



2022 - 2023

Model Arab League
BACKGROUND GUIDE

Summit of Arab Heads of State

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



Original draft by Mikaela Black, Chair of the Summit of Arab Heads of State 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,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 Summit of Arab Heads of State. My name is Mikaela Black, and I am honored to be serving as your chair for the 2023 National University Model Arab League. I am an International Affairs major at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. This will be my fourth year participating in Model Arab League; I have served as a delegate, chair, and Secretary General in Model Arab League conferences.

The Heads of State is a unique body, with a unique tone and crucial issues to address. As representatives of the leaders of your state themselves, you must consider the person you are embodying, their relationships and priorities, and the specific government they lead. However, because you are the heads of state, you need not be concerned about the views of your home government; this is a uniquely powerful position which can contribute to fruitful debate.

This background guide will provide you with a foundation of knowledge on the topics -- use it as a springboard for your own research. The topics are challenging, and of vital importance to the Arab League. I have no doubts that the debates on these topics will be engaging and passionate, and the solutions you create will be comprehensive. I look forward to meeting you, and to an exciting and successful debate.

Sincerely,

Mikaela Black

Summit of Arab Heads of State

Topic 1: Exploring the preservation of national monuments and historical artifacts during conflict as well as recovering them from other states

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background:

The protection of national monuments and historical artifacts during conflict is of vital importance because of the object's high susceptibility to harm. UNESCO defines cultural heritage, and the related artifacts, as "the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations."¹ World War 2 prompted the international community to codify much of the customary protection that had existed for centuries.² In 1954 the first legal framework was created with the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. This Convention "set rules on how to identify cultural property to be protected, how to mark it (with an internationally recognised emblem – a blue shield), how to register its protection under the Convention, and how to evacuate the property should it be threatened by damage."³ The 1954 Hague Convention states that each state is responsible for safeguarding its own cultural property in the event of an armed attack. "This can be done, for example, by moving such property away from potential or actual military action, or in the case of historical sites, by avoiding placing military objectives near to them."⁴ The Committee for the Red Cross summarizes the role of the aggressor in relation to the international law:

"Parties to an armed conflict are not allowed to direct hostilities against cultural property and must avoid incidental damage to such property... Occupying powers must protect cultural property under their control from theft, pillage or misappropriation. If cultural property is removed from occupied territory for its own protection, it must be returned at the end of hostilities... International law also prohibits the destruction of cultural property as a means of intimidating people under occupation or as a reprisal."

In 1998, Article 8 of the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court established jurisdiction including over the destruction of historic, religious, scientific, or artistic artifacts.⁵ It should be noted, however, that as of March 2016, of the 124 countries that are party to the

¹ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "States Parties," States Parties - UNESCO World Heritage Convention, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/>.

² "Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict," ICRC, October 29, 2010, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/conduct-hostilities/cultural-property/overview-cultural-property.htm>.

³ "Briefing European Parliamentary Research Service," accessed August 15, 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)579081_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI(2016)579081_EN.pdf).

⁴ "Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict," ICRC, October 29, 2010, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/conduct-hostilities/cultural-property/overview-cultural-property.htm>.

⁵ "Briefing European Parliamentary Research Service," accessed August 15, 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)579081_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI(2016)579081_EN.pdf).

Rome Statute, Syria and Iraq are not among them.⁶ Although international law establishes the protection of artifacts, the execution of said protection during conflict is not consistent. UNESCO is one organization which works with governments, museums, and others to monitor compliance and help protect and preserve cultural property. Assistance may also be found with other NGOs such as the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos).⁷

B. History in the Arab World:

Of the twenty-two members of the Arab League, 16 parties have ratified the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and four have accepted the treaty.⁸ However in the last few decades, many artifacts and culturally important sites have been destroyed in the crossfire of regional conflicts or deliberately destroyed by extremist groups, and much of the heritage of the Arab world has come under threat. Between 1990-1991 during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait the National Museum was ransacked and looted, with hundreds of artifacts still not found today. In 2003, with the US invasion of Iraq, about 15,000 artifacts were lost, and only a quarter have been recovered.⁹ In response, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution which banned trafficking cultural objects removed illegally and called for their return.¹⁰ During the 2011 Egyptian uprising, the Egyptian Museum containing 120,000 artifacts was broken into, and in Libya's National Museum a bank vault was looted containing “collection of priceless coins, jewelry and small statues” known as the “treasures of Benghazi.” In 2013, “looters stole or damaged 1,060 of 1,089 objects housed at Egypt’s Mallawi Museum in Minia” and in 2014, the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo closed down, soon after being destroyed by a carb bomb, destroying the museum in an attempt to target a state security bureau.¹¹ The United Nations and other organizations have attempted to curb some of the destruction of cultural artifacts in the Arab world. On 12 February 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution “condemning the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage by terrorists in Iraq and Syria, and the looting and smuggling of heritage artefacts to finance terrorist activities.”¹² And in March 2013, Unesco created a regional training program in Syria, and in 2014 created an Emergency

⁶ “Assembly of States Parties,” International Criminal Court, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/asp>.

