



**2022 - 2023**  
**Model Arab League**  
**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**Council on Political Affairs**

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**National  
Council  
on US-  
Arab  
Relations**



**Original draft by Maeve Knepper, Chair of the Council on Political Affairs at the 2023 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations**

Honorable Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2022-2023 Model Arab League season! My name is Maeve Knepper, and I am a senior at the University of Wyoming majoring in Economics and International Studies with a concentration in Africa and the Middle East. I am thrilled to be your chair for the Council on Political Affairs at the National University Model Arab League conference this year, and I can't wait to meet you all in Washington, D.C. this spring. This is my fourth year participating in Model Arab League as both a delegate and chair, and I have especially loved participating at my own regional conference, Rocky Mountain Model Arab League.

I wrote this background guide as a starting point for your research on these topics, and I hope you will find it insightful. I also hope that you will continue your research beyond this guide to learn more about these topics and the ways that they impact the countries you are representing. The most important and also the most difficult aspect of Model Arab League is accurately role-playing a country, but the best way to accomplish this is by knowing as much as possible about each issue. I chose these topics because of their relevance to the Arab world and for their potential for lively debate and impactful resolutions. I hope that throughout your research you will find them as interesting as I have.

Entering this season, my advice to you all is to never be afraid to participate. Even when the nuances of parliamentary procedure or speaking in front of a room full of people seem intimidating, your chairs, upper-secretariat, and fellow delegates will be there to support you. I promise, you will get better through practice, and I encourage you to speak up as much as possible.

If at any point you have questions or would like to contact me, please feel free. My email is [mknepper@uwyo.edu](mailto:mknepper@uwyo.edu). In the meantime, I wish you all a wonderful 2022-2023 Model Arab League season!

All my best,

Maeve Knepper  
Chair, Council on Political Affairs

## **Topic 1: Discussing the relationship between international and local regulators as a means of addressing corruption throughout the Arab League.**

### **I. Introduction to the topic**

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

Corruption is a broadly defined and far-reaching issue in many parts of the world. The widely accepted definition of corruption, including by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the World Bank, is “the abuse of public office for private gain.”<sup>1</sup> However, this definition can also be expanded upon to include any abuse of power, including within private institutions such as schools and businesses. Bribery, fraud, theft, and collusion are all examples of corruption that can exist in the public and private sectors.

Many IGOs distinguish between isolated and systemic corruption. Isolated corruption occurs when “noncorrupt behavior is the norm, and institutions in both the public and private sectors support integrity in public life.”<sup>2</sup> In cases of isolated corruption, fraudulent acts are rare and individual. Systemic corruption occurs when fraudulent acts are “routine in dealings between the public sector and firms or individuals.”<sup>3</sup> Where systemic corruption exists, regardless of whether it is illegal, bribery and fraud are seen as characteristic of dealings with the public sector, whether across the whole government or specific agencies or departments.

Combating corruption worldwide is a massive endeavor for many international and non-governmental organizations in order to alleviate its myriad consequences on the poor and working class.<sup>4</sup> Initiatives include anything from establishing anti-corruption courts (such as in Ukraine), creating data analytics systems to monitor the performance of judges (such as in Kenya), or supporting open and transparent budgets (such as in Mongolia).<sup>5</sup> Combating corruption protects ordinary citizens from the impacts of misdirected funding, environmental degradation, poor governance, and poor economic development that occurs when officials take advantage of money, power, and connections.

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

The most proliferated form of corruption in the Arab world is called “wasta” in Arabic (واسطة) which roughly translates to “influential contacts or connections.” Wasta is the means by which anyone progresses in society. Throughout the Arab world, wasta is both “a common practice and a social norm.”<sup>6</sup> Your family’s connections to people in government, in the private sector, in

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank Group, "Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank," World Bank Group, accessed August 3, 2022, <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/corruptn/cor02.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Group, "Helping Countries," World Bank Group.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Group, "Helping Countries," World Bank Group.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, "Combating Corruption," World Bank, last modified October 19, 2021, accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption>.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, "Combating Corruption," World Bank.

