



2019-2020

**Model Arab league
BACKGROUND GUIDE
Summit of Arab Heads of State**

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



Original draft by Courtney Dziewior, Chair of the Summit of the Arab Heads of State at the 2020 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 2019-2020 season of Model Arab League! My name is Courtney Dziejwior, and I will be this year's National Chair for the Summit of the Arab Heads of State. I am a junior majoring in Chemistry and Music at Converse College in Spartanburg, SC. This is my third year participating in Model Arab League. I have debated in various Model Arab League and NATO conferences, and I could not be more honored to be chairing this council.

The Arab Heads of State is a council unlike any other. This council gives you the unique opportunity to exercise your diplomatic skills while discussing some of the most important and pressing topics from the perspective of a world leader. Each of you will be representing the leader of your state, and as such you must have an in depth understanding of both the policies of your state, the state leader you are portraying, and current events. I urge you to go beyond a simple Google search and use news articles, speeches, government websites, scientific reports, official documents and treaties, and more for your research.

One thing to remember is that remaining in character and, even more pressing, staying within your state's policy is what allows for a smooth flow of debate. These are two things that will be required of you at all times. More specifically, being on top of your policy is key in this council and something I expect to see during your debates. In addition, debate can become intense as each you lobby for your country's rights and stance on topics, but during all of the highs and lows of committee, I expect diplomacy and mutual respect between all delegates. This is a learning opportunity for everyone from those who are debating here for the first time to those who are veterans on their fourth year. We all have something we can learn from this experience. Why else would we participate?

As you prepare for each of the topics and read through this background, you will begin developing solutions to the problems presented. It is important to look past the obvious solutions and find unique, creative, and necessary solutions. Often times, committees will favor surveys, conventions or conferences, or establishing committees to take care of the given subject, but I urge you to think deeper and go beyond the given mold. Additionally, as this is a committee made up of the Heads of State, keep in mind that you have the power to modify and add to documents and charters as well create new policies, frameworks, and mechanisms.

I look forward to meeting you at NCUSAR or at SERMAL if you are there. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at CSDziejwior001@converse.edu. Until then, good luck and happy researching!

Best,

Courtney Dziejwior

Topic I: Identifying reasons and devising measures to counter corruption and extortion within the Arab League as well as a League-wide response to unlawful behavior by Member States.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

As the world increasingly focuses in on dishonesty, deception, and duplicity in governments and populations, the importance of addressing corruption, extortion, and associated unlawful behavior becomes increasingly apparent. Pew Research Center surveys indicate that 76% of people in emerging and developing economies say corrupt political leaders are a major problem in their country.¹ They also report that crime and corruption are seen as the greatest problems in the Middle East by its people.² Furthermore, corruption and extortion are a major threat due to how they hinder fair and open trade which is vital for a healthy global economy.³

To properly address both corruption and extortion, it is important to have a clear understanding of what each of these terms mean. While there is no official League definition, corruption is commonly described as dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power and usually includes bribery. There are many forms of corruption, including nepotism and political corruption.⁴ Extortion is the act of obtaining something such as money or property from another through the wrongful use of force, violence, or threats.⁵ Furthermore, for the purposes of this topic, unlawful behavior refers to any additional illegal actions related to corruption or extortion that are committed by Member States.

B. History in the Arab World

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), corruption has a long and ever evolving history, and it is time for the League to address discrepancies in its response to corruption and extortion and its associated unlawful behavior. The 2018 findings in the Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index show that the MENA region has an overall average score of 39 out of 100 (higher numbers indicate positive perceptions).⁶ Furthermore, five of the bottom ten in the index are Arab League states.⁷ Poor and war torn countries — including Syria, Yemen, Sudan,

¹ "Crime and Corruption Top Problems in Emerging and Developing Countries." *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*, 23 Mar. 2016, www.pewresearch.org/global/2014/11/06/crime-and-corruption-top-problems-in-emerging-and-developing-countries/.

