2016 - 2017
Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE
Council on Palestinian Affairs

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Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the 2016-2017 Model Arab League season. My name is Jayda Means and I am honored to serve as the Chair of the Council on Palestinian Affairs at Nationals, ARMAL, and SERMAL. I am a Sophomore at Converse College, where I am a History and Political Science double major. This will be my second year participating in the Model Arab League program. During my Freshman year, I learned and had the chance to understand key issues affecting the Arab world, and I have been able to advance and change my perception of what I thought the Arab world was like. The MAL program will help you or continue to challenge the way you think, and to allow you to develop key skills. Participating in MAL simulations improves your analytical, research, public speaking and critical thinking skills. The simulations also give you a skill that will set you apart from the crowd. As a participant, you will be able to present a valid opinion and stand by it, even if you are the only person that has that view. The MAL program allows us to learn about politics, religion, culture, and foreign affairs.

As a participant, you get to experience unique opportunities. There are affordable trips abroad, meeting new friends from different places around the world, and even a chance to be in a documentary. During my first year, I was able to have a camera crew follow my every step during every conference. Although it was a challenging experience, I was able to document my growth a memories of my first year.

The key to success in the MAL program is to prepare for conferences. Research is crucial to your success as a delegate at all conferences. We want this to be a learning experience for all, and in order to do that, we all have to do our part. I encourage everyone to read this background guide, to help you start your research and to gain some basic information about each topic. I also encourage you to not only research your country assignment, but also other countries that will be represented by your fellow delegates. While at conference, I find that it will be beneficial for you to speak as much as possible, and to know the rules of procedure so that debate can move along at an appropriate pace. Participation is key!

With that being said, I want you all to know that I am very excited for this Model Arab League season. My goal is to give you as many tools as possible to help you in any way. Even though this is a competition, I want you all to understand that this is a friendly competition. I encourage you all to come with a positive attitude and to be ready to meet new friends. I can't wait to meet you and hear your ideas. Good luck to you all.

Happy Researching,
Jayda Means

Topic 1: Reviewing current education systems within Palestine, and proposing reforms including, but not limited to, revisions in standardized testing, curriculum standardization, and the promotion of scholarship opportunities

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Since the Palestinian Ministry of Education took control of education policy from Israel in 1994, education in Palestine has been characterized and defined by short-term solutions and contingency planning. Occupation presents a plethora of challenges to education, many of which can only be marginally predicted, if at all. Due to the difficulties of educating children in refugee camps and uncertainty surrounding funding, the Ministry of Education is often unable to formulate long-term strategies that will bring modern, unified education to Palestinian students. Though efforts have been made in the past, these strategies have been rejected because the Ministry "would not be able to mobilize the projected funds, nor have the necessary implementation capacity" to achieve the ambitious goals.[1]

This is not to say that education in Palestine is hopeless; quite to the contrary, youth literacy is over 99%, and primary school enrollment is about 92%.[2] These figures are quite high even by global standards, and reflect a populace that is conducive and receptive to rigorous and high-quality education, in both the traditional and vocational sectors. Unfortunately, "legislation governing the education sector is not uniform, and is generally perceived as inadequate," as responsibilities, standards, and accountability remain inconsistent or unclear.[3] Remedying these obstacles is critical to resolving a number of other maladies in Palestinian society, as with the proper tools, this motivated population will be able to contribute to increased youth employment and greater political stability.

B. History in the Arab World

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Palestinian curricula were subject to Jordanian and Egyptian education policies; shortly thereafter, control was seized by Israel. This persisted until the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education was established in 1994. However, continued academic constraints, frequent and prolonged closures of schools, the banning of

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[1] "Developing Education in Palestine: A Continuing Challenge." *Developing Education in Palestine: A Continuing Challenge*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016. <http://www.unesco.org/education/news_en/131101_palestine.shtml>.
[2] "At a Glance: State of Palestine Statistics." *UNICEF*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016. <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt_statistics.html>.
[3] "The Role and Performance of Palestinian NGOs In Health, Education, and Agriculture." (2006): n. pag. The World Bank Group and The Bisan Center for Research and Development. Web. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/294264-1166525851073/NGOreportDec06.pdf>.

textbooks and educational material, and restrictions imposed during the Intifadas continued to hamper the ability of Palestine's government to implement all of the educational initiatives it sought. Shrinking budgets have further impeded the ability of some schools to effectively follow the national curriculum, despite the Ministry of Education being allotted 20% of the national budget.[4]