⁷ “Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict,” ICRC, October 29, 2010, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/conduct-hostilities/cultural-property/overview-cultural-property.htm>.

⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Center, “Arab States,” UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/arabstates/>.

⁹ Agence France-Presse, “Regional Strife Destroying Historical Arab Treasures,” Al Monitor, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/01/arab-world-heritage-museums-destruction.html>.

¹⁰ “Briefing European Parliamentary Research Service,” accessed August 15, 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)579081_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI(2016)579081_EN.pdf).

¹¹ Agence France-Presse, “Regional Strife Destroying Historical Arab Treasures,” Al Monitor, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/01/arab-world-heritage-museums-destruction.html>.

¹² “Briefing European Parliamentary Research Service,” accessed August 15, 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)579081_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI(2016)579081_EN.pdf).

Response Action Plan (ERAP) for Iraq.¹³ The League continues to struggle with preserving and protecting monuments from destruction in the face of widespread regional unrest.

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

The topic at hand may be divided into two distinct questions: 1) in what ways can the members of the Arab League preserve national monuments and historical artifacts through times of conflict, and 2) how may they recover artifacts from other states lost during conflict or occupation? The body may create mechanisms that can be enacted or triggered when necessary, or create more constant procedures. In addition, the body must determine what qualifies as a national monument or historical artifact – archaeological sites, physical artifacts, natural wonders, historic buildings, art, whole cities, or even cultural heritage including music, poetry, literature, oral histories, or food. In regards to the second question, the body is not required to make as many decisions regarding approach, but must come together about the direction they wish to follow. The body could interpret the task to recover artifacts as to mean from Western countries and former colonial powers, but may also expand to include situations of governance or occupation by terrorist or extremist groups. Overall, Delegates must consider what measures would most effectively protect and retrieve items of significance, and what constitutes national or even regional significance. As always, resolutions and policies created by the committee must be in line with previous Arab League resolutions and agreements on sovereignty.

II. Questions to Consider in your research:

- Has your country already lost valuable art or artifacts? Through theft? Destruction? Poor maintenance?
- How much does your country's economy rely on tourism? Is the preservation of monuments critical to your economy?
- What steps has your country already taken to preserve their monuments and treasures?
- How might your country define cultural artifacts?

III. Questions a resolution might answer:

- Can there be emergency protocols put in place to protect monuments and artifacts of significance?
- How does the league define what is considered an artifact, or what is considered art?

¹³ "Briefing European Parliamentary Research Service," accessed August 15, 2022, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)579081_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/579081/EPRS_BRI(2016)579081_EN.pdf).

- How should ownership of art, artifacts, and monuments be defined? Should there be a league-wide approach at all? Or should it be left up to individual nations?

IV. Additional Resources:

- [World Bank Country Tourism Database](#)
- [Middle East tourism data](#)
- [World Travel and Tourism Council's Middle East Travel and Tourism report](#)
- [Culture and the State](#)
- [Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict](#)
- [Arab States](#)

Topic 2: Establishing league wide protocol for monitoring elections, election standards and preventing electoral fraud

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background:

In order for democracy to govern properly, the integrity of public elections is seminal to ensuring the legitimacy of government. Election observation or monitoring are tools used to follow an election and determine the legitimacy of the results of the process based on how the process was conducted and to combat electoral fraud. Electoral fraud refers to “deceptive or negligent interference with the electoral process that intends to prevent the outcome from reflecting the will of the people.”¹⁴ Election monitoring consists of neutral observers “analyzing election laws, assessing] voter education and registration, and evaluating fairness in campaigns.”¹⁵ A successful and fair election supplemented by election monitoring reports can bolster the legitimacy of the victor. Electoral fraud in new democracies is devastating to the political system, as it “result[s] in instability and an immediate erosion of the new government’s tenuous credibility.”¹⁶ Unfortunately, fraud is most likely to occur in countries where basic freedoms are not met and rights are not guaranteed by struggling democracies.

