

TIMELINE: SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

Compiled by Thomas Plofchan

March 6, 2011: In the southern town of Daraa, police arrest some fifteen young boys for spray-painting buildings with the slogan, “The people want the downfall of the regime.”

March 15, 2011: On Day of Rage, small protests against the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad (1965-) take place in Damascus and Aleppo.

March 18, 2011: Anti-regime demonstrations take place in Damascus, Homs, Baniyas, and Daraa; security forces shoot and kill six protesters in Daraa.

March 23, 2011: Security forces kill dozens of protesters in Daraa in attempt to end growing uprising.

March 24, 2011: Al-Assad advisor Butheina Shaaban announces measures and reforms including government salary increases, licensing of new political parties, and studying a possible end to emergency law.

March 29, 2011: Large pro-regime demonstrations are held in Damascus and elsewhere in Syria.

March 30, 2011: Bashar Al-Assad addresses parliament in first speech since start of protests; blames foreign conspirators and satellite channels for unrest; promises reforms and dismisses government of Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Otari (1944-); Adel Safar (1953-), former agriculture minister, is later appointed to form a new cabinet.

April 6, 2011: Bashar Al-Assad announces the granting of Syrian citizenship to tens of thousands of Kurds.

April 12, 2011: Security forces with tanks and heavy weapons begin mobilizing in Syrian cities to quell spreading unrest.

April 16, 2011: In a televised address, Bashar Al-Assad announces the repeal of emergency law and the granting of permission to hold demonstrations under certain conditions.

April 22, 2011: Bloody Friday protests leave more than 120 people dead in Daraa, Damascus and elsewhere in Syria; President Barack Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issue statements condemning the regime’s crackdown on demonstrators.

April 29, 2011: Syrian refugees begin crossing border into Turkey; first of twenty-one Syrian refugee camps is established in the country; President Obama issues U.S. Executive Order 13572 blocking property of three Syrian officials because of human rights abuses, including Maher Al-Assad (1968-), the Syrian president’s younger brother, who is commander of the Republican Guard and the army Fourth Armored Division.

May 9, 2011: European Union imposes arms embargo on Syrian regime and freezes assets of and applies travel ban on senior regime officials.

May 18, 2011: U.S. Executive Order 13573 blocks U.S. property owned by Bashar Al-Assad and six other senior Syrian officials.

June 3, 2011: Security forces reportedly kill thirty-four protesters in Hama during the largest anti-regime demonstration since the unrest began.

June 6, 2011: Syrian government reports that more than 120 soldiers were killed by “armed gangs” in Jisr Al-Shughour; some Western media reports suggest that residents took up arms to repel assault by regime security forces.

June 14, 2011: Arab League condemns regime crackdown on protesters; Secretary-General Amr Moussa says Arab states are “worried, angry and actively monitoring” the crisis.

June 17, 2011: Syrian conflict spreads to Lebanon with the outbreak of clashes in Tripoli between Lebanese supporters and opponents of the Syrian regime.

July 8, 2011: Tens of thousands of Syrians, many carrying roses and olive branches, stage a demonstration in Hama.

July 10, 2011: Syrian government holds a two-day national dialogue; opposition factions boycott the meeting.

July 11, 2011: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says that Bashar Al-Assad has “lost legitimacy” and that “we have absolutely nothing invested in him remaining in power.”

July 29, 2011: Defectors from the Syrian army announce the formation of the Free Syrian Army, led by former Colonel Riad Al-Asaad (1961-).

July 31, 2011: Security forces reportedly kill more than 100 protesters in Hama.

August 3, 2011: UN Security Council issues a statement condemning “the widespread violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities.”

August 8, 2011: Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud condemns Bashar Al-Assad’s “killing machine”; Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain recall their ambassadors from Syria.

August 17, 2011: U.S. Executive Order 13582 bans Syrian oil imports and new U.S. investments in Syria, and blocks Syrian government property in the United States.

August 18, 2011: Leaders of the United States, France, Germany and Britain issue coordinated statements calling on Bashar Al-Assad to resign.

August 23, 2011: Syrian factions inside and outside of Syria form the Syrian National Council to oppose the Al-Assad regime.

