



2013 - 2014

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Council on Political Affairs

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Dear Delegates,

It is my honor to welcome all of you to the 2013-2014 Model Arab League and to the Council on Political Affairs. My name is Klevis Xharda and I look forward to chairing your committee at the National University Model Arab League. I am currently a senior at Northeastern University pursuing a Dual Major in Political Science and International Affairs with a Minor in Middle East Studies. I have been participating in the model programs since my freshman year and have been fortunate to perform in many capacities at over fifteen conferences. I will also be your Secretary General at the Northeast Regional Model Arab League conference in Boston, MA this fall.

The Arab world is a rapidly changing and oftentimes politically unstable region. The developments that the world saw during the Arab Spring have had lasting, yet unpredictable, impacts on the way that governments operate in the Middle East. This period of enlightenment was supposed to bring change through the will of the people. It was supposed to promote fair and just governance in a region that has seen many historical injustices. Though this is true for some, the tremors of such rapid change are still being felt across many Arab states. The democratic structures that were installed with such fervor have been unstable at best, and impossible at worst. Countries such as Syria, Egypt, and Yemen find themselves unable to agree on a common plan for the future.

These changes have also caused strain on the economies of each member of the League of Arab States. Unemployment in the region is rampant and is further contributing to the instability of governmental structures. The youth, in particular, are facing unequivocal strain from such economic deterioration. Across the world, Arabs continue to deal with widespread racism and discriminatory laws.

As you prepare for the many conferences this season, it is imperative that each of you remains dedicated to the tasks of your committee. Now, more than ever, it is essential that the Arab world decide on a path that allows each state to govern itself peacefully. The spring has passed, and the true test of strength will be reviled in how the region reacts during the aftermath of revolutionary change.

I challenge each of you to research the topics thoroughly and enter each committee session with ideas and methods of improving the existing structures in the Middle East. I hope that each of you is able to create unique and pragmatic solutions to these real-life problems plaguing the region. Most importantly, I wish that you are able to learn from your fellow delegates the skills that will become part of your education as you pursue your careers.

Best of luck,
Klevis Xharda
Council on Political Affairs

Council on Political Affairs

Topic 1: Establishing conditions, standards, and guidelines for multi-party negotiations to end the conflict in Syria.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The Syrian civil war is an ongoing conflict between the government of Bashar al-Assad and various opposition groups vying to take control of the Syrian government. Dating back to 1947, the Ba'athist party has ruled Syria for the vast majority of the country's existence. The modern Ba'ath party is identified as a socialist movement and is currently led by Bashar al-Assad, who came to power after the death of his father, Hafez al-Assad.¹ The current crisis began in March 2011, with civilian protests launched during a wave of pro-democracy sentiment known as the Arab Spring. Those protests were met with harsh repression from the Syrian government, which led to an armed rebellion. Assad's regime continued to crack down on protesters, eventually resorting to massive human rights abuses including torture, disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and detention of medical patients. In response, civilians began to take up arms against the Syrian government, transforming a peaceful movement to increase democratic freedoms into an all-out civil war. Since the beginning of the conflict, more than 100,000 Syrians have died and thousands more have become internally displaced or refugees.²

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The Syrian civil war has received significant international attention through the news and various relief agencies. The Syrian National Coalition receives logistic and political support from Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. These states, however, have not contributed any troops for direct involvement in the war. France, Britain and countries in Western Europe have also provided limited political support. Though the international community has attempted many negotiations, none have been successful in ending the conflict.

Attempts at successful negotiations have failed largely because of the opposition's inability to form a unified coalition and hesitation by the international community. Supported by Russia and Iran, the Syrian government has been able to withstand international pressures by avoiding United Nations action as a result of the Russian veto. Assad's ability to maintain control has also been facilitated by the many unorganized opposition groups. These groups include the Syrian National Coalition, the Free Syrian Army, various Kurdish groups, and al-Qaeda affiliated groups.³

¹ News, ABC. "Syrian Civil War: What You Need to Know." *ABC News*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/syrian-civil-war/story?id=20112311>>.

² "Syria opposition parties: explained - ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)." *Abc.net.au*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-29/syria-opposition-parties/4913162>>.

