



2017-2018

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Summit of Arab Heads of State

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National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



Original draft by Daniel Crum, Chair of the Summit of Arab Heads of State at the 2018 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 Summit of Arab Heads of State. My name is Daniel Crum and I will be serving as your chair for the 2018 National University Model Arab League. I am an International Affairs major at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. This will be my third year participating in Model Arab League and I am delighted to be allowed the opportunity to chair the Summit of Arab Heads of State, the best council by far.

As a member of this council, you will be representing the leader of your state. This means you will be debating issues at the highest levels of government and it is expected that if you vote for a resolution it would be binding as there is no higher authority needed to approve the resolution. Usually, this makes the Summit of Arab Heads of State one of the more contentious and tense councils and it also tends to make the debate more in depth and comprehensive. As a delegate, you are not only expected to have a solid understanding of your state's policies and positions, you are also expected to have an understanding of the character you are playing. Staying in character not only makes the simulation more realistic, but also more fun for you and your fellow delegates.

At each of the conferences you will be attending this season it is important that you have a solid understanding of not only the state you represent but also the leader you are supposed to play. Therefore, I recommend you use this background guide as a starting point for your research and then move beyond the obvious or easy solutions and get creative in devising possible resolution ideas you could bring forth at your conference. The topics assigned to this council are designed to look beyond current events and tackle some of the core issues facing the Arab League and the Arab World.

Sincerely,
Daniel Crum

Topic I: Revisiting and updating the 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism to reflect and adapt to the challenges faced by the contemporary counterterrorism environment.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

In April of 1998, The League of Arab States agreed to implement the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. However, global and regional terrorist and counterterrorist activities and tactics have changed significantly since the convention was put in place. Since the beginning of the 21st Century, the number of terrorist groups and attacks on innocent civilians throughout the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Region has been on the rise. Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Al Shaabab, ISIS, and many other terrorist organizations have changed the terrorism and counterterrorism landscape to such a degree that the 1998 convention should be revisited and updated to reflect these changes.

The 1998 Convention primarily focuses on the need for general policing of terrorist activities and the exchange of relevant information between Arab League members.¹ However, the nature of counterterrorism efforts since the beginning of the Global War on Terror has primarily consisted of Western-led coalition-based military action against international terrorist organizations. In recent years, many member states created new counterterrorism centers in order to gain more information and work to oust these groups. The council should explore the new tactics, strategies and information gained from these organizations in order to strengthen the League's counterterrorism tactics. Lastly it is imperative to revisit the definitions for terrorism or acts of terror specified in the 1998 Convention.

B. History in the Arab World

The rise of radical groups began in the late 1970's in the MENA Region. The Arab-Israeli Conflict became a catalyst in the rise of terrorist organizations, including Egypt Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and Al-Gammat Al-Islamiyya. In the 1990's another surge of Militant groups began, including Al-Qaeda, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. Each of these groups had varying levels of power but rose due to a feeling of injustice or intrusion within their own nation. As these groups grow in strength and their attacks become increasingly violent, most Western counterterrorism efforts have become focused in and around the Arab World. This presents an interesting challenge to the Arab League member states.

There are several items the League can address in their updates of the 1998 Convention. For example, the rise of the Arab Spring and its aftermath may be used as an example. After the Arab Spring in 2011, several states saw an increase in terrorist activity as well as weakened state governments that were not capable of adequately dealing with the threat of terrorism. This led to

¹ League of Arab States. *Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism*, 22 April 1998, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3de5e4984.html>

a lack of consensus amongst member states, which has contributed to the constant threat of extremist activity within the Arab World. Even with the 1998 Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, terrorist activity continues to pose a major threat to the region. In 2015, the MENA region suffered 5,580 terrorist attacks.² This is more than any other region in the world. These attacks not only harm and kill citizens, but disrupt the economy and diplomatic relations.

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

Solutions to the current problems the League faces in suppressing terrorism must go beyond the 1998 treaty's answer of general law enforcement and the free exchange of information. One proposed answer to the growing threat of terrorist activity in the region is the creation of a unified military force within the Arab League's member states or expanded joint military operations.³ In preparing for this topic, the council should consider what could be done to update the document to create a revised treaty that will be effective in helping states combat terrorism, while keeping in mind the restrictions of the Charter of the Arab League. Additionally, considerations must be made for the viability of proposed solutions. How can new measures succeed where past attempts failed? What caused the 1998 convention to not be successful and what factors prevented the creation of a unified military force that, presumably, could step in where local policing of terrorist activity failed?

