



Model Arab League

Annotated Bibliography for Comoros

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This annotated bibliography was created to serve as a research resource for students taking part in the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations' Model Arab League Program. With the understanding that research can be intimidating and time consuming, an effort was made to find a set of scholarly articles that give a detailed background and thorough account of the current situation for this League of Arab States member. Included are annotations designed to give a description of the source with the intention of students completing the research on their own. There has been an attempt to focus on more contemporary scholarship, specifically post-9/11 and post-2011 (so-called "Arab Spring") where possible, as these are two phenomena that fundamentally changed politics in the Arab world. These sources should provide students with a solid basis for understanding the country they are representing in both regionally and globally significant issues as well as the interests of other countries within the League of Arab States.

1. Bruce Baker, "Comoros: The Search for Viability," *Civil Wars*, Volume 11, Number 3, September 2009, pp. 215-233. •• Despite being a union of small islands far south and removed from what is considered the Arab world, the Comoros islands remain party to the League of Arab States and face many of the same internal issues that its larger counterparts confront. Located in a strategic position for sea trade, the islands were once a colony of France and only achieved independence relatively recently. While the islands are a union today, their unionization did not come without many problems including coups, separatist movements, and widespread corruption.
2. Maurice Garnier and Mark Schafer, "Educational Model and Expansion of Enrollments in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Sociology of Education*, Volume 79, Number 2, April 2006, pp. 153-175. •• Due to its unique geographical location, it is helpful to analyze the Comoros in the African context as well as the Arab context. Education in Sub-Saharan Africa has typically lagged behind the rest of the world, however recent findings are showing promising trends of large increases in school enrollment. Interestingly, there are significant statistical differences between levels of enrollment increases in former British and French colonies, as well as Christian and Muslim majority countries.
3. Timothy S. Rich, "Island Microstates and Political Contention: An Exploratory Analysis of Cape Verde and Comoros," *African and Asian Studies*, Volume 7, 2008, pp. 217-233. •• Studying Comoros' history reveals a very fragile and divided group of islands that have almost institutionalized the *coup d'état* as the primary means of transition of power. As an island microstate however, there are examples of more stable and democratic nations like Cape Verde, and this article explores theoretical means by which Comoros may be able to achieve a greater level of stability and good governance. Most notable and relevant among these for participation in the Arab League is policies pertaining to

emigration and remittances.

4. Algernon de Horsey, "On the Comoro Islands," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Volume 34, 1864, pp. 258-263. •• This very short article gives the reader a 19th century perspective on the Comoros islands. Specifically, the author describes the geography, trading, and agriculture of each island, of which much remains the same today.
5. Hantamalala Rafalimanana and Charles F. Westoff, "Potential Effects on Fertility and Child Health and Survival of Birth-Spacing Preferences in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Studies in Family Planning*, Volume 31, Number 2, June 2000, pp. 99-110. •• As women in developing countries gain knowledge of and increased access to family planning and birth control methods, they tend to want to wait longer to have children and have less children overall. This is true for many Sub-Saharan African states including Comoros. Unfortunately, cultural ideas of Comorian childbearing do not coincide with Comorian women's own desires for timing and quantity of children. Hypothetically, if Comorian women's desires for increased timing between births and fewer children overall became the norm, there may be significant positive consequences in terms of the health of Comorian citizens.
6. Howard French, "The Mercenary Position," *Transition*, Number 73, 1997, pp. 110-121. •• Given France's meddlesome postcolonial interference in Comoros, it comes as no surprise that the tiny island country has had such a tumultuous history. In many former European colonies, mercenaries were employed to impose and depose dictatorial regimes at a rapid pace. Bob Denard is one of these mercenaries and he had the most significant presence in Comoros. With this abusive historic relationship in mind, one may presume heavily anti-European and/or anti-Western sentiments among the Comorian populace.
7. "COMOROS: Moheli Island 'Under Siege'," *Africa Research Bulletin*, Political, Social, and Cultural Series, Volume 47, Issue 4, 2010, pp. 18373A-18374A. •• This short article describes some of the modern political contention that is going on among Comorian islands. Interestingly, the article reports the Comorian President's thankfulness for Libyan military aid in maintaining stability, while others condemn the assistance.
8. "Comoros Islands: Military Action Approved," *Africa Research Bulletin*, Political, Social, and Cultural Series, Volume 45, Issue 2, March 2008, pp. 17428A-17429B. •• Another short article from the Africa Research Bulletin giving insight into the internal divisions of the Comoros Islands. In this case, the island of Anjouan has an insurrection occurring, and African Union (AU) states as well as some European countries have

pledged assistance to the President of Comoros.

9. Ali Nabwa, "Media Problems in the Comoros," *Index on Censorship*, Volume 9, Issue 2, 1980, pp. 33-37. •• Post-independence, the President of Comoros attempted to reclaim Comorian heritage by starting a mass literacy campaign and create credible local media outlets. As in many Sub-Saharan post-colonial countries, this feat proved to be much more difficult than anticipated due to lack of resources, competency, and strict government controls.
10. Edward A. Alpers, "Indian Ocean Africa: The Island Factor," *Emergences*, Volume 10,, Number 2, 2000, pp. 373-382. •• Most scholarship about Africa tends to focus solely on continental Africa and ignores the plethora of islands on Africa's coasts which play a significant part in African and global history. Specifically, in terms of the islands of the eastern coast of Africa, they have been historically important for trade (goods and slaves) between various European powers, Arab Sultanates, and Southeast Asia. Because of their strategic value in shipping routes, many of the Indian Ocean African islands were hotly contested for a number of centuries. Comoros stands out as a set of these islands; a valuable port location on the southeast African coast.
11. Elise E. Granek and Mark A. Brown, "Co-Management Approach to Marine Conservation in Moheli, Comoros Islands," *Conservation Biology*, Volume 19, Issue6, December 2005, pp. 1724-1732. •• Being a set of volcanic islands, the Comoros are home to a wealth of biodiversity both marine and on land. Despite the country's many conflicts and coups that dot its history along with an ever growing global population and continuous overfishing, the island of Moheli has managed to protect its environment in a unique way. This article gives an overview of the co-management method being used in the area and how it has created and maintained local investment in the upkeep and protection of their reserve.
12. Hamdy A. Hassan, "The Comoros and the Crisis of Building a National State," *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Volume 2, Issue 2, May 2009, pp. 229-239. •• The history of the Comoros is essential to understanding how the islands became a part of the Arab League and the state's current role within the organization. Because of its distance from the core of the Arab world, it appears that the Arab League has largely ignored the political upheavals in the Comoros and left it to the African Union to handle Comorian problems. More recently, both the U.S. and Iran have taken an interest in the Comoros due to post-9/11 and War on Terror era interest in majority Muslim nations' politics.