September 2, 2011: European Union bans imports of Syrian oil.

September 21, 2011: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan says that his government has cut off contacts with Syria.

September 27, 2011: Security forces and military defectors engage in heavy fighting in the city of Rastan.

October 4, 2011: Russia and China veto draft UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution that would condemn “grave and systematic” human rights violations in Syria.

October 14, 2011: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay warns that the Syrian crisis “is already showing worrying signs of descending into an armed struggle.”

October 29, 2011: Security forces shell Homs after clashes between Al-Assad loyalists and military defectors in the city.

November 2, 2011: Arab League announces that the Syrian government has accepted an Arab League proposal to immediately halt violence, free prisoners and open dialogue with the opposition.

November 12, 2011: Arab League votes to suspend Syria from membership and impose political and economic sanctions until the Al-Assad regime adheres to Arab League peace plan.

November 27, 2011: Arab League votes sanctions on Syria, terminating transactions with the Syrian Central Bank, imposing a travel ban on Syrian officials, suspending commercial flights between Syria and Arab countries, and freezing assets related to the Al-Assad regime.

December 7, 2011: Bashar Al-Assad tells *ABC News*: “I did my best to protect the people, so I cannot feel guilty.”

December 12, 2011: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay says more than 5,000 people have been killed in the Syrian conflict.

December 19, 2011: Syria signs new Arab League agreement requiring the regime to withdraw security forces and heavy weapons from civilian areas, commence talks with the opposition, and allow human rights workers and journalists into the country.

December 19-20, 2011: Security forces reportedly kill nearly 200 people including army defectors in a massacre in Idlib province.

December 23, 2011: Two suicide bombings kill at least forty people outside the State Security Directorate and another security building in Damascus.

December 26, 2011: Arab League representatives arrive in Syria to monitor Al-Assad regime's compliance with Arab League agreement.

December 28, 2011: Syrian regime announces release of more than 750 prisoners detained during protests.

December 30, 2011: Large anti-regime protests take place across the country.

January 6, 2012: General Mustafa Ahmad Al-Sheikh becomes highest-ranking military officer to defect and join the Free Syrian Army.

January 22, 2012: Arab League calls on Bashar Al-Assad to hand over power to his top deputy, and for the formation of a national unity government and new Syrian elections.

January 23, 2012: Formation of Al-Nusra Front (Jabhat Al-Nusra), a Syrian affiliate of Al-Qaeda, is announced.

January 28, 2012: Arab League suspends monitoring mission, citing escalating violence.

February 4, 2012: Russia and China veto draft UN Security Council resolution supporting Arab League call for Bashar Al-Assad to resign and demanding all parties cease violence and reprisals; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton criticizes the veto as a "travesty" and calls for "friends of democratic Syria" to unite against Al-Assad.

February 6, 2012: United States closes its embassy in Damascus.

February 10, 2012: Car bombings kill twenty-eight people outside the Military Intelligence Directorate and a police compound in Aleppo.

February 12, 2012: Arab League approves a resolution opening communication channels with the Syrian opposition and calling on the UN Security Council to send a peacekeeping mission to Syria; Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri issues a videotaped message calling on militants throughout the region to participate in the overthrow of the Al-Assad regime.

February 16, 2012: UN General Assembly votes 137-12 with seventeen abstentions to condemn

the Syrian regime's "widespread and systematic" human rights violations and demand Bashar Al-Assad's resignation.

February 23, 2012: Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is appointed Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League on the Syrian crisis.

February 24, 2012: Friends of Syria conference in Tunis demands that Bashar Al-Assad cease the use of violence and allow humanitarian aid into the country, and calls on the UN to send a peacekeeping mission to Syria.

February 26, 2012: In a national referendum Syrian voters approve a new constitution that establishes a multi-party system; opposition leaders call the vote a sham.

March 8, 2012: Deputy Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister Abdo Hussameldin announces his defection from the Al-Assad regime and urges colleagues to abandon "sinking ship."

