2026-2027
Model Arab League
BACKGROUND GUIDE

Joint Defense Council
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National Council on US-Arab Relations

Original draft by Amanda Gomes, Chair of the Joint Defense Council at the 2027 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Esteemed Delegates,

It is my great honor to welcome you all to the 2026-2027 Model Arab League Joint Defense Council! My name is Amanda Gomes, and I am beyond excited to serve as your Committee Chair. I am a senior studying Political Science and International Affairs at Northeastern University, and this is my third year competing in MAL, so I could not be more excited to have my last model debate experience as a member of Secretariat. I hope your time in the JDC fills you with the same excitement, curiosity, and passion that it has for me!

My favorite thing about the JDC is how incredibly multifaceted the debate in this committee can be. Its primary focus is addressing areas of priority in the defense and security domains, yet it is deeply interconnected with other Arab League committees. Decisions made in the economic, political, and humanitarian spaces all tie directly back to the JDC, making it vital that you think about the bigger picture of the policies you push for throughout debate. Despite the diverse perspectives that will inevitably be present in the room, some directly contradicting one another, it is important to remember that you are not just pushing for decisions that satisfy your country's policy, but decisions that reflect the unity and intention behind the League itself.

As a three-time MAL participant, I remember how I felt entering the committee room for the very first time, and I also remember how I felt once I started understanding the flow of debate and meaningfully engaging with it. Regardless of how new or experienced you may be, I encourage you to not let your debate background or lack thereof dictate your participation in the committee. Be helpful to those who are less experienced than you, and seek to learn from each and every delegate present. The topics in this council are diverse, some requiring more sensitive discussion than others, and I expect you to treat them with the same care and compassion that you should treat your fellow delegates with. Debate can at times feel scripted, but the issues being discussed all bear genuine real-world impact on millions of people, and I implore you to remember that before you speak.

I am deeply proud of my time in MAL, and although I haven't seen you debate yet, I am positive I will be proud of whichever direction you choose to take in the JDC. I hope you have as much fun debating these topics as I did writing them, and please do not hesitate to reach out to me at gomes.am@northeastern.edu if you have any questions. Good luck; I can't wait to see where the JDC takes you!

Sincerely,

Amanda Gomes
Joint Defense Council Chair

Topic I: Addressing the weaponization of water resources and river systems as tools of coercion against Arab member states.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

As the climate crisis worsens and global population numbers continue to rise, water manipulation has become an increasingly dangerous tool. The MENA region in particular is the world's driest, home to 12 of the most water scarce countries in the world, a statistic that amplifies its susceptibility to coercion via water weaponization.[1] Beyond MENA countries, lack of sufficient water has also transformed from an issue of resource scarcity to one characterized by competition and interstate tensions on a global scale. Almost ⅔ of global freshwater is divided between two or more states, yet over 50% of international river basins worldwide do not have established agreements on cooperation regarding these shared resources.[2] Ultimately, this lack of governance in the Arab world and beyond has led to an increased frequency of water-related conflict and security threats. From 2020 to 2026, over 1428 water-related conflicts worldwide have taken place according to the Pacific Institute.[3] Of these 1428 incidents, some have been driven by competition over water itself, while others have involved non-traditional warfare methods through tactics like political coercion and infrastructure subversion.[4] In Arab countries where water is already scarce, competition with upstream states acts as a risk, but sabotage by outside actors also poses a severe threat; many states in the region lack the resource buffer to endure an unexpected shortage in an already dwindling water supply.

Historically, cooperative interactions among states over water resources has been the norm and have previously outnumbered water-based conflicts at a ratio of 2:1.[5] An analysis of interstate relations over water resources from 2008 to 2019 indicated that this trend has changed, with transboundary water disputes now occurring more frequently when compared to international collaboration over these resources.[6] In a January 2026 report, the United Nations warned that the world is entering a state of "water bankruptcy," a challenge that will exacerbate existing international tensions motivated by aquatic resources.[7] As the world's most water stressed region, the MENA region can expect to bear the brunt of this vital resource shortage; its naturally

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[1] Al-Otaibi, Ghanimah. "By the Numbers: Facts about Water Crisis in the Arab World." *World Bank Blogs*, 19 Mar. 2015, blogs.worldbank.org/en/arabvoices/numbers-facts-about-water-crisis-arab-world.
[2] Ellis, Nathanial. "Water as a Weapon: The World's Most Crucial Resource." *Atlas Institute for International Affairs*, 11 July 2026, atlasinstitute.org/water-as-a-weapon-the-worlds-most-crucial-resource/.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Michel, David. "What Causes Water Conflict?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 8 Nov. 2024, https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-causes-water-conflict.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Roy, Diana, et al. "The Global Water Crisis: Stress, Scarcity, and Conflict." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 20 Mar. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/water-stress-global-problem-thats-getting-worse.

arid climate and rapidly growing populations continue to increase the demand for water as the supply of freshwater and renewable hydro resources continues to shrink.[8]

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), an agreement established between India and Pakistan in 1960, effectively divided the six rivers of the Indus basin between the two states and marked a significant milestone in their bilateral relations.[9] The treaty outlined that three western rivers would be given to Pakistan with the caveat that India could use the western rivers so long as their use was non-depleting and no changes were made that would impede Pakistan's ability to access its water through its rivers.[10] For years, the IWT served as an example of international collaboration over shared water resources, until 2025 when India announced that it was suspending the treaty following terrorist attacks that they blamed on Pakistan.[11] Since then, India has intensified their engagement in the western rivers, with officials outright claiming that "not a single drop of water will flow to Pakistan."[12] In addressing this aggression, Pakistani officials claimed that "the strangulation of water is an existential threat," offering a cautionary parallel to states like those in the Arab League who may similarly rely on upstream resources beyond their control.[13]

B. History in the Arab World

Due to the water scarcity within the Arab world, along with the fact that Arab countries are home to over 5% of the global population, the region feels a heightened threat posed by its lack of water accessibility.[14] Available water resources within the region are estimated at 265 km3, with only 225 km3 being surface water and an overwhelming 65% of all available resources originating outside the region itself. Consequently, millions of Arab governments and citizens depend on resources flowing into the region through the Euphrates, Tigris, and Nile rivers, putting Arab countries at a strategic disadvantage and heightened risk of conflict over shared and limited resources.[15]

Rivers such as the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates provide drinking water to millions of Arab League citizens. Massive rivers such as these cut through numerous nations, giving upstream nations a significant strategic advantage in how these water resources are utilized and where water is able to flow. As a result, states such as Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, and Syria become vulnerable to the

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Jamal, Umair. "Pakistan Ups the Ante on Indus Water Dispute With India." *The Diplomat*, 7 July 2026, https://thediplomat.com/2026/07/pakistan-ups-the-ante-on-indus-water-dispute-with-india/.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Abumoghli, Iyad. "Water Security in the Arab World." EcoMENA, 9 Apr. 2024, https://www.ecomena.org/water-arab/.
[15] El-Habr, Habib. "Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation: The Experience in the Arab Region." *The UN Chronicle*, 1 Dec 2007, https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/clean-drinking-water-and-sanitation-experience-arab-region.