² *Ibid.*

³ "We Are All Affected." *Corruption Watch*, Corruption Watch (RF) NPC of Transparency International, www.corruptionwatch.org.za/learn-about-corruption/what-is-corruption/we-are-all-affected/.

⁴ Ottaway, Marina. "What Does Corruption Mean in the Middle East, Exactly?" *Wilson Center*, 11 May 2016, www.wilsoncenter.org/article/what-does-corruption-mean-the-middle-east-exactly.

⁵ e.V., Transparency International. *Anti-Corruption Glossary*, Transparency International, www.transparency.org/glossary.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Libya, and Iraq — have traditionally shown the worst symptoms of corruption, and these were the states in the bottom of the index. Conversely, more wealthy and stable countries like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are not exempt from the effects of corruption. Overall, corruption is getting worse rather than better in all Member States.

As society evolves, the manner of how corruption presents itself also changes. In the MENA region, corruption often refers to *wasta*, which translates to nepotism, favoritism, or ‘who you know,’ and enables people to achieve certain objectives or positions which individuals might not have been qualified or recognized for otherwise.⁸ This is considered the primary issue in the region and the most pressing to address. *Wasta* is also considered another form of corruption. *Wasta* is a predominant aspect of Arab society and is predominant in the majority of Arab League Member States.⁹

While corruption is found in everyday governance, extortion is predominantly rooted in the actions of extremist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). ISIL often resorts to intimidation and violence in order to receive money from citizens, businesses, and governments alike.¹⁰ Additionally, local gangs and smaller militant groups similarly resort to extortion, meaning this issue is present across the League.

When considering the topic as a whole, it is important to have an understanding of individual cases of corruption and extortion in various Member States. For example, higher ranking states have shown unique issues with corruption, such as in the case of the United Arab Emirates, where money laundering has become a rising issue. In Libya, *wasta* is a common issue and is apparent in how state-owned businesses control the market.¹¹ These two examples are present in many different Member States and in many different ways. As such, it is important to consider how these individual issues affect the League as a whole.

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

The League of Arab States has previously convened to discuss anti-corruption at the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention in 2010.¹² At this convention, measures were discussed that focused on detecting, preventing, and combatting corruption in all its forms, as well as handling of perpetrators and increasing Arab government cooperation. This was signed by 21 Arab League states and ratified by twelve. Additionally, the United Nations Convention against Corruption

⁸ Ottaway, Marina. “What Does Corruption Mean in the Middle East, Exactly?” *Wilson Center*, 11 May 2016, www.wilsoncenter.org/article/what-does-corruption-mean-the-middle-east-exactly.

⁹ Feghali, Rena. “Wasta: Connections or Corruption in Arab World?: Nardello & Co.: We Find Out.” *Nardello & Co. | We Find Out*, Nardello & Co., 2014, www.nardelloandco.com/insights/wasta-connections-or-corruption-in-the-arab-world/#.

¹⁰ “Oil, Extortion and Crime: Where ISIS Gets Its Money.” *NBCNews.com*, Reuters, 11 Sept. 2014, www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/oil-extortion-crime-where-isis-gets-its-money-n200991.

¹¹ “Libya Corruption Report.” GAN Integrity, GAN Integrity INC., www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/libya/.

¹² “League of Arab State Arab Anti-Corruption Convention.” *Worldbank*, 2010, star.worldbank.org/sites/star/files/Arab-Convention-Against-Corruption.pdf.

(UNCAC) outlined further anti-corruption measures and was ratified by fifteen Arab League countries.¹³

While acts of corruption and extortion within countries are outside of the jurisdiction of the League unless involving more than one Member State, it is important to consider the effect that these different issues have on the League. Scandals within a Member State directly reflect on the League as a whole, and affect the perspective of outsiders on the League's capabilities. Any solution concerning corruption and extortion should address ways to reduce these unlawful actions. Additionally, considering that an anti-corruption convention has previously been held by the League, solutions should include more expansive measures beyond those already taken by the League.

