Syria as a failed state & the destruction of Aleppo

Shannen Dilag
Aleppo 2010

- Formerly Syria’s largest city
- It was the country’s industrial and financial center
- It was famous for its 13th Century citadel, 12th Century Great Mosque and huge covered markets, or souks
Aleppo 2016

- Became a battleground of Syria’s Civil War starting July 2012
- August 2016 - Controlled by anti-government rebels
- December 2016 - Controlled by Syrian government
What went wrong?
Current Syrian government’s issue of legitimacy
Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father. He was confirmed by the Syrian electorate in 2000 and 2007 in a referenda that did not include opposing candidates.

The regime's secret police routinely tortured, imprisoned, and killed political opponents, and those who spoke out against the regime.

During Hafez and Bashar’s regime, there was an uneven representation in government—mostly minority Alawites (aka Shia Arabs) were represented while Sunni Arabs (the majority population in Syria) were excluded.

Hafez al-Assad, Bashar al-Assad’s father, ruled over Syria for 30 years.
Assad regime’s disregard for human rights

- The 1963 State of Emergency law, in place until 2011, allowed authorities to arrest journalists under charges of threatening “national security”.

- Government has unlimited license to kill and use terror as a deterrent/to suppress political opposition.

- Protestors who were wounded in demonstrations were denied access to healthcare or were arrested at the hospital. Security forces blocked ambulances from reaching the injured and some doctors and nurses who attempted to help were killed.
The Arab Spring 2010-2014
Anti-Government Protests

FREE SYRIA

I ASSAD

MUST GO!
Key Actors in the Civil War
United States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iran, ISIS, United States (formerly)
2011: Violence breaks out in Syria

After protests demanding civil rights and political reform break out in Syrian capital Damascus and Aleppo, the Syrian Government attempted to fight back.
2012: Rebels gain control of Aleppo
2014: Syrian Government strikes Aleppo
2015: Russian airstrikes hit Aleppo
January - August 2016

Source: IHS Conflict Monitor/news reports
Why does the war only get worse?

- International intervention
- Little incentive to protect civilians
- The war is complex and each side has a different agenda
- Post-war uncertainty and possibility of genocide against Syria’s civilians
Who decides what happens in Syria?

Ceasefire attempt 1: February-July 2016

Ceasefire attempt 2: September 12-20 2016
December 2016: Aleppo under siege
“The Syrian government has re-established control over eastern Aleppo.”
- Vitaly Churkin, Russia’s UN Ambassador (December 13, 2016)
Civilians return to rubble

Video: http://nyti.ms/2hGgM4A
Aleppo’s displaced seeks refuge
My name is Bana, I'm 7 years old. I am talking to the world now live from East #Aleppo. This is my last moment to either live or die. - Bana

I would like to thank all the humans whose stood for the humanity with our case, i will never forget you if we passed to the other life

Monther Etaky
What comes after Aleppo falls?

“[This] won’t mean the end of the war in Syria, but it will be a huge step toward this end.”
- Bashar Al-Assad
(December 13, 2016)