policies and actions taken by their northern neighbors. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a hydroelectric dam built on the Blue Nile, is one such example. Egypt has stood against infrastructure development on the river for decades due to water scarcity concerns.[16] On the other side, Ethiopia, the nation whose highlands provide the Nile with over 85% of its water, asserts that it has the right to decide how best to use these natural resources to improve living conditions for its citizens.[17] Construction on the GERD dam began in 2011, with Ethiopia announcing it was to fill the dam's reservoir in 2020.[18] This immediately sparked concern from Egypt as it went against the nation's mandate that the dam was not to be filled without a legal binding agreement on equitable distribution of the Nile.[19] Egypt looked toward the international community for support, with the U.S. backing up the nation by threatening to withhold aid from Ethiopia if it did not come to an agreement on this matter.[20] The Arab League called for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) intervention and did propose a resolution about filling the dam, but it was rejected by Ethiopia and the project continued.[21] The development of this dam is a major hope for Ethiopia's economic development, but the consequences for downstream nations' access to water are immense and pose significant security challenges.[22]

Current military tensions and attacks within the region further demonstrate the way water resources are being weaponized. Iranian forces responded to U.S. missile attacks with its own repeated missile attacks on Kuwait, an ally of the U.S. within the region.[23] These airstrikes hit water desalination plants, causing fires and forcing operations at these plants to cease.[24] This is not the first time in the 2026 Iran War that water desalination plants have been the target of missile strikes, as both Iran and Bahrain reported material damage to desalination plants a few months prior.[25] In nations like Kuwait, repeated attacks on water desalination plants raise many concerns for civilian infrastructure and water accessibility. Kuwait has the world's worst level of water stress largely due to a lack of freshwater lakes and rivers within its territory. In a nation where estimates say around 90% of the drinkable water supply comes from desalination plants, the stakes are immensely high when critical water infrastructure is targeted.[26] The Arab League

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[16] Mukum Mbaku, John. "The controversy over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam." *The Brookings Institution*, 5 Aug. 2020, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-controversy-over-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] "Ethiopia rejects Arab League resolution on Renaissance Dam." *Al Jazeera*, 16 Jun. 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/16/ethiopia-rejects-arab-league-resolution-on-renaissance-dam.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Gambrall, John. "As U.S. strikes bridges in Iran, it targets a water desalination plant in Kuwait." *PBS*, 17 July 2026, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/as-u-s-strikes-bridges-in-iran-it-targets-a-water-desalination-plant-in-kuwait.
[24] Irwin, Zane. "Water Plants Under Fire in the Gulf Are Crucial to Civilians." *The New York Times*, 21 July 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/21/world/middleeast/desalination-water-middle-east.html.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Aleisa, Esra. Navigating Kuwait's water scarcity challenges: A holistic analysis of water resources, environmental impact, cost, and policy implications. *Science Direct*, 1 Oct. 2024, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.desal.2024.117827.

itself stated that these attacks violated international law and constituted a war crime, pointing towards United Nations Security Council Resolution 2817 that condemned Iranian attacks on civilian infrastructure within Gulf nations.[27] While the Arab League has condemned these actions, no comprehensive measures have been taken to prevent further attacks or protect water infrastructure across member nations.

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

As water weaponization and conflicts over shared water resources continue to increase, the need for effective governance to mitigate the frequency and impacts of these challenges also expands. The most significant step toward international regulation on shared water bodies to date is the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, which entered into effect in 2014 after achieving the required 35 ratifications over a decade after its adoption by the UN General Assembly.[28] Despite this important milestone, the treaty lacks significant enforcement or conflict resolution mechanisms in cases where states refuse to comply, making it incapable of offering entirely effective protections for downstream states.[29] Bilateral agreements have similarly proved insufficient, as seen with the 1959 Nile Waters Agreement between Egypt and Sudan. The agreement sought to clarify which states could utilize the Nile's resources and to what extent, but it was negotiated without the participation and consent of upstream neighbors like Ethiopia.[30] Consequently, the agreement has not been treated as a binding or enforceable law.

Gulf nations currently own and operate water desalination plants that are responsible for nearly 40 percent of the world's total amount of desalinated water.[31] Within the Gulf itself, desalinated water accounts for nearly 90 percent of the total drinking water for several Gulf nations.[32] These desalination plants rely on constant streams of water, but Iran could weaponize water access by blocking or contaminating this water coming in from the Persian Gulf.[33] This wouldn't be an

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[27] "Arab League Deplores Iranian Attacks on Kuwait Power, Water Plants as War Crime." *Qatar News Agency*, 30 Mar. 2026, https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=arab-league-deplores-iranian-attacks-on-kuwait-power-water-plants-as-war-crime&date=30/03/2026.

[28] "UN Watercourses Convention to Enter into Force Following 35th Ratification." *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 22 May 2014, https://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-watercourses-convention-to-enter-into-force-following-35th-ratification/

[29] Ibid.

[30] Messay Deribe, Mekdelawit. "The 1959 Agreement "for the full utilization of the Nile waters": The crux of the problem in the Nile Basin water use." *WeAspire*, 15 Feb. 2022, https://www.weaspire.info/the-1959-agreement-for-the-full-utilization-of-the-nile-waters-the-crux-of-the-problem-in-the-nile-basin-water-use/.

[31] Hussein, Mohammed. "How much of the Gulf's water comes from desalination plants?" *Al Jazeera*, 12 Mar. 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/12/how-much-of-the-gulfs-water-comes-from-desalination-plants.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Michel, David. "Could Iran Disrupt the Gulf Countries' Desalinated Water Supply?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 19 Mar. 2026, https://www.csis.org/analysis/could-iran-disrupt-gulf-countries-desalinated-water-supplies.

unprecedented situation, as the Iraqi Armed Forces dumped millions of oil barrels into the Persian Gulf during the first Gulf War to contaminate water coming into desalination plants located in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[34]

In addition to manipulating the water itself, the threat of cyber attacks on water desalination plants to compromise technology used to run the plant poses another serious concern, particularly for Gulf nations.[35] To counter both water manipulation and cyber threats on desalination plants, the Arab League must look to develop proactive solutions for prevention. One such solution may include looking toward drone surveillance technologies to identify threats and report on current infrastructure conditions.[36]

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What distinguishes water weaponization from resource competition? Where should the Council draw this line?
- To what extent is your state vulnerable to water coercion relative to other member states, and what specific factors drive that vulnerability?
- What sort of collaborative agreements or technical safeguards could reduce the Arab world's susceptibility to water weaponization and coercion?
- How can the League defend downstream member states' rights to water while respecting the sovereign interests of upstream non-member states?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- At what point should the Arab League consider an act of water weaponization as an act of warfare and what sort of response should that warrant?
- As an already water-scarce region, how can the League and its members collaborate to support member states facing water weaponization?
- What threshold of damage or disruption should be required before an outside act of interference with Arab water resources triggers a JDC response?
- How should the League mitigate the risk of water attacks escalating into broader regional conflict?

