



2025-2026

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Political Affairs Council

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Original draft by Kaylee Warner, Chair of the Political Affairs 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

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the Political Affairs Council! My name is Kaylee Warner, and I am delighted to serve as your chair this year for the 2026 Model Arab League Political Affairs Council. I attend Converse University in Spartanburg, South Carolina. This is my third and final year of Model Arab League and my senior year at Converse. I am a triple major in German Studies, History, and Politics. Due to my specific majors, the Political Affairs Council is a thrilling adventure for me to chair. My interest in international politics and diverse topics of debate intersect perfectly. I am excited for another year of debate in the Political Affairs Council with all of you!

This background guide was curated as a starting point for your research. As this is just a guide, I hope you will use your research capabilities to construct thorough solutions. This conference is only fully enjoyed when you are as prepared as you feel you can be. It is best to understand the full scope of the country you will be representing. Understand the form of government, country policy, and financial capacity of the country you are representing. This will help you comprehend and more accurately represent the relationships and dynamics between you and your fellow delegates. Understand where you stand in your country's policy. Keep in mind that your fellow delegates are doing the same, and remember decorum despite any frustration or stagnant periods during debate. Your main goal at this conference is to explore diplomatic procedures, accurately represent your country, and grow as a debater. As your chair, I expect all of you to put your best foot forward and act with diplomacy and integrity.

During your time in debate, please ensure that you are listening to those around you. This is not a one-star show, but instead a place where a plethora of ideas and skills are merged together. All submitted drafts should reflect that there are several schools and debaters in the room. Please use communication skills and diplomacy to your advantage when working with one another. I look forward to watching you learn and grow your skills while debating at nationals.

Best of luck in the research process! I cannot wait to see where your research takes you. I know you will all exceed. If you have any doubts or questions regarding the upcoming conference and the Political Affairs topics, do not hesitate to reach out to me at @KAWarner001@converse.edu.

Best of luck,
Kaylee Warner

Topic I: Addressing the Red Sea security crisis regarding the escalation of tensions and current maritime threats

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The Red Sea is vital for global trade, energy transport, and regional geopolitics. The Red Sea, an inlet of the Indian Ocean, connects the Suez Canal in Egypt to the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. This stretch of water is one of the most travelled waterways in the world.¹ Roughly 12% of global maritime trade passes through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, connecting the Mediterranean via the Suez Canal to the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Countries such as Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen are closely connected to the Red Sea due to location and use.² Countries such as China, Russia, many European powers, and the United States use this trade system and have a great interest in its safety and accessibility.

Recent escalations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Houthi response have undermined maritime security in the region. Houthi forces have targeted commercial ships transitioning in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which they perceive as Israeli or one of its allies. This is why the Red Sea has become home to many attacks on trade goods, especially those that are entering Israel through the Suez Canal. Due to Israel's link to the Suez Canal, the Canal experiences heavy attacks on the flow of goods. The attacks on the ships carrying the trade goods, such as energy goods, consumer goods, food products, and raw goods, have limited economic growth. The limit of economic growth through trade in the Suez Canal has created economic strain on Arab League Nations such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Jordan, and Yemen, as well as many countries outside of the Arab League.

Because of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the Houthis, in support of Hamas, a Palestinian Sunni Islamist group, have retaliated against Israel. This began due to Israel stopping any aid from entering Gaza during the conflict. In doing so, they have created many difficulties for Palestinian civilians to access the necessities of life, including fundamentals like food, water, and medicine. The Houthis, with the encouragement and support of Iran, have since begun their attacks on any goods that are sent to Israel in response to the proclamations of cutting all supplies to Gaza made by Israel on October 9th, 2023.³ These armed attacks destabilized the trade of many other countries due to the presence of non-state actors like the Houthis on shipping lanes and increased piracy off

¹ "Economic Aspects." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 20 July 2025, www.britannica.com/place/Red-Sea/Economic-aspects.

² Imtiaz, Ayman. "The Geopolitics of the Red Sea Crisis: Implications for Global Trade and Security." *Modern Diplomacy*, 26 Apr. 2025, moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/04/26/the-geopolitics-of-the-red-sea-crisis-implications-for-global-trade-and-security/.

³ "Israel Announces 'total' Blockade on Gaza." *Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 9 Oct. 2023, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/israel-announces-total-blockade-on-gaza.

the Yemeni coast. These events have caused not just stress for Israel, but also surrounding countries.

Many countries and companies have since been forced to redirect their goods to obtain safe transport through the region. This costs both time, money and has environmental implications. Countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia have had to increase military patrols and presence within the Red Sea to deter hostiles and pirates. These naval vessels, as well as the commercial ships, are now both under attack by Houthis from their missile and drone strikes.⁴

The Red Sea also contains many political interests. Especially for those outside of the Arab League. Due to the potential and current impacts of continuous harm to trade ships in an area as essential as the Red Sea, many countries have tried to put a stop to the destabilization in the waters. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Iran, China, and several other European nations with different mandates and rules have placed ships and patrols into the international waters. All have either aided the Houthis groups, specifically Iran and China, while others have placed attacks on Houthis' ships, like the United States and the United Kingdom.

