

Background Guide

15th Annual AUSMUN



MMXXII

Arab League

Welcome Letter from the Director of Research



Greetings fellow delegates,

It's a pleasure to see you attending the American University of Sharjah's 2022 Model United Nations Convention (AUSMUN 2022). As the age-old adage goes, "with great power comes great responsibility," as delegates of nations at the world's largest international forum, you have a heightened degree of power and responsibility. Not only do you have a say in shaping solutions for the world, and bringing glory to your country, but also the pressure of ensuring that those solutions are pragmatic, feasible, and effective in solving the issues you have set to resolve. Not only do you have a space at the international platform, but also the responsibility to ensure that you set an apt example of your nation for the world to see.

With that being said, I wish you all the best for your preparations and I am really excited to see what your wonderful minds and enthusiastic selves come up with in the committee rooms. Finally, also remember that your responsibilities include having fun and making the best of your time at AUSMUN 2022!

Best Regards,
Mohammad Amaan Siddiqui
Director of Research - AUSMUN 2022



Welcome Letter from the Dais

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and honor to welcome you all to AUSMUN 22. We are beyond thrilled to conduct this conference and look forward to chairing you all. We hope to model the United Nations in the most realistic, entertaining, and educational way possible. With your kind contribution, we aim to make this conference an unforgettable experience for all its participants.

Founded in 1945, the Arab League (or the League of Arab States) pre-dates the United Nations itself. Acting in a spirit of unity and solidarity, Arab League aims to establish and maintain peace, stability, and security amongst its members as well as other nations. . The League of Arab States' members meet biannually in the Arab League headquarters located in Cairo, Egypt. They have pledged to actively cooperate on various matters including—but not limited to—economic and military affairs.

The two topics we will be discussing in this year's AUSMUN conference within the Arab League are: the Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia and the foreign intervention of Turkey in the Middle East. We feel very enthusiastic about the fruitful debate we hope to have during our committee sessions and are excited to go over the resolutions all delegates formulate.

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Best Regards,
Mohammed Falah Al Khaffaf and Shahd Mahmoud, Chairs
Rutuja Kulkarni, Research Assistant

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Overview of the Committee



History

The Arab League, formally the League of Arab States, is a confederation of twenty-two Arab states formed on 22 March 1945, to “draw closer the relations between member states and coordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries” (Pact of the League of Arab States, 1945).

The founding members of the alliance - Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan, and Yemen - had vowed to participate in ‘close cooperation’ in order to mediate and improve on matters such as politics, economics, culture, and health. In addition, the founding members had shown a strong opinion on violence as a methodology to solving disputes between member states and renounced such means in addition to signing a military pact in 1950, vowing to treat acts of aggression against any member state as an act against all (Masters, 2020).

Today, the Arab League has 22 members, all abiding by the foundations set in the 1945 Pact of the League of Arab States, with the league targeting general regional issues, disputes, and strategies regarding the growth of the region in all aspects.

The alliance has helped solve numerous issues in recent years, spanning from the Arab Spring protests of 2010, the Libya Revolt of 2011, to the 2011 uprising in Syria, with decisions and solutions having been implemented in a timely manner, the Arab League has been instrumental to the economic growth and political stability of the region.



Overview of the Committee

Structure and Functions

The Arab League has no mechanism or power to compel its members to comply with their set agendas and acts as more of a ground of discussion in regard to its ability to bind agreements. According to its charter, it can be deduced that decisions reached by a majority “shall bind only those [states] that accept them,” with some claiming that this may place an unnecessary burden in regard to collective action.

Though such claims may seem viable, it is important to note that the foundations of the Arab League are those of peace and prosperity, with the original goals and targets of the league reverberating in the modern-day actions taken by the collective. Yet again, as the target of the league is to achieve “close co-operation of the Member States”, the decisions reached are not binding.

The principal institutions of the Arab League are the Council of the League, the Joint Defense Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Committees, and the Secretariat General. The Council of the League is the supreme organ. It is composed of representatives from the member states and holds general sessions twice a year. The Joint Defense council, on the other hand, had been set up after the signing of the treaty of mutual defense and economic cooperation in 1950. The Economic and Social Council was set up to replace the Economic Council which had been created following the Treaty in June 1950. Its aim is to establish the objectives of and to promote the means for the economic and social development of the Arab world.

The Committees fall into three different categories: Committees set up by the main institutions of the League, “ad hoc” Committees, responsible for carrying out specific tasks, and “Permanent Committees”, which play a crucial part in the working of the League. The Secretariat General is the institution of the League of Arab States responsible for implementing decisions taken by the Council of the League. It is headed by the Secretary-General with the assistance of several Assistant Secretary Generals and staff some of whom are permanent and some temporary. The Secretary-General is elected by a majority of two-thirds of the members, with the appointment usually lasting for five years. He has a key role in presenting the Arab world on an international level (IDW, 2020). The Arab League is based on principles that support and promote a unified Arab nationalism and a common position among Arab states on various issues.

