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Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)

Topic 1: Repatriation and Prosecution of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Their Families

YUNMUN XXXVII

After ISIS lost its territory in 2019, tens of thousands of fighters and family members were left in camps and prisons in northeast Syria. The largest camp, al-Hol, held about 73,000 people at its peak.[1] The camps were run by the Kurdish-led SDF rather than a recognized state. Most residents were women and children, and they were held for years without trial while many home countries refused to take them back.

UN Security Council Resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017) called on states to criminalize foreign fighter activity and to develop strategies for their prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration. A 2020 draft that would have strengthened those resolutions failed when the United States vetoed it for not calling for repatriation.[2] The question of whether taking back nationals is an obligation or a choice remains unresolved.

In January 2026, Syrian government forces took al-Hol from the SDF. Most of the approximately 6,300 foreigners living there soon left, with many reportedly being smuggled to other parts of Syria.[3] When the camp closed in February, thousands remained unaccounted for.[4]

This committee's task is twofold: resolve the remaining issues of al-Hol, and make a plan ensuring it does not happen again. For committee purposes, assume that the CTC has located the roughly 70,000 people once held at al-Hol and nearby prisons. They include several thousand suspected fighters and tens of thousands of women and children from over 40 countries who are now scattered across temporary sites in Syria. Syria's government says it can hold them for only a few more months, and no country has yet agreed to take its nationals back. Delegates must decide what to do with these people, and in doing so write the plan the international community can follow if this, *chas v'shalom (meaning, god forbid),* happens again.

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[1] UN OCHA, *Syria: Humanitarian Response in Al Hol Camp, Situation Report No. 1*, 2019.
[2] "US vetoes UN resolution over Islamic State fighters' return," *Times of Israel*/AFP, Aug. 2020.
[3] "Most families of foreign fighters have left Syria IS-linked Al-Hol camp," AFP, Feb. 12, 2026.
[4] "Syria closes IS-linked Al Hol camp after emptying it," *Al-Monitor*/AFP, Feb. 22, 2026.

While you research this topic and your country's perspective you may want to consider these questions to help guide you:

- Who decides whether someone is a terrorist or a civilian, and where is that line drawn?
- Where and how are suspected terrorists tried, and what happens if their home country refuses them?
- What about the remaining women and children along with those deemed not complicit? Are they innocent, and where should they go?
- What responsibility do countries have to repatriate their citizens detained abroad for suspected involvement with terrorist organizations?
    - How should the international community respond if countries refuse to accept their citizens? What practical measures should be taken?

Research your country's record on these issues and stay aligned with its policy. Plagiarism and prohibited AI usage will not be tolerated. Email me at grone@mail.yu.edu with any questions. I'm looking forward to reading your initial stances and am excited to learn about your nation's positions.

Sincerely,

Gideon Rone

Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee

YUNMUN XXXVII