

2016-2017

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Special Council on Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons ncusar.org/modelarableague



Original draft by Kathleen Langbehn, Chair of the Special Council on Refugees and
Internally Displaced Persons at the 2016-2017 National University Model Arab League,
with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-

Arab Relations

Honorable Delegates,

I would like to welcome you to the 2016-2017 Model Arab League. I am honored to serve as your chair for this Special Council on Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. My name is Kathleen Langbehn; I am a junior at Converse College studying Psychology. This is my third year with Model Arab League programs and my second year chairing for the Model Arab League.

As participants in this Council and at the conference as a whole, it is my hope that you will all expand your knowledge and understanding of Middle Eastern politics and issues. Additionally, you have the opportunity to expand your public speaking, research, critical thinking, and negotiation skills to utilize in the future. There are many opportunities offered to Model Arab League alumni by NCUSAR including intensive Arabic language programs, both summer and academic year semester internship programs, study abroad opportunities, and exchange fellowships to Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

In this committee, I expect delegates to have a sound base of policy research that enables them to stay in character. Remember, you are representing your assigned country, not your own personal beliefs. Issues that refugees and internally displaced persons face are growing by the day, and I hope that you'll all be able to come up with resolutions that address this growing Arab League and worldwide concern.

I look forward to seeing the resolutions that you all come up with, and I am anticipating a productive, fun, and educational experience for all.

Best, Kathleen Langbehn

Topic 1: Exploring and formulating League-wide methods to increase the political, social, and economic agency of refugees.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Refugees are individuals who have been forced to leave their home country due to conflict, violence, or persecution; they differ from migrants in that migrants choose to settle in another country, in search of a better life. While migrants may be in danger of similar persecutions as refugees in their home countries, oftentimes the consequences are not as severe. Migrants are also processed under immigration laws, while refugees have a different bureaucratic route to travel through.¹

Refugees are often unable to return home if they chose to, and may have fears of persecution in their home country based on their membership in particular religious, social, political, or racial groups.² This distinction of the person's inability to determine whether to return to their home country, or to choose their destination is a contributing factor of a poor sense of personal agency. This may extend into matters of employment, education, the ability to protect or provide for one's family, and daily life tasks.

B. History of the Topic

There are nearly five million registered refugees from the conflict in Syria alone.³ Five Arab countries host the majority of these refugees, which places a huge strain on their ability to adequately host those displaced peoples. Lebanon, a country of 4.5 million, has 1 million Syrian refugees, which is as many refugees as the entire European Union is hosting. Refugees in the MENA region are also not treated as active members of society by the host countries.⁴

The refugee crisis is one of the most critical issues that our world is dealing with today. While the European Union has taken some refugees, the brunt of the crisis still falls on the Arab League's shoulders. Pressing economic problems for refugees include difficulty in finding employment and potentially being underqualified to work in their host countries. Big problems for host countries include overcrowding, insufficient funding, and a lack of jobs for their citizens and residents, which can lead to persecution and anger towards refugees. As situations in countries like Yemen and Syria escalate in violence, it

¹ "Migrant vs. Refugee: What's the Difference?". *CNN*. 8 Sept. 2015. Web. 13 Feb 2017. http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/08/world/what-is-difference-migrants-refugees/

² "What Is a Refugee? Definition and Meaning." *USA for UNHCR*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Jan. 2017. http://www.unrefugees.org/what-is-a-refugee/

³ "Syria Regional Refugee Response" *UNHCR Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal.* 05 Jan. 2017. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

The real refugee crisis is in the Middle East, not Europe" *The Washington Post.* 14 May 2016. Web. 16 Jan 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/14/the-real-refugee-crisis-is-in-the-middle-east-not-europe/?utm_term=.6b8da2e0de95

becomes more imperative to find creative solutions to the biggest human relocation challenge that Arab countries have had in years.

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

According to the UN, refugees are to be accorded the same rights as any other legal resident of the host country. Thus, efforts to increase the economic and social agency of refugees might focus on ensuring refugees are granted access to the same rights as the legal residents of the host country. Additionally, increasing the number of resettlement opportunities might help alleviate strain caused by excess refugees and increase political, economic, and social agency for them. Palestine has reported an increase in these types of opportunities for their displaced population, and it is often credited to outreach and youth programs that give people a sense of purpose and self-worth.

