



2025-2026

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Joint Defense Council

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Original draft by Madison Feudo, Chair of the Joint Defense Council 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

Esteemed delegates,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 session of the Joint Defense Council for Model Arab League! My name is Madison Feudo, and I am a master's student at the University of Massachusetts Lowell pursuing Peace and Conflict Studies. This will be my third year participating in Model Arab League, having represented countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia on multiple different councils, and my first year participating in a leadership role rather than as a delegate. I am incredibly honored to be your chair for this year's Joint Defense Council, and I hope that your time as a delegate on this council will bring excitement, joy, and the signature touch of challenge that comes with being a MAL delegate.

The Joint Defense Council primarily serves to address military and security-based defense imperatives for the Arab League, but do not forget that political decisions, economic factors, and humanitarian concerns are equally important when considering solutions to the topics. It is critical to encompass every aspect of each issue in your approach to a solution; this will ensure that you are all working towards a single goal, despite the differences you may share in positions or strategy.

For some of you, this may be your first Model Arab League experience, or your first experience with the Joint Defense Council. For others, you may be walking into our council as a seasoned veteran. Regardless of your level of experience, I encourage all delegates to remain open-minded and approach this council and its topics with the level of seriousness and thoughtfulness that they require. I expect every delegate to research thoroughly, remain loyal to your country's policies and positions, and be committed to working together effectively and efficiently to address the issues at hand. It is of the utmost importance that you respect your fellow delegates and the topics of this council. Though you are participating in a simulation of events, the topics this council will be addressing reflect current issues and have real-life implications for millions of individuals. I implore you not to lose sight of that during your time in the Joint Defense Council.

Above all else, your time on this council should serve as an educational opportunity and a way for you to step out of your comfort zone, even if you are returning to the Joint Defense Council for your fourth time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at madisonfeudo@gmail.com. Good luck, and enjoy being a Joint Defense Council delegate!

Sincerely,

Madison Feudo
Joint Defense Council Chair

Topic I: Exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Arab defense measures, particularly as used in conflicts with non-state actors

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The application of technology in military pursuits around the world has become an increasingly common occurrence over the past two decades. In recent years, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) has become pivotal for nations looking to expand their defense and security options in conflict, an outlet that is encouraged by the global community in an effort to keep up with modernization and maintain power over adversaries. The world's leading militaries employ AI across a variety of functions in an effort to enhance their strategic objectives and increase effectiveness in their defense sectors; however, the use of AI in military operations in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region is not quite as advanced as in other regions of the world.

Despite a general lack of advancement currently, some nations have pursued AI through smaller regional bodies. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional union made up of the states of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, functions to achieve coordination, integration, and interconnection among member states in all fields, leading to their unity. Additionally, the GCC works together to advance scientific and technical progress in industry by conducting joint projects and establishing research centers.¹ The member states often share security objectives between themselves and with other members of the Arab League, but the council cannot make substantial military decisions, despite having a Joint Military Command. While approximately 60% of companies in the GCC have incorporated AI for at least one business-related function, few states in the MENA region have seriously pursued the incorporation of AI into their defense systems.² While this largely speaks to the region-wide lack of equal capabilities, an important factor in the slow shift to AI within the region is stability. Currently embroiled in several conflicts, the MENA region lacks the consistent regional stability and security to accurately assess the benefits and implications of AI usage in defense measures.

Though there is a capability gap, AI usage in defense measures is continuing to expand and will eventually become a crucial focus in conducting military operations against hostile actors. In particular, the rise of cyberattacks by non-state actors poses a significant threat to nations and their ability to maintain a strong defense. As non-state actors move further away from frequent physical attacks and shift their focus to online recruitment and destruction, states must adjust their security priorities to address these threats. AI as a mechanism for defense against cyberattacks from both state and non-state actors may prove to be a fruitful endeavor, with defense systems being able to monitor military networks and intelligence platforms to detect any intrusions or unusual activity at a rate

¹ "The Gulf Cooperation Council - about Us." *Gcc-Sg.org*, 2025, www.gcc-sg.org/en/AboutUs/Pages/default.aspx.

² Cooper, Bradley. "Artificial Intelligence Revolutionised Warfare - Defence & Security Middle East." *Defence & Security Middle East*, 3 July 2023, www.defsecme.com/analysis/artificial-intelligence-revolutionised-warfare.

not possible for human operatives.³ Furthermore, AI-based systems can provide states with the ability to detect previously unknown threats, analyze malware, and automate vulnerability management in real-time, which allows cybersecurity professionals to focus on higher-level objectives and produce adequate incident responses. The constant self-evolution of AI technology allows these models to offer a heightened level of defense that standard systems are unable to achieve.⁴ Conversely, the increased use of AI is accompanied by concerns of algorithmic bias and the possibility of targets being falsely identified, potentially increasing the likelihood of unnecessary escalations between state and non-state actors. Preventative measures, such as training, intensive data studies, and implementing best practices for use and development, should be required when considering the incorporation of AI technology in defense.