The United States and many European nations hold an interest in securing freedom of navigation under international trade laws. They are trying to do this by deploying naval vessels and air strikes. American President: Donald Trump deployed two air campaigns that have caused 550 people to become victims after deploying 774 air strikes between January and May of 2025. While these countries aim to stop the illegal attacks on trade goods, political relationships have caused them to get out of hand and lead to a rise in insurance on trading. These issues have made it nearly impossible for trade goods to enter through the Red Sea, causing them to instead be redirected to ports in various distant locations, most notably South Africa and India. Meanwhile, Iran and Russia are supplying the Houthis attacks. Russia was able to commit to a deal with the Iranian government to provide \$10 million worth of weapons, which are not being circulated to the Houthis. China is also helping the Houthis by gaining access to the region through their military base in Djibouti, and acts as a financial supplier of military goods and weapons. They fund parts of the weapons, such as hydrogen cells that are being used by the Houthis for drone attacks, to limit their heat exposure on surveillance while increasing their range.⁵ Iran and China have also acted as escorts for Houthi ships, as they place drone strikes on commercial vessels and come into contact with Western forces. This was prevalent when a German surveillance aircraft found itself in a position with a Chinese warship that pointed a laser directly at the aircraft on July 2, 2025.⁶ The

⁴ Sainz, Victoria. "The Red Sea Shipping Crisis (2024–2025): Houthi Attacks and Global Trade Disruption." *Atlas Institute for International Affairs*, 27 Mar. 2025,

atlasinstitute.org/the-red-sea-shipping-crisis-2024-2025-houthi-attacks-and-global-trade-disruption/

⁵ Nevola, Luca. "A Red Sea Hall of Mirrors: US and Houthi Statements vs. Actions." *ACLEDA*, 4 Mar. 2025, acleddata.com/report/red-sea-hall-mirrors-us-and-houthi-statements-vs-actions.

⁶ Alasrar, Fatima Abo. "Iran, China, Russia, and the Collapse of Deterrence in the Red Sea." *Atlantic Council*, 24 July 2025, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/iran-china-russia-and-the-collapse-of-deterrence-in-the-red-sea/.

tensions in the Red Sea became even clearer, as the Houthis were no longer a singular threat; all were aiding in the crisis.

Along with the Houthi attacks, other political and military interests have played a huge role in the increasing tensions in the Red Sea. For example, outside influences such as China and the United States hold multiple alliances within the region. China specifically has a strong interest in gaining political strength and influence in the Arab region; therefore, it attempts to gain favor by sending technologies to Iran, which are the prominent force behind the Houthi attacks.⁷ Iran and the Houthis have also continuously aided in the passage of Chinese ships through the region. Meanwhile, these tensions exacerbate as the United States claims that it wants to address the Red Sea security issues to incorporate free trade. Due to these conflicting issues, tensions among all have heightened. The United States and the United Kingdom have declared they will be acting against these attacks in the establishment of Operation Prosperity Guardian. The plan with this operation was to cut supply chains and attacks from the Houthi group, with the help of several powers like Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Seychelles, and Spain.⁸ This operation was and still is ineffective in controlling Houthi attacks, as a mismanagement of detecting the movements and plans of the Houthi group continues.⁹ While the countries participating in Operation Prosperity Guardian lose millions trying to manage and keep up with the Houthis' attacks, countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Djibouti continue to feel the economic implications of these continuous ambushes.¹⁰ Manufacturers and tradesmen in the region continue to fear the cost and threats as they lose millions of dollars per vessel if they are caught in the Houthi attacks.¹¹

The crisis of the Red Sea has led many Arab countries to lose money and potential influence as they try to clear the troubled waters. Without the Red Sea trade route, many goods, most notably the trade of oil, will continue to diminish and eventually cause economic disadvantages within the Arab League.

B. History of the Arab World

⁷ Alasrar, Fatima Abo. "How China Turned the Red Sea into a Strategic Trap for the US." *Atlantic Council*, 5 May 2025, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/how-china-turned-the-red-sea-into-a-strategic-trap-for-the-us/.

⁸ "Statement from Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Ensuring Freedom of Navigation." *U.S. Department of Defense*, 18 Dec. 2023, www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3621110/statement-from-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-ensuring-freedom-of-n/.

⁹ "The Houthis, Operation Prosperity Guardian, and Asymmetric Threats to Global Commerce - Center for Maritime Strategy." *Center for Maritime Strategy - Center for Maritime Strategy*, 17 July 2024, centerformaritimestrategy.org/publications/the-houthis-operation-prosperity-guardian-and-asymmetric-threats-to-global-commerce/.

¹⁰ Liangxiang, Jin. "U.S. Motives in the Red Sea Go beyond Bringing Stability." *Middle East Council on Global Affairs*, 18 Aug. 2024, mecouncil.org/blog_posts/u-s-motives-in-the-red-sea-go-beyond-bringing-stability/.

¹¹ Wells, Jeffrey. "Operation Prosperity Guardian: A Colossal Blunder Demanding an Unyielding Response." *Medium*, The SCIF, 19 Aug. 2024, thescif.org/operation-prosperity-guardian-a-colossal-blunder-demanding-an-unyielding-response-8137eed0bb1c.