March 15, 2012: Nationwide protests by regime opponents and supporters mark the first anniversary of the Syrian uprising; Gulf Cooperation Council announces that its six member states—Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait—will close their embassies in Damascus.

March 21, 2012: UN Security Council backs six-point Annan peace plan, which calls on the Syrian government to partake in an inclusive political transition process; cease violence and withdraw security forces; allow access for humanitarian assistance; release prisoners who have been arbitrarily detained; allow freedom of movement for journalists; allow Syrians to demonstrate freely.

April 1, 2012: Friends of Syria conference in Istanbul recognizes the Syrian National Council as the representative of Syrian opposition; United States agrees to send communication equipment to rebels, while Arab nations pledge more than \$100 million in financial support; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) opens the Domiz camp in Iraq for Syrians fleeing the conflict.

April 12, 2012: Ceasefire brokered by Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan takes effect.

April 21, 2012: UNSC Resolution 2043 establishes 300-member UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) to monitor the ceasefire and ensure implementation of Annan peace plan.

April 22, 2012: U.S. Executive Order 13606 blocks U.S. property of and bans entry to Syrians suspected of committing human rights abuses with information technology.

May 3, 2012: Security forces raid Aleppo University, killing at least four student protesters.

May 7, 2012: Syria holds parliamentary elections amid boycott by opposition; reports say that ruling Baath Party and allies won a 60 percent majority, with most of the other seats going to pro-regime independents.

May 10, 2012: Suicide bomb attacks kill more than fifty people near a police base in Damascus.

May 25, 2012: Security forces and pro-regime irregulars known as *shabiba* reportedly kill more than 100, half of them children, in the town of Houla.

June 6, 2012: Bashar Al-Assad dissolves Adel Safar's government and appoints Riyadh Hijab (1966-), former agriculture minister, as prime minister.

June 12, 2012: Hervé Ladsous, UN undersecretary-general for peacekeeping operations, calls the crisis in Syria a full-scale civil war.

June 16, 2012: UN suspends its monitoring mission in Syria, citing dangerous conditions after observers are directly targeted in attacks.

June 21, 2012: Syrian air force pilot flies fighter jet to Jordan and defects.

June 22, 2012: Syrian forces shoot down a Turkish military aircraft.

June 30, 2012: Action Group for Syria, comprised of the six members of the UN Security Council, European Union, Turkey, Iraq, Qatar and Kuwait,

meets in the Geneva I conference; Geneva Communiqué calls for implementation of the Annan peace plan.

July 6, 2012: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says that the Syrian conflict has reached a "critical stage" and warns that it could be devastating for the entire region; Brigadier General Manaf Tlass, a member of Bashar Al-Assad's inner circle and son of former Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass, defects to Turkey.

July 11, 2012: Nawaf Al-Fares, Syrian ambassador to Iraq, defects.

July 14, 2012: International Committee of the Red Cross classifies the Syrian conflict as a civil war.

July 18, 2012: An explosion at the National Security Building in Damascus kills three top regime officials: Deputy Defense Minister Assef Shawkat (1950-2012), Bashar Al-Assad's brother-in-law and a former intelligence chief; Defense Minister Daoud Rajha (1947-2012); and General Hassan Turkmani (1935-2012), a former defense minister; Free Syrian Army and the Islamic Brigade group issue separate claims of responsibility.

July 19, 2012: Rebel forces capture eastern Aleppo; Russia and China veto draft UNSC resolution that would extend the mandate of UNSMIS and threaten sanctions against the Syrian regime.

July 24, 2012: Lamia Al-Hariri, Syrian ambassador to Cyprus and niece of Vice President Farouk Al-Sharaa (1938-), defects; her husband, Abdelatif Al-Dabbagh, Syrian ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, defects shortly afterward.

July 28, 2012: UNHCR opens the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan.

August 2, 2012: Annan resigns as Joint Special Envoy; cites Bashar Al-Assad's refusal to implement the Annan peace plan, escalating rebel military campaign and disunity among UN Security Council members.

August 6, 2012: Prime Minister Riyadh Hijab defects to Jordan and accuses the Al-Assad regime of "genocide."

