaving the country without feasible frameworks that could assist to reorganize the economic and social networks that have existed for centuries. Third, the destruction of the national economy was extreme to the extent that life became harsh for millions of Syrians after the already weakened economy had further collapsed. Investments and financial transactions had significantly reduced. Fourth, the spillover effect of the civil war had economic and social distress on neighboring countries. The Syrian neighbors carried the refugee burden which generated economic pressure and social implications including inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts (Seeberg, 2017).

One of the impacts of veto powers disagreement on Syria includes the humanitarian crisis that has devastated millions of people across the country causing more than half a million deaths and pushing more than 12 million to be refugees in the Middle East and beyond. To respond to this catastrophe, Einsiedel and others (2015) argue that humanitarian crisis followed by refugee catastrophes had become the central concern of the UNSC since the beginning of the civil war in 2011. They stress that taking the historical humanitarian disasters that happened worldwide under the guise of the UN into consideration, the ability of the Council to deter humanitarian crisis should be taken with doubt. Among others, the UN was unable to prevent the genocide in Rwanda and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. In the twenty first century, in the middle of nuclear competition among superpowers for hegemony, the agency lacks trust from the global community. In the case of Syria, bringing perpetrators to justice and curbing further humanitarian escalations would be at the center of the Council.

While the veto powers in the Council had been immensely occupied in defending their vested interests, the tragedy in the country was escalating. From 2011 up to 2012, millions of Syrians had already internally displaced. In early 2012, the refugee crisis had started affecting neighboring countries. The already troubled regional states were flooded with Syrian refugees to the extent that some countries such as Lebanon had started refusing to host more refugees. The refugee has continued escalating from time to time. Today Syrian refugees can be found in the Middle East, Europe and North America. The refugees are suffering from a wide range of

challenges including lack of basic services and discrimination from local communities in host countries particularly in neighboring countries such as Lebanon and Iraq. Returning back to their homes is unthinkable at this time since the civil war has still continued in many parts of Syria (Spain, 2013).

The refugee crisis in Syria includes the internally displaced people and the people left their homes to neighboring countries, Europe and North America. There are four million internally displaced Syrians elsewhere in the country. Neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan also hosted significant number of Syrian refugees. Thousands of Syrians crossed the Middle East and exiled in Europe and North America. The refugees currently living inside Syria and in neighboring countries are in grave situations due to lack of socio-economic facilities and continued attack from the rebel groups and government forces. Refugees in neighboring countries are suffering from shortage of basic needs such as food, clean water, safe shelter and lack of public services. They are affected by hostilities and discrimination from the local people. This emerges after job opportunities reduced and pressure on limited public services was witnessed. The local people believed that the refugees were taking their jobs and sharing their public services such as hospitals and schools making it hard for the locals to compete (UNDP, 2015).

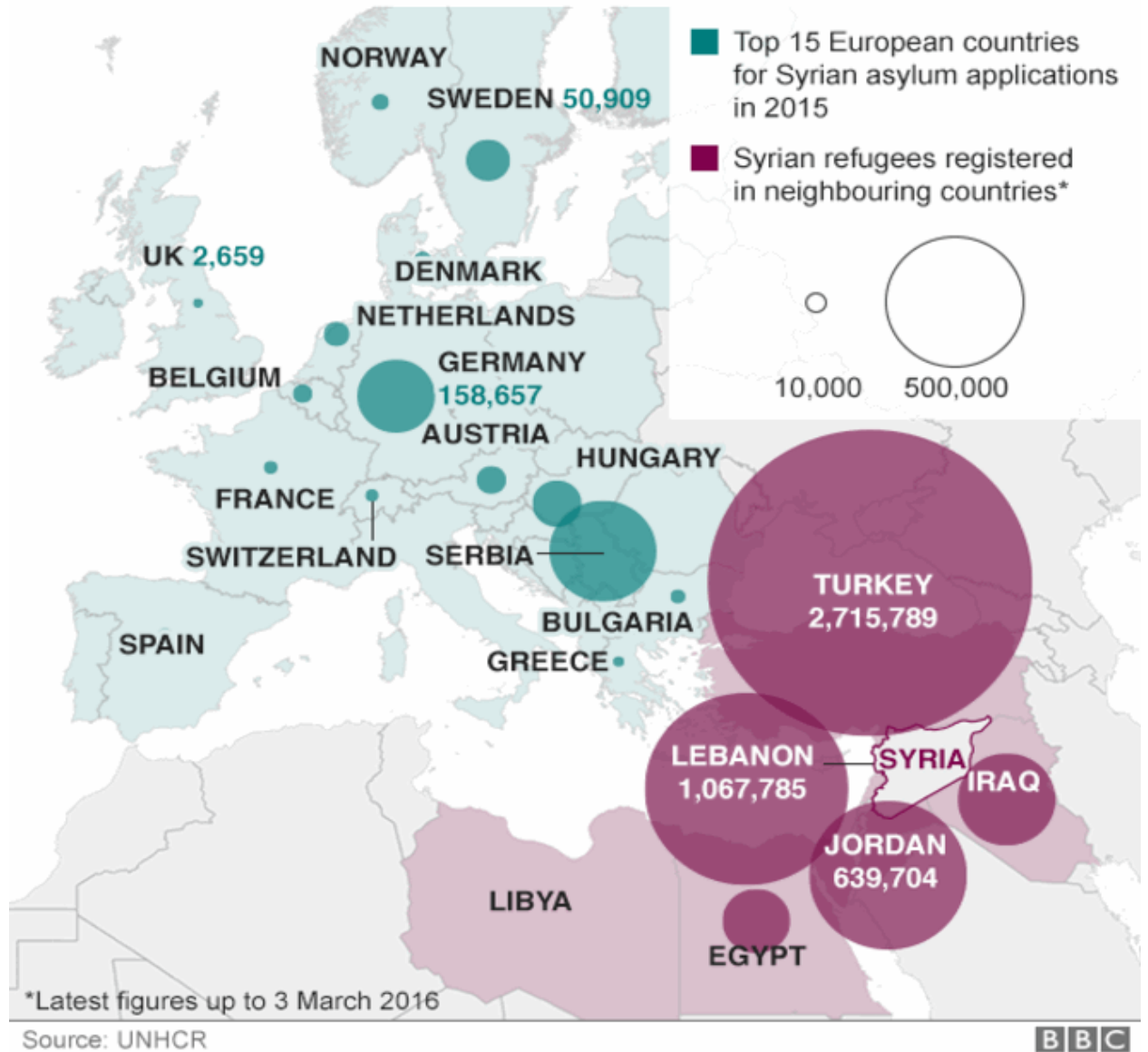
Another consequence of the disagreement of permanent members is failure to provide attention to the economy of innocent civilians from complete destruction. According to Magri (2019), in order to take Syria back to its 2010 condition, the World Bank required 200 billion USD. Another organization the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia suggested 400 billion USD for reconstruction. This indicates the extent and depth of the Syrian economic collapse. This destruction doesn't merely show the demolishing of buildings and roads, it also implies the collapse of major infrastructures such as education, health and social fabrics including religious institutions that cannot be easily restored in short of period of time. The irony is that while the Syrian economy was collapsing, permanent members of the UNSC were calculating their interest in the country. While the Russian Federation wants to maintain its market for its military production in the region, the US is looking for oil from Syria. Both countries have invested billions of dollars in the Syrian territory, and they would like to safeguard their interest.

