



**2021 - 2022**

# **Model Arab League BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**Joint Defense Council**

[ncusar.org/modelarableague](http://ncusar.org/modelarableague)

**National  
Council  
on US-  
Arab  
Relations**



**Original draft by Anna Scott, Chair of the Joint Defense Council at the 2022 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 2021-2022 Model Arab League Joint Defense Council. My name is Anna Scott, and I am incredibly honored to serve as your chair for this year's council. I am a second year student at Converse University studying History, Political Science, and American Sign Language. This will be my third year participating in the phenomenal opportunity that is Model Arab League, with my previous two years being on the Joint Defense Council as a delegate. This program has provided me with debate skills, leadership abilities, and personal and professional connections that will last a lifetime. Below I have provided some advice that I wish I would have had during my first year on Model Arab League as well as my first year at the National University conference.

1. **Fully immerse yourself in your work.** You have to forget your opinions and prior knowledge as a student and person outside of the League and essentially reprogram your brain. You have to now represent your member state and respective council to the best of your ability and a significant part of that is conducting your research and writing from the perspective of a diplomat.
2. **Have a set schedule for your research.** Set deadlines for yourself, no matter how small, to ensure you have your work completed and proofread by the time the conference rolls around. In the same way that you had to, at one point, test different study methods to figure out what worked best, you have to organize your research in different ways to discover what is the most cohesive for you.
3. **Remain diplomatic no matter what.** One of the best things a delegate can do is establish themselves as a friendly yet firm representative of their member state early on in the conference. Prior to opening, see if there are any other delegates you can get to know on a professional level to more easily form alliances in debate. In addition to the allies your country already has, you have to find other delegates whose ideas inspire you and who you believe will support your ideas in return. Avoid calling member states out by name when contentious topics are discussed, as this will only make them feel attacked and therefore they will be much less likely to sign on to any of your ideas in a working paper.
4. **Understand all perspectives present.** Though there is usually never one uniform opinion on any given topic amongst the League, you must understand where each member state is coming from. Their stances are typically produced from three key factors; wealth, population, and level of conflict within their country. Because these factors vary greatly between states, nobody is always going to agree with you or the body as a whole. Your goal is to come to an agreement that takes into account the needs of individual states and the League as a whole.

I wish you all the best of luck in your preparation, and I look forward to seeing you at NUMAL! If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email me at [aescott003@converse.edu](mailto:aescott003@converse.edu) .

-Anna Scott

## **Topic I: Exploring avenues for the prevention of stockpiling while encouraging the disarmament of chemical and biological weapons in the region.**

### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

Chemical and biological weapons have been increasing substantially both in number and in potency since World War I, provoking uneasiness throughout the globe in a manner similar to nuclear weapons. A chemical weapon is defined as “A chemical agent or toxin, such as mustard gas, lewisite, or sarin, that has been prepared for release on the battlefield or within a civilian population in sufficient concentration to cause widespread illness or death.”<sup>1</sup> Biological warfare, however, can take many different forms that do not involve hazardous chemicals and is a much older form of warfare. The earliest known example of biowarfare is believed to have occurred in the year 1155 in Tortona, Italy. The Emperor at that time, Barbarossa, had human bodies put into water wells to poison anyone who drank from them. Other forms include planting plague victims in opposing forces’ towns to start epidemics, infusing wine with the blood of the seriously ill, and selling the clothes of smallpox patients to unsuspecting buyers.<sup>2</sup>

A more recent, well-known instance of biological weapons is the Anthrax attacks of 2001. Shortly after the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th, Anthrax began showing up in the mail of unknowing news stations and even two U.S. senators. These attacks took the lives of five people and seriously injured seventeen others, and is considered one of the worst biological weapon attacks in history<sup>3</sup>. The impact of COVID-19 in 2020 led many scientists who specialize in chemical and biological weapons to question if a superbug could be created to wipe out entire populations, as rapidly advancing cures for illnesses also create a resistance to treatment. There are currently sixteen countries that are confirmed to have or suspected to have a biological weapons program<sup>4</sup>, many of whom are party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BTWC). Despite this treaty being entered into force in 1975, many countries have taken advantage of the lack of ability to prove if a state has these weapons. This is something to consider in any guidelines formed in response to the topic.