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What aspects of terrorist and counterterrorist activity have changed since the 1998 convention was passed?
- What has my state done in its attempts to suppress terrorism? Have these attempts been successful?
- What have other states done to suppress terrorism and have they been successful?
- To what extent does state sovereignty play a role in counterterrorist activity in the region?
- How has my state engaged with other Arab League member states to combat terrorism in the region, and how can they do so in the future? What unique advantage or resource can your member state bring to the table to combat threats of violent extremism and terrorist groups?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the League support its members in suppressing terrorism beyond what the current convention allows?

² "Terrorist Attacks by Region in 2014". Statista. 2017. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/489581/terrorist-attacks-by-region/>

³ Michael Bröning. "The All Arab Army?" *Foreign Affairs*. 2015. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/persian-gulf/2015-04-07/all-arab-army>

- Are there any clauses in the 1998 convention that do not accurately reflect the needs of member states trying to suppress terrorism that can be updated?
- How should the League respond to states outside the League interfering with member states' activities in suppressing terrorism?

IV. Additional Resources

- [1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism](#)

This is a copy of the 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. It is important to look over the Convention in order to get a better understanding of all that is included in the document and to see where it may need improvements.

- [Global Terrorism Database](#)

The Global Terrorism Database is an open source database with information on terrorist events from 1970-2016. Founded in 2001 at the University of Maryland, it provides information on over 170,000 terrorist attacks around the world.

- [Counterterrorism Topic Overview by the Rand Corporation](#)

Rand Corporation is a nonprofit institution that publishes research and analysis to improve policy and decision-making. Its page on Counterterrorism presents different ideas and analysis of counterterrorism.

- [U.S Department of State Country Reports on MENA](#)

The US State Department Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism writes a country report each year. This gives a brief overview of most member states' counter terrorism tactics and attacks faced in 2015.

Topic II: Establishing a Charter-compliant framework and protocol for the resolution of inter-Arab conflicts, particularly in light of recent diplomatic disputes.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Article five of the Arab League Charter focuses on conflict resolution between member states.⁴ In summary, the article sets guidelines for states within the League to settle disputes in front of a neutral council in order to avoid an escalation of the conflict. However, the general consensus as to the efficacy of conflict resolution between member states is mixed.^{5,6} The clause lacks specifics and has not been recently updated, and therefore fails to create a meaningful conflict remediation process. While most international organizations have intricate security frameworks for preventing and mediating conflicts in their charters, the Arab League Charter does not have specific guidelines for mediating these crises. Their frameworks include a process for bringing the dispute to the body, a process for multilateral discussions, peacekeeping military forces and a body to make the decision. While the League has used many of these tactics in resolving conflicts, there is no specified process listed in the Charter to aid in the mediation of conflicts.

B. History in the Arab World

The Arab League has a long history of implementing diverse methods to achieve conflict resolution. These methods are usually not found in the Charter and have achieved varying levels of success. For example, in 1961, Iraq invaded Kuwait for the first time and Britain intervened by placing troops between the two forces. An agreement was made that Iraq would recognize the territorial borders of Kuwait if British forces left. In response to this, the Arab League was supposed to deploy a peacekeeping force of 3,000-3,500 Arab Troops. However, only about 2,300 troops were actually deployed.⁷ Another example of an attempt at conflict resolution occurred after a 2009 football match in Sudan between Algeria and Egypt. Shortly after the match, fights erupted between the supporters of the two teams, and several government officials from both countries were involved. This led to an increase in tensions between Algeria and Egypt that were not resolved. The Arab League attempted to bring the two sides to the table; however, no formal discussions were held.

The lack of definition of mediation in the Charter is the largest gap to maintaining peace in the region. This Council should look at ways in which to update the definition to include how to bring disputes to the League and who or which council should be in charge of looking over them.

⁴ Charter of the League of Arab States. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp

⁵ Ambassador Hesham Youssef. "Mediation and Conflict Resolution in the Arab World" 2013. <https://ifsh.de/file-CORE/documents/yearbook/english/13/Youssef-en.pdf>.

⁶ Dr. Nader Nasur et al. "The Failure of the Arab League in Solving Inter-State Disputes." *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*. Vol. 22 No. I. (2017).

http://www.bjournal.co.uk/volume/paper/BJASS_22_1/BJASS_22_01_02.pdf

⁷ Youssef. Conflict Resolution.

Most recently, in June 2017, several Arab States including Saudi Arabia and the UAE cut ties with Qatar because of allegations that Qatar provided funding to terrorist operations. This dispute, termed the Gulf Crisis, has seen little in the way of League-wide conflict resolution. While Kuwait has stepped forward as the primary mediator of the situation, a more long-term solution is critical to the longevity of the League.

