



2023 - 2024

Model Arab League BACKGROUND GUIDE

Summit of Arab Heads of State

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



Original draft by Owen Haynes, Chair of the Summit of Arab Heads of State at the 2024 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable delegates,

Thank you to everyone for your interest in taking part in the 2023-2024 Summit of Arab Heads of State. My name is Owen Haynes, and I am a political science major at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock with a concentration in international studies and a minor in Middle Eastern studies. Through my Model Arab League experiences, I have had numerous wonderful opportunities to both chair and be a delegate in Political Affairs, Palestinian Affairs, the Arab Court of Justice, and Arab Heads of State.

This council is quite different from the others as you will stand in, not as a representative, but as the head of state of your country. That means you might be faced with issues that must be addressed in a time-sensitive manner or with issues your country does not have an official stance on. You, and possibly your partner, must work to ensure that you represent the will of the leader you represent and how they might respond to such situations.

Remaining in character is one of the most important parts of the Model Arab League. It allows the simulations to be as true to life as possible, while also allowing for the hard work of preparation before the conference to not go to waste when one is acting out entirely of line with reality. As you might be able to tell, preparation is another important part of the Model Arab League. Showing up to conferences understanding your country's positions, your assigned head of state, and other issues in the MENA region helps students effectively move through topics and come to creative and promising solutions.

After many conferences, my advice is of course to have fun. But I want to remind everyone that the best way to participate, represent your country, move the council in your desired direction, and win awards is by speaking. Refresh yourself on parliamentary procedure often, and find what points or motions could best help you in an array of circumstances. It is certainly a good idea to try to remember those points and motions. Good luck and I cannot wait to meet you all in Washington!

Best regards,

Owen Haynes

Topic I: Analyzing the effect of Syria’s re-admittance into the Arab League and pursuing the possibility of continued League expansion.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

In March 2011, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad repeatedly used deadly force to quell Arab Spring protests, which later led to the country’s civil war. The cruelty of the war brought international attention to the country, as the world was already watching the Arab Spring unfold. The Syrian government and its allies attacked Syrian citizens and civilian infrastructure, including facilities necessary for clean drinking water.¹ Torture, forced disappearances, and strict censorship, among other human rights violations, were carried out on behalf of the al-Assad regime.² The Arab League tried several times to intervene in the war³ and restore peace to the country.⁴ They offered al-Assad a peace agreement, which he accepted but then disregarded.⁵ Less than two weeks after Syria signed the agreement, the Arab League voted to revoke Syria’s membership.⁶ Syria naturally voted no to the resolution, as did Lebanon and Yemen. Iraq abstained from the vote.⁷ After the removal of Syria, the Arab League continued to operate.

The civil war in Syria morphed into a conflict with several sides, bringing in fighters and weapons from all over the globe. Throughout the development of the war, Syria and its allies were able to retake the land from rebels, terrorist groups, and ethnic groups. Today, the fighting has been reduced to a much smaller area of the country, which is far from Damascus.⁸ The United Arab Emirates and Jordan have worked with Syria to normalize relations in recent years.⁹

¹ *Human rights in Syria*. Amnesty International. (n.d.).

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/>

² Ibid.

³ “The Arab initiative to solve the Syrian crisis.” Al Jazeera, 6 September 2011,

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2011/9/6/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁴ “Arab League to push Syria plan at UN.” Al Jazeera, 17 December 2011,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/12/17/arab-league-to-push-syria-plan-at-un>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵ McDonnell, Patrick J. “Syria signs Arab League deal to pull back military.” Los Angeles Times, 2 November 2011, <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-xpm-2011-nov-02-la-fg-syria-arab-league-20111103-story.html>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁶ Sly, Liz. “Syria suspended from Arab League - The Washington Post.” Washington Post, 12 November 2011 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syria-suspended-from-arab-league/2011/11/12/gIQAvqGxEN_story.html. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Syrian Civil War | Facts & Timeline.” Britannica, 28 July 2023,

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁹ CHEHAYEB, KAREEM, and ABBY SEWELL. “What’s behind Syria’s return to the Arab League?” AP News, 8 May 2023,

Several states met in early May 2023, and later again that month, and voted to accept Syria's re-entry. Yet some states, such as Qatar and Kuwait, are still very cautious when speaking about or working with Syria.¹⁰

B. History in the Arab World

In 2011, a wave of pro-democracy protests started in Tunisia and spread around the Arab world, known to many as the Arab Spring.¹¹ Each Arab nation responded differently to the protests. Top politicians were ousted,¹² laws were changed to appease protesters,¹³ police and security forces used violence against protesters,¹⁴ new constitutions were ratified,¹⁵ and civil wars were started. Libya and Syria were governments that used force against civilians and then fell into civil war.¹⁶ Syrian President Bashar al-Assad oversaw the murder of hundreds of protesters and deployed tanks in neighborhoods to discourage protests.¹⁷ The world called upon the Arab League to take action.