Many refugees may have held jobs or acquired education in their home countries that put them in the category of highly-skilled labors. Often, after being displaced, these individuals are unable to find work in their own field due to roadblocks such as certifications or degrees that do not automatically translate into an employable credential in their host country. Some programs seek to help these individuals get the licenses they need, and others find ways to utilize these skills in a capacity that doesn't require a specific license, such as a former teacher working as a substitute instead of attempting to obtain a teaching license.⁶

Some refugee camps have developed their own self-sustaining economies. In Zataari, Jordan, the world's largest camp, thousands of small businesses line the streets. The camp, originally intended to be very temporary, has almost become a town, with its inhabitants rebuilding their lives and reopening stores they used to own back in their home country of Syria. Outside Zataari, the Jordanian government has begun "investing in industries Syrians are skilled in — construction, agriculture, and manufacturing." By doing this, refugees have a chance to participate in and help the economy; however, there is still a problem with overcrowding. While solutions like these can work in the small-scale, the council must take into consideration the measures required to translate it into solutions that will alleviate these problems across the places that accept refugees.

II. Questions to Consider in your Research

What is your country's stance on accepting refugees and asylum seekers?

How much support, and what type of support, is your country willing to give?

⁵ "Protecting Refugees: questions and answers". *UNHCR*. 01 Feb. 2002. Web 16 Jan 2017. http://www.unhcr.org/enus/publications/brochures/3b779dfe2/protecting-refugees-questions-answers.ht

⁶ "Alternatives to Licensing". WES Advisor. 24 Oct. 2016. Web 16 Jan. 2017 http://www.wesstudentadvisor.org/2016/10/alternatives-to-licensing.html

^{7 &}quot;World's Largest Syrian Refugee Camp has Developed Its Own Economy". *PBS*. 18 Jun. 2016. Web. 13 Feb 2017. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/worlds-largest-syrian-refugee-camp-has-developed-its-own-economy/>

What rights is your country willing to give refugees?

What is the end result your policy aims to accomplish?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

How can the League work together to solve the issues of refugee rights?

To what extent should refugees have political agency in a different country?

How can the League best utilize highly skilled refugees in host countries?

IV. Additional Resources to View:

- 'Refugees' and 'Migrants' Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Europe Can Find Better Ways to Get Refugees into Workforces
- The real refugee crisis is in the Middle East, not Europe
- Asylum & the Rights of Refugees

Topic 2: Investigating and mitigating current security threats to refugees in official settlements, as well as internally displaced persons in active conflict zones.

I. Introduction to Topic

A. General Background

The issue of protection for refugees is a complicated one, with a variety of proposed solutions. One solution proposed by the International Peace Institute was a global rescue initiative to provide humane reception centers in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe.⁸ An issue that has been raised is the negative narrative around refugees and internally displaced persons.

Areas of refuge for internally displaced persons are often unstable and lack resources for becoming durable. While it is the responsibility of national governments to protect IDPs, some governments are unable or unwilling to do so. In this situation, what is the role of the international community? If it is a member state, what is the role of the League?

B. History of the Topic

With high profile terrorist groups operating in and around conflict zones in the Arab world, the physical security of refugees cannot be ignored. Most recently there have been suicide bomber attacks at the Atma refugee camp in Syria. ¹⁰ 38% of refugees worldwide come from the Arab world. In 2015, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq accounted for over half of the global total of displaced persons due to conflict. ¹¹ Protecting these vulnerable people must be a top priority.

Additionally, refugees experience hate crimes and violence against them even when host countries are supposed to protect them. One a recent instance occurred in Turkey, where border guards deliberately shot at and tried to harm asylum seekers during a period of closed borders. ¹² In addition to protecting refugee camps from outside threats, the League must also attempt to find solutions on protecting camps from internal violence as well.

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

In late 2015, there was speculation that the United Kingdom would deploy troops to Syria to set up safe havens for internally displaced persons and refugees. ¹³ Though this never

⁸ "How to Protect Borders and Refugees?". *International Peace Institute*, 7 Jun. 2016. Web. 16 Jan 2017.

https://www.ipinst.org/2016/06/protecting-borders-and-refugees#8

⁹ 'Thematic Areas: Internal Displacement'. *UNOCHA*. N.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2017.