As the MENA region and the Arab League continue to modernize their military operations and weapons systems, the implementation of AI becomes an increasingly critical objective. In addition to not only implementing AI into the League's defense measures, individual states should prioritize the reevaluation of current systems and technologies to see where AI may be able to enhance or replace existing protocols.⁵ Furthermore, a shift from focusing AI technologies towards offensive military measures and redirecting to defensive capabilities will bolster the national security of Arab states, and a cohesive framework or set of guidelines for AI usage throughout the League could enhance regional security as well.

B. History in the Arab World

Though the increased production and implementation of AI technology systems and assets is a relatively new development, the MENA region has been dabbling in the technology since the 1970s. Beginning with the usage of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), states within the League soon expanded to drone usage for reconnaissance and surveillance missions throughout the following decades, with other developments remaining limited.⁶ Seeing the increase in drone usage by other Arab states, Iran and Türkiye quickly joined in the drone race as a way of boosting their military capabilities while facing economic restrictions. Both nations have strategically used drones and UAVs to advance foreign policy objectives in the region, in turn putting pressure on other Arab states to develop their own offensive and defensive capabilities.

³ Marcin Frąckiewicz. "Artificial Intelligence in the Military: How AI Is Reshaping the Future of War." *TS2 Space*, 20 July 2025,

https://ts2.tech/en/artificial-intelligence-in-the-military-how-ai-is-reshaping-the-future-of-war/#google_vignette.

⁴ Mohamed, Nachaat. "Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Cybersecurity: A Deep Dive into State-of-The-Art Techniques and Future Paradigms." *Knowledge and Information Systems*, vol. 67, Springer Science and Business Media LLC, Apr. 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10115-025-02429-y>.

⁵ Bin Nasser, Nasser. *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Regional Security, Threat Perceptions and the Middle East WMD-Free Zone*. 2025, undir.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/UNIDIR_The_Impact_of_Artificial_Intelligence_on_Regional_Security.pdf.

⁶ Bassant Hassib, and F. Ayad. "The Challenges and Implications of Military Cyber and AI Capabilities in the Middle East: The Geopolitical, Ethical, and Technological Dimensions." *Shaping Smart and Health Ageing*, Jan. 2023, pp. 49–65, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32432-1_4.

While there is no standardized method for utilizing AI by League members, several states have incorporated AI into their military defense systems in similar ways. Throughout the MENA region, AI is prominent in surveillance, autonomous weapons and vehicle systems, and intelligent command and control systems.⁷ As conflicts have erupted in the region, the use of AI-operated drones has increased, achieving both defensive and offensive objectives for states. Member states of the Arab League are actively working on expanding their repertoire of AI strategies and technologies to enhance cybersecurity and increase functionality in combat, objectives that benefit all members and promote League-wide security.

In more recent years, GCC states such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have taken the lead on AI development in the defense sector. Both nations, along with several others within the League, have given priority to increasing the usage of unmanned and artificial systems in an effort to strengthen their respective defense industrial bases.⁸ Additionally, the GCC states have further incentives to incorporate AI technology into their defense and security sectors as a way to supplement the lack of large numbers in their armed forces, a result of smaller national populations. In 2024, Saudi Arabia presented its first-ever unmanned naval military vessel to be powered by AI at the Riyadh World Defense Show, displaying a significant jump in progress for AI in military operations.⁹ However, it is important to note that AI development and use are not exclusive to the GCC states, nor are they alone in their interests in expanding AI technology in defense. This is a League-wide interest, and all member states have a stake in the continued pursuit of AI.

The progress continues throughout the Arab League, but as state capabilities increase, so do those of non-state actors. The low-cost benefit of autonomous drones and other forms of AI weaponry provides non-state actors with accessible avenues for causing destruction and chaos, while also allowing them to compete with the more traditional military capabilities that state armed forces hold.¹⁰ As states consider expanding their use of AI in the military sector, they must also consider how to prevent this technology from falling into the hands of hostile actors.

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

Implementing AI into Arab defense measures, particularly concerning combating non-state actors, is an effort that all member states of the League must band together to undertake. Current AI protocols in military operations should be considered, but new avenues for the incorporation and application of AI systems would need to be discussed to create a comprehensive plan for AI in the defense sector. In states that do not have

⁷ Omer, Noor. "AI as a Force Multiplier in the Middle East Defense Systems." *Innov8.Krd*, 2025, <https://innov8.krd/2714>.