---

1

<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/chemical+weapon#:~:text=chemical%20weapon.%20n.%20A%20chemical%20agent%20or%20toxin%2C,sufficient%20concentration%20to%20cause%20widespread%20illness%20or%20death.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1326439/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/amerithrax-or-anthrax-investigation>

4

<https://www.nti.org/learn/biological/#:~:text=Only%2016%20countries%20plus%20Taiwan%20have%20had%20or,against%20the%20possession%20and%20use%20of%20biological%20weapons.>

## B. History in the Arab World

Chemical and biological weapons are generally included by most states to be Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Egypt in particular is one member state that has pushed for a WMD free zone within the Middle East in addition to requesting that non-parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological Weapons Convention become a party as soon as possible.<sup>5</sup> Israel, on the other hand, has been accused of stalling talks of overall disarmament of WMDs across the region, especially when the 2012 Helsinki conference was postponed due to Israel's refusal to participate. The Arab League has been desperately trying to come to a League-wide agreement in the last decade on how to handle WMDs, as that is critical in creating guidelines for the production and possession of these weapons by member states, but has failed to do so.

Though the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banned the use of chemical and biological weapons, it did not ban their production or stockpiling. This led to the creation of the Biological Weapons Convention, which was an extension of the Geneva Protocol and explicitly banned the "development, production, and stockpiling of" biological weapons.<sup>6</sup> These were both re-enforced and reemphasized with the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, but none of the above have deterred countries from possessing or even using these weapons. In addition to state actors, terrorist groups such as ISIS are suspected of possessing chemical and biological weapons. This is much more dangerous than any country that currently has these weapons, as terrorist groups are not bound by international treaties or conventions nor do they abide by the laws of the country (or countries) in which they are active.

Perhaps the most notable use of chemical weapons within the Arab world has been that of Syria under the Assad regime. Assad acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013, and has since used chemical weapons at least fifty times that the international community is aware of.<sup>7</sup> One of the chemicals that has been used the most is chlorine, an extremely common yet deadly substance that takes the most lethal form in a pale green gas. While chlorine is used in cleaning products and computer chip manufacturing, it was first used as a deadly weapon in World War I and has since been used primarily as a choking agent.<sup>8</sup> The other most commonly used weapon is sarin, a man-made nerve agent. Originally developed in the late 1930s as a pesticide, it has no odor, color, or taste in a liquid form but is more commonly used as a fast-acting gas. When a

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nti.org/gsn/article/arab-league-convene-emergency-meeting-mideast-wmd-free-zone/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/4/6/from-chlorine-to-sarin-chemical-weapons-in-war>

<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.state.gov/pcw-condemns-syrias-repeated-use-of-chemical-weapons/#:~:text=On%20April%2021%2C%2021%20in%20The%20Hague%2C%20the,in%20the%20PCW%20Executive%20Council's%20July%202020%20decision.>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/industrial-chemicals-weapons-chlorine/>

human comes into contact with sarin gas, effects arise immediately and can range from drowsiness and blurred vision to paralysis.<sup>9</sup>

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

Though the ultimate goal in any dialogue on weapons of mass destruction is disarmament, there must first be a strategy in place to avoid conflict. Mentioning member states that possess these weapons by name is not advised unless they have actively used the weapons, particularly if they have used them on civilians. Strategic plans should first and foremost be centered around peacebuilding and peacekeeping by destroying or repurposing these weapons and creating healthy dialogue in areas of conflict. Reinforcing treaties and conventions, while important, have proven to be ineffective in the past and are often a more symbolic than literal gesture.

Considering that these weapons can often be household chemicals repurposed into WMDs, many can have the inverse effect; turning weapons into typical chemicals. This is a very delicate process, however, as removing the harmful agents is much more difficult than creating them. In addition, these weapons cannot be handled in the way that nuclear weapons are; they are their own class of weapons of mass destruction and can serve more alternative purposes than that of nuclear weapons. One avenue that may be beneficial to explore is how these weapons can be studied to provide post-exposure therapy to victims as well as testing what their long-term effects are.<sup>10</sup> One bioweapon that is often not discussed in this topic is opioids, particularly man-made opioids such as fentanyl. Because they are talked about more in a context of drug addiction, their deadliness is not considered as a weapon.