Negotiations between the Syrian government and the Arab League were not fruitful. Syria agreed to a peace plan, but entirely disregarded the Arab League agreement for democratization and an

<https://apnews.com/article/syria-arab-league-cairo-saudi-arabia-qatar-7de1b30587560531dad1df4eb29f4ef3>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹⁰“Arab League brings Syria back into its fold after 12 years.” Al Jazeera, 7 May 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/7/arab-league-agrees-to-bring-syria-back-into-its-fold>. Accessed 30 July 2023. (“Arab League brings Syria back into its fold after 12 years”)

¹¹ Ugarte, Pedro. “The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What's the Legacy of the Uprisings?” Council on Foreign Relations, 3 December 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/article/arab-spring-ten-years-whats-legacy-uprisings>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹²Kirkpatrick, David D. “President of Tunisia Flees; Premier Takes His Place.” The New York Times, 14 January 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/15/world/africa/15tunis.html>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹³Abouzzohour, Yasmina. “Heavy lies the crown: The survival of Arab monarchies, 10 years after the Arab Spring | Brookings.” Brookings Institution, 8 March 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/heavy-lies-the-crown-the-survival-of-arab-monarchies-10-years-after-the-arab-spring/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹⁴Jay, Martin. “Police violence reaching new levels in Morocco with Sunday beatings.” CNN, 30 May 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/30/morocco.protests.violence/index.html>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹⁵“Oman 1996 (rev. 2011) Constitution - Constitute.” Constitute Project, 2011, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Oman_2011. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹⁶Abouzzohour, Yasmina. “Heavy lies the crown: The survival of Arab monarchies, 10 years after the Arab Spring | Brookings.” Brookings Institution, 8 March 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/heavy-lies-the-crown-the-survival-of-arab-monarchies-10-years-after-the-arab-spring/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹⁷“Human rights in Syria Amnesty International.” Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

end to violence against protesters.¹⁸ The Arab League asked the United Nations¹⁹ to intervene with aid,²⁰ but the war has yet to end. Refugees fleeing Syria have found refuge in much of the Arab World, but the strain of refugees has been weighing on the governments in the League and its allies.²¹ President al-Assad and his allies have been able to recapture much of the country and maintain complete control of Damascus,²² to the displeasure of several Arab administrations that funded his enemies. Jordan—which is one of the largest intakers of refugees, coupled with the Palestinian refugee crisis on its other border—began to call for normalization with Syria, partially in hopes that it would end the refugee crisis.²³ The League readmitted Syria, but some of the states are still weary of working with Syria until the President agrees to a peace deal.²⁴

Changing the membership of the Arab League is not necessarily unusual. The Arab League has expanded its membership more than a dozen times since its initial founding in 1945. On three occasions in its history, the League has suspended the membership of a nation and later reinstated its membership: Egypt, Libya, and now Syria.²⁵ Many other states have been allowed to attend conferences and participate as observer states—such as India, Brazil, Venezuela, Chad, and Eritrea—²⁶and other countries like Türkiye have formed partnerships with the League.²⁷

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

¹⁸McDonnell, Patrick J. “Syria signs Arab League deal to pull back military.” Los Angeles Times, 2 November 2011, <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-xpm-2011-nov-02-la-fg-syria-arab-league-20111103-story.html>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

¹⁹“Arab League to push Syria plan at UN.” Al Jazeera, 17 December 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/12/17/arab-league-to-push-syria-plan-at-un>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²⁰Charbonneau, Louis, and Patrick Worsnip. “U.N. assembly adopts resolution condemning Syria.” Reuters, 15 February 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria/u-n-assembly-adopts-resolution-condemning-syria-idUSL5E8DB0BH20120216>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²¹“Syria Refugee Crisis Explained.” USA for UNHCR, 8 July 2022, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²²Duignan, Brian. “Syrian Civil War - Uprising in Syria, 2011–.” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War/Uprising-in-Syria-2011>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²³“Syria agrees to curb drug trade in meeting with Arab ministers.” Al Jazeera, 1 May 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/1/syria-agrees-to-curb-drug-trade-in-arab-ministers-meeting>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²⁴“Arab League brings Syria back into its fold after 12 years.” Al Jazeera, 7 May 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/7/arab-league-agrees-to-bring-syria-back-into-its-fold>. Accessed 30 July 2023. (“Arab League brings Syria back into its fold after 12 years”)

²⁵Zeidan, Adam. “Arab League | History, Purpose, Members, & Achievements.” Britannica, 30 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arab-League>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²⁶“League of Arab States (LAS) partnership with Museum With No Frontiers (MWNF).” League of Arab States (LAS) partnership with Museum With No Frontiers (MWNF), <https://www.museumwnf.org/league-of-arab-states/?page=LAS-member-states.php>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²⁷“Türkiye's Relations with the League of Arab States (AL) / Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” Mfa.gov.tr, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/league-of-arab-states.en.mfa>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

The initiative passed by the Arab League in 2011 asked the Syrian government to do a number of things,²⁸ including holding a democratic presidential election in 2014, establishing a new prime minister, and ending violence against protestors.²⁹ The next step the League took in response to al-Assad was to revoke Syria's membership from the League³⁰ In February 2012, the Arab League sought international help to solve the issues in Syria.³¹

Despite the League's several attempts to resolve the war and humanitarian crisis in Syria, al-Assad remained in control. Since then, Syria has made large strides in normalization efforts with the rest of the League. In 2023, Jordan, for example, began to push for an end to the conflict in Syria.³² Normalization with Syria is how the nations in the League are currently dealing with the issue of Syria's war. If Syria is able to return despite President al-Assad having committed egregious crimes and ostracized himself from the League and the civil war not having ended, it shows that future obstacles for members-in-consideration might not be too strenuous.

