



2019-2020

**Model Arab league
BACKGROUND GUIDE
Joint Defense Council**

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



Original draft by Fatima Ahmad, Chair of the Joint Defense Council at the 2020 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 2019-2020 Model Arab League Joint Defense Council. My name is Fatima Ahmad and I am honored to serve as the chair for the Joint Defense Council. I am currently a Pre-Clinical Pharmacy student majoring in Chemistry at Georgia State University. Growing up, I was passionate about two things: Science and Middle Eastern Politics. School has acted as my medium for exploring my enthusiasm for Science. As for politics, MAL has given me the opportunity to find a space to reflect my passions for Middle Eastern Politics while refining my speaking skills, professionalism, and ability to practice diplomacy to my fullest potential. As a Palestinian born in the United States, MAL has also served as a space for me to connect to my roots and relate to the problems that plague the Arab World today. Having competed in MAL since high school and attending six MAL conferences, my experience has allowed me to learn the ins and outs of MAL. So, as excited as I am to see you all compete, I expect nothing less than diligence and hard work. Below, I have prepared for you tips to help you succeed in Arab League:

1. **Understand Your Narrative:** You are no longer an American student with a typically Eurocentric, Orientalist perspective on the Middle East. You are now an ambassador of your assigned Arab country, meaning you should now think like an Arab, debate like an Arab, and provide Arab solutions, no matter how likable or unlikable the stance may be. It's important to put aside your personal opinions, biases, and prejudice and focus on the scope of your represented country.

2. **Preparedness:** If there's one thing a delegate can't hide in his/her performance, its unpreparedness. You can't caucus or negotiate topics you don't fully understand yourself. So, it's exceedingly important that you are well-versed on your topics and have firm, yet flexible solutions in mind. This includes practicing rules of procedure, resolution writing, and public speaking. The months preceding your conference should incorporate rigorous research and practice. I highly recommend you reach out to professionals who specialize in these topics, write a position paper, and hold regular mock conferences with your fellow teammates.

3. **Separate The Person From The Problem:** Maintaining a professional demeanor is one of the hardest skills to master, yet one of the most important. When debate gets heated, it's easy to allow your feelings to take over, but remember, you are competing to find solutions; so, put the League's priorities before yours. However, do not assume that there will not be heated debate. Keep in mind that decisions approved by a two-thirds majority in the JDC are binding to all; thus, heated debate is inevitable. It's about how you handle such intense moments that define you as a diplomat. So, express your perspective in a calm, respectful manner to ensure you don't lose sight of their position or interests.

4. **Reach Out:** If you need help, reach out. I am here to assist you in any way you need! Please do not hesitate to email me with subject heading "JDC MAL" at fahmad5@student.gsu.edu with any questions.

5. **Improvement:** Understand that you have the privilege of competing in MAL. This is a platform for you to practice professionalism, communication skills, and grow as an overall individual.

I am looking forward to chairing future leaders and am certain you each will bring a set of unique ideas and resolutions to the table!

Best wishes,

Fatima Ahmad

Topic I: Assessing the current state of areas of conflict and formulating plans to mitigate the risks of conflict escalation.

I. Introduction To The Topic

A. General Background

For decades, the Arab World has been defined by its strained interactivity between Arab regimes, their civil societies, and the common people, in the scope of basic human rights, dictatorship vs. democracy, and leadership reform. As we look back at impeding events in the Arab World that have led to such conflict, it's easy to recognize a pattern: lack of political initiative. The decade of the 1980s in the Arab World, however, truly signified the opening of conflict, specifically between Arab regimes and civil society.

Since then, the idea that participation of civil society is necessary for country development has grown popular, specifically in the process of reform, good governance, and the rule of law.¹ Such ideas have been expressed through open confrontation, such as an increase of political activism and protests against government regimes. Now, there has been greater awareness of the increasing importance of civil society in assisting governments to push forward the wheel of development. Such acknowledgement has allowed regional reform organizations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the room they need to start growing.