Operational impediments of the democratic system from electoral fraud results in people being prevented from exercising their political and social rights. “The result is that minorities, people with disabilities, the poor, women and youth may be denied their rights to vote” and when this occurs, “the right to political participation as proclaimed in the UN International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is violated.”¹⁷

Current programs for election monitoring overemphasize the need for monetary resources to be devoted to the problem, while not analyzing the systems through which elections are conducted.¹⁸ Any programs designed to combat electoral fraud has three functions: “deter participants from engaging in fraud; allow for the detection of undeterred fraud; and, provide for mitigation of the harm caused by fraud that has escaped both deterrence and detection efforts.”¹⁹

Article 25 of the ICCPR (1966) provides benchmarks for achieving free and fair democratic elections: 1) periodic elections; 2) universal suffrage; 3) equal suffrage; 4) right to stand for

¹⁴ “Assessing Electoral Fraud White Paper Series Electoral Fraud in ... - IFES,” accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/rlp_electoral_fraud_white_paper_web.pdf.

¹⁵ “Democracy Program.” Democratic Elections and Standards, Monitoring Elections. The Carter Center, n.d. Web.

08 Aug. 2016. <<https://www.cartercenter.org/peace/democracy/>>.

¹⁶ “Assessing Electoral Fraud White Paper Series Electoral Fraud in ... - IFES,” accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/rlp_electoral_fraud_white_paper_web.pdf.

¹⁷ “Assessing Electoral Fraud White Paper Series Electoral Fraud in ... - IFES,” accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/rlp_electoral_fraud_white_paper_web.pdf.

¹⁸ “Assessing Electoral Fraud White Paper Series Electoral Fraud in ... - IFES,” accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/rlp_electoral_fraud_white_paper_web.pdf.

¹⁹ “Assessing Electoral Fraud White Paper Series Electoral Fraud in ... - IFES,” accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/rlp_electoral_fraud_white_paper_web.pdf.

public office; 5) right to vote; 6) secret ballot; 7) genuine elections; and, 8) allowing for the free expression of the will of the people.²⁰ Additionally, in 2005, the United Nations created the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers -- a set of guidelines to assist with election monitoring.²¹ There are various UN entities which provide electoral assistance, including: The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), The Department of Peace Operations (DPO), The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and United Nations Volunteers (UNV).²²

B. History in the Arab World:

Traditionally the Arab League does not exert influence in the elections of its member states, because of the “lack of a specific mandate in the field and to the fact that the member states of the Arab League have historically perceived election observation and assistance as exclusively state domains.”²³ The Charter of the League states in Article 8, “Every member State of the League shall respect the systems of government established in the other States of the League, and shall regard them as the exclusive concerns of those States. Each shall pledge to abstain from any action calculated to change established systems of government.”²⁴ The interpretation of this article has contributed to the lack of action on the part of the League. Any missions only occurred at the request of the member state.

However, in the last two decades, the League has been increasingly involved in conducting election monitoring missions. Most recently, the League has created monitoring councils for the elections of the Egyptian Senate in August 2020, the Egyptian presidential elections in May 2021, Moroccan elections in September 2021, Iraqi parliament elections in October 2021, and Parliamentary elections in Lebanon in May 2022.²⁵

²⁰ “To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.” ICCPR, art. 25 (b).

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

²¹ United Nations. Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers. 27 Oct. 2005. <https://www.ndi.org/files/DoP-ENG.pdf>.

²² “Elections | Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed August 14, 2022, <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>.

²³ “The League of Arab States and the Electoral Gap.”

²⁴ “The League of Arab States and the Electoral Gap.”

²⁵ “Lebanese Parties Jostle for Votes; Arab League to Monitor Elections,” Arab News, March 14, 2022, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2042576/middle-east>, “Arab League to Monitor Egypt's Senate Elections,” EgyptToday, August 9, 2020, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/90577/Arab-League-to-monitor-Egypt-s-Senate-elections>, “Arab League Announces Its Participation in Monitoring Iraqi Elections,” Iraqi News Agency, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://ina.iq/eng/14505-arab-league-announces-its-participation-in-monitoring-iraqi-elections.html>, “Arab League Will Help Monitor the Iraqi Elections,” Al Mayadeen English, October 4, 2021, <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/arab-league-will-help-monitor-the-iraqi-elections>, “Arab League Monitors Egyptian Presidential Polls,” QNA, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2014-05/18/arab-league-monitors-egyptian-presidential-polls>, Safaa Kasraoui, “Arab League: Morocco's Elections Allowed Voters to Freely Fulfil Electoral Duty,” <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/>, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2021/09/344370/arab-league-moroccos-elections-allowed-voters-to-freely-fulfil-electoral-duty>.