<sup>6</sup> Transparency International, "Wasta: How Personal Connections Are Denying Citizens Opportunities and Basic Services," Transparency International, last modified December 11, 2019, accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/wasta-how-personal-connections-are-denying-citizens-opportunities-services>.

schools, and in hospitals is what secures your ability to obtain jobs, education, and services. As one Arab put it:

Wasta is a way of life. You need wasta to get to work, wasta to get promoted at work, wasta in order to enter certain places, wasta to get you a place at university or even a hospital bed. I expect that even on Judgment Day we will need wasta too.<sup>7</sup>

Transparency International asked people in Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan about their experiences with wasta in addition to their experiences with corruption and bribery. The results showed that about a third of the population used wasta to obtain services, and almost half of the people who used wasta also paid a bribe.<sup>8</sup> Courts and public utilities (such as electricity and water) are two of the most common sectors where wasta occurs.<sup>9</sup> In a region where high unemployment rates, especially youth unemployment rates, are causing increasing levels of frustration amongst citizens, wasta remains a major obstacle to obtaining a job.<sup>10</sup>

Wasta began as a means of managing relations between families, clans, and tribes in the Arab world.<sup>11</sup> Originally, intermediators would facilitate negotiations between leaders of different tribes while preserving family honor.<sup>12</sup> However, wasta has transformed over time from “defusing tribal conflict to acquiring economic benefits.”<sup>13</sup> Moreover, wasta relies primarily on reciprocity to function.<sup>14</sup> Even without a bribe or immediate quid pro quo, the expectation under wasta is that when the beneficiary is asked for a favor, it will be returned.

Wasta exists in every Arab country and in many different sectors. It permeates throughout education, the workforce, in business and private enterprise, in healthcare, and in government. This kind of corruption is difficult to combat using traditional, Western perceptions of corruption due to its embedment in Arab society.

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

Wasta is difficult to combat because even those without connections would use wasta if it was available because of how necessary it is to obtain services throughout the Arab world. “One will frequently find that people (all over the world) blame wasta for all kinds of economic ills but do not hesitate to make use of their own connections when needed.”<sup>15</sup> Ramady also notes that “Western perspective on wasta will probably consider this as a form of corruption, while it is widely perceived as something “natural” and not criminal in most Middle Eastern societies.”<sup>16</sup> In

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<sup>7</sup> Transparency International, "Wasta: How Personal," Transparency International.

<sup>8</sup> Transparency International, "Wasta: How Personal," Transparency International.

<sup>9</sup> Transparency International, "Wasta: How Personal," Transparency International.

<sup>10</sup> Transparency International, "Wasta: How Personal," Transparency International.

<sup>11</sup> Rena Feghali, "Wasta: Connections or Corruption in the Arab World," Nardello & Co., last modified April 2014, accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.nardelloandco.com/insights/wasta-connections-or-corruption-in-the-arab-world/>.

<sup>12</sup> Feghali, "Wasta: Connections," Nardello & Co.

<sup>13</sup> Feghali, "Wasta: Connections," Nardello & Co.

<sup>14</sup> Mohamed A. Ramady, ed., *The Political Economy of Wasta: Use and Abuse of Social Capital Networking* (Springer Publishing, 2016), 8, accessed August 26, 2022, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/bfm%3A978-3-319-22201-1%2F1.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Ramady, *The Political*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Ramady, *The Political*, 9.

other words, the pervasiveness of *wasta* is likely to cause difficulties for IGOs and international NGOs working on anti-corruption efforts throughout the Arab world.

Cultural perceptions surrounding corruption and *wasta* make it especially difficult to combat throughout the Arab world. Lack of coordination and communication between international and local regulators seeking to root out corruption creates inefficiency. That being said, many countries throughout the Arab world are choosing to adopt international best practices regarding anti-corruption efforts.<sup>17</sup> For example, Saudi Arabia's anti-corruption program and its Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) placed significant emphasis on the "benefits of cooperation with international bodies tasked with fighting corruption around the world."<sup>18</sup> The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority began similar cooperation with the UN Development Program and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to combat corruption drawing on best practices globally and "tailored to Kuwait's legal and institutional systems."<sup>19</sup>

Due to the nature of *wasta* in the Arab world, the Arab League must focus on removing the disconnect between local regulators (whether it be NGOs or local authorities) looking to combat corruption and international regulators (IGOs such as the UN or World Bank or large international NGOs) operating in Arab countries. The Arab league is also in a key position to do this as it sits at the nexus of these international and local regulators, allowing it to create policies that address corruption while also adhering to local standards.

## II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are current IGO policies or initiatives addressing corruption in Arab League countries?
- What are the local laws addressing corruption in Arab League countries?
- How prevalent is *wasta* in different Arab League countries?
- Are there certain characteristics of a government or institution that allow *wasta* (or corruption, in general) to be more prevalent?
- What cooperation exists between IGOs and local NGOs in Arab League countries?