The Arab League's willingness to re-invite Syria shows their commitment to cooperation and could mean new opportunities for seats at the table for other countries. The best way forward to expand the League might be to embrace its commitment to cooperation and invite observer states who might not have previously been considered. Disputed territories in the region, such as Western Sahara and Somaliland, could be invited as observers; former Arab League territories, like South Sudan, could as well. Though, this path should be approached cautiously since it could cause political resistance among those countries with complicated ties to those regions. Close collaborations could also be made with countries with strong connections to Arabic or Islamic cultures, such as Indonesia. Geographically close nations and organizations might be considered as possible observers, including the African Union. This process is not boundless and should remain in line with the league of the Charter of the Arab League.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

²⁸“The Arab initiative to solve the Syrian crisis.” Al Jazeera, 6 September 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2011/9/6/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syria-suspended-from-arab-league/2011/11/12/gIOAvqGxEN_story.html

³¹Charbonneau, Louis, and Patrick Worsnip. “U.N. assembly adopts resolution condemning Syria.” Reuters, 15 February 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria/u-n-assembly-adopts-resolution-condemning-syria-idUSL5E8DB0BH20120216>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

³²CHEHAYEB, KAREEM, and ABBY SEWELL. “What's behind Syria's return to the Arab League?” AP News, 8 May 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-arab-league-cairo-saudi-arabia-qatar-7de1b30587560531dad1df4eb29f4ef3>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

- Does your country have a favorable view of Syria following the Arab Spring? If not, in what ways has your country approached the issue in the past? Did your country vote to accept or deny Syria's readmittance, or did you abstain? Has your country been outspoken about this issue?
- Has the re-admittance of Syria into the Arab League tarnished the reputation of the League? Does the reputation of the Arab League have an impact on your country's politics?
- Does it matter that Syria has a history of not respecting the demands of the League by killing protesters? Did your government react similarly to Syria's during the Arab Spring? Has your country tried to normalize relations with Syria since its removal? And how have relations changed since its readmittance?
- Has your country benefited since the readmittance? How could it? How might it have been a detriment to your country, and has it had negative impacts?
- What countries might have a strong argument or stake in joining the League? And would those countries be willing to join?
- How are countries admitted into the Arab League? Does your country believe more countries should be admitted? If so, which ones and why?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Has there been a smooth transition of Syria back into the Arab League? Have there been any difficulties? Will or has the League addressed those difficulties?
- What benefits would allowing more countries into the League bring? Could it allocate more resources? Could it promote regional stability in the areas around MENA–southeast Europe, central Africa, and central Asia?
- If other countries will be invited, what criteria would applicants need to meet? Would they need sizable ethnically Arab groups? Would they only need to speak Arabic? Must they be Muslim majority? Or might they need to simply respect Arabic cultures and wish to work closely with the League?
- Which different distinctions might be given to applicants? Will they be member states, observer states, or some other type of partner state? Which rights would they be afforded in the League?

IV. Additional Resources

[Charter of Arab League](#)

The Charter that establishes the Arab League has information on members and observers in Article I and Annexes 1 and 2.

[Türkiye's Relations with the League of Arab States \(AL\)](#)

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains Türkiye's relationship with the Arab League in this webpage. It also discusses the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum (TAF).

[India - Arab League Relations](#)

In this webpage from the Indian Embassy in Cairo, the Indian government highlights its support for Palestine and its appreciation of its use of the Suez Canal, among statements promoting cooperation between the League and India.

[Venezuela Supports Arab - Latin Cooperation](#)

As a member of OPEC and with a population of around 1.6 million Arabs, Venezuela has a strong case for its current observer status. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela planned in 2021 to strengthen ties between South American and Arab nations.

[Brazil - Arab Trade](#)

This Middle East Monitor article showcases the strong trade relations between Brazil and Arab nations.

[National Syrian Council's Timeline of Events](#)

This timeline from the National Syrian Council (the oppositional government) expresses its understanding of the civil war and political struggles.

[Greece - Arab League Relations](#)

Daily News Egypt explains the relationship between Greece and the League, which includes the League's hope that Greece can represent Arab interests in the European Union.

Topic II: Recommending ways to protect minority ethnic and tribal groups in the MENA region.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Ethnic cleansing, discrimination, and nationalism in general have long been a part of the history of humans. All across the globe, people in the minority are often discriminated against by the majority. In a small number of cases, a majority is oppressed by a ruling minority. Following several decades of repeated genocides against minority groups across the planet, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities in GA resolution 47/135 in 1992.³³ This document afforded many rights to the protected groups listed in the title of the Declaration; however, the Declaration was adopted without a vote and is not legally binding, as is any General Assembly resolution.

In 2022, the United Nations passed GA resolution 76/168 which “promoted” the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.³⁴ The first operative clause reads: “Reaffirms the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law, as proclaimed in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and draws attention to the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, including the provisions on forms of multiple discrimination[.]”³⁵ Although this resolution directs the Secretary-General and Repertoire to assist countries in protecting these groups, this resolution is not legally binding.

