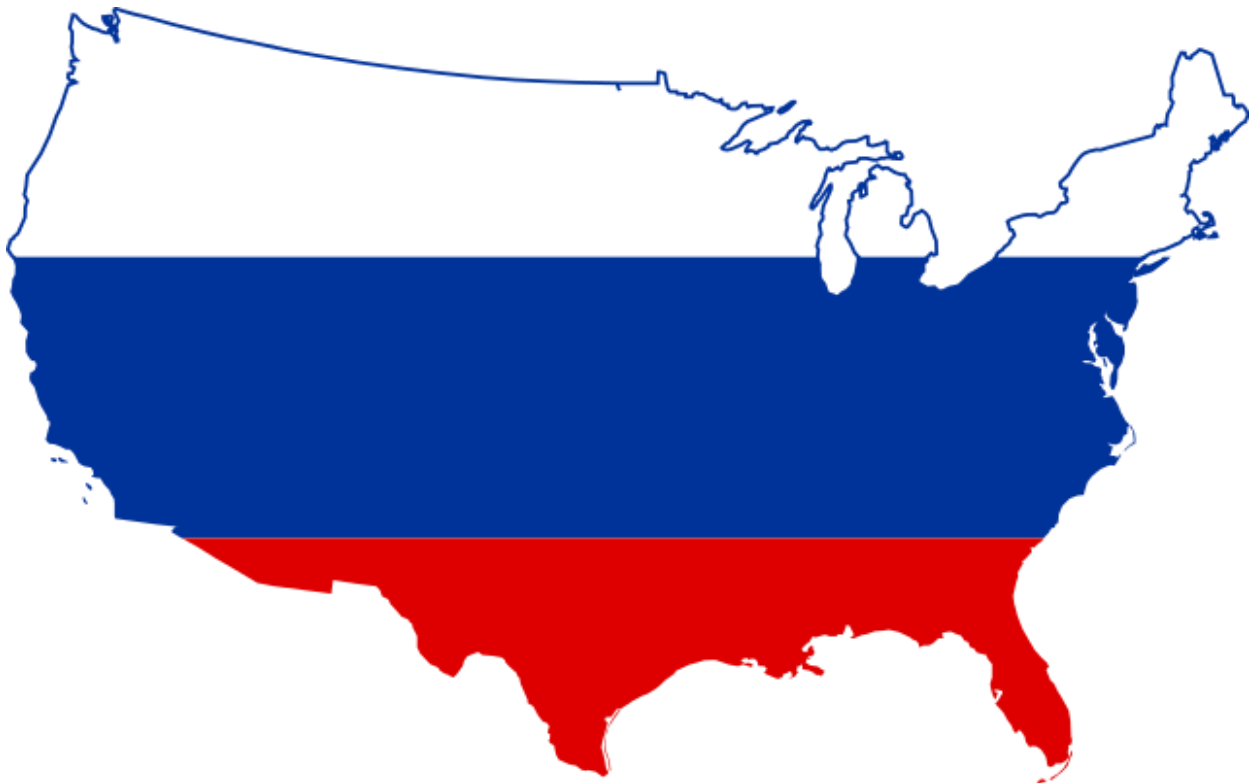


International Criminal Court:

War crimes and conflicts in Syria – who is responsible?

1/3/2017



On November 30th, 2016, the Russian Federation notified the U.N. Secretary-General that it intended to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), [“which was adopted in Rome on 17 July 1998 and signed on behalf of the Russian Federation on 13 September 2000.”](#) It joined Israel, Sudan, and the United States with this position of removing its obligations to the International Criminal Court.

Moscow said it withdrew because of impartiality, or [one-sidedness](#), but it did so at a time in which it was being accused of war crimes in both Ukraine and Syria. For the reason of impartiality, Ukraine, in addition to the United States, have also been accused of war crimes in their respective conflict zones. Ukraine is a signatory to the Rome Statute that has not ratified, according to Wikipedia.

The need for the International Criminal Court, could not be greater at this time, while [the Obama Administration has authorized a defense package that could result in the downing of Russian aircraft in Syria](#), and [Russia has begun to back the Taliban in Afghanistan](#).

In the past, [the Obama Administration has worked with the Russians in Syria](#), but Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, reports that [the Obama Administration is reportedly trying to delegitimize incoming President-elect Trump through hostile acts against Russia](#).

It is unclear how President-elect Trump will lead the U.S. Intelligence Community, at least at this time, but if he is going to maintain positive relations with Russia, he needs to start by brokering a truce between the U.S.-backed rebels and the Russian-backed Assad regime, which must include disarming the U.S.-backed rebels, or abandoning U.S. support for the rebels all together. He also needs to end the conflict between the Russian-backed rebels in Ukraine, and Ukrainian defense forces.

President-elect Trump may also need to recognize the Russian annexation of Crimea, to bolster support for the Russian military. He may also need to negotiate with Iran and Russia, to bring about peace in the Middle East, especially with regards to Israel, in addition to Afghanistan. Trump may also need to build up security forces, with a larger U.S.-backed coalition, including the formal governments of Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Iraq – in order to defeat ISIS.

There is no telling when Russia and the United States will be able to return to the International Criminal Court, with Russia’s annexation of Crimea ruled as an occupation, and the United States having outstanding cases in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, just to mention a few. However, their abstaining from the ICC shouldn’t be viewed as their guilt of crimes against humanity. For an example, the Russian annexation of Crimea resulted through the lack of any bullets fired, and over 93% of voters approved of the annexation. The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan and Iraq was widely supported by the International Community at that time, despite the lack of finding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs).

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a jurisdiction, as such that it analyzes what happened after the dust settles, in which all parties are technically guilty. We are in no way suggesting that these wars did not occur without incidents, but the United States and Russia are the primary forces behind efforts to reduce terrorism, for an example as it existed in Iraq and Afghanistan with Al-Qaeda, as it exists in Iraq and Syria with ISIS, and as it continues to exist in many other nations, including Yemen, South Africa, Egypt, Libya, and the Palestinian Territory.

The worst thing that could happen, would be Russia and the U.S. going loggerheads, and aligning separate sides of third party military forces, in proxy wars between the two major nations. We believe that President-elect Trump understands this, and this is why he seeks such high-level cooperation with Russia.