

Syrian rebel fighters fire a heavy machine gun against Daesh positions from a location west of Kobani during fighting on November 4, 2014.

YANNIS BEHRAKIS/REUTERS



What changes do you anticipate in Iran's share, role, and position in post-Assad Syria? Figures such as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani from the new government, along with

the new foreign policy chief of the European Union and US officials as foreign actors, believe that Tehran will no longer maintain its previous standing in Syria. What

are your thoughts on this issue?

It is too early to make such statements, whether they come from Americans, Europeans, or from the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham or any other

force. Expressing these words is a sign of naivety.

The historical relationship between Iran and Syria will not be diminished by the presence of a number of extremist armed forces. Iran has contributed to the economy, agriculture, water, electricity, and various other sectors in Syria, and the people of this country have felt these services. The people of Syria are aware of the multitude and diversity of Iran's services in their country. Culturally and ideologically, Iran has not had issues with the Syrian people, although it did not approve of some behaviors of the former government and tried to make that system aware of its shortcomings, while also advising or attempting to create a new intellectual and social atmosphere for the Syrian government. However, it maintained very good relations with the people. Therefore, predicting that Iran will

no longer have a role in Syria is an immature statement.

It seems that Turkey has disrupted the equations of many other prominent regional players, especially Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, and Russia, in Syria. In such circumstances, how much do you think Tehran can turn the developments in Syria into a subject for greater joint cooperation with Saudi Arabia and its allies in this matter?

Our friends and brothers in Turkey will soon realize how the situation will unfold. Addressing economic, social, political, and cultural issues in Syria by a neighboring government, along with strange consequences such as the occupation of southern Syria, are not minor matters that a single country can manage alone. The costs that these developments will impose on

Turkey will gradually become apparent. Issues such as maintaining the value of the Syrian pound, providing safe drinking water, ensuring electricity, and many other matters will arise. Turkey's presence in Syria will raise many questions. Will the mindset of the Syrian people and the Arab populations, including those in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, accept the repetition of occupation and the dominance of the Ottoman Empire over Arab countries? The regional developments will be so diverse that many alliances and coalitions in the area will be disrupted. Certainly, many countries in the region will reassess their calculations in light of the developments in Syria, each considering their own security for the future.

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Israel's violation of Syrian sovereignty and contradictions with international law



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OPINION

From the perspective of international law, the sovereignty of nations remains a fundamental pillar. Accordingly, Article 2(1) of the United Nations Charter recognizes all states, regardless of their political system, economic power, or internal stability, as possessing a distinct legal status in the international community.

This principle guarantees that the sovereignty of no country, despite its internal challenges, can be subject to the arbitrary will of another state. Moreover, the absence of a central government does not undermine the sovereignty or the protected legal status of the country in the international system.

International law has defined the criteria and legal elements for recognizing a state through the 1933 Montevideo Convention, which, under Article 1, stipulates that the formation and recognition of a state's sovereignty depends on having a defined territory, population, government, and the ability to engage in relations with other states. However, this mechanism applies solely to the establishment and recognition of a state, not to the continuation

of its sovereignty following significant changes in its political system or internal stability. Thus, the sovereignty of an already-established state cannot be questioned due to internal political changes or instability. Therefore, according to the views of international legal scholars, the sovereignty of a state is not dissolved by fundamental changes in its territorial population or central authority. This rule, based on the principle of the permanence of state sovereignty, ensures the stability of the state-centered international community and promotes international peace and security through the survival of state entities and the equality of sovereigns.

Thus, the logical consequence of the existence and continuity of a country's sovereignty, even in the absence of an effective central government, is the protection of its territorial integrity and political independence. Accordingly, any use of force against it and interference in its internal affairs is explicitly prohibited under Articles 4 and 7 of the UN Charter.