3.3. The Spillover Effect of the Civil War

The influx of Syrian refugees into neighboring countries has implicated political, economic and social distress. This is due to a number of reasons. First, refugees tend to fight against the government of their country of origin. Some refugees go further to organize a fighting group against governments in their home to revenge or change the hostile situation in their home that pushed them to flee their country. This eventually creates instability in the host country and political dissatisfaction between the origin and host country. Second, refugees and people in the host countries might go to conflict due to competitions. For example, if the refugees are in a better standard of living than the people of host countries, this may attract envy and hatred towards immigrants which eventually might lead to conflict (Alshoubaki and Harris, 2018). Third, the economic burden of refugees on host countries may attract public dissatisfaction with the government of host countries due to job loss and national budget pressure.

Despite major similarities, the effects of refugee influx in neighboring countries vary based on the economic, social and political status of host countries. While the economic pressure of refugee influx is high in countries where there is huge economic stress, the political implication becomes high where there is political instability. In countries where there is both economic and political distress, the political and economic repercussion of refugees remains discordant. For example, the Syrian refugees exacerbated the economic and political situation of Iraq due to the already weakened political economy of Iraq. In Turkey, Syrian refugees were seen as security threats most likely because of the extension of the Syrian conflict into Turkish territory. In Lebanon, the fear was that the Syrian refugees might exacerbate the already troubled economic and security condition. The Jordanians were scared of the spread of religious and ethnic conflict into their country. All these various situations indicate that the effects of Syrian refugees on neighboring countries were diverse based on the status of host countries (Young et al., 2014; Magri, 2019). In order to clarify the magnitude of Syrian civil war and the extent of its impact on neighboring countries, the spillover effect of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan has been briefly examined as follows.

Syrians in neighbouring countries and Europe



(Janeiro, 2016: 12)

Figure 1: Syrian Refugees in Neighboring Countries and Europe

3.3.1. Turkey

The spillover effect of the Syrian civil war is immense in Turkey in many ways. First, there have been a number of instances that the Syrian refugees would import the civil war into the Turkish territory. This is due to the involvement of the Turkish regime and other Turkish rebel groups in the Syrian civil war. Second, the flow of Syrian refugees into Turkey has added fuel on the longstanding ethnic and religious division in the southern part of Turkey. Along the borders of the two countries, residents from various ethnic and religious groups have had a longtime dispute and sometimes bloody conflict. There had been fighters backed by both countries that used their host countries as springboard to launch attack against the other. For example, the Kurdish ethnic groups cover a vast geographic landscape in both Syria and Turkey territories. The Kurdish freedom fighters known as Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have been supported by the Syrian government to attack against the Turkish regime even though these fighters have started negotiating with the Turkish government. A substantial number of Kurdish people still stand with the Syrian regime and refused to cooperate with the Turkish unionist agenda. Those who reside in the Turkish territory gain support from the Turkish regime which angers the Kurdish inside the Syrian territory. This division among Kurdish Turkey and Syria territories has been against the interest of Turkey because the conflict has been dragged to the Turkish territory. Following the civil war and the spread of instability in the region, the situation has recently aggravated the tension and could lead to a full-fledged conflict which would make the area a potential for anti-Turkey terrorist recruitment.

Third, since the outbreak of the civil war, the Turkish government had been providing a wide range of support to the Syrian rebel fighters. The rebel groups operate in both countries, and they spend their time in Turkish territory in their free time and for military training. The underlying concern is that the rebel groups may import the situation into Syria if they are not well managed (Young et al., 2014).

3.3.2. Lebanon

Studies suggest that Lebanon, a small country in the northern and eastern part of Syria, leads both the region and the World in terms of hosting the Syrian refugees since 2012. According to the UNHCR (2019), Lebanon hosts the highest number of Syrian refugees in the

Middle East. Another extensive research conducted by group of scholars and international organizations indicates that the per capita refugee in Lebanon is the highest in the world based on the proportion of its total population to the number of refugees (Magri, 2019). Accordingly, one Syrian refugee amounts to three-point five (1:3.5) Lebanese citizens. The country has allowed thousands of refugees to enter into its territory (UNHCR, 2019; Young et al., 2014). The Lebanese government announced that it hosts more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees in 2019. The UNHCR announced that it has more than one million refugees officially registered as Syrian refugees in the country in the same year.

The argument has been, as the number of refugees increases, the socio-economic pressure gets worse. This is true in countries such as Lebanon where its political system had been fragile for years and where more than 300 thousand Palestinian and Iraqi refugees had caused substantial impact on its already weakened political economy. Taking the impacts of refugees on the troubled country into account, the Lebanese government had refused to accept Syrian refugees. The government failed to allocate camps allowing the refugees to spread all-over the country. This partly exacerbated the tension between local people and refugees following the shrink in job opportunities and increased pressure on public services. Despite the socio-economic impacts, the security threat had been discordant in Lebanon. Part of the reason comes from the large-scale involvement of the Hezbollah terrorist organization in both countries.