Delegates should certainly discuss *wasta* and its pivotal role in Arab society. Consequently, it should be considered what – if any action is necessary – can be done to reduce its presence and effects.¹⁴ In terms of unlawful behavior by the government of a Member State, measures should be taken to solve the disparities present in the League's historical responses to unlawful behavior. Furthermore, all solutions should determine if the League has a legal right to impose punitive measures to address unlawful behavior and, if so, at what point.

Potential solutions can be found by studying actions taken in various states. Some states such as Tunisia have been taking steps to counter rising corruption, including various anti-corruption strategies, bodies to directly handle the issue, and more robust legislature.¹⁵ Some measures have been successful, but others have faced obstacles. A fully formed solution will take into account what has failed and why, when trying to devise a long-lasting resolution.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What kind of responses has the League taken in regard to corruption, extortion, and unlawful behavior?
- How has your country taken action against corruption and extortion, if at all?
- What systems or steps have other countries taken against corruption and extortion, and are they implementable in your country?
- What international efforts have been made to counter corruption and extortion?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How large of a role can the Arab League play in this solution?

¹³ "UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)." UNCAC Civil Society Coalition, UNCAC Coalition, uncaccoalition.org/the-uncac/about-the-uncac/.

¹⁴ Doughan, Yazan. "Corruption in the Middle East and the Limits of Conventional Approaches." *Middle East*, no. 5, 2017, doi:10.2307/1559268, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8fb0/2aeb7d726a1a96f0d864a4a02f9ef839bfff.pdf>.

¹⁵ Council of Europe. "Anti-Corruption Digest Tunisia." Action against Economic Crime and Corruption, Council of Europe, 26 June 2019, www.coe.int/en/web/corruption/anti-corruption-digest/tunisia.

- How can a League-wide framework be applied to reducing and responding to corruption, extortion, and other unlawful behavior?
- Can cases of wasta be addressed only by political and administrative reforms, or would other measures be more appropriate?
- At what point should individual cases of corruption and extortion become a League-level concern, if at all?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Transparency International - Corruption Perceptions Index 2018](#)
The Transparency International (TI) outlines the current rankings for all countries and assigns a score from 1 to 100. A specific section is outlined for current Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) progress against corruption.
- [Wasta Once Again Hampering Arab Youth Chances for a Dignified Life](#)
This article outlines the presence of wasta in the MENA region with statistics gathered from youth in region that give a more accurate depiction of the pivotal role wasta plays in everyday life. Additional information and graphs are also provided detailing its effect on the job outlook for youth.
- [GAN Business Anti-Corruption Portal – Country Profiles](#)
This website provides country profiles on corruption for all states. These profiles outline the threat of corruption in various levels of life including the judicial system, police, public services, land administration, legislation, and civil society. This should be used as a starting point for individual country research on the presence and threat of corruption.
- [Arab States: Corruption and Reform](#)
Outlined here are the main threats of corruption specifically in the Arab world with real world examples and broken down to both the Middle East as well as the Levant and North Africa regions.

Topic II: Examining the prevalence of human trafficking in the region and what measures can be taken to reduce or abolish it in accordance with the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Human trafficking is a globally prevalent issue and has seen an uptick in its presence due to high profitability. Human trafficking is described as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer... by means of threat, force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or money, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes the prostitution of others..., forced labor or services, slavery or [similar practices], servitude, or the removal of organs” by the United Nations.¹⁶ A brief summary is that there are two main types of human trafficking: labor trafficking and sex trafficking.

It is necessary to understand how human trafficking works in order to devise any solutions. There are three aspects to human trafficking: the act, the means, and the purpose. The act is what is done – is it recruitment, transfer, transportation, etc.? The means is how it is accomplished. This can be through threat, force, abduction, fraud, or other means. Lastly, the purpose is why it is committed. It is always for exploitation, but what type of exploitation? Additionally, it is important to realize that human trafficking and slavery are not the same, and referring to it as such often undermines the ability to prosecute human trafficking in international law.