But even despite the unique and troubling situation surrounding Palestinian education, the system still faces many of the same debates and challenges of Western schools. One of the main points of contention is the role of the tawjihi, the national exam administered in the 12th grade to all Palestinian students, which more or less determines what professions and fields of study they can study and matriculate into. Some educators and policymakers have expressed a desire to move away from the "rote memorization" and rigid prescriptions of the test, and towards a more holistic, critical and creative thinking approach.[5] Moreover, policymakers also see education reform as an opportunity to resolve the youth unemployment crisis: with nearly half of the Palestinian population below the age of 15, curricula must reflect the changing economy and job market, and better prepare students to enter it.[6]

Still, only six Arab states – mostly in the Gulf – outpaced Palestine in the United Nations' Education Index,[7] a considerable achievement considering Palestine has only had full control of its education system for just over 20 years, and has one of the lowest GDPs in the Arab world. Its high literacy rate and scholastic achievements suggest that with proper funding and increased stability, Palestine is well-suited to produce high-achieving students capable of serving the region in a number of roles.

C. Finding a Solution: Past, Present, Future

As noted, Palestine faces a number of conventional and unconventional challenges in its education policy. Delegates should engage all education sectors – public, private, and international (such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency) – to design improvements and solutions that address the disparate concerns of each. This includes making considerations for funding, content, security, and infrastructure that will improve upon the advancements that have already been made. Moreover, delegates should also consider highlighting the exemplary aspects of Palestinian education, which should first be augmented to ensure those elements continue to yield results, and also to serve as a model for those Arab states that actually lag behind Palestine in these areas.

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[4] Daoud Kuttab, "The man behind the future of education in Palestine," *Al Monitor*, 2 February 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/palestinian-minister-reform-education-sector.html.
[5] "The man behind the future of education in Palestine."
[6] "The man behind the future of education in Palestine."
[7] United Nations, "Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development," 2015, http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Where would the budget for the new educational revisions come from?
- Which countries might be willing to participate in helping develop and implement these new educational reforms?
- Is it possible to use other countries educational system as a model, in order to find the best strategy to implement educational reforms?
- What will be some possible challenges in successfully implementing the standardized curriculum?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the Arab League help rebuild Palestine's educational system?
- Will the resolution affect students who are already in certain academic programs?
- What type of scholarship opportunities will be created, and will they be for a certain school system?
- How will educators be affected?

IV. Additional Resources:

[UNESCO - Developing Education in Palestine: A Continuing Challenge](#)

[UNRWA - Education in the West Bank](#)

[UNRWA - Education in the Gaza Strip](#)

[State of Palestine Ministry of Education and Higher Education](#)

Topic 2: Developing initiatives to increase international awareness of Palestinian statehood with an emphasis on addressing human rights concerns before international bodies

I. Introduction

    A. General Background

Though recent activities in the Arab world, particularly the resurgence of Iranian influence and the rise of Daesh, have detracted attention from the Palestinian issue, the plight of Palestinians has not diminished. Without adequate medical care, housing, and basic necessities, many live in sordid conditions, and find no refuge in local or international government bodies. Refugees flood neighboring countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, having been pushed from their homes by encroaching Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. Much of this can be attributed to Palestinians having very limited self-government, and no official sovereignty as an independent state.

Setting aside the validity of its territorial claims, the Israeli government is responsible for the conditions of the citizens that it governs, including Palestinians. Without question, these conditions are substandard at best for Palestinians, and many would argue that they rise to the level of human rights violations – a claim Palestine has recently pursued in the International Criminal Court. While the Palestinian cause has gained momentum in recent decades, it has yet to achieve the critical mass necessary to alleviate the conditions that have been imposed on countless Palestinians.

    B. History in the Arab World

Since 1948, the *de facto* State of Palestine has been in constant flux, with various parts of its territory at times being under the control of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Syria. However, conventional understanding of a prospective State of Palestine tends to reflect the territory that had been delineated by the 1948 United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. Significant swaths of this territory were seized by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and have been held since; as a result, the territory that Palestine lays claim to is often referred to as the area defined by the 1967 borders.