Election monitoring related technology has also progressed within Arab League member states. In Egypt and Tunisia, Civil society organizations have been investigating quicker, more effective ways of monitoring elections using text messaging (SMS) since 2013.²⁶

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

In order to create a solution, Delegates must consider the failures of current methods of addressing Electoral Fraud. They must contemplate the various types of assistance that can be provided by international organizations, such as technical assistance, support to creating a conducive environment, organization and conduct of an electoral process, certification/verification, electoral observation, supervision of elections, panels of political and/or electoral experts, coordination of electoral observers, etc.²⁷ They must question in what ways intimidation has affected the results of elections, and how the spread of modern communication and media have created challenges and opportunities. These questions and interests must be balanced with maintaining state sovereignty, as this is a key priority of many member states.

Ultimately, Delegates must also consider the bodies of international law already addressing the issue, how their solutions will coordinate with those pre existing texts, and the new standards of the Arab League will compare with other organizations such as the African Union and the European Union -- and consider if the solution will be comparable to policies practiced in other areas of the world in order to retain legitimacy on the world stage.

II. Questions to Consider in your research:

- Have elections results in your state ever been called into question? Have any of you elections been monitored in the past?
- Are there private organizations in place within my country that have been helpful to our election processes? Would the League of Arab States benefit from considering using some of these processes?
- If there is electoral corruption within my country, what means are most common in committing this fraud?
- How involved should the Arab League be when it comes to individual country's elections?

III. Questions a resolution might answer:

- What standards need to be in place for an election to be considered free and fair?

²⁶ "SMS to Help Monitor Elections in the Arab World," SciDev.Net, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.scidev.net/global/news/sms-monitor-elections-arab-world/>.

²⁷ "Elections | Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs," United Nations (United Nations), accessed August 14, 2022, <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>.

- What are some specific provisions that would help member states prevent electoral fraud?
- Do the proposed solutions comply with sovereignty and other restrictions laid out in the League Charter and other relevant documents?
- How will a protocol work within the various governmental systems of the member states of the League?

IV. Additional Resources:

- National Democratic Institute - Voter Registration in the Middle East and North Africa: Select Case Studies
- United Nations - Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers
- Foreign Policy - How Election Monitors Are Failing
- Assessing Electoral Fraud in New Democracies -- A Basic Conceptual Framework
- International Electoral Standards -- Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections

Topic 3: Evaluating methods by which the League can combat climate change and desertification

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background:

Climate change and desertification pose an important challenge for the global community, but they also threaten the Arab world and its security as well. Changes in the environment put stress on the land and its resources; scarcity leads to the disruption of social systems which causes conflict and competition.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Desertification is “land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas, collectively known as drylands, resulting from many factors, including human activities and climatic variations.”²⁸ Desertification is exacerbated by climate change, as well as contributing to the trend of climate change itself, through changes in vegetation cover and fluxuations in greenhouse gas emissions.. Additionally, it reduces agricultural productivity, therefore negatively affecting the income and exacerbating economic downturns. “The major human drivers of desertification interacting with climate change are expansion of croplands, unsustainable land management practices and increased pressure on land from population and income growth.”²⁹ The cycle of Desertification and climate change contributing to each other continues as the “increasing human pressures on land... reduce[s] the resilience of dryland populations and constrain their adaptive capacities.”³⁰

B. History in the Arab World:

As climate change threatens the planet, the Arab world is increasingly affected by changes in the natural environment. Changes in climate and the accompanying risks threaten gains in development in the Arab region. The Arab region is now the most water-scarce and food-import-dependent region in the world.³¹ The cycles of drought the region has experienced are increasingly severe compared to the rest of the world, and according to the UNDP, the cycles are increasingly “exacerbating the existing challenges of sustainably managing limited natural resources across the Arab Region.”³² According to a report from the

²⁸ “Chapter 3 : Desertification — Special Report on Climate Change” (IPCC), accessed August 15, 2022, <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/chapter-3/>.

²⁹ “Chapter 3 : Desertification — Special Report on Climate Change” (IPCC), accessed August 15, 2022, <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/chapter-3/>.