The Charter of the Arab League endorsed the principle of an Arab homeland while respecting the sovereignty of the individual member states. The internal regulations of the League Council and its committees were agreed in October 1951 with those of the Secretariat-General being agreed in May 1953 (Kishore, 2021).

Since then, governance of the Arab League has been based on the duality of supra-national institutions and the sovereignty of the member states. Preservation of individual statehood derived its strengths from the natural preference of ruling elites to maintain their power and independence in decision making.

The logo for MUN AUS features the letters 'MUN' in a large, serif font. A globe is positioned behind the letter 'U', and the letters 'AUS' are written in a smaller font across the globe. The entire logo is set against a laurel wreath background.

Overview of the Committee

Substantive Voting

Each member and state in the League have one vote, with no advantages given to any state, regardless of size, political power, or economic presence. When making decisions, the Arab League adopts principles of “unanimity” and “domestic law,” which means that the member states have the final decisions on important issues, rather than the organization itself (Davis, 2020).

Funding

The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) is a regional Arab organization, a working sub-organization of the Arab League, with its main objectives being to correct and balance the payment of its member states, remove payment restrictions between members, improve Arab monetary cooperation, and encourage the development of Arab financial markets. This organization is mainly responsible for the funding of the Arab League and its projects.

One of the highest contributions of the AMF to its members was the \$200 million loan given to Yemen in 2010 to support economic restructuring programs (AB, 2010).

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Topic I: The Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia

Summary and History of the Issue

The Nile River is considered the longest river in the world as it stretches from south to north through eastern Africa for over 6,600 kilometers and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile runs along, or through, 11 African countries, some of which are Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda (National Geographic Society, 2019). The Nile has acted and continues to act, as a major rich resource of nutrition, agriculture, fishing, and a transportation route for millennia. Ancient Egyptians have utilized it to develop irrigation systems, and grow several crops in its uniquely rich soil. Today, the Nile serves as a power source through the use of hydroelectric energy, as well as an important trade route that connects markets of Europe and other continents to Africa.

In April of 2011, the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) started. Both the people and the Government of Ethiopia have funded this project which promises to serve not only Ethiopia but Sudan and Egypt as well. Given that Egypt and Sudan heavily rely on the river. Ethiopia claims that as a consequence of the dam's construction, up to 12,000 jobs are expected to be created and around 20,000 people will be resettled upon the project's completion (Verdict Media Limited, 2017). Egypt and Sudan, however, have a different say on the matter. Even though conflict about the allocation of the Nile River's water resources started several years ago, the construction of the GERD has escalated the matter significantly between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. Ethiopia believes that it has the right to utilize the Nile in whichever way it sees fit to support the poverty of its people given that it supplies 85% of the water flowing into the Nile River (Mbaku, 2020). On the other hand, Egypt, which heavily relies on the Nile's water for various purposes, including household and commercial use, views the project as a significant threat to its water security.

Topic I: The Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia



Key Issues

Droughts in Egypt

A major long-term issue was raised during talks and negotiations with Ethiopia. Egypt fears the construction of the Great Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia will greatly diminish its supply of Nile water, especially during droughts, since the Nile supplies nearly 90% of its water (Khan et al., 2021). Despite its view that Ethiopia should help mitigate droughts by releasing some of the water stored in the dam's reservoir, Ethiopia favors the scenario of having control and getting the final say as to how the dam is managed. Both parties have made efforts to try to reach an agreement, where they both offer up a compromise in order to reach common ground. Egypt, initially planning to oppose the mere start of the construction of the dam, has now shifted its position, seeking to resolve the issue in a way that ensures a constant, sufficient supply of Nile water. However, being the source of the majority of the water flowing into the Nile, Ethiopia has continued to express its determination to be the country holding the final decision as to how droughts will be dealt with. The countries are still in talks towards a diplomatic settlement that satisfies all parties. They have both agreed to recognize a fall below 35-40 b.c.m per year in the flow of the Nile Water as an official drought (Mbaku, 2020). The dam will fill up its reservoir for a second year now, a final decision yet to be reached.



A virtual satellite image depiction showing the Dam as well as the surrounding countries and landmarks.

Credit: Wheeler et al. 2016.