⁸ Rossiter, Ash, and Brendon J. Cannon. "Turkey's Rise as a Drone Power: Trial by Fire." *Defense & Security Analysis*, vol. 38, no. 2, May 2022, pp. 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2022.2068562>.

⁹ "World Defense Show." *Worlddefenseshow.com*, 2025, www.worlddefenseshow.com/en.

¹⁰ Jeremy Julian Sarkin, and Saba Sotoudehfar. "Artificial Intelligence and Arms Races in the Middle East: The Evolution of Technology and Its Implications for Regional and International Security." *Defense & Security Analysis*, vol. 40, no. 1, Taylor & Francis, Jan. 2024, pp. 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2024.2302699>.

existing AI infrastructure, technological capabilities would need to be bolstered through proper funding, with attention to developing the systems and having the necessary resources to utilize AI defense systems properly.

Specific protocols for addressing threats raised by non-state actors should be constructed, with attention to ensuring any AI systems are protected against the manipulation of hostile forces and are unable to be taken by non-state actors for malicious purposes.¹¹ This could be done by creating a systems oversight committee, or by putting advanced technological safeguards in place that would keep out any unwelcome actors.

An evaluation of League-wide security objectives should be discussed and highlighted when exploring the usage of AI in the defense sector. In addition to any League-specific security concerns and objectives, ethical and legal guidelines should be put in place to ensure that the usage of AI complies with international standards and aligns with the goals of the Arab League. By undertaking all of these considerations, states in the League could create a comprehensive AI policy for military action that would not only increase regional security but would also ring the League to par with global developments and modernization efforts.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How can the League work to balance the inevitable increase in AI usage while maintaining regional stability?
- What measures should the League take to ensure that AI defense technology is employed correctly and does not increase threat risks?
- How has your country used AI in defense measures (if applicable), and what has been learned from these instances?
- What implications does AI usage in defense have in the current conflicts occurring in the region?
- What safeguards should be put in place when developing or encouraging the usage of new AI defense measures?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the League prevent AI defense measures from falling into the hands of non-state actors or other hostile parties?
- What are the vulnerabilities created by attacks in states that do not have proficient AI defense capabilities?
- How can the region join the global community in advancing AI technology while maintaining independence and intra-League cooperation?
- What steps can the League take to ensure that AI policies regarding defense align with the collective security interests of all Arab League member states?
- How will the League finance AI defense mechanisms, particularly in member states that do not currently have adequate technological capabilities necessary?

IV. Additional Resources

¹¹ Uri Inspector. "How AI Is Redefining Middle Eastern Warfare." *The National Interest*, 9 May 2024, nationalinterest.org/blog/techland/how-ai-redefining-middle-eastern-warfare-210960.

“Artificial Intelligence Futures for the Arab Region”

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

This report from the UNESCWA outlines a comprehensive analysis of AI, specifically focusing on the implications of AI for the Arab region through the year 2040. While security and defense are not the core focus of this document, it provides important insight as to how AI may be incorporated into various sectors, highlighting capacity building.

“Towards a Tech Exporting Gulf: How the AI Revolution is Reshaping Defence and Politics in the GCC States”

Italian Institute for International Political Studies

This is a publication examining the increase of AI in the GCC states. The authors discuss various aspects of defense and security, while also making a case for EU-Arab cooperation on AI usage and implementation. Though this does not address every state within the Arab League, the publication still provides important insights on how Gulf states are currently utilizing AI and what the benefits of these advances have been.

“The Uncertain Dividends of AI in the Middle East”

The International Institute for Strategic Studies

This article, though short, presents important questions regarding the resource disparity and developments necessary for AI usage to increase throughout the Middle East. It addresses the gap between the Arab region and the rest of the world with regard to AI preparedness and outlines the steps necessary for effective AI development.

AI Preparedness Index

International Monetary Fund

This index, developed by the International Monetary Fund, assesses the level of AI preparedness across multiple countries using indicators such as digital infrastructure, human capital and labor market policies, innovation and economic integration, and regulation and ethics.

Topic II: Establishing a rapid response mechanism for cross-border military escalations and civilian protection

I. Introduction

A. General Background

In modern-day, both small-scale and large-scale conflicts are breaking out constantly, putting civilians everywhere at risk of being caught in the crossfire. In the past, peacekeeping forces and small regional joint military bodies have attempted to quell cross-border escalations with minimal success, leaving conflicts to continue festering for long periods of time without successful intervention. While the goal of peacekeeping is to provide a non-militant force to aid in a conflict, missions often lose their purpose or become so derailed that they are not able to be successful. In border disputes, peacekeeping forces are frequently sabotaged to fail by the actors in the conflict through the cutting off of supplies, interference in responsibilities and duties, and provocation and violent escalation.¹² This, coupled with the scarcity with which peacekeeping missions are sanctioned by international bodies, leaves many cross-border conflicts unresolved and unattended.

