



League of Arab States

Cross-Border Human Trafficking

Backgrounder Guide

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Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

Greetings, esteemed delegates of the League of Arab States (LAS)! At this year's iteration of SPAMUN, I, Eugene Sung, have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Director of the LAS committee alongside your Chair Isabella Wu and your Assistant Director William Rozmus. We, your Dais team, are invigorated with the desire to make SPAMUN 2025 an unparalleled experience in your MUN career.

LAS was created in 1945 with the purpose of establishing cooperation between Arab countries in the realms of politics, economics, and culture. In scenarios where the needs of the Arabs are underrepresented in supranational organizations such as the UN, LAS becomes a necessary platform for focusing on regional needs. The topic of Cross-Border Human Trafficking was chosen as the LAS topic at this iteration of SPAMUN due to its significance in today's era, especially in Arab nations, as presently, this issue occurs on a greater scale than ever before in history, with millions of men, women, and children being victims just in LAS countries alone.

At all times at the conference, delegates must maintain a professional attitude and follow the SPAMUN Code of Conduct. Any usage of AI (position paper, speech writing, etc.) is strictly forbidden. Any delegates found using it will be excluded from award consideration. Within the committee room, all are expected to faithfully embody the values, ideals, and positions of their countries to the best of their abilities, no matter if their personal values are in conflict. We anticipate new and bold ideas and participation in the sport of diplomacy through creating and joining blocs that best suit your country's position.

Position papers are due on October 7 for feedback and October 14 for final submissions. Please send position papers to [lasspamun@southpointe.ca], including your full name and delegation. However, do note that this date can be subject to change. If you are experiencing extraordinary circumstances that affect your ability to submit your position paper in time, do not hesitate to let us know.

Whether you are new or experienced, excited or dreading, this is your moment to become Icarus without the fear of your wax wings being melted. I encourage you to go above and beyond, even outside the conference. Don't feel restricted by the extent of this background, but instead feel the deep academic urge within you to surpass it and gain a deeper knowledge about this topic, not only for the sake of this committee but for the sake of becoming an educated member of society. I, in addition to the rest of the dais team, wish you the very best in every single step leading up to the conference, as well as the conference itself.

Eugene Sung
Director of the League of Arab States
SPAMUN 2025

Committee Description

The League of Arab States (LAS) was created in March 1945 with seven original founding members, with additional countries joining in the years to come to create the LAS that we all know today.¹ Its creation was driven by concerns over the possible division of colonial territories after World War II and the opposition to the establishment of a Jewish State on Palestinian territory.

Originally, the league was created to organize and enhance the political, economic, cultural, and social programs of member states, as well as mediate disputes amongst member states or between them and foreign entities.¹ However, over time, the League took a broader role with the signing of the Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation in February 1950, committing signatory countries to military cooperation and more concrete economic partnerships.²

Although the League may seem commanding, they do have restrictions on their power. Namely that the smooth operation of the LAS relies heavily on the mutual cooperation between member states as the League lacks the means to compel countries to follow resolutions. This is because the League's charter states that the league was established to ensure respect for the independence and sovereignty of Arab states. The charter's consequence is that passed resolutions apply only to signatory nations meaning other member states who disagree with the resolution are not required to adhere to it. This is a significant drawback on the effectiveness of the LAS as by the 1980s, 80% of the 4000+ passed resolutions were not implemented.³

In recent times, the LAS has shown that they are committed to being active diplomatically with foreign nations outside the Arab area. In 2023, the league organized a sustainable development forum with 16 UN entities and urged for the support of developing countries suffering from poverty, food insecurity, and inequality.

Furthermore, the forum raised LAS's concerns that the UN's 2030 Agenda is to eradicate poverty, ensure peace, and protect our planet is in risk of failing.⁴ More recently, the League endorsed a plan for a stable post-war Gaza at a summit in Cairo, where they suggested that Gaza should be governed by a transitional committee of nonpartisan Palestinians under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian government.⁵ Both of these examples show that the LAS is not only an organization for internal matters, but an organization from uniting Arab voices so they can be heard strongly and clearly on the international stage.