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Kebebew, Tadesse. "The imperative to protect water and water systems during armed conflict." *International Committee of the Red Cross*, 24 Apr. 2025, https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2025/04/24/the-imperative-to-protect-water-and-water-systems-during-armed-conflict/.

IV. Additional Resources

“Water Weaponization: Dominant Trends and Local Action to Spare Water from Armed Conflict in Syria, Palestine and Yemen”
Geneva Graduate Institute

This Geneva Graduate Institute report examines how local action can counteract water weaponization, using Yemen, Syria, and Palestine as case studies. It analyzes dominant trends in water weaponization and offers insights on how international institutions can strengthen responses to water coercion.

“Indicator SDG 6.4.2. Water Stress (%)”
The World Bank

The World Bank developed this indicator to measure the water stress and scarcity all nations across the globe face. The indicator tracks the amount of freshwater withdrawal in any given nation compared to its total supply of freshwater.

“Past, Present and Future of the Indus Water Treaty: Implications for Transboundary Water Governance Challenges and Modernization Prospects”
Water Security (Volume 28)

This study examines straining factors actively damaging the Indus River system, including those driven by climate change, growing populations, and rising political tensions. Furthermore, it looks at the role of the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, establishing the urgent need for the treaty to be updated in response to newfound challenges involving the river system.

“Desalination, Water, and War”
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

This article examines patterns of state aggression by highlighting how attacks on desalination plants in conflicts throughout the MENA region have been on the rise in recent years. By drawing on states like Kuwait and Oman as examples, the piece emphasizes how nations dependent on desalination risk having their water supply entirely disrupted by even the slightest foreign inference.

Topic II: Assessing vulnerabilities in undersea cables and pipeline infrastructure.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Undersea communications cables carry an estimated 99 percent of intercontinental data, making them crucially important for upholding global communications and commerce.[37] The majority of these undersea cables are owned by major technology corporations, such as Google, Meta, and Amazon.[38] While companies such as these still maintain the majority of undersea cable infrastructure, individual states have begun to enter into the market. For example, Nokia sold one of the largest manufacturers of undersea cable technology, Alcatel Submarine Networks (ASN), to the French state in 2024.[39] As companies and nations alike look to invest more in the artificial intelligence sector, demand for new undersea cable infrastructure keeps rising.[40] These cables are crucial for global data center connectivity, allowing these centers to run and train new artificial intelligence models.[41]

Due to the role these cables play and the limited number of cable networks, cable disruptions can have major consequences for technology across the globe. Undersea cables are vulnerable to natural erosion and are increasingly a target for intentional disruption by state actors.[42] For example, a United States cybersecurity company identified nine incidents of undersea cable disruptions off the coast of Taiwan in 2024 and 2025 alone.[43] The majority of incidents are assessed to be accidental cable damage, but Chinese vessels have been accused on numerous occasions of cutting cables in the region using anchors.[44] Russia is another nation that has been accused of deliberately destroying cable infrastructure, with a Russian ship being seized after cutting numerous cables that connected Finland and Estonia.[45] It can be difficult to identify who,

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[37] Belbagi, Zaid. "Subsea cables in Hormuz are being weaponized against the global economy." *Arab News*, 28 May 2026, https://www.arabnews.com/node/2645247.
[38] Petrova, Magdalena. "Tech Underwater cables are a vital piece of the AI buildout and internet — investment is booming." *CNBC*, 8 Nov. 2025, https://www.cnbc.com/2025/11/08/big-tech-ai-underwater-cables.html.
[39] "Nokia completes its sale of leading submarine networks business, ASN (Alcatel Submarine Networks), to the French State." *Nokia*, 3 Jan. 2025, https://www.nokia.com/newsroom/nokia-completes-its-sale-of-leading-submarine-networks-business-asn-alcatel-submarine-networks-to-the-french-state/.
[40] Petrova, Magdalena. "Tech Underwater cables are a vital piece of the AI buildout and internet — investment is booming." *CNBC*, 8 Nov. 2025, https://www.cnbc.com/2025/11/08/big-tech-ai-underwater-cables.html.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Mok, Charles. "Toward Undersea Cable Resilience: The Case for Global Collaboration." *Texas National Security Review*, 2026, https://tnsr.org/2026/06/toward-undersea-cable-resilience-the-case-for-global-collaboration/.
[43] Milmo, Dan. "Risk of undersea cable attacks backed by Russia and China likely to rise, report warns." *The Guardian*, 17 Jul. 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/jul/17/risk-undersea-cable-attacks-backed-russia-china-likely-rise-report-warns.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

if anyone, was behind any given attack on undersea infrastructure due to the frequent nature of accidental disruption and the lack of surveillance measures. In addition to attacks that have already been carried out, some nations have begun to develop more advanced technology to disrupt cable infrastructure in this new form of hybrid warfare. The China Ship Scientific Research Center (CSSRC) developed a new ship that is able to cut through cables over 13,000 feet below sea level, posing an increased security risk for the state of international communications.[46] These undersea cables must eventually reach land, so they become more exposed near shorelines. Sending out patrols to prevent these incidents and respond quickly when incidents do arise often proves futile, as many of these regions are highly active maritime routes.[47] When attacks do happen, repairs are often possible, but they can require a significant amount of time and money poured into them since there are only a few companies that make these specific fiber-optic communications cables.[48]

Similarly, massive amounts of oil and gas are transported around the world through just a handful of pipelines.[49] However, underwater pipeline damages are not as economically crucial as damages to underwater cable infrastructure. As opposed to underwater cables, oil and gas are mainly transported via land cables. In addition, as nations look toward more forms of clean energy, the reliance on these pipelines has somewhat reduced. Damages to pipeline infrastructure may not be as economically costly, but they can have major impacts on international relations and the environment. The controversy surrounding the Nord Stream Pipeline explosions are one such example. In 2022, Sweden reported numerous blasts that damaged three of the four pipelines, causing around three months worth of gas to leak into the water.[50] Nations began to investigate what had happened and blame other nations for the attack; to date, no definitive conclusion has been reached on who was behind these attacks.[51] This incident exemplifies the difficulty in protecting underwater infrastructure and holding those responsible for attacks when they occur, emphasizing the significance of the issue for susceptible Arab states.