3.3.3. Iraq

In terms of number of Syrian refugees, Iraq hosts relatively lower number as compared to the regional states. For example, from 2011 up to 2018, there have been around 250 thousand Syrian refugees in Iraq. Majority of these refugees are ethnic Kurdish; they are officially registered in the Kurdistan region of Iraq where they were welcomed and accorded accommodation by the regional administration. Despite the efforts made by the regional government to ensure refugees access basic rights, a study conducted in 2018 found that the refugees are suffering from economic, security and social challenges. The study indicated that the refugees are also putting pressure on the local people including shortage of employment opportunities and pressure on basic services such as health and education. There are other challenges the refugees have been facing such as limited access to justice, public participation and property ownership (Durable Solutions Platform, 2019).

Even though the number of Syrian refugees has been relatively small, the spillover effect of the Syrian civil war has extremely affected Iraq more than any country in the region for a number of reasons. First, Iraq has already over one million internally displaced citizens. The country was an already troubled state becoming the epicenter of the Arab Spring way before the Syrian civil war started in 2011. There had been a catastrophic military confrontation between the Iraqi government and rebel groups across Iraq that claimed thousands of lives. Extremist groups and jihadist rebels had already controlled significant part of the country before they headed to other parts of the Middle East. This situation effectively served as a fertile ground for the ethnic, economic and religious distress between the Iraqi local people and the Syrian refugees (Young et al., 2014). Second, the cross-border between Iraq and Syria had been a center of violence since the beginning of the Iraqi war in 2003. Terrorist groups such as ISIS, the Shia militants and others have had an extensive presence in the area particularly in the Kurdistan region where hundreds of Syrian refugees and internally displaced Iraqis have camped. This had weakened not only the longstanding social and ethnic unity of the people across the borders but also diminished the economic and social activities in the area.

The pressure escalated when the Syrian refugees poured into the region. Third, the Sunni ethnic sects are the majority in both Syria and Iraq, and majority of Syrian refugees are from the Sunni Muslims (Sunni Kurds). On top of this, the ISIS terrorist groups claim themselves as Sunni Muslims, and they are from both countries. This means the ISIS has a good reason to recruit terrorists from Syrian refugees. When this happens, the local people who don't support the ISIS obviously developed frustration against the Syrian refugees. Their discontent eventually developed into an organized violence which had become a serious security dilemma across the border.

3.3.4. Jordan

The economic, social and political effect of the Syrian refugees on Jordan has been characterized as one of the largest in the region. According to Magri (2019), Jordan is the second country in the Middle East after Lebanon to receive the highest number of Syrian refugees in different parts of the country. The proportion of the refugees to its citizens is equal to one refugee for eight (1: 8) citizens. In other words, one out of eight people in Jordan is a Syrian refugee which makes it easy to imagine the economic pressure and the social impact on citizens.

This would mean job opportunities and social subsidies could be significantly compromised. Safety and wellbeing of Jordan citizens might be jeopardized if the refugees failed to obtain daily expenses and to acquire necessity to sustain their lives. In order to avoid the national security challenge and social disaster, the government would have to provide economic and social support to the refugees cutting from the national budget. This eventually puts huge pressure on the government and people of Jordan.

Jordan has become a shelter for more than 1.2 million Syrian refugees. Eighty four percent of these refugees have dispersed throughout the countries away from the camps. Only sixteen percent of refugees were able to stay in camps. Even though Jordan has attracted recognition from the international community for opening its door and willing to host millions of Syrians, the refugee crisis particularly affected its economic, security and social wellbeing (Alshoubaki and Harris, 2018). Since the outbreak of the civil war in 2011, the economic burden has been extremely huge. It has exacerbated the already weak economic performance of Jordan and aggravated the social grievance that emerged from the harsh economic climate in the country. For example, within five years from 2011 to 2016 only, the Syrian government spent 4.2 billion USD on Syrian refugees. This budget not only affects the limited national sources but also obstructs the investment activities of Jordanians. To this effect, the situation may provoke public dissatisfaction and discomfort towards refugees.

CHAPTER FOUR: ENDING THE CIVIL WAR

This chapter examines the mechanisms and possible solutions to ending the Syrian civil war. It begins with explaining the responsibility of the UNSC to avert the humanitarian crisis. It then discusses the mechanisms to end the civil war. The major issues discussed under this topic include Uniting for Peace (U4P), Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the French Proposal. This chapter argues that while all these proposals to end the civil war have come up with distinct recommendations on the possible ways to break the diplomatic deadlock in the Council, they should be further analyzed. The analysis assists to find out if they can be used to convince the permanent members to reconsider their veto power when they adopt resolutions and allow UN approved intervention in Syria.

4.1. Responsibility

The effects of the veto powers disagreement on peace and security in Syria have been extremely challenging to comprehend taking the social and economic destructions in the country into account (Zifcak, 2012). In the first place, the disagreement has effectively blocked the Council from passing a resolution that could decide on how to intervene in Syria to maintain stability across the country. Again, members of the Council have failed to introduce alternative mechanisms to break the deadlock. The problem, however, is that the relation between the veto powers disagreement and the crisis in Syria has not been examined. The examination could have indicated correlation between the failure of the Council to execute its mandate and the human and economic catastrophe in Syria.

Nevertheless, the problem eventually became clear that the disagreement between veto powers has affected millions of lives across the country. The effects of the veto power disagreement were clearly understood when the veto powers failed to come to common ground on the matter in April 2011 and when the government forces increased their cruel measures and killed hundreds of civilians within three months from March to May. The crisis started in February 2011 and intensified in March the same year when fifteen kids posted government critiques on a wall to which the Syrian government responded brutally. From 2011 to 2019, more than 500,000 civilians were killed. While more than 5 million people left their home and became refugees in neighboring countries such as Turkey and Lebanon, more than 6.3 million civilians

have been displaced inside Syria (Magri, 2019). This incident immediately provoked a question whether the Council has the ability to tackle the crisis.