Topic I: The Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia

Sudan Grows Desperate

A year ago, Sudan had a very encouraging tone regarding the Great Ethiopian Dam. It made it clear it thought the dam would solve several agricultural and electrical dilemmas alike. Not only was it expected to increase the predictability of the Nile water flow, but it was also going to provide Sudan with an additional farming season, greatly nourishing its agricultural sector. To add to that, acting as the newest power source in the region, the dam would become a very reliable, cheap source of electricity for the Sudanese people (BBC, 2021). However, recent shifts in stance indicate that Sudan is no longer fond of the construction of the dam like Egypt. In several public statements made recently, it has announced the impending threat the dam poses to its water supply, pointing out that, in the event of a drought, its position would be much worse than Egypt, given the fact it does not have a large reserve of water to aid in the fallout. Moreover, Ethiopia's seemingly deliberate secrecy greatly worries Sudanese officials. The presence of the dam could have several effects on the pre-existing dams in Sudan, The Merowe Dam, and The Roseires Dam, to name a few. The Ethiopian dam, being the largest hydroelectric dam in Africa to be built on the same river, the Nile, will likely affect the operation of Sudanese dams. How exactly it would do so remains to be seen.

World Intervention

While all three parties are still going back and forth in the hopes of reaching an agreement, countries in the surrounding regions are afraid this dispute will not end well. Several Gulf Arab states have continued to issue public political statements to help mediate the conflict. Additionally, the U.S has also made clear and highlighted the importance of seeking expeditions with the negotiations, by sending several government officials to and around the Horn of Africa (Khan et al., 2021). Disputes over the Nile water have been going on for decades, dating back to the agreements of 1929 and 1959, which split 90% of the Nile water between Egypt and Sudan (Mbaku, 2020). However, Ethiopia's 2011 decision to start construction on the dam is what re-ignited this feud. It claims it was no party to any past agreement, and insists that, since the majority of the Nile is Ethiopian waters, it has the right to carry on with its plan anyway. As the tension rises between the three states, Egypt believes the Ethiopians have been dealing in bad faith and has made it clear its willingness to take whatever measures necessary to eliminate the threat if the situation persists without a compromise. Saudi Arabia is drawing on its strong and long-standing ties with the three countries in order to help dissolve the feud. The UAE and Qatar, as well, have expressed significant interest in playing a meaningful, mediating role.



Topic I: The Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Contributing to over 85% of the Nile's water flow, the Blue Nile is an important source of water, critical to Egypt's water supply. In 1959, the three countries signed an agreement that distributes the Nile's water equally between them. In 2011, the construction of the renaissance dam began; and therefore, disputes have arisen between the three countries. Egypt and Sudan have claimed that the dam revokes the treaty of 1959 while Ethiopia disputed otherwise. The governments of Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia have made many attempts to resolve the issue peacefully and without war. Multiple summits have been organized between the three countries to set rules about the dam's water output. In March of 2015, the three countries reached a declaration of principles that the countries must follow. As per the agreement, the United States, the United Nations, and South Africa have been appointed as observers. Though the declaration has been agreed to, yet it has not been signed. Ethiopia has argued that the dam is within its sovereignty and that it should have full control over it. While Egypt and Sudan argued otherwise and asserted that they had historical claims over the Nile's water. The issue was also discussed in the security council to avoid conflicts amid threats from Egypt and Sudan to destroy the dam, yet no agreement has been reached. The United States and the World Bank have also called out the three countries urging them to reach a peaceful agreement. Adding to their efforts, the African Union arranged a meeting that produced a promising format - a tripartite committee that foresees the dam's operations. Arab countries have also shed their support to a peaceful resolution.



Topic I: The Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia

Questions a Resolution Should Address

1. What are the impacts of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam's construction on neighboring nations along the Nile River?
2. What aspects of a country will be most affected by the dam and what is the type of this impact?
3. How can this issue be resolved and what are possible solutions to address all involved parties' concerns?
4. What are more effective ways of water resource allocation given the current situation and how can these ways be monitored and regulated?
5. What are the risks and benefits that may present themselves due to the construction of the GERD?

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Topic II: Foreign Intervention of Turkey in the Middle East

Summary and History of the Issue

In recent years, Turkey has become one of the dominant players in the affairs of the Middle East in the 21st century, as a result of its divergence from its past, more passive approach towards the neighboring region. Such endeavors brought a change in the international and regional balances in the region where Turkey takes a keen interest.

In the past, Turkey was only concerned with its security when it came to the Middle East, with cautious policies of non-interference being applied. But the system-level changes reduced the weight of such concerns in its foreign policy and a pro-active Middle Eastern policy was adopted. This alteration had started coming to fruition in 2001, when Turkey had begun to be under the control of the conservative and populist political Justice and Development Party, also referred to as the AKP (Khan, 2015).

Recently, Turkey had started to partake in a strategy of global alliance regardless of others' interests, with actions such as the invitation of the Israeli Minister of Energy to the Antalya Diplomacy Forum acting as a catalyst to the aggressive reaction of members of the region of the Middle East to Turkey's new policies (Altunisik, 2021).

In the past, Turkey has acted as a segue between the Arab world and the rest of the world, with relations staying mostly on the positive side with little to no interference between the two parties, yet this has changed in recent years and has been a shock to the region's socio-political climate.