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arab-League>

² https://avalon.law.yale.edu/21st_century/arabjoin.asp

³ <https://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/briefs/summit-arab-states>

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<https://www.unescwa.org/news/arab-forum-sustainable-development-2023-calls-accelerated-progress-towards-agenda-2030>

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⁵<https://www.ft.com/content/f012ff73-d729-4c67-a2a8-f182ad298ec7>

In the LAS committee, there will be a unique type of round-table called *Bloc Overview Sessions*. The motion for it, after being brought up at a dais-approved time during a moderated caucus, will be automatically passed at the dais's discretion. *Bloc Overview Session* is a round-table aimed to help achieve three things. First, to achieve participation in the committee. Second, for Bloc members to be able to clearly outline their bloc's stances and iron out any confusion that may have arisen before. Third, to help undecided delegates choose a bloc, or none at all. *Bloc Overview Sessions* have a slightly different procedure compared to a normal round-table. This special procedure will be explained to the delegates during the conference at an appropriate time.

Topic Overview

Cross-border human trafficking is the non-consensual transporting, transferring, receiving, holding, concealing, harboring, and controlling of a person across more than one national jurisdiction with the purpose of exploitation. In this case exploitation includes, but is not limited to: slavery, sexual slavery, forced marriages, organ removal, forced labor, debt bondage, and child soldiering.⁶ Many mistakenly believe that most cross-border human trafficking ended sometime around 1865 with the abolishment of slavery in the United States, as that is the most well-known example of a type of international human trafficking ending. However, this could not be further from the truth.

The fact is that for nearly three and a half centuries, 12.5 million people were trafficked during the transatlantic slavery era.⁷ Today, there are an estimated 50 million people who are being actively exploited as a result of human trafficking, many of them currently in different nations, as countries with higher corruption and lower stability offer criminal organizations a layer of protection. This also means that 50 million is a conservative estimate as countries with the aforementioned conditions cannot be trusted to keep credible statistics is most likely much higher.⁸

Another reason cross-border human trafficking is an issue that must be urgently solved, other than its hidden potential size, is the broad extent to which it affects people. All forms of societal entities, such as countries, NGOs, IGOs, etc, are in some way or another negatively affected by cross-border human trafficking.

For example, international human trafficking can spread diseases from country to country and force governments to spend more money to control infectious outbreaks. Furthermore, consistent human trafficking actions can also make governments invest more in policing, prosecution, and more expansive victim support.⁹ For NGOs, cross-border human trafficking means that if they want to aid people, they are forced to rapidly expand operations, logistics, and the web of cooperation between governments and themselves, which in most cases is simply not feasible. This leaves victims vulnerable in areas where NGOs can't quickly expand to, such as countries with poor relationships with the country the NGO is based in.¹⁰ For IGOs, continued failure to control cross-border human trafficking within their jurisdiction can create a negative reputation, decreasing

⁶ <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/ht-tp-eng.html>

⁷ <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teacher-resources/historical-context-facts-about-slave-trade-and-slavery>

⁸ <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking>

⁹ <https://PMC420297>

¹⁰ <https://www.intrahealth.org/vital/five-hurdles-localizing-global-development-and-how-ngos-can-help-overcome-them>

future funds from donors. Additionally, just like countries, IGOs like LAS may face the need to divert more of their funds to combat international traffickers.¹¹

Timeline of Events

2005–2006 | Arab Guiding Law on Human Trafficking adopted

- Council of the Arab Ministers of Justice and the Ministers of Interior adopts the *Arab Guiding Law on Human Trafficking*.

-The law provides guidelines and assistance to League countries drafting anti-trafficking legislation.¹²

2010 | The Arab Initiative launched at Doha Forum

- The *Arab Initiative for Building National Capacities for Combating Human Trafficking* was launched during the Doha Foundation Forum.

