

BACKGROUND GUIDES



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Letter from the DIAS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Arab League at the 10th annual conference of the GEMS Wesgreen Model United Nations 2026. We, the chairs of the Arab League: Fatima Hatem, Layal Melhem and Nadine Tabche, are honoured to preside over this esteemed committee and are eager to meet the delegates. We are thrilled to be able to welcome the spirited discussions that will take place throughout our committee sessions, and we are certain that you will all walk out of this conference as more confident, knowledgeable, diplomatic, and empathetic individuals.

During this conference, the delegates can expect to engage in fruitful discussions and uphold Arab League values as they represent their respective Member States. The delegates will work together to propose inventive and innovative solutions to the geopolitical threats that plague the Arab world as we know it today, thereby developing their research, writing, public speaking, and problem solving skills. This MUN, therefore, provides an excellent opportunity for delegates to cultivate the skills that many renowned world leaders possess, preparing them to potentially one day become the future leaders of our generation.

With that being said, we wish you luck with the research you will be conducting and highly recommend that you get started as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary stress. Having a calm, open mind, an ample amount of research and an unwavering willingness to solve the problem at hand will lead to a remarkable MUN experience, with memories, and hopefully, genuine friendships that will last a long time.

We strongly encourage you to keep this background guide safe, as it has been meticulously designed to be the perfect starting point for your preparation for this conference. If you have any queries or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to email us at the email address listed below. We look forward to seeing you all soon. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Chairs of the Arab League – Layal Melhem, Fatima Hatem and Nadine Tabche.
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Introduction to committee

Founded in Cairo, on March 22nd, 1945, the League of Arab States (known alternatively as the Arab League or LAS) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of members across both the Middle East and Northern Africa (the MENA region). This organization was created with the main focus and goal of promoting cooperation between its member states, protecting the sovereignty of each member, and to serve as a platform where a wide variety of issues such as cultural, political and economical, among others, could be discussed. With 22 members part of the organization, the Arab League has successfully managed to execute multiple initiatives across its years of operation, from establishing free trade among a majority of its members in 2005, to establishing the 2002 Arab Peace Resolution

Holistically, the purpose of the Arab League is to strengthen ties, coordinate policies, and foster cooperation among its Arab member states in economic, cultural, social, and political fields, while protecting their independence and sovereignty. Since its establishment as a form of resistance against colonialism, the council has worked tirelessly to provide a platform for Arab states to present a united front on the international stage, challenging colonial division and demonstrating its global importance. Today, it continues to promote unity and conflict resolution in the Arab world in pursuit of the shared goals and common interests of all 22 Arab nations from North Africa and the Middle East, and will continue to do so to ensure diplomacy, negotiation and cooperation are never forgotten across all its members.



Agenda 1:
Addressing the rise in
violence due to political
corruption and the lack of
cooperation
between MENA countries

Introduction to the Agenda

In recent years, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has experienced a significant rise in violence, driven by multiple interconnected factors, including political corruption and the lack of effective cooperation among MENA countries. Diplomatic fragmentation has severely contributed to the worsening of violence and civil security, resulting in instability within the MENA (Middle East and Northern African) region, and solidifying it as one of the least peaceful regions in the world over decades of history which results in a multitude of hardships for millions of people each year.

According to UNICEF (The United Nations' International Children's Emergency Funds), in 2024, at least 50 million people were affected by some form of a humanitarian crisis (such as natural disasters, war, instability, etc), and a further 16 million people have been internally displaced. Another major consequence of this instability is the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV). An estimated 37 to 40 percent of women in the Arab region experience some form of violence during their lifetime, with intimate partner violence being the most common. Although some political and legal reforms have been introduced, efforts to prevent GBV continue to face serious obstacles, including weak institutional power. These are not the only issues which have been intensified by political corruption and a rise in violence.

Without clear ways to communicate and resolve conflicts, tensions are difficult to reduce and can quickly grow into larger conflicts. The lack of cooperation and transparency, and violence within the region has served to exacerbate these issues and prove the need for diplomacy and negotiation in an age of instability, and highlight the need to improve intergovernmental coordination.

Key Terms

Political Violence: Violence that is carried out due to political motives, such as to influence decision or control.