³⁰ “Chapter 3 : Desertification — Special Report on Climate Change” (IPCC), accessed August 15, 2022, <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/chapter-3/>.

³¹ “Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best Practices and Lessons Learned - World,” ReliefWeb, July 26, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-adaptation-arab-states-best-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

³² “Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best Practices and Lessons Learned - World,” ReliefWeb, July 26, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-adaptation-arab-states-best-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

UNDP, the region's environment is "highly vulnerable to rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and increased risks of floods and droughts"³³

Global temperatures will rise faster in the MENA region than the global average, becoming even more extreme.³⁴ The extreme temperatures lead to extreme droughts and significant decreases in the supply and access of water. This poses a significant threat to economies because 40% of employed Arab citizens work in agriculture-related jobs.³⁵ UNDP projections have shown that by the year 2025 the water supply in the Arab region will be only 15 percent of what it was in 1960.³⁶ A rise in temperature of 2 degrees Celsius will cause a projected 20 to 40 percent decline in rainfall in the MENA region. According to a World Bank report from 2012, "there are now less than 1,000m³ of renewable water resources per person in MENA, as compared to 4,500m³ in East Asia Pacific countries, and 9,000m³ in the United States."³⁷ The impact of the increasing water scarcity on the economy is expected to be 6% to 14% less economic growth by 2050.³⁸

In addition, water scarcity and drought contribute to hurdles of food supply. As supply shrinks and the agriculture sector suffers, prices of food and other agriculture related goods skyrocket. Between 2007 and 2008, the prices of food rose quickly, which contributed to increased instances of riots in the region.³⁹ One study concluded that "The Arab Spring would likely have come one way or another, but the context in which it did is not inconsequential. Global warming may not have caused the Arab Spring, but it may have made it come earlier."⁴⁰

³³ "Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best Practices and Lessons Learned - World," ReliefWeb, July 26, 2018,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-adaptation-arab-states-best-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

³⁴ "A New Plan to Support Action on Climate Change in the Arab World," World Bank (World Bank Group, November 15, 2016),

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/15/a-new-plan-to-support-action-on-climate-change-in-the-arab-world>.

³⁵ "CLIMATE CHANGE: In the Arab World, Building Fridges to Live in an Oven." IRINnews.org. IRIN News, 5 Dec. 2012. Web. <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/96974/climate-change-in-the-arab-world-building-fridges-to-live-in-an-oven>>.

³⁶ "Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best Practices and Lessons Learned - World," ReliefWeb, July 26, 2018,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-adaptation-arab-states-best-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

³⁷ "A New Plan to Support Action on Climate Change in the Arab World," World Bank (World Bank Group, November 15, 2016),

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/15/a-new-plan-to-support-action-on-climate-change-in-the-arab-world>.

³⁸ "A New Plan to Support Action on Climate Change in the Arab World," World Bank (World Bank Group, November 15, 2016),

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/15/a-new-plan-to-support-action-on-climate-change-in-the-arab-world>.

³⁹ "Let Them Eat Baklava." Economist.com. The Economist, 17 Mar. 2012. Web. <<http://www.economist.com/node/21550328>>.

⁴⁰ Werrell, Caitlin E., Francesco Femia, and Anne-Marie Slaughter. "The Arab Spring and Climate Change." Americanprogress.org. Center for American Progress, 28 Feb. 2013. Web.

<<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/02/28/54579/the-arab-spring-and-climate-change/>>.

Climate-related instability is also a source of illegal armed groups who seek to attract young people, increasingly those who are “affected by drought-induced food insecurity and who have limited job prospects” according to the findings of the UNDP.⁴¹

Ultimately, the UNDP and other international organizations have concluded that “climate risks threaten development gains in the Arab Region and will undermine efforts to end poverty and hunger”⁴² and thus is a problem the Arab world must take seriously.

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

Solutions targeting climate change and desertification must promote “the adoption of sustainable land management solutions and contribute to addressing desertification as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change, with co-benefits for poverty eradication and food security among dryland populations.”⁴³ This can be achieved through targeting natural resource management practices, diversified incomes, policy support, and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches designed to improve productivity for the agricultural sector.

Delegates must address the issue of rising food prices and how that contributes to increasing instability. Solutions such as providing food subsidies have been implemented in many states, including Egypt, however the larger portion of government budgets as well as the lack of targeted population makes the policy solution rather ineffective.⁴⁴ Delegates are encouraged to examine existing policy structures in place and focus on their current weaknesses. Hardships stemming from food and water scarcity can be a major source of anger towards the government; delegates must contend with the primary issue of providing for their population.