One essential thing to understand about this topic is how the international community has approached this issue and the framework it has established. As such, the Palermo Protocols are a pivotal part of any discussion. The Palermo Protocols are three protocols adopted by the United Nations. The first two are the most relevant to the given topic: 1) the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and 2) the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.¹⁷ The Palermo Protocols were created to supplement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000 and are still relevant today. The two protocols serve as a good framework example on this topic and should be closely read as a source of background information. All Member States — except for Comoros, Somalia, and Yemen — acceded to or ratified the first protocol.¹⁸

¹⁶ “Human Trafficking.” *What Is Human Trafficking?*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html.

¹⁷ “United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto.” UN, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>.

¹⁸ “UN, United Nations, UN Treaties, Treaties.” *United Nations*, United Nations, 2000, treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en.

B. History in the Arab World

The Arab countries play varied roles in human trafficking, with different countries serving as origin, transit, and/or destination countries.¹⁹ In the MENA region, human trafficking often takes advantage of youth due to their lack of education, naivety against adults, and lack of strength. Furthermore, impoverished families from war torn countries are commonly the source of these trafficked children. For example, 900 children were smuggled from Yemen to Saudi Arabia from 2006 to 2007.²⁰ Additionally, victims of human trafficking that managed to escape have been classified as illegal immigrants and punished.

The most common forms of human trafficking in the MENA region are for domestic servitude, forced labor, camel jockeying, and sex trafficking. Camel jockeying is an especially common form of youth trafficking due to the desire for jockeys to add as little additional weight which might slow down camels. This often results in those that were trafficked for this cause to be malnourished to maintain their low weight.²¹ Steps have been made to reduce this practice through laws to raise the legal age, but this is not uniform across the League and the issue continues.

Another issue regarding human trafficking in the region is that different states' laws and cultures do not recognize certain forms of human trafficking as human trafficking, thus perpetuating the issue. Sex trafficking is the other predominant form of trafficking, but often is not prohibited due to many states permitting temporary marriage, in which the woman has few rights and the man is often the one who decides when the marriage ends. Consequently, temporary marriage is a way of legalizing prostitution. However, some states such as Iraq have taken steps to prohibit sex trafficking through additions to their constitution. For those states that do possess explicit laws, the issue of consistently enforcing them still remains.²²

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

In 1994, the League of Arab States created the first draft of the Arab Charter on Human Rights in which they acknowledged citizens' rights to freedom. By May 2004, a revised version was created to reflect the changes over the previous decade since the 1994 charter. Additionally, the League also devised the Department of Human Rights.²³ Since 2004, no changes have been made to the Charter to incorporate advances in the past fifteen years, despite the framework being recognized as contradictory to international standards and international human rights

¹⁹ "Sex Trafficking of Children in the Middle East." *ECPAT International*, www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Factsheet_Middle_East.pdf.

²⁰ Child trafficking is burning problem: Yemeni minister. *Gulf News*. 19 January 2007. Accessed on 23 March 2009 from: <http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/01/19/10097777.html>.

²¹ Dudley, Schuyler. "Human Trafficking in the Middle East and North Africa Region." *TOPICAL RESEARCH DIGEST: HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING*, www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/trafficking/MiddleEast.pdf.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ "Civic Freedom Monitor: League of Arab States." *The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law*, ICNL, 29 Jan. 2018, www.icnl.org/research/monitor/las.html.

laws.²⁴ This is in spite of all Member States also being signatories of or having ratified at least one United Nations human rights treaty.²⁵ Two examples of such UN treaties are the “Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography” and the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime” which all Arab League countries have acceded to or ratified.

Despite this multitude of international legal frameworks, human trafficking persists unabated in the region, largely due to failed enforcement and continued trafficking through the workarounds mentioned earlier. To properly address this topic and devise a solution, self-evaluation of each Member State is necessary. Where are the major origin, transit, and destination countries in the League? Additionally, what types of human trafficking are most prevalent in which regions? This will enable more cohesive and thought-out solutions focused on evaluating and reducing human trafficking if possible.