- Subsequently, the initiative was soon adopted by the Council of the Arab Ministers of Justice.

- The Doha Foundation Forum consisted of 635 representatives from LAS, UNODC, experts, and official delegations from Arab countries.

- The *Arab Initiative* received support from the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking (QFCHT), LAS, and UNODC.

- The Central aim of the plan was to build and promote “National capacities in the Arab region to effectively combat human trafficking.”

- The initiative urged countries that had not yet ratified the UN TIP Protocol to do so. Second, it supported Arab States in preventing and combating human trafficking by promoting domestic legislation in compliance with international human rights and fostering cooperation at international, national, and regional levels.

2015 (July) | INTERPOL-AFRIPOL joint Operation FLASH-WEK

- The operation led to 1062 arrests, 2731 migrants being found, and most importantly, 823 victims of human trafficking.

- Among the LAS member nations, only Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and the UAE participated.

- The operation also found that a prominent number of victims were recruited online with the promises to be taken into a professional soccer academy or to work in hotels and beauty salons.

- Most victims were found to be of Asian descent, particularly from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.¹³

¹¹

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/2013/arab-initiative-to-build-national-capacities-to-combat-human-trafficking-in-the-arab-countries.html>

¹²<https://unipd-centrodirittiuumani.it/en/topics/arab-league-combating-human-trafficking-1>

¹³<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/more-than-1000-arrested-in-international-human-trafficking-and-migrant-smuggling-operation/>

2021 (Oct) | Iraq ratifies the Arab Protocol to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons

- The protocol is not yet officially ratified by the LAS, as at least seven other countries must ratify it.¹⁴

2023 (March) | LAS and UNODC signs the Regional Framework for Arab States (2023–2028)

- The regional framework acts as the supreme blueprint for strategic cooperation between UNODC and LAS.
- It also frames how UNODC will act to strengthen, prioritise, customise, and deliver appropriate support for the Arab region so they can resolve their most pressing challenges.
- There are six major areas of focus. First is to balance the approach to drug control, second is to strengthen the response to organised crime, third is to take firm actions against corruption and financial crime, fourth is to aim for the prevention of terrorism, fifth is to reinforce criminal justice, and lastly to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling from foreign nations.¹⁵
- Only 18 countries of the LAS have signed the Regional Framework: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen.¹⁶

Case Study

Over the course of 4 years between 2020-2024, Amnesty International interviewed 72 Kenyan women who taught English as Saudi families' personal English teachers who were also the victims of cross-border human trafficking. Before going on further, it is important to note that as stated before, human trafficking is not only limited to the forceful transfer of a person, but also includes the non-consensual harbouring of a person.

Firstly it is important to realize that these women weren't forcefully taken to their workplaces but were pressured into signing employment contracts with the employers with terms that would later be completely disregarded. The original terms of their job usually included a room to stay in the student family's home, food provided, and the limitations of their job being only to teach English. But after arriving, these women found out that the living conditions were subpar, they were given tiny portions of food, the work schedule was lengthened with less sleeping and break times, salary was diminished or in some cases completely eliminated, and the responsibilities expanded to the likes of being a nanny.

Furthermore, most of the women had their passports and phones confiscated to prevent them from fleeing the country or contacting their families. Additionally, all the women went through verbal, physical, and sexual harassment everyday. All of their basic freedoms were taken away, with some of the women being forbidden

¹⁴ <https://ina.iq/en/politics/15070-iraq-signs-the-arab-protocol-of-combating-human-trafficking.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2023/March/signature-of-the-regional-framework-for-arab-states-2023-2028.html>

¹⁶ https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/2023/RF/Framework_ENG_ONLINE.pdf

from even leaving their employers' house for 2 years. The report also states that Kenyan women had to use segregated items and washrooms within the employers' houses, and in cases where the women were working with other workers from Arab or Asian nations, the Kenyan women would be paid significantly less, as they were deemed less desirable due to their ethnicity.