Historically, Arab League member states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, and Yemen have maintained a deep strategic interest in the Red Sea due to its vital role as a commercial, geopolitical, and cultural crossroads. The Red Sea has long provided MENA nations with economic advantages and diplomatic opportunities, serving as a maritime gateway linking the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the African continent. Even before the rise of modern trade networks, ancient civilizations in Egypt and Yemen recognized the Red Sea's immense strategic and economic value¹². Due to the location of the Red Sea as a connection to both Europe and Asia. It has always been a source for a plethora of financial opportunities¹³. Before oil was the top trading market in the MENA region, the Red Sea held many other economic valuables. With fishing and minerals, many economic resources were able to be traded to other countries through a faster and therefore cheaper route, using the Red Sea. In the post-colonial era, particularly during the Cold War, the geopolitical landscape of many Arab League nations shifted. The emergence of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which includes key MENA states such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, and Qatar, further enhanced the region's global economic influence, especially after member states raised oil prices in the 1970s.¹⁴ This economic leverage spurred development across the Arab world and increased maritime trade through the Red Sea, elevating its importance as a commercial artery.

However, the region has remained vulnerable to instability. Since the Yemen conflict began in 2014, Iran's support for the Houthis has fueled attacks on commercial vessels and disrupted the traditional maritime security order. In 2015, many Arab League nations, mainly led by Saudi Arabia's naval blockade, economically isolated the Houthis group in Yemen after their takeover of the previous Yemeni government in early January 2015. This began the increase in attacks from the Houthis in the Red Sea. Desperate for supplies after the naval blockade and airstrikes from Saudi Arabia, and US intervention, the Houthis began to pirate and sink ships in the waters around Yemen and further in the Red Sea from 2015 on.¹⁵ As a result, the Red Sea has shifted from being solely a corridor for opportunity to a flashpoint of regional insecurity. Thus, the Red Sea has continued to be a pivotal point where renewed Arab cooperation and strategic vision to safeguard its waters and maintain regional stability are required.

The attacks from 2015 have not been consolidated and have continued. As the Israel-Palestine conflict continues, the Houthis continue to attack ships with the help of Iran. This has created continuous turmoil and insecurity in the region. The constant drone and missile strikes have caused tremendous damage to the economic and political stability of the region. To aid against these attacks, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have

¹² Heath, Nathanael C. "A Red Sea Geopolitics Primer." *Fares Center*, 4 Feb. 2020, sites.tufts.edu/farescenter/a-red-sea-geopolitics-primer/

¹³ "The Strategic Importance of the Red Sea - 16 , - 24 القارات الخمس24." May 2024, 5karat24.com/the-strategic-importance-of-the-red-sea/

¹⁴ Kutlu, Ovunc. "Wars, Crises, Global Economy Drive Oil Prices in History." *Anadolu Ajansı*, 1 Nov. 2015, www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/wars-crises-global-economy-drive-oil-prices-in-history/85231

¹⁵ "Conflict in Yemen and the Red Sea | Global Conflict Tracker." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 26 Mar. 2025, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen

promoted initiatives to increase regional cooperation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.¹⁶ Yet, a unified Arab League maritime security strategy remains undeveloped.

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

Addressing the Red Sea security crisis regarding the escalation of tensions and current maritime threats requires a comprehensive and regionally coordinated approach involving diplomatic, strategic, and infrastructural measures. To be clear, this topic does not involve offensive military action or direct armed conflict, but rather focuses on safeguarding commercial shipping routes, enhancing regional stability, and preventing further escalation through cooperative mechanisms.

Historically, efforts to secure the Red Sea have relied on national naval deployments, informal alliances, and bilateral agreements. While these remain relevant, they must now be adapted to address the complex and transnational nature of modern maritime threats. The Arab League currently lacks a unified body tasked with monitoring maritime security in the Red Sea, despite the region's economic and geopolitical significance. While this is not in place currently, many nations within the League have previously tried to address these issues. In order to adequately address these long-lasting conflicts, solutions should consider the creation of regulatory measures of the Red Sea under the Political Affairs Council. These measures could serve as a platform for real-time communication between member states, coordinate joint naval patrols with non-combat mandates, and support the development of early-warning systems and port security infrastructure. The goal of these discussions is to ensure that member states respond more effectively to piracy, smuggling, and threats posed by non-state actors, while reducing reliance on external military intervention.

Additionally, the council should promote confidence-building measures and diplomatic dialogue among all regional stakeholders, including those impacted by conflicts in Yemen, Sudan, and the Horn of Africa. Enhancing communication and trust among Arab states bordering the Red Sea is essential to preventing miscalculation and fostering long-term maritime stability. Future strategies should also include investment in coastal development and economic resilience, addressing root causes of instability such as poverty, weak governance, and conflict spillover. By establishing new institutional frameworks and prioritizing collective security, the Arab League can take a leading role in protecting one of the world's most vital maritime corridors while promoting regional peace and cooperation.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has your country been affected by Red Sea insecurity?
- How has your country responded to the maritime threats in the Red Sea? Have they taken any actions, and if so, have they been successful?

¹⁶ Behera, Aditya. "The New Red Sea Cold War: Proxy Conflicts, Maritime Threats, and Alliances." *Diplomatist*, 4 Aug. 2025, diplomatist.com/2025/08/04/the-new-red-sea-cold-war-proxy-conflicts-maritime-threats-and-alliances/.

- What are some reliable measures that will continue to ensure sovereignty in nations that are along the Red Sea, while still protecting them?
- How can your country contribute to joint maritime capacity building?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Would your country support a League-led maritime patrol? What conditions would need to be in place for your country to remain in the League-wide patrol?
- How can your country contribute to joint maritime capacity building?
- Can dialogue just between Arab League nations aid in the strengthening of the Red Sea? Would it require further dialogue between non-state actors or even foreign nations?
- What can nations do collaboratively without escalating tensions between Western nations, non-state actors, and other Arab League nations?