Destroying all chemical and biological weapons is a much more obvious example of how to deter member states from creating or possessing them. In a way that is similar to nuclear weapons both in casualties and environmental effects, states hoard these weapons because they feel threatened or suspect that other countries have them. If there were to be a shining example of a powerful country destroying 100% of their WMDs, other countries would follow suit and create a chain reaction. However, there is a question of how to destroy different classes of things like chemical weapons, and therefore will require assistance from renowned scientists. It may also be beneficial to keep the Council of Environmental Affairs up to date on how these weapons are being handled.

Any possible solution must answer the question, “What does a WMD free world look like?” It is also critical to take into account current victims of chemical and biological weapons,

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/sarin/basics/facts.asp>

<sup>10</sup>

<https://globalbiodefense.com/2020/10/31/drive-redirect-program-seeks-to-develop-countermeasures-against-chemical-threats/>

whether they be victims of direct use in a conflict or weapons testing. Perhaps a plausible solution would involve, in addition to halting all production and use of these weapons, an evaluation on the damage that they have caused to human populations. As previously mentioned, the Council on Environmental Affairs would likely see an overlap of responsibility in this topic and therefore would be a key asset if an assessment of this nature were to be completed.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What is a key difference in chemical and biological weapons that require them to possibly have different solutions?
- What are the factors that led to previous failures in disarmament of all WMDs?
- What is your member state's history with WMDs?
- How can chemical and biological weapons be repurposed to avoid use during conflict or on civilians?
- How did Arab Spring and the conflicts that it exacerbated change attitudes towards WMDs amongst member states?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- How can the Arab League evaluate what member states have WMDs without provoking conflict?
- What tactics of disarmament are worth pursuing and show promising results, and what tactics are too dangerous?
- Would a collaboration with another international organization assist in solving this issue, or does it need to be kept solely within the Arab League?
- How will funding for disarmament or repurposing be sourced?
- How will member states who use WMDs be handled?

## **IV. Additional Resources**

[DRIVE ReDIRECT: Program Seeks to Develop Countermeasures Against Chemical Threats](#)

[World Health Organization Stresses Need for Continued Public Vigilance in Responding to Deliberate Infections](#)

[From chlorine to sarin: Chemical weapons in war](#)

## **Topic II: Devising a League-wide strategy to enhance capabilities in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, with an emphasis on regional security efforts.**

### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

Many conflicts that are ongoing in the world today are the result of decades or even centuries old tensions, usually caused by territorial or religious disputes. The conflict in Ukraine was born out of Russian desire to possess Crimea, something leftover from the USSR era, just as disputes over the South China Sea have its origins in island disputes from centuries ago. These always have to be translated into modern terms, however; the South China Sea as it was seen in 1900 versus in 2021 are two very different perspectives. It is now known that this sea holds plentiful sources of oil in addition to valuable marine life, something China has no reservations about using to their advantage.<sup>11</sup> Beijing has even gone so far as to have man-made islands in this sea used for tourism purposes, something that brings in large amounts of money for the mainland.

When looking for a strategy in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, it is important to consider the origins of the conflicts that have brought the most destruction to the region in question. Once those facts have been researched and documented, only then can a person understand what is necessary to build stability and peace within a country or region. It is critical to acknowledge that peacebuilding and peacekeeping often requires things like humanitarian aid to be sent in, inspections of areas to ensure there are no weapons, and for evaluations to be done to determine the likelihood of the conflict at hand resurfacing.<sup>12</sup> Terrorist groups stand as an opposing force to peace in any country, as their tactics cannot thrive in a society that is politically and economically stable.