¹⁰ "20 killed' in suicide bomb attack at Syrian refugee camp, ISIS claims responsibility" *Russia Today News*. Web. 06 Oct. 2016. https://www.rt.com/news/361773-suicide-attack-syria-refugees/>

^{11 &#}x27;Global Report 2016'. IDMC. 2016. Web. 16 Jan 2017. http://www.internal-displacement.org/globalreport2016/>

^{12 &}quot;Turkey: Border Guards Kill and Injure Asylum Seekers". *Human Rights Watch*. 10 May 2016. Web. 13 Feb 2017. https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/10/turkey-border-guards-kill-and-injure-asylum-seekers

¹³ "British troops 'could be deployed to the Middle East to set up and protect safe havens for refugees fleeing Syria" *Daily Mail.* Web. 07 Sep. 2015. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225751/British-troops-deployed-Middle https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225751/British-troops-deployed-Middle https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3225751/British-troops-

came to fruition in Syria, this strategy has been employed in numerous conflicts around the globe. However, there have been notable failures, such as Kosovo, where security forces closed their gates in the face of violence and failed to protect the civilian population.¹⁴

In late 2016, Lebanon began construction on an isolation wall around a Palestinian refugee camp. ¹⁵ This was an unprecedented measure, and construction was soon "paused" due to protests. ¹⁶ Could a modified version of this plan be an alternate solution for managing security threats in refugee camps?

II. Questions to Consider in your Research

How far is your country willing to go to protect refugees and civilians?

Will your country work unilaterally or multilaterally?

What can be done to correct failing strategies from the past?

What specific security threats do refugees face? How does your country work to manage these threats?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

How can the League control security threats to refugees?

How might internationally displaced persons return to safety?

What extent will the League go to to protect refugee settlements?

IV. Additional Resources to View:

- Intro: Addressing refugee security
- Human trafficking in refugee camps
- Internal Displacement in the Middle East and North Africa

¹⁴ "Kosovo: Failure of NATO, U.N. to Protect Minorities" *Human Rights Watch*. Web. 26 Jul. 2004. https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/07/26/kosovo-failure-nato-un-protect-minorities>

 ^{15 &}quot;Lebanon Begins Building 'security Wall' around Palestinian Refugee Camp." *Alaraby*. N.p., 19 Nov. 2016. Web. 16 Jan. 2017. https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2016/11/19/lebanon-begins-building-security-wall-around-palestinian-refugee-camp.
 16 "Lebanon freezes plan for Ain al-Hilweh's 'racist wall'". *Aljazeera*. 23 Nov. 2016. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.

^{16 &}quot;Lebanon freezes plan for Ain al-Hilweh's 'racist wall'". Aljazeera. 23 Nov. 2016. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.
http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/lebanon-freezes-plan-ain-al-hilweh-racist-wall-161121124417114.html

Topic 3: Evaluating current access to education for refugees and internally displaced persons throughout the Arab League, and proposing reforms to areas that require improvement.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

According to the 1951 Refugee Convention,¹⁷ education is a basic human right. Refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than the global average, and only half of refugee children have access to primary education.¹⁸ The global average primary school attendance rate is 91%.

Internally displaced persons are sometimes considered only temporarily living in an area, so they may be refused admission into schools in their host communities, especially if the school does not have the resources to provide. Enrollment in primary schools for refugee children is extremely low, at 50%. This is an extremely low number for the importance of education on IDPs, and agencies around the world are working diligently in an effort to tackle the issue.¹⁹

B. History of the Topic

Access to education in the Arab League as a whole may be an issue even for citizens and residents. In 2014, the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality Program (ARAIEQ) was an initiative started in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), UNESCO, and the World Bank to increase rates of transition to secondary school. Five League members—Djibouti, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, and Yemen—have secondary school transition rates of less than 90%, and six other member states had no data available. Without even considering the plight of refugee children, some Arab states do not have adequate public education systems. School systems in MENA are "generally of low quality," as of 2014, and even though many of the countries have made great strides toward improving access to and quality of primary schools, there are still challenges such as skills mismatch, overpopulation of youth, and low funding to address. 22

¹⁷ 'The 1951 Refugee Convention'. *UNHCR*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2017. http://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee convention.html>

¹⁸ 'Education'. UNHCR. N.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2017. < http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/education.html ¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ 'Education for All Regional Report 2014 for the Arab States'. Global Education for All Meeting. UNESCO. 14 May 2014. Web. 1 Feb. 2017. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/pdf/ARAB-REGION_EN.pdf

^{21 &}quot;Education and Internally Displaced Persons." *Google Books.* N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Jan. 2017. .