IV. Additional Resources

[Red Sea Area](#)

The Website is a hub for many Arab League codes of conduct of international law through the International Maritime Organization. This website directly speaks of the Houthis' attacks in the Red Sea and ways that these non-state actors should be stopped in accordance with many laws and maritime security.

[Djibouti President: We Are Monitoring Red Sea Developments, Reject Targeting of Our Land](#)

A news article written by Abdulhadi Habor discusses plans for nations across the League to disrupt attacks in the Red Sea. The article explains further plans of diplomacy to increase security within the Red Sea and establish regional stability.

[Red Sea Trade: Navigating the Currents of Commerce](#)

Arjunt Sant writes a paper describing the importance of the Red Sea to many nations within the Arab League. The paper also writes about the many threats of the Red Sea from the Houthis, the blockade near the Suez Canal, to environmental factors.

[Red Sea Crisis | Center for International Maritime Security](#)

An article written by Dmitry Filipoff to illustrate the different realms of the Red Sea security crisis can be addressed. The article also encourages the dissection of the failures of many navies across the world in their efforts to address the crisis.

Topic II: Navigating the possibility of a political alliance with Iran and Türkiye within the Arab Region

I. Introduction

A. General Background

In recent years, several Arab League nations that were once hostile towards the Iranian government have successfully attempted to normalize relations with Iran, primarily as an effort to de-escalate the high tensions within the Arab world. This move has also benefited the MENA region economically, as it has boosted trade and economic growth due to Iran's large domestic market and vast energy reserves. Previously, Iran has held a controversial role in the MENA region, due to its involvement in many conflicts outside of its country's boundaries. Specifically, Iran has held many stakes in conflicts such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, through their aiding of nonstate actors.¹⁷ However, more recently, Iran has played a major role in diplomatic relations between countries. As of 2023, in Beijing, with mediation from China, Iraq, and Oman, Saudi Arabia and Iran began official diplomatic ties. They opened or reopened diplomatic operations in both Riyadh and Tehran.¹⁸ Iran also holds access to one of the most important oil chokepoints in the world, carrying over 17 million gallons of oil a day, the Strait of Hormuz. With access to the Strait of Hormuz, many nations can gain financial opportunities that could be hindered without access to the route.¹⁹ If Iran decided to close the trading route for these countries, this could be detrimental for many Gulf countries, as oil is already an integral part of their economies. With the nature of diplomatic promise and ties to the Strait of Hormuz, many nations are beginning to see Iran as a force they need to be on diplomatic terms with, rather than an enemy.

Although some nations, such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen, remain distrustful of Iran's role in the instability of the MENA region, the ongoing political landscape indicates that the foreign perception of Iran in the Arab world has become more positive.²⁰ Recent military actions taken by the United States and Israel against Iran have further complicated these dynamics, prompting some Arab League members to call for restraint and renewed diplomatic efforts to prevent further escalation in the region.

Growing instability in the MENA region has allowed Türkiye to fill a power vacuum, advocating for an independent Arab foreign policy supporting Islamic values.²¹ Crises

¹⁷ Loft, Phillip. "Iran's Influence in the Middle East - House of Commons Library." *House of Commons Library*, United Kingdom Parliament, 25 July 2024, commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9504/.

¹⁸ Cafiero, Giorgio. "A Year Ago, Beijing Brokered an Iran-Saudi Deal. How Does Détente Look Today?" *Atlantic Council*, 6 Mar. 2024, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/iran-saudi-arabia-china-deal-one-year/.

¹⁹ "Can Iran Really Shut down the Strait of Hormuz?" *Al Jazeera*, 24 June 2025, www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/23/can-iran-really-shut-down-the-strait-of-hormuz.

²⁰ Sayeh, Janatan. "Analysis: Iran's Waning Influence in the Arab World." *FDD's Long War Journal*, FDD's Long War Journal, 28 Dec. 2024, www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2024/12/analysis-irans-waning-influence-in-the-arab-world.php.

²¹ "TRT Global - Türkiye Rejects 'baseless' Arab League Accusations." *TRT Global - More News Stories and Insights in 45 Languages*, 5 Mar. 2021, trt.global/world/article/12746556.

such as the Syrian Civil War and the 2017 Gulf Diplomatic Crisis have increased Türkiye's influence in the Arab world.

During the Syrian Civil War, Türkiye became actively involved by funding non-state actors who pushed for the toppling of Bashar al-Assad while also advancing their own interests in the region. This also led to them engaging in a proxy-like conflict against various actors, including the United States and Russia. In 2017, Türkiye supported Qatar during the Gulf Crisis, due to the involvement of different nations in the Arabian Gulf and Egypt attempting to force Qatar to stop supporting pro-Islamic organizations, eventually leading to a blockade of Qatar. In 2021, the crisis was resolved with the Al-Ula Declaration, in which Qatar made no significant concessions, highlighting the failure of the Saudi-led bloc and a diplomatic victory for Türkiye.²² This strengthened Türkiye's regional role by backing Qatar and promoting its vision of soft political Islam.²³

B. History of the Arab World

The Islamic Republic of Iran was established in 1979, following the Islamic Revolution that led to the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Pahlavi Dynasty. This shift in leadership led Iran to adopt a skeptical view of a multitude of religious, social, and political values that most Islamic nations held at the time, thus souring relations with many states in the MENA region.²⁴ Relations came to a boiling point in 1980, after the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) began. Most Islamic nations supported the Iraqi faction due to growing tension towards the Iranians and the policy shifts they made after the revolution. After the conflict, Iran became heavily isolated within the MENA region, yet it was able to showcase its military and political power.²⁵

Since then, Iran's influence in the region has grown dramatically, due to the growing occurrence of proxy warfare and the use of non-state actors to spread Shia ideology across the Arab world, most notably in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. This continues to cause tension among Arab state leadership in the Arab League as they continue to have an overall negative view of Shia ideals, which directly contradict the majority Sunni leadership of the Arab world.²⁶ The heavy use of non-state actors by Iran has also bittered the already negative relationship with the Western hemisphere.