Since the Kenyan women's consent was obtained through deception, and their mobility and human rights were curtailed in a foreign country, Amnesty International classified the incident as a case of international human trafficking (cross-border human trafficking).

In response to these events and others, the Saudi government passed the Labor Reform Initiative 2021, which allows private sector workers to leave or change jobs under certain conditions. Sadly, this does not apply to domestic workers, which is what the Kenyan women were technically classified as since they lived in their employers' homes. Luckily, there has been some progress made by the Saudi government. In October of 2024, 222 employers were fined and 25 recruitment offices were suspended. Furthermore, new legislation has been passed to limit a workday to 10 hours and guarantee rest days. However, the problem still stands that many of these rules are rarely enforced.

Sadly, although it is Kenyans being exploited, the Kenyan government remains hesitant to intervene as the value of remittances from Saudi Arabia being sent back to Kenya doubled between 2020-2024. Due to this economic incentive, the Kenyan government is likely not to intercede in this issue. However, even if the Kenyan government does intervene in some capacity, there isn't likely to be a major change. This is because people deeper in poverty are more susceptible to these types of operations as they are more desperate to try to support their families, and a prominent number of Kenyans happen to live below the poverty line.

"I felt like a donkey and even donkeys find rest" - Rashida, a Kenyan worker in Saudi Arabia, 2024.¹⁷

Historical Analysis

Human trafficking has existed since the earliest stages of human history. One of the earliest documented accounts of cross-border human trafficking occurred in the Ottoman Empire with the Slavic people; the term 'slave' originates from this context. However, the Transatlantic slave trade marked the true globalization of human trafficking.

In the 16th century, Portugal transformed the institution of slavery by sailing directly to Africa to purchase or capture people, transporting them to Europe instead of relying on land trade routes through the Middle East. . Other European nations soon followed and began creating port bases in Africa. In 1525, instead of shipping the

¹⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/9222/2025/en/>

slaves back to Europe, nations began to ship them to the New World in order to make up the low labor force there. It wasn't until Britain and the US outlawed slavery that the shipping of Africans would stop.

In the mid 1800s, Chinese people began immigrating to the US in large numbers due to job prospects. Unfortunately for the immigrants, the demand for coolie labor was high, or in other words, the demand for foreign laborers who were willing to work for a fraction of what a white person would. Although this was not technically international human trafficking, as the Chinese workers were often threatened and had limited survival options, many historians still classify it as a form of slavery or a consequence of human trafficking.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was formed in 1919 to provide protection for all workers regarding working conditions, including but not limited to pay and hours. Furthermore, in 1921, the League of Nations held a conference where 33 nations ended up signing the International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children. Following the cessation of World War Two, the newly formed League of Nations replacement, the United Nations, adopted the Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others in 1949. Although only 66 nations have ratified, the significance that it was the very first legally binding international agreement on human trafficking stands.

The historical trend shows that the long history of human trafficking, which has almost become synonymous with slavery, is slowly being combated, not solely due to individual nations' efforts, but also from recent international cooperation.¹⁸

Current Situation

The current situation of cross-border human trafficking is nuanced and complex, with many different parties being involved. All of them have varying degrees of involvement, the will to solve the problem, and impact from the issue.

As of 2024, the legal frameworks addressing human trafficking in most LAS nations remain inadequate, and the risk of being trafficked remains significant. Every year, the US Department of State publishes the Trafficking in Persons report, where they give all countries a ranking based on their compliance with the American Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Although other nations are not bound to follow this act, it serves as a widely respected benchmark, offering clear standards for countries committed to combating human trafficking..

Countries rated as Tier 1 are fully compliant with the American Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA).