²² "Education in the Middle East and North Africa." World Bank. 27 Jan 2014. Web. 13 Feb 2017.

http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/brief/education-in-mena

This issue becomes even more pertinent in the face of a refugee crisis. Children at refugee camps, in theory, all have access to primary education. However, it is often only in theory. For one, most refugees are hesitant to send their children to schools, as they firmly want to believe that their predicament is temporary, and that they will be able to return home early enough that their children will not need to attend a foreign school. Additionally, many children have already missed at least a few months of school by the time they arrive in a new location, due to travel and safety reasons.²³

As well as issues related to their often chaotic journeys, refugee children may also face harassment or bullying in their school environments. In Jordanian schools, refugee students often face verbal and physical abuse from the other students, due to their status. Efforts to create schools inside refugee camps have been marginally successful, but some teachers also do not feel comfortable or safe in these environments²⁴ and therefore refuse to go in to teach. In Jordan, there is a 50,000 person long waitlist of Syrian refugees waiting to get into primary and other public schools.²⁵

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

One previously-mentioned solution is the ARAIEQ, which was established at the Global Education for All Meeting in Oman in May 2014. At this conference, there were many topics discussed focusing on progress of education in the Arab League.²⁶

A solution that Jordan's Hai Al Dubat School for Girls has been using is lengthening class times, and splitting up the mornings and afternoons to accommodate both Jordanian residents and refugees: "Jordanian kids come in the morning, and Syrians in the afternoon." While this works better than overcrowding classrooms, and offers students more access to education, it is an imperfect system. There is resentment amongst Jordanians who believe refugees are taking their rightful classroom seats, and class times have to be shortened to adapt to this system. Many children who come to school from camps are traumatized, have not received an education for months, or are prone to acting out from anger towards their situation. 28

In order to increase the amount of refugees receiving higher education, primary educational facilities must be improved. The Arab League must work to figure out all the challenges that refugees face, and attempt to bring solutions not just to individual countries, but also to all MENA countries housing refugees. While educational systems

²³ "Education in the Second Largest Refugee Camp in the World." *Global Partnership for Education*. 20 Jun 2013. Web. 13 Feb 2017. < http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/education-second-largest-refugee-camp-world ²⁴ *Ibid*.

^{25 &}quot;World's Largest Syrian Refugee Camp has Developed Its Own Economy". PBS. 18 Jun. 2016. Web. 13 Feb 2017.
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/worlds-largest-syrian-refugee-camp-has-developed-its-own-economy/
26 "Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis." UNHCR. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.
http://www.unhcr.org/57d9d01d0

have been improving, there is still much work to be done.²⁹ The League can try to take individual case-studies from nations with high refugee populations, and attempt to apply them to places all over the region.

II. Questions to Consider in your Research

What are your country's education rates in general? For refugees? If there are pronounced differences, why?

What steps to reform would your country be willing to make to work out a solution to provide education more evenly across the board?

What NGOs work in your country and throughout the League to combat this issue?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

What League-wide reforms would be feasible to help solve the issue of lack of education for refugees and IDPs?

How will responsibility for education be handled? As a League? On a member-state basis?

How can the problem of school overcrowding within member-states be solved?

How could funding be gathered to create permanent public schools in refugee camps? What would the challenges be to this?

How can access to education be improved for all people?

IV. Additional Resources to View

- http://jusoorsyria.com/programs/refugee-education-program/
- http://www.openideorefugee-education.com/
- https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/16/education-syrian-refugee-children-what-donors-and-host-countries-should-do
- https://www.google.com/amp/www.aljazeera.com/amp/indepth/opinion/2016/09/educate-refugee-children-lose-160919102949662.html
- https://www.google.com/amp/s/cdn.relaymedia.com/amp/s/www.weforum.org/ag enda/2016/05/why-refugee-education-is-a-problem-and-six-solutions
- http://www.openideorefugee-education.com/
- http://www.basiced.org/wp-content/uploads/Factsheets/Educating Refugees and IDPs.pdf

²⁹"Access to Higher Education for Refugees in Jordan." *Relief Web.* ARDD- Legal Aid, n.d. Web. 16 Jan 2017. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/access to higher education for refugees in jordan.pdf>

Topic 4: Examining the extent to which the recent increase in refugees has created secondarily displaced persons, and addressing the challenges that secondarily displaced persons pose and face.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Displaced peoples have become one of the biggest problems that the Arab League faces today. In addition to refugees, who cross country borders in order to escape persecution and violence, there are also internally displaced peoples, who are forced to flee their homes due to the same reasons as refugees, but stay within their home country.³⁰

A secondarily displaced person, then, is one who has been displaced twice: once from their home country, and again from the country they took refuge in. When the Syrian war erupted in 2011, along with all the Syrian refugees fleeing the country, the civil war displaced more than half a million Palestinians, who were taking refuge in Syria at the time.³¹

B. History of the Topic

The growing problem of secondarily displaced persons is most relevant for Palestinian refugees; refugee camps in Syria have been attacked on multiple occasions, and even for the safer ones, violence threatens the fabric of the communities that have developed, as many of the camps are uncomfortably close to battlegrounds. Fearing for their lives again, Palestinians all over Syria have had to pack up their belongings and relocate yet again. However, the hardships do not end with another move.