Türkiye, officially known as the Republic of Türkiye, was founded in 1923 after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the majority of the MENA region for more than

²² Guneylioglu, Murat. "Reconsidering Türkiye's Influence on the Syrian Conflict." *Royal United Services Institute*, 31 Jan. 2025, www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/reconsidering-Türkiye-s-influence-syrian-conflict.

²³ "The GCC Crisis: Qatar and Its Neighbors." *Center for International and Regional Studies*, 21 Apr. 2024, cirs.qatar.georgetown.edu/research/research-initiatives/gcc-crisis-qatar-and-its-neighbors/.

²⁴ "Iranian Revolution." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 27 July 2025, www.britannica.com/event/Iranian-Revolution.

²⁵ "Iran-Iraq War." *New World Encyclopedia*, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Iran-Iraq_War. Accessed 7 Aug. 2025.

²⁶ Lee, Sarah. "The Evolution of Shia Islam in Iran: Politics and Beyond." *Number Analytics // Super Easy Data Analysis Tool for Research*, www.numberanalytics.com/blog/evolution-of-shia-islam-in-iran. Accessed 7 Aug. 2025.

600 years. After the creation of the Arab League in 1945, Türkiye maintained limited and cautious relations with the Arab League, primarily because the Turkish government wanted to focus on becoming a bridge between the West and the MENA region, rather than focusing solely on Arab relations. The Turkish government was also aware of the League's sentiment of pan-Arab nationalism, which directly viewed Türkiye's Ottoman past negatively.²⁷ Throughout the remainder of the 20th century, Türkiye maintained a neutral stance with the Arab League, balancing diplomatic support for Arab interests while maintaining a positive image with the Western world and Israel, which recognized it in 1949.

It wasn't until the early 2000s that the Turkish government became interested in expanding its sphere of influence across the Middle East. They sought to deepen relations with other Arab countries while also increasing political and economic ties. Economic integration and trade partnerships became a common goal between Türkiye and individual member states of the Arab League. The Arab Spring uprisings in the 2010s additionally reshaped Türkiye-Arab League relations. The Turkish government supported Islamist uprisings that were against the monarchist and Western-aligned Arab states. More specifically, Türkiye supported the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which was able to overthrow the Egyptian autocratic government in 2010, only to be overthrown by a military coup in 2013.²⁸

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

Navigating the possibility of a political alliance with Iran and Türkiye within the Arab region requires a nuanced, strategic approach that balances pragmatic engagement with the preservation of Arab sovereignty and unity. This topic does not propose full integration of non-Arab states into the Arab League, but rather the exploration of structured, conditional cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as regional stability, trade, and conflict de-escalation. Historically, relations with Iran and Türkiye have been shaped by fluctuating alliances and competing regional ambitions. While these historical dynamics cannot be overlooked, emerging geopolitical realities demand that Arab states reassess how engagement with these powers can serve collective regional goals.

Potential solutions could address evaluating the cost-benefit of formal versus issue-based cooperation. While a formal alliance may prove politically sensitive and complex, which creates limited collaboration on specific issues, there are factors of policy that many of the countries are not divided on, with the policies of Iran and Türkiye. To manage such engagement, it could be beneficial to propose the creation of a framework for regional dialogue, operating under the Political Affairs Council, to facilitate structured and transparent communication with Iran and Türkiye on select matters. Mechanisms such as

²⁷ "Türkiye." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 7 Aug. 2025, www.britannica.com/place/Turkiye.

²⁸ "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Total Collapse - Mena Research Center." *MENA Research Center - Center for Studies in Strategic Studies, Violent and Radical, Women and Childhood, Social, and Islamic Enlightenment in the Middle East and North Africa*, 1 Mar. 2024, www.mena-researchcenter.org/the-muslim-brotherhood-and-the-total-collapse/.

this could ensure that cooperation remains issue-specific, non-binding, and consensual, while also allowing Arab states to maintain a unified front in negotiations.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Would your country support Türkiye, Iran, both, or neither in specific cooperative ventures?
- What red lines must not be crossed in forming alliances?
- How would an alliance with Türkiye or Iran affect existing alliances and partnerships outside of the League?
- How does this potential alliance affect your country's foreign policy either positively or negatively?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What strategies and policies can reduce the tensions and encourage positive engagement among governments?
- What grounds would countries need to have in place in order for the Arab League to create
- Would creating an alliance that is strictly economic or political ensure the cooperation of the Arab League?
- How can the political relations with Iran and Türkiye affect the non-aligned perception of the Arab League on a global scale?

IV. Additional Resources

[National Foreign Policy in the "Century of Türkiye "](#)

This website is a synopsis of Türkiye's foreign policy. It discusses, from Türkiye's point of view, its foreign policy achievements and what they would like to continue to work towards, and what they hope to achieve in the future.