Every country in the Arab region, aside from Syria, has submitted a climate action plan detailing how to meet in the goals of the Paris Agreement, specifically lowering admissions and focusing on global temperatures.⁴⁵ Delegates must remember to use these plans as a resource.

The World Bank offered the MENA Climate Action Plan, focused on three core areas: “Foster water and food security, Making sure cities are ready to cope with the impacts of climate change, and Lowering the emissions that cause global warming by improving energy efficiency and investing in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, reducing pollution from industry, transport and waste, sequestering carbon from agriculture, and

⁴¹ “Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best Practices and Lessons Learned - World,” ReliefWeb, July 26, 2018,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-adaptation-arab-states-best-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

⁴² “Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best Practices and Lessons Learned - World,” ReliefWeb, July 26, 2018,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-adaptation-arab-states-best-practices-and-lessons-learned>.

⁴³ “Chapter 3 : Desertification — Special Report on Climate Change” (IPCC), accessed August 15, 2022, <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/chapter-3/>.

⁴⁴ “Let Them Eat Baklava.” Economist.com. The Economist, 17 Mar. 2012. Web.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21550328>>.

⁴⁵ “A New Plan to Support Action on Climate Change in the Arab World,” World Bank (World Bank Group, November 15, 2016),

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/15/a-new-plan-to-support-action-on-climate-change-in-the-arab-world>.

investing in agro-forestry and the preservation of forests.”⁴⁶ Considering this plan as well as The World Bank 2012 “Adaption Pyramid Framework”, may provide a basis for discussion and policy ideas targeting the root problem of climate change.

II. Questions to Consider in your research:

- Has your country experienced extreme temperatures, droughts, floods, or other extreme climate events?
- What water resources does your country possess?
- Is your country’s water supply at risk of becoming scarce?
- What food resources do your citizens depend on?
- Is your country’s food grown and produced domestically, or does it depend on other countries for imports?
- Does your country subsidize food? If so, what percentage of your government’s budget is devoted to subsidies?
- Has your country experienced any riots or unrest caused by rising prices of food or other goods?
- How has the productivity of your country’s agricultural sector changed?

III. Questions a resolution might answer:

- How can the League address the scarcity of water and food resources in order to ensure that the citizens of all League member states are able to access clean water and adequate nutrition?
- How can the League prepare itself to be resilient to the negative security implications of rising food prices?
- How can the League focus on building infrastructure that is more resilient to desertification?
- How can the League assist populations that have been displaced due to a lack of resources in their former home?

IV. Additional Resources:

- [Report: Adaptation to a changing climate in the Arab countries](#)
- [Report: The Arab Spring and Climate Change](#)

⁴⁶ “A New Plan to Support Action on Climate Change in the Arab World,” World Bank (World Bank Group, November 15, 2016), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/15/a-new-plan-to-support-action-on-climate-change-in-the-arab-world>.

- Report: Economics of Climate Change in the Arab World
- World Bank fact sheet on Arab climate change
- Climate Change Adaptation in the Arab States: Best practices and lessons learned

Topic 4: Examining factors which contribute to illegal arms flow within and through the Arab League and devising strategies to combat this flow

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background:

The proliferation of weapons bought and sold in states through illicit means is a modern global security threat. Conflicts are perpetuated by the illegal arms trade, economies and socio-economic systems are harmed by them and become dependent on it, and the presence of illegal arms trade contributes to the development of terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, gender violence, piracy, and much more.⁴⁷

Legal arms owned and operated by the state and law enforcement are essential to stable societies, however, illicit arms trade and transfer contributes significantly to the endurance of conflict and the prevalence of crime. Illicit arms transfer or arms trafficking can be defined as “those arms and weaponry possessed, stored, traded, and used in clear violation of national and/or international laws and without official government consent or control; these transfers may involve corrupt government officials acting on their own for personal gain.”⁴⁸ Non-state actors, including illegal gangs and terrorist organizations are pertinent to the flow of illegal arms, however states are the primary manufacturers and suppliers of illicit arms.