A key example of why peacekeeping and de-escalation efforts continue to fail in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region lies in Western policy and influence. While cross-border escalations are an inherently transnational issue, Western policy frameworks maintain a state-centric approach to dissolving conflict, which is not a successful model when applied to all conflicts. Additionally, Western and international policies towards peacekeeping often produce counterproductive outcomes, which either allow conflict to expand or do nothing to stave it off.¹³

The formation of a rapid response mechanism with this history in mind may be the key to efficiently addressing cross-border escalations in the MENA region and providing steadfast protection to civilians in conflict zones. The distinction of the duties of a rapid response force is the focus of this topic - distinguishing how the force operates and how it differs from traditional peacekeeping missions or armed forces.

B. History in the Arab World

In the Arab League, a rapid response mechanism does not currently exist, and has not been successfully created in the past. The extent of regional instability prevalent throughout the League has prevented conflicts from being resolved peacefully for decades, with traditional intervention methods only serving to prolong the fighting. Cross-border escalations, ethnic conflicts, and other causes for concern have increased

¹² Jett, Dennis. "Why Peacekeeping Does Not Promote Peace - Middle East Policy Council." *Middle East Policy Council*, 24 Aug. 2023, mepc.org/essays/why-peacekeeping-does-not-promote-peace/.

¹³ Mansour, Renad, and Mark White. "Why Peacebuilding Fails and What to Do about It." *Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank*, 25 May 2023, www.chathamhouse.org/2025/06/why-peacebuilding-fails-and-what-do-about-it.

risks to individual state and regional security objectives, with no solution currently in sight. In many of the ongoing conflicts, clear outcomes are not promised; instead, evolving forms of violence are apparent, and destruction and bloodshed continue to spread throughout several states in the Arab World.

In the MENA region, a lack of coordination on security objectives has played a critical role in the failure to mitigate cross-border escalations and other minor conflicts before they have the opportunity to expand. As such, this has created a long-term dependency on external actors to aid in intervention, primarily through the promotion of ceasefires with loose terms and minimal severe consequences should the terms of the ceasefire be violated.¹⁴

Some form of a regional response force has been suggested for the MENA region dating back to the 1980s, encouraging a comprehensive defensive framework that would address the prominent security concerns raised by cross-border escalations and other regional scuffles that routinely go unattended. The GCC states have a joint military force, known as the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF), but it does not have the specialized training required to address the multitude of security threats facing the region today. Additionally, the use of the PSF requires unanimous approval by all GCC members for deployment, which increases response time and reduces the likelihood of a force being dispersed to address the conflicts at hand.¹⁵

Though the leaders of Arab states have taken the lead in diplomatic negotiations for larger conflicts throughout the region, they simply do not hold the level of capacity necessary to address all smaller-scale conflicts in an adequate manner. The creation of a rapid response force that could act at the behest of state leaders while not relying on multiple votes to take action could be instrumental in bringing a new age of de-escalation to the region.

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

With regard to a rapid response mechanism, it is important to keep in mind that similar endeavors have not been successful in the past. Strict guidelines would likely be at the forefront of any rapid response mechanism created and endorsed by the League, ensuring that the response mechanism was deployed under the correct circumstances and had clear objectives to act within the bounds of the conflicts being addressed, without creating further unrest or safety concerns for surrounding civilians. Furthermore, discussions regarding the operations of a rapid response mechanism might be beneficial for establishing cross-border travel and operational capacity that is amenable to League states.

¹⁴ Hamzawy, Amr, and Nathan J. Brown. "How Regional Security Dialogues Can Address the Grim Realities in the Middle East." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2025, carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/04/regional-security-middle-east-israel-iran?lang=en.

¹⁵ Mundy, Sam. "Gulf States and Israel Should Form a Rapid Response Force." *Foreign Policy*, 5 Sept. 2022, foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/05/israel-gcc-uae-gulf-arab-states-iran-rapid-response-force-military-defense-nato-security/.

Resolutions should consider resources and personnel capacity when addressing the creation of a rapid response mechanism. What individuals will be a part of this rapid response mechanism? Is it purely on the ground tactical support, or is there a less visible component that provides technological and planning support? Who oversees this mechanism, and how are the necessary resources provided? These are all essential in producing a solution that will inspire longevity and cooperation among League member states.