Proper recourse following attacks on underwater infrastructure can be difficult under existing international norms. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) states that coastal nations have sovereignty in their waters about 14 miles from the shore, but incidents

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[46] Murphy, Erin & Matt Pearl. "China's Underwater Power Play: The PRC's New Subsea Cable-Cutting Ship Spooks International Security Experts." Center for Strategic and International Studies, 4 Apr. 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/chinas-underwater-power-play-prcs-new-subsea-cable-cutting-ship-spooks-international.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Cohen, Ariel. "Undersea Infrastructure : A Weak Spot For National Security." *Forbes*, 25 Aug. 2026, https://www.forbes.com/sites/arielcohen/2026/08/25/undersea-infrastructure--a-weak-spot-for-national-security/.
[50] Adomaitis, Nerijus and Johan Ahlander. "What is known about the Nord Stream gas pipeline explosions?" *Reuters*, 21 Aug. 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-is-known-about-nord-stream-gas-pipeline-explosions-2025-08-21/.
[51] Cohen, Ariel. "Undersea Infrastructure : A Weak Spot For National Security." *Forbes*, 25 Aug. 2026, https://www.forbes.com/sites/arielcohen/2026/08/25/undersea-infrastructure--a-weak-spot-for-national-security/.

outside of this range have much less protection under international law.[52] Nations are able to repair cables within their exclusive economic zones, but it is a difficult task for a nation to hold another accountable for the damage they have caused outside of the 14 mile region closest to the shoreline.[53] While damaging undersea infrastructure is considered a crime under UNCLOS, the convention does not contain explicit enforcement measures for nations to take when vessels pose threats to this infrastructure.[54] Enforcement is left up to the nation where these ships are registered, yet there is no actual obligation or mechanism to ensure nations do actually penalize malicious attacks.[55] This legal gap is particularly significant for Arab states surrounding the Gulf and Red Sea, as chokepoints and heavily trafficked waterways carrying internet cables make accountability even more challenging to achieve.

B. History in the Arab World

Cable cutting incidents have caused major internet connectivity disruptions for numerous Arab League member states, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. For example, three attacks were reported on cables in the Red Sea in 2024, initially suspected to have been caused by the Houthi rebel group.[56] However, the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) has since stated it believes these cable cuts may just have been accidental damage caused by the passage of commercial ships in the region.[57] Whether this damage was caused accidentally or intentionally, these incidents emphasize the need to ensure better protections are in place to keep this infrastructure running properly and to ensure further construction of undersea cable infrastructure. Work on new undersea cables has already been halted since 2024 due to the threat of Houthi attacks, so new security risks arising poses an even bigger threat to the state of undersea cable infrastructure as a whole.[58]

Regional tensions with Iran have posed a massive threat to this future development, as Iran has threatened to cut undersea cables and struck data centers in both Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.[59] An Iranian news source with ties to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) published an article mapping undersea cables in the Persian Gulf region and framing these cables as potential strategic advantage in current conflicts.[60] The Strait of Hormuz is one main example

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ringbom, Henrik. "New threats—old rules: Law of the sea issues raised by suspected attacks on submarine infrastructure in the Baltic Sea." *Ocean Development & International Law*, vol. 56, no. 3, 3 July 2025, pp. 390–414, https://doi.org/10.1080/00908320.2025.2534621.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] "Red Sea Cable Cuts: Envisaging Operational Framework for Securing Critical Undersea Infrastructure." *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, 7 Oct. 2025, https://idsa.in/publisher/issuebrief/securing-critical-undersea-infrastructure.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Belbagi, Zaid. "Subsea cables in Hormuz are being weaponized against the global economy." *Arab News*, 28 May 2026, https://www.arabnews.com/node/2645247.

of a possible flashpoint for this form of hybrid warfare, as seven major cable systems pass through these waters.[61] The IRGC announced this year that they will be enforcing protection fees for other nations to pass through the Strait and maintain these cables.[62] While these cables account for only a small percentage of global communication bandwidth, they are particularly important for connectivity in many Gulf nations.[63] Even the threat of damaging these cables poses significant concerns for nations that rely on these cables for communication by forcing nations to confront the possible consequences if such an attack were to be carried out.

As Arab League nations look to expand investment in the artificial intelligence sector, ensuring cables are free from attack is of the utmost importance to power data centers.[64] Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have begun looking towards artificial intelligence to help diversify their economies and move away from an oil-dependent model.[65] In order to fund these advancements, these nations have looked toward major technology players to heavily invest in the sector. For example, Microsoft has said it will invest over $15 billion U.S. dollars into AI partnerships in the nation from 2023 to 2029.[66] As these nations become more and more invested in the AI sector, nations become even more reliant on these cables to transport massive flows of data.[67] However, much of the Gulf region depends on just a handful of undersea cables for internet connectivity with the rest of the world.[68] When threats and disruptions occur, even if they are fixed relatively quickly, they can have major economic consequences.[69] Continued investment in the AI sector means nations must also place importance on protecting this infrastructure to keep their economies growing.

Within Arab League nations, most oil imports and exports are either brought over on shipping vessels or transported through overland pipelines. Due to regional tensions and shipping disruptions across the Strait of Hormuz, nations such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have placed focus on building new overground pipelines to bypass these waterways entirely.[70] However, Arab League nations do rely heavily on natural gas transported through underwater pipelines, particularly the Arab Gas Pipeline. This pipeline is no stranger to attacks;

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Kotkin, Masha. "Beneath the Strait: Iran Could Threaten Gulf Data Centers, Undersea Cables." *Stimson*, 16 Apr. 2026, https://www.stimson.org/2026/beneath-the-strait-iran-could-threaten-gulf-data-centers-undersea-cables/.
[65] Hamill-Stewart, Chris. "The Gulf's AI Boom Has an Undersea Cable Problem." *Wired*, 22 May 2026, https://www.wired.com/story/the-gulfs-ai-boom-has-an-undersea-cable-problem/.
[66] "Escalating tensions turn spotlight on Big Tech's AI investments in Middle East." *Reuters*, 2 Mar. 2026, https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/escalating-tensions-turn-spotlight-big-techs-ai-investments-middle-east-2026-03-02/
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Shamim, Sarah. "Saudi, UAE, Iraq: Can three pipelines help oil escape Strait of Hormuz?" Al Jazeera, 27 Mar. 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2026/3/27/saudi-uae-iraq-can-three-pipelines-help-oil-escape-strait-of-hormuz.

from 2011 to 2012, the portion of the pipeline flowing from Egypt to Jordan was bombed fifteen times.[71] These attacks caused significant economic strain and disrupted gas exports, with the government of Jordan spending over one million U.S. dollars a day and lifting energy subsidies at the height of the attacks.[72] More recently, widespread power outages occurred after an attack on a gas pipeline located in Syria, the sixth attack on the pipeline.[73] Attacks like these have major economic and security implications for nations across the Arab League, making it imperative that nations develop better ways to protect and respond to attacks on this crucial infrastructure.

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

In order to protect this critical infrastructure, solutions must focus on preemptive measures to protect and track existing systems. Satellite imaging and advanced prediction analysis using artificial intelligence are two detection methods that nations across the globe have begun employing to identify potential attacks before they even occur.[74] For example, The United Kingdom has launched the Nordic Warren Joint Expeditionary Force, which utilizes AI technology to analyze data on the placement of vessels and make risk calculations to inform nations of possible attacks before they happen.[75] While numerous incidents regarding undersea infrastructure have plagued Arab League nations, the body itself lacks any sort of centralized mechanism aimed at identifying and countering these threats. In order to best protect against these attacks, Arab League nations must be willing to work together and share data regarding the seas.