However, when it comes to holding countries responsible, some contend that the instability in Syria is not subject to the problem of a single state (Khallaf, 2016; Zifcak, 2012). For example, some argue that the US is responsible for the Syrian instability (Rath, 2017). According to Rath, the Syrian civil war started immediately after the US withdrew its troops from the region in 2011. The US had planned to practice a neutral foreign policy in the Middle East which unfortunately created a gap between the weak governments in the region and western powers' untimely withdrawal from the area. This vacuum gave a huge opportunity to the extremists such as al-Qaeda and ISIS to stretch their influence in the region. Rath proposes the formation of a strong federalist government in Syria would be a solution to restore peace and stability in the country. However, he missed to discuss the global actors in the country and neglected to mention possible intervention from the international community particularly the UNSC. The mere change of the form of government in Syria would not bring peace to the country because the conflict has a global nature as a result of the global actors participating in the civil war. Providing a domestic solution to a global problem cannot bring a lasting remedy. I argue that a diplomatic intervention through the UNSC could provide lasting solution to the civil war if the Council is committed to the principles of the UN Charter.

Another argument holds Russia and China responsible for the instability of Syria (Khallaf, 2016). During the UNSC negotiations, the two countries requested members of the Council to adhere to the UN principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states. Based on this principle, the Russian Federations and China rejected resolutions that proposed UNSC intervention in Syria that could have averted the instability before it spread throughout the country. Instead of focusing on the dire situation in the country particularly in early 2011, the two countries focused on UN ideals completely ignoring the human catastrophes in Syria. As a result of this inaction, millions of Syrians have lost their lives, millions left their homes looking for refuge in and outside Syria. This situation could have been different had the UNSC intervened immediately when the civil war started in 2011. Nevertheless, Russia and China repeatedly rejected resolutions that aimed at halting the Syrian crisis.

Some argue that both Russia and the US should be equally accountable for the crisis in

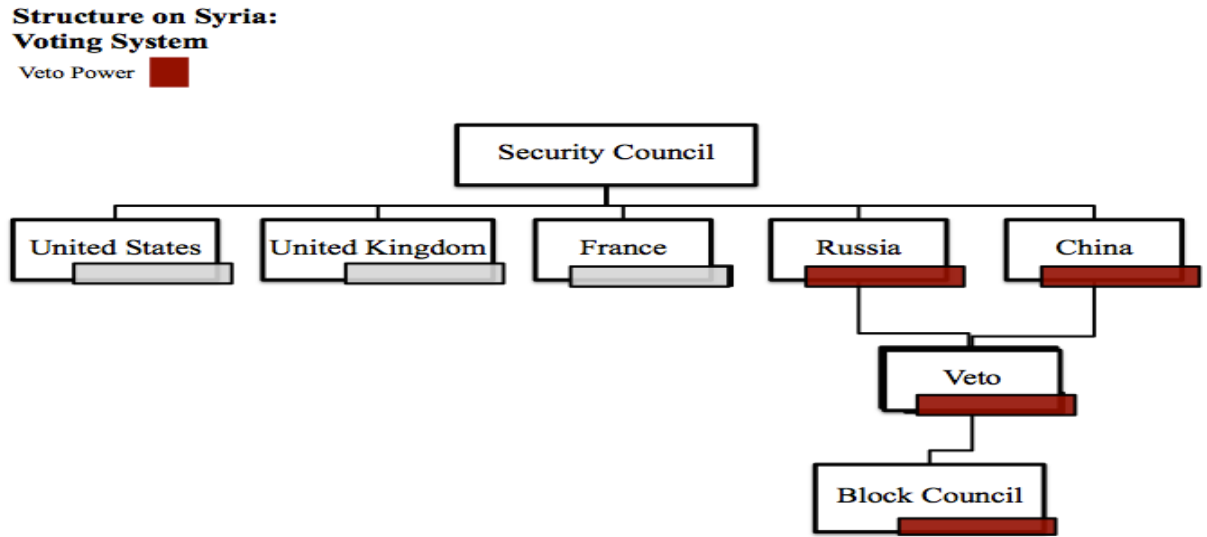
Syria mentioning that the two countries behind the disagreement between veto powers (Staudenmeyer, 2014). In Syria, while the Russian government gives financial and military support to the Assad regime, the US government provides technical and financial support to the rebel groups. In the Council, the Russian representative has been providing unwavering support to Assad through cancelling resolutions that aimed at putting various pressures including economic and political sanctions on the country and isolating the Assad regime from the global diplomatic community. The US has been pushing members of the Council to support resolutions that requested putting any pressure on the Assad regime including military intervention and mandating foreign powers to pursue military attack on the Syrian government and to bring about complete regime change in the country. This political tension between Russia and the US in both Syria and the UNSC diplomatic negotiation has escalated the Syrian civil war.

Nevertheless, the two countries should not carry the same burden equally when it comes to bearing responsibility to the crisis. For example, Crosston (2014) argues that although the two veto powers (Russia and the US) work to defend their national interests in Syria, it has been Russia and Iran that aggressively desired to limit the influence of the US in Syria. Nevertheless, Crosston argues that the Syrian crisis has nothing to do with the US. It is Russia's and Iran's support for Syria that complicated the crisis. Russia wants to be considered as a superpower, while Iran is working to remain as a regional power to deter Saudi Arabia. However, this study argues that it is hard to look at the crisis in Syria without the involvement of the US, particularly US' role in the Council.

4.2. Mechanisms to End the Civil War

There are a number of mechanisms the UNSC member states may employ to end the civil war. some of these mechanisms include Uniting Four Peace, Responsibility to Protect and the French Initiative. These possible tools to remedy the crisis have been briefly explained as follows.

Figure 2: Structure of the UNSC voting on Syria



(Khallaf, 2016: 33)

4.3. **Uniting for Peace (U4P)**

This study will examine the U4P resolution to find out the reasons and arguments that can help to tackle the veto power deadlock. This would be an alternative approach to convince the veto powers to refrain from voting on resolutions that seek to prevent civilians from the scourge of civil war. Although the interference of national interest in their decision-making process remains to be the major challenge in convincing the veto powers to refrain from vetoing, the U4P can help to bring them to the negotiation board and show them another possible solution to the ongoing crisis in Syria.

