

MUN

ARAB LEAGUE BACKGROUND GUIDE

AUSMUN 2021



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH WELCOME LETTER



Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2021. As an organization led by the students of AUS, AUSMUN has had the privilege of hosting some of the biggest and most diverse MUN conferences in this region. Our 2020 conference saw over 1000 delegate registrations from more than 45 national and international institutions!

Adapting to a New Normal, Promoting Resilience: given the turbulent year of 2020, there was no other theme which could have fit our present conditions better. A small outbreak in Wuhan exactly a year back has now trickled down into a global catastrophe which has two million dead, leaving a trail of broken lives in its wake. Looking at the severely distorted life that has become our 'new normal', some may question whether it could all have been avoided. Whether we could have been better prepared. And the broader goal of our conference is to do exactly that: teach the upcoming generation to question current policies in the hopes of preventing another similar global catastrophe.

This background guide has been formulated by your chairs along with the research team to provide you with a concise overview of the topics chosen.

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH WELCOME LETTER

The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous actions that have been taken, which can be used by delegates as a stepping stone to come up with their own solutions to the issues. At the end of each topic, delegates will find sections of questions and suggestions that aim to guide the process of research.

Delegates are greatly encouraged to expand beyond the guide and research about their country and topics in order to construct well founded arguments during debate. The delegate handbook contains a number of tips on how to research and addresses a vast array of common concerns. Finally, let me use this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all those who have helped create the document you are reading right now: Your wonderful moderators, the AUSMUN Research Team, and not to mention the AUSMUN Media team who have done an incredible job in designing and formatting the Background Guides.

I wish you the very best in preparing for the conference. If you have any queries at all, or need any specific help in researching for your topics, do not hesitate to contact research@ausmun.com

Sincerely,
Julia Jose
Director of Research
AUSMUN 2021

MODERATORS



Muhammad Habib

Layth Al-Khairulla

Mouj Al Sheikh

Hadi Kesrouan

WELCOME DELEGATES!

We are in unprecedented times, and AUSMUN is something that brings us a sense of normalcy.

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you all to the 2021 American University of Sharjah Model United Nations Conference (AUSMUN2021). As chairs of the Arab League, we look forward to hearing the new ideas you would bring to the table on solutions for solving regional issues regarding our committee, as well as hearing your intense debates and realistic resolutions. We believe that you will bring a new perspective on how to solve these issues. We are looking forward to seeing you on the days of the conference.

In its 14 year history, AUSMUN, has been inspiring the youth into solving international issues and is always looking for improvement in its conferences. This year, due to COVID-19, the conference is going to be held virtually for the first time in AUSMUN history. However, we will continue to ensure that you gain the same experience and memories as any other in-person conference . We hope you will all have a memorable and fruitful experience with AUSMUN 2021. Looking forward to a great conference with you all!

For any inquiries or concerns about the conference, please feel free to contact us through the following email: ausmun.arableague@gmail.com

BEST REGARDS,
AUTHORS OF THE BACKGROUND GUIDE
MUHAMMAD AND LAYTH

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE

The Arab League, or the League of Arab States, is a regional organization in the Arab world. It was formed in Cairo, Egypt on the 2nd of March, 1945 with just six member states. Today, the league has 22 members. The league's main goal is to improve relations between member states and promote collaboration between them. In addition to that, it serves to protect member states' independence and sovereignty. The league targets regional issues that directly affect its member states. It provides member states a platform that allows them to discuss and resolve these issues peacefully and within the Arab domain. Each member has one vote towards resolutions and decisions are only applicable on states that voted for them. In its core, the league aims to strengthen and coordinate the political, cultural, economic, and social programs of Arab nations. The Arab League is the ideal platform for anything and everything related to the Arab world.

Summary and History

Ever since 2015, Turkey's foreign policy has seen drastic changes. Previously, Turkey had been emphasizing diplomatic, cultural, and trade growth with foreign nations. However, this has changed and Turkey has increased its military presence in its neighboring countries, mainly in the Middle Eastern region. Since Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan formed his coalition a year after he assumed the presidency, he has engaged in military intervention against the Kurdish population that spreads across its borders, engulfing southern Turkey, northern Syria, and northern Iraq. There has been massive outcry from several Arab League nations, many of which have condemned Turkey's actions in entering the Middle East. Moreover, Turkey's close ties with neighboring Iran is viewed by numerous GCC countries as a threat to their sovereignty and national interests. According to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Ahmed Aboul Gheit, he calls it an "invasion of an Arab state's land and an aggression on its sovereignty" (as cited in Saba, 2019, para. 1). Thus, it is evident that this issue is of significant status within the Arab League.

Turkey's operations in Syria have been numerous around the Middle East, thereby establishing an assertive presence in the region. On April 24, 2016, Turkey launched "Operation Euphrates Shield" aimed at combating ISIS fighters and the Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) in northeastern Syria. This operation lasted around 7 months and resulted in substantial recovery of many lands to Turkish-backed forces from previous control of ISIS and the SDF. These territories include key locations along the Syria-Turkey border such as Afrin and Manbij.

