



# **2025-2026**

## **Model Arab League**

### **BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**Arab Court of Justice**

[ncusar.org/modelarableague](https://ncusar.org/modelarableague)



**Original draft by Natalie Sieren, Chief Justice of the Arab Court of Justice at the 2026 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations**

Honorable Justices,

My name is Natalie Sieren, and I am honored to serve as the Chief Justice of this year's Arab Court of Justice. I am currently a junior at Northeastern University, majoring in History, Culture, and Law, with minors in International Affairs and Public Policy. This will be my third year participating in Model Arab League and my third time in the Arab Court of Justice. I look forward to meeting all of you in my favorite committee!

The Arab Court of Justice is unlike any other committee in Model Arab League. There is no resolution-writing process or traditional moderated debate. Instead, this committee simulates an international court—meaning your success depends on well-crafted arguments, strong legal reasoning, and research skills. You will not only represent a country bringing or responding to a case, but also serve as an impartial justice for the other cases.

One of the most important things to know before we begin is that deadlines matter. Because this committee functions like a real court, your memorials and evidence binders must be submitted before the conference starts to give your opponents time to respond. Meeting these deadlines is essential for ensuring a positive conference experience for you and your fellow justices.

Lastly, I want to emphasize that the cases you'll be working with are not just theoretical, but a reflection of real and ongoing challenges in international law and politics across the Arab League. I advise you to put considerable thought and care into your cases.

I know this committee is challenging. I am here as a resource if you need any help. Feel free to reach out to me at [sieren.n@northeastern.edu](mailto:sieren.n@northeastern.edu) with any questions. I'm excited to see what you bring to the bench!

Best of luck,  
Natalie Sieren

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## **Case I: The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria v. The Kingdom of Morocco**

Regarding the alleged intelligence gathering network in the Western Sahara

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria has filed suit against the Kingdom of Morocco concerning alleged covert intelligence operations carried out in Western Sahara. Algeria asserts that Moroccan agents have been secretly operating in the area under false identities—posing as journalists, aid workers, and civilians to surveil pro-independence Sahrawi activists and gather sensitive information on Algerian diplomatic efforts.

In 2021, Algeria severed diplomatic ties with Morocco, where the Western Sahara was the primary point of contention. The conflict over the region is not new. Since the UN-brokered ceasefire in 1991, the status of Western Sahara has remained unresolved. On one side of the dispute, Morocco views the territory as part of its sovereign state. In contrast, Algeria supports the Polisario Front, which calls for Sahrawi independence.

Algeria sees the use of spyware, such as the notable Pegasus program, as a threat to its national sovereignty and a form of escalation of already tense relations. Morocco maintains that it is implementing internal security measures within what it considers its sovereign territory, hence denying any legal wrongdoing.

The Court will investigate these findings and issue a ruling on the claims above. Information on the details of the alleged 'Moroccan spy network' is still ongoing. Therefore, the Court will not only have to consider national security and unlawful interference, but also grapple with the legal status of Western Sahara under international law.

### **Further Resources**

1. "Managing Tensions between Algeria and Morocco ." *International Crisis Group*, 29 Nov. 2024,  
[www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/247-algeria-morocco-western-sahara/managing-tensions-between](http://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/247-algeria-morocco-western-sahara/managing-tensions-between).
2. "World Report 2024: Rights Trends in Morocco and Western Sahara." *Human Rights Watch*, 11 Jan. 2024,  
[www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/morocco-and-western-sahara#1bdb61](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/morocco-and-western-sahara#1bdb61).
3. "Pegasus: From Its Own King to Algeria, the Infinite Reach of Morocco's Intelligence Services." *Middle East Eye*, 21 July 2021,  
[www.middleeasteye.net/news/pegasus-morocco-king-macron-targeted-intelligence-reach](http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/pegasus-morocco-king-macron-targeted-intelligence-reach).
4. ICJ Advisory opinion on Western Sahara, 1975.

## **Case II: The Arab Republic of Egypt v. The Hellenic Republic of Greece (represented by Comoros)**

Regarding the trial of nine Egyptians in the aftermath of the 2023 Messenia migrant boat disaster

The Arab Republic of Egypt has filed a lawsuit against the Hellenic Republic of Greece, represented in the Arab Court of Justice by the Union of the Comoros, concerning the criminal prosecution of nine Egyptians for the 2023 Messenia migrant boat disaster.