Finally, it is important to note that joint forces in the Arab League have not been particularly successful in the past. Examine those forces - what worked, and what did not? The creation of a rapid response mechanism must be for the purpose of dispelling conflict, not creating further issues with a non-cohesive body that cannot operate effectively together.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Has your country advocated for a rapid response mechanism or similar security measure in the past? If so, what was the reasoning behind that position? If not, how would such a mechanism benefit your country?
- What steps can be taken to ensure that a rapid response mechanism would be amenable to all League members without posing a threat to national sovereignty and individual military pursuits?
- How might a collective rapid response defense force address security concerns in a way in which a singular military force cannot?
- How can the League pursue a rapid response mechanism successfully, without leaving room for the repeat of past failures?
- In what ways could a rapid response mechanism across the League promote deterrence?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How will the League determine and decide upon the logistic capabilities of a rapid response mechanism to ensure equity and satisfaction for all member states (e.g., number of troops from each state, funding sources, weapons provided)?
- What stipulations are needed to ensure that the forces can act as necessary in response to conflict without violating humanitarian rights in the process?
- How can the rapid response mechanism be constructed in a way that encourages League-wide cooperation beyond shared military and security objectives?
- What training and resources would be needed for the rapid response mechanism to adequately address the concerns of the League?
- How will the League monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the rapid response mechanism?

IV. Additional Resources

[“Can this joint Arab military force succeed where others have failed?”](#)

The Brookings Institution

This article analyzes the past failures of smaller military response forces in the MENA region, noting intra-League cooperation as a necessary cornerstone for success in military endeavors.

“Middle East: ICRC calls for de-escalation and protection of civilians among rising tensions”

International Committee of the Red Cross

This statement from the ICRC addresses ongoing conflicts in the MENA region, requesting attention to the protection of civilians and increased efforts in de-escalation from regional and international actors. While it does not specifically mention a rapid response force, it is an important piece in noting calls for civilian protection within the region.

“Civilian Protection and Middle East Armed Groups: In Search of Authoritative Local Voices”

Human Rights Watch

This article, written by an academic working for Human Rights Watch, highlights the threat that armed groups and small-scale conflicts bring to civilians throughout the region. It also notes the benefits of protecting civilians from armed groups, beyond humanitarian concerns and objectives.

“Why Arabs Lose Wars”

Middle East Forum

This article from the Middle East Forum outlines a variety of reasons why conflict resolution is difficult in the MENA region, noting factors such as culture, education, force gaps, and combined arms operations.

Topic III: Creating a regional security framework to manage the defense implications of growing refugee and internally-displaced persons (IDP) populations, with emphasis on displaced persons from the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Syria

I. Introduction

A. General Background

In the Middle East and North African (MENA) region today, there are more than 45 armed conflicts taking place across a multitude of countries, including Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen. These conflicts have created countless security threats, infrastructure vulnerabilities, increased organized crime, the creation of failed states, and more. In addition to these threats, a major security risk lies in the movement of displaced people and refugees.

The movement and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) has caused concern globally for decades, specifically regarding the latent security challenges and risks that accompany a mass influx of people from another country or countries. One of the largest concerns of host governments is whether or not the population of incoming refugees contains enemy combatants, individuals who seek refuge as a cover to continue to engage in conflict beyond the soil of their home or originating country.¹⁶ Beyond the risk of enemy combatants, a substantial increase in people in any country can cause strain on necessary resources such as food, water, and hygienic products, and can create discord among local communities if not properly addressed. In 2024, a case study analyzing the security threats posed by Syrian refugees in Germany was published, reporting findings that while there was no significant evidence that the refugee population left Germany more susceptible to violent crimes and terrorist attacks, a perceived risk to security and lack of security measures in place resulted in multiple instances of small-scale conflict between refugees and native Germans.¹⁷

While any security framework should apply to all refugees and IDPs, this topic emphasizes those populations originating from Syrian, Gaza, and West Bank territories in light of the ongoing conflict and its joint security and humanitarian implications.

B. History in the Arab World

In 2020, approximately 33 million people migrated or were displaced from Arab countries, with the top two countries of origin being the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine.¹⁸ In light of the October 7th attacks and the increased campaign against Palestinian territories over the past two years, that number has risen exponentially, with refugees and IDPs flooding surrounding countries in search of support and safety. While

¹⁶ Sharon Stanton Russell. (2017, March 2). *Refugees: Risks and Challenges Worldwide*. Migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-risks-and-challenges-worldwide>

¹⁷ Barakat, A. (2024). The Syrian refugee crisis and global security threats. *Syria Studies*, 15(2). <https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/syria/article/view/2730/2096>