¹⁸ <https://theexodusroad.com/history-of-human-trafficking/>

Tier 2 countries do not meet the TVPA minimum standards, but are putting in prominent efforts to align and comply with the standards. Tier 2 Watchlist countries do not meet the minimum TVPA standards but also aren't putting in enough effort to solve the problem. Tier 3 nations fail to meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are also not making efforts to do so. Finally, countries designated as Special Cases typically face conflict or extraordinary circumstances that make strict tier classification impractical.¹⁹

According to the 2024 US TIP report, this is how the LAS members were rated: Bahrain was the only LAS nation to be ranked Tier 1. Comoros, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the UAE are all ranked Tier 2 respectively. Algeria, Kuwait, and Lebanon are on the Tier 2 watchlist. Djibouti, Sudan, and Syria are on Tier 3. Libya, Yemen, and Somalia are designated as a Special-Case. Note that the rank for Palestine is not provided in the report, as the US does not recognize the statehood of Palestine.²⁰

Moving on to the major stakeholders, as mentioned before, every entity is in one way or another affected by International Human trafficking. Aside from the individual families and communities that lose valued members of their group when one or more gets trafficked, especially to another country, nations are the largest stakeholders in the issue of international human trafficking.

First and foremost, the International Labour Organization estimates that human trafficking generates \$150 billion USD per year for criminals that goes untaxed, unchecked, and laundered. Furthermore, many human trafficking organizations, particularly those capable of international operations, are linked to organized crime, the funding of terrorism, and, in some cases, direct involvement in terrorist activities. Hence, the ongoing issue of human trafficking, especially cross-border trafficking, represents a threat to national security.²¹

Independent businesses are also significantly affected by human trafficking. This is because as the majority of human trafficking victims become slaves or are indebted to work, the process gives companies and businesses that utilize this type of labor force an unfair advantage compared to other legal competitors due to enjoying lower production costs.²² For IGOs, a persisting problem of human-trafficking within their jurisdiction not only causes their reputation and international legitimacy plus credibility to falter and to decrease, but also forces organizations to devote more of their resources to law enforcement, border control, refugee handling, prosecution, etc, instead of spending those precious funds on critical infrastructure, services, and social programs.²²

¹⁹ <https://www.ijm.org/news/what-is-the-tip-report>

²⁰ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

²¹ <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/pt/tip-and-som/module-7/key-issues/root-causes.html>

UN/International Involvement

The United Nations has played a central role in shaping the international response to cross-border human trafficking in the Arab States. The most significant step was the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) in 2000. Nearly all Arab nations have ratified the Protocol, pledging to protect victims and make human trafficking illegal. The UN notes that many states still struggle to identify victims and bring traffickers to justice, indicating that implementation has been uneven throughout the region.²²

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the UNODC has been especially active. UNODC has trained judicial and law enforcement officials in nations like Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt through regional projects. These programs concentrate on enhancing intergovernmental collaboration and bolstering governments' capacity to disrupt trafficking networks that prey on migrants and refugees traversing the area.²³

Trafficking has also been addressed within the framework of conflict and security. In 2016, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2331, which explicitly condemned the trafficking of women and children by terrorist groups such as ISIS in Iraq and Syria. This marked the first time the Council formally recognized trafficking as a threat to international peace and security.²⁴ Meanwhile, the UN Human Rights Council and other UN bodies have reported on the exploitation of displaced Syrians in neighboring Arab States, highlighting patterns of forced labor and sexual exploitation that extend across borders.²⁵

The UN has also addressed labor exploitation in Gulf nations, where many migrant workers are exposed to trafficking-like practices due to the kafala (sponsorship) system. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has advocated for reforms to shield workers from abuses like debt bondage, passport confiscation, and travel restrictions in collaboration with UN agencies.²⁶

The UN has identified Libya as a key hub for trafficking organizations that prey on migrants attempting to reach Europe. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) have reported extensive violations in detention facilities, where migrants are frequently the victims of sexual assault, extortion, and forced labor. In addition to demanding increased international cooperation to address the flow of trafficked individuals through Libya's borders, UN bodies have repeatedly urged Libyan authorities to dismantle these networks and enhance migrant protections.²⁷