Extremism: Holding beliefs that are outside of what is considered mainstream, potentially promoting radicalization.

Clientelism/Patronage Networks: A system where those in power provide goods or services to individuals in exchange for political support.

Cronyism: When positions of authority are appointed to associates or friends (without taking into account their suitability), rather than those with appropriate qualifications to the role.

Judicial Reform: The process of changing legal systems in order to promote accountability, fairness, and justice within any given country.

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI): An Index showing how corrupt the public sector of a nation appears to be. Lower scores indicate higher (perceived) corruption levels.

Multilateral Cooperation: Agreements and collaborative efforts involving multiple countries, usually for mutual benefit or to address certain issues.

Armed Non-State Actors: Organized entities that are not the government (and operate outside of the government) which use force to achieve their own political, economical, or other goals.

Democratization: The process of introducing a democracy, or the principles of a democracy.

Key Issues

Weak Governance and Rule of Law: Having weak or undefined laws, judicial, or governance systems can severely contribute to corruption, as it can continue without any repercussions and leads to a culture of impunity, resulting in deteriorating trust within existing systems. This also allows for politically or financially motivated violence to occur endlessly, with change being difficult to implement as a result. As abuse of power and political violence rises, it sparks the potential for conflicts when it comes to regional stability, as countries may not trust each other, and therefore, refuse to work with one another entirely.

Lack of Cooperation: Without proper, multilateral cooperative measures, the risk of violence rises, as nations are unable to plan or create joint-responses to sudden challenges, especially in the face of a multitude of crises. Violence can more easily occur cross-borders, and criminal networks can more easily expand due to this, which exposes gaps in the member states' abilities to stop and prevent violent acts. It also undermines the people's trust in their government's abilities to improve safety, and generally, the lack of cooperation hurts anti-corruption and anti-violence efforts.

Accountability and a Lack of Transparency: The lack of information about governments or individuals in power make it difficult to assess and identify the presence of corruption (and patronage networks). Further, when corruption does occur, oftentimes the responsible parties are not held accountable and they do not face consequences, leading to the erosion of trust and the normalization of such behavior within government, hence worsening the problem by directly leading to the weakening of governance and allowing a system where political violence and radicalization is perpetuated.

The Presence of Patronage Networks & Cronyism: Patronage Networks and Cronyism contribute heavily to the rates of corruption. It shifts the government from being a place for those capable of bringing about improvement to a place where loyalty guarantees protection and power. By preventing the right people getting into their appropriate roles, it creates the opportunity for inequality, civil-war, and riots within a nation, which could prompt frustration, and thus, violence that could have been avoided. Also, patronage networks and cronyism hinders the ability for the government to run effectively, as well as develop and establish intergovernmental relationships, further worsening anti-corruption and anti-violence measures.

Major Parties

International Entities:

The World Bank Group: is taking action against gender-based violence by incorporating it into the core strategic objective of the WBG's new gender strategy and the forthcoming gender action plan of the MENA region.

UNRWA: Held events across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, to highlight its commitment to end harm against women and children, advocating for decreasing the violence caused by political corruption.

Regional Entities:

MENA Sites Of Conscience Network: Initiated by the international coalition of sites of conscience: addresses key issues regarding the mechanisms that societies need to follow to come to terms with past issues and how to rebuild relations and promote trust among citizens through civic engagement and dialogue

The Arab Interior Ministers' Council (AIMC): Provides the Arab countries with a chance to cooperate together in fields including internal security and prevention of crime

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Combats political corruption through strengthening laws, enhancing financial monitoring and regional cooperation by following the statutes of the GCC which stipulates the common fate and purpose of its people, achieving coordination, integration and interdependence in all fields.

Major Parties

Countries:

Lebanon: The long history of corrupt leadership and sectarian governance led to an economic collapse, leaving the government unable to meet public needs. This failure caused widespread protests and social unrest.

Tunisia: As a result of the Arab Spring of 2011 the decades-long dictatorships have fallen causing the country to struggle in strengthening democratic and social inclusion as well as tackling the initial cause of the systematic corruption.

Libya: Corruption and inequality inflamed the 2011 Arab Spring protests and subsequent failure to establish a stable democratic state resulted in ongoing civil war and factional violence over control of oil resources.

