



(From left to right: Dr Riad Abbas Ambassador of Syria to India, Student Representative of O.P. Jindal Global University Tamanna Dahiya, Dr. Mohsen Bilal Chief Speaker and Member of the Central Leadership of the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party and Head of the Bureau of Higher Education, Dr. (Prof) Abdul Fatah Ammourah Director of Centre for Middle East Studies and Vice Dean at O.P. Jindal Global University, Dr Wael Awwad, Writer & Senior International Journalist)

STRENGTHENING INDIA - SYRIA RELATIONS AND FUTURE OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS

15TH NOVEMBER 2019- SAPRU HOUSE, NEW
DELHI

Speaker Bio

Dr. Mohsen Bilal

Head of Higher Education Bureau of the ruling BAATH party, Syria

His political career started in 1977 when he was elected to the People's Assembly. In 1981, he was named the chairman of the Arab and foreign affairs committee and served in this position until 1985. He led the Syrian delegation at the 1982 World Peace Conference in Prague. In 2001, he became Syria's ambassador to Spain, and he held this post until he was appointed minister of information to the cabinet headed by then Prime Minister Mohammad Naji Otari in February 2006. He replaced Mahdi Dakhlallah as information minister. When Bilal was in office, he acted as chief spokesperson for the Syrian government during the Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006. Dr. Bilal's term ended in April 2011.

Synopsis of the Talk

A delegation of six students from the Bachelors and Masters programme for International relations were taken to the Indian Council for World Affairs in Delhi where they not only had the proud privilege of interacting and interviewing Dr. Bilal but were also acquainted with the views and questions of other think tanks and media houses about the issue.

The Syrian Civil War which has become the biggest humanitarian crisis of the 21st century is still an ongoing conflict between the Ba'athist Syrian Arab Republic led by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, along with various domestic and foreign allies against other foreign forces which are not only opposed to the ruling government but its allies as well. The parties involved in the conflict more often than not tend to clash with each other which results in a disaster for Syria. Estimated casualties in the duration of this conflict are over 500,000 and millions of people have been displaced. Syria was once a culturally rich country, it was a developing nation and the Assad regime was closely working with the Turkish Government to build a better relationship between the two nations so what exactly happened between 2010-2011 that countries across the Middle East ganged up against Syria?

The format of this conference was an interactive roundtable discussions attended by various former ambassadors, key journalists and students from various universities including our very own O.P Jindal Global University.

Dr. Bilal deliberated on the rich civilizational and historical ties between India and Syria. Both countries have had a secular orientation and with Syria joining the Non-Aligned Movement moreover India supporting "Syria's legitimate right to regain the occupied Golan Heights." In turn, this was reciprocated with Syrian recognition that Kashmir is a bilateral issue further strengthened the bond between the two nations. Furthermore, Dr. Bilal also spoke eloquently about Indo-Syrian relationship dating back to the non-alignment and anti-colonialist approach. He appreciated India's non-interference policy regarding the Syrian conflict and explained the need for the world to appreciate state sovereignty. Regarding future with India Dr. Bilal spoke of soft power approaches and increasing cultural and educational links with India which would allow peaceful reconstruction of the country.