²² <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>

²³ <https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/mena-projects.html>

²⁴ [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2331\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2331(2016))

²⁵ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/721894?ln=en&v=pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/sponsorship-reform-and-internal-labour-market-mobility-migrant-workers-arab>

²⁷ <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/libya-migration-report-18dec2018.pdf>

Overall, past UN involvement in the Arab States has combined legal frameworks, regional cooperation, conflict-related interventions, and advocacy for labor reform. While progress has been made, the UN continues to stress that greater regional coordination and stronger enforcement are necessary to effectively address cross-border trafficking in the Arab world.

Possible Solutions

Please do not feel constrained by the list of potential solutions or the depth of them, as the limit of what you, as a delegate, can do in the LAS committee. Delegates are welcome to explore further into any of the soon-to-be-mentioned ideas, as well as to build upon them. Nevertheless, delegates are also highly encouraged to come up with new, interesting, and holistic solutions for the committee that take into account the original cause of cross-border human trafficking as well as the resulting effects from it, as long as they are within reason and representative of your country's stances.

Law enforcement

The most obvious and the most widely applicable solution to combat all forms of human trafficking is simply funding law enforcement more. In this context, law enforcement includes the arrest, prosecution, and operations against human traffickers. This increase in funding would also include an increase in funding to border security forces as a force against international human trafficking. The pros of this solution are that it's realistic and one of the most direct ways to combat the problem head-on. Furthermore, it is even effective when human trafficking is done by an organized criminal organization. The cons of this solution are that countries may be lacking resources to increase law enforcement funding, and/or the law enforcement forces may be corrupt and under the payroll of the very criminal organizations that they are supposed to catch.

Worker protections

As mentioned in the case study, not all international human traffickings are perpetrated by the stereotypical armed criminal gangs. Sometimes, it's just private corporations and employers taking advantage of others.¹⁸ In this case, LAS nations can individually pass laws to meet a certain benchmark like the ILO standards, or work together in the Arab parliament and propose a resolution within the LAS framework.²⁸ The pros of this solution are that it's a long-term solution that requires a relatively low amount of initial investment. It also improves the international image of the individual countries as well as the LAS as a whole, which has the potential to pull in more future funding through investments. Nonetheless, there are still cons to this solution. One of the cons is that there must be a certain level of order within the countries, or in other words, the police must have the capacity to enforce regulations, which a lot of LAS member countries don't have. Another con is that employers and businesses can simply pay off law enforcement and not follow the laws anyway, due to systemic corruption.

²⁸https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40declaration/documents/publication/wcms_508317.pdf

Conflict resolution

Some nations in the LAS, like Iraq and Somalia, face regional instabilities caused by militant groups, whilst some, such as Libya, Sudan, and Yemen, face full-blown civil wars. This can make enforcing laws and regulations virtually impossible and creating new adequate legislation inconceivable due to not having the resources or the political stability for the legislative process. Countries facing these circumstances must end the conflict before implementing any additional efforts to combat human trafficking and, by extension, all crimes, as peace and relative stability of the governing institutions are a prerequisite for progress and social stability. There are many ways to end a conflict, whether it be by bombing the enemy into submission even at the cost of civilian casualties, a coalition of international forces, or a regional or national task force. The pros of this solution are that it lays a strong foundation for a long-term solution and is also a stepping stone in solving many other issues. The con of this approach is that military operations, especially at a nationwide scale, are incredibly expensive and take up humongous percentages of the national budget, especially for LAS nations.

Bloc Positions

Every single one of the solutions that were mentioned above, as well as many solutions that weren't, falls into two greater categories that will divide the committee into distinct blocs. Whether it be law enforcement or social care, the age-old question of where the resources will come from will have to be answered, and each respective blocs possess different answers to it. With two contrasting blocs and one neutral bloc, countries of the two major blocs should ideally work to sway the moderates into their side of the court.

