



## BRIEFING PAPER

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# Syria: a reading list

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## Summary

### Syria: a reading list

On 26 September David Cameron told the House of Commons:

'I am very clear that ISIL needs to be destroyed in Syria as well as in Iraq. We support the action that the United States and five Arab states have taken in Syria, and I believe that there is a strong case for us to do more in Syria, but I did not want to bring a motion to the House today on which there was not consensus. I think it is better if our country can proceed on the basis of consensus. In this House, as I am sure we will hear in the debate today, there are many concerns about doing more in Syria, and I understand that. I do not believe that there is a legal barrier, because I think that the legal advice is clear that were we or others to act, there is a legal basis, but it is true to say that the Syrian situation is more complicated than the Iraqi situation. It is more complicated because of the presence of the brutal dictator Assad. It is more complicated because of the state of the civil war. We should be clear that we have a clear strategy for dealing with Syria, backing the official opposition, building it up as a counterpoint to Assad and working for a transition. As I have said, in the end, what Syria needs is what Iraq needs: a Government who can represent all of their people.'

This document is a reading list that covers the situation in Syria, the complexity of battling Syrian groups and of outside interventions, the legal implications of any UK intervention and other aspects that will form part of one of the House's most significant debates of recent years.

This reading list accompanies a series of Commons Briefing Papers:

[Iraq and Syria - developments in 2015](#) (CBP 7261)

[Legal basis for UK military action in Syria](#) (CBP 7404)

[Seeking a negotiated solution in Syria](#) (CBP 7392)

[France and Article 42\(7\) of the Treaty on the European Union](#) (CBP 7390)

[ISIS/Daesh: the military response in Iraq and Syria](#) (SN06995)

[UK drone attack in Syria: legal questions](#) (CBP 7332)

[Syrian refugees and the UK](#) (SN06805)

[Parliamentary approval for military action](#) (CBP 7166)

[ISIS and the sectarian conflict in the Middle East](#) (RP 15/16)

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# 1. Specialist publications

- Shashank Joshi, '[Sound strategy or dodgy dossier? Cameron's case for Syria strikes](#)', *RUSI [Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies] Commentary*, 26 November 2015
- Jane Kinninmont, '[Europe needs to take an holistic approach to tackling ISIS](#)', *Chatham House [International Institute of International Affairs] Comment*, 25 November 2015
- '[An alarming new escalation in the Syria war](#)', *International Crisis Group Blog*, 24 November 2015
- Jean-Marie Guehenno, '[The dangers of a European war on terror](#)', *POLITICO Opinion*, 24 November 2015
- Shadi Hamid, '[Is there a method to ISIS's madness?](#)' *Brookings Institution Markaz Middle East Politics & Policy Blog*, 24 November 2015
- Dapo Akande and Marko Milanovich, '[The constructive ambiguity of the Security Council's ISIS resolution](#)', *EJIL [European Journal of International Law] Blog*, 21 November 2015
- International Crisis Group, '[The world bombs Syria](#)' [audio], *SoundCloud*, 19 November 2015
- Chris Zambelis, '[Saudi Arabia and Russia clash over Syria](#)', *Gulf State Analytics*, 18 November 2015
- Malcolm Chalmers, '[UK air strikes in Syria: time for a decision?](#)', *RUSI Briefing Paper*, 18 November 2015
- Giorgio Cafiero and Daniel Wagner, '[Turkey and Qatar: close allies, sharing a doomed Syria policy](#)', *The National Interest*, 9 November 2015
- Giorgio Cafiero and Daniel Wagner, '[The US and Iran's common interests in Syria](#)', *Fair Observer*, 7 November 2015
- Patrick Cockburn, '[Too weak, too strong: the state of the Syrian war](#)', *London Review of Books*, Vol 37 No 21, 5 November 2015
- Neil Quilliam, '[What the UK can do to solve the refugee crisis](#)', *Chatham House Comment*, 7 October 2015