## III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- To what extent should foreign intervention be allowed in order to address corruption?
- How can the Arab League better coordinate efforts to prevent corruption across League countries?
- In what ways can the Arab League improve communication between international and local regulators?

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<sup>17</sup> Julia Kim and Adam Vause, "The Need for Anti-corruption Measures in the Middle East," DLA Piper, last modified February 23, 2022, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.dlapiper.com/en/us/insights/publications/2022/02/global-anticorruption-perspective-q1-2022/the-need-for-anti-corruption-measures-in-the-middle-east/>.

<sup>18</sup> Kim and Vause, "The Need," DLA Piper.

<sup>19</sup> Kim and Vause, "The Need," DLA Piper.

- To what extent should the Arab League take into account cultural perceptions of corruption in its anti-corruption efforts?
- What are the roles of local NGOs regarding anti-corruption efforts and how can the Arab League support those NGOs?

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

- [Wasta: Connections or Corruption in the Arab World](#)
- [The Need for Anti-corruption Measures in the Middle East](#)
- [The Political Economy of Wasta: Use and Abuse of Social Capital Networking](#)
- [Wasta: How Personal Connections Are Denying Citizens Opportunities and Basic Services](#)
- [World Bank: Combatting Corruption](#)
- [Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank](#)
- [A Change Management Roadmap for \*Wasta\*-Free Managerial Practices in Arab Organizations](#)
- [Regulation, Trust, and Cronyism in Middle Eastern Societies: The Simple Economics of 'Wasta'](#)
- [League of Arab States: Arab Anti-Corruption Convention](#)
- [A Glance at the Arab Convention to Fight Corruption](#)

## **Topic 2: Exploring the benefits of demilitarized zones throughout the Arab world and additional means of implementing demilitarized zones.**

### **I. Introduction to the topic**

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

Demilitarized zones (DMZs) are common in many conflict areas or other contested borders around the world, the most infamous of which likely being that between North and South Korea at the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. DMZs are defined by the Red Cross as “an area, agreed upon between the parties to an armed conflict, which cannot be occupied or used for military purposes by any party to the conflict.”<sup>20</sup> The Red Cross also lists several conditions that should be agreed upon, either verbally or in writing, in order to establish a DMZ including stipulations that all combatants as well as mobile weapons and mobile military equipment have been evacuated, no hostile use is made of fixed military installations or establishments, no acts of hostility are committed by the authorities or by the population, and all activity linked to the military effort has ceased.<sup>21</sup> Any DMZ agreement should also outline the limits of the DMZ and methods of supervision.

DMZs, also sometimes known as buffer zones, have been used worldwide. Historic examples include the Concert of Europe in the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Switzerland; the Treaty of Versailles in German Rhineland; the Tanggu Truce in Chinese Manchuria; and the Geneva Conference in North and South Vietnam.<sup>22</sup> Buffer zones were also created as a condition of the independence of Norway from Sweden and of several Baltic states from Russia.<sup>23</sup> Current examples include that in Korea as well as the UN buffer zone in Cyprus and in the Sinai Peninsula between Israel and Egypt.<sup>24</sup>

DMZs and buffer zones are argued to slip between the cracks of international law because the land they occupy, by definition, lacks sovereignty.<sup>25</sup> Conceptual frameworks exist that attempt to remedy this, particularly for the sake of the rights of citizens living within DMZs; however, these frameworks are yet to be formally implemented and the regulations governing DMZs often exist on a case-by-case basis.<sup>26</sup>

Despite a lack of unifying legal frameworks, DMZs have many benefits in both the short- and long-term. Besides the initial benefit of instituting a section of territory where a ceasefire is recognized, DMZs can also play a role in facilitating peace processes. In the case of North and South Korea, for example, a border village located in the DMZ has been the site of important

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<sup>20</sup> "How Does Law Protect in War: Demilitarized Zones," International Committee of the Red Cross, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/demilitarized-zones>.

<sup>21</sup> "How Does," International Committee of the Red Cross.

<sup>22</sup> Eian Katz, "Between Here and There: Buffer Zones in International Law," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 84 (2017): 1398, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/uclr84&i=1397>.

<sup>23</sup> Katz, "Between Here," 1398.

<sup>24</sup> Katz, "Between Here," 1398.

<sup>25</sup> Katz, "Between Here," 1398.