³ "What You Need To Know About The Syrian Civil War." *Thinkprogress.org*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://thinkprogress.org/security/2013/04/29/1932871/syria-civil-war/>>.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

The most recent threat by the United States to use a military strike in order to punish the Assad government for the use of chemical weapons was explicitly intended to dissuade the use of chemical weapons, and not to end the civil war. Significant consideration must be taken into account of Syria's compliance with international agreements. The League has proposed various actions to end the conflict, which include the replacement of the Syrian seat from the Assad regime and the funding of the Free Syrian Army from GCC states.

In order for the conflict to cease, the Council must take into account the League of Arab States' suggestions as well as sanctions imposed on Syria. Future plans should include both large and small-scale actions that focus on a resolution for country as well as individuals and the future of current refugees.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has my country been affected by recent events in Syria?
- What steps has my country taken to address the Syrian civil war and attempts at ending the conflict?
- Has my country worked with the international community to create plans aimed at ending the Syrian civil war?
- Would my country be willing to sign a plan or treaty that would end the conflict?
- Have other multinational groups addressed the Syrian issue, and if so have any of these methods been effective?
- What "recent developments, events, and actions" have changed the situation of the Syrian civil war?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What actions can the Arab League take to address issues of the Syrian civil war and the protection of Syrian civilians?
- Should the Arab League Charter be amended to deal with future conflicts?
- How might other institutions play a role in creating a solution to this issue?
- What areas of the Syrian civil war need to be addressed for the Arab League to act effectively, why, and what methods could the Political Affairs Committee use to achieve these changes?

IV. Resources to Review

"Syria Civil War News, Photos and Videos - ABC News." *ABC News*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/world/syrian-civil-war.htm>>.

"Syria profile." *BBC News*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703856>>.

Library, CNN. "Syria Civil War Fast Facts." *CNN*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<<http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/27/world/meast/syria-civil-war-fast-facts/index.html>>.

"Syrian Civil War | Phil Bonus & Review." *Phil-bonus-and-reviews.com*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://phil-bonus-and-reviews.com/syrian-civil-war/>>.

Topic 2: Discussing methods to advocate for the political and social rights of Arabs living outside of member states, with special emphasis on addressing anti-Arab and anti-Islamic laws and policies.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The Muslim diaspora is by far the largest in the world. Today, there are nearly 20 million Muslims in the European Union and nearly 2.6 million Muslims in the United States.⁴ Muslims form majorities in some neighboring countries, such as Turkey, Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. European Muslims are mixed; they are from many different national and ethnic backgrounds, from various classes and sects, and from rural as well as urban areas. They have had different experiences depending on their age, gender, and sexuality. Some have lived in Europe for several generations, including many Turkish Muslims in Germany and Pakistani Muslims in the UK. Others have arrived more recently from North Africa and the Middle East. The experiences of migration and re-location, and Islamophobia have contributed to a shared sense of Muslim identity despite these other differences.⁵

Muslims living outside the Middle East have a shared connection of religious heritage that is not always well received and has led to heightened persecution, especially after a rise in terrorism from Islamic organizations. Though many Arabs are Muslim, not all Muslims are Arab. As a result of the lack of education, there is little differentiation between Muslim and Arab, thus, negative connotations are put upon both communities.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

In April of 2011, France introduced a law against covering one's face in public. Muslim women in full-face veils, or niqab, are now banned from any public activity including walking down the street, taking a bus, going to the shops, or collecting their children from school. French politicians in favor of the ban said they were acting to protect the "gender equality" and "dignity" of women. But five months after the law was introduced, the result is a mixture of confusion and apathy. Muslim groups report a worrying increase in discrimination and verbal and physical violence against women in veils. There have been instances of people in the street taking the law into their hands and trying to rip off full-face veils, of bus drivers refusing to carry women in niqab or of shop-owners trying to bar entry. A few women have taken to wearing bird-flu-style medical masks to keep their face covered; some describe a climate of divisiveness, mistrust and fear.⁶

In the United States, anti-Muslim sentiments have become widespread since the 9/11 attacks. An

⁴ Galtung, Johan. "The Muslim Diaspora in Europe and the USA." *Transcend*, (2012): <<http://www.transcend.org/tri/downloads/MuslimDiaspora.pdf>>.

⁵ "Moving People Changing Places - Muslim diasporas." *Movingpeoplechangingplaces.org*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.movingpeoplechangingplaces.org/locations/muslim-diasporas.html>>.

⁶ Chrisafis, Angelique. "France's burqa ban: women are 'effectively under house arrest'." *the Guardian*, 2011. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/19/battle-for-the-burqa>>.

example of this is the controversy surrounding the proposal for an Islamic center near the Ground Zero site. Although the Park51 building would not be visible from the World Trade Center site, opponents of the Park51 project said, among other things, that establishing a mosque so close to Ground Zero would be offensive since the hijackers in the 9/11 attacks were Islamic terrorists. Supporters have pointed out that some victims and victims' families are in favor of the Park51 project and that some victims were also Muslims. Regardless of the fact that churches and temples exist in the area, the idea of an Islamic institution was met with great opposition.⁷

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

As the Arab Spring has changed the dynamic of many countries in the Middle East, it is also essential that the League of Arab States use this momentum to change the way that the Arab diaspora is treated abroad. Campaigns such as the Islamophobia Awareness Month in the United Kingdom had an arguably mixed impact, and according to some commentators even backfired, inciting further polarization as seen in some commentaries.⁸

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has my country been affected by anti-Arab or anti-Islamic sentiments around the world?
- What steps has my country taken to address global anti-Arab and anti-Islamic sentiments?
- Has my country worked with the international community to create plans aimed at decreasing or eliminating prejudices against Arabs?
- Would my country be willing to sign a plan or treaty aimed at improving the stance or Arabs in foreign countries?
- Have other multinational groups addressed this anti-Arab problem, and if so have any of these methods been effective?
- What “recent developments, events, and actions” have changed the situation for the Arab diaspora?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What actions can the Arab League take to address issues of global prejudices against the Arab diaspora?
- Should the Arab League Charter be amended to deal with future conflicts?
- How might other institutions play a role in creating a solution to this issue?
- What areas need to be addressed for the Arab League to act effectively, why, and what methods could the Political Affairs Committee use to achieve these changes?

⁷ Green, Jonah. "Park51 Islamic Center Opens Its Doors Near Ground Zero." *TheHuffingtonPost.com*. The Huffington Post, 22 Sept. 2011. Web. 11 Oct. 2013. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/22/park51-islamic-center-ope_n_975585.html>.

⁸ "Islamophobia Awareness Month Ends In Great Britain After Much Disagreement." *The Inquisitr News*. The Inquisitr, 7 Dec. 2012. Web. <<http://www.inquisitr.com/427572/islamophobia-awareness-month-ends-in-great-britain-after-much-disagreement/>>.

- What actions can individual governments take to encourage preventative domestic policies on the part of the international community?

IV. Resources to Review

"Sunday dialogue conflicts over religion." *Nytimes.com*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/opinion/sunday/sunday-dialogue-conflicts-over-religion.html?ref=park51&r=0>>.

" Park51 Opens Its Doors Near Ground Zero." *The Huffington Post*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/22/park51-islamic-center-ope_n_975585.html>.

"Call for Muslim veil ban in French universities - The Local." *Thelocal.fr*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<<http://www.thelocal.fr/20130805/report-calls-for-veil-ban-in-french-universities>>.

"France's hijab ban causing tension | The National." *Thenational.ae*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<<http://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/frances-hijab-ban-causing-tension>>.

Wiles, Ellen. "Headscarves, human rights, and harmonious multicultural society: Implications of the French ban for interpretations of equality." *Law & Society Review*, 41. 3 (2007): 699--736. Print.

Wing, Adrien Katherine and Monica Nigh Smith. "Critical Race Feminism Lifts the Veil: Muslim Women, France, and the Headscarf Ban." *UC Davis L. Rev.*, 39. (2005): 743. Print.

Topic 3: Considering agreements for the movement of skilled and unskilled labor between member states in order to decrease unemployment, spur economic growth, and enhance inter-Arab cooperation.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Ironically, the Arab world is frequently under the spotlight regarding sizable non-Arab expatriate work forces and unemployment of Arab nationals. Arab countries' primary resources – namely lucrative natural resources *or* (un)skilled worker populations – are complementary in their potential; increased inter-Arab cooperation might help these countries retain the developmental and economic benefits of the employer-employee relationship for the benefit of the region collectively.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The Middle East, as a recent report by the World Bank shows, has the highest youth unemployment in the world; 28.3 percent in 2012 and expected to rise to 30 percent in 2018. Women, moreover, have been faced with the overwhelming burden of a rate at 19.3 percent in 2012, more than twice the unemployment among men. The situation seems catastrophic when it comes to young women; in certain countries, such as the Gulf States, the unemployment reaches over 70 percent while it is more than 30 percent in North Africa and the rest of the Middle East.⁹

The Arab world is the region that carries the highest rate of unemployment in the world. The reported unemployment in the region is running at 10.3 percent compared to 6.2 percent on average globally. This situation, which was presented in "Global Employment Trends 2011," becomes even more critical when one puts the youth of the region into focus.¹⁰

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

In order for Arab nations to combat this unemployment, they must focus on economic growth and recovery. Though this seems difficult in the midst of internal conflicts, it is imperative that each member state comes up with policies that will increase economic growth among the population. Though the Arab Spring has promoted democracy in many states, this cannot be sustained if the population is unemployed.

Member states might work with one another to encourage cross-border migrations between one another, with a special emphasis on the exportation of surplus labor in a way that will positively affect the regional economy as well as retaining skilled labor in the region.

⁹ "An emerging world of unemployment." *Your Middle East*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/business/an-emerging-world-of-unemployment_16471>.

¹⁰ Pope, Stephen. "Arab Unemployment Frustration Is The Real Danger." *Forbes*, 2011. Web. 1 Oct 2013.

<<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stephenpope/2011/02/03/arab-unemployment-frustration-is-the-real-danger/>>.

'Nationalization' of the private sector demography, for example, has been a recurrent theme in GCC states looking to decrease the ratio of third-nationals to citizens in private businesses. Abdul Aziz Istaitieh, head of economic policy planning at Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, says that "only 8.7 percent of private-sector jobs in Abu Dhabi are held by Emiratis," though efforts at 'Emiratization,' as the name implies, do not distinguish between 'non-Emiratis' and 'non-Arabs' as a primary concern, if at all. Istaitieh also raises a separate factor of Arab unemployment, saying "92 percent of [private-sector jobs in Abu Dhabi held by Emiratis] are office and administrative posts," signaling a disdain for non-white-collar jobs in the UAE.¹¹ A prejudice against particular industries and positions, however, is not unique to the UAE, or even the GCC.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has my country been affected by unemployment rates?
- What steps has my country taken to address rising unemployment rates in member states of the Arab League?
- Has my country worked with the international community to create plans aimed at decreasing the unemployment rate in the Arab world?
- Would my country be willing to sign a plan aimed at improving work conditions and lowering the unemployment rate?
- Have other multinational groups addressed unemployment in the Arab world, and if so have any of these methods been effective?
- What "recent developments, events, and actions" have changed the situation individuals seeking employment in Arab states?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What actions can the Arab League take to address issues of unemployment?
- Should the Arab League Charter be amended to deal with future unemployment in the Arab world?
- How might other institutions play a role in creating a solution to this issue?
- What areas need to be addressed for the Arab League to act effectively, why, and what methods could the Political Affairs Committee use to achieve these changes?

IV. Resources to Review

Al-Habees, Mahmoud A and Mohammed Abu Rumman. "The Relationship Between Unemployment and Economic Growth in Jordan and Some Arab Countries." *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 18. 5 (2012): 673--680. Print.

"Arab League: 25 million Arabs are unemployed | Egypt Independent." *Egyptindependent.com*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/arab-league-25-million-arabs->

¹¹ Arnold, Tom. "Abu Dhabi Faces Emiratization Challenge as Nationals Shy Away from Private-sector Jobs." *TheNational.ae*. The National, 17 June 2013. Web. <<http://www.thenational.ae/business/industry-insights/economics/abu-dhabi-faces-emiratization-challenge-as-nationals-shy-away-from-private-sector-jobs>>.

[are-unemployed](#)>.

"Unemployment in the post-revolutionary Arab world." *www.peacon.net*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.paecon.net/PAEReview/issue59/Kadri59.pdf>>.

"Arab Youth: Education, Employment and Unemployment." *www.youthpolicy.org*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2003_LAS_Education_Employment_Eng.pdf>.

Topic 4: Formulating long-term Arab League contingency plans to address the potential effects of change in regional political structures.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

After the initial effects of the Arab Spring wore off, many Arab states have faced new challenges while attempting to establish popular governments. These challenges have had a huge effect on the political structure in Middle East, Egypt, and North Africa. On July 3, 2013, the Egyptian army chief General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi removed the country's then-incumbent president Mohamed Morsi from power and suspended the Egyptian constitution in a bloodless military uprising. The move came after large-scale ongoing public protests in Egypt for and against Morsi. In Syria, the prolonged civil war has only been met with continual protests and upheaval.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The rapid descent into political strife and turbulence in these states has rocked the once placid region, with unimaginable violence recently breaking out in Egypt. While nothing compares with the carnage that had been seen in Libya – itself under pressure for a regime change – the turn of events has led many to question the wisdom of the democratic transformations that are taking place in these states. As Egypt's re-instated military regime struggles and the civil war in Syria rages on, new questions are arising in the post-spring Middle East.¹²

Though the Arab Spring has brought many positive changes to the region, it has also caused large swaths of instability in the Arab world. This instability has caused long-term wars, rapid changes, and political shifts within member states. These changes have perpetuated issues such as unemployment, violence, and the spread of regional instability.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

With political upheaval spreading across many nations, The League of Arab States must come up with strategies that will allow it to respond to these changing paradigms. These rapid political shifts are not only detrimental for individual states, but they endanger the structure of the League itself. Though not a monarchy, Egypt sent shockwaves through the gulf following the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak, and again after President Muhammad Morsi. If similar transformations were to take place in Bahrain, Morocco, or Syria, regional allies – as well as enemies – would be scrambling to guarantee the best possible outcome; the Arab League can serve as an all-inclusive forum for interested Arab governments to address their stance toward various political structures in anticipation of changes therein.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has my country been affected by regional political shifts?

¹² Caballero-Anthony, Mely. "Post-Arab Spring: Political transitions in retreat?." *Pacific Forum CSIS*, 66. (2013): <<http://csis.org/files/publication/Pac1366.pdf>>.

- What steps has my country taken to address regional political shifts and internal conflict in member states?
- Has my country worked with the international community to create plans aimed at creating contingency plans for political shifts?
- Would my country be willing to sign a plan or treaty aimed at ensuring the strength and stability of regional governments?
- Have other multinational groups addressed contingency plans in the Arab world, and if so have any of these methods been effective?
- What “recent developments, events, and actions” have changed the situation individuals seeking employment in Arab states?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What actions can the Arab League take to address issues of regional instability?
- Should the Arab League Charter be amended to deal with future changes in the political structures of member states?
- How might other institutions play a role in creating a solution to this issue?
- What areas need to be addressed for the Arab League to act effectively, why, and what methods could the Political Affairs Committee use to achieve these changes?

IV. Resources to Review

HUGHES, DANA and MOLLY HUNTER. "Egypt President Morsi Ousted, Under House Arrest." *ABC News*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://abcnews.go.com/International/president-morsi-ousted-democratically-elected-leader-house-arrest/story?id=19568447>>.

Tim Hume, CNN. "Egypt's coup: What we know so far." *CNN*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.cnn.com/2013/07/04/world/meast/egypt-coup-what-we-know/index.html>>.

"Syria | Reuters.com." *Reuters.com*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.reuters.com/places/syria>>.

William Dermody And Sarah Lynch, USA TODAY. "The Egypt semantics debate: Is it a coup? A civil war?." *Usatoday.com*, 2013. Web. 1 Oct 2013. <<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/08/16/egypt-coup-civil-war/2665313/>>.