In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly recognized the State of Palestine as a non-member observer state of the UN, and encouraged the body to support Palestine's petition for full membership, by a vote of 138 in favor, 9 opposed, and 41 abstaining.[8] This represents a 72% support rate for a Palestinian state among United Nations members. However, of the 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council, only China has officially recognized

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[8] General Assembly Resolution 67/L.28, *Status of Palestine in the United Nations*, A/RES/67/L.28, 26 November 2012, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/L.28.

the State of Palestine, severely hindering the viability of Palestinian resolutions in that body. The United States alone has vetoed nearly 40 Security Council resolutions condemning Israeli occupation of Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan, or promoting Palestinian self-determination.[9]

For practical purposes, this suggests that while support for Palestinian statehood is widespread, it is lacking in the most crucial areas, i.e., Western Europe and North America. Moreover, this has often prevented Palestine from raising its grievances in the highest international bodies. Since the 2012 UN resolution, however, Palestine has gained access to some of these bodies, including the International Criminal Court in 2015 and the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016. While this will help to elevate the visibility of Palestine's struggle, it must be met with increased support from the West before significant momentum can be achieved.

C. Finding a Solution: Past, Present, Future

To achieve results that will ease the struggles faced by Palestinians, delegates should take a multifaceted approach. The body should consider the avenues that are already available to Palestinians – particularly as a result of their status as a non-member observer state to the United Nations – that can be accessed and utilized to present and alleviate the problems that plague Palestine. This might include courts, arbitrators, and non-government organizations. These actions should be directed at both raising awareness of Palestinian concerns, as well as formulating an actionable plan to resolve them.

Additionally, there should be a concerted and targeted effort to break down barriers that continue to stand in the way of Palestinian statehood. First, these barriers must be identified and analyzed for the complications they present. Then, delegates must devise a strategy that will most effectively win support for a Palestinian state.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are some initiatives that would provide the best motivation and help for international awareness of Palestinian Statehood?
- What are some initiatives that have been used in the past? Which ones have worked, and which ones have failed?
- What are the specific violations of international human rights laws that need to be addressed?
- What countries will support initiatives to raise awareness for Palestinian statehood?

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[9] United Nations, "Security Council – Veto List," 12 August 2016, http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick.

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Will the resolution help crack down on human rights violations, and if so, how?
- How will the resolution help international bodies recognize Palestine as its own state?
- How can Palestine remedy some of its problems even without full recognition of statehood?

IV. Additional Resources:

International Criminal Court - Report on Preliminary Examination Activities (2015)

Human Rights Watch - Israel/Palestine

Council on Foreign Relations - Palestinian Statehood at the UN

Topic 3: Reassessing the 2002 Arab Peace initiative with particular regard to Clauses 2 and 3 and analyzing the impact of regional regime changes on the peace plan's implementation

I. Introduction

  A. General Background

Considering the longstanding and messy conflict that it seeks to resolve, the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative is almost astounding in its simplicity. In a mere ten clauses, the Arab League – heavily influenced by a proposal from then-Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Sa'ud of Saudi Arabia – laid out the framework for peace between Israel, Palestine, and the Arab world at large.

The most relevant clauses are two and three, which stipulate the terms of the agreement vis à vis Palestine and Israel. Israel would be required to agree to withdraw from all territory it seized and occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (including the Golan Heights and the disputed Sheba'a Farms); comply with UN General Assembly Resolution 194 when addressing matters pertaining to Palestinian refugees; and accept a Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Conversely, the Arab states would agree to enter into a peace agreement with Israel, normalize relations, and ensure that the security of Israel would be maintained and respected.

  B. History in the Arab World

The initial proposal was made in 2002 at the Arab League Summit in Beirut; however, only ten of the 22 heads of state were in attendance, undermining the unanimity of the initiative's support. Still, it represented an important first step in Arab-Israeli reconciliation, and was positively received by much of the international community. President George W. Bush called Prince Abdullah to congratulate him on his proposal, and publically praised Saudi Arabia for offering a path toward full normalization of relations with Israel.[10]

However, the Second Intifada and Israeli resistance to the plan's right of return and 1967 border provisions stalled progress. The API lay dormant until 2007, when the 21 leaders at the Arab League Summit in Riyadh voted unanimously to reaffirm support of the Arab Peace Initiative.[11] This more widespread support, including from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, gave new life to the negotiations. Still, Israel and the United States continued to oppose the border and return clauses; additionally, Hamas leadership refused to endorse a deal that would recognize the

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[10] David Sanger and Serge Schmemann, "Bush Praises Saudi Proposal for Arab Relations with Israel," *The New York Times*, 26 February 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/26/international/middleeast/26CND-MIDEAST.html.