B. History in the Arab World

Although today’s Middle East and North Africa region is under Arab control, many ethnic and tribal groups still exist from the time before European, Arab, and Turkish control. Some groups have been more successful than others at surviving and preserving their cultures and languages.

³³Bielefeldt, Heiner, and Michael Wiener. “Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities - Main Page.” United Nations - Office of Legal Affairs, 16 January 2023, https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga_47-135/ga_47-135.html. Accessed 30 July 2023. https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga_47-135/ga_47-135.html

³⁴“Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly.” United Nations Digital Library, 22 June 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3954950?ln=en>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

³⁵ Ibid.

Despite having been in the region for thousands of years, these tribes and ethnic groups in the region continue to face discrimination.

Protections of ethnic groups in the Middle East have been achieved in the past, although protests were often required to gain equal legal protections. Such is the case of the Berbers in Morocco during the Arab Spring.³⁶ Groups in other countries have faced ethnic cleansing, such as the case of the Darfur in Sudan,³⁷ the Isaaq in Somalia,³⁸ the Kurds³⁹ and Ma'dan⁴⁰ in Iraq, and the Yazidis in ISIS territory in Syria.⁴¹ After the liberation of the Arab World from Western colonialism, some groups were never incorporated into society as a whole. The Bidun are a stateless group in Kuwait and are considered illegal residents in their own country. The Bedouin (not to be confused with the previously discussed group) are a tribal group of nomads who travel the desert in North Africa. When Arab states nationalized the deserts and pastures used by these peoples, the people were forced to find other land or to settle in a country with a culture much different than that of the tribe.⁴²

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

In the 1990s, a dispute between King Hassan and Berber partisans in Morocco drew the attention of the United States Department of State due to the mistreatment of the ethnic minority group.⁴³ Berber parties gained a considerable amount of seats in the legislature, and later that year, King Hassan replaced the partisan legislature with a new non-partisan government.⁴⁴ Protests broke

³⁶“Arab Spring inspires Berbers to push for their rights.” The Denver Post, 5 May 2012, <https://www.denverpost.com/2012/05/05/arab-spring-inspires-berbers-to-push-for-their-rights/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

³⁷“Darfur Destroyed: Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan | HRW.” Human Rights Watch, 6 May 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/05/06/darfur-destroyed/ethnic-cleansing-government-and-militia-forces-western-sudan>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

³⁸“Statement on the Isaaq Genocide Committed between 1987 and 1989 by the Somali Government.” Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, 10 August 2022, <https://www.lemkininstitute.com/statements-new-page/statement-on-the-isaac-genocide-committed-between-1987-and-1989-by-the-somali-government>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

³⁹“Introduction : GENOCIDE IN IRAQ: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds.” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/ANFALINT.htm>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁴⁰“Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers including their origins and geographic location.” Refworld, 16 November 2000, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4be668.html>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁴¹“ISIL/Da'esh Committed Genocide of Yazidi, War Crimes against Unarmed Cadets, Military Personnel in Iraq, Investigative Team Head Tells Security Council | UN Press.” UN Press, 10 May 2021, <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14514.doc.htm>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁴²“Bedouin | Definition, People, Customs, & Facts.” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bedouin>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁴³“Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers including their origins and geographic location.” Refworld, 16 November 2000, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4be668.html>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

out from Berbers, who wished for partisan representation in government and for the Berber language to be taught in schools and used in government publications.⁴⁵ Despite protests and political organizing of Berbers, the King adopted a new constitution in 1996, which Berbers felt placed new restraints on them.⁴⁶ After years of activism, recognition of the Berbers was finally added to the Moroccan constitution in 2011.⁴⁷ Jordan goes further and guarantees seats in its legislature to Bedouins.⁴⁸ Lebanon has a similar mechanism that requires the president to be from an ethnic Christian minority group.⁴⁹ There are less fortunate endings for ethnic groups such as the Ma'dan in Iraq, who have been displaced by the hundreds of thousands.⁵⁰ Iraqi elections are structured to allow proportional representation of minority groups, yet voting for those representatives is not exclusive to members of those groups.⁵¹

Closing the gap between the legal rights of Muslim, Arab citizens, and others should be of utmost importance when approaching a solution to this issue. This should especially be considered true for historically mistreated groups in the region. Tribes like the Tuareg⁵² and stateless groups like the Bidun⁵³ face discrimination in the Middle East and North Africa. These people are often denied rights such as education.⁵⁴ In the case of the Berbers, there was a language barrier preventing Berbers from not being educated in their native tongue. The ability to hold office, such as in the case of the Berbers in Morocco in 1993, can be denied.⁵⁵ Housing and employment are areas where ethnic groups will face discrimination in the region.⁵⁶ Any solution to this issue might be written in vagueness so as to not offend any member states. One of the largest obstacles to finding a solution will be states having to admit they mistreat minority groups.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ ABOUYOUB, YOUNES. "Morocco: Reforming the Constitution, Fragmenting Identities." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 6 July 2011, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/44947>. Accessed 30 July 2023. [s://carnegieendowment.org/sada/44947](https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/44947)

⁴⁸ Country profile: Jordan - foreign policy research institute. (n.d.). https://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/jordan_country_study_0.pdf

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State. (n.d.). *Lebanon (01/94)*. U.S. Department of State. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/lebanon/7929.htm>.