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

The Israeli-Palestine conflict is the most talked about issue today, with multiple countries outside of the Arab League seeking an end to the violence. In December of 2020, the United States succumbed to years long pressure from the Alliance for Middle East Peace and created the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act. This piece of legislation is meant to provide monetary aid (approximately 250 billion USD) over a span of five years in order to build peace and begin reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians in addition to supporting the

---

<sup>11</sup>

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/south-china-sea-dispute-brief-history#:~:text=A%20small%20outcropping%20of%20sand%20occasionally%20breaks%20the,Brunei%2C%20China%2C%20Malaysia%2C%20the%20Philippines%2C%20Taiwan%2C%20and%20Vietnam.>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.international-alert.org/what-we-do/what-is-peacebuilding>

Palestinian economy. Much of the peacebuilding is done in a method known as “people to people”, which is meant to start small and eventually grow to decrease territorial tensions.<sup>13</sup>

There has also been a major push for environmental peacebuilding in recent years, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean. So much of this kind of peacebuilding comes down to repurposing resources to build up societies in the MENA region, rather than using them to cause more conflict and destruction. At the 1991 Madrid Conference, the countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Syria met alongside the Palestinian Liberation Organization to discuss various solutions, dividing themselves into five “tracks”. While some of the tracks dealt with issues like refugees, others that dealt with the economy or water supply were the best opportunities for peacebuilding. The solutions founded there contributed heavily to the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles, in which there were calls for cooperation between Israel and Palestine in energy sourcing, water supply, joint projects, and environmental protections.<sup>14</sup>

The worst conflict in the MENA region is inarguably that in Yemen, in which we are seeing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Because the country has many tribes and therefore tribal tensions in addition to foreign interference and non-state actors, it is unlikely that there will ever be a perfect solution. External factors include the funding of non-state actors by fellow Arab League member states, as well as tensions between other states that feed over into what side of the conflict they are on. The goal for peacebuilding has to take these tribes into account, as there is a major push to keep international politics out of small tribes that are already facing their own communal issues. They have their own sets of laws, and therefore may not be willing to comply with across-the-board solutions to the conflict. It is critical to note that they are wary of outsiders and that humanitarian aid may need to be distributed for them to regain trust in their country and in the international community before peace talks are brought forth.<sup>15</sup>

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

With ongoing conflicts in the MENA region spanning from full-blown civil war to general political instability, there is no uniform solution that will fix every issue. However, any solution must put the wellbeing of the people within an area of conflict first. It would be ill-advised to detach the human casualties from the areas in which peacebuilding and peacekeeping are most needed. It would perhaps be beneficial to work in the track method used

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.mei.edu/publications/trilemma-power-aid-and-peacebuilding-israeli-palestinian-context>

<sup>14</sup>

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/environmental-peacebuilding-eastern-mediterranean#:~:text=Almost%2020%20years%20ago%2C%20multilateral%20and%20bilateral%20negotiations,organizations.%20Recent%20studies%20show%20its%20importance%20and%20potential.>

<sup>15</sup>

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/peacebuilding-time-war-tribal-cease-fire-and-de-escalation-mechanisms-yemen>



in 1991 in Madrid, in which a committee is formed for each aspect of peacebuilding that needs work. Whether there were committees of this nature for each area of conflict or if there should only be one for overall conflict management is an important question to consider if this is your solution of choice.

Oftentimes throughout the past two decades, attempts at peacebuilding have been done through a western, liberal lens. This is not an accurate way to manage or end conflicts, as the Arab World is much different than that of Europe or North America. Tribal mediation is one method within the Arab World that has proven to be effective, as so many of the countries within the Arab League have populations in opposing tribes that are unknowingly contributing to a larger conflict. It is also critical to avoid giving a platform to those who seek instability, even if doing so in the name of counterterrorism or peacebuilding. Any solutions must consider not only the economic and humanitarian impact, but an environmental impact as well. This is not to say you must task other councils with these aspects of peacebuilding, but simply find ways of incorporating them into your own ideas.

There would be massive value in attempts to reconstruct the economies of countries and regions that are seeking enhanced peacebuilding and peacekeeping abilities. Though this seems as though it could fit within the purview of the Economic Affairs Council, it is a key part of peacekeeping in the region and therefore must be handled within the Joint Defense Council. Without economic and financial stability, it is unlikely that any solutions formed will have positive lasting effects. Perhaps a fund dedicated to this specific aspect of peacekeeping would be advisable, whether it be through the Arab League as a whole or a specific council. No matter the solution created, bear three things in mind: severity of the conflicts at hand, their origins, and plans to resolve them that have failed in the past.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What are some common themes in conflicts around the globe as well as specifically in the MENA region?
- What is the main factor standing in the way of peacebuilding in Arab League member states?
- How does counterterrorism strategy affect peacekeeping?
- Are there any examples of countries outside of the MENA region who have had successful peacekeeping operations?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- What peacekeeping strategies can be mapped out using modern technology to protect cybersecurity?
- How do peacekeeping and disarmament of WMDs tie together?
- How can different conflicts have similar solutions?
- In what ways can we study the origins of conflicts to prevent future resurgences?

