



2023 - 2024

Model Arab League BACKGROUND GUIDE

Arab Court of Justice

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



Original draft by Susanna Helms, Chief Justice of the Arab Court of Justice at the 2024 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable Representatives,

I am excited to welcome you to the 2023-2024 Arab Court of Justice. My name is Susanna Helms, and I am incredibly happy to serve as your Chief Justice. I am a senior at Hollins University majoring in International Studies. This will be my fifth year participating in Model Arab League and my second time as a Chief Justice. My experience with ACJ has been illuminating and I look forward to sharing it with you!

The Arab Court of Justice is unlike any other committee and thus presents its own unique challenges and rewards. This committee will undoubtedly allow you to flex your research skills as well as utilize that research when presenting your case. You are able to serve not only as a representative for your country but also as an impartial justice overseeing other cases. One key aspect that sets ACJ apart is that there are strict deadlines to be met before we begin our first session. If your country is bringing a case, then you must turn in your memorial on time so that the opposition can read it and write their counter-memorial.

It is typical for the majority of representatives to be experiencing ACJ for the first time. Do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you have at helmssn@hollins.edu. I wish you the best in your endeavors and look forward to seeing you at NUMAL.

1. The Kingdom of Jordan v. Syria

Regarding drug trafficking activity on the border of Jordan.

In recent years, Jordan has experienced an increase in drug smuggling along its border with Syria. Jordan has also claimed officials within the Syrian government are primarily to blame for the extent of the trade. In May of 2023, Jordan carried out an air strike that destroyed a drug facility in Southern Syria and has not ruled out the threat of similar attacks in the future. Additionally, Jordan has stated the issue is an encroachment on Jordan's sovereignty and influence over the border. Although the Syrian government has made recent pledges to curb drug smuggling, Jordan has expressed concern over the lack of progress. The court will investigate these accusations and determine whether Syria has violated Jordan's sovereignty through these actions.

Resources to Consider:

Abu Sneineh, Mustafa. "Jordan Accuses Syria and Iran of Orchestrating 'Drugs War' Along Border." *Middle East Eye*, 24 May 2023.

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-accuses-syria-iran-drugs-war-orchestrating-along-border>.

Al-Khalidi, Suleiman. "Jordan Strikes Iran-Linked Drugs Factory in Southern Syria - Sources." *Reuters*, 8 May 2023.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-strikes-iran-linked-drugs-factory-southern-syria-sources-2023-05-08/>.

Al-Sharafat, Saud. "The Captagon War: Smuggling on the Jordanian-Syrian Border." *The Washington Institute*, 23 Sept. 2022,

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/captagon-war-smuggling-jordanian-syrian-border>.

2. *The Kingdom of Morocco v. People's Democratic Republic of Algeria*

Regarding Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara.

For decades, the Western Sahara has been the subject of conflict between Morocco and Algeria. In recent years, Morocco's claim over the territory has been strengthened via support by several members of the Arab League as well as nations outside the region such as the United States and France. On the other hand, Algeria supports the Western Sahara's independence movement. Although the current situation has been described as a 'frozen conflict' there is an increase in military activity on both the Moroccan and Algerian borders of the Western Sahara, further emphasizing the importance of the issue. The court will determine whether Algeria's refute of Morocco's claim to the territory is legally founded.

Resources to Consider:

Dworkin, Anthony. "North African Standoff: How the Western Sahara Conflict Is Fuelling

New Tensions between Morocco and Algeria." *ECFR*, 8 Apr. 2022,

<https://ecfr.eu/publication/north-african-standoff-how-the-western-sahara-conflict-is-fuelling-new-tensions-between-morocco-and-algeria/>.

"Taking Up Question of Western Sahara, Some Speakers in Special Decolonization

Committee Call for Urgent Self-Determination Referendum, Voice Concern over

Human Rights Abuses | UN Press." *United Nations Press*, 13 June 2023,

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gacol3370.doc.htm>.

**3. *League of Arab States (represented by Bahrain) v. Unaoil (represented by Yemen)*
*Regarding whether Unaoil's operations within the Arab League have violated international law.***

Investigations in The United Kingdom, Australia, The United States, and more have revealed an extensive case of corruption within the Unaoil company and have resulted in convictions for several executives. Although based in Monaco, Unaoil has operated in many Arab League member states including active conflict zones such as Syria and Yemen. Since 2016, investigative journalism and government inquiry have uncovered many instances of bribery between Unaoil and government officials in Libya, Syria, and the UAE. The court will determine whether Unaoil has violated relevant international law through its bribery and corruption as well as how they may be held accountable for these crimes.

Resources to Consider:

In re KBR, Inc. Secs. Litig., 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 221137 (United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division August 31, 2018, Filed, Entered).

advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=cases&id=urn:contentItem:5T6R-XVM1-FJM6-62WT-00000-00&context=1516831. (Nexus Uni access required)

“The Bribe Factory: The Company That Corrupted the Global Oil Industry.” *Sydney Morning Herald*,

<http://www.theage.com.au/interactive/2016/the-bribe-factory/day-1/the-company-that-bribed-the-world.html>.

4. *Qatar v. United Arab Emirates*

Regarding concerns over the Barakah nuclear power plant.

In 2019, the UAE opened the Barakah nuclear power plant. Since the plans for the plant were announced, Qatar has objected to its construction. In a 2019 letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Qatar voiced concern over the plan because of a potential threat to the environment and stability in the Gulf region. The IAEA declined to intervene in the matter. The UAE has stated they are committed to running the power plant safely but Qatar continues to object. The court will determine whether the Barakah nuclear power plant poses the concern Qatar claims.

Resources to Consider:

De Clercq, Geert. "Exclusive: Qatar Asks IAEA to Intervene over 'Threat' Posed by UAE Nuclear Plant." *Reuters*, 20 Mar. 2019. *www.reuters.com*,

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-emirates-nuclearpower-exclusive-idUSKCN1R120L>.

Sabga, Patricia. "Nuclear Gulf: Experts Sound the Alarm over UAE Nuclear Reactors." *Al Jazeera*, 15 July 2020,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/7/15/nuclear-gulf-experts-sound-the-alarm-over-uae-nuclear-reactors>.

5. *The Republic of Egypt v. The Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (represented by Mauritania)*

Regarding the potential effects of the GERD project on Egypt.

For over a decade, Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has been under construction on The Nile. Throughout that time, Egypt has opposed the dam due to the effect it may have on Egypt's water access. Despite Egypt's concerns, Ethiopia has proceeded with the dam's construction and claimed that Egypt would benefit from it. Although there have been discussions between the two nations regarding the dam, none have ended in an agreement. The court shall consider the potential effects of the GERD and if the project is indeed a threat to Egypt's stability.

Resources to Consider:

Ayefram, Gashaw. "The Nile Dispute: Beyond Water Security." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 19 Jan. 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/88842>.

Mukum Mbaku, John. "The Controversy over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam."

Brookings, 5 Aug. 2020,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-controversy-over-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/>.