Syria: Corruption was a key criticism of the government when the civil war began, contributing to the state's collapse, widespread violence, and a dire humanitarian crisis. The conflict ultimately led to the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024.

Yemen: A civil war was initiated due to complaints of corruption and the failure of the state to provide basic services, leading to a collapsed state and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

UAE: Legislations to criminalise activities associated with terrorism was put in place by the UAE government thus preventing political corruption.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

United Nations Convention Against Corruption: In October 2003, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), a treaty that serves as the only legally binding universal instrument against corruption. By 2012, 15 out of 21 Arab UNCAC party states had ratified or acceded, leading to its widespread adoption across the MENA region that continues to grow.

Arab Convention to Fight Corruption: On the 21st of December 2010, the Arab League issued the Arab Convention to Fight Corruption, the first official pan-Arab anti-corruption instrument that works by promoting political integrity, transparency, and accountability across member state governments to prevent the rise of violence. This treaty complements international efforts like the UNCAC by strengthening efforts in asset recovery and enhancing cooperation between MENA countries. It was signed by 21 Arab countries, demonstrating the region's strong commitment and solidifying the treaty's status as a regional norm.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015):

On the 18th of December 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted a unanimous resolution to provide a roadmap for a political solution in Syria to address the rise in violence during the civil war and focus on fulfilling the humanitarian needs of civilians to achieve lasting peace and unity. Despite its significance, it had limited success due to the lack of regional and international cooperation to enforce it.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 (1990): On the 29th of November 1990, the United Nations Security Council adopted the most impactful resolution of the Kuwait War, a war which stemmed from national rivalries, territorial disputes, and a general lack of cooperation and diplomacy. The resolution authorised Member States cooperating with the Government of Kuwait to use military force to compel Iraqi compliance and restore international peace and security in the area.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

1. What steps can governments take to improve transparency and accountability?
2. How can MENA member states improve diplomatic coordination with each other?
3. Which body should be investigating suspected cases of politically motivated actions?
4. What role can the League of Arab States play in facilitating cooperation and resolving crises?
5. How can non-state actors be regulated within the MENA region?
6. What role do external actors and external parties with influence play in regulating political corruption?
7. How can judicial systems be strengthened, and frameworks be implemented to ensure no corruption occurs?

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Agenda 2:

Addressing resource scarcity
and water security as growing
threats to regional stability
and unity

Introduction to the Agenda

All over the world, but especially within the Middle Eastern Northern African region (MENA), a lack of resources, especially water, threatens peace and civilizations alike. The Arab region is one that is highly water-stressed (with around 60% of people living in these 'water-stressed' regions), and the need for basic resources intensifies when considering the numerous humanitarian crises ongoing within the territory, making it more vital than ever— and, consequently, making resource scarcity a massive threat to regional stability.

Other factors such as demand due to rising populations, the creation of new industries, or even climate change further worsen this. Oftentimes within the MENA region, resources tend to be cross-boundary. However, despite this, when access to resources becomes an uncertainty, it is likely that the pressure to obtain these resources drive conflict, tensions, and violence, as nations fight to gain access, control, or ownership over these resources so they may meet the needs of their country and people. The scarcity of food and water creates tensions among nations automatically, and combined with climate change exacerbating shortages immensely, as well as having unclear terms for dealing with transboundary sources, has the potential to lead to disputes and many conflicts.

This issue calls for diplomacy in the face of potential political tensions to reduce the possibility of conflicts and ensure that, despite resource scarcity, all nations can get access to what they need and are able to meet their needs without excessive inequality or disputes. With this agenda, all member states should put aside their national interests and use the League of Arab States as a forum for consensus-building as intended with the committee, where all countries are able to cooperate, coordinate, and strive to create policies and strategies that all nations can agree on to improve resource scarcity in the Arab region and reduce the impact it has in the future.

Key Terms

Transboundary Water Sources: Sources of water which lie on the borders of two or more countries (such as rivers or aquifers).

Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM): The strategic management of water to ensure all needs can be met, such as protecting ecosystems or having fair access to water among others.

Water Stress Index (WSI): An index which compares the demand of water in a given region, against the available supply.