The U4P resolution has been at the center of intellectual discourse on how to abate the crisis in Syria. Historically, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted U4P to intervene in case of UNSC inability to ensure stability (Carswell, 2013; Johnson, 2014). This resolution gives a secondary power (as per article 11(2) of the UN Charter) to the UNGA to intervene in case of UNSC stalemate to execute its mandate. In other words, when the UNSC is tied up with inaction and inefficiency, and when permanent members are driven by much of self-interest, the UNGA can intervene, take a necessary measure and avert urgent human catastrophes (Labbe, 2013). The inaction and inefficiency of the UNSC has been the objective to push the reform process in the

Council. This challenge has happened in the case of Syria when draft resolutions that sought to avert, among others, the civil war and allow humanitarian aid across the country were rejected by Russia and China (Melling & Dennett, 2018). In order to break the deadlock in situations such as the Syrian crisis, the U4P resolution should be brought in to seek an alternative solution out of the Council. This would effectively shift the mandate from the UNSC to the UNGA.

The UN Charter mandates the UNSC to maintain global peace and security. Yet, there have been a number of instances where the Council failed to execute its mandate due to lack of agreement among its permanent members. For example, the USSR blocked two resolutions S/1653 and S/1752 that exclusively aimed at averting the Korean War. These two resolutions were vetoed by the USSR on 6 September 1950 and 12 September 1950 respectively. Members of the Council brought the blockage into the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA or simply GA) seeking a solution from the Assembly. Following the request, the GA adopted resolution 377 (V) also known as Uniting for Peace (U4P) resolution on 3 November 1950. Therefore, historically, the U4P resolution was created to avert the USSR veto blockage.

Generally, the U4P is a resolution aimed at solving an urgent problem that requires UN intervention but when the UN organ fails to execute its mandate. The resolution comes into effect particularly when resolutions that seek to solving a certain challenge are blocked by permanent member (s) as a result of fierce contentions between veto powers in the UNSC. As a way out, the resolution can be applied when members of the Council failed to reach an agreement and when diplomatic negotiations are caught in deadlock. The Syrian crisis is a human catastrophe that requires urgent response. The situation calls to reconsider and bring in the resolution in the Syrian veto power deadlock. The ceasefire that seek to end the civil war and humanitarian resolutions that aim at allowing non-governmental organizations to operate in Syria for humanitarian purposes could be championed by the GA resolution effectively sidelining the UNSC from the voting system. In the GA, all members of the UN are expected to participate in voting the resolution. A veto blockage is not administered, and resolutions pass based on the majority of votes cast to the given resolution. This gives opportunity for the Syrian resolutions to see the light of the day.

4.4. Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The theory of R2P originates following the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the 1995 former Yugoslavia genocide. The UN has been criticized for its failure to protect innocent civilians in those calamities. The late UN Secretary General (from 1997 to 2006) Kofi Annan pushed member states to change the situation. He argued that unless the international community creates a mechanism that effectively averts human catastrophes, there is always room for the Rwandan genocide to happen again anywhere in the world. Following Annan's push, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) introduced R2P. In 2004, Annan officially approved R2P as a tool to unlock diplomatic stalemate during humanitarian crisis. The UN endorsed R2P in the 2005 World Summit (Olsen, 2017).

R2P incorporates three major principles related to state responsibility, global support and UNSC intervention during human rights violations. First, it accords primary responsibility to the state itself to protect its own citizens from crimes against humanity. Second, it declares that the international community bears duty to assist states to execute their responsibility. Third, if the state fails to carry out its duty to protect its citizens from human atrocities or if the state is part and parcel of the fundamental human rights violations, the international community should intervene through the UNSC and authorize military force to successfully avert the situation before it goes out of control. In the case of Syria, in line with the first principle, the state has failed to protect its own citizens, or the Assad regime has been part and parcel of the human rights violations. According to the second principle, if the situation in Syria goes beyond the power of the Syrian regime, the international community bears duty to provide a wide range of assistance to Syria. Over the last nine years, this principle has failed to yield fruit due to the diplomatic deadlock in the UNSC. Russia has effectively blocked the Council from adopting any substantive resolution that sought to halt the Syrian crisis. Interestingly enough, in accordance with the third principle, the international community is responsible to intervene in Syria to protect civilians from the scourge of the civil war. It holds the mandate to further execute its maximum responsibility through sanctions and even military intervention in the country.

However, imposing sanction and authorizing foreign intervention in Syria has become unattainable due to the fierce disagreement in the UNSC. There are two arguments. One of the arguments is that the responsibility to protect has no power to hold members of the Council

responsible for their failure to execute their mandate in accordance with the R2P or there is no mechanism that holds veto powers responsible for inaction. The other argument comes in comparison with the application of R2P in Libya which enabled western powers to dismantle the Ghaddafi regime leaving the country without functional government. For example, following the destruction of Libya by western alliance through NATO, the IBSA group (India, Brazil and South Africa) challenged any foreign intervention in Syria. The three countries abstained during the 4th October 2011 UNSC resolution vote on Syria contending that military intervention would mean repeating the Libyan catastrophe in Syria, and it would potentially lead Syria into unending civil war as it happened in Libya (Adams, 2015).

According to this approach, members of the UNSC bear the highest responsibility to protect the lives of innocent civilians from atrocities. This responsibility emanates from the UN Charter that mandates members of the UNSC to maintain peace and security across the world. This mandates however has attracted a number of interpretations and criticisms. Some argue that it contradicts with the UN Charter that guarantees permanent members to exercise their absolute right to protect their own interests. The contradiction is that if the veto powers are allowed to stand for their own interests in the Council, the countries would find it hard to protect the interests of others which would put them in to the dilemma of conflict of interest. In this situation, it would be challenging to hold those countries responsible to protect other countries (Spencer Zifcak, 2012).

The dilemma between advancing self-interest and representing and protecting the interests of other states in the Council as per the UN mandate has been a major challenge for permanent members to carry out their responsibility during mass atrocities and gross human rights violations. As it has been discussed in chapter two and three, one of the reasons why the UNSC veto powers have failed to execute their responsibility and protect innocent civilians from atrocities in Syria has been the influence of national interest in their decision-making process (Guimaraes and Carvalho, 2017). The application of the principle of R2P is therefore to avoid the clash between national interest and global mandate of the permanent members in the Council.