#### **IV. Additional Resources**

[Global Conflict Tracker | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

[Peacebuilding in the Time of War: Tribal Cease-fire and De-escalation Mechanisms in Yemen](#)

[Reinventing Peace in Syria – The Cairo Review of Global Affairs.](#)

### **Topic III: Formulating collective agreements and inter-League norms and rules of engagement regarding the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) among Arab states.**

#### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

##### **A. General Background**

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, more colloquially known as drones, are defined as any aircraft that does not contain a human. Most of these vehicles are operated by humans in control centers on military bases and allow militaries all over the world to complete dangerous missions that would not otherwise be possible or would inflict mass casualties.<sup>16</sup> The concern that many have about the use of UAVs is the possibility of them becoming autonomous, having the ability to act without a human pilot. Much of this is affected by public perspective on artificial intelligence, as well as government cybersecurity measures. The present air exclusion zones are also called into question when UAVs are present, as many of these devices are small enough to have the government flying them argue that they should be permitted.

These devices must also operate differently depending on the environment. Urban landscapes often have so much noise and pollution that the vehicles that must be used there are set up differently than those in rural areas. Common concerns amongst the international community regarding Unmanned Aerial Vehicles is the possibility of unknown surveillance, remote detonation of explosives, transporting illicit substances or objects, and the spread of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons.<sup>17</sup> There is also a question of standardization, as there are hundreds of various UAVs on the international market yet there are very few that have military capabilities.

##### **B. History in the Arab World**

The Middle East currently has a fast-growing market for UAVs, with the vast majority of them being for military use. As of 2019, the market was only worth around \$2.30 billion, whereas it is expected to be at around \$3.95 billion by 2025.<sup>18</sup> It has become impeccably clear that these devices are the future of military technology, but they can serve other critical societal needs as well. UAVs have been used to deliver goods to areas that are otherwise difficult to reach, they are used in agriculture, and even in search and rescue efforts. Because the models vary so greatly, there is no single correct way to use one.

---

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.rand.org/topics/unmanned-aerial-vehicles.html>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR3023.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3023.html)

<sup>18</sup>

<https://www.unmannedairspace.info/latest-news-and-information/middle-east-uav-market-to-reach-usd3-95-billion-by-2025-new-report/#:~:text=“The%20use%20of%20Unmanned%20Aerial%20Vehicles%20%28UAVs%29%20is,infrastructure%20for%20inspection%20and%20cost%20and%20risk%20minimization.>

UAVs are currently banned in Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Kuwait for civilian use, so the military makes up around 82% of the total market. Multiple countries in the Arab World have been importing drones from China, such as Jordan and the UAE, who have also attempted to purchase Predator XP drones from the United States. The UAE was successful in this purchase, creating a deal with General Atomics in 2013 and having them delivered in 2017. The U.S. however modified these drones to prevent them from carrying weapons, in turn causing the UAE to purchase a Chinese equivalent to the model.<sup>19</sup>

Israel is one of the primary drone users in the region, and one of the largest users of armed UAVs at that. A 2017 report indicates that they accounted for approximately 60% of the world UAV exports over a period of thirty years, however the exports have always been listed as unarmed. Despite having a large number of armed drones, most of the total drones possessed are only used for investigative or situational awareness purposes. In addition to UAV technology, Israel also has some of the most sophisticated anti-UAV technology, including the Iron Dome which is a radar system that neutralizes UAV targets from long distances.<sup>20</sup>