[Iran's Evolving Foreign Policy Structure: Implications for Foreign Relations](#)

This brochure describes Iran's foreign policy and the potential effects it could have. Written by Hamidreza Azizi and published in June of 2024, describes the idea behind many decisions made by the government of Iran and their potential impact.

[Iran Tells Arab League: Like Arab States, Tehran Desires Peace In Syria - Iran Front Page](#)

The news article published by the Iran Front Page, an English-translated news site of Iranian news, describes an account of the Iranian Foreign Minister on his views on the security of Syria. This account followed a statement made by the Arab League after Iranian involvement in Syria.

[Türkiye to attend Arab League summit for first time in 13 years - Turkish Minute](#)

This news article, published by the Turkish Minute, an English translation and review of Turkish news, describes the emotions of Türkiye as they are invited to its first Arab League meeting since 2011. The article gives insight into potential reasons for Türkiye's involvement and presence in the Arab League.

Topic III: Strengthening regional security by seeking out ways to ensure political stability within the Arab League

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Political instability continues to be one of the largest obstacles to regional security in the Arab world. Civil wars, coups, and regional wars have maimed many of the Arab League nations for centuries, and currently inflict many of the nations with the inability to progress politically, economically, and socially. These conflicts hinder many nations from creating unity and agreement in terms of the Arab League, leading to the League searching for ways to create a more stable environment for all member nations and the fate of their people. With regional stability being at the heart of the foundation of the Arab League and its members, the strengthening of regional security is extremely important.²⁹

Regional security is connected to political insecurity in a rather direct correlation. Due to political instability like the Civil Wars in Yemen and Syria or the political tensions in Bahrain and Lebanon, spillover across borders has become an imminent issue. Many nations are forced to send troops; experience protests within their own countries based on the political unrest of these nations; and/or feel the economic pressure of the proxy wars that follow many of these countries.³⁰ This creates tensions across the region as they experience the aftermath of people fleeing the country as refugees or the pressures of war across borders.

B. History of the Arab World

The Arab Spring exposed both the deep grievances and fragile state structures across the region. While Tunisia emerged with a semi-functional democracy, Syria, Libya, and Yemen descended into prolonged conflict. In countries like Lebanon, Iraq, and Sudan, governmental gridlock and foreign interference further eroded public trust and state functionality.³¹ The Arab League was continuously reactionary in their involvement in stopping political instability, rather than proactive in their attempts to promote regional security.³²

In Lebanon from 1975-1990, Lebanon experienced its own Civil War. This was due to an array of religious groups trying to control government entities. With many forces entering the framework of the war, such as Syria and Israel, the MENA region was under many

²⁹ Hafez, Mohamed Hosam. "The Arab League: Its Foundation and Role in Arab Regional Security." *Al Sharq Strategic Research*, 1 Sept. 2022, research.sharqforum.org/2019/01/21/the-arab-league/.

³⁰ Taylor, Gabe. "Breaking down the Causes and Consequences of Political Instability." *Eastern Home Research*, 4 Mar. 2025, www.eshrs.org/breaking-down-the-causes-and-consequences-of-political-instability/.

³¹ Dakhilallah, Farah. *JSTOR Wwww.Jstor.Org*, www.mpi.lu/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/GUIDE_jstor_01.pdf. Accessed 8 Aug. 2025.

³² Benaissa, Monim. "The Arab League in Political Crisis." *Atlas Institute for International Affairs*, 21 Oct. 2020, atlasinstitute.org/the-arab-league-in-political-crisis/.

stressors. In 1989, in order to disrupt the Civil War and create security within the nation, the Arab League met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and began discussions of ways to put the conflict under control. The agreement led to the balance of power between religious groups in the country's cabinet and gave less power to the president. This was put into effect in November of 1989.³³ It created a sense of political stability within the country and allowed many of the non-Lebanese forces to exit the country, allowing for more regional stability.³⁴ However, the effects are still felt today with the insurgency of Hezbollah.

In more recent days, the pattern of coming together after political instability strikes continues. In 2025, Arab nations met in Baghdad, Iraq, to discuss the Israel-Palestine conflict. This conflict has left many in the MENA region feeling its consequences. Due to the Abrahamic Accords, some nations within the Arab League have found it difficult to aid Palestine, while some are unable to help due to Israeli attacks. Due to this instability and the global sphere, this conflict is broadcast; the Arab League needs to remain in solidarity in their movement and wording when speaking of the country of Palestine and the conflict they face. They created the “Baghdad Declaration” at their recent summit, calling again for a two-state solution and a ceasefire from any forces within the region, as well as implementing a fund to help with the reconstruction of Palestine.³⁵ While this is important for regional stability, political stability is important for Palestine in the creation of one of the nations within the two-state solution compromise.

However, while it is important to create declarations and summits, unless there is political action within countries that are and can experience political insecurity, many nations will continue to fall into the pattern of regional insecurity. Within the Arab League, there is a problem of enforcing their words and putting action to help the region.

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

When negotiating terms to strengthen regional security through ensuring political stability within the Arab League, it is important to consider the deep interconnection between national governance, regional cooperation, and the social-political forces behind instability. Political instability in one member country tends to cross borders, leading to refugee crises, economic upheavals, extremism, and diplomatic tensions.