August 9, 2012: Bashar Al-Assad appoints Wael Al-Halqi (1964-), former minister of health, prime minister; Syrian and Jordanian military forces engage in a border clash.

August 15, 2012: A report by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic says that regime as well as opposition forces have committed crimes against humanity.

August 17, 2012: Lakhdar Brahimi, veteran UN diplomat and former Algerian foreign minister, succeeds Kofi Annan as Joint Special Envoy.

August 20, 2012: President Obama draws “red line” threatening U.S. military force if the Al-Assad regime deploys chemical weapons against opponents.

August 26, 2012: Security forces reportedly kill some 400 people in the Damascus suburb of Dariya.

September 16, 2012: Brigadier General Mohammed Ali Jafari of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps says that the IRGC is providing “advisory help” to the Al-Assad regime.

September 25, 2012: Sixteenth-century market in Aleppo is destroyed amid heavy fighting in the city.

September 28, 2012: At Friends of Syria conference in New York, United States pledges \$45 million in non-lethal and humanitarian aid for Syrian rebels.

November 2, 2012: Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights says rebel forces may have committed war crimes by summarily executing Syrian soldiers who had surrendered.

November 11, 2012: Syrian National Council and other factions form the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces; Moaz Al-Khatib (1960-), a Muslim cleric, is named coalition president; the coalition’s goals include overthrowing the Al-Assad regime and establishing a “democratic and pluralistic civil state”; Israeli tanks open fire on Syrian posts after shelling of the demilitarized zone in the Golan Heights.

November 30, 2012: Friends of Syria conference in Tokyo calls on Syrian regime to cease the use of violence and provide access for humanitarian aid.

December 8, 2012: Salim Idris (1957-) replaces Riad Al-Asaad as commander of Free Syrian Army.

December 10, 2012: U.S. State Department designates Al-Nusra Front a terrorist organization; UNHCR reports that more than 500,000 Syrian refugees have fled the country.

December 12, 2012: President Obama says the United States recognizes the Syrian National Coalition as “the legitimate representative” of the Syrian people; National Coalition attends Friends of Syria conference in Marrakesh.

January 6, 2013: In a televised address, Bashar Al-Assad announces reforms to end the conflict, including elections, a national reconciliation conference and a new constitution.

January 11, 2013: Special Joint Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi meets with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov and Deputy U.S. Secretary of State William Burns; they fail to resolve differences over role of Bashar Al-Assad in Syria’s transition.

January 15, 2013: Bombings at Aleppo University kill more than eighty people.

January 29, 2013: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reports that the bound bodies of sixty-five people, apparent victims of a mass execution, were found on a riverbank in Aleppo.

January 30, 2013: Israel says its military aircraft bombed a convoy near Syria’s border with Lebanon transporting weapons to Hezbollah.

February 21, 2013: A car bombing near the ruling Baath Party headquarters in Damascus kills more than fifty people.

February 28, 2013: At Friends of Syria meeting in Rome, United States pledges \$60 million in medical supplies and food for rebels; Syrian National Coalition expresses disappointment over the lack of military aid.

March 7, 2013: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres reports that more than one million Syrians have become refugees from the conflict.

March 24, 2013: Moaz Al-Khatib resigns as president of the Syrian National Coalition; he later cites interference from international and regional parties.

March 25, 2013: Rebels fire mortars into central Damascus.

March 26, 2013: Arab League grants Syria's seat in the organization to the Syrian National Coalition.

April 21, 2013: At Friends of Syria meeting in Istanbul, United States pledges an additional \$123 million in non-lethal aid to the Syrian opposition.

April 22, 2013: George Sabra (1947-), a former political prisoner and Communist Party official, is elected interim president of the Syrian National Coalition.

April 30, 2013: Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah says in a televised speech that his group's fighters have intervened in Syria in support of the Al-Assad regime.

May 4, 2013: Security forces and *shabiha* reportedly kill some 250 people in Baniyas and Bayda, triggering an exodus from the cities.

May 5, 2013: Israel says its military aircraft bombed a shipment of advanced surface-to-surface missiles in Damascus possibly intended for Hezbollah.

May 7, 2013: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says that 4.25 million Syrians have become internally displaced persons (IDPs).