¹⁸ *Addressing migration issues in the Arab region Briefing for United Nations Resident Coordinators*. (2023). <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/migration-issues-arab-region-english.pdf>

many countries, such as Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and more, have welcomed refugees into their states, others have struggled with the presence of refugees and the threats that come with accepting large populations through their borders. Lebanon, which has historically had one of the largest Syrian refugee populations in the League, faced security challenges when the influx of refugees began to strain scarce resources in the country, triggering social and political unrest among local citizens who were displeased with the decisions of their government to take in vulnerable populations.¹⁹

In response to the concerns raised by refugee and IDP populations, many states have attempted to change their border policies to decrease the likelihood of hostile actors entering their country and maintain control over the number of people entering the country at any time. However, a formal immigration process takes time and resources to carry out effectively, and often results in the illegal smuggling of people over the border when addressing vulnerable populations.²⁰ It is important to note that while some form of border patrol or monitoring process may be beneficial to the overall security objectives of Arab states, the system needs to be accommodating for individuals who are fleeing violence from another country or actor. The 1965 Casablanca Protocol attempted to strike this balance with regard to Palestinian refugee rights, but has fallen short.

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

In response to the several ongoing conflicts in the region, the implications of hosting record-breaking populations of refugees and IDPs have grown complicated for many members of the League. With people fleeing the dire humanitarian conditions in their home countries, host states are having difficulty navigating the allocation of resources to incoming refugees, as well as struggling to find suitable placements for refugees and IDPs without creating further unrest.²¹ While many League states are sympathetic to the struggles facing these populations, accepting them into national territory brings forth the aforementioned risks of internal conflict, resource strain and scarcity, and increased crime rates.

Resolutions to this issue will need to effectively address the security concerns that accompany the displacement of people on a large scale, while maintaining the dignity and rights of those affected by the ongoing conflicts. This will be crucial for the successful implementation of a security framework, both for upholding the safety of refugee and IDP populations and for addressing the concerns of the native state populations. Consider the benefits of policies directed towards the structure and reinforcement of refugee

¹⁹ Crisp, J. (2016, April). *The Syrian Refugee Emergency: Implications for State Security and the International Humanitarian System*. Middle East Institute. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/syrian-refugee-emergency-implications-state-security-and-international-humanitarian>

²⁰ Yahya, M., & Muasher, M. (2018, October 18). *Refugee Crises in the Arab World*. Carnegieendowment.org. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2018/10/refugee-crises-in-the-arab-world?lang=en>

²¹ Lischer, S. K. (2017, September 29). *The Global Refugee Crisis: Regional Destabilization & Humanitarian Protection* | American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Wwww.amacad.org. <https://www.amacad.org/publication/daedalus/global-refugee-crisis-regional-destabilization-humanitarian-protection>

camps, using local initiatives and support to increase security without jeopardizing the inhabitants.

As solutions are debated, it is important to note that the complexity and severity of conflicts will always fluctuate, as will the needs of refugees and IDPs. Policies and ideas will need to remain flexible to accommodate a variety of conditions, but a general framework is necessary to effectively manage the flow of displaced populations. Remember that while the uncontrolled movement and placement of refugees and IDPs may pose a variety of security threats, you are still dealing with people who have endured immeasurable tragedy. Be sure to balance the defense priorities of the League with the respect for life needed when addressing victims of conflict.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is your country's current refugee and IDP population as a result of the ongoing conflicts in the region?
- What are the League-wide security concerns presented by the large number of refugees and IDPs coming out of conflict zones?
- What measures, if any, have your country and the League taken to manage the increase in refugees and IDPs while addressing related defense and security threats?
- What are the main security challenges faced by the Arab League with the influx of refugees and IDPs?
- How can any current security protocols surrounding refugee and IDP populations within the League be improved or expanded upon to support a regional framework?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the League create a framework that addresses the security challenges raised by large refugee and IDP populations without jeopardizing the integrity and safety of these people?
- What sources will be used to provide funding for this framework without taking away current resources being provided to refugee and IDP populations throughout the League?
- How can international support and aid be leveraged to increase the success of a regional security framework?
- What, if any, measures will be included in the framework to promote reintegration into home territory for refugee and IDP populations when conflict elapses?
- How can this framework be created with a League-wide consensus while being mindful of potentially conflicting diplomatic ties?

IV. Additional Resources

[“A Decade of Displacement in the Middle East and North Africa”](#)
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

This report analyzes the patterns of displacement and refugee populations throughout the MENA region from 2010 to 2019. While all countries are discussed, the report highlights the condition of displaced people in Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, and Egypt, which makes it particularly useful for this topic.