⁵⁰ "The Iraqi Government Assault on the Marsh Arabs (A Human Rights Watch Background Paper, January 2003)." Human Rights Watch, 25 January 2003, <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/marsharabs1.htm>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵¹ Al-Mawlawi, A. (2023, March 21). *Is Iraq's sectarian quota system holding the country back?* The Iraq War: 20 years on News | Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/21/is-iraqs-sectarian-quota-system-holding-the-country-back>.

⁵² "Tuareg." Minority Rights Group, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/tuareg-3/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵³ ZOUARI, HOUSSEM. "Human rights in Middle East and North Africa." Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/report-middle-east-and-north-africa/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The treatment of Jewish people will certainly have to be a consideration of the council when finding a solution to this problem. A commitment to protect the human rights of ethnically and religiously Jewish persons in member states could be a possible course of action for the Heads of State. Trying to normalize with Israel is becoming a new trend in the Arab League, but the Arab League has yet to find a consensus on how Arab nations should interact with Israel.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What minority ethnic groups exist in your country? How are they currently being treated by your government? How have they been treated in the past?
- Does your country have a history of regions being controlled by a tribal system?
- Has your country taken steps to protect the rights of these groups? Has your country tried to remove these groups from your territory?
- How have other countries identified groups that warrant protection? How have those countries effectively protected the cultures of those groups?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Who gets to decide which groups will be protected? Should it be up to the individual states? Or should the Arab League of States or another organization decide?
- How would these groups be protected? Would there be an oversight body to ensure groups are actually protected? Should states comply with this hypothetical body?
- Should reparations be awarded to individuals from historically mistreated ethnic groups and tribes?
- Should land be given to those groups? Should resources be devoted to preserving the cultural heritage of these groups? Where would those funds come from?

IV. Additional Resources

[Arab Charter on Human Rights \(2004\)](#)

Arab nations joined together to craft and ratify this 2004 charter on human rights, which has a statement against racism and includes rights such as equal treatment for all persons.

[Minority Rights Group International's Map of Peoples Under Threat.](#)

This interactive map from Minority Rights Group International shows countries where minority groups are especially at risk of genocide or mass killings.

[United Nations Human Rights](#)

This webpage from the United Nations website explains the existing international human rights and provides an accompanying video.

[Encyclopedia Britannica's Peoples of the Middle East Portal](#)

Encyclopedia Britannica offers a portal in which one can learn about 21 different peoples in the Middle East and North Africa.

[International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)

Some Arab League nations have signed onto this United Nations' treaty establishing civil and political rights for humans.

Topic III: Evaluating ways to safeguard regional stability against future regime changes.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The first “Purpose of the United Nations” in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter states:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace[.]⁵⁷

It has been the general census of the world since it first tried to assemble the League of Nations, and then again at the creation of the United Nations, that political stability would be necessary so that neighbors would not fall one after another, or conflicts in a country would not spill into other countries, as did happen in the World Wars. The United Nations' first point of the first article of its Charter establishes that the priority of the world is to promote peace *and security* and to suppress threats to peace. Despite the international commitment to peace and security, 2021 to 2022 saw a 10% global increase in civil unrest.⁵⁸ Recent political instability in the times surrounding presidential elections have caused great civil unrest and attempted coups d'état—such as in the Americas in the United States,⁵⁹ Guatemala,⁶⁰ and Brazil;⁶¹ and in Africa in Zimbabwe,⁶² Gabon,⁶³ and Niger.⁶⁴

⁵⁷“Chapter I: Purposes and Principles (Articles 1-2) | United Nations.” the United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-1>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵⁸ Dlewis. (2022, March 28). Civil unrest and political instability increases due to COVID-19. Vision of Humanity. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/world-less-peaceful-as-civil-unrest-and-political-instability-increases-due-to-covid-19-pandemic/#:~:text=Fuelled%20by%20the%20pandemic%20the,civil%20unrest%20and%20political%20instability.&text=Key%20findings%20from%20the%20Global,Belarus%20recording%20the%20largest%20deterioration>.

⁵⁹ 117th Congress. (2022, December 22). *FINAL REPORT of January 6th*. FINAL REPORT of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-J6-REPORT/html-submitted/index.html>

⁶⁰ Delcid, M. (2023, September 2). Guatemalan president-elect Bernardo Arévalo alleges “ongoing coup.” CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/americas/guatemalan-president-elect-arevalo-alleged-coup-inlt-hnk/index.html>

⁶¹ Martins, L. (2023, April 26). Brazil’s Bolsonaro gives testimony to police on Jan. 8 riot. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/brazil-bolsonaro-police-testimony-riot-deposition-uprising-62604db69fa774c14fa3d9a6ac043d0f>.

⁶² Thomson Reuters. (2023, September 1). Zimbabwe opposition calls for nationwide protests over disputed vote. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/zimbabwe-opposition-calls-nationwide-protests-over-disputed-vote-2023-09-01/>.

