

The Faces of the Syrian War

For the past 5 years the world witnessed major displacements, skyrocketing civilian casualties and the rise of terrorist groups in Syria and its neighbouring countries. International established "red lines" were crossed by several parties on multiple occasions and repeated United Nations initiated peace efforts failed. Regional and international networks saw the conflict as a chance to advance their interests in the region and intervened by employing strategies of proxy warfare, thereby further increasing divisions in an already highly polarized region. The international community, seized by the complexity of the conflict, was not able to prevent the outbreak of the world's most detrimental humanitarian crisis since World War II. This article aims to provide an insight in this ongoing conflict by sharing statements of major faces of the Syrian war.

The Syrian Arab Spring

President Bashar al-Assad: *"Of course I have just started to talk about this conspiracy, and then I will move to the internal situation, so that satellite T.V. stations will not say that the Syrian president considered all that has happened a foreign conspiracy".*

(Speech, 30 March 2011)

Arab Twitterati: *"one down, two speeches to go".*

(Reaction to speech on Twitter, 30 March 2011)

Neil Sammonds: *"The accounts of torture we have received are horrific. We believe the Syrian government to be systematically persecuting its own people on a vast scale".*

Sammonds is the Amnesty International's researcher on Syria.

(Deadly detention: Deaths in custody amid popular protest in Syria, 30 Aug 2011)

Rebellion & Repercussion

President Bashar al-Assad: *"No solution can be reached with terror except by striking it with an iron fist".*

(Statement Syrian state news agency SANA, the Telegraph, 5 Aug 2013)

Abu Suleiman Abarra : *"One day I ground up plants to make bread. Can you believe it? It wasn't edible. My wife used to cook for the wounded—10 people then eight, five, one and then there was no more food. We started cooking lemon leaves. Some people died from hunger. A lot of people were poisoned from plants they found".*

Abarra was a bicycle repairman and anti-regime activist living in Homs.

(Interview, the Wall Street Journal, 19 Dec 2014)

Qassem Shasho: *"We won't give up until we free Sinjar and kick out Da'esh ... We have not had any martyrs but we have had injuries".*

Shasho is the most prominent Yazidi Peshmerga.

(Statement, the Guardian, 21 Dec 2014)

Who's Responsible?!

Kofi Annan: *"When the Syrian people desperately need action, there continues to be finger-pointing and name-calling in the Security Council"*

Annan served as United Nations and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria from Feb 2012 to Aug 2012.

(Statement, BCC, 2 Aug 2012)

Colonel Riad al-Asaad: *"The responsibility for this destruction and the killing of the Syrian people lies with the international community, especially the ones who claimed that they were helping Syrian people, who said they offered help when they didn't. They will be responsible also for what happens in the future..."*

Colonel al-Asaad is the founder of the Free Syrian Army.

(Interview, Al Jazeera, 13 Oct 2012)



The Prospects for Peace?

Lakhdar Brahimi: *"The issue of President Assad was a huge hurdle. The Syrian regime only came to Geneva to please the Russians, thinking that they were winning militarily. I told them I'm sure that your instructions were: 'Go to Geneva. But not only don't make any concessions, don't discuss anything seriously.'"*

Brahimi served as United Nations and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria from Sept 2012 to May 2014.

(Statement, Siegel, 7 Jun 2014)

Redur Xelil: *"The Middle East is fused with the presence of difference global powers. The Middle East have always been a vast ground for the opportunities of these forces, from U.S.A to Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey. They have all profits in the Middle East and if they manage to resolve their problems, the crises in Syria and Iraq will end".*

Xelil is the spokesman of the People's Protection Unit (YPG)

(Interview, Kurdish Daily News, 24 May 2015)

President Putin: *"We are ready to work with the president to ensure a path towards political transition so as to ... move away from an armed confrontation. But that should not be done with the use of force from the outside".*

(Statement, Al Jazeera, 19 Jun 2015)