To find a solution to this problem, nations must also find a way to surmount some of the challenges that come with repairing damaged cables. The global cable repair fleet consists of only around 60 vehicles capable of carrying out necessary fixes.[76] On top of the small number of vessels currently able to fix undersea cable issues that arise, it's estimated that half of these existing vessels will be out of commission by the year 2040.[77] To ensure that undersea cable fixes are dealt with properly and efficiently, nations must look toward developing these response measures and investing in the construction of additional vessels. Another difficulty in responding to broken or faulty cables are the current international laws surrounding these fixes. Permits must

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[71] Danin, Robert. "The Politics of Energy: What Morsi's Fall Means for Jordan." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 13 Aug. 2013. https://www.cfr.org/articles/politics-energy-what-morsis-fall-means-jordan.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Aji, Albert. "Blast hits pipeline in Syria, causing wide power outages." *AP News*, 24 Aug. 2020, https://apnews.com/general-news-7700a3d3865d2ae528765375ac9094d1
[74]Mok, Charles. "Toward Undersea Cable Resilience: The Case for Global Collaboration." *Texas National Security Review*, 2026, https://tnsr.org/2026/06/toward-undersea-cable-resilience-the-case-for-global-collaboration/.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Bateman, Aaron. "To keep the world's data flowing, countries need to quickly fix broken undersea cables." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*s, 29 Jul. 2025, https://thebulletin.org/2025/07/to-keep-the-worlds-data-flowing-countries-need-to-quickly-fix-broken-undersea-cables/
[77] Ibid.

be acquired to access the waters where cable issues have arisen, adding another layer of difficulty in efficiently addressing these issues.[78] Damaged oil and gas pipelines pose an additional threat, as these spills damage marine life and pollute the seas. To properly address vulnerabilities in undersea communications networks, the League must advance measures that advance and expedite the repair process.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Which member states are most dependent on undersea cable infrastructure, and how does that dependence vary between Gulf states, Red Sea states, and others across the League?
- What technological or financial barriers are most important to address in order to bolster Arab resilience and protections against undersea cable and pipeline attacks?
- How can the League address pipeline infrastructure vulnerabilities while engaging respectfully with the private sector and corporations that own cable infrastructure?
- How prepared is your country to adapt in case of a disruption to its internet connection via interference with its undersea cables?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What financial mechanisms could the League create to help lower-income member states invest in infrastructure protections?
- How should the League distinguish between accidental damage, sabotage, and acts of hybrid warfare in incidents where outside actors disrupt Arab undersea cables or pipeline infrastructure? How should League-wide responses differ in regards to the circumstances of the incident?
- How should the League's response vary in terms of scale when an incident affects a single state versus multiple member states?
- Under what circumstances does an attack on undersea or pipeline infrastructure warrant a regional response versus a national response?

IV. Additional Resources

"Invisible and Vital: Undersea Cables and Transatlantic Security"
Center for Strategic and International Studies

This article outlines the current state of undersea communications cable infrastructure and its importance in global data sharing. The article discusses vulnerabilities in this infrastructure as well as specific attacks on cables that have previously occurred. It presents recommendations for ensuring the resilience of this infrastructure, from sharing intelligence across national borders to building new technologies for risk assessment purposes.

[78] Ibid.

“Submarine Cables - International Framework”
United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

This report discusses the sections of UNCLOS that govern international law on undersea communications cables. The main tenets for this portion of the treaty focus on what provisions are in place if cables are to be damaged, either accidentally or intentionally. It also touches on sovereignty within national waters and where nations have the freedom to lay undersea cables.

“AI and Sovereignty: The Geopolitical Power of Submarine Cables”
HEC Paris Business School

This research examines the role that the artificial intelligence boom plays in geopolitical relations, particularly focusing on the role of underwater cables. The article discusses how the economic viability of artificial intelligence has nations all competing to be a leading developer, spurring conflict and sabotage to gain an edge in the sector.

“The Strategic Future of Subsea Cables: Egypt Case Study”
Center for Strategic and International Studies

This article examines the potential for economic prosperity, technological innovation, and global conflict that arise due to the increasing need for protecting undersea cable infrastructure by examining Egypt as a case study. It discusses the specific infrastructure that Egypt currently relies on and Egypt’s plans to expand undersea cable systems moving forth. When discussing foreign actors, challenges include both the competition in the sector itself and the threat of sabotage to important infrastructure.

Topic III: Examining the Arab League's readiness regarding the militarization of space capabilities and satellite technology.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The exploration of space has acted as a subject of interest for countless states around the world for several years; yet, it has become clear that national ambitions and individual strategic priorities have turned space into not only an outlet for scientific discovery, but also a domain for active military competition. The militarization of space refers to the use and development of military technology in earth's orbit and outer space, and it has long been a concern among actors in the international community.[79] Tracing back to the Cold War, the arms race between the former Soviet Union and the U.S. was characterized by the shared desire of the two states to outpace one another in space dominance. The space arms race in particular led to the creation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, a landmark international agreement that banned weapons of mass destruction in space, prohibited militaristic activity on celestial bodies, and outlined international legal norms surrounding acceptable space activities.[80]

Despite the monumental step toward space safety made by the Outer Space Treaty, the militarization of space has presented a heightened threat in recent years, particularly due to state actors taking actions that fall into grey areas and are not addressed in the original treaty. As nations around the globe look to modernize military operations, many have begun to look towards outer space as a new realm to do so. Russia launched their Russian Aerospace Forces in 2015, 2018 saw India developing their Defense Space Agency, and the subsequent year in 2019 was when the U.S. created the first ever independent military force dedicated exclusively to space, the US Space Force.[81] Since then, France, Japan, the UK, Germany, Australia, South Korea, China, and several other international actors have all also made strides towards establishing their military presence in space.[82]

As a result of increased strategic interest, many states have grown concerned about the risks posed by a militarized space domain, even those who have not made significant attempts to establish their own military presence in outer space. Satellites act as incredibly vital infrastructure for communication, aviation, shipping, and several other industries, all of which depend on these satellites receiving signals from orbit coming from space. Consequently, an

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[79]Sheposh, Richard. "Militarization of Space." *EBSCO*, 2023. https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/military-history-and-science/militarization-space.
[80] Kimball, Daryl. "The Outer Space Treaty at a Glance." Arms Control Association, July 2024, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/outer-space-treaty-glance.
[81] Abou Zahr, Khaled. "Space is the new strategic high ground." *Arab News*, 17 July 2026, https://www.arabnews.com/node/2651215/amp.
[82] Ibid.

attack or disruption to a state's satellite can entirely disrupt their infrastructure, creating a new sort of contemporary hybrid threat. In 2022, the threats posed by satellite interference came to light when Russia hacked an American satellite company mere hours before they initiated an attack on Ukraine, effectively reducing communication capacity for the Ukrainian military.[83] Beyond Ukraine, as space becomes an increasingly important domain with regard to infrastructural stability and militaristic priorities, preparing Arab countries for the militarization of space and satellite technologies must be stressed as a defensive and strategic priority across the region.