Both national and international policies have made relocation especially hard for secondarily displaced Palestinian refugees. Many are denied access across new borders and forced to return to either their home country or Syria. Due to the novel nature of this issue, there are not many resolutions or bills in place to solve the issues at hand. In fact, Article 1D of the 1951 Refugee Convention actually excludes many of the Palestinian refugees from its coverage, since the UNRWA already covered the excluded refugees. Additionally, although there is a divide between refugees and Palestinian refugees, all displaced peoples are often grouped into one when considering aid, and different countries also refuse to create different infrastructures to accommodate secondarily displaced peoples.³² In order to solve this issue, the Arab League must look on past actions by the United Nations and other organizations; in order to cater its future solutions to uniquely fit the secondarily displaced Palestine refugees, as well as any other secondarily displaced peoples that could emerge, including those who fled Iraq in the mid- to late-2000s.

 ^{30 &}quot;Displaced Person/Displacement." UNESCO. Web. 13 Feb 2017. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/displaced-person-displacement/
 31 Fritzsche, Jasmin. "Displacing the Displaced: Challenging the International Framework for Palestinian Refugees in

³¹ Fritzsche, Jasmin. "Displacing the Displaced: Challenging the International Framework for Palestinian Refugees in light of the Syria Crisis." *Center for Migration and Refugee Studies*. 2014.
³² Ibid.

This problem largely illustrates the growing burden of wars in the Middle East, and emphasizes how important it is for the Arab League to find both short- and long-term solutions to the wars that have torn apart homes and nations.

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

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was created in 1949 specifically for displaced Palestinian peoples. The organization was meant to be a temporary service provider for the displaced peoples who lived on land now designated to Israel. Since its conception, the UNRWA has helped around 5 million registered Palestinian refugees. Although this organization has been very helpful in providing aid and resources to previously displaced Palestinians, the recent development of secondarily displaced persons has caused great need for infrastructural changes within the organization, since it was never intended to deal with a problem of that breadth or depth.³³

The PLO Department of Refugee Affairs is another organization created to aid Palestinian displaced refugees. While it does exist, however, it is currently not strong enough to help the amount of secondarily displaced peoples who need it most.³⁴ In considering different solutions to aid these secondarily displaced Palestinians, Iraqis, and Yemenis, heavy weight must be placed on how the national government can help its displaced peoples.

While the UNRWA is a good first step in providing immediate aid, more needs to be done. The League needs to create systems to not only find safe and lasting homes for those displaced, but also to ensure that the issue of secondarily displaced peoples does not become widespread. This largely becomes an important Arab League matter, because all MENA countries must be united in its methods to provide as much help as possible to those secondarily displaced, while at the same time trying to solve conflicts so that peoples do not continue the vicious cycle of being displaced from one area to another.

II. Questions to Consider in your Research

What is the prevalence of secondarily displaced persons in your country?

Are there any programs in place, either nationally or through NGOs that help solve this issue?

What are issues that specifically secondarily displaced persons face more than refugees or internally displaced persons?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

³³ UNRWA. < https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>

³⁴ "Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons." *BADIL*. Volume VIII 2013-2015.

How can the Arab League work together to help secondarily displaced persons reach more stability?

Can NGOs be utilized, or are there any existing organizations that could be included as aid?

Do new systems need to be put in place within MENA countries housing refugees, to provide equal access to resources to secondarily displaced refugees?

How can Palestine work to help relocate its refugees? How can the rest of the Arab League aid Palestine in this endeavor?

What are the most important challenges to address in this newly growing problem?

IV. Additional Resources to View

- Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons
 http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/badil-new/publications/survay/Survey2013-2015-en.pdf
- Displacing the Displaced: Challenging the International Framework for Palestinian Refugees in light of the Syria Crisis
 http://www.who.int/environmental health emergencies/displaced people/en/
- http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/sudan/2014/sudan-other-crises-distract-attention-from-tremendous-needs-of-idps
- http://schools.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/Documents/Fritzsche%20-%20Displacing%20the%20Displaced%20FINAL-October%2030.pdf
- http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/badil-new/publications/survay/Survey2013-2015-en.pdf