In June 2023, the fishing trawler *Adriana* was heading to Italy when it capsized in international waters off the coast of Greece. The ship was carrying approximately 750 migrants, primarily from Egypt, Pakistan, and Syria. The disaster claimed the lives of an estimated 550 people. Survivor accounts alleged that the Hellenic Coast Guard attempted to tow the vessel into Italian jurisdictional waters, which may have led to its sinking.

In the aftermath, Greek authorities arrested nine Egyptian survivors and charged them with human smuggling. Although a Greek court later dismissed the case due to a lack of jurisdiction, several international human rights organizations have criticized the proceedings as unjust. Greek authorities argue that the arrests were consistent with domestic law and that the later dismissal of charges demonstrates that Greece's judicial system functioned properly and provided a fair process.

Egypt requests that the Court review whether the prosecution of these individuals was lawful. Additionally, questions arise about whether Greece was involved in potential state misconduct in violation of its obligations to migrants and refugees in distress at sea.

### **Further Resources**

1. "Nine Egyptians to Go on Trial in Greece Over Deadly Pylos Shipwreck." *Al Jazeera*, 20 May 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/20/nine-egyptians-to-go-on-trial-in-greece-over-deadly-pylos-shipwreck>
2. "Trial Under Way in Greece Over Pylos Shipwreck That Killed More Than 500." *Al Jazeera*, 21 May 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/21/trial-under-way-in-greece-over-pylos-shipwreck-that-killed-more-than-500>
3. Human Rights Watch. "Greece: Pylos Shipwreck Anniversary – Still No Justice." *Human Rights Watch*, 12 June 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/06/12/greece-pylos-shipwreck-anniversary-still-no-justice>

### **Case III: The Republic of Iraq v. The Republic of Türkiye (represented by Lebanon)**

Regarding the Tigris-Euphrates basin water sharing disputes

The Republic of Iraq has filed a lawsuit against the Republic of Türkiye, represented by the Republic of Lebanon, regarding the 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at promoting an equitable sharing of water resources in the Tigris-Euphrates basin. Since the 1960s, unilateral water plans that altered the rivers' flows, coupled with political tensions between the countries, have strained relations in the basin. The recently signed Framework Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Water Policy between the Republic of Iraq and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Framework, sought to foster a new wave of cooperation.

Iraq asserts that Türkiye has not fulfilled its obligations. Türkiye's continued construction of upstream dams, particularly as part of the Southeastern Anatolia Project. Which have severely reduced water flow into Iraq, harming agriculture, exacerbating drought conditions, and threatening food and water security. Iraq also contends that the water crisis has deepened internal displacement and environmental degradation. Türkiye asserts its sovereign right to manage water resources within its territory and attributes the situation in Iraq to poor water governance and therefore upholds the MoU.

The Court will determine whether Türkiye has acted in good faith to honor its commitments under the 2024 Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **Further Resources**

1. "Water Politics in the Tigris-Euphrates Basin." *Arab Center, Washington DC*, 31 May 2023, [arabcenterdc.org/resource/water-politics-in-the-tigris-euphrates-basin/](https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/water-politics-in-the-tigris-euphrates-basin/).
2. France-Presse, Agence, and Ezgi Akin. "Turkey's Erdogan in Iraq to Talk Security, Water and Oil." *Al-Monitor*, 21 Apr. 2024, [www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/04/turkeys-erdogan-iraq-talk-security-water-and-oil](https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/04/turkeys-erdogan-iraq-talk-security-water-and-oil).
3. "Turkey, Syria and Iraq: Conflict over the Euphrates-Tigris." *Climate Diplomacy*, [climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/turkey-syria-and-iraq-conflict-over-euphrates-tigris](https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/turkey-syria-and-iraq-conflict-over-euphrates-tigris).
4. "26 Agreements Signed between Türkiye and Iraq." *The Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications*, [www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/26-agreements-signed-between-turkiye-and-iraq](https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/26-agreements-signed-between-turkiye-and-iraq)

#### **Case IV: Al Jazeera (represented by Qatar) v. The State of Palestine**

Regarding the temporary suspension of Al Jazeera's operations within Palestine

Al Jazeera Media Network, represented by the State of Qatar, has filed a lawsuit against the State of Palestine concerning its suspension. On January 1st, 2025, the Palestinian Authority ordered the suspension of Al Jazeera's operations in the West Bank. The ban remained in place until May 2025, which barred the network's journalists, technical crews, and other associates from reporting inside Palestine.