4.5. The French Initiative

The essence of the French initiative is to influence the permanent members to refrain from casting their veto in case of humanitarian catastrophes and mass atrocities. The initiative required the veto powers to adopt a code of conduct that could serve as a mechanism to persuade permanent members from rejecting resolutions related to human gross rights violations. A declaration was brought to the UNSC in 2015 by France and Mexico. The declaration requested the permanent members not to reject a resolution in case of mass atrocities. It also sought to pass resolution concerning human catastrophe even if a permanent member disagrees with it. Ultimately, this would disable the permanent members from blocking any resolution that focus on averting mass atrocities (Espada, 2014).

The ultimate objective is that the code of conduct would call upon veto powers from not only to refrain from rejecting resolutions but also to provide their support. The initiative was proposed in 2013. Nevertheless, the idea of urging permanent members to refrain from casting their vote begs a hard question. What if the initiative is potentially against the fundamental interest of the permanent member (s)? The possible answer is that the United Nations Secretary General is expected to organize a group that would assess the actual human rights violations and mass atrocities before the initiative is brought to the UNSC for decision. This should be a guarantee for the permanent members who feared that the code of conduct might negatively affect their interest (Melling and Dennett, 2018).

Nevertheless, in relation to the Syrian crisis, the French Proposal may face three major challenges. First, the application of the proposal requires the permanent members to abandon their veto rights. In other words, in order to avoid the disagreement among veto powers, the veto power should be eschewed through the proposal. Yet, all permanent members should agree to renounce their veto which is extremely challenging for competing superpowers. Second, in order for permanent members to renounce their veto, they would like to be sure that there is actual mass atrocity. Nevertheless, the Syrian mass atrocity is subject to political manipulation. What is the standard for mass atrocity? How many people should die in order to decide there is actually a mass atrocity in Syria? The permanent members would like to get answer to these questions before they renounce their veto power. Third, the permanent members always stand for their self-interests even during catastrophes such as the Syrian one, and the UN Chapter acknowledges

this. As their veto is usually equated with their national interest, they may find it hard to renounce their interest (Espada, 2014).

The question, therefore, is whether they would be willing to abandon their interest by relinquishing their veto power (Espada, 2014). As it has been discussed earlier, taking the UN reports, UNSC resolutions, UN human rights organizations reports and Kofi Annan lead organization recommendations, it is safe to conclude that the Syrian crisis is a mass atrocity and gross human rights violation (Olsen, 2017; Adams, 2015). Moreover, to make sure that the Syrian catastrophe is a crisis of mass atrocity, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism) can provide necessary reports about the human rights violations in Syria. Based on the facts on the ground, the two organizations can come up with solid investigation results that would eventually help the UNSC to decide how to resort a U4P resolution to avert the situation in Syria (Melling and Dennett, 2018)

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This last chapter is a summary of the project. It reviews the major arguments and findings. It begins with reassessing the strengths of the UNSC including its continuous discussion of the crisis and tabling draft resolutions in the Council. The chapter reexamines the major weaknesses of the Council in its failure to secure unanimity among veto powers and protect innocent civilians from the scourge of the civil war. It then explores the effects of veto power disagreement on stability of Syria and the spillover effects on Syria and its neighbors. This has been done through reexamining the effects of the UNSC resolutions on Syrian stability, the diplomatic deadlock in the Council, the bureaucratic diplomatic relationship among members and its consequences. The chapter then accords conclusion to the study and gives some recommendations for further consideration and research.

5.1. The UNSC Resolutions and Syrian Instability

Since the formation of the UN in 1945, the UNSC has been at the center in its effort to advance stable global order. Article 24 of the UN Charter precisely stipulates that members of the Council should be in charge of ensuring global stability on behalf of all the UN members (Okhovat, 2011). The Council is also the only UN organ that carries the mandate to adopt a binding agreement that is effective among member states. The permanent members have the veto power that enables them to reject any resolution that threatens their national interest. The USSR was the reason behind the creation of the veto power in 1945. Out of the fear of the western powers, the USSR required the introduction of veto power into the Council. The fear emerged from the fact that western powers might stand together in the Council against the interests of the USSR which may eventually discriminate the country and affect its global interests (Khallaf, 2016). Consequently, the USSR was the first country to cast its veto in 1946 and later became the veto power that casts vetoes the most. For example, from February 1946 until July 2019, the Russian Federation vetoed 141 times, the US voted 83 times, UK 32 times, France 18 times and China 14 times. The case of Israeli-Palestine conflict and the Syrian civil are some of the issues that attracted a high number of vetoes.

While the US has been the veto power that has consistently vetoed resolutions

concerning the Israeli-Palestine issues, the Russian Federation (formerly USSR), sometimes China, was the veto power behind the rejection of resolutions that focused on averting the Syrian crisis. The Great Britain and France had a mediation role during the decision-making process. The two countries sometimes support their ally, the United States, and mostly provide mediating proposals for substantive matters (Okhovat, 2011). The Syrian civil war started in 2011 and has not yet been addressed. The UN Security Council has attempted to address the crisis through diplomatic negotiations. For example, in 2011, the Council brought a resolution concerning the ceasefire between government forces and the oppositions groups. The Russian Federation and China rejected this resolution. In 2019, the Council discussed a resolution regarding possible ways to permit humanitarian aid in the Eastern part of Syria. Again, the Russian Federation and China cast their vote against the resolution. In all these cases, the Russian Federation and China remarked the significance of sovereignty of the Syrian government and the principles of the UN Charter. In the meantime, the tension between Russia and the United States in particular and members of the Council in general has blocked the Syrian negotiation process. To this end, since 2011, Russia and China have significantly increased their veto mainly because of the situation in Syria (UNSC, 2020). While Russia was able to veto against 19 resolutions, 14 on the issue of Syria, China cast nine vetoes, out of which eight were concerning Syria. Therefore, it has been clear that the veto power disagreement is a major hindrance for the UNSC to execute its mandate in humanitarian intervention and ceasefire operations.

