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SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

# 4TH ANNUAL ADULT MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Simulation of United Nations Security Council | Addressing Turkish Aggression against Kurds

**SECURITY COUNCIL | DIRECTIVE**

The United Nations Security Council (SC) is the only UN body with the ability to put forth concrete concerted actions concerning a particular global security issue. For more information on working methods of the Security Council [SEE HERE](#).

As a delegate at the simulated SC you will discuss actions concerning the escalation of tensions between the Turkish government and its continued aggression against Turkish, Syrian, and Iraqi Kurds. While representing a specific UN Member State, you are asked to adhere to your country's specific policies by familiarizing yourself with its past resolutions, affiliations and geopolitical allies. In other words, become a true Delegate of this country and stay in character throughout the simulation. To provide you with an example: Russia may not be in agreement with the United States on all issues concerning the Middle East. Therefore, rhetoric, viewpoints and policies will differ significantly. Please [SEE HERE](#) a video of an actual SC session to familiarize with process.

All fifteen (15) Member States of the Security Council\* serve on this UN body to seek solutions to prevent and contain global security threats. In the case of our SC simulation, we seek solutions to prevent and contain global security threats of ISIS within and outside the Middle East. Based on this, the following questions can guide your research as you prepare for the conference.

- Definition of a terrorist
- Extent to which Security Council affects domestic policies of a sovereign nation
- Effectiveness of UN Peacekeepers deployment
- Effective Monitoring mechanisms
- Consider President Erdogan agenda and possible reaction to a solution
- Identify allies, supporters and opponents of Kurdish People and Kurdish Cause
- Current Crisis in Syria has triggered use of frequent veto within SC. Consider how veto will play a role in finding solutions that satisfy all veto powers to avoid stalemate.
- Contemplate mechanisms and commitments for actors to remain compliant with found solution to adhere to agreement.

**\*UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBER STATES:** China, France, Russia, UK, and the US as permanent members with veto power ([what is veto power?](#)) and currently Bolivia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, and Uruguay. Note: **Turkey will be present at this meeting as a non-voting participant state.**

## Kurdish History | AT A GLANCE

The Kurdish people are a northwestern Iranian ethnic group in the Middle East. The Kurdish people gained a renewed sense of nationalism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a group of people with common ethnicity, history, and purpose. As the map below demonstrates, the Kurdish people do not have a state of their own and have attempted multiple times to gain autonomy in the different states that they have occupied. In the 1970s, the Kurdish people of northern Iraq fought against the Iraqi government in 2 wars that lasted until the 1990s whereby the establishment of a No-Fly zone by the western coalition fighting for Kuwait allowed Kurdish fighters to consolidate and establish an autonomous governing body within Iraq's borders. This has not been the case in Turkey, Iran, and Syria, who see the Kurds as untrustworthy traitors wishing to break apart their countries. Approximately half of all Kurds today reside in Turkey, making up approximately 19% of the Turkish population.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Washington Times

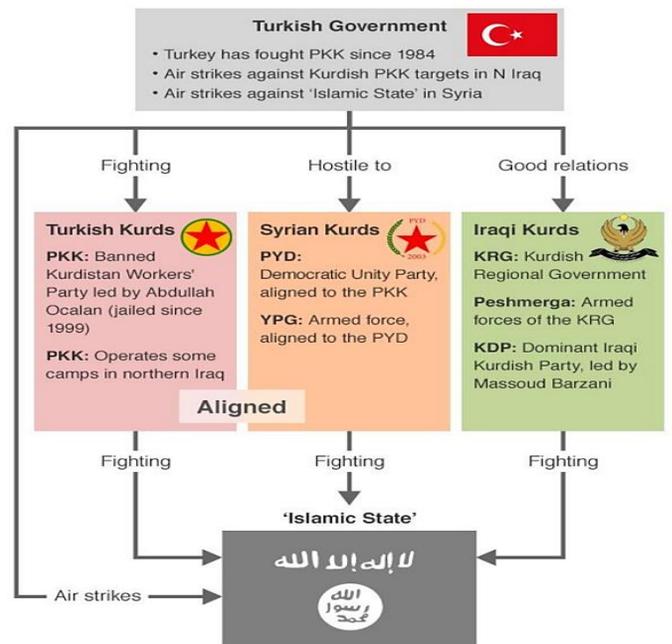
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<sup>1</sup> [CIA World Factbook - Turkey](#)