<sup>26</sup> Katz, "Between Here," 1398.

summits between the countries' leaders.<sup>27</sup> An important nature sanctuary has even been developed at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>28</sup> DMZs can also facilitate "return to normal" conditions for civilians. In Cyprus, for example, sections of the Green Line are farmed and inhabited, and more than 10,000 people live and work in "Civil Use Areas" located inside the buffer zone.<sup>29</sup> Not only do DMZs provide immediate benefits in facilitating negotiation and a providing a neutral place of mediation, but they can also become origins of peace in the long-term.

## B. History in the Arab World

Several DMZs exist throughout the Arab League or were implemented in order to mitigate conflicts. One of the most successful DMZs was the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), which oversaw the DMZ created between Iraq and Kuwait in the aftermath of the invasion of 1991.<sup>30</sup> The mission operated from 1991 until 2003 and was called a "model United Nations peacekeeping operation."<sup>31</sup>

The 1949 Armistice Agreements signed between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria established a DMZ in the Sinai Peninsula that limited that number of forces that can be placed there by Egypt and is demilitarized to various degrees, especially close to the border with Israel.<sup>32</sup> It was hoped this DMZ would lead to peace treaties, which weren't signed for another thirty years, and it has caused some legal issues regarding civilians living in the DMZ (see Section A); however, it has facilitated the end of the conflict and still acts today as a de facto buffer zone between Egypt and Israel, especially near Gaza.<sup>33</sup>

There are several other DMZs currently active throughout the Arab League. Sudan and South Sudan agreed upon a Safe Demilitarized Border Zone in a June 2011 agreement on border security, though both sides have been accused of violating it.<sup>34</sup> A DMZ also exists along the border of the Golan Heights, which has been highly contested over the course of the Arab-Israeli

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<sup>27</sup> Megan Specia and Tim Wallace, "Inside the Border Village Hosting North and South Korea's Summit," *The New York Times*, last modified April 26, 2018, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/26/world/asia/dmz-kim-moon-meeting.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Lisa M. Brady, "Life in the DMZ: Turning a Diplomatic Failure into an Environmental Success," *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 4 (September 2008): 585, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24916002>.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus: About the Buffer Zone, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://unficyp.unmissions.org/about-buffer-zone>.

<sup>30</sup> "Iraq/Kuwait - UNIKOM - Background," United Nations Peacekeeping, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unikom/background.html>.

<sup>31</sup> "Iraq/Kuwait - UNIKOM," United Nations Peacekeeping.

<sup>32</sup> "1949 Armistice Agreements," *International Law and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, April 21, 2022, 139, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108762670.009>.

<sup>33</sup> "1949 Armistice," 139.

<sup>34</sup> "'Both Sudan and South Sudan Have Troops in the Demilitarized Zone': Report," Dabanga, last modified June 14, 2013, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/both-sudan-and-south-sudan-have-troops-in-the-demilitarized-zone-report>.



conflict.<sup>35</sup> Finally, another DMZ was created between Russian and Turkish troops in the Syrian region of Idlib in 2018.<sup>36</sup>

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

DMZs have a long historical presence throughout the world but also as a means of mitigating conflicts throughout the Arab world. The existence of several DMZs as well as the past successes and failures of several others provide examples of ways that DMZs might further benefit Arab states. For example, conflict and bids for peace in places such as Yemen or Western Sahara could benefit from DMZs as places of ceasefire, mediation, and negotiation. Further debate on the role of DMZs in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the conflict in Syria could also provide new leases on their role in peace processes.

DMZs have not always been successful, however. Violations (e.g., along the Sudan-South Sudan border) and violations of the rights of citizens that live in DMZs are two examples of common problems that the Arab League should address if it is to implement DMZs in the future. Civilians without legal protections are often the most vulnerable if steps are not taken to ensure their rights during the negotiation process.

DMZs are commonly used yet underrated diplomatic tools, and their long presence throughout the Arab world make them suitable for use in current and future conflicts if implemented effectively. The Arab League is well-positioned to manage these DMZs and maximize their diplomatic, political, and security benefits as an organization with contributions from every Arab state. The Arab League can better facilitate UN Peacekeeping forces, communicate with Arab governments and militaries, and standardize best practices for DMZs within the League. Discussion on this topic can cover anything from the advantages and disadvantages of DMZs, analyzing and/or improving their effectiveness throughout the Arab League, best practices for implementation, areas where DMZs may need to be implemented in the Arab League, or addressing political outcomes created from DMZs.