⁶³ Al Jazeera. (2023, September 2). Gabon coup leader: No rush to elections and “the same mistakes.” Military News | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/2/gabon-coup-leader-no-rush-to-elections-and-the-same-mistakes>.

⁶⁴ Peltier, E., & Alfa, I. (2023, August 9). *No more coups in West Africa, Nigeria’s leader vowed. Niger called his bluff*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/world/africa/niger-coup-nigeria-military.html>.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has found that governments with slow economic growth are more likely to be near “fragility,” and this is especially true if the governments are already not effective at enforcing their own economic policies.⁶⁵ To avoid fragility, the IMF says that countries with extremely slow economic growth should enact “counter-cyclical policies.” These policies prevent “sharp contractions in economic output.”⁶⁶ Such policies would need international cooperation to prove effective; the IMF also suggests that nations increase their effectiveness, which can be achieved through promoting social equality and spending more on education and healthcare.⁶⁷ “Seizing pivotal moment[s]” is another way countries can escape the perils of fragility, which means that countries have to be willing to take advantage of important current events, such as when Rwanda used healing from the genocide as a way to ensure equality and restore political stability.⁶⁸ Nations that are willing to take the advice of the IMF will likely show promise in not allowing domestic issues to bleed across international borders and burden their neighbors, which could, in turn, cause even more instability in that region.

B. History in the Arab World

Instability has been a modern problem in the Arab World since the end of the First World War. The victors of the war split up the former Ottoman Empire (and colonies from Germany) into arbitrary new nations, often with Western-selected leaders, called mandates.⁶⁹ With this new mandate system in place, France and Britain seized control of the MENA region and began drawing new borders for MENA. New borders left little consideration for tribal, ethnic, and religious groups. Power was often handed to prominent religious figures or wealthy individuals.

Since the mandate system, Arab nations have seen many coups and regime changes, such as the one in Egypt in 1952. The effects of the Cold War between the USSR and the United States resulted in a wave of terrorism overtaking the region. Al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood began spreading from Arab nation to Arab nation. In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq during its War on Terror, believing the Iraqi government had weapons of mass destruction, an invasion and occupation that resulted in over 100,000 deaths.⁷⁰ The United States continues to hold a

⁶⁵Akanbi, Olusegun, et al. “How To Escape The Perils of Fragility.” International Monetary Fund, 3 August 2021, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2021/08/03/how-to-escape-the-perils-of-fragility>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹“Mandate | Definition, System, & Facts.” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mandate-League-of-Nations>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷⁰Hamasaeed, Sarhang. “Iraq Timeline: Since the 2003 War.” United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/iraq-timeline-2003-war>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

presence in Iraq,⁷¹ and has changed the Iraqi government tremendously since the invasion; Saddam Hussein was executed, new political parties were introduced, and new elections were held.⁷² Each Arab country, like Iraq, has its own unique set of issues concerning stability.

In 2011, political stability in the Middle East and North Africa took a turn for the worse when pro-democracy protests began in Tunisia.⁷³ Security forces and police were used to squash protests, but the Tunisian president was eventually ousted.⁷⁴ This led to demonstrations and struggles with government forces in nearly every Arab country. New laws and constitutions were implemented across the region to address the instability that resulted in the coups in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.⁷⁵ Monarchies had less reason to address the concerns of protesters, considering how far removed the citizens were from governmental processes. Every single country that experienced the Arab Spring has reverted back to levels of oppression from before the Spring. The only country that withstood the test of time was Tunisia,⁷⁶ but Tunisia's president has recently plunged the country into chaos and instability after he forcefully took power from Tunisia's highest court and its national legislature.⁷⁷

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

Past solutions for an Arab nation to fend off waves of disruption have been to give in to at least some of the demands of the protesters. Jordan's King had to make several public promises to relinquish some of his power in order to appease protesters, including relinquishing the right to appoint the prime minister and instead giving that right to the parliament.⁷⁸ Saudi King Abdullah gave away 10.7 billion dollars in scholarships, loan forgiveness, and wage increases and

⁷¹Tucker, Eric. "Why U.S. forces remain in Iraq 20 years after 'shock and awe.'" PBS, 15 March 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/why-u-s-forces-remain-in-iraq-20-years-after-shock-and-awe>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷²Hamasaeed, Sarhang. "Iraq Timeline: Since the 2003 War." United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/iraq-timeline-2003-war>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷³"Timeline: How the Arab Spring unfolded | Arab Spring: 10 years on News." Al Jazeera, 14 January 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/14/arab-spring-ten-years-on>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵Abouzzohour, Yasmina. "Heavy lies the crown: The survival of Arab monarchies, 10 years after the Arab Spring | Brookings." Brookings Institution, 8 March 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/heavy-lies-the-crown-the-survival-of-arab-monarchies-10-years-after-the-arab-spring/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷⁶ Ugarte, Pedro. "The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What's the Legacy of the Uprisings?" Council on Foreign Relations, 3 December 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/article/arab-spring-ten-years-whats-legacy-uprisings>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁷⁷Yerkes, Sarah, and Maha Alhomoud. "One Year Later, Tunisia's President Has Reversed Nearly a Decade of Democratic Gains." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 22 July 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/07/22/one-year-later-tunisia-s-president-has-reversed-nearly-decade-of-democratic-gains-pub-87555>. Accessed 30 July 2023

⁷⁸Gavlak, Dale. "Jordan's King Abdullah vows to allow elected cabinets." BBC, 12 June 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13744640>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

promised local elections in order to appease protesters. Moroccan King Mohammad VI had to promise new elections to appease protesters.