Such matters are important to the entire world due to the magnitude of the Middle East's effect on the global condition, with the politically, economically, and militarily powerful nation of Turkey posing a threat to the region's activities.

Topic II: Foreign Intervention of Turkey in the Middle East

Key Issues

The Turkish Occupation of Northern Syria

Operation Peace Spring (Oct 9, 2019 – Nov 25, 2019): The Turkish Armed Forces and the Syrian National Army conducted Operation Peace Spring in northern Syria, Aleppo Governorate, in 2019, a cross-border military operation against the Syrian Democratic Forces and later the Syrian Arab Army.

Operation Euphrates Shield (Aug 24, 2016 – Mar 29, 2017): During the Syrian Civil War, the Turkish Armed Forces and Turkey-aligned Syrian opposition organizations conducted Operation Euphrates Shield, which resulted in the Turkish occupation of northern Syria.

Operation Spring Shield (Feb 27, 2020 – Mar 6, 2020): In response to the Balyun airstrikes, a cross-border military operation was launched against the Syrian Armed Forces and affiliated militias in northern Syria's Idlib Governorate by the Turkish Armed Forces.

Operation Olive Branch (Jan 20, 2018): A cross-border military operation led by the Turkish Armed Forces and Syrian National Army in northwest Syria's majority-Kurdish Afrin District against the Syrian Democratic Forces' People's Protection Units.

The Kurds

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has long viewed the rise of the largest ethnic minority group, the Kurds, in Syria as a threat across the border of Turkey. This is due to a specific Kurdish separatist group called the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which has been at crossroads with the Turkish government for decades. Syria became embroiled in a civil war in 2011. Protests against the autocratic administration of the country erupted in major cities. When the government reacted to the uprisings by ruthlessly suppressing them, it created a power vacuum in the north. Beginning in 2013, the Islamic militant group ISIS stormed into the area. ISIS eventually controlled major areas of this region, which was home to the Kurds. Turkish army and supported Syrian rebels started an operation on the Syrian side of the border on October 9th to construct a 30km (20-mile) deep "safe zone". It was a consequence of US troops withdrawing from Syria, relying on the Kurds to destroy the Islamic State. Following that, Turkey and Russia agreed to share control of the border area. As far as Turkey is concerned, the anti-PKK operations will continue given that the PKK is viewed as a direct threat to the country's security and regional stability.

Turkey and Russia's deal on north-east Syria



Topic II: Foreign Intervention of Turkey in the Middle East

Foreign policy

Initially, Turkey took pride in its cultural, diplomatic, and trade connections with its foreign allies. Post-2015, its foreign policy faced drastic changes due to the increase in military presence in the Middle East. Ever since President Erdoğan enabled the Kurdish intervention, a majority of Arab League nations have condemned Turkey from entering the Middle East. Furthermore, back in 2017, Turkey launched airstrikes on Syria and Iraq and its strong ties with neighboring Iran are viewed as a threat by numerous GCC countries and as the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit calls it, “invasion of an Arab state’s land and an aggression on its sovereignty” (as cited in Saba, 2019, p. 1). At that time the government’s aim was mainly to convince its NATO allies, particularly the US, to support Turkey’s idea of creating a buffer zone along the border. These operations cause instability throughout the Middle East.

Topic II: Foreign Intervention of Turkey in the Middle East

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Since its independence, Turkey has been involved with many conflicts in the Middle East. Turkey's involvement has varied from threats to other countries to putting troops on the ground and invading countries. Countries like Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Cyprus have experienced troubles with Turkey over land disputes and political reasons. In 1937 Turkey and Greece had a dispute over the island of Cyprus where Turkey invaded the northern part and Greece took the southern part. The United Nations has set a demilitarized line between the two occupants to keep the peace in 1964. However, both countries are still in dispute and the problem is not solved. As for the Turkish involvement in Syria that has been happening since 2015. The Turkish forces invaded the northern part of Syria where the Kurdish people reside. Several summits have been held with Russia as a host in 2020 to resolve the issue between Syria and Turkey. The summit was a success where both countries agreed to a ceasefire. Turkey is also involved in Iraq where they occupied a part of the Kurdish state. Direct talks between the Iraqi and Turkish governments have been going on for years but no treaty has been signed.

Topic II: Foreign Intervention of Turkey in the Middle East

Questions a Resolution Should Address

1. Why did Turkey find military operations necessary?
2. Did Kurdish militias and their allies have the ability to resist a Turkish invasion?
3. Could the Turkish invasion have led to ethnic cleansing?
4. How can Turkey's invasion be stopped?
5. What were the UN's efforts regarding Turkey's invasion of Cyprus?
6. How did Turkey's newfound relations with Israel affect its relationship with nations of the Middle East?

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