Alternatively, it should be considered whether solutions that result in an official, League-declared stance are viable. These would call for in-depth examination of the stance of individual Member States on the topic. Keeping in mind the different laws and policies of each state, it should be evaluated what stance the League as a whole can take in regard to human trafficking. Considering the length of time since the last modifications were made to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, it should be evaluated whether new additions or changes are needed.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Did your state sign, ratify, or accede to the relevant Palermo Protocols, and, if so, were there any reservations?
- What is your state’s stance on what qualifies as human trafficking?
- Has your state taken any steps to reduce human trafficking? If so, what?
- What treaties, resolutions, and/or documents related to human trafficking has your state signed, ratified, or acceded to?
- What types of human trafficking are the most serious in and to your state?
- Is your state an origin, transit, or destination country for human trafficking?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What changes, if any, should be made to the Arab Charter on Human Rights?
- Should the League as a whole take an official stance on human trafficking?
- What can be done to reduce the current number of persons subject to human trafficking?

²⁴ Rishmawi, Mervat. “The Arab Charter on Human Rights.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 06 Oct. 2009, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/23951>

²⁵ Rishmawi, Mervat. “Arab Charter on Human Rights and the League of Arab States: An Update.” *OUP Academic*, Oxford University Press, 10 Feb. 2010, academic.oup.com/hrlr/article/10/1/169/602519.

- What types of human trafficking should be defined as illegal for the League?

IV. Additional Resources

- [The Palermo Protocols](#)
The first two Palermo Protocols are pivotal to any discussion on human trafficking. They are both valuable to read over for a better understanding and example of a framework. It is important for the protocols to be understood as well as know what reservations states had with them.
- [Topical Research Digest: Human Rights and Human Trafficking](#)
This research digest contains various documents sorted by region. The Human Trafficking in the Middle East and North Africa Region digest contains useful information the predominant forms of human trafficking in the region.
- [Sex Trafficking of Children in the Middle East](#)
Human trafficking of youth and the varying roles countries play in trafficking is outlined here. Case studies and examples of different types of trafficking are also included.
- [2019 Trafficking in Persons Report | Country Narratives](#)
This US Department of State page contains links to various country narratives which outline what progress the country has made to eliminate trafficking and ranks the country to a given tier according this. Recommendations to improve elimination efforts, prosecution, laws, prevention, and the targeted victims in that country are also depicted.
- [UNODC on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants](#)
The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provides background and general information on trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

Topic III: Exploring and establishing potential reaction mechanisms within the Arab League for the prevention of intrastate and interstate conflicts and other non-violent disputes.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Intrastate conflict is conflict and violence within a single state, whereas interstate conflict is violence between two or more states. The MENA region has several ongoing intrastate conflicts including the Syrian Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War. In contrast, interstate conflict has decreased over the past several decades. This has correlated with an increase in non-violent disputes and can be understood by the fact that non-violent disputes must first develop before escalating into conflict. Therefore, mediation serves an important role in these non-violent disputes in order to prevent such escalation.

B. History in the Arab World

Currently, there are no predominant Arab League interstate conflicts. All current conflicts are between Member States and non-Member States, such as the 2016 West Iran clashes and the ongoing Palestine-Israel conflict, or intrastate conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War, Yemeni Civil War, and the Darfur, Sudan conflict, among others. Additionally, members of the Arab League have a history of participating in intrastate conflicts such as the Yemeni Civil War. This resulted in Member States forming a peacekeeping force composed of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar.²⁶ Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia also provided airspace, water territory, and military bases.²⁷ While the Yemeni Civil War is an intrastate conflict, it resulted in response and contributions from a significant number of Member States.