Consequently, from the international perspective, the sovereignty of Syria, which currently lacks a functional central government, remains protected against any form of armed aggression or use of force. This cannot be violated by any other entity within the international

system. Any notion aimed at undermining Syria's sovereignty, leading to military aggression or the use of force against it, is invalid and cannot be justified. As international practice confirms, the prohibition of intervention and the use of force prevents any state from launching armed aggression against another.

In line with the above argument, any military intervention in countries without a central government can only occur following decisions by the UN Security Council and within the framework of Chapter VII actions of the UN Charter. Forceful interventions in countries like Syria, which are sometimes referred to as "failed states" by other countries or international organizations, have only taken place under UN Security Council resolutions. Notable examples include the UN operations in Somalia under Security Council Resolution 794, the UN mission in Liberia under Resolution 1509, and the UN mission in Sierra Leone under Resolution 1270.

These cases demonstrate that the international community and the Security Council still uphold the international sovereignty of "failed states," respecting their territorial integrity and immunity from armed aggression by other states. Such states are still entitled to the rights outlined in Articles 4 and 7 of the UN Charter.

Furthermore, many Chapter VII Security Council resolutions, while acknowledging the absence of a central government, explicitly reaffirm the right of these countries to sovereignty and territorial integrity. For example, Security Council Resolution 897 regarding UN operations in Somalia (UNOSOM II) emphasizes respect for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with the UN Charter.

In other words, the Security Council's reliance on Chapter VII resolutions further supports the notion that states lacking effective central governments continue to benefit from the protections afforded by Articles 4 and 7 of the UN Charter. Without this, such resolutions under Chapter VII would be meaningless and ineffective.

Moreover, many Chapter VII resolutions explicitly include a condition for the country in question to consent to UN operations on its soil, further reinforcing the international sovereignty of these states within the international system. Detailed discussions during the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1851 show that countries such as the UK, China, Russia, and Germany insisted on the necessity of the Transitional Government's consent before allowing foreign intervention in Somalia, thus confirming the respect for Somalia's sovereignty.

Therefore, the repeated affirmations by the Security Council and the practice of states concerning the continued international sovereignty of "failed states" and the necessity of their consent for any military intervention highlight the prohibition of any armed aggression or interference against these countries. This principle is starkly violated by the recent widespread Israeli aggression against Syria, which constitutes an illegal occupation of Syrian territory.

Israel's justification for its attack on Syria, claiming preemptive disarmament, is in direct contradiction with international law. According to Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and the fight against terrorism, there is no accepted legal basis under international law for preemptive disarmament. This represents a clear breach of the foundational principles of international law, one which Israel has continued for over a decade in Syria.

Israel's aggression and illegal occupation of Syrian territories, including the violation of its 1974 agreement with Syria, are part of a broader pattern of illegal occupation in Palestine and Lebanon. This disregard for international law, human rights, and UN resolutions is evident in Israel's defiance of the International Court of Jus-

stice's advisory opinion, which called for the end of the occupation of Palestinian territories, and its ongoing actions in Syria. Israel remains confident that under the protection of the United States, it is immune from any consequences or accountability. Following the 1967 war, Israel occupied most of the Golan Heights, and in an illegal and globally unrecognized action, annexed these territories. This act has never been recognized by the international community and remains a clear violation of international law.

Sovereignty and territorial integrity are fundamental and foundational principles in the structure of international law. They are not subject to the will or interpretations of certain states, but are based on the consensus of the international community. Therefore, it must be emphasized that Israel or the United States cannot redefine these concepts to undermine their significant implications.

Syria's sovereignty, like that of Lebanon, Palestine, and any other country in the region, is inviolable, and any attempt to threaten or alter its territorial integrity or destroy its infrastructure by the Israeli occupying regime is strictly prohibited and will lead to international responsibility for Israel and its supporters.

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Israeli soldiers ride armored vehicles during an exercise in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, near the cease-fire line between Israel and Syria on June 17, 2015.

REUTERS/HOSAM KATAN