B. History in the Arab World

Within the space domain, the Arab world remains relatively behind in militaristic development as most current space militarization efforts have been undertaken by larger military powers. Despite this fact, space militarization remains relevant to Arab countries because they have increasingly found themselves confronting space threats, specifically due to risks posed by surveillance and satellites. In 2025, Israel launched Ofek 19, a spy satellite intended to aid them in maintaining "persistent, simultaneous surveillance of any point throughout the Middle East."[84] As Israel continues to fight in the war in Gaza, targets have been stricken in Palestine as well as in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq as a result of broader regional hostilities, and these nations face heightened security threats due to Israeli satellites in space.[85] Due to the fact that Israel maintains a level of independent satellite surveillance capacity that its Arab neighbors cannot match, the Arab league continues to be placed in a state of persistent regional instability and the need for space preparedness continues to grow.

Outside of surveillance alone, Arab countries have also felt firsthand the detrimental impacts of satellite disruption within the region, both on the individual citizen level and on the larger commercial and economic scale. In February of 2026 during the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, several Arab ships present in surrounding waters were subject to interference with their navigation systems due to GPS jamming and spoofing. Over 1,100 ships in Iranian, UAE, Qatari, and Omani waters were disrupted on February 28th alone.[86] Despite commercial ships not being the intended target of the interference, the capacity of outside states to disturb such vital infrastructure across the league has since alarmed Arab countries and pushed them to reconsider their readiness to face these sorts of security threats.

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[83] Howell O'Neill, Patrick. "Russia hacked an American satellite company one hour before the Ukraine invasion."*MIT Technology Review, 10 May 2022,* https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/05/10/1051973/russia-hack-viasat-satellite-ukraine-invasion/.
[84] "Israel launches satellite to expand its surveillance throughout the Middle East." PBS News, 3 Sep. 2025, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israel-launches-satellite-to-expand-its-surveillance-throughout-the-middle-east
[85] Ibid.
[86] Hunt, Katie. "GPS jamming is emerging as an increasingly prevalent — and troubling — weapon of war." CNN, 6 Mar 2026, https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/06/science/gps-jamming-ships-planes-iran-war.

Outside of external threats caused by surrounding states, Arab countries also face an internal structural vulnerability in the space domain: they are largely dependent on outside powers to launch their satellites. No Arab state currently has the ability to independently launch, meaning that all league members rely on foreign actors or independent launchers to make strides toward developing their satellite technology. In 2019, the impacts of this over-dependence on outside actors were highlighted when Falcon Eye 1, an Emirati satellite built by the UAE for surveillance, was destroyed after the European Vega rocket carrying it suffered a launch failure.[87] The incident cost the UAE millions, in addition to showcasing how Arab states may be hindered in their satellite and space development so long as they are dependent on foreign actors.[88]

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

In order to bolster regional security as a new military domain emerges in space, Arab League nations must come together and decide how best to foster space norms, be it through diplomatic discussions or a formalized treaty. Currently, Arab space agreements and governance attempts revolve around scientific exploration rather than being security-driven, making the region insufficiently prepared for the space revolution and the risks it may pose. In 2019, the UAE launched the Arab Space Cooperation Group alongside Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, and Jordan, as an effort to encourage space exploration and technological development throughout the region. [89] While undoubtedly a beneficial effort, the group was not designed to address satellite interference, GPS jamming, spoofing, and many of the other contemporary security threats posed in the space domain, highlighting a gap in governance that the League must collaborate to address.

While the space domain does pose a multitude of concerns, many Arab states are most concerned by the real-world challenges that they faced with regards to satellite disruption in both 2025 and 2026. Through the recurrence of these incidents, the Arab world has been alerted to just how damaging electronic warfare via satellites can be, threatening communication and shipping infrastructure in multiple places at rapid pace. The International Telecommunication Union, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and the International Maritime Organization have all expressed legitimate concern over satellite interference, encouraging states to develop their satellite protection to prevent signal disruption and spoofing as these tactics become increasingly more utilized.[90] To address these concerns, the Arab League must collaborate to establish shared means of identifying potential satellite risks, alerting impacted industries and civilians, and

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[87] Henry, Caleb. "Arianespace Vega launch fails, Emirati satellite lost." Space News, 10 July 2019, https://spacenews.com/arianespace-vega-launch-fails-emirati-satellite-lost/.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Hainaut, Beatrice. "The Middle East Enters the Space Race." *Stimson*, 3 Nov. 2023, https://www.stimson.org/2023/the-middle-east-enters-the-space-race/.
[90] "Protect satellite navigation from interference, UN agencies urge." International Maritime Organization, 25 Mar. 2025,https://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/pressbriefings/pages/joint-imo-icao-itu-statement-satellite-interference.aspx.

maintaining essential services in instances where satellite interference does occur. Possible solutions could include establishing a shared set of norms around military and dual-use satellite activity, reducing the risk of miscommunication or escalation as more states enter the space domain. Member states could also pursue a joint satellite-sharing agreement, allowing nations without space programs to access shared imaging and monitoring capabilities as Arab nations continue to develop their militaristic ambitions in outer space.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How does a state's geographical location and proximity to active conflict influence its susceptibility to satellite interference?
- Should the Arab League prioritize building out just defensive satellite countermeasures, or should it also look toward developing offensive capabilities in the space domain?
- How should Arab states assess the potential risk associated with responding to an act of satellite interference? How can these states minimize the risk of conflict escalation in instances where interference provokes a response?
- How can Arab states begin to develop their own space capabilities given their dependence on foreign actors and launchpads?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How should Arab League members define the threshold of severity required for a satellite-related incident to trigger a collective defense response?
- What intelligence or data-sharing mechanisms could be established to support the development of defensive infrastructure across the League to protect against satellite disruptions?
- How should the financial burden of investing in space security be distributed among member states with different economic capabilities?
- How should the Arab League ensure that resolutions in this domain remain adaptable and relevant as the militarization of space continues to evolve?

IV. Additional Resources

"GPS jamming and interference map"
FlightRadar24

This map provides daily, real-time data on GPS jamming activity across the globe. By utilizing Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) data that determines a given aircraft's precise location along with Navigation Integrity Category (NIC) data that identifies both quality and consistency of data, the map is able to showcase areas that are subject to radio signal jamming.

“The new struggle for space”
Engelsberg Ideas

This article details the history of space weaponization in warfare, focusing on the role that space satellites and fears of nuclear weapons played in Cold War tensions. It goes on to discuss recent changes in U.S. policy regarding space, such as the creation of the United States Space Force in 2019. The article argues that recent developments signal a return to power competition in space, but this time with many more nations capable of utilizing the outer space domain.