Moreover, they were able to secure areas around the Euphrates river, Jarablus, and Al-Bab. This operation yielded support from various members of the international community. Then Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon in a readout issued from his office, expressed his emphasis “on the key role of Turkey in the fight against Da’esh” (In meeting with Turkey's President, UN chief stresses country's key role in fighting ISIL, 2016, para. 1). Then, on March 18, 2018, Turkish forces entered the city of Afrin in what has been called “Operation Olive Branch.” This intervention was condemned by some members of the Arab League and the Arab League Secretary-General as an intervention in the affairs of Turkey’s southern Arab neighbor, Syria.

Furthermore, Turkey has launched airstrikes in 2017 targeting parts of Syria and Iraq against Kurdish groups in the aforementioned states. This was a predecessor to Operation Claw, which saw Turkish forces enter the Kurdistan region of Iraq. It started in May 2019, and took form in many sub operations, the most recent of which, Operation Claw Tiger, launched in June 2020 (Reuters Staff, 2020).

Discourse on the Issue

Arab League members argue that these operations are an attack on the sovereignty of Arab nations. The right of a nation to its sovereignty is an inherent claim that was given since before the establishment of the United Nations. Moreover, they cite that Turkish operations are in violation of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) which states that “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. However, Turkey claims to be acting in self defense as stated in Article 51 of the UN Charter which states that “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”

These operations provide instability in the Middle East as members of the Arab League have been witnessing increased intervention on their land. These operations may serve as a further destabilizer to an already unstable region. The Arab League administration has been vocal about its opposition to Turkey's meddling in its member states' affairs. In addition, key members of the Arab League have continued in their condemnation of Turkish operations. Member states such as the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have publicly stated their dissatisfaction over the events that have unfolded. However, other members have active Turkish military bases on their lands. These countries include Qatar, Somalia, Syria, and Iraq. In fact, Qatar continues to have strong ties with Turkey on various political and economical issues. Therefore, it is evident that there is some division within the Arab League on how to address this issue.

Past Actions by UN, International Organizations (IO) and NGOs

The Arab League has drafted resolutions condemning Turkish military operations. Recently, they adopted a resolution that takes "a unified Arab approach towards Turkey and condemn Ankara's continuing intervention in Iraq" (Aldroubi, 2020). However, even though this resolution received support from members of the Arab League, it failed to deliver any major reform to Turkey's actions. In addition, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet has warned of grave violations of human rights with victims that "include those perceived to be allied with opposing parties, or critical of Turkish-affiliated armed groups" among others (UN rights chief calls for Turkey to probe violations in northern Syria, 2020). There was a statement issued by the five European members of the Security Council, in 2019, condemning Turkey and their actions. However, this was vetoed by Russia and the United States. The European Union has condemned Ankara's actions in Syria. Furthermore, they "threatened sanctions against Turkey" over its offensive in Syria (Emmott & Irish, 2019, para. 1). These actions, while powerful, have not deterred Turkey's activity. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

provided a more mediated approach as NATO Secretary General claimed that “NATO has been informed by Turkish authorities about the ongoing operations in Northern Syria” and that it counts on Turkey “to act with restraint” (NATO, 2019, para. 8). These calls have been met with virtually no change by Turkish forces. The Arab League and the United Nations have failed to pass a resolution that would deter Turkey from intervening in the Middle East. This has kept the door open for them to exert their military force in what they believe is a right to protect themselves.

Questions to Consider

- Is Turkey justified in its approach?
- What are ways in which Turkey’s intervention may be reduced, if not stopped completely?
- Is combatting terrorism a justifiable reason for entering into Syria and Iraq?
- Should the international community enforce sanctions on Turkey?

Suggestions for further research

- Ways to safeguard Arab nations’ sovereignty.
- Possible action to be taken against Turkey (if any).
- Possible means of collaborating with other non-Arab League countries/ UN on tackling Turkey.
- Violations that Turkey has committed in the Middle East.

Summary and History of issue

Historically, the Middle East used to be a significant political centre owing to its strategic location between Asia, Europe and Africa. The region's prominence rose after the discovery of oil. The Middle East is now the biggest supplier of oil in the world. In addition to that, oil plays a major role in shaping political relations in the MENA region. Because of competition and other factors, many countries such as Iraq and Iran have had tumultuous political relations with MENA. Furthermore, countries like the United States and Turkey have attempted to gain control of the oil market- the Red Line agreement is one among many historical attempts to establish partnerships with the Middle East for this purpose (Demirmen, 2003) . With external interventions increasing, the MENA region needs to solve its current issues so they can protect themselves against such interventions. Examples of such interventions include the United States in Iraq and the United Kingdom in Libya. (Liu, 2013)

Issues such as the one between Qatar and multiple other GCC nations is a key source of conflict in the region. The state owned Qatargas enterprise is the world's largest supplier of liquified natural gas, a fact which could contribute to the existing competition for energy dominance (Qatargas, n.d.).