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

This topic has the ability to coincide with anything on chemical and biological weapons, as a major concern of many governments within the league is that UAVs can be used to do things like disperse toxic materials. In January of 2021, Iran began drills for domestically produced UAVs, which has raised questions among the international community about what these products will be used for. Because of the likelihood of Iran possessing unreported chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, there is a lack of transparency in most of their military technology.<sup>21</sup> This is something that is important to address in any working paper; the line between disclosing sensitive information and being transparent enough to calm fears of conflict within the international community.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia opened a factory in a partnership with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. The primary goal in the opening was to mimic the American drone, the MQ-1 Predator. This was the model sought after by Jordan and the UAE in attempted deals with the U.S., but they ultimately went with the Chinese model.<sup>22</sup> With so many Arab League member states collaborating with China to obtain new technologies, a new approach would be a push for inter-League production and boosting the Arab UAV market. In addition, familiarizing oneself with the most popular and most useful UAVs will assist in standardization protocols.

---

<sup>19</sup> <https://drones.rusi.org/countries/united-arab-emirates/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://drones.rusi.org/countries/israel/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/1/5/in-pictures-irans-military-holds-first-ever-drone-drill>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.droneacademy-asia.com/post/the-adoption-of-uavs-in-the-middle-east>

Another concern to be addressed is rivalry between member states in who can produce the most advanced UAV technology in the shortest amount of time. Extreme competition can lead to faulty designs as well as dangerous testing methods, which are two outcomes to be considered in any solutions. A database of available military drones would be a helpful resource to create, as there is currently limited information on what countries have what models of weapons and what their primary uses are. In addition, extensive remote pilot training needs to be conducted in all militaries that aim to make UAVs part of their arsenal. Just because these devices are not carrying a pilot or passengers does not mean that there is room for error; remote pilots need to operate with the same level of precision and care that a regular pilot would. In turn, the training is a part of standardization within both individual militaries as well as any collaboration projects in the Arab League.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- How can public opinion often sway the decisions of the government in military matters?
- In what ways does artificial intelligence overlap with UAVs?
- Are there any instances of the use of UAVs by member states that can be used in the creation of guidelines?
- Are there any protocols in place to prevent the capture and use of UAVs by non-state actors?
- What countries have developed anti-UAV technology?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- Is there a model of UAV that would fit military needs without posing inherent threats by simply existing?
- What purposes can UAVs serve that have not yet been explored?
- What are the key factors in properly testing new UAV technology?
- What is the long term goal of UAV production?

## **IV. Additional Resources**

[Armed Drones in the Middle East: RUSI](#)

[Unmanned Aerial Vehicles | RAND](#)

[The Middle East's Game of Drones: The Race to Lethal UAVs and Its Implications for the Region's Security Landscape](#)

## **Topic IV: Assessing the capacity of member states to conduct counter-terrorism operations and combat irregular threats, while formulating cohesive strategies to improve capabilities.**

### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

Perhaps the most prominent threat that has plagued the MENA region for years is terrorism, with various groups creating instability on an international level. Hezbollah is the largest of these groups, with their origins being in the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Their ultimate goal was to establish Shi'i rule in the country, using a combination of terrorist attacks and kidnappings in addition to providing social services to their supporters and members. Going forward past the Lebanese Civil War, their calls started advocating for a form of Islamic democracy in the country. Hezbollah has been a staunch supporter of Syrian involvement in Lebanese politics, as well as a main opponent of Israel. As of today, they are the only militia to ever bring the IDF to a standstill.<sup>23</sup>

There is also a major threat to be found in terrorist groups splitting into new organizations, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Because all of these terrorist groups are fighting state actors as well as one another, it is clear that there is a lack of cohesive goals amongst them. However, there is one thing that a few of them have in common; they are providing communities with resources they otherwise would not have, therefore gaining more power. Fear and control are the two factors central to the influence terrorism holds over Arab League member states that lack stability, and part of this is social protections for their supporters in a similar fashion to gangs.

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

The death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2019 begged the question of what was to happen next in the area occupied by the Islamic State, with a strong possibility of him being turned into a martyr. Former President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Masoud Barzani, advised the rest of the international community to remain strong in the fight against ISIS and to avoid considering al-Baghdadi's death the end of the fight against terrorism. He has also pushed to eliminate the source of terrorism, which is intolerance. Education and encouragement of acceptance and coexistence in addition to regional stability are currently the two factors that prevent resurgences of terrorist groups, something he advocates for.<sup>24</sup>

A major step was taken by the Biden administration in rescinding the designation of Houthi forces in Yemen as a terrorist organization in an attempt to de-escalate the conflict.

---

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hezbollah>

<sup>24</sup> <https://mepc.org/commentary/whats-next-region-following-al-baghdadis-death>

Russia and the United States also increased diplomatic ties with Oman and Qatar, indicating positive reception of the administration's goal of ending the war in Yemen. Much of this goal has to be accomplished within the Arab League, however, because western powers lack internal knowledge and experience in negotiating with non-state actors compared to member states of the League. These non-state actors, such as the Houthis, have begun offering the territories they occupy things like water wells that they need to survive and therefore create a dependency. This dependency must be broken by state-sponsored humanitarian aid.<sup>25</sup>

The Arab Strategy to Combat Terrorism was formed in 1997, but the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism replaced it as a binding document when it was entered into force in 1999. This document, however, has extremely vague points; international human rights law is not referenced, and terrorism isn't defined inherently as violent. During the League's 26th Summit, there was a push to discuss regional stability and counterterrorism tactics that led to a conversation on a Joint Arab Military Force, which was ultimately unsuccessful. There is a lack of uniformity in current tactics, but this does not necessarily mean that the only way to create joint solutions is to have a League-wide military.<sup>26</sup>

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

In June 2021, the United Nations held its second Counterterrorism Week in which it conducted exercises in online and hybrid forms. These exercises involved 147 member countries, showing unity in a way that the Arab League can use in its own organization.<sup>27</sup> This conference lasted three days, and had a pinpoint focus on factors like irregular threats and how to combat terrorism in an age of constantly evolving technology. Technological aspects are especially critical in improving capabilities, including the subjects of other topics such as UAVs. Artificial intelligence, cyberthreats, and new methods of weapons transportation are all topics to be considered in counterterrorism strategy.

An evaluation of the conditions of terrorism hot spots is not an entire solution itself, but it can be a critical part of a broader solution. Factors to include in any possible assessments or evaluations are natural resources, political climate, poverty levels, and condition of territories occupied by known terrorist organizations. Redefining what a terrorist organization is may also be in order, as the distinction between non-state actors and terrorist organizations has been blurred in recent years. These solutions, if implemented, will likely provide accurate estimates of

---

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.mei.edu/publications/houthis-and-limits-diplomacy-yemen>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-5/key-issues/middle-east-and-gulf-region.html>

<sup>27</sup>

<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2021/un-secretary-general-highlights-responsible-use-new-technologies-counter>

what the region can look like and operate as without the constant threat of groups like Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, or the Islamic State.

Over the past seven years, Egypt has made great strides in its domestic counterterrorism operations, particularly witnessing the demise of the Muslim Brotherhood. A major factor in this is that they first stabilized government institutions, providing themselves with a strong network to combat threats. In addition, Egypt was able to source the funding of these terrorist organizations and sever those ties to ensure financial instability, therefore slowly rendering them unable to purchase new weapons or supplies. Other tactics that have made the Egyptian security forces so successful in wiping out terrorism in their country include controlling religious discourse that leads to misinformation, collaboration with religious institutions to promote peace, and increasing their efforts in international anti-extremist projects.<sup>28</sup>

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What countries have had the most successful domestic counterterrorism strategies?
- What is the key difference between a non-state actor and a terrorist organization?
- What are the factors that create and affirm the hold that terrorists have over the regions they occupy?
- How can state-funded terrorism be discussed and solved in a non-contentious solution?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- Is an assessment necessary to further develop solutions?
- Can individual member states create a nation-wide anti-extremism campaign, or does it need to be League-wide?
- What timeline should the League be operating on to create maximum productivity?
- How can the League prepare for a terrorist-free region?

## **IV. Additional Resources**

[The Houthis and the limits of diplomacy in Yemen](#)



[UN Secretary-General highlights responsible use of new technologies in counter-terrorism efforts](#)

[Counter-Terrorism Module 5 Key Issues: Middle East and Gulf Region](#)