

SYRIA: BACKGROUND



Read the text and answer the questions.

Following World War I, France acquired a mandate over the northern portion of the former Ottoman Empire province of Syria. The French administered the area as Syria until granting it independence in 1946. The new country lacked political stability and experienced a series of military coups. Syria united with Egypt in February 1958 to form the United Arab Republic. In September 1961, the two entities separated, and the Syrian Arab Republic was reestablished. In the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Syria lost the Golan Heights region to Israel. During the 1990s, Syria and Israel held occasional, albeit unsuccessful, peace talks over its return. In November 1970, Hafiz al-Asad, a member of the socialist Ba'ath Party and the minority Alawi sect, seized power in a bloodless coup and brought political stability to the country. Following the death of President Hafiz al-Asad, his son, Bashar al-Asad, was approved as president by popular referendum in July 2000. Syrian troops - stationed in Lebanon since 1976 in an ostensible peacekeeping role - were withdrawn in April 2005. During the July-August 2006 conflict between Israel and Hizballah, Syria placed its military forces on alert but did not intervene directly on

behalf of its ally Hizballah. In May 2007, Bashar al-Asad's second term as president was approved by popular referendum.

1. What European country controlled Syria following World War I?
 - a. France
 - b. Germany
 - c. Great Britain
 - d. Russia

2. In 1967, Syria lost the Golan Heights region to _____.
 - a. Egypt
 - b. Israel
 - c. Jordan
 - d. the Soviet Union

3. Who became president of Syria in 2000?
 - a. Bashar al-Asad
 - b. Benjamin Netanyahu
 - c. Hafiz al-Asad
 - d. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Influenced by major uprisings that began elsewhere in the region, and compounded by additional social and economic factors, antigovernment protests broke out first in the southern province of Dar'a in March 2011 with protesters calling

for the repeal of the restrictive Emergency Law allowing arrests without charge, the legalization of political parties, and the removal of corrupt local officials. Demonstrations and violent unrest spread across Syria with the size and intensity of protests fluctuating. The government responded to unrest with a mix of concessions - including the repeal of the Emergency Law, new laws permitting new political parties, and liberalizing local and national elections - and with military force and detentions. The government's efforts to quell unrest and armed opposition activity led to extended clashes and eventually civil war between government forces, their allies, and oppositionists.

4. Which of the following was not a demand of Syrian protesters in 2011?
- legalization of political parties
 - removal of corrupt local officials
 - repeal of the restrictive Emergency Law allowing arrests without charge
 - surrender of al-Asad to U.N. International Criminal Court

International pressure on the Asad regime intensified after late 2011, as the Arab League, the EU, Turkey, and the US expanded economic sanctions against the regime and those entities that support it. In December 2012, the Syrian National Coalition, was recognized by more than 130 countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people. In September 2015, Russia launched a military intervention on behalf of the Asad

regime, and government-aligned forces recaptured Aleppo city in December 2016, shifting the conflict in the regime's favor. Political negotiations between the government and opposition delegations at UN-sponsored Geneva conferences since 2014 have failed to produce a resolution of the conflict. Since early 2017, Iran, Russia, and Turkey have held separate negotiations in Astana to reduce violence in Syria. According to an April 2016 UN estimate, the death toll among Syrian Government forces, opposition forces, and civilians was over 400,000, though other estimates placed the number well over 500,000. As of December 2018, approximately 6.2 million Syrians were internally displaced, while an estimated 42,700 refugees returned to Syria from surrounding countries. Approximately 13 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance across the country, and an additional 5.7 million Syrians were registered refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and North Africa. The conflict in Syria remains one of the largest humanitarian crises worldwide.

5. Which of the following did not impose sanctions against Syria?
- Arab League
 - European Union
 - Russia
 - United States
6. By the end of 2018, _____ Syrians were registered refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and North Africa.