Oil rich nations have more backing from international states while oil poor nations don't. The treatment of the oil rich and oil poor nations is one of the causes of political issues within Arab nations. Many oil-poor nations claimed to share oil rent, while oil-rich states never fully agreed to it. (Oil rents are the difference between the value of crude oil production at world prices and total costs of production). This caused more and more tension between nations in the MENA region. In the 70s, the oil rent was so high that many rich nations decided to create institutions that would help nations in need to pay off their rent (Luciani, 2017).

This, however, did not last long because countries decided to attack certain nations. For example, Iraq invading Kuwait. In recent history, the addition of The Greater Arab Free Trade (GAFTA) has increased the inter-Arab trade. With the US turning away from oil and relying on Shale Gas, Chinese demand would become ever more crucial for the region. This highlights a larger recent trend, in which Western nations are becoming less oil dependent on Middle East, while Asian countries which are rapidly industrializing seek to establish stronger relations to rely on MENA oil supply (Kaspersen, 2015)

Discourse on the issue

The issues regarding oil and politics in the MENA region are capable of violating the UN Charter. In situations such as Iraq invading Kuwait, it is a direct violation of Article 2. Article 2 states “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” In addition to that, political issues regarding oil go against the UNSDGs. It directly violates the 16th goal which states ‘Peace, Justice and strong institutions’. Furthermore, the general use of oil hinders the UNSDGs. It slows down the process of achieving affordable and clean energy.

Letting oil shape up the socio-political relations of the region is a step backwards. In the long run it will have a catastrophic effect on the countries involved. Saudi Arabia is one of the main countries involved in this issue. With them being the biggest exporter of oil in the world, their political relations within the region are also affected by it (Twin, 2019). Furthermore, Qatar plays a big part in this issue. It is the largest natural gas supplier in the world and currently has an ongoing problem with multiple countries in the region. The saying “Oil is power” is evident in the MENA. With Saudi Arabia in an ongoing conflict with Iran, limiting their oil exports creates an advantage for Saudi Arabia. Qatar being on good terms with Iran has also affected their relationship with Saudi Arabia (Dept, 2009).

If Iran manages to rebuild its diplomatic relations with the US, it has the potential to dominate the regional energy sector, thereby adding another regional competitor (Kaspersen, 2015). Meanwhile, Iraq's history with Kuwait and their current political situation has affected their relationship with the rest of the region. Notably, Iraq's main reason to invade Kuwait was to gain more oil control (Abdulrazaq, 2019).

Finally, an additional layer of complexity is added to existing geopolitical relations by extremists' control of regional oil fields. Large portions of oil fields in Syria are controlled by the Islamic State, thereby rendering it a key source of financing for their activities. Recently, ISIS has sought to further expand its illegal oil trade by venturing into North African nations. Key victims of these are Egypt, Libya and Algeria, many of whom rely on oil/mineral trade to fund their economies (Tichy, 2019).

Past Actions by UN, International Organizations (IO) and NGOs

Introduction of Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) in 1997 was one of the actions taken to increase trade between the Arab nations and improve economic relations by reducing customs on regional goods. While it looked successful, it has not solved the full problem. Other than the Oil for food programme, the UN has not done much about this issue (UN). Neither has there been active efforts from the Arab League to address it. This issue directly pertains to how governments act and create relationships with other nations without letting oil create a bias in their decisions. Key areas of economic focus in the upcoming decades amongst others, could include:

Diversification: With more and more countries shifting to renewable energies, the MENA oil politics may change in the near future. The UAE and Saudi Arabia form excellent examples of this shift. This may end up improving the relationship between many MENA countries because the demand for oil will decrease.

Reducing the role of states in oil based economies: Arab governments in the past have implemented reforms aimed to promote liberalization, investment and growth of the private sector. These reforms seem to have taken a sluggish pace in recent years. Openness to trade and integration with the global economy would form another key goal for MENA nations in the years to come (Al-Moneef, 2006).

Questions to Consider

- How might the regional geo-politics have evolved without the influence of oil?
- How has oil contributed to political relationships between countries?
- What would Middle East foreign policy look like in the absence of Western independence from/ Asian dependence on oil?
- What steps can be taken to curb control of oil fields by extremist organizations?
- What roles do countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Qatar play in this issue?
- How does renewable energy affect oil production?

Suggestions for Further Research

- The role of oil in the MENA region.
- Oil's role in extremist organizations' funding.
- Relationships between countries (Saudi Arabia- Qatar, Iran-GCC and so on).
- Top oil distributors in the MENA region, regional competition and how that affects diplomatic ties.

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