[11] Avi Issacharoff, "Arab States Unanimously Approve Saudi Peace Initiative," *Haaretz*, 28 March 2007, http://www.haaretz.com/news/arab-states-unanimously-approve-saudi-peace-initiative-1.216851.

State of Israel (though some members tempered their opposition by claiming they might reconsider their stance if Israel were to commit to the plan).[12]

Since the 2007 revival, the API has received varying degrees of support from the European Union, Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Obama administration; to a lesser extent, many in the Israeli government have expressed support for the general idea of renewed peace talks, with the aforementioned reservations regarding specific aspects of the API. Public opinion, however, shows an encouraging trend: though "support" can suggest a number of sentiments, polls from as recently as 2014 suggest that a majority of Israeli citizens would be in favor of at least using the Arab Peace Initiative as the basis for further negotiations, with some levels of support reaching as high as 76%.[13] [14]

C. Finding a Solution: Past, Present, Future

While recent developments display encouraging trends for prospects of success, the Arab Peace Initiative has not yet achieved critical mass. Concerns surrounding many of the stipulations remain, even among those who support the deal in principle. The most prominent concerns for Israel are the right of Palestinians to return to Israeli territory – which some fear would comprise an Arab majority and more or less nullify the goal of a Jewish state[15] – and a return to 1967 borders. Groups like Hamas and some Arab states retain reservations of recognizing the State of Israel.

In light of this, delegates should consider which aspects of the plan are not negotiable, and which can be tailored or leveraged to achieve a more agreeable solution. It might be revised to attract greater international support, or to press for better terms for Palestinians. Either way, it appears that the Arab Peace Initiative is at present the most viable basis for successful negotiation of an Arab-Israeli peace, and delegates should find a way to reintroduce it as such.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are my state's particular policies regarding the specific terms of the API?
- Does my state have any diplomatic ties that could be leveraged to create support for the API?
- How have Palestinian, Israeli, and Arab politics changed since 2002 and 2007?

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[12] "Arab States Unanimously Approve Saudi Peace Initiative."
[13] Avika Eldar, "Most Israelis Back Arab Peace Initiative," *Al-Monitor*, 27 May 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/most-israelis-back-arab-peace-initiative.html.
[14] "Poll Shows Increasing Support for Peace by Israeli 'Soft Right,'" *Haaretz*, 28 February 2014, http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.576968.
[15] "Arab Leaders Relaunch Peace Plan," *BBC News*, 28 March 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6501573.stm.

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Does the Arab League still support the API as the best path forward for Palestinian statehood?
- Which clauses in the API are not negotiable? Which can be edited or deleted to accommodate one or more parties?
- What new avenues has UN observer status afforded Palestine in its push for statehood?

IV. Additional Resources:

Arab Peace Initiative Full Text

Reuters - Netanyahu says willing to discuss Arab initiative for peace with Palestinians

Al-Monitor - Poll suggests Israelis could be sold on Arab League Initiative

Topic 4: Evaluating access to healthcare in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and proposing reforms in areas such as hospital infrastructure, third party health clinics, and treatment opportunities in other member states

I. Introduction

    A. General Background

From a structural standpoint, healthcare in Palestine can be broken into four distinct sections: the public sector, the private sector, international aid, and NGOs. Each faces its own challenges in the mission to provide Palestinians with healthcare, and will need to be addressed separately in any resolution.

Broadly, the public healthcare sector in Palestine refers to the Ministry of Health and all organization operating beneath it. This includes the General Directorates for Public Health, Hospitals, Pharmacy, and Health Insurance. The Palestinian government offers public health insurance to all citizens, which allows treatment at Ministry of Health-administered primary and secondary care facilities.

Private sector healthcare in Palestine, while less influential than the public sector, plays an important role in the industry. Staffed largely by public sector employees working out of hours, private clinics are critical as providers of so-called "tertiary care," which includes diagnostic and surgical services.[16] Additionally, the public sector will at times contract private organizations to utilize systems and infrastructure that the public sector does not possess, or that is overwhelmed, particularly during emergency situations.[17]

The nongovernmental organizations that provide healthcare in Palestine, such as ANERA, the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, and Red Crescent provide critical supplies and services that are financed partly through private donations, and partly through Ministry of Health funding. Examples include provision of "technical guidance and cash grants, as well as medical supplies,"[18] expanding and repairing critical water infrastructure,[19] and administering direct medical and EMS care.[20]

Finally, international aid organizations such as United States Agency for International Development and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency For Palestinian Refugees in the

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[16] World Health Organization, *Health System Profile: Palestine*, 2006, http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/documents/s17306e/s17306e.pdf.