5.2. The Abuse of Veto Power and Syrian Catastrophe

The abuse of veto increased (from 2011 to 2019) when the Russian Federation and China extensively used their veto power to reject resolution that focused on averting the Syrian crisis. The two countries have always argued that the resolutions would destroy the sovereignty and unity of Syria. Moreover, they argued that the aim of western power is not to avert the Syrian civil war it rather has always been to change the Assad regime. According to Russia, even though the Syrian crisis is created by both the ruling group in Damascus and the fighters, the western powers also sought to put sanction and political pressure only on the Assad regime which is a one-sided approach. On top of that, the western approach is against the principle of the UN Charter that prohibits states from intervening in the domestic matter of any member.

Consequently, the abuse of veto or rather the disagreement between Russia and the US has made unanimity a scarce resource in the Council (Shraideh, 2017; Melling and Dennett, 2018).

Nevertheless, unanimity is not something that can be achieved easily as it has been witnessed in history. Following the UN meeting in San Francisco in June 1945 on the necessity of unanimity between veto powers, the then superpowers agreed to postulate their agreement on the UN Charter under article 27. As it has been discussed earlier, article 27 (2) and (3) explain about the requirements that should be taken in order for a resolution to be adopted. For procedural matters, nine (9) members shall vote in favor. For substantive matters to pass, however, in addition to nine (9) votes, it requires positive vote from all permanent members. During the negotiation to postulate article 27 (3), members were asked to cast their votes. Thirty (30) countries cast positive vote, two (2) rejected it and fifteen (15) countries abstained from voting. Australia and France had opposed the idea of veto. However, while Australia's suggestion was rejected, France's proposal was accepted and was eventually picked to be one of the permanent members (Shraideh, 2017; Wouters and Ruys, 2005).

While unanimity has become scarce in the case of Syria, the socio-economic catastrophe has increased. The refugee crisis, the security dilemma and the economic hardship have fundamentally destroyed the unity and social wellbeing of the Syrian public. If the UNSC is still waiting for unanimity to decide how to avert the Syrian crisis, it will too late to restore the socio-economy of the country back to its previous status. When it comes to Syria, where the veto powers have divided between west and east, the veto has created a diplomatic deadlock making unanimity impossible. This is partly due to the major reason behind the creation of the veto power. It was created to bring unanimity among the superpowers in UNSC to avoid a similar failure observed during the League of Nations. The League had granted the power of veto to all member states potentially blocking unanimity in the institution. Unlike this institution, after the superpowers agreed in 1945 to accord veto power to only five countries, representatives of the superpowers stated that the veto would be the greatest achievement of the UN (Shraideh, 2017).

5.3. Decision-making Process and Its Consequences

The failure of the permanent members to bring a solution to the Syrian catastrophe has

further triggered detrimental challenges to the country and its neighbors. If the veto politics continue hindering the UNSC decision making process from taking swift action to avert the humanitarian crisis across the country, a number of severe consequences may further escalate the civil war in the region. In addition to the complete inaction in Syria that would further impair the credibility of the UNSC decision-making process, it could also aggravate the refugee crisis with devastating effect on the Middle East and Europe. While the damage on the credibility of the Council and the refugee crisis in the Middle East Europe would be detrimental, Syria could continue to be safe haven for extremists and terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qaeda which would potentially threaten the stability of the whole region and even the western world. Taking the current diplomatic deadlock in the Council, it is safe to argue that the failure of the UNSC veto powers to decide on averting the Syrian crisis will continue crippling the credibility of the Council unless reform is introduced. Since 2011, the crisis in Syria has served as a litmus paper that tested the ability of the Council. In this regard, it has been confirmed that the Council has failed to pass the test when it failed to protect innocent people from the scourge of the Syrian conflict. It happens as a result of the arrangement of the Council, the organization of its members and the distribution of power between veto and non-veto states (Jafarova, 2014).

The Council is organized from fifteen states. Five of them are veto holders and the other ten states have no veto and are elected every two years by the General Assembly. The veto holders are permanent members by default. These states are the UK, the US, France, the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. Note that China the PRC was represented by ROC until 1971. In addition, the Russian Federation was represented by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. These five countries became veto holders following their victory of the second world war (Okhovat, 2011). The president of the Council is elected from these fifteen (15) members every month. If any case is brought to the Council for decision, and if the case is considered as a threat the global stability and order, then the Council takes round of measures to avert the challenge. First, the Council's primarily step is providing a proposal to the parties in dispute to avoid their discord through peace dialogue. Second, to bring the disputing parties into dialogue, the Council designate ad hoc group to mediate the matter. Third, it may also draft a resolution. Fourth, it may dispatch peacekeeping forces to maintain peace and security. Six, it may authority sanctions on specific groups participating in the conflict. Seventh, it may also order military action to avert total disaster. At the last resort, the Council may call the concerned

member state to participate in the discussion (Dallas, 2018; Okhovat, 2011).

The non-permanent members of the Council have no power to block a resolution unless the resolution is a procedural matter which requires nine votes out of the fifteen members regardless of their membership. The non-permanent members are non-veto members, and they are elected every January first from all regions including Africa (three representatives), Latin America and Caribbean (two representatives), Asia (two representatives), Western Europe and others (two representatives) and Eastern European (one representative). The Arab states are represented by one representative from Africa or Asia. The 2019 non-permanent members of the Council are Belgium, Dominica Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam (UNSC, 2019).

One of the reasons for the sluggish decision-making process of the UNSC comes from the inequality among the fifteen member states. In decision making process, all votes don't carry equal weight. While votes from the permanent members are necessary for substantive issues, votes from non-members are not. In other words, there is a voting process that necessitates the involvement of permanent members. This voting order incorporates the ideas of substantive and procedural matters. In the decision-making process, both substantive and procedural matters need nine votes to pass to the next step. However, substantive matters require positive vote from all permanent members. If one of the nine votes turn negative and it's from the veto power, that resolution is null and void. Yet, the veto power can abstain, which is consequently considered as positive vote, and it would not negatively affect the resolution. The procedural matters, on the other hand, don't necessarily require a positive vote from the permanent members as long as they acquire nine votes out of the fifteen members. In the case of draft resolutions on Syria, particularly according to the draft resolutions on 4 October 2011 and 20 December 2019, thirteen (13) out of fifteen (15) members of the Council accorded positive to both resolution while two (2) countries rejected both. Consequently, both resolutions could not see the light of the day due the two votes from permanent members Russia and China. The paradox here is that even if all the ten (10) non-permanent members cast their positive vote, all of them would not equate to one of the permanent members because of the inequality of states in the Council (Okhovat, 2011).