“Syrian Refugee Crisis Threatens the Security and Stability of the Middle East”

The American Security Project

This article focuses on the years-long Syrian refugee crisis, particularly how the number and displacement of refugees can cause security breaches in host countries and threaten the stability of the region.

“Global Report 2024”

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

This global report from the UNHCR addresses refugee trends for the year 2024, with several areas of strategic focus, including internal displacement. The report also includes a region-specific focus on the MENA region. The report also includes a section on protection policies and laws, which could be beneficial when developing a security framework.

“MERNID”

Middle East Research Network on Internal Displacement

This research forum provides countless publications and datasets regarding internal displacement in the region. The network includes analysts from Syria, Yemen, and Iraq who provide insights on displacement and its effects on the region.

Topic IV: Standardizing defense education and joint military training programs to foster strategic cohesion across Arab armed forces

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The key to successful military development and operations lies in the foundations of defense training regimens and the education available to prospective soldiers. Without the investment of the proper resources into education programs specializing in defense measures or developing robust training protocols, military forces would not be able to successfully collaborate to address the growing number of security threats facing the world today. Each state is responsible for training and providing education to its national military forces, but not every state has the necessary resources to provide training and education at the level required to produce a successful military unit. A standard educational curriculum, accompanied by training programs that have been tested and approved by military officials, is crucial when building cohesion among military forces.

The Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP), created by NATO, is an example of a successful standardized regional defense program. The primary goal of the program is to work with partner countries to assist in identifying gaps in education institutions in the defense and military domain. The DEEP program works closely with partner nations and professional military education institutions around the globe to develop specific curricula on a variety of subjects, including counterterrorism, hybrid warfare, resilience, leadership, and more.²² Together, program officials and partner countries take steps to modernize their defense education and training practices, collaborating with international partners and members of civil society where necessary to increase efficiency and accessibility in resources. To date, the DEEP program has over 1,500 subject matter experts, a number that continues to grow each year.

Programs such as DEEP are extraordinarily successful in achieving enhanced military capabilities and cohesion among forces. These programs, in addition to providing educational and operational tools, provide several other benefits to participating nations that can bolster their defense profile: projecting stability to adversaries, capacity building in the defense domain, sustainable reforms and transformations, and the professionalization of armed forces. While these all serve to aid individual states and their security objectives, they are also important deterrents for potentially hostile actors. In the MENA region, reforms of the current defense education institutions and establishing joint training programs throughout the League could be instrumental in building a secure and stable Middle East.

B. History in the Arab World

²² NATO. "Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)." *NATO*, 2025, www.nato.int/cps/uk/natohq/topics_139182.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Currently, there is no League-wide standardized defense training and education program for the MENA region. However, individual states have taken steps towards enhancing their military education initiatives; in 2018, the creation of the G5 Sahel Defense College allowed Mauritania, in collaboration with Niger, Chad, Mali, and Burkina Faso, to train officers that would have otherwise needed to rely on foreign training programs, while simultaneously supporting the modernization of the national armed forces through the defense college.²³ The Defense College remains in operation, but does not capture all of the strategic military matters in its curriculum that an educational institution outside of the region would cover. Furthermore, the lack of external influence presents a challenge when attempting to institute a robust educational program, hindering progress in development.²⁴ Instructors also heavily relied on case studies that took place outside of the MENA region in efforts to prevent the creation of diplomatic distrust, but this too was hindered by a lack of understanding of how other regions contribute to the global military domain.

Another example of a joint military initiative is the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF), the military organ of the GCC. In theory, the PSF is intended to deter and respond to any military aggression waged towards the members of the GCC; however, the PSF is sorely lacking in defense equipment, soldiers, and adequate funding to act in a manner that would protect the security of the region. Despite being created in 1984, the force has engaged in few conflicts, remaining noticeably inactive in the Gulf War and creating a vulnerability in the region's security standing.²⁵ The PSF's consistent lack of involvement in any conflicts has impeded overcoming instability in the region, and is a prime example of why standardization of defense education and training is a necessity for the Arab League.

The Arab League needs to invest in standardizing its defense education and joint military training programs to protect the collective security of all member states. There has been discussion within the region in the past regarding military alliances and cohesive efforts, but none of those endeavors have yet been successful. Although each state harbors individual struggles, the League is unified in its security goals and its need to keep threats from hostile actors at bay. Investing in a unified defense model grounded in training and education reforms will not only support the military domain in the region, but will also decrease League reliance on foreign powers for strategic services.²⁶ If all member states can reach a standardization agreement, the Arab League will be able to boast a level of stability that would garner respect from global competitors and would be capable of efficiently quelling regional conflict and unrest in the future without outside intervention.