Arab League countries are more commonly involved in non-violent disputes, as seen in the ongoing Qatar diplomatic crisis. The Qatar crisis began when a Saudi led coalition accused Qatar of supporting terrorism by assisting Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and al-Qaeda. Despite the resulting blockades, the event has largely remained non-violent, though with diplomatic and economic ties severed.²⁸

²⁶ al-Shibeeb, Dina. "Your Guide to 'Operation Decisive Storm.'" *Chatham House*, Al Arabiya, 26 Mar. 2015, english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2015/03/26/Allies-back-Saudi-led-Decisive-Storm-op-in-Yemen-with-fighter-jets-.html.

²⁷ "War in Yemen | Global Conflict Tracker." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen.

²⁸ Moubayed, Sami. "Qatar Crisis: Two Years but No End in Sight." *Gulf News – No.1 in UAE and Dubai for Breaking News, Opinion and Lifestyle*, Gulf News, 4 June 2019, gulfnews.com/world/gulf/qatar/qatar-crisis-two-years-but-no-end-in-sight-1.64343589.

In the case of interstate conflict, the League does have a built-in response mechanism through Articles V, VI, and VII of the 1945 Charter of the League of Arab States. These articles directly address aggression and threat of aggression between Member States and grants the threatened or attacked state the right to convene the entire Council of the Arab League. These articles also state that any decision the Council makes can only be enforced if both states have asked the Council to step in, and any dispute that requires force in order to be resolved is prohibited.²⁹

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

Considering the history of League members intervening in intrastate conflict, and the potential of this escalating to interstate conflict, a solution should account for this when considering prevention measures to interstate conflict. Additionally, solutions must go beyond Articles V and VI of the Charter of the League of Arab States. The comprehensiveness of Articles V, VI, and VII should be considered in evaluating the relevancy of the document and whether any changes should be made to it. Any research should — at a minimum — evaluate the entire Charter as well as these specific Articles for any weaknesses in the eyes of the Member States.

Another important consideration is that the League has practically no built-in responses to conflict within one state. This is due to the issue of state sovereignty, but it should also be observed that intrastate conflict hardly ever remains a concern for the single state in which it takes place. As evident in the Yemeni and Syrian wars, other Member States often become involved. As such, it is necessary to determine whether any solution is possible for the League that addresses a framework of response to intrastate conflict, without escalating the conflict in doing so. Additionally, considering the particular task of establishing a reaction mechanism for these conflicts, it should be assessed what level of conflict this would be employed in. This can be discovered by exploring the most predominant types of conflict that erupt in the region.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What weaknesses – if any – are present in the relevant articles of the Charter of the League of Arab States?
- What interstate or intrastate conflicts or disputes has your state been involved in?
- What is your state's stance on current non-violent disputes and intrastate conflicts?
- Should the League address conflict between a Member State and non-Member State?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can interstate and intrastate conflict be mediated?
- How involved should the League be with non-violent disputes?

²⁹ "CHARTER OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES." *International Relations and Security Network*, ISN ETH Zurich, www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125350/8005_arableaguecharter.pdf.

- Should any modification be made to the Charter of the League of Arab States to reflect League responses to non-violent disputes or intrastate conflicts?
- What actions can Member States take to resolve non-violent disputes before the escalate to violence?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Charter of the League of Arab States](#)
The Charter of the League of Arab States is a necessary document all delegates should know inside and out. The information pertaining to conflicts is especially relevant to this topic, but all articles are still relevant to the given committee.
- [Mapping and Explaining Middle Eastern Conflict](#)
Information on current and past Middle East conflicts are outlined with attention to the history that leading up to current events. Useful infographics and pictures provide additional details.
- [The Gulf Divided: The Impact of the Qatar Crisis Resource 4](#)
This outlines the cause for the 2017 Qatar Crisis and boycott with information on the impact it has had on the region.
- [The Contagiousness of Regional Conflict: A Middle East Case Study](#)
The factors that contribute to or inhibit regional conflict are presented with the aid of case studies including rise of ISIL. Relevant sections within the paper outline six critical factors that lead to interstate conflict.

Topic IV: Exploring concerted efforts to strengthen controls on the transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALW) — both illicit and state-sanctioned — into the region.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are two classes of portable weapons that are prevalent in the MENA region. SALWs are a large global concern because these types of arms are often involved in trades that fuel conflict and crime throughout the MENA region and the world. According to the United Nations 2006 Small Arms Review Conference, small arms are individual-use weapons and light weapons are those used by a crew of two or more people, but can also be carried and used by one person.³⁰ Small weapons include items like revolvers, rifles, assault rifles, and light machine guns, while light weapons consist more of heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns and missile systems, and small-caliber mortars.³¹

Efforts have been attempted to regulate the trade of arms, including SALW, by the United Nations 2013 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This treaty was signed by eight Member States and ratified or acceded to by three.³² The lack of participation by Member States in this treaty is significant and can potentially be attributed to various pitfalls in the comprehensiveness of the treaty. Additionally, further efforts have been made to monitor the progress and amount of SALW through the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI).^{33, 34, 35}

Despite these various efforts to regulate arms trade, SALW trade has only increased. This is due to the growing global network for arms trade in the digital age through the internet, thus posing a new challenge in tracking illicit trade. The internet allows for easier advertisement, procurement, and technology transfers related to arms trafficking.³⁶ Furthermore, another significant issue is understanding the difference between state-sanctioned and non-state sanctioned arms trade and the means through which these trades occur (individual traders, black markets, auctions, etc.). While many arms transfers commence as the state-sanctioned variety, governments' inability or

³⁰ "Small Arms Review Conference 2006." *United Nations*, 2006, www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/pdf/international_instrument.pdf.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "Arms Trade Treaty – UNODA." *United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs*, United Nations, 2013, www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/arms-trade-treaty-2/.

³³ "Programme of Action on small arms and its International Tracing Instrument." *United Nations office for Disarmament Affairs*, United Nations, 2018, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/programme-of-action/>.

³⁴ "International Tracing Instrument." *United Nations*, 2016, <http://www.poa-iss.org/InternationalTracing/InternationalTracing.aspx>

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ "Beyond the Dark Web: Arms Trafficking in the Digital Age." *Medium*, 2018, <https://medium.com/@SmallArmsSurvey/beyond-the-dark-web-arms-trafficking-in-the-digital-age-56ddd806587a>

inaction in tracking these arms allows illicit arms traders to channel SALW into the hands of warlords, terrorist groups, and other agents of violence.³⁷

The proliferation of these weapons – especially through illicit means – remains one of the most pressing global security threats. Modern conflicts are largely fueled and prolonged by continued influx of SALW, with these weapons also contributing to the development of terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, gender violence, piracy, and countless other harmful criminal activities.³⁸ Immediate action in response to this continuing crisis is needed, and the Arab League has the opportunity to set a new global standard in coordinating reforms over SALW trade.

B. History in the Arab World

In the MENA region, strengthened SALW transfer controls are particularly needed. From 2009-2013 to 2014-2018, the flow of arms to the Middle East increased by 87%.³⁹ Comparatively, all other regions saw a decrease. The League has previously been very vocal on SALW controls in the early 2000s with participation in talks about the UN POA and ATT as well as through various other dialogue forums. Despite the large interest of the League in the topic, implementation of increased arms control has been poor due to continuing instability and conflict as well as ongoing reservations with the ATT. The UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) is the main international arms register and details the import and export of conventional weapons, but the majority of the MENA region refuses to contribute because of the belief that a register should include information on additional parameters, such as arms holdings and weapons of mass destruction.⁴⁰

The majority of current armed conflicts are rooted in both licit and illicit SALW flow. This is predominant in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, as these states face intrastate violence and civil war. Extremist groups are another area in which arms transfers are becoming a rising concern, especially in the case of terrorist groups like ISIL and al-Qaeda. Private arms ownership is also largely allowed in the MENA region and facilitates the presence of public arms markets. This legal, wide-spread arms trade often results in the spread of arms across borders to other states. In various states, efforts have been made to create stricter regulations and increased coastal patrols, but the problem persists.