Therefore, the failure of members of the UNSC to reach a consensus poses a dangerous risk to the Syrian people whose security depends on the Council's interventions. This existential threat requires a global attention. In the process, members of the Council bear UN Charter responsibility to decide and come to agreement to safeguard those who need urgent intervention. Nevertheless, the Council has been in political deadlock in many occasions as it has been discussed elsewhere in this study. This deadlock situation has required the reform of the Council believing that reform would improve the Council's decision-making process to avert the crisis in Syria. Following the deadlock during the Syrian draft resolutions, the Council has attracted a number of criticisms from the public for its inaction to intervene in the Syrian civil war. The criticisms have ensured that the Council has failed to execute its mandate stipulated under the UN Charter which gives exclusive power to the Council to maintain global peace and security (Spain, 2013).

5.4. Conclusion

This study examined the effects of UNSC veto power on stability of Syria and its neighbors. The major finding is that the UNSC has failed to execute its mandate to save Syrians from the scourge of the civil war. The study confirmed that the Council could have saved thousands of lives who were killed in 2011 and 2012 had the Council taken swift measure to call on the cease fire. The Council also failed to rescue Syrian refugees across the Syrian border. It was not able to pass a resolution that would have allowed humanitarian aid for refugees in the borders. The major reason for the failure of the Council is the involvement of political and economic issues into the negotiation. In order to arrive at the conclusion, the study has analyzed a number of topics and issues related to the subject matter. These issues can be shortly summarized as follows.

Chapter one discussed background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, theoretical framework, literature review, scope of the study, hypothesis and methodology. It briefly framed the core issues of the research and indicated the major areas to be discussed throughout the study. Chapter two examined the history of Syrian conflict from the independence of the country up to the beginning of the civil war. It explains how and why the civil war erupted in 2011 in a small-town call Daara and expanded fast across the country. The intervention of the UNSC to curb the crisis, the full-scaled fight between the

Syrian government and the opposition groups have been extensively covered. It also analyzed the role of the veto powers in halting the gross humanitarian crisis in Syria. It argued that the veto power had failed to act quickly in order to save humanity from the scourge of the civil war.

Chapter three analyzed the effects of the Syrian civil war on Syria itself and on the neighboring countries. It argued that the deadlock of the veto powers on cease fire and humanitarian aid had created a loophole in global crisis management. The study confirmed that the UNSC could have saved civilians by passing a resolution that calls the fighting powers for ceasefire. It could also pass a resolution that requests the fighting groups to allow humanitarian aid to pass through the borders. Unfortunately, the Council failed to pass those possible resolutions. Consequently, the spillover effect of the civil war stretched from Syria to neighboring countries, and to Europe and America. Half a million Syrians have died, millions have been internally displaced and still millions exiled out of Syria.

Chapter four examined the major reasons for the inaction of the UNSC to act on the crisis in Syria and major suggestions to avoid diplomatic deadlock in the Council. The intervention of national interest of states during negotiations and the complexity of the civil war were found to be the main reasons behind the deadlock. The study has discussed a number of solutions suggested by scholars and international organizations to unlock the diplomatic deadlock in the Council. Some of these possible solutions include the U4P, the R2P and the French Initiative. While these suggestions seem to be significant to solve the crisis, the problem is that the UNSC members have failed to consider these principles.

Chapter five summarized the whole project and concluded the analysis. The purpose is to revisit the main analysis of the study and to make a brief summary of the tenets of the projects. In short, it summarized the UNSC resolutions and Syrian instability, the abuse of veto power and the Syrian catastrophe, the sluggish decision-making process and its effect in Syria and its neighbors. It also forwarded recommendations that should trigger further study and wide-ranging research.

5.5. Recommendations

The UNSC is mandated by the UN to maintain global peace and security. To execute its mandate, it has been carrying out several operations across the world. Its main purpose has been

safeguarding global order and providing protection to civilians from any conflict driven catastrophes. This global responsibility has earned the Council both recognitions and criticisms. For example, in the case of the Syrian civil war, the Council has been criticized for failing to take swift measure to protect civilians from the conflict. It has been argued that the UNSC should solve the diplomatic deadlock in order to avert the Syrian crisis. However, this has not been an easy task to the members of the Council. The permanent members have been unable to come to a common understanding because of their economic, political and security interests in Syria. Taking the spillover effects of refugees and the expansion of terrorism and extremism (including Hezbollah and ISIS) in the region into consideration, it would be against the best interest of member states and the world in general to continue neglecting the restoration of Syrian stability. In this regard, this study provides the following recommendations.

First, civil societies and human rights organizations, should organize themselves and persuade the permanent members of the Council to adopt resolutions that call for ceasefire and seek to avert the humanitarian catastrophes in Syria. This can be done by organizing meetings and demonstrations, participating in the UNSC global forums, using social media platforms and publications.

Second, the permanent members should stop supporting both the Assad regime and opposition groups. The financial and technical support has been one of the reasons why the civil war has continued for a decade. The termination of financial and technical assistance is extremely crucial to disempower the fighting groups and deescalate the wide-ranging crisis and spillover effects of the civil war. This move is essential not only to avert possible grave consequences in the country but also to better maintain peace and security in the region.

Third, the UN should organize a committee to examine and disclose whether the UNSC has failed to execute its mandate, particularly in the case of ceasefire and humanitarian aid. To this end, the committee can find out if any member of the Council seeks to verify whether the situation in Syria is a mass atrocity and whether the interest of permanent members in Syria contradicts with the human and social well beings of Syrians. The finding can be used to adopt resolution and avert the crisis in Syria.

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