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

- What DMZs exist throughout the Arab League?
- What have been the historical successes and failures of DMZs, not only in the Arab League but around the world?
- Where have DMZs been successful in mitigating peace processes around the world?
- Which conflicts throughout the Arab League could benefit from a DMZ?
- What have been historical best practices for implementation of DMZs?

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<sup>35</sup> Frederic C. Hof, "The Golan Heights: Avoiding an Unforced Error," The Atlantic Council, last modified July 20, 2018, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-golan-heights-avoiding-an-unforced-error/>.

<sup>36</sup> Maria Tsvetkova, "Russia and Turkey Agree to Create Buffer Zone in Syria's Idlib," Reuters, last modified September 17, 2018, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-putin-erdogan-hope/russia-and-turkey-agree-to-create-buffer-zone-in-syrias-idlib-idUSKCN1LX1BU>.

### III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What role should the UN or other foreign actors play in implementing and supervising DMZs?
- What role should the Arab League play in supervising existing or future DMZs?
- Where could Arab League states benefit from the implementation of a DMZ?
- How should the Arab League ensure the rights of civilians in DMZ areas?
- How can the Arab League use existing or future DMZs to facilitate peace processes?

### IV. Additional Resources

- ['Both Sudan and South Sudan Have Troops in the Demilitarized Zone': Report](#)
- [The Golan Heights: Avoiding an Unforced Error](#)
- [How Does Law Protect in War: Demilitarized Zones](#)
- [Iraq/Kuwait - UNIKOM - Background](#)
- [Between Here and There: Buffer Zones in International Law](#)
- [1949 Armistice Agreements](#)
- [Russia and Turkey Agree to Create Buffer Zone in Syria's Idlib](#)
- [Spatialities of Peace Zones](#)

### Topic 3: Exploring avenues to resettle and reintegrate ex-combatants and their affiliates.

#### I. Introduction to the topic

##### A. General Background

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is a process by which ex-combatants are detached from armed groups and reintegrated into society overtime and has the potential to bring greater peace to communities undergoing conflict.<sup>37</sup> DDR, in some instances, has been expanded upon to include other concepts such as reinsertion, repatriation, and resettlement, as well as Community Violence Reduction (CVR) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).<sup>38</sup>

The goal of DDR is to reintegrate ex-combatants because “assisting fighters to gain a foothold in civil society is thought to prevent their return to combat and in the long-run the re-outbreak of war.”<sup>39</sup> While this may seem like a pipe dream, re-settling ex-combatants is vital to sustain a post-conflict society.<sup>40</sup> As noted by Banholzer, “the particular threat arising from ex-combatants comes from their high levels of organization, their familiarity with fighting techniques and weaponry and their willingness and habit to use violence as a mean to reach their aims.”<sup>41</sup> Successfully re-settling ex-combatants and their affiliates (namely spouses and children) is essential to any post-conflict peace process, and DDR programs attempt to do this.

Formal DDR programs primarily focus on three main goals: Taking small arms and other weaponry from ex-combatants; down-sizing or disbanding armed forces; and providing ex-combatants with assistance to support their economic and social reintegration into civil society.<sup>42</sup> DDR programs also focus on the communities receiving ex-combatants, who may resent or ostracize the ex-combatant after suffering during the conflict, by implementing initiatives addressing issues such as poverty or unemployment.<sup>43</sup> Broader issues of identity, the militarization of the society, and economic as well as peace trajectories must be taken into account by DDR programs. DDR programs, though they have been operating under the official name since the 1980s, have had mixed results; however, similar reintegration and resettlement programs without the DDR label have been successful in the past.<sup>44</sup>

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

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<sup>37</sup> Clive Vincent Jachnik, "Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: An Underdeveloped Diplomatic Tool in Yemen," *SIRIUS – Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen* 4, no. 1 (March 31, 2020): 1, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/sirius-2020-1666/html?lang=en>.

<sup>38</sup> Jachnik, "Disarmament, Demobilization," 1.

<sup>39</sup> Lilli Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs Succeed?" (unpublished manuscript, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) / German Development Institute, December 14, 2013), 1, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2367307>.

<sup>40</sup> Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament," 1.

<sup>41</sup> Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament," 2.

<sup>42</sup> Jacqueline Parry and Olga Aymerich, "Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Militarized Society," *Peacebuilding*, March 16, 2022, 1, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21647259.2022.2042982>.

<sup>43</sup> Parry and Aymerich, "Reintegration of Ex-Combatants," 1.