“The Cosmic Precipice: Why Weaponizing Space Hurts Us All”
Ethics and International Affairs

This article argues against the advent of space militarization and weapons deployment, stating that the risk of damaging crucial GPS technology and setting off a rapid, global arms race could cause serious global harm. The article cites the importance of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty in ensuring weapons are not deployed in space, urging nations to uphold this treaty and commit to keeping space a peaceful domain.

“The Middle East Space Race and the Future of Regional Disputes”
Diplomatic Courier

This article discusses how countries in the Middle East have begun to invest significant amounts of money in the space sector to boost technological development and diversify their economies. It specifically discusses how Iran has developed satellites for both military and civilian purposes, increasing the threat of advancing warfare into an entirely new domain.

Topic IV: Strengthening security sector reform and National Defense Institutions in League member states emerging from conflict.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

As nations begin to emerge from conflict and look to rebuild their governments, they become increasingly vulnerable to interference from foreign nations and non-state actors. As foreign nations have begun to get more involved in civil wars due to the advent of globalization, conflicts are lasting for far longer and are becoming more deadly than ever.[91] This trend of globalization also means that numerous actors are often involved in just one conflict.[92] In 2025, there were 65 global conflicts involving at least one nation recorded, marking a new high since World War II.[93] Of these conflicts, civil wars remain the majority, while the total number of civil wars has nearly tripled since the 1990s.[94]

In the early 2000s, an estimated 60% of conflicts that came to a close saw fighting reemerge within in the next five years.[95] To better protect against the risk of falling back into conflict, nations must focus on shoring up security measures and regaining the trust of its citizens following internal or external conflicts. States must look to strengthen oversight mechanisms and improve legal frameworks in order to be more transparent with their citizens and effectively reform the security sector during post-conflict eras. Once civil wars break out, the lack of comprehensive international response and support can make it difficult to effectively bring conflict to a close.[96] Even when civil wars do end for good, the cost of human life and the economic cost of rebuilding civilian infrastructure both bring severe consequences for nations involved in the conflict.[97]

When it comes to civil wars that end with the same government still in power, nations often look to repress dissenting voices while leaving citizens' concerns largely unaddressed.[98] Security

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[91] "Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict." *United Nations University*, 1 Mar. 2017, https://unu.edu/cpr/project/civil-war-trends-and-changing-nature-armed-conflict.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Muller, Natalie. "'Conflict Trends': Civil wars, international fights hit high." *Deutsche Welle News*, 10 Aug. 2026, "'Conflict Trends': Civil wars, international fights hit high." https://www.dw.com/en/conflict-trends-civil-wars-international-fights-hit-high/a-77467842.
[94] "Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict." *United Nations University*, 1 Mar. 2017, https://unu.edu/cpr/project/civil-war-trends-and-changing-nature-armed-conflict.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Karreth, Johannes & Jaroslav Tir. "The international community struggles to end civil wars. How can international organizations help?" Oxford University Press Blog, 22 Apr. 2022, https://blog.oup.com/2018/04/international-organizations-civil-wars-united-nations/.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ko, Jeremy. "How civil war intensity shapes post-war repression: State capacity, regime type, and conflict termination." *Political Studies Review*, 17 July 2026, https://doi.org/10.1177/14789299261461183.

sector reform is meant to address these concerns, ensure the security of a nation post-conflict, and regain the trust of its citizens by improving security institutions such as the police and armed forces.[99] However, implementation of security sector reform in a nation looking to rebuild itself following conflict often falls short of the mark. Security sector reform places a large amount of emphasis on the state monopolizing the use of force, but this model can be difficult to apply in nations where non-state actors play a significant role in the political stability and security of a nation.[100]

B. History in the Arab World

Arab League nations such as Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Sudan have undergone years of civil war that allowed non-state actors to gain significant influence within their borders. In 2011, a wave of protests known as the Arab Spring broke out across many Arab League nations. Nations such as Tunisia saw rapid revolution and overthrowing of the dominant political regime as a result of these protests, leading to the onset of democratic elections just a few months later.[101] While some nations saw sweeping changes, others witnessed crackdowns on dissent and no comprehensive change to governmental structure.[102] For example, protest movements in Yemen lead to violent struggle between the government and protesters fighting for democracy in the nation.[103] Regardless of whether protest movements led to a change in government, lead to large-scale political instability and security concerns for all nations involved.

In 2011, protests against Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad turned into a fully-fledged civil war in the nation.[104] The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, more commonly known as ISIS, began to seize control of Syrian territory in 2013.[105] Nations such as Russia and the United States began to target this militant non-state actor, and in 2016 ISIS's stronghold in Aleppo was recaptured by the Syrian government.[106] From 2016 to 2024, numerous attempts at a ceasefire and diplomatic resolution were negotiated, but these ceasefire attempts came to an end when the Syrian rebel group Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) overthrew the al-Assad regime in just ten days.[107] Israeli airstrikes in Syria and large-scale campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon during 2024 led Hezbollah to reduce their presence within Syria, reducing support for al-Assad's regime and

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[99] "Security Sector Reform (SSR) at the United Nations." *United Nations*, https://www.un.org/ssr/en.
[100] "Security Sector Reform: Rethinking state-society relations for long-lasting peace." *Rethinking Security*, 31 Oct. 2024,https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/2024/10/31/security-sector-reform-rethinking-state-society-relations-for-long-lasting-peace/.
[101] "Arab Spring." *Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] "Conflict in Syria." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 3 Aug. 2026, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-syria.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

providing opposing rebel groups an opening to overthrow the government.[108] The leader of HTS, Ahmed al-Shaara, became interim president of Syria after al-Assad's overthrow.[109] As Syria attempts to rebuild following the civil war, conflicts have still arisen within the nation. The Syrian government reached an agreement with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) military coalition in March of 2025 to integrate them into the government, but conflict erupted in January of 2026 as the Syrian government had failed to make major progress in integration by year's end.[110] A ceasefire was announced just a few days later, with a more comprehensive plan to integrate Kurdish military forces into the government announced just a few days later.[111] Continued security concerns such as these have made it difficult for the new Syrian government to establish a sense of security and stability within the nation, but steps have been taken to reduce security risks. President Ahmed al-Sharaa created a National Security Council to manage the nation's security policy in March of 2025[112] and appointed numerous high-ranking intelligence personnel into the government in July of 2026 in an effort to strengthen the nation's national security.[113] However, issues such as large-scale displacement, economic instability, and fragmented areas of governmental authority have made it difficult for Syria to emerge from conflict and ensure stability within the nation.[114]

During the Arab Spring revolutionary movement, the First Libyan Civil War broke out and culminated in the recognition of a new government made up of rebel forces, the National Transitional Council.[115] During this transitional period, a General National Congress (GNC) was elected to create a new constitution for the nation in the next eighteen months.[116] Elections for a House of Representatives were held in 2014, but some Islamic military leaders claimed that the results of this election were illegitimate as foreign powers influenced the outcome.[117] As such, these leaders took military control of the capital city Tripoli and pushed the House of Representatives to Tobruk.[118] United Nations peace talks between the House of Representatives and GNC in 2015 led to the formation of the transitional Government of National Accord, but