[17] *Health Systems Profile: Palestine*.

[18] American Near East Refugee Aid, "Hospital Infrastructure," http://www.anera.org/category/health/hospitals/.

[19] American Near East Refugee Aid, "Water and Sanitation," http://www.anera.org/category/economic-development/water-and-sanitation/.

[20] Palestine Red Crescent Society, "About PRCS," 17 August 2016, https://www.palestinercs.org/en/prcs.php.

Near East provide direct foreign aid to the Palestinian government, in the form of grants and supplies. In 2014, USAID contributed near $117m in aid to Palestine,[21] and UNRWA has set a 2016 aid goal of $403m.[22]

B. History in the Arab World

As with any conflict area, healthcare in Palestine is severely limited in many ways in terms of accessibility and capability. The most prevalent issue relates to mobility: because of the pervasive nature of Israeli checkpoints, as well as the blockade of Gaza, many Palestinians find it difficult to access facilities in neighboring towns.[23] This jeopardizes the health of patients who experience unnecessary and potentially life-threatening delays in their transport to medical facilities.

For those who can access clinics and hospitals, patients often find them lacking. The World Health Organization reported in 2014 that "nearly 50 percent of Gaza's medical equipment is outdated," and that nearly a quarter of essential medicines and nearly half of the critical supplies were "at or near zero stock" in public sector facilities.[24] Many of these ills are related to funding shortages, as the Ministry of Health struggles to provide adequate resources.

This is not to say that traditional conflict elements have not contributed to Palestinian healthcare problems. In the 2014 violence in Gaza, "17 hospitals, 56 primary healthcare facilities, and 45 ambulances were damaged or destroyed" by Israeli aggression, damages which total approximately $50m.[25] Though such actions are violations of international law, Israel condemned the reports by the United Nations implicating their forces, suggesting that Hamas had been using the facilities to launch its own aggressions.

C. Finding a Solution: Past, Present, Future

As has been noted, delegates will have to devise solutions to address a wide array of problems that confront Palestinian healthcare. Public facilities face issues of chronic underfunding and poor staffing; many Palestinians are unable to afford private healthcare costs; most Palestinians in the West Bank that are not categorized as refugees do not qualify for UNRWA assistance. These concerns are all exacerbated by the challenges posed by Israeli occupation, including

[21] United States Agency for International Development, "West Bank/Gaza," https://explorer.usaid.gov/country-detail.html#West Bank/Gaza.
[22] United Nations Relief and Works Agency, "Gaza Emergency," http://www.unrwa.org/gaza-emergency.
[23] World Health Organization, "Restricted Emergency Access to Jerusalem," http://www.emro.who.int/pse/information-resources/abu-abed.html.
[24] World Health Organization, "Report of a field assessment of health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory," 2015, http://applications.emro.who.int/docs/Cons_Rep_2015_EN_16311.pdf?ua=1.
[25] Helena Kennedy, "The 2014 conflict left Gaza's healthcare shattered. When will justice be done?" *The Guardian*, 29 June 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/29/2014-conflict-gaza-healthcare-hospitals-war-crime-israel-hamas.

limits on free movement, and at times, damage caused by military aggression. Providing a framework for adequate healthcare in Palestine will necessitate solutions to all of these challenges and more, and will likely require multiple resolutions to do so.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are the challenges of providing healthcare in Palestine?
- What countries will be willing to provide treatment opportunities for Palestinians, and if so, what type of treatments will be provided?
- Are there any policies or restrictions of materials that would hinder the availability of land and or building materials?
- Where would these health clinics be located?
- Who would be the third party involved, and how much funding and materials would they be providing?
- Is it safe to build these hospitals in the Gaza Strip?
- What resources could the Arab League provide?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Where would be the best places to build medical facilities?
- Will there be any way to devise better routes for emergency medical vehicles?
- Who will the healthcare professionals be, and how will they be chosen?

IV. Additional Resources:

[Science and Diplomacy - Health Challenges in Palestine](#)

[World Health Organization - Report of a field assessment of health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory](#)

[World Health Organization - Situation Report 1: Occupied Palestinian Territory](#)

[UNRWA - Gaza Emergency](#)