<sup>44</sup> Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament," 2.

DDR, and other resettlement programs, have been used in past post-conflict societies throughout the Arab League and its observer states, especially in Africa. As of 2020 there were 13 peacekeeping operations active globally, many with a DDR component, and half of these operations were in Africa including Western Sahara and the border between Sudan and South Sudan: “For many of them, DDR has proved to be a strong imperative for a timely and efficient implementation of signed peace agreements.”<sup>45</sup> DDR was also implemented in Somalia, Chad, and Eritrea.<sup>46</sup> In other words, successful re-integration of ex-combatants is an important part of post-conflict transitions within countries, and there is evidence of the success of DDR programs.

DDR methods must be implemented in the context of the post-conflict society. As a result, there is no “one size fits all” means of re-integrating ex-combatants. Their adoption and success in several Arab League states bodes well for their implementation in current and future conflicts throughout the Arab world.

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

Several conflicts throughout the Arab League could provide good opportunities for successful DDR opportunities. Conflict in Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Libya, Western Sahara, and Iraq are all examples of where re-integration of ex-combatants is already necessary or could be needed in the future. Significant research has also been conducted on the potential of DDR efforts in a post-ISIL Iraq.<sup>47</sup> Research was also done on the impact of a militarized society on re-integration efforts in Iraq.<sup>48</sup> Negotiations in Libya have also included DDR as an “important peace-building tool” in future agreements.<sup>49</sup> Further studies have analyzed current DDR portfolios and their potential for success in Yemen.<sup>50</sup>

DDR does not just have implications for ex-combatants but for affiliates as well. One of the most pressing humanitarian issues since the collapse of ISIS has been that of the wives and children of ISIS combatants. Currently, 26 camps in Northern Iraq house over 200,000 people, most of whom are the spouses and children of deceased or imprisoned ISIS fighters.<sup>51</sup> While their husbands face justice, many of these women and children have been shunned by their families, stripped of their nationality, and live in limbo in refugee camps across the region.<sup>52</sup> Successful re-integration of the affiliates of ex-combatants or other fighters is important to maintaining peace and stability across the region post-conflict.

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<sup>45</sup> Anatole Ayissi, "Three Decades of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Africa: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead," in *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa* (2020), 141, accessed August 30, 2022, [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7\\_9](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7_9).

<sup>46</sup> Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament," 15.

<sup>47</sup> Jacqueline Parry and Emily Burlinghaus, *Reintegration of Combatants in Iraq after ISIL*, 1, April 2019, accessed August 30, 2022, <https://auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/For%20WEB%20-%20Parry%20et%20al.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Parry and Aymerich, "Reintegration of Ex-Combatants," 1.

<sup>49</sup> "UN, 5+5 JMC Agree on 'Inclusive DDR Process' in Libya," The Libya Update, last modified May 25, 2022, accessed August 30, 2022, <https://libyaupdate.com/un-55-jmc-agree-on-inclusive-ddr-process-in-libya/#:~:text=Williams%20and%20the%20Libyan%20military,the%20readiness%20and%20priorities%20of>.

<sup>50</sup> Jachnik, "Disarmament, Demobilization," 1.

<sup>51</sup> Jason Beaubien, "A Life in Limbo for the Wives and Children of ISIS Fighters," NPR, last modified March 15, 2022, accessed August 30, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2022/03/15/1086488950/a-life-in-limbo-for-the-wives-and-children-of-isis-fighters>.

<sup>52</sup> Beaubien, "A Life," NPR.

With a number of on-going conflicts throughout the Arab world, DDR programs have the potential to make long-lasting contributions to peace processes through efforts to successfully re-integrate ex-combatants and their affiliates. Discussion on this topic can cover a wide variety of topics related to re-integration throughout the Arab League, including the requirements of resettlement, distinguishing between refugees and ex-combatants, and potentially re-instating citizenship to those who lost it as a result of conflict. Discussion can also focus on preventing future re-mobilization of ex-combatants and further developing the receiving communities alongside re-integration processes.

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

- What aspects of DDR (or other re-integration strategies) have been successful and what aspects have failed in past implementations?
- What are the primary needs of ex-combatants being re-integrated into society?
- What kind of psychosocial support do ex-combatants require?
- How are asylum requests for ex-combatants or their affiliates handled by Arab League states?
- How might the Arab League prevent re-mobilization of ex-combatants in a post-conflict society?