Currently, instability in one region of the League has massive effects on other parts of the League. Two examples are Palestine and Syria. Refugees from humanitarian crises in these countries often settle in states close to their state of origin. Due to geography, many of those in Yemen who would become refugees are trapped by mountains, deserts, and the sea. Despite having less impact than the refugee crises in other parts of the region, the country continues to experience vast amounts of instability. Global intervention has tried to bring solutions to these present-day issues but usually fails because those committing acts of violence do not want to give up power and are unwilling to cooperate. Peace talks seldom find common ground between two parties. Terrorism still finds places of haven in the region, often by producing their own stable local governments to compete with the legitimacy of the official government.

A trade solution might be the best way to approach this issue. One of the many issues ailing the MENA region is a reliance on oil and natural gas. This places the economic stability of the Arab League in a directly dependent relationship with the global economy. If the oil market changes drastically, the economy in the region could be heavily disrupted. To avoid this dependence, the area could turn to new industries and create more trading partners. Every new trading partner and new industry could mean one more layer of insulation from the global economy. Furthermore, if one country is able to depend upon itself economically, then its neighbors in the League are not likely to become burdened by bleeding-over domestic issues. If one neighbor's economy crashes, economic diversity means the other neighbors have less danger of crashing too.

Other approaches could include election safe-guarding through a number of possible, yet challenging ways. Finding a reasonable balance between the advancement of the region and the political sovereignty of each state would be necessary. Oversight bodies could be created, which would face similar issues as safeguarding. How such a body would operate and who would be on the body would need to be addressed. The potential benefits should outweigh the sovereignty concerns of each state. Peace deals have been unsuccessful for the League, but promoting peace through resolutions shows where the sentiments of the League lie. This public support for peace could help resolve an issue, but promises for peace with no eventual fruition might be embarrassing politically.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is the current stability in the Middle East and North Africa and its subregions? Which member nations have stable governments? Which ones do not?

- What recent regime changes have happened in or around your country? Is your country currently threatened by an unstable neighbor?
- How frequent are regime changes in the Middle East? Do political scientists expect future turbulence in the area?
- Does your country have a contingency plan for what happens if a neighbor collapses? Could your country be prepared to assist with a major humanitarian crisis?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What is the League's opinion on preventing future abrupt regime changes? Is that an invasion of self-determination and sovereignty?
- Will this resolution prevent countries from making future willing changes to their government?
- What could the League do to ensure that the effects of future regime changes do not spill over borders? Would the action plan be feasible? How would countries be incentivized to participate in the plan?
- Would countries be encouraged to globalize and diversify their economies to decrease dependence on the region? Would doing so risk the cultural preservation of the Arab World?

IV. Additional Resources

[Obama Administration's Plan to Build Political Stability in MENA](#)

This Obama administration plan to promote political stability in the Middle East and North Africa recognizes the importance of MENA fossil fuels to the global economy, aims to combat terrorism in the region, and directly supports Israel while opposing Iran.

[United Nations Rule of Law](#)

The United Nations website asserts that its rule of law assumes that laws should be well known, equally applied to any party, and fall in line with human rights.

[Creating a Political Strategy for Stabilizing Fragile States - Brookings](#)

This Brookings commentary piece from two foreign policy experts outlines what steps fragile states can take to avoid falling into further instability.

[Stable Governance - USIP](#)

The United States Institute of Peace states that the necessary conditions for a stable government include many things, including civic engagement and political accountability.

[Women's and the Arab Spring](#)

This 2016 United Nations article outlines the part that women played in the Arab Spring, and how they were affected by the civil unrest and the changes it brought.

Topic IV: Developing League-wide free speech standards while recognizing the role of government authority.

I. Introduction to the Topic:

A. General Background

Liberal political beliefs of individualism in reaction to colonialism exploded at the turn of the 19th century. Ever since, freedom of speech—along with freedom of expression, protest, press, or publication—have been pillars in Western culture. Of course, freedoms and specific laws about and limitations to these freedoms differ from country to country. Differences in freedom of the press, laws about hate speech, and freedom to criticize the government are just some of the differences that one would find between countries with “free speech.” Although, different interpretations of the term “free speech” are just as diverse as its forms.

The influence the West gained by winning the Second World War helped it implement the United Nations’ 30 human rights, among which is the freedom of expression.⁷⁹ The United Nations reinforced its appreciation of freedom of speech by ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Whereas the International Declaration of Human Rights is found in the United Nations Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is an agreement among nations that can be legally binding if countries agree.

B. History in the Arab World

Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.⁸⁰ However, the Arab League produced its own Arab Charter on Human Rights in 1994, signed by all member nations. The Charter guaranteed the freedoms of “thought, conscience, and opinion,” of “freedom of assembly and association,” “to participate in the cultural life, enjoy literary and artistic production and be given the chance to advance his artistic thought and creative talent.” However, it never protected the right of expression or speech.