International humanitarian law and human rights law are violated in various contexts relating to the use of illegal weapons by non-state actors, specifically criminal and terrorist organizations. The use of such weapons has negative impacts on all social groups, “ranging from deaths, injuries, displacement and psychological harm, to long-term socioeconomic effects on access to health and education, the delivery of humanitarian services, the protection of civilians, and sustainable development.”⁴⁹ As the use of illicit arms becomes easier, respect for international law declines, as the actors in possession of the weapons are not compliant and are not incentivized to be compliant with fundamental international law.⁵⁰

The Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in a briefing to the UN Security Council stated that “the diversion and trafficking in arms... and ammunition [is] ‘a defining factor’ in undermining peace and security.”⁵¹ Arms sales is spurred by the mutual dependence between sellers and buyers, as well as the cycle of arms

⁴⁷ “Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Mine Action (MA).” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52142.htm#

⁴⁸ “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

⁴⁹ “Political Will along with Weapons-Control Management Critical in Stemming Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms, Speakers Tell Security Council,” United Nations (United Nations Press), accessed August 14, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14708.doc.htm>.

⁵⁰ “Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict: A ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0734_arms_availability.pdf.

⁵¹ “Political Will along with Weapons-Control Management Critical in Stemming Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms, Speakers Tell Security Council,” United Nations (United Nations Press), accessed August 14, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14708.doc.htm>.

sales and conflict. Studies have shown that arms sales can often make conflicts more likely.⁵² According to the Arab Center in DC, “The very possession of modern weapons systems encourages their use, particularly by countries that do not have effective parliamentary or public oversight of government decision-making but do have determined autocratic leadership and well-financed, cosseted militaries.”⁵³

Instruments, agreements, and mechanisms at the disposal of states include the Firearms Protocol, the UN program of Action on SALW (2001) as well as the Arms Trade Treaty (2013) which requires States parties to develop national control systems to address trafficking and diversion of weapons.⁵⁴

The prevalence of international illicit arms trade threatens national security, promotes war economy activities, and can be used as a tool for foreign intervention.⁵⁵ Studies have shown that it “deteriorates social stability since it fuels communal and social strife, especially in sectarian, tribal, or ethnic conflicts, which is an underlying cause for most of the Arab civil wars.”⁵⁶

B. History in the Arab World:

Arms flow within the Arab World has been frequently described as a ‘regional arms race.’⁵⁷ The Middle East remains a top destination for world arms exports. Of the top ten arms imports, six are MENA states, including Saudi Arabia at number one, Egypt, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Qatar. Middle East nations collectively spend the highest percentage among regions of the globe on weapons: 4.5 percent of GDP.⁵⁸ From the perspective of the exporters themselves, the Arab world is the ideal market for conducting arms deals; the US, Russia, and China are major exporters of arms to the region.

Before 2011, the majority of illicit arms trade in the MENA region was between specific conflict zones following state-sponsored routes.⁵⁹ This has changed as the rate of illegal arms flow has increased significantly. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) noted that “the volume of international transfers of major arms in 2015-19 was 5.5

⁵² Cato.org, accessed August 14, 2022,

<https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/risky-business-role-arms-sales-us-foreign-policy>.

⁵³ Charles W. Dunne, “The Arms Trade in the MENA Region: Drivers and Dangers,” Arab Center Washington DC, April 20, 2021, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-arms-trade-in-the-mena-region-drivers-and-dangers/>.

⁵⁴ “Political Will along with Weapons-Control Management Critical in Stemming Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms, Speakers Tell Security Council,” United Nations (United Nations Press), accessed August 14, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14708.doc.htm>.

⁵⁵ “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

⁵⁶ “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Charles W. Dunne, “The Arms Trade in the MENA Region: Drivers and Dangers,” Arab Center Washington DC, April 20, 2021, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-arms-trade-in-the-mena-region-drivers-and-dangers/>.

⁵⁸ Charles W. Dunne, “The Arms Trade in the MENA Region: Drivers and Dangers,” Arab Center Washington DC, April 20, 2021, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-arms-trade-in-the-mena-region-drivers-and-dangers/>.

⁵⁹ “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

per cent higher than in 2010-14 and 20 per cent higher than in 2005-2009.”⁶⁰ In 2020 the same report noted that Qatar increased its state sponsored arms import by 631%, Egypt by 212%, Saudi Arabia by 130%, and imports increased by 61% across the region between 2015 and 2019.⁶¹

The increased flow of illegal arms feeds ongoing conflicts. Examples include Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq. The shift in political structure and the disintegration of some states after the Arab Spring in 2011 contributed to this trend.⁶²

Additionally, the increasing involvement of non-state actors, trans-border networks, and global superpowers into regional geopolitics have allowed the illegal arms trade to be a tool for prolonging proxy wars who are provided with arms and funds in the pursuit of political goals.⁶³ States contend with this as well as ensuring the security of their regime. In order to prevent the military establishments of their states from attempting coups, many governments will “cater to the needs, and wants, of their armed forces as a matter of top priority.”⁶⁴ Ultimately, the MENA region’s arms trade sector is one of self-reinforcement.