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

- Who qualifies as an ex-combatant or an affiliate of an ex-combatant?
- How should the Arab League address refugee camps occupied by affiliates of ex-combatants/ex-fighters, especially those who have been stripped of their nationality?
- Where in the Arab League might DDR or similar programs be helpful in re-integrating ex-combatants?
- What role should the Arab League play in supervising DDR programs throughout the Arab League?
- What elements should be included in a DDR program?

## **IV. Additional Resources**

- [Three Decades of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Africa: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead](#)
- [When Do Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs Succeed?](#)
- [A Life in Limbo for the Wives and Children of ISIS Fighters](#)
- [Health Care and Psychosocial Support for Former Combatants and Families](#)
- [Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: An Underdeveloped Diplomatic Tool in Yemen](#)
- [Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration \(DDR\) after Proxy Wars: Reconceptualizing the Consequences of External Support](#)
- [The Future of Iraq: Is Reintegration Possible?](#)
- [Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Militarized Society](#)

- [Reintegration of Combatants in Iraq after ISIL](#)
- [UN, 5+5 JMC Agree on "Inclusive DDR Process" in Libya](#)

## Topic 4: Examining the impacts of global shortages on Arab League states.

### I. Introduction to the topic

#### A. General Background

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, impacts to the supply chain are deeply felt for a long period of time after the initial shock with shortages of goods being the most common consequence. These shortages can last for weeks or even months after an initial incident. The COVID-19 pandemic has showed the world just how vulnerable it is to the whims of the supply chain. Disruptions to delicate shipping networks can cause delays for months as a result of shipping backlogs, labor shortages, and geopolitical tensions and the Arab world is no exception.<sup>53</sup> The economic costs of the pandemic on the MENA region are estimated at \$227 billion.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the shortages caused by supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic are still being felt across the region.<sup>55</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed several vulnerabilities in the global supply chain; however, it has also given countries an opportunity to reexamine their trade infrastructures and technologies.<sup>56</sup> Many countries will likely trade efficiency for resilience by shortening supply chains, while others may take advantage of new technologies to enhance efficiencies and build resilience at the same time.<sup>57</sup> In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic, for all its disruptions to the global supply chain, is also providing countries with the ability to reassess their vulnerabilities in order to prevent shortages in the future. The COVID-19 pandemic serves as the foremost example of the impact of supply chain shocks and resulting global shortages on countries around the world. However, other disruptions to supply chains, also causing shortages, are of equal importance, and perhaps even greater concern, to the Arab League.

#### B. History in the Arab World

The Suez Canal, passing through Egypt and connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea, is one of the most important trade routes in the world with 12% of global trade and \$1 trillion worth of goods passing through each year.<sup>58</sup> It is also incredibly vulnerable. The large container ship, *Ever Given*, attempted to pass through the Suez Canal in March 2021 but, through a series

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<sup>53</sup> Martin Farrer, "Global Supply Chain Crisis Could Last Another Two Years, Warn Experts," *The Guardian*, last modified December 18, 2021, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/dec/18/global-supply-chain-crisis-could-last-another-two-years-warn-experts>.

<sup>54</sup> Johannes G. Hoogeveen and Gladys Lopez-Acevedo, *Distributional Impacts of COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa Region*, 1, 2021, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36618/9781464817762.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Farrer, "Global Supply," *The Guardian*.

<sup>56</sup> "Middle East Brief: Post Covid-19 Supply Chains," *Economist Intelligence*, last modified September 11, 2020, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.eiu.com/n/middle-east-post-covid-19-supply-chains/>.

<sup>57</sup> "Middle East," *Economist Intelligence*.

<sup>58</sup> New Zealand Embassy in Cairo, "The Importance of the Suez Canal to Global Trade," *New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade*, last modified April 18, 2021, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade/mfat-market-reports/market-reports-middle-east/the-importance-of-the-suez-canal-to-global-trade-18-april-2021/#:~:text=Approximately%2012%25%20of%20global%20trade%20passes%20through%20the%20Suez%20canal,19%2C000%20ships%20utilised%20the%20route>.

of poor maneuvers, became lodged in the canal.<sup>59</sup> What should have been an eleven-hour crossing took several days, and over 400 ships carrying billions of dollars' worth of cargo were blocked from crossing at the chokepoint.<sup>60</sup> The *Ever Given* exposed a major vulnerability in the global supply chain by creating a bottleneck that caused global shortages for months following the incident.<sup>61</sup>