Desertification: The process in which fertile land turns into territory resembling a desert, making it difficult to employ agriculture.

Droughts: When there is low rainfall for a long period of time, leading to water shortages and famines.

Desalination: The process of removing salt and other minerals from water with the use of technology in order to make water safe for consumption.

Scarce Resources: Resources which are available in low, limited, or non-existent quantities, hence making them valuable.

Resource-Based Conflicts: Disputes which arise due to the scarcity of resources, leading countries to go into conflict over ownership or control over said resources.

Interdependence: When two or more parties, including governments, are dependent on one another.

Key Issues

Climate Change: In recent years, climate change has significantly worsened, with research showing average temperatures to be rising especially within the MENA region—with many member states frequently reporting temperatures reaching above 50 degrees celsius in the summer season. These temperature rises cause desertification within fertile farmland, with about 50% of the land in the MENA region being degraded already, which severely reduces food production annually. Further, climate change worsens rain patterns and hence promotes droughts and famines, which only begins a cycle of intensifying the reducing levels of food and water compared to the demand of people who need it.

Division of Resources, and Inequality with Resource Division: Even with sources for basic necessities (water, food, materials), resources are not always divided evenly. A notable example with this is within OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), where quotas are not allocated evenly, leading to major disparities in the economies of member states in this regard. However, this does not just occur with oil. Resources are often split depending on geographical location, political influence, or other factors, and not simply based on need. This leads to some regions having massive demand for resources like water, while others do not, because a given nation may have the wealth to overcome the issue with other means. This inequality could fuel conflict, with access to resources may symbolize power rather than unity and solidarity.

Key Issues

Conflicts, and a Lack of Intergovernmental Cooperation: In the face of a diminishing supply of resources as a direct result of many various factors, the lack of cooperation between nations makes these issues much harder to deal with. Without coordination, nations may not be able to effectively respond to the problems associated with rising climate change such as droughts, famines, or desertification. Moreover, pre-existing tensions between nations make cooperation unlikely despite MENA countries collectively facing the same issues, and leaves all member-states vulnerable were these issues to continue to worsen, or if they faced a sudden lack of resources, contributing to disputes rather than resolutions.

Lack of Established Frameworks: Frameworks can help establish the grounds for which resources are divided, how ownership is split, and much more. However, a lot of transboundary water resources lack these frameworks. Only a few of these shared aquifers and rivers have formal cooperation guidelines. Without these

clear terms, it makes disputes have a much higher risk of occurring, and makes countries likelier to disagree on terms with one another, which is another factor that could contribute to the vulnerability of MENA member states to sudden, rampant resource scarcity or loss.

Major Parties

International Entities:

UN-Water: The interagency coordination mechanism for all water and sanitation matters within the United Nations system.

The World Bank Group: The largest multilateral financier for water in developing countries, heavily funding the development of water infrastructure and climate resilience projects, as it recognises resource scarcity as a growing economic and social threat.

Regional Entities:

Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC): The primary body under the Arab League that coordinates the region's water policies and adopted the comprehensive Arab Strategy for Water Security (2010 – 2030).

Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD): A specialised organisation under the Arab League that conducts research and provides technical support on water management and agricultural systems in arid and semi-arid environments.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Tackles resource scarcity and water security threats by investing in solar-powered desalination projects, diversified water management strategies and the overall agriculture of the region.

Major Parties

Countries:

Yemen: Experiencing one of the world's worst resource scarcity crises amidst ongoing armed conflict, extreme drought, and excessive groundwater depletion. Fuel shortages inflate food prices and complicate water access, causing nearly half of the Yemeni population to face severe hunger and malnutrition. The ongoing civil war also forces farmers to migrate and leave their farmland, severely hindering any agricultural advancements.

Jordan: Jordan is the second most water-scarce country in the world, greatly due to its arid climate and the lack of neighbouring water bodies. This makes Jordan heavily reliant on foreign aid and imported goods. The Jordan River is shared between 4 countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Over 96% of its freshwater is diverted for agriculture and domestic use, greatly damaging its historic flow and ecosystem. Urgent action is required to prevent this resource scarcity from destabilising Jordan's economy.