However, many struggle to find successful initiatives made by civil society. The desire for reform by the common man in the Arab world is not always considered a priority by Arab governments.

Societal reform is restrained by Arab governments needing to keep a tight hold on liberalization and modernization, which prevents real progress from being made.² With the foundation of change being held under tight control by Arab governments, it has made conflict escalation inevitable in the Arab World.

¹ https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Articles/safa_handbook.pdf

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/04/why-street-protests-dont-work/360264/>

B. History of The Topic

The Arab world has struggled with resolving conflict for decades, particularly as new states formed after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. A good example of what happens when a crisis is not addressed comes from one of the most historic events in the Arab World; The Crusades. When the Arabs were initially aware of the Crusaders planning to seize Jerusalem in 1099 (first Crusade), they made close to no effort to stop the siege until it was far too late.³ They continued to postpone the issue, convinced it was nothing but a small matter they could easily handle when the time came. This mentality is what led to the killing of thousands of Arabs and the (initial) successful siege of Jerusalem. Today, it is this same mentality that Arab governments have that continues to allow conflict escalation to take place. However, since the Crusades, how have the Arabs learned to help mitigate conflict?

Since the Ottoman Empire collapsed, numerous attempts have been made to try and mitigate conflict escalation. While the typical narrative of Arab history revolves around constant internal corruption, battles, and tribal wars, there is also a history of tradition revolving around bringing peace and arbitration to the Arab world. For example, in Yemen, the Chamber of Commerce works with tribal leaders and community representatives to preserve the capital, Sana'a.⁴ We find other examples of tribal reconciliation all around the Arab world, such as in Jordan and Palestine.⁵ The issue, however, is that tribal codes are not recognized by Arab governments and are considered informal forms of mitigation, thus, making them less of a viable method for the state.

C. Finding A Solution To The Problem: Past, Present, and Future

After analyzing the background of this topic, it is evident that there is a lot of work to be done

³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/the-crusades-an-arab-perspective/>

⁴ Al-Qadha' Wal Solh al- Asha'ri wa Atharahoma ala al Qadha' al- Nizami fi Falastine [The Tribal Judicial Code and Reconciliation and their Impact on the Regular Judiciary in Palestine] 2003

⁵ Informal Justice System: The Rule of Law and Dispute Settlement in Palestine. The National Report on the Results of the Field Research (in Arabic) 2006; available at http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/iol/ar/index.php?action_id=211.

in terms of conflict mitigation. There have been numerous attempts made to halt conflict, yet they've failed almost every time on a national scale. Before we can discuss future solutions, the first step is to formulate a plan for all member states of the League of Arab States to recognize areas of conflict. Today, we continue to have certain member states deny the legitimacy of some conflicts, refusing to provide aid or take the initiative to resolve such conflicts. The Arab League must develop a single, unilateral method for identifying areas of conflict and ensuring all member states follow such method.

Moreover, the Arab World struggles with Arab government's communication with civil society. It's important to close this gap and have peaceful negotiations that could allow for both parties to express themselves. We also find that the Arab World carries a rich history that includes traditional tactics for conflict mitigation, yet they are not implemented in the legal system and affect only small, urban communities. To secure a peaceful future, these traditional methods should be implemented into the legal systems and communicated to the general public. Remember, this topic assesses current conflict areas and formulates plans to risk conflict escalation, so you must keep in mind both aspects of this topic in your solutions and resolution writing.

II. Questions to Consider in your Research

- How could getting the League of Arab States involved in conflict mitigation be positive or negative?
- Given the current state of the Arab World, is conflict mitigation possible?
- Has the country I'm currently representing attempted to mitigate conflict in the past? If yes, did they succeed? And, how? Do they have plans to do so in the future?
- What can we learn from past failures to mitigate conflict?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Will the League of Arab States be assessing current state of conflict themselves? Or will another body be doing so? What steering committees could be assigned to do such research?
- Will states be required to help mitigate conflict?
- Will states be required to recognize all areas of conflict?
- What funding will be used to mitigate conflict?
- How will financial contributions be regulated?
- How will the League ensure that all member states participate and contribute equally?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Between the States of the Arab League, June 17, 1950](#)
- [Arab Charter on Human Rights](#)
- [Aljazeera Middle East News](#)
- <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/tackling-mena-regions-intersecting-conflicts>