Shortages resulting from the Russia-Ukraine War are also a major threat to stability in the Arab world. Egypt, the most populous Arab country, imports 80% of its wheat from Ukraine and Russia.<sup>62</sup> For a country whose stability rests largely on bread subsidies for its population, this shortage is a major potential threat. Ukraine and Russia also supply 80% of Tunisia's grain and 60% of Lebanon's, in addition to supplying Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, Jordan, and Morocco.<sup>63</sup> In other words, shortages caused by the conflict are threatening the stability of the region as a whole.<sup>64</sup>

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

The COVID-19 pandemic, the incident in the Suez Canal, and the Russia-Ukraine War all provide evidence of the reverberating impact of global supply chains and the consequence of global shortages. This is particularly problematic throughout the Arab world, especially in countries without the infrastructure or technology to better mitigate shortages. The effects of such vulnerabilities on the Arab world are likely to be two-fold: economic instability domestically as a result of shortages and maritime trade insecurity as a result of vulnerabilities throughout Arab League state-controlled waterways.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine War are still being felt across the Arab world. According to the International Monetary Fund, inflation rose to 14.8% across the MENA region in 2021.<sup>65</sup> Coupled with a shortage of basic goods (e.g., bread), the pandemic and the war are likely to cause greater economic and political instability across the region that must be addressed by the Arab League. The Arab League states and particularly high importers of Russian and Ukrainian grain such as Egypt should focus on diversifying their grain imports while also reducing demand in order to accommodate the shortage.<sup>66</sup>

Secondly, the Arab League must address vulnerabilities in maritime trade routes surrounding the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal. The ability of

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<sup>59</sup> "Lessons from the Ever Given," SCOR, last modified June 7, 2022, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.scor.com/en/expert-views/lessons-ever-given#:~:text=Reported%20by%20media%20across%20the,navigation%20can%20become%20a%20chokepoint>.

<sup>60</sup> "Lessons from," SCOR.

<sup>61</sup> Elisabeth Braw, "What the Ever Given Taught the World," Foreign Policy, last modified November 10, 2021, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/11/10/what-the-ever-given-taught-the-world/>.

<sup>62</sup> Natasha Turak, "Russia's War Is Threatening the Middle East's Food Security — Sparking Warnings of Riots, Famine, and Mass Migration," CNBC, last modified April 28, 2022, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/28/russia-ukraine-war-threatens-the-middle-east-s-food-security.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Turak, "Russia's War Is Threatening," CNBC.

<sup>64</sup> Caitlin Welsh, "The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa," Center for Strategic and International Studies, last modified May 18, 2022, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/impact-russias-invasion-ukraine-middle-east-and-north-africa>.

<sup>65</sup> Turak, "Russia's War Is Threatening," CNBC.

<sup>66</sup> Welsh, "The Impact," Center for Strategic and International Studies.



these narrow waterways to become bottlenecks for global trade was made clear by the *Ever Given* incident. This vulnerability has important implications for the Arab world and especially Egypt as major a stakeholder in the trade routes that connect the Indian Ocean with Europe and the Mediterranean. Trade security is vital to preventing global shortages, and given the strategic position of the waterways surrounding the Arab states, there must be an increased focus on securing these trade routes to prevent similar incidents, whether by accident or by the actions of malicious actors, from occurring again.

## II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are the short and long-term impacts of supply chain shocks in the Arab League states?
- How will the Russia-Ukraine war impact future shipments of essential goods, namely grain?
- How can Arab League states better prepare for future shortages? What are their vulnerabilities?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted supply chains thus far?
- How does security of trade routes impact the supply chain?

## III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the Arab League ensure the security of trade routes, especially maritime trade routes?
- How should the Arab League address the grain shortage as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war?
- How should the Arab League better prepare for future global shortages that occur as a result of supply chain shocks?
- How can the Arab League better mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on shortages?
- What are best practices that the Arab League could adopt to prevent the impact of future global shortages?

## IV. Additional Resources

- [What the Ever Given Taught the World](#)
- [COVID-19 Crisis Response in MENA Countries](#)
- [Global Supply Chain Crisis Could Last Another Two Years, Warn Experts](#)
- [Distributional Impacts of COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa Region](#)
- [Lessons from the Ever Given](#)
- [Middle East Brief: Post Covid-19 Supply Chains](#)
- [The Importance of the Suez Canal to Global Trade](#)
- [Russia's War Is Threatening the Middle East's Food Security — Sparking Warnings of Riots, Famine, and Mass Migration](#)
- [The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa](#)