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Gebeily, Maya & Jana Choukeir. "Syrian government, Kurds agree integration deal, US hails 'historic milestone." *Reuters*, 30 Jan. 2026, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrian-kurdish-led-sdf-agree-ceasefire-phased-integration-deal-with-government-2026-01-30/.
[111] Ibid.
[112] "Syria's interim president announces formation of national security council." *France24*, 13 Mar. 2025, https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250313-syria-interim-president-announces-formation-of-national-security-council-sharaa-bashar-al-assad.
[113] "Syria's Al-Sharaa reshuffles security and intelligence leadership." *Al Jazeera*, 19 Jul. 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/7/19/syrias-al-sharaa-reshuffles-security-and-intelligence-leadership.
[114] Sainz, Victoria. "Fragmented Syria and the Weight of Non-State Rule." *Atlas Institute for International Affairs*, 7 Aug. 2025, https://atlasinstitute.org/fragmented-syria-and-the-weight-of-non-state-rule/.
[115] Issitt, Micah. "Second Libyan Civil War." *EBSCO*, 2023, https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/military-history-and-science/second-libyan-civil-war.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

this body was unable to put forth a slate of cabinet ministers due to rejection by the House of Representatives.[119] Nations such as Russia and Egypt have backed the House of Representatives, while the UN has provided support to the GNC.[120] Divisions both within the nation and within the global political sphere have continued even after the 2020 ceasefire was signed between the two parties.[121] To this day, Libya remains politically fragmented as these two rival governments seek recognition as the leader of the nation.[122] As the nation remains divided, foreign nations such as Russia have used this opportunity to expand their presence within the nation and utilize the vast oil expanses present within Libya.[123]

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

To ensure nations do not fall back into conflict, all nations within the Arab League must come together to support member states looking to rebuild security measures and defense institutions following conflict. Nations must focus on rebuilding the trust of their citizens following conflict, particularly in a region that saw the outbreak of widespread protests just over a decade ago. The Arab League has had a Joint Defense Pact in place since 1950, but it has never been enacted like that of other international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Council (NATO).[124] As tensions have risen within the region over the last several years, some policymakers have begun to rally more intensely behind the idea of collective and cross-border security measures in the Arab World.[125] For example, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Pakistan signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement to strengthen collective deterrence as the nations share concerns regarding the increasingly aggressive military stances of both Israel and Iran.[126] The agreement explicitly states that these nations will treat an attack on one as an attack on all, providing these nations an additional layer of strength against potential attacks.[127] One way that Arab League nations may look to deter and prevent attacks from external actors would be through the passage of an Arab-wide deterrence agreement, pooling together the military resources of all nations across the alliance.

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] "U.S. Strategy for Stabilizing Fractured Libya." *Legis1*, 22 July 2026, https://legis1.com/news/libya-stabilization-strategy-us-for-stabilizing.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Orman, Mert. "An Arab Alliance: A New Hope?" *Atlas Institute for International Affair*s, 28 Sep. 2025 https://atlasinstitute.org/an-arab-alliance-a-new-hope/.
[125] Hamzawy, Amr & Nathan Brown. "Is the Arab World Finally Discovering Collective Security and Multilateral Diplomacy?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 17 Dec. 2025, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/12/arab-multilateral-gaza-conflict-diplomacy-middle-east.
[126] Azhari, Timour, et. al. "Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan pledge mutual defence as Middle East turmoil escalates." *Reuters*, 7 Aug. 2026, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/saudi-arabia-turkey-pakistan-sign-joint-defence-deal-amid-regional-turmoil-2026-08-07/.
[127] Ibid.

In order to help rebuild the security of any given nation, Arab League states must also look to rebuild civilian institutions and restore trust in governance. The Arab League's commitment in Sudan to a comprehensive ceasefire alongside reintegration programs and disarmament have helped to rebuild citizens' trust in their government.[128] In addition, the League has invested in regional partnerships aimed to rebuild the transportation sector along with providing humanitarian aid that has helped to rebuild critical civilian infrastructure damaged in previous conflicts.[129] However, as the war in Sudan continues forth, rebuilding civilian infrastructure will not be enough to effectively address security concerns within the nation. Member nations must focus both on addressing the damaging consequences of conflict while ensuring security against further attacks.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has conflict within the MENA region and the global rise of violent non-state actors altered security policy and priorities within your country?
- What existing legal frameworks and oversight mechanisms place a check on security forces within your nation?
- Which member states currently show early warning signs of potential relapse into conflict and what steps can be taken now to prevent that relapse?
- What oversight measures have proven effective elsewhere at bolstering the stability of national security institutions?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What steps can nations put into place to ensure that security sector reform is properly enacted and overseen by civilian institutions?
- How will nations keep military power in check, making sure their national security is not entirely controlled and reliant on their security forces?
- To what extent should the Arab League as a whole be involved in developing and enforcing security sector reform in individual member states?
- How can League member states ensure that security stabilization initiatives ensure long-term peace and stability within a particular nation?

IV. Additional Resources

"Security Sector Reform 101: Understanding the Concept, Charting Trends and Identifying Challenges"
Centre for International Governance Innovation

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[128] "The Arab League Supports the Peace Initiative Proposed by PM Kamil." *Sudan Horizon*, 24 Dec. 2025, https://sudanhorizon.com/the-arab-league-supports-the-peace-initiative-proposed-by-pm-kamil/.
[129] "Arab League and Sudan plan reconstruction with focus on smart transport." *Sudan Tribune*, 28 July 2026, https://sudantribune.com/article/316701.

This publication discusses how the concept of security sector reform (SSR) arose as international actors began to identify the connection between a secure nation and national development. It discusses the political, institutional, economic, and societal dimensions that SSR is meant to target, focusing on key principles that help strengthen national security such as democratic accountability and civil society engagement.

"The Role of Non-State Actors in Arab Countries after the Arab Uprisings"
The European Institute of the Mediterranean

This publication discusses the political consequences of the Arab Spring and the advent of numerous non-state actor groups across Arab League member states. It examines numerous case studies across the region, such as Yemen and Syria, to discuss how political repression from state governments can lead to the emergence of violent opposition.

"Understanding the Arab Interior Ministers' Council and its role in transnational repression"
MENA Rights Group

This analysis focuses on the role of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council in coordinating defense efforts across Arab League nations. It discusses the current legal frameworks put into place by the council and how collaboration with other intergovernmental organizations can lead to broader security strengthening. Specific case studies of extraditions across member states are introduced to discuss the enforcement mechanisms of the council and potential human rights concerns that come along with them.

"Civil–Military Relations and Civil War Recurrence: Security Forces in Postwar Politics"
The Journal of Conflict Resolution

This research article examines the impacts that restructuring of security forces within a nation has on its overall security levels following internal conflict and civil war. The article finds that imposing measures such as civilian military oversight does reduce the likelihood a nation will return to civil war.