Sale of illegal arms also threatens human rights, and contributes to the physical power of many autocratic countries. “Moreover, their leaders and governments often have a tendency to use imported weapons and gear against their own citizens or in ruthless conflicts involving high civilian casualties.” Recently, the market for riot control gear has grown significantly; including chemical agents used by states to suppress political protests.⁶⁵ Additionally, the purchase of arms by states as well as violent non-state actors divert limited resources that might otherwise go to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other vital societal needs.⁶⁶

Recently, the Arab League has partnered with the European Union to combat illegal trade of weapons in the Arab member states, specifically Small Arms and Light Weapons.⁶⁷ The League of Arab States has placed a focus on arms trafficking issues, including supporting the UN POA and adopting the Arab Model Law on “Weapons, ammunition and hazardous material” in 2002.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the majority of states in the MENA region do not

⁶⁰ Wezeman, Pieter D.; Fleurant, Aude; Kuimova, Alexandra; Tian, Nan; Wezeman, Siemon T. “Trends in International Arms Transfers.” *United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf.

⁶¹ Wezeman, Pieter D.; Fleurant, Aude; Kuimova, Alexandra; Tian, Nan; Wezeman, Siemon T. “Trends in International Arms Transfers.” *United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2020, https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/fs_2003_at_2019.pdf

⁶² “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

⁶³ “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Charles W. Dunne, “The Arms Trade in the MENA Region: Drivers and Dangers,” Arab Center Washington DC, April 20, 2021, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-arms-trade-in-the-mena-region-drivers-and-dangers/>.

⁶⁵ <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/middle-east-riot-control-system-market>

⁶⁶ Charles W. Dunne, “The Arms Trade in the MENA Region: Drivers and Dangers,” Arab Center Washington DC, April 20, 2021, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-arms-trade-in-the-mena-region-drivers-and-dangers/>.

⁶⁷ “Arab League, EU Stresses Importance of Banning Illegal Arms, Small Weapons,” Kuwait Times, May 23, 2022, <https://www.kuwaittimes.com/arab-league-eu-stresses-importance-of-banning-illegal-arms-small-weapons/>.

⁶⁸ “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen ...,” accessed August 15, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

contribute to the UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA), arguing that a register should include additional information, such as arms holdings and weapons of mass destruction.⁶⁹

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

Delegates should consider resolutions that highlight weaknesses in the current international law regarding illegal arms trade, and ways in which Arab League member states fill those gaps. Any solution must address both state and non-state buyers and sellers of arms. Seeing as the ATT is the most relevant body of international law, criticisms of its weaknesses should play a large role in discussion and any subsequent solutions.

States may consider regional solutions within the League, as well as League wide tactics. States may also look to each other as well as other nations for expertise on the subject as well the sharing of the use of relevant technologies. Delegates may have to determine their priorities regarding which direction they want to take the issue, including directly addressing current international law, or developing multilateral treaties amongst states with the goal of limiting illicit sales or bolstering tracking mechanisms for arms transfers.

II. Questions to Consider in your research:

- Which treaties has your state signed or ratified? If none have been ratified, why not?
- Where in a network of illegal arms trade does your state reside? Is it primarily a buyer or seller?
- Does your state have any legislation or tracking mechanisms for arms transfers?
- Are there any prominent non-state actors in your country who participate in significant illegal arms trade?
- How should state-sanctioned versus illicit arms trade be dealt with?

III. Questions a resolution might answer:

- Is it possible to supplement the existing international law regarding illegal arms trade?
- How can the League halt the cycle of arms trade and conflict?
- How can states promote internal stability through arms trade control?

⁶⁹ Perlo-Freeman, Sam. "Arms Transfer to the Middle East." *United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2009, www.unidir.org/files/medias/pdfs/arms-transfers-to-the-middle-east-sipri-eng-0-170.pdf.

- How can the League negate or reduce the use of arms against civilians or in civilian populated areas?

IV. Additional Resources:

- Arms Transfers and Human Rights: The Impacts on Regions in Conflict
- Arms Transfers to the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons for an Effective Arms Trade Treaty
- Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict

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