The Arab Charter on Human Rights was rewritten in 2004⁸¹ and went into effect in 2008. A year after it went into effect, it had only been ratified by Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Libya, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen—ten of the 22 member nations.

⁷⁹“Freedom of expression and opinion | OHCHR.” ohchr, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/freedom-expression-and-opinion>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁸⁰OHCHR Dashboard, <https://indicators.ohchr.org/>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁸¹“Arab Charter on Human Rights.” United Nations Digital Library System, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/551368?ln=en>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁸² The new Charter included the right to “information and to freedom of opinion and expression.” The next text read: “Such rights and freedoms shall be exercised in conformity with the fundamental values of society and shall be subject only to such limitations as are required to ensure respect for the rights or reputation of others or the protection of national security, public order and public health or morals.”⁸³ Therefore, governments are still allowed to place restrictions on freedom of speech.

Freedom of the press has been heavily limited in the MENA region, especially in the years since the Arab Spring. Egypt had zero journalists imprisoned in 2012 but had 26 journalists jailed in 2019. Bahrain had zero journalists imprisoned in 2009 but had six in 2019. Access and free use of the Internet have become complicated in the years since the Arab Spring. By the end of 2019, Egypt’s Internet Freedom Score from Freedom House fell from 49 in 2006 to 26 in 2019. Four years later, Libya’s government passed a widely criticized anti-cybercrime law.⁸⁴ Recent famous cases of jailed or assassinated journalists have been those of Omar Radi and Jamal Khashoggi.

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

Past solutions to this topic have been shaky in the region. Unwilling states can either disregard their agreements or simply not sign such agreements. Journalists continue to be jailed across MENA, and people have begun to be arrested for their social media posts.⁸⁵ Criticisms of the governments during the Arab Spring on social media, in publication, and in person were hard to suppress during the Arab Spring, but as governments began to regain power from the pro-democracy protesters, criticisms began to be limited. However, it should be noted that many of the agreements about the right to freedom of speech in the Middle East and North Africa usually stipulate that governments can limit the freedom of speech for reasons to avoid detriment to the country.

The largest obstacle to finding a solution to this topic will certainly be the issues of state sovereignty and self-determination among states. The Charter of the Arab League stipulates that member states will make no attempt to change the form of government of one another. New rules that seek to expand the rights of citizens of the Arab League must be ratified by every member state to be effective. States must be willing to accept new laws in their own countries. Some

⁸²RISHMAWI, MERVAT. “The Arab Charter on Human Rights.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 6 October 2009, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/23951>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁸³“Arab Charter on Human Rights.” United Nations Digital Library System, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/551368?ln=en>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁸⁴“Libya: Revoke Repressive Anti-Cybercrime Law.” Human Rights Watch, 3 April 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/03/libya-revoke-repressive-anti-cybercrime-law>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁸⁵“Morocco: Crackdown on Social Media Critics.” Human Rights Watch, 5 February 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/05/morocco-crackdown-social-media-critics>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

countries that wish not to be held legally responsible for suppressing beliefs and speech are likely not to agree to such an agreement. Certain countries might not fear arbitration, and will sign on to a free speech resolution only for bettering their global image but have no intention to follow through with their promises.

Perhaps the way to get countries to agree to a free speech resolution is by negotiating. Countries in a tough position to respect such an agreement could be persuaded if offered certain incentives by the League. Or, maybe the way to get hard-to-sign countries to sign on is by making the resolution purposefully vague. This would allow for committed countries to exceed expectations, while the other countries in the region can save face. Such a crossroads is where delegates should be very careful in researching their country's positions. A delegate should consider if their country would demand nothing but progress, or if they are okay with some countries taking more relaxed stances.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are the views of free speech in your nation? Do citizens expect freedom of expression? Does your government offer such and similar protections?
- Does the success and longevity of your government or administration require that speech not be free? Is it necessary for stability that speech not be free?
- Has the League put any of these measures in place in the past? Were they effective? What downsides did they have? What was the effect in your country, and how did your population react?
- Does your country support free speech? Would your country prefer it if only some people had freedom of speech? Who are those people? Is it only those who agree with your government? Is it only men?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How could the League close the disparity between the freedom of speech between men and women?
- Does recognition of the role of government authority outweigh the loss of sovereignty states are likely to face with League-wide regulations?
- How will the concerns of member states with less bargaining power be reflected in the new standards that will be applied equally across the League?
- To what extent will member states still be allowed to regulate their own communications laws?
- Will journalists be given special protections?
- Will a group exist to oversee compliance with these regulations? Will that group have the power to discipline noncompliant states?

IV. Additional Resources

[Article19 Middle East Talk](#)

A panel at a 2017 Article19 event discusses the digital rights of queer communities in select Middle Eastern and North African countries.

[Freedom House March 2023](#)

Freedom House piece which discusses how freedom has marginally improved in the region.

[Reporters Without Borders Map](#)

Reporters Without Borders produces a yearly interactive map. The map from 2023 ranks 180 countries, including all of the Arab League, on press freedom.

[UNESCO Global Trends in Press Freedom](#)

The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's 2021/2022 report on press freedom reports that freedom of press violations occurred in most countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.