### Kurdish Participation in Recent Middle Eastern Conflicts

The autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq has participated in fighting multiple militias that have encroached upon their sovereign region throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> US-Iraq War that started in 2003. As the conflict has evolved, the Kurds in Iraq have aligned themselves with the US, often fighting alongside US air support, and, most recently, they have taken territory from the Islamic State in Syria with the assistance of Kurdish units in Syria. Prior to the recapture of Mosul from the Islamic State, the United States provided material support in the form of ammunition, food, and medical supplies, much to the annoyance of Iraqi defense experts who see this as empowering parties which may one day seek to declare independence.<sup>2</sup>

The People’s Protection Units (YPG) is the largest Kurdish fighting force that has participated in the recent conflict against the Islamic State, but the increased armament and aggression of this group of stateless fighters has heightened tensions between the different actors in the region. Turkey, which fought a war from 1984-1999 against Kurdish autonomy, still views this domestic population as traitorous and damaging to state security, going as far as labeling the Kurdish Worker’s Party (PKK) a terrorist organization. While many states acknowledge Turkey’s rationale for labeling the PKK a terrorist organization due to their connection to extortion rings and drug smuggling in the past<sup>3</sup>, many Western actors in the Middle East have drawn a distinction between the group Turkey fought in the 80s – 90s and the YPG who are helping them fight against the Islamic State today. Turkey has bombed multiple YPG positions in Syria and Iraq since the rise of the Islamic State, citing their belief that the YPG is an ideological extension of the PKK for the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state. The US, EU, and UN have all urged Turkey to abide by international laws and refrain from complicating the efforts to cease hostilities in the region.<sup>4 5</sup>



<sup>2</sup> [US signs military aid deal with Iraq's Kurdish fighters](#)

<sup>3</sup> [PKK – Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Turkey VS Syria’s Kurds VS Islamic State](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Turkey bombing US Allies](#)

## Turkish Government | Recent Developments

In April 2017, Turkey voted to give more control to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a referendum that passed with 51.4% 'yes'. These new powers allow the President of Turkey to appoint public officials, establish laws by decree, and declare a state of emergency.<sup>6</sup> This follows last year's coup attempt, where members of the Turkish Armed Forces attempted to remove Erdogan from power. Following the attempted coup, several members of the Kurdish Worker's Democratic Party (HDP), Turkey's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest party, were detained for questioning.<sup>7</sup> Teachers, journalists, politicians, and several other members of Turkish society have been fired or arrested since the coup attempt as the administration seeks to eliminate what it considers subversive forces within its society.<sup>8</sup>

The Turkish government has taken in the most refugees (over 3 million)<sup>9</sup> from the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria and is considered a major actor in the region for peace negotiation. Turkey has had its borders permeated by refugees, Islamic State militias, and Kurdish YPG fighters alike, which has been a constant security concern. In late 2016, Turkey worked with Russia on a ceasefire agreement (S/2016/1133), however, the unfortunate reality with this agreement is the grey area that Kurdish fighters find themselves in. To Turkey, they are a terrorist network, yet many in the West consider the Kurds valuable allies. Upon adoption of this resolution, "several Council members raised concerns regarding the terms of the ceasefire, the lack of clarity on the monitoring mechanism and the risk of having a parallel political process if there was not adequate coordination with the UN's mediation efforts."<sup>10</sup>

## UN Security Council Mandate

In order for the humanitarian disaster in the Middle East to come to a close, Turkey must find reconciliation with its domestic population of Kurds or risk escalation of transnational conflict. Given the volatile nature of the situation, the UN Security Council is simultaneously tasked with ensuring the protection of human rights for Kurds as well as ensuring the Turkish government's commitment to the region. While these two tasks become seemingly more mutually exclusive with each passing day, it is necessary to mend this relationship (at least temporarily) in order to focus on the issue of Syria.

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<sup>6</sup> [New Powers of the Turkish President](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Turkey Arrests Pro-Kurdish Leaders](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Turkish Kurds being purged from positions of influence](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Turkish Refugee Count - UNHCR](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Security Council Report – February 2017](#)

**Interesting Links** | [Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations](#); [The Kurdish Project](#)

**United Nations Documents:**

[S/2016/1133](#): Russia summarizing the agreement reached with Turkey on a ceasefire and political talks for Syria. December 2016.

[Security Council Report for Syria](#)

[Security Council Report for Iraq](#)

[Security Council Report on Terrorism](#)

[Turkey: Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights](#)

***Check back after June 12 for updates and country bloc positions***