International Cooperation Bloc

Nations in the International Cooperation Bloc have relatively firm institutional powers and have great political, economic, and social connections with Western countries and international agencies, and therefore are much more comfortable working with them. Countries that are in this bloc are Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. These nations may strive towards international cooperation as a way of achieving their solution and obtaining new resources due to several reasons. For countries like Qatar and the UAE, they may prefer this option as both nations are trying to brand themselves as the economic and tourist hub of the Middle East, and working with trusted UN and supranational organizations would greatly aid their public perception, which may lead to a boost in tourism or investment. Meanwhile, countries like Jordan or Lebanon may prefer this option as they are already very dependent on US/UN/EU assistance for their refugee and humanitarian situation, so working with the same organizations may prove beneficial for policy continuity. All that being said, these nations, whether it be due to public perception, dependence, or other reasons, see that the value received from cooperation between LAS and the international bodies, plus Western nations, will far outweigh any downsides. These nations would be strongly opposed to the Regional Cooperation Bloc's view of solely wanting to work with regional frameworks, as they see it as being inefficient.

Regional Cooperation Bloc

Nations in the Regional Cooperation Bloc also enjoy relatively stable institutions like the previous bloc and may have a certain amount of ties to international organizations and Western countries. However, the difference with this bloc is that this bloc prioritizes sovereignty and independence of the region, so they refuse to cede the resolution of sensitive issues like international human trafficking to non-Arab nations. Countries making up this bloc are Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Iraq, Oman, Comoros, Palestine, Mauritania, and Djibouti. These nations desire to work with Arab nations to solve problems in Arab countries using existing frameworks within the LAS or through new regional initiatives. Saudi Arabia is in this bloc as they are wary that the UN and international oversight could expose domestic issues to the world, as opposed to keeping domestic issues contained regionally. Smaller nations like Comoros, which don't have large political influence in the UN or the world stage, may prefer working with LAS as they have a relatively larger voice and attention there instead of the UN, where they are treated as simply a part of the Arab blocs. This bloc by no means denies the vast wealth and resources that UN bodies and Western nations can provide them. Instead, they see the potential harm to their sovereignty and independence through international cooperation to outweigh all possible benefits. These nations are the de facto opposition to the International Cooperation Bloc and would adamantly oppose resolutions brought up by them.

Non-Aligned Bloc

Nations in this bloc have weak institutional power and low national resources, whether it be due to civil wars, regional conflicts, power vacuums, etc. Countries that are in this bloc are Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Somalia. These nations, unlike the nations of the previous blocs, are in dire situations and do not have a strong preference on where additional resources come from as long as they do come. Sudan has been in a full-blown civil war since 2023 and is in no position to divert funding from the war effort for combating cross-border human trafficking, nor to bolster military funding in a way that would decisively end the war. For Syria, although its civil war formally has ended with the Assad regime being dethroned, its government is still facing tons of regional conflicts within its borders with insurgents, and is in a transitional period with fractured governance. Because of these situations, nations of this bloc are very open to aid from wherever. In terms of bloc interactions, these nations may work together to form a neutral bloc focusing on general cooperation, or may fracture off to whichever of the other blocs proposes a better deal for them. Though this bloc may seem less influential than the others, this bloc holds the power to shift the balance of power in a decisive way.

Discussion Questions

1. How can Arab states manage their borders while still protecting migrants and refugees from being exploited?
2. Should the Arab League take the lead on coordinating anti-trafficking responses, or should this responsibility stay mainly with the UN?
3. What kinds of accountability should exist for governments that fail to address trafficking within their territories?
4. How can survivor experiences shape the way anti-trafficking policies are designed in the region?
5. In conflict zones, what limits exist on what humanitarian actors can realistically do to stop trafficking?

Additional Sources

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