May 11, 2013: Two car bombings kill more than forty people in the Turkish town of Reyhanli near the Syrian border.

May 22, 2013: Friends of Syria conference in Amman condemns atrocities by Syrian regime and reiterates support for the Syrian National Coalition; clashes in Tripoli kill at least ten people.

May 25, 2013: Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah promises military support for Bashar Al-Assad until the defeat of Syrian rebels.

May 27, 2013: EU ends its arms embargo on Syrian rebels.

June 5, 2013: Syrian forces recapture Qusair with the help of Hezbollah fighters.

June 7, 2013: UN increases the target in its appeal for international aid to Syria from \$3 billion to \$5 billion, citing the rapid intensification of the conflict.

June 12, 2013: Sunni rebels reportedly attack Hatlah and kill some sixty Shiites.

June 13, 2013: White House announces that U.S. intelligence officials have "high confidence" that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons multiple times over the past year, and that as a result of the finding President Obama authorizes direct military support to the rebels.

June 22, 2013: Friends of Syria conference in Doha agrees to provide "material and equipment" to rebels, and demands fighters from Hezbollah, Iran and Iraq withdraw from the country.

July 6, 2013: Ahmad Jarba (1969-), a former political prisoner, is elected to replace George Sabra as president of the Syrian National Coalition.

July 24, 2013: Major General Aviv Kochavi, director of Israel Defense Force military intelligence, warns that Syria is becoming a "center of global jihad."

July 25, 2013: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says that more than 100,000 people have died in the Syrian conflict.

July 26, 2013: Syrian National Coalition delegation, meeting with members of the UN Security Council, seeks a commitment that Bashar Al-Assad will not be part of a transitional government; calls on Russia to end its support for Syrian regime.

July 27, 2013: Security forces in Homs recapture the Khalid Ibn Al-Walid mosque, a symbol of rebel resistance.

July 30, 2013: Iran opens a \$3.6 billion line of credit enabling Syria to purchase oil from Iran.

August 4, 2013: Sunni rebels capture Alawite towns in northwestern Syria, reportedly killing

200 people; rebels claim they killed regime forces, while residents say the dead were civilians.

August 15, 2013: Car bombing kills at least twenty-one people in the Beirut suburb of Ruwais, a Hezbollah stronghold.

August 18, 2013: Inspectors from Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Mission (OPCW-UN) arrive in Syria to investigate allegations of chemical weapons attacks; jihadist groups attack Kurdish towns, forcing thousands of Kurds to flee into Iraq.

August 21, 2013: Starting at 2:30 a.m., thousands of social media messages report a chemical attack on Damascus suburbs; Western media publish images of bodies of purported victims; opposition accuses Al-Assad regime of toxic gas attack; Syrian Information Minister Omran Al-Zoubi says allegations are “untrue and completely fabricated.”

August 23, 2013: Two car bombings in Tripoli kill at least forty-two people.

August 26, 2013: Secretary of State John Kerry condemns the Syrian regime’s “undeniable” use of chemical weapons; regime accuses rebel fighters of launching chemical attacks.

August 27, 2013: Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel says that the United States is prepared to strike Syria if President Obama orders an attack to deter Bashar Al-Assad from further use of chemical weapons.

August 29, 2013: After British Prime Minister David Cameron calls for military response to chemical weapons attack, Britain’s parliament votes to reject military strike on Syria.

August 30, 2013: White House accuses Syrian regime of launching a chemical attack that killed 1,429 people in the Damascus suburbs on August 21; U.S. assessment says motive was to rid suburbs of opposition forces using area to stage attacks on capital; Doctors Without Borders later reports that three hospitals near Damascus treated 3,600 patients displaying neurotoxic symptoms, and that 355 of the patients were subsequently pronounced dead.

August 31, 2013: President Obama asks Congress to authorize a U.S. military strike on Syrian regime targets in response to its use of chemical weapons.

September 2, 2013: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov calls U.S. intelligence on the chemical weapons attack inconclusive; Bashar Al-Assad tells *Le Figaro* there is a risk of a “regional war” if Western nations strike Syria.