Topic II: Developing strategies for League-wide cyber security guidelines and protocols.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Today, when discussing threats against the Arab World, we think of threats correlating to terrorism, corrupt governments, and leaders attacking one another. Although the Arab world is vulnerable regarding these aspects, there is another sector that has little to no attention or media coverage in the Arab World: cybersecurity. When the general community thinks of technological development and the cyber world, we think of western developed countries and their hacking crises. The threat of cyber-attacks, however, does not exclude the Arab World. Growth in the cyber sector in the Arab World has been significant in the past decade, with the regional cyber security market predicted to be worth 9.56 billion USD by 2019.⁶ Dr. Sameh Aboul-Eneim estimates the adoption of digital technology in the Middle East to add up to \$820 billion to regional GDP and create roughly 4 million jobs by 2020.⁷

However, when discussing Cybersecurity, it's important to note that not all Arab states recognize cybersecurity on the same basis. So, before we dive into the history of this topic, it's important to clarify what exactly cybersecurity entails. According to the International Telecommunication Union, cybersecurity "is the collection of tools, policies, security concepts, security safeguards, guidelines, risk management approaches, actions, training, best practices, assurance and technologies that can be used to protect the cyber environment and organization and user's assets. The general security objectives comprise availability, integrity, which may include authenticity and non-repudiation, and confidentiality."⁸ Although this definition seems like a broad, flexible definition, the Arab world begs to differ. The Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence

⁶ <https://www.naseba.com/content-hub/topic/cyber-security-topic/companies-middle-east-highly-vulnerable-cyber-attacks-says-pwc-study/>

⁷ <https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/cybersecurity-challenges-middle-east>

⁸ "Cyber Definitions." CCDCOE, 28 Apr. 2015, ccdcoe.org/cyber-definitions.html.

(CCDCOE) brings attention to this, stating that there is not a single, solid definition of cybersecurity that each state follows.⁹

B. History of the Topic

Cyber-attacks are a fresh threat to the Arab World. There has only just been a sharp uptick in cyber-attacks and hacking activity in the Middle East. As banks, schools, and the technology sector introduce new technology, they face vulnerability against viruses and other cyber threats. As we progress and grow in the technology sector, cyber security is becoming a more widespread and urgent concern, specifically during times of elections. Tunisia, for example, created the Technical Telecommunications Agency (ATT) in 2013 to prepare for their democratic transition in October, 2014.¹⁰ Jordan, in 2014, introduced the Cybercrime Law and Counterterrorism Law after the “Flame” virus spread around the MENA region.¹¹

Throughout all the cyber chaos in the Arab World today, certain countries have become targets. For example, Saudi Arabia has suffered from numerous cyber-attacks which have forced them to spend more on cyber security than any other country in the Middle East.¹² As well as other gulf countries, Saudi Arabia has been a common target due to the motive of most cyber-attacks, which is to hack information for oil and gas leverage.¹³ This tells us that cyber-attacks are not as simple as we may think, with some perhaps stemming from terrorist groups that aim to hack vulnerable and critical sectors in the Arab World.

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

⁹ “Cyber Definitions.” CCDCOE, 28 Apr. 2015, ccdcoe.org/cyber-definitions.html.

¹⁰ https://www.eff.org/pages/crime-speech-how-arab-governments-use-law-silence-expression-online#tn_ba_ckground

¹¹ https://www.eff.org/pages/crime-speech-how-arab-governments-use-law-silence-expression-online#cc_ct

¹² <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1557001/cyber-security-fastest-growing-sector-saudi-arabia>

¹³ “Middle East Cyber Attacks 'Widespread' and Target OT.” Intellectual Property in the Energy Sector, 20 Mar. 2018, www.powerengineeringint.com/articles/2018/03/middle-east-cyber-attacks-widespreadand-target-ot.html.