It could be helpful to begin by assessing the underlying causes of instability. This could be economic inequality, political marginalization, corruption, and institutions' weakness. One must also take into account how the Arab League could contribute to solving them in a way that does not affect national sovereignty. It is crucial in developing a solution to analyze the regional security issues that have been generated due to political unrest, such

³³ Karam, Karam. “The Taif Agreement | Conciliation Resources.” *Conciliation Resources*, July 2012, www.c-r.org/accord/lebanon/taif-agreement.

³⁴ El-Charif, Khaldoun. “Lebanon’s Political Crisis Hinges on an End to War. What Will Come Next?” *Middle East Council on Global Affairs*, 25 Aug. 2024, mecouncil.org/blog_posts/scenarios-for-the-day-after-in-lebanon-a-domestic-settlement-or-further-divisions/.

³⁵ “Baghdad Hosts 34th Arab Summit amid Limited Gulf Presence and Regional Turmoil.” *Times Kuwait*, 17 May 2025, timeskuwait.com/baghdad-hosts-34th-arab-summit-amid-limited-gulf-presence-and-regional-turmoil/.

as the Gaza crisis, Yemen Civil War, Syria Civil War, and many others, while monitoring future prospective issues that could emerge. This is not a deconstruction of all the countries, but more of an overview of why political instability occurs and how to deal with it. Approaching the issue at the point of political instability should be a priority while conducting research.

Some key points to explore include whether the League should develop early-warning systems for political crises, expand the mandate of existing bodies like the Arab Peace and Security Council, or create a regional mechanism for political dialogue and reconciliation. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, but researching previous summits, specifically the 34th Arab Summit or the 5th Arab Development Summit in Baghdad in 2025, may be a good source for not only achievable initiatives, but also initiatives that may not work for many Arab nations due to continuing political instability in the region.³⁶

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What are the internal causes of political instability in your country or your neighbors?
- Has your country been a source or recipient of mediation?
- What reforms or institutions could the League support to prevent a crisis?
- Has your country actively gone through political reform and/or instability?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What role should the Arab League play in mediating internal conflicts?
- How can the League prevent instability without becoming politicized?
- What long-term tools can promote resilient, responsive governance across the region?
- What ways can proactiveness be achieved league-wide when seeking out future political instability without disrupting domestic affairs?

IV. Additional Resources

[Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism](#)

The website breaks down the convention of Arab States in terms of terrorism. This is a guideline to frameworks of how political stability could be tracked in the past and how the Arab League feels as a whole about instability.

[Improving Stability in the Arab World](#)

Anthony H. Cordesman discusses in his report about improving stability within the MENA region. He critiques the previous ways of looking at regional stability and dives into the reasons why instability exists and how it can change.

³⁶ Mayadeen, Al. "Baghdad Arab Summits Recap: Key Decisions & Statements." *Al Mayadeen English*, Al Mayadeen English, 17 May 2025, english.almayadeen.net/in-pictures/baghdad-arab-summits-recap--key-decisions---statements.

Disruptions and Dynamism in the Arab World

The research paper, written by Frederic Wehrey, analyzes where regional instability and political instability stem in Arab nations. He specifically targets ideas of unemployment for women and youth, economic hardships, and deep inequalities within nations. Wehrey focuses on the reasons behind these challenges within the Arab World and the change that is to come in the region.

Consequences and Significations of Holding the Arab League Summit in Light of Regional and Global Shifts

The position paper is meant to be a summary of the summit of the Arab League in 2023. Understanding the thought process and means of betterment in regions such as Palestine, and how to stop political instability that was causing regional instability in real time.

Topic IV: Evaluating the treatment of political prisoners held by members of the Arab League, as well as considering means to return the prisoners to their respective states

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Political prisoners, as defined by the Arab League, are those who have been imprisoned due to their political beliefs and the actions they take due to their political beliefs.³⁷ There is no universally defined term in accordance with the term political prisoner, so it is important to remember how the Arab League has defined the term. Because of this, it is difficult to determine a number that equates to how many political prisoners there are in the world, but the United States Department of State believes there is an estimated one million around the world. Within the Arab League nations, it is estimated that there are over 200 thousand political prisoners.³⁸ Again, these range from many different political identities and political activities that have incarcerated them.

The treatment of political prisoners is a sensitive yet critical human rights issue, and has been one for decades. Many Arab League members, as well as nations outside of the Arab League, have debated the issue of the treatment of political issues as a human rights issue, national sovereignty, and regional cooperation. Throughout the region, individuals can be detained for political activism, protest, journalism, or association with opposition groups often face indefinite detention, torture, and denial of legal process.

Many nations question how to best transition these political prisoners out of punishment, or if they have the authority to do so. The idea of releasing political prisoners can align itself as a question of sovereignty, but many question the human rights violations of many. However, the question of political prisoners is also influenced by many Western powers, such as the United Nations. While many in the league have begun to release their political prisoners, like Saudi Arabia, or trade their political prisoners, like Syria, there has not been a resource to help the transition.³⁹ There are many aftermath problems of releasing political prisoners that further create problems of political instability, such as the sharing of their time or families speaking out against the government. Some nations have resorted to simply quietly releasing prisoners without any transition, creating a transitional arena without help or consequences.⁴⁰

B. History of the Arab World

³⁷ "Statement of Opinion Regarding Definition of Political Prisoners." *Assistance Association for Political Prisoners*, 12 Jan. 2021, aappb.org/?p=12838.

³⁸ "Political Prisoners by Country 2025." *World Population Review*, 2025, worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/political-prisoners-by-country.

