



Presbyterian Mission

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations

SYRIA

The United Nations in Syria

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): Since 2012, this office has monitored the situation in Syria and regularly issued reports concerning violations of human rights law related to the ongoing conflict.¹

UN General Assembly (UNGA): in 2017, the Assembly passed a resolution which condemned the widespread abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law in the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular the use of chemical weapons. The resolution urges all member states toward action in support of a durable peace in the country as well.²

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): The UNHCR provides humanitarian aid for refugees from Syria, including cash for medicine and food, stoves and fuel for heating, insulation for tents, thermal blankets and winter clothing. Internally displaced persons in Syria receive shelter kits, non-food items, protection, and psychosocial support. The UNHCR's new aid plan calls for \$4.4 billion to be spent for five million refugees and four million people living in communities that support them.³

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): In 2018, OCHA targeted 11.2 million Syrians to receive assistance from a pool of \$1.62 billion. Funds are targeted across four areas: food security, healthcare, education, and clean water and sanitation.⁴

UN Security Council: Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, the Council has passed resolutions which establish a peacekeeping force, allow for continued monitoring of the situation, create limited ceasefires, provide a framework for the end of the use of chemical weapons, and call for access for those providing humanitarian aid.⁵

UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS): In April 2012, the UN Security Council approved a peacekeeping team with a mandate to monitor and implement the Joint Special Envoy's six-point plan to end the conflict in Syria. After a thirty-day extension, the UNSMIS mandate came to an end. Further extension may be possible when violence subsides.⁶

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) & Syria

Presbyterian Mission: For over 200 years, Presbyterians have been involved in Syria. In 1956, mission workers encouraged the creation of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL)

which remain church partners to this day. While the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) maintains relationships through two mission co-workers, Presbyterians are also connected through the Jinishian Memorial Program. This program began in 1966 to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the post-genocide Armenian population in Syria.⁷ Today, local partners working with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance bring desperately needed emergency aid to the most vulnerable in the country.⁸

Syria Lebanon Partnership Network of the PC(USA): This mission network brings together Presbyterians from around the United States to facilitate partnerships with ministries in Syria and Lebanon. The network is committed to supporting leadership development and theological education and working toward a just peace in the region.⁹

PC(USA) Policy on Syria: The 223rd General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis approved an overture to stop the killing, work for reconciliation, alleviate suffering, and deepen partnership with Syrian Christians. The policy called for the Church to engage in advocacy which would support Syrian refugees coming to the United States and work with relevant UN bodies to create a just peace in the region.¹⁰

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN)

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations is called to act on an issue when it meets three criteria: the PC(USA) has a policy regarding the topic, partner churches are in favor of action, and it appears on the UN agenda. In the case of Syria, PMUN has interpreted their ministry through participation in ecumenical advocacy on the UN Security Council. This includes the office's role as a founding member of the Syria Negotiations Civil Society Support Group.

NGO Working Group on the Security Council: The NGO Working Group was founded in 1995 to promote dialogue between the NGO community with foreign officials, policy experts, and members of the Security Council. PMUN involvement in the working group creates an exchange of information and perspective between the PC(USA) and the principal UN organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, including continued monitoring of the situation in Syria.¹¹

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/menaregion/pages/syindex.aspx>

² <http://undocs.org/A/C.3/72/L.54>

³ <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html>

⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/syria>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_Nations_resolutions_concerning_Syria

⁶ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unsmis/>

⁷ <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/syria/>

⁸ <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/syria/>

⁹ <http://www.syrialebanonpn.org/>

¹⁰ <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000230>

¹¹ <https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngo-working-group-on-the-security-council-4-24.html>