## 5 Syria: a reading list

- Elizabeth Quintana and Jonathan Eyal (eds). '[Inherently unresolved: the military operation against ISIS](#)', *RUSI Occasional Paper*, 4 October 2015
- Raffaello Pantucci and Clare Ellis, '[The threat of ISIS to the UK: RUSI threat assessment](#)', *RUSI Briefing Paper*, 3 October 2015
- Ian Bond, '[The insoluble Syrian problem: only wrong answers?](#)', *CER [Centre for European Reform] Insight*, 29 September 2015
- Jonathan Eyal and Elizabeth Quintana (eds). '[Inherently unresolved: regional politics and the counter-ISIS campaign](#)', *RUSI Occasional Paper*, 25 September 2015
- Simon Mabon, '[Why Saudi Arabia is having such trouble with its Syria policy](#)', *The Conversation*, 22 September 2015
- James Strong, '[Interpreting the Syria vote: Parliament and British foreign policy](#)', *International Affairs*, Vol 91 No 5, 16 September 2015
- International Crisis Group, '[New approach in Southern Syria](#)', *Middle East Report*, No163, 2 September 2015
- Derek Averre and Lance Davies, '[Russia, humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect: the case of Syria](#)', *International Affairs*, Vol 91 No 4, 1 July 2015
- Christopher Phillips, '[Sectarianism and conflict in Syria](#)', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 36 No 2, 24 March 2015
- Matthias Vanhullebusch, '[The Arab League and military operations: prospects and challenges in Syria](#)', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 22 No 2, 16 March 2015
- '[Syria's president speaks: a conversation with Bashar al-Assad](#)', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 94 No 2, March/April 2015
- Robert S Ford, '[How to correct America's strategy in Syria](#)', *Middle East Institute*, 11 March 2015
- Martin Hartberg et al, '[Failing Syria: assessing the impact of UN Security Council resolutions in protecting and assisting civilians in Syria](#)', *Norwegian Refugee Council et al*, March 2015
- Aaron Stein, '[Stumbling in Iraq and Syria, 2011–14](#)', *Whitehall Papers*, Vol 83 No 1, 24 December 2014

- Emile Hokayem, '[Iran, the Gulf States and the Syrian civil war](#)', *Adelphi Paper 54*, 15 December 2014
- Fred H Lawson, '[Syria's mutating civil war and its impact on Turkey, Iraq and Iran](#)', *International Affairs*, Vol 90 No 6, 12 November 2014
- Patrick Cockburn, '[Whose side is Turkey on?](#)', *London Review of Books*, Vol 36 No 21, 6 November 2014

## 2. Select Committee publications

- Foreign Affairs Committee, [\*The extension of offensive British military operations to Syria\*](#), 3 November 2015, HC 457 2015-16
- International Development Committee, *Syrian refugee crisis*, HC 463 2015-16
  - [Written and oral evidence](#) (20 October-25 November 2015)
- Defence Committee, [\*The situation in Iraq and Syria and the response to al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq al-Sham \(DAESH\): Government response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2014-15\*](#), 25 March 2015, HC 1126 2014-15
- Defence Committee, [\*The situation in Iraq and Syria and the response to al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq al-Sham \(DAESH\), Seventh Report of Session 2014-15\*](#), 5 February 2015, HC 690 2014-15

### 3. Books

- John McHugo, *Syria: from the Great War to civil war*, 2014
- Christian C Sahner, *Among the ruins: Syria past and present*, 2014
- Reese Erlich, *Inside Syria: the backstory of their civil war and what the world can expect*, 2014
- David W Lesch, *Syria: the fall of the House of Assad*, August 2013
- Emile Hokayem, *Syria's uprising and the fracturing of the Levant*, May 2013



## 4. Miscellaneous

- European External Action Service, '[Final declaration on the results of the Syria talks in Vienna as agreed by participants](#)', 30 October 2015
- Department for International Development/Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Ministry of Defence, '[UK non-humanitarian aid in response to the Syria conflict](#)', 27 October 2015

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