

# [Syrian crisis](https://assignbuster.com/syrian-crisis/)

Since the early spring of 2011, Syria has be enveloped by a bloody and violent civil war that has cost the lives of over 100, 000 civilians and over 1 million people have had to flee to neighboring countries such as Jordan and Turkey(http://syriahr. com/en/). With so much bloodshed and continuing escalation in the conflict, many in the international community believe that this war could last many more years or even decades. As we will see the conflict that stemmed in March of 2011, resulted for many different reasons which make peace very difficult to achieve.

The current President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, is currently trying to rout out the rebel groups from many key cities in Syria such as Damascus and Homs. Because Assad is a member of the Alawite community in Syria, which makes up a substantial minority of the population, a majority of those who are fighting against him in the rebel camps feel that Assad’s government is not listening to the will of the majority of Syrians but rather his group specifically.

Peace has been unable to be achieved because Assad refuses to relinquish his office which has been a key demand by the rebel forces. Assad rejects the idea that he should step down from office because he believes he was lawfully elected as head of state and he will only step down in 2014 when elections are held again. Because negotiations have failed, the fighting has only continued to escalate.

With powerful fanatical groups such as Hezbollah supporting the Syrian president with armed troops and conducting military operations within the borders of Syria, the death tolls have continued to rise. Syria’s president does not feel threatened by staying in power because he has the backing of powerful nations such as Russia, China and Iran. Because of this support, the Western powers have been able to do very little in order to change the tide of war.

Although the US has issued harsh words and ‘ red-lines’ towards the Syrian regime, it has done very little to put fear into the minds of those in the regime. The backing of the Syrian regime by its Russian and Chinese allies are crucial to the necessary survival of Assad’s government and as long as he has their backing, there is very little the West and other nations can do to change the course of the conflict in favor of the allies.

Recently the fighting has become so brutal that on March 18th 2013, chemical weapons containing saran gas were used on a suburb of Damascus. The destruction was so immense that over 1000 Syrian civilians were killed within hours of the deadly attack. Both sides claim that the other side used the gas in the conflict; the Syrian government claims that the rebels used it in an attempt to gain Western sympathy by making it seem that the Syrian regime used it while the Syrian government adamantly rejects it.

Since this terrible and horrific event it has only served to embolden both sides in the conflict while forcing the international community to take a more active role in the conflict. Although the US in late August stated that they would use military force against the regime in order to prevent further such chemical attacks, this stance was eventually withdrawn when the Russians proposed to actively oversee the removal and destruction of Syria’s chemical arsenal.

The very fact that such weapons were used and also the capability of Assad to unleash air attacks and heavy artillery bombardment on rebel positions, it is evident that the conflict in Syria is an example of asymmetric warfare which states that it is a,” conflict between actors with highly unequal military capabilities”( Frieden 240-248). Because of the escalation in the fighting and with the slaughter of women and children in neighborhoods even around the heart of Damascus, peace talks have become increasingly hopeless.

Because the battle for the control of Syria is becoming ever more desperate, both sides might engage in activity that could later cause a greater escalation in the war (what Frieden describes on pg. 100 as Brinksmanship). If there is any hope in a peaceful outcome in this bloody and ever expanding conflict, both sides must be willing to sacrifice some of its demands in order to end the senseless killing of innocent lives. However, Assad adamantly refuses to let go of control of Syria, which his family has had