Egypt: Heavily dependent on the Nile River while struggling with rapid population growth, pollution, and climate change impacts, causing a significant water deficit in the country. Resource challenges contribute to economic stress, with approximately 60% of Egyptians already in poverty or vulnerable. Like GCC countries, Egypt has begun investing in desalination plants; however, due to different interests, it adopted a different approach by also focusing on water supply and sanitation in rural areas.

Syria: Due to the political instability and refugee crisis in Syria, more than 70% of Syrian refugees are living in poverty and struggle to access basic services such as safe drinking water and reliable electricity. Turkey and Iran's dam projects significantly reduce water flow to downstream Syria and Iraq, creating significant conflict and water stress, threatening both local and regional unity and stability.

Iraq: Iraq is particularly vulnerable to the damage caused by Turkey and Iran's dam projects as a downstream nation already struggling with drought and pollution. Studies suggest that Turkey's various dam and hydropower construction projects have reduced Iraq's water supply along the two rivers by 80% since 1975. Furthermore, according to a UNICEF report, nearly 3 out of 5 children in Iraq have no access to safe water.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Arab Water Forum (AWF): A major event organized by the Arab Water Council (AWC) that is held every 3 years, which acts as a platform for water stakeholders to discuss challenges and solutions related to water security in the MENA region. This is particularly important as lingering mistrust between states hinders cooperation on shared resources such as rivers.

Arab Water Council (AWC): Established on April 14, 2004, the Arab Water Council maintains its central headquarters in Egypt, as formalized by a February 2009 host agreement between the organization and the Egyptian government. The official General Assembly meeting to formally establish the association took place in Alexandria, Egypt, in November 2008. The goal of this council is to promote a deeper understanding and better management of the water resources in the Arab states. Working alongside the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AWMC), strategies, including the Arab Water Strategy (2010–2030), are being developed.

Declaration of Principles (DoP): Agreement on Declaration of Principles between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERDP) was signed in Khartoum, Sudan, on Monday, the 23rd of March 2015, to highlight the principles that must be followed by the 3 countries to protect the exploitation of the Nile River. On 15 September 2021, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on the GERD (S/PRST/2021/18) in which it calls for the resumption of the AU-led negotiations to reach a “binding agreement” on the dam’s filling and operation.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Arab Water Strategy: Based on the importance of water in the Arab Region, a resolution was adopted in 2009 during the Arab Economic and Social Summit held in Kuwait on the 20th of January, tasking the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC) with the development of a water security strategy to meet future challenges and requirements for sustainable development. This task was shifted to the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands where a draft strategy was documented and later on presented to the AMWC during mid-2009. The strategy was amended and submitted for review to the Executive Office of the Arab Ministerial Council of Water held in Cairo on 27-28 January 2010.

Establishment of Frameworks for Sustainable Development: Within the League of Arab States (LAS), a new department was created regarding Sustainable Development and International Cooperation in 2016. The League of Arab States had also adopted frameworks for the same purpose, such as the Arab Strategy for Agricultural Development and Food Security (ASADFS) or the Arab Plan of Action to deal with Climate Change (APACC). The League of Arab States has also entered a partnership with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) to improve regional coordination and use of technology to reduce the impacts of water scarcity. These frameworks have helped gear Arab States into moving towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly future.

Climate Change Strategy for the Arab Region: Regionally, almost all member states (with the exception of Syria), signed the Paris Agreement in 2017 which aims to strengthen the global response to climate change. Furthermore, in terms of the ASADFS, all agriculture ministers of all member states have adopted this initiative. To add on, all member states of the APACC have integrated this on top of their coordination with the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in order to improve existing systems to fight against climate change, hence reducing the risk of future scarcity.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

1. How can valuable resources be divisible among stakeholders in a fair and just manner?
2. How can cooperation between member states be encouraged to ensure joint-solutions can be implemented in the future?
3. What frameworks can be implemented to reduce the amount of conflict occurring over resource scarcity?
4. How should resources which are cross-boundary be handled effectively, and how can these be regulated?
5. How can resources be protected and managed more efficiently to reduce artificial resource scarcity?
6. How can nations work together to prepare for unexpected drought or famine?
7. What steps can countries take to actively reduce fighting over limited resources?
8. How can mistrust between nations be handled to improve cooperation?

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