The State of Palestine justified the ban as a national security measure, asserting that Al Jazeera was disseminating material that could "provoke strife, incite unrest, and interfere in Palestinian internal affairs." Officials argued that, during a period of turmoil, unchecked media narratives had the potential to exacerbate tensions. Palestine thus framed the suspension as a temporary, proportionate restriction designed to protect public order.

Al Jazeera, however, argues that the ban was an unlawful infringement on press freedom. Furthermore, Palestine's actions of suppressing critical reporting under the guise of security concerns set a dangerous precedent for narrowing human rights.

Al Jazeera requests that the Court evaluate the balance between press freedom and state security. The Court will have to address whether a temporary ban constitutes an abuse of state power under international law.

#### **Further Resources**

1. "Al Jazeera Ban Must Be Lifted, Rights Experts Urge Palestinian Authority | UN News." *United Nations*, United Nations, 13 Jan. 2025, [news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158936](https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158936).
2. Kershner, Isabel. "Al Jazeera Ban Lifted by Palestinian Authority After Months-Long Suspension." *The New York Times*, May 12, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/12/world/middleeast/al-jazeera-ban-palestinian-authority.html>
3. Knell, Yolande. "Palestinian Authority Suspends Al Jazeera TV Channel in West Bank." *BBC News*, BBC, 2 Jan. 2025, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgmxzyrnm8o](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgmxzyrnm8o).
4. "Al Jazeera Slams Palestinian Authority Move to Suspend West Bank Operations." *Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 7 Jan. 2025, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/1/palestinian-authority-suspends-al-jazeera-operations-in-the-west-bank](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/1/palestinian-authority-suspends-al-jazeera-operations-in-the-west-bank).
5. "Palestinian Authorities Suspend Al Jazeera's Operations, Citing Failure to Meet Regulations." *Wafa Agency*, 1 Jan. 2025, [english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/153060](https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/153060).

## **Case V: The Republic of Djibouti v. The Federal Republic of Somalia**

Regarding Somalia's alleged failure to suppress piracy in the Gulf of Aden

The Republic of Djibouti has filed a lawsuit against the Federal Republic of Somalia, concerning Somalia's inadequate prevention and suppression of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and its adjacent maritime zones. Somalia's weak enforcement has allowed pirate networks to operate, posing a threat to commercial shipping, humanitarian aid routes, and regional maritime security.

Since the 2010s, piracy has been significantly declining in the region, but recent reports indicate a resurgence of attacks against commercial vessels. There have been multiple reports of hijackings and hostage situations taking place in waters under Somalia's jurisdiction.

The security of the Horn of Africa and its ports is a high priority for Djibouti. The increase in piracy poses a risk for the region if no action is taken. Djibouti hosts multiple foreign military bases, including those of the US, France, and China. Their presence has also helped contribute to the slowdown of piracy in the area, but there is a risk that if Somalia cannot fulfill its duties, it will further increase the influence of such foreign powers.

Somalia responds that the current government has taken responsibility for handling security to the best of its ability. However, it lacks the institutional capacity, resources, and security infrastructure to maintain effective maritime control, and it has cooperated with international naval missions and regional security efforts.

The Court must decide whether Somalia has failed its due diligence obligations under international law.

### **Further Resources**

1. Donovan, Aidan. "Piracy in Somalia, Its Contribution to Instability, and Its New Path Forward." *International Relations Review*, International Relations Review, 3 Jan. 2023, [www.irreview.org/articles/piracy-in-somalia-its-contribution-to-instability-and-its-new-path-forward](http://www.irreview.org/articles/piracy-in-somalia-its-contribution-to-instability-and-its-new-path-forward).
2. Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC/JA). *Press Statement: Red Sea Threat Update*. December 2023. <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Press-statement-Red-Sea-Threat.pdf>
3. "New Report Highlights Continued Threat of Somali Piracy – ICC – Commercial Crime Services." *ICC*, 10 Apr. 2024, [icc-ccs.org/new-report-highlights-continued-threat-of-somali-piracy/](http://icc-ccs.org/new-report-highlights-continued-threat-of-somali-piracy/).
4. "Djibouti, a Crucial Partner in a Strategic but Unstable Region." *EEAS*, 15 July 2024, [www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/djibouti-crucial-partner-strategic-unstable-region\\_en](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/djibouti-crucial-partner-strategic-unstable-region_en).