³⁷ Garcia, Denise. “Disarming Lords of War: A New International Treaty to Regulate the Arms Trade.” *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2014-12-23/disarming-lords-war>

³⁸ “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#

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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.

A large portion of arms transfers to the in-conflict states are from external states. In the case of Syria, 10% of all Russian arms exports are directed into the territory, with contributions from other governments as well, including India and France. In Libya, ten states supplied arms, all of which were non-Member States.⁴¹ Additionally, many of the countries receiving SALW possess licit stockpiles of SALW, with several storage sites of these arms lacking sufficient security to ensure the proper monitoring of the weapons. Without proper security, proliferation is exacerbated as non-state actors manage to obtain these weapons.

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

The League has made some steps towards increased SALW control, but the threat of continued, unchecked proliferation looms with an increasing number of civilian casualties. A resolution to this topic should find a way to stay within policy while still determining ways to restrict or increase the security of arms transfer in the region. Additionally, the presence of both state-sanctioned and illicit SALW trade should be evaluated and discussed with solutions created for each side of arms trade. The presence of legislation and security measures within each Member State and the possible additions or improvements should be evaluated when attempting to produce a resolution.

The ATT, the most predominant treaty relevant to this topic encountered various criticism due to its weaknesses, including failure to resolve concerns that the ATT limits rights for self-defense, as well as a lack of discussion on the import of individual weapon sub-components (which could later be assembled together into full weapons), poor record-keeping and reporting, and the exclusion of certain types of weapons from the list of prohibited items.⁴² Analyzing these oversights could serve as a viable route to discovering what is necessary to cover in a solution that previous treaties and frameworks have failed to accomplish.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Which treaties has your state signed or ratified? If none have been ratified, why not?
- In your state, are SALW predominantly sent or received?
- Does your state have any legislation or tracking mechanisms for arms transfers?
- What is your state's stance on large stocks of individual ownership of SALW?
- How should state-sanctioned versus illicit SALW transfers be dealt with?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

⁴¹ "ARMS TRADE TO MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SHOWS FAILURE OF EXPORT CONTROLS." *Amnesty International USA*, www.amnestyusa.org/reports/arms-trade-to-middle-east-and-north-africa-shows-failure-of-export-controls/.

⁴² Jackson, Kirk. "Analysis | The Arms Trade Treaty: A historic and momentous failure." *Ceasefire*, 2013, <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/failure-arms-trade-treaty/>.

- Is it possible to adopt a tracing mechanism to monitor the transfer and presence of SALW in the MENA region?
- How can we ensure all SALW are properly marked and documented?
- How can the League negate or reduce the use of SALW against civilians or in civilian populated areas?
- How can controls of SALW be increased?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Arms Transfers and Human Rights: The Impacts on Regions in Conflict](#)
A historical overview of weapons, baseline definitions, international efforts, and specific cases of arms trade are detailed. This serves as a good baseline for knowledge when first attempting to understand the topic.
- [Arms Transfers to the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons for an Effective Arms Trade Treaty](#)
While this was published prior to the completion of the ATT, valuable information is included on Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Detailed is the arms presence, suppliers, arms supplies, and risk of the arms being used to violate international human rights law (IHRL) within each of the five states.
- [Arms Transfer and SALW Controls in the Middle East in North Africa: Mapping Capacity-Building Efforts](#)
This background paper outlines potential measures that can be taken for capacity building for SALW controls within the MENA region. Furthermore, specific information on activity by the League in the early 2000s is detailed.
- [Illicit Trafficking | Small Arms Survey](#)
Illicit trade of SALW is outlined with details on what causes the spread and the presence of the black market. Additional surveys, publications, and links are also provided.