³⁹ Desk, Arab. "The Arab League Welcomes the Successful Implementation of the Prisoner Release Agreement in Yemen." *The Eastern Herald*, 17 Apr. 2023, easternherald.com/2023/04/17/the-arab-league-welcomes-the-successful-implementation-of-the-prisoner-release-agreement-in-yemen/.

⁴⁰ Omran, Ahmed Al. "Saudi Arabia Quietly Steps up Releases of Political Prisoners." *Subscribe to Read*, Financial Times, 25 Feb. 2025, www.ft.com/content/96e9b7df-5bd9-44ac-9436-6aa8aca6d922.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has the most significant number of political activists among Arab states, according to various humanitarian organizations. Bahrain was also ranked number one among Arab countries in terms of the highest number of prisoners. Since the Arab Spring in 2011 and the pro-democratic protests in Bahrain, the ruling Al-Khalife royal family has faced all levels of political opposition through the use of violent intervention and brutal suppression.⁴¹

In the Arab Republic of Egypt, there are an estimated 70,000 political prisoners. Most of these prisoners were initially detained due to their participation in “unauthorized demonstrations.” There are also reports that the authoritarian Egyptian government has violated its law by holding individuals in pre-trial detention for more than 2 years.⁴² This large number of political prisoners is a result of the 2013 Egyptian military coup, which saw the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood and reinstated harsh autocratic rule in Egypt.

Despite occasional prisoner releases tied to foreign diplomacy, there remains no consistent Arab League framework for addressing political prisoners. This lack of structure regarding the treatment and release of political prisoners within the Arab world has led to a multitude of humanitarian organizations calling for the creation of one, calling out authoritarian regimes that have violated fundamental human rights.

Furthermore, post-conflict zones have created legal grey areas where detainees are held outside traditional state control, such as ISIS-affiliated camps in Syria and Iraq, raising questions of responsibility and repatriation. Ongoing civil wars in Syria and Yemen, with a multitude of non-state actors and organizations that work under their jurisdiction, have also raised suspicions of poor treatment of political prisoners and various accusations of violations of human rights. There have been reports of some individuals arrested in areas under a civil war who had been imprisoned for more than a decade.⁴³

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

In debating the case of the handling of political prisoners held by Arab League members and the possible repatriation of these individuals to their states, it is vital to tactfully balance respect for national sovereignty with the Arab League's broader agenda of human rights, justice, and regional stability.

It would be helpful to begin by examining legal definitions and criteria for political prisoners, with the understanding that these may be substantially different in every

⁴¹ *Rights Group: Bahrain Has Highest Number of Political Prisoners among Arab States – Middle East Monitor*, www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220913-rights-group-bahrain-has-highest-number-of-political-prisoners-among-arab-states/

⁴² Arab Center Washington DC. “‘Free Them All’: The Trampled Rights of Political Prisoners in the Arab World.” *Arab Center Washington DC*, 27 May 2022, arabcenterdc.org/resource/free-them-all-the-trampled-rights-of-political-prisoners-in-the-arab-world/.

⁴³ “Human Rights in Yemen.” *Amnesty International*, www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/yemen/report-yemen/

member state due to differing legal systems, political contexts, and security concerns. A solution will not be helpful unless there is a discussion of whether general guidelines or monitoring mechanisms might be formulated to further transparency in detention practices without encroaching upon national jurisdiction.

The representatives are also called on to take into account the prospect and consequences of prisoner repatriation, particularly where return is perilous to the detainee or where there are deplorable diplomatic relationships between states. This can be done through programs established by the Arab League and under standards introduced as a regional theme.

As solutions are formulated, there should also be discussions of longer-term reforms, such as calling on member states to apply fair trial norms, expand access to legal counsel, and increase judicial oversight over politically sensitive cases. Last but not least, this topic challenges the League to reassert its own ideals of justice and mutual respect, while exploring pragmatic paths to dialogue, reintegration, and regional cooperation.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is your country's record regarding political detention?
- Would your government support the creation of a regional monitoring body?
- How does your country handle the repatriation of political prisoners or detainees?
- What are the legal definitions and requirements for your country in terms of due process, political prisoners, and the release of prisoners?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Should the Arab League establish a neutral committee to review political detention cases?
- Could a mediation or arbitration mechanism help facilitate prisoner transfers in politically sensitive cases?
- How can the League uphold human rights standards while avoiding politicization or selective enforcement?
- What is the safest way to release prisoners to their respective states without harm, malice, or ostracization?

IV. Additional Resources

[The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners](#)

The brochure breaks down the ideas behind the United Nations' implementation of the treatment of prisoners of all kinds. This article goes through many different topics, including the dignity of prisoners as human beings, vulnerable groups as prisoners, medical and health services that should be provided to all prisoners, restrictions and discipline of prisoners, custody standards in prison, and many more.

[Introducing Political Prisoners Watch](#)

The article describes ways that political prisoners are treated across different countries and what is determined as unjust treatment of political prisoners.

Arab League calls for halting abuse in Israeli prisons

The news article describes the Arab League's fight for fair treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israel. This was after one hundred Palestinian detainees were assaulted in an Israeli prison. Considered political prisoners, the Arab League called on the UN Security Council, the Red Cross, and human rights groups to pressure Israel into stopping these violations of Palestinians.

How former political prisoners defend the rights of prisoners after their release

This article discusses a couple who were once political prisoners in Belarus, became advocates for political prisoners through their volunteer work with Viasna Human Rights Center. The article describes the work they do to help political prisoners recover from trauma.