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

The League has, in the past, deployed peacekeeping troops as a means to deescalate situations. However, it is up to the Council to decide if such actions are compliant with the Charter or determine that historical precedent is sufficient to allow further deployments of peacekeeping Arab troops. Conflict resolution by the League has, so far, been done on a case-by-case basis with little effort made to create a standard operating procedure for the League to follow in future conflicts.

The goal of a resolution for this topic should be to find a way for the Arab League to successfully create a more peaceful region by creating a generally agreed upon and effective means to reduce regional tension and solve conflicts. The resolution should seek to maintain an impartial view of all situations. It is imperative that the Council seek to create a neutral process so both sides may be fairly considered, but also protects all those living within the conflict zone. This Council should also consider if the frameworks and protocols decided upon by the body will be the same for all inter-Arab conflicts that may arise, whether it be political, sectarian, etc.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What methods of conflict resolution have been successful between member states in the past?
- Can successful methods of conflict resolution be transferred to other regions of the world?
- What political, cultural, or economic factors play a role in conflicts in the Arab region?
- What types of conflict most often manifest in inter-Arab conflicts?
- How involved should the League be in mediating conflicts?
- What have other organizations done to decrease the role bias plays in conflict resolution?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What constitutes a conflict that the League should get involved in?
- What standards must be met for the League to consider a conflict sufficiently resolved?

- What conflict/resolution methods are available to the League in compliance with the Charter?
- What is an appropriate response by the League in the event that one or more parties of the conflict ignore the proposed solution?
- What methods should the League use as a means to resolve a conflict?

IV. Additional Resources

[The UN Peace Promise](#)

The UN Peace Promise is a list of agreements made in order to commit to both conflict resolution and maintaining humanitarian aid. It lists 5 overall commitments with varying commitments with the overall purpose of preventing escalation and protecting humans.

[African Union Peace Building Capabilities](#)

This paper published by CSIS discusses the conflict management policies and capabilities the African Union has used. It may be helpful in identifying similar policies the Arab League can use.

[Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation](#)

Stanford's Center on International Conflict and Negotiation contains research and analysis on conflict resolution across the world. It may prove helpful in finding new strategies and methods to incorporate into a League-wide strategy for Conflict Resolution.

[Mediation and Conflict Resolution in the Arab World](#)

This document by Hesham Youssef provides a look into the pitfalls of the Charter when it comes to mediation. It provides some examples of mediation by the Arab League and some suggestions for providing a stronger mediation process.

Topic III: Evaluating the potential need for Charter reform as it pertains to continued Arab League security, cohesion, effectiveness, and relevance

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The Arab League was founded in 1945 with six Member States and has since grown to include 22 member states. Over the 77 years that the League has existed, much has changed. States and economies have grown, governments have changed and crises have erupted across the Arab world. In looking at all of the changes that have occurred, it is important for the League to reexamine the Charter in order to make sure it maintains its relevance and effectiveness in the coming years.

The Arab League was founded on the principles of Pan-Arabism⁸, the belief that a shared identity transcends national and political boundaries. However, since the creation of the League, cohesion and unity have eluded it. The reasons for this are vast and varied, not the least of which is the socio-economic shifts. Still, the League's mission, "to draw closer the relations between member States and coordinate their political activities with the aim of realizing a close collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries" marches on and as the region and the world changes, so must the League.⁹

B. History in the Arab World

The Charter of the Arab League was signed on March 22, 1945. Since 1945, the League has sought to maintain its mission and vision to strengthen relations between member-states coordinate policies to safeguard the independence of each nation. While the League has been successful in maintaining some peace in the region and the international community, in recent years, it has not been as successful in mitigating the crises that have spread across the Arab World. Member states have been struck by crisis internally and externally; many members have struggled with citizen uprisings, civil war and terrorism. While these are some of the most prominent issues, member states have also suffered weakened economic systems, accusations of human rights violations, and increasing charges of lack of ability to come together as a region and keep its citizens safe. These are all issues that the League pledged it would settle; however, the Charter does not provide a sufficient definition of how it should precede in these situations. The League has proposed amendments to the Charter in the past. On March 28, 2015, the League convened and discussed a range of topics, including amendments to several articles.¹⁰

⁸ Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergei. "The Arab League." *Council on Foreign Relations*. (2014). <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/arab-league>

⁹ Arab League Charter. Article 2. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp

¹⁰ "League of Arab States Discusses Proposed Amendments to its Charter." Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. March 19, 2015. Accessed September 3, 2017. <http://www.cihrs.org/?p=14811&lan=en>

C. Solutions to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

While the League's mediation and resolution of crises is certainly one of the larger missing pieces from the Charter, this topic also focuses on other areas in which the League can strengthen itself among its member states and in the international community. The League might review and possibly expand the Charter through developing a definition of the responsibilities of each of the councils created in the Charter; a definition of how the League should secure the region from the further crises and from international intervention; and a framework of how the League should act and work with other international and regional organizations. The council may also choose to discuss the permanent placement of a Human Rights Council as part of the Charter, in conjunction with the Arab Charter on Human Rights.¹¹ The Charter lacks responses to each of the current issues that the Arab League faces. This council may decide to explore ways to make the Charter more relevant to what is occurring currently within the region.

Having identified the areas in which the Charter is lacking definition and explanation, it is the charge of this council to decide the most prominent areas that should be strengthened and present resolutions on how to update the Charter and what it might state. Delegates should try to look beyond the limits placed on the League when it started and to include all areas in which the Charter could be improved. Delegates should consult the areas that have been of most success to the League to date and begin to expand on them. Each should look at areas that can be specified or broadened in order to produce a stronger and more effective Charter. The conclusion of this council's time should result in strong evaluations of the Charter and should produce a more cohesive, effective, and relevant Charter.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How does the League's Charter differ from that of other international organizations?
- What previous attempts have been made to improve the League's charter?
- What are the Charter's strongest and weakest areas?
- What is the League's mission, and in what ways does the Charter reflect that mission? Could it be clearer?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What areas of the Charter are still relevant in the MENA region today?
- What can be done to the Charter, if anything, that will make the League more effective?
- What should the Charter look like to help increase Arab cooperation in the areas of security, cohesion, effectiveness, and relevance?

¹¹ "University of Minnesota Human Rights Library." University of Minnesota. Accessed August 22, 2017. <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instreet/loas2005.html>.

IV. Additional Resources

[Arab League Charter](#)

The Charter itself should be read thoroughly in order to have an understanding of where it stands currently. Read each of its Articles and Annexes thoroughly and look for areas that need improvement.

[Arab League Reform in 2008](#)

This article by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace provides a look into reforms made at the 2008 Arab League Summit in Tunis. While the reforms were not properly put into effect, they serve as a place to begin looking and factoring into ways the League could explore reform.

[A New and Improved Arab League](#)

This article by the Brookings Institute provides a look into how the Arab League responded successfully to the Arab Spring. Its affective handling of the situation at the time may provide insight into what it could be doing now.

[2015 Proposed Amendments to the Arab League Charter](#)

This document provides amendments to the Charter that were discussed in March of 2015.

Topic IV: Countering Iranian interference in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, and formulating methods to combat its destabilizing role in those areas.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The relationship between Iran and many member states is a complicated one that traces back for decades. While sectarian differences do play a role in the rocky relationship, the continued obstacles between member states and Iran are complex and growing. Iran's actions in the region, its responses to Arab governments' policies, and the differences between culture and heritage all contribute to this convoluted relationship.¹² Many member states are split on their views towards Iran's nuclear program, and that increases tension in the region. While all of these issues attribute to the growing antipathy towards Iran, Iran's interference in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen also supply those feelings.

Since the 1980's, Iran has been a destabilizing power in the MENA region. Many countries have cut diplomatic ties over the years in response to the revolution or Iran's sponsorship of terrorism. In recent years, Iran's influence in the region has spread. Iran supported the creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon,¹³ interfered in the 2014 Yemen civil war, the Syrian civil war, and Iraqi war. While these are only a few of the Iranian interferences that have been used to destabilize and control the region, they are some of the more prominent ones for the League to discuss. Iran's interference in these conflicts has caused the governments in each of these states to be destabilized and has interfered with the health and welfare of their citizens. Iranian efforts to supply weapons and support for dangerous regimes has threatened the wellbeing of citizens throughout the Arab World.

B. History in the Arab World

Much of Iran's intervention in these conflicts begins with its support of terrorism. Iran has long been a supporter of Hezbollah and other prominent terrorist groups in the region. It played a key role in Hezbollah's birth in 1982; however, its role was not confirmed until recently. In 2016, Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the Hezbollah, admitted that all of their financing and arms come from Iran. This was the first time that Hezbollah publicly confirmed the role of Iran's support¹⁴. Iranian security and intelligence services have advised and assisted the Assad regime and the Syrian government's military since 2011, in addition to providing essential military supplies. In

¹² Zogby, James, Elizabeth Zogby, and Sarah Zogby. "Looking at Iran: How 20 Arab and Muslim Nationals View Iran and Its Politics." 2012. Accessed September 04, 2017.

¹³ Emile Hokayem. "Iran and Lebanon." US Institute of Peace (2015). <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-lebanon>

¹⁴ Majid Rafizadeh. "In first, Hezbollah confirms all financial support comes from Iran." English.alarabiya.net. June 25, 2016. Accessed August 17, 2017. <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/2016/06/25/In-first-Hezbollah-s-Nasrallah-confirms-all-financial-support-comes-from-Iran.html>.

addition, Iran has supported Hezbollah's actions and military support in Syria.¹⁵ Iran has provided crowd control gear, Internet surveillance technology, and deployed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Forces (IRGC) to help in preserving Assad's power. In 2015, it was reported that 4,000-5,000 Hezbollah advisors and fighters were there in addition to 3,000 Iranian IRGC troops.¹⁶ Their involvements in Syria led to their involvement in Iraq due to their desire to gain access to Bagdad and continue the flow of weapons and personnel into the country.

Iran has been heavily involved in Iraq since the invasion in 2003. The nation used the US invasion as an opportunity to infiltrate Iraq and create a more pro-Iranian Iraq. It began with the Iranian backed Badr Organization in Iraq. Badr was a violent militant group supporting the overthrow of the Iraqi government; it eventually became a political party in the current government but still maintains its militant arm.¹⁷ The organization is now a powerful force in Iraq and has been accused of summarily executing people and burning the homes of Sunni Muslims in Iraq. However, the organization is currently ingratiating itself to the government as a political party by helping the government in its fight against Daesh. In addition to the Badr Organization, IRGC forces are currently in Iraq aiding in the fight against Daesh in Mosul.

Iran is no stranger to seeking opportunity to undermine, destabilize and interfere with countries in the Arab League, and its latest project is Yemen. It has been reported that Iran is sending advanced weapons and military advisers to Yemen's Houthi movement. IRGC and Hezbollah forces were sent in order to advise and provide support to the Houthis in raids against the Saudi Arabian coalition leading to the deaths of some of their commanders.¹⁸

C. Solutions to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

When addressing this topic, delegates must consider a multitude of factors that influence the Arab League's relationship with Iran. Delegates must recognize the threat Iran poses to states it has already interfered with, as well as the threat of those interferences in other member states. The League needs to decide the best way to combat the role of Iran in each state, as well as preventative measures in order to secure other member states. The council should prioritize addressing Iran's involvement and influence in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen first, as their governments are continuously undermined by Iran. Delegates should seek resolutions to defend against and prevent these actions in order to protect the citizens of these countries. It is the charge of this council to write resolutions that protect all member states and to come to the aid of those whose sovereignty is in question.

¹⁵ Will Fulton, Joseph Holliday, and Sam Wyer, "Iranian Strategy in Syria." Institute for the Study of War. May 2013. Accessed August 17, 2017. <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/iranian-strategy-syria>.

¹⁶ Ali Afoneh and Michael Eisenstadt. "Iranian Casualties in Syria and the Strategic Logic of Intervention." Iranian Casualties in Syria and the Strategic Logic of Intervention - The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. March 11, 2016. Accessed August 17, 2017. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iranian-casualties-in-syria-and-the-strategic-logic-of-intervention>.

¹⁷ Susannah George. "Breaking Badr." Foreign Policy (2014). <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/breaking-badr/>

¹⁸ Joshua Koontz. "Iran's Growing Casualty Count in Yemen." War on the Rocks. June 03, 2017. Accessed August 17, 2017. <https://warontherocks.com/2017/06/irans-growing-casualty-count-in-yemen/>.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is my country's relationship with Iran?
- Does my country have differing positions on Iran from those in the Arab League?
- Does my country have diplomatic or economic relations with Iran?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What non-violent methods are available for member states to counter Iranian interference in the region?
- How should the League respond, in general, to Iran and its destabilizing nature?
- What can be done about Iranian interference in Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria?

IV. Additional Resources

[Iran Dominates in Iraq](#)

This article gives an interesting background into the way Iran has become a major supporter and influence in Iraq.

[An overview of Iran and Lebanon](#)

This is a time line of Iran's interference in Lebanon through Hezbollah. The United States Institute of Peace gives an overview, background, and birth of Hezbollah and Iran's ties to it.

[An overview of the Houthi rebels in Yemen](#)

The United States Institute of Peace provides a history of the Houthi movement and the role they have played in both past and present history of Yemen.