September 4, 2013: Russian President Vladimir Putin warns against a U.S. strike on Syria, saying: “We have our ideas about what we will do and how we will do it in case the situation develops toward the use of force or otherwise.”

September 5, 2013: At the G-20 summit in St. Petersburg, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says that aid efforts are not keeping pace with the growing humanitarian crisis in Syria.

September 9, 2013: Russia proposes that Syria place its chemical agents under international control and gradually destroy them to avoid a U.S. military strike; Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem (1941-) says his government welcomes the Russian plan.

September 10, 2013: President Obama announces that he has asked Congress to postpone a vote to authorize the use of force against Syria while a diplomatic approach is pursued.

September 14, 2013: Russia and the United States agree on a deal to place Syria’s chemical arsenal under international control, and to complete destruction of the arsenal by mid-2014; President Obama says that the United States is “prepared to act” if the deal fails.

September 16, 2013: A report by UN weapons inspectors finds “clear and convincing evidence” that on August 21 surface-to-surface missiles containing the nerve agent sarin were launched from regime-controlled positions on Ein Tarma, Moadamiyah, and Zamalka in the Ghouta area near Damascus.

September 24, 2013: President Obama announces \$339 million in new humanitarian aid for Syria; total U.S. humanitarian aid reaches nearly \$1.4 billion.

September 25, 2013: Thirteen Islamist rebel factions reject authority of Syrian National Coalition and call for opposition movement to unite within an Islamic framework.

September 27, 2013: UN Security Council unanimously adopts UNSC Resolution 2118 requiring the Syrian regime to dismantle its chemical weapons arsenal.

October 1, 2013: Officials from OPCW arrive in Damascus to monitor the dismantling of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal.

October 31, 2013: OPCW reports that the Syrian regime has rendered its chemical weapons production facilities inoperable.

November 19, 2013: Two suicide bombings at the Iranian embassy in Beirut kill at least twenty-three people.

November 23, 2013: Islamist rebels including members of the Al-Nusra Front capture oil installations in Deir Al-Zor province.

December 2, 2013: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay says that a fact-finding team has found substantial evidence implicating the "highest levels" of the Syrian regime in war crimes.

January 5, 2014: Syrian National Coalition reelects Ahmad Jarba as president.

January 7, 2014: U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights announces that it has suspended reporting updates on the Syrian conflict death toll due to difficulties in verifying information sources.

January 21, 2014: *Guardian* and CNN cite a report by former international war crimes prosecutors accusing the regime of the "systematic killing" of 11,000 detainees; report says evidence suggests regime is guilty of crimes against humanity.

January 22-31, 2014: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convenes first round of Geneva II peace talks involving the Syrian government and Syrian National Coalition; Joint Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi reports no progress toward a political agreement or delivering humanitarian aid, saying "the gaps between the sides remain wide."

February 1-5, 2014: Barrel bombs reportedly dropped by security forces kill at least 246 civilians in Aleppo.

February 4, 2014: U.S. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper says that Bashar Al-Assad has strengthened his hold on power; warns of "perpetual stalemate where neither the regime nor the opposition can prevail."

February 10-15, 2014: A second round of Geneva II talks is held; representatives of government and opposition fail to agree on agenda; Joint Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi apologizes to the Syrian people for lack of progress in the talks.

February 16, 2014: Abdul-Ilah Al-Bashir Al-Noeimi replaces Salim Idris as commander of Free Syrian Army.

February 22, 2014: UN Security Council unanimously adopts UNSC Resolution 2139 calling on the Syrian regime and the rebels to cease attacks on civilians and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid; calls for an end to "all forms of violence" and condemns Al Qaeda-related terrorism.

March 22, 2014: Turkish military forces shoot down a Syrian fighter jet after it enters Turkish airspace.

May 1, 2014: UNHCR reports that by the end of 2013, 2.3 million Syrian refugees had sought asylum in Turkey (560,129), Iraq (212,181), Jordan (576,354), Lebanon (858,641) and Egypt (131,707); 18 percent of the refugees live in thirty UNHCR camps, located in Turkey, Jordan and Iraq.