As mentioned before, the League of Arab States lack a single, concrete definition of cybersecurity and different forms of cyber-attacks that are regularly deployed. It is essential that you draft language for all cybersecurity terms to ensure all member states understand what this topic entails. Next, preventative measures must be taken, especially for newly connected countries that are vulnerable to cyber-attacks and lack the financial means to expand their technology sector.

Trade of information and technology is one way of protecting member states. Each member state has their own tactics used to protect themselves, but this information is not shared. You must formulate a plan to effectively share preventative techniques while continuing to respect each member states' right to protect their information and sovereignty.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Does my country have any cyber terms defined in their own documents and/or legislation?
- Could the League adopt these definitions? If yes, can these definitions be applied to all members of the League?
- Has my country attempted to address cybersecurity issues? Have they placed preventative measures in the past? If yes, have they succeeded?
- Has my country ever experienced a cyber-attack? If yes, how did they react?

III. Questions A Resolution Might Answer

- Should protecting other member states be mandatory? If yes, what will be implemented to ensure they do so?

- What body will research and collect data on cybersecurity?
- Should any JDC documents adopt the cybersecurity definition?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Cyber Definitions](#)
- [Arab Information and Communication Technologies Organization](#)
- [The Prevention of Information Technology Crimes, Federal Law 2006, UAE](#)
- <https://dam.gcsp.ch/files/2y10Nth6zPq3L46mSmNHjDCHu0dHgIRQpn3vynHt587WqRL4WBwP1ta>

Topic III: Evaluating League-wide defense preparedness with regards to regional security issues such as, border control and weapons trafficking.

I. Introduction To The Topic

A. General Background

The international community has built and continues to maintain a comprehensive set of international treaties, guidance and reporting instruments in the fields of arms transfers and small arms and light weapons (SALW) controls. The international community, however, has to an extent, neglected the Arab World. That said, while the need for a stronger hold on weapon trafficking is present, the willingness of the Arab World to participate in cooperation is rather weak. One reason for this is the difficulty in targeting where most weaponry comes from in the Arab World - such a wide range of arms and arms transfers leads to security challenges.

B. History of the Topic

The Arab World has struggled with border control and weapons trafficking. However, three specific issues have caused the crisis to reach its current extent today; diversion and stockpile leakage in post-conflict settings, the transfer of arms to non-state actors; and significant and ongoing military build-ups by states. Different factors have led to such issues, such as the collapse of government control over military depots, coups that rely on supporting militant groups, and stockpile leakage stemming from illicit sources.

For example, in Libya, the removal of government power during the Arab Spring caused a great shift in weapons trafficking. Prior to 2011, the standards for weapon ownership was low and poorly regulated.¹⁴ Libya had the highest citizen-gun ownership rates in the Arab world and provided illicit weaponry to its neighboring states. Such weapon violations led to embargoes being placed on

¹⁴ https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/libya/libya_2011

Libya. However in the current civil crisis, many Arab and non-Arab countries regularly violate weaponry regulations to support the various warring factions' initiatives.¹⁵ Such escalation illustrates how poor border control has not been able to prevent illicit weapons from entering neighboring states.

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

With current civil crises and rebel uprisings in the Arab World, control of weaponry and border control is more important than ever. It's necessary that we separate government power from weapon control. Once a government has collapsed, the ability to regulate illicit weaponry generally ends. One solution to this issue would be to create an Arab League committee, independent of any government power, which would oversee the regulation and trade of weaponry in the event the collapse of an Arab government is imminent. This solution, however, is not that simple. You must develop a strategy that will ensure that this committee would not infringe on member state sovereignty or have ties with rebels.

Moreover, border control remains an issue. Instituting and renewing the League's Military Commission to provide security along borders would allow the League to regulate the weapons crossing the borders.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Has your country previously attempted to stop weapon trafficking? If yes, how? Did they succeed?
- What is my country currently doing to establish stronger border control?
- Are any illicit weapons being transported in/out of my country?

¹⁵ https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/libya-arms-embargo-investigates-uae-violations-190507162028_284.html

III. Questions A Resolution Might Answer

- What funding towards border control would be instituted?
- How will the Military Commission be renewed?
- Will soldiers from member states be placed on border control?
- Will there be punishment for states that actively participate in weapon trafficking?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Aljazeera Middle East News](#)
- https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/bp_1811_att_mena_1.pdf
- <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/93/4/767/3897496&sa=D&ust=1566185920585000&usg=AFQjCNFt1nfzu-CGjfBOumv3ID8OvH>

Topic IV: Protecting member states' maritime trade routes by combating the threat of destruction of ports, vessels, ships, or tankers related to commerce.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region contains great natural resources that support their economies today. Oil and natural gas are some of the most essential resources for the global economy. However, they are only effective if traded and transported safely and effectively. Which is why open and navigable waterways in MENA region are just as important. The Suez Canal, Bab el-Mandeb, and Strait of Hormuz are just a few of the vulnerable chokepoints in the Arab region; their closure would disrupt oil and natural gas for much of the world. It is, however, the Arab World's current hostile political tensions that have begun to threaten ports, vessels, ships, and tankers vulnerable. Since the 20th century, this vulnerability has been increasingly used as leverage during times of war and civil tension.

B. History of the Topic

Although all waterways are important and greatly affected by political tensions, three waterways in the MENA region are at high risk and thus the main targets: the Suez Canal, the Arabian Gulf, and the Gulf of Aden.¹⁶ In the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aden, maritime commerce is threatened by a severe lack of stability in the environment around the waterways. However, this instability is not from natural causes. Rather, the repeated, violent coups, such as in Egypt, have led to intense damage and security issues, specifically when the radical Islamic Brotherhood in 1928 threatened the military government by attacking the canal¹⁷ The Gulf Aden faced similar issues, as the extensive tribal tension in Somalia led to the development of piracy enterprises that target commercial traffic in the Gulf and broader Indian

¹⁶ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/maritime-security-middle-east-and-north-africa-strategic-assessment>

¹⁷ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/60a2/15e5da0882dd043aa411287337f87b58393a.pdf>

Ocean.¹⁸

The Arab World also faces threats from outside sources, such as Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy pose a threat to Gulf shipping around the Arabian Peninsula, including the deployment of advanced ports, submarine warfare against Arab vessels and ships.¹⁹

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

With the MENA regions' current vulnerability against Maritime threats during politically hostile times, there needs to be work done to formulate a unified maritime force to combat piracy and extra-regional threats. The problem is, however, not all member states are able to purchase and dedicate vessels to this issue. Finding funding will be the biggest struggle in combatting maritime threats. Find a funding mechanism that will allow all member states to afford the deployment of maritime vessels will be the biggest obstacle in this topic.

Moreover, most piracy attacks consist of underprivileged youth, because it's easy to purchase ships and recidivism are high. Preventative measures need to be instituted to ensure piracy isn't spreading. This can include research committees, outreach programs, and rehabilitation center for the youth. This topic, more than any other, requires research. You must know your country's geopolitical motives and understand how to navigate them.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Is Piracy an issue in my country? If yes, how severe?
- Has my country attempted to develop better Maritime security? If yes, how?
- Has my country been attacked before? If yes, what was the response?
- Is my country located near a potentially targeted waterway?

¹⁸ <https://qz.com/africa/1287522/somali-piracy-and-armed-robbery-off-the-indian-ocean-doubled-in-2017/>

¹⁹ <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1513>

III. Questions A Resolution Might Answer

- How will Maritime security be funded?
- How will underdeveloped countries be protected?
- What NGOs or outreach programs could be instituted to help the youth?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Scholarly Times Maritime](#)
- https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/140206_maritime_security_shelala_report.pdf
- <http://www.imo.org/en/About/Pages/Default.aspx>