²³ Cline, Lawrence E. "Trying to Coordinate Force in the Sahel: The G5 Sahel." *Smallwarsjournal.com*, 2025, smallwarsjournal.com/2020/10/27/trying-coordinate-force-sahel-g5-sahel/.

²⁴ Samaan, Jean-Loup. "Tawazun - the Sahelization of Military Education in Mauritania." *Tawazun.net*, 2021, tawazun.net/english/blog1.php?id=569-tw.

²⁵ Reder, Julian. "The Peninsula Shield Force: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Vestigial Organ." *International Policy Digest*, 8 May 2017, intpolicydigest.org/peninsula-shield-force-gulf-cooperation-council-s-vestigial-organ/.

²⁶ Ghazleh, Mohammad Abu. "A Middle Eastern NATO Appears Necessary, but Not yet Possible | the Washington Institute." *Www.washingtoninstitute.org*, 18 July 2022, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/middle-eastern-nato-appears-necessary-not-yet-possible.

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

As previously stated, military and defense education in the Arab League has largely remained unchanged since the early 2010s, leaving significant gaps in the types of approaches used to train armed forces. Despite individual strides in the military sector, the League still lacks a standardized curriculum and program for defense education. Currently, many national military forces within the League are breaking down due to insufficient resources and the increased corruption of the defense sector. Reforms must be implemented to bring peace, stability, and security to the region.

A shared system for research, continued development, and hosting armed forces trainees should be considered when approaching standardization. In an effort to encourage League-wide cohesion, it might be pertinent to consider how resources will be contributed and what each participating state may offer for the success of a defense education program. The creation of joint military programs may relieve states from having to export their officers for specialized training, but it is important to consider funding and material support when addressing such programs. Will states take turns hosting joint military training programs, or will there be a system of satellite bases for training? Would the joint training programs be connected to the framework for defense education or utilized as a separate operation? These questions will need to be discussed with all League members, and will expand the opportunities for military excellence amongst state and regional forces.

When crafting a solution to this issue, consider the current best practices of the armed forces throughout the League. Through the evaluation of existing exercises and educational institutions, a comprehensive military framework can be established to create a new protocol for defense education and joint military training across the League to encourage strategic cooperation and collaboration.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Does your country currently share any military-based educational or tactical resources with other states in the League? If so, what makes those partnerships successful?
- What are the benefits of a shared defense understanding and educational curriculum throughout the League concerning increasing deterrence?
- What aspects of joint military training programs across other international organizations have been successful?
- How could this standardization increase security and stability throughout the region?
- What resources, if any, could your country offer to the proposed programs to encourage strategic cohesion and promote unity in the League?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What would be the expected contributions from member states in terms of troops, tactical weapons and resources, and infrastructure needs?

- Who would be responsible for determining what training exercises and educational resources are necessary to create a standardized program for the League?
- How will the member states determine the location and content of joint military training exercises?
- What measures will the League take to create unity among military forces while respecting cultural, societal, and ideological differences?
- How will information sharing and military training exercises be conducted in a manner that is equitably accessible for all member states in the League, while also being safeguarded by external powers or hostile actors?

IV. Additional Resources

[“Education and Training”](#)

NATO

This webpage, though not a publication regarding the MENA region, goes into further detail about the extensive programs and efforts put into place by NATO officials to increase defense education and military training. It highlights organizational structure, the importance of these programs, case studies of their training in action, and some of the benefits of their programs that have been observed by partner countries. This may be a good place to further your knowledge on what works when thinking about a cohesive system for armed forces.

[“How Arab Defense Sectors Gain from Civilian Expertise”](#)

Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center

This article outlines the past decade of military struggles throughout the Arab League, citing a variety of reasons why armed forces are failing in the region. However, it also discusses the role of civilians in creating a successful military force, and how this has worked in other countries and regions. It provides some intriguing insights and may lead to out-of-the-box solutions for delegates when approaching this topic in committee.

[“Enhancing Strategic Education in the Middle East: Envisioning a Pan-Arab Security and Defense College”](#)

The Strategy Bridge

This article, which includes an essay from a military education professional, explores the possibility of a defense college for the Arab League and what the benefits of that may be. It provides important background on the history of defense colleges and outlines a template for what could be a successful model in the MENA region, based on past failures in this area and using the successes of other regional and national defense colleges. A solution should not be replicated from this resource, but it provides a new perspective on the need for a standardized defense education system.

[“The African Union Peace and Security Council”](#)

African Union

This leads to the official webpage of the African Union's Peace and Security Council, the body that oversees defense measures and training initiatives. Though this is not a source on the Arab League, several items on this webpage may be of use in providing other examples of success in cohesive training and education methods. In addition to the general information on this page, review the AU Common Defence Pact and the Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy.