



Arab League



Committee Summary

The League of Arab States is a coalition made up of twenty two Arab countries (including Palestine), which encompasses a population of over 350 million people. The League's main goal is to support cooperation between Arab countries, pushing for development and peace. The League was founded in 1945 as a response to post World War Two territory disputes. The founding members of the League were Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Yemen.¹ In the League's charter, article two states that the Arab countries work with cooperation in the areas of: "economic and financial matters (trade, currency, customs, agriculture and industry) communication (railways, roads, aviation, navigation, posts and telegraphs), cultural matters, matters regarding nationality (passports, visas and execution of judgements and extradition), social welfare and health matters".² In addition to these basic issues, the Arab League has also pushed for social issues such as helping Palestine gain statehood in the UN on November 29th, 2012.³ Other recent issues that the League has been involved in include creating a no-fly zone over Libya in 2012⁴ and calling for the resignation of Syrian president Bashar al-

¹ "The Avalon Project : Pact of the League of Arab States, March 22, 1945." The Avalon Project : Pact of the League of Arab States, March 22, 1945. Accessed March 13, 2017.

² *ibid*

³ McMahon, Robert, and Jonathan Masters. "Palestinian Statehood at the UN." Council on Foreign Relations. November 30, 2012. Accessed March 13, 2017.

⁴ Leiby, Richard, and Muhammad Mansour. "Arab League asks U.N. for no-fly zone over Libya." The Washington Post. March 12, 2011. Accessed March 13, 2017.



Assad in 2012.⁵ In coming years the League hopes to work together to improve the livelihood of Arab Nations.

Topic I: Terrorism and Radicalization

Introduction

The idea of terrorism and radicalization is not a new one, but one that has recently thrust into the limelight because of groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIL and the attacks they have executed against the west. Many in Europe and North America fear that terror is spreading across the world and gaining a foothold in other continents. Along with this fear of terror is concern of mass radicalization, as young Muslim men are being radicalized by groups like ISIL. The terrorist group has a growing online presence that they use to recruit new members from abroad, who then travel to fight with jihadi rebel groups across the Middle East. The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) estimated that more than 47,000 foreigners have been killed fighting for anti-Assad factions, including ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra. These fighters come from dozens of nations, including France, Germany and the UK.

Radicalization also occurs in the middle east. Two common misconceptions are that radicalization is because of the religion of Islam and that radicalization occurs more often to lower class people. A recent leaked British Intelligence report suggests that in fact religion plays a very small role in

⁵ "Arab League calls on Assad to delegate power." Arab League calls on Assad to delegate power - Al Jazeera English. Accessed March 13, 2017.



the radicalization of British citizens, saying that most radicals are “religious novices.”⁶ Radicalization to could happen to just about anyone, there is no clear path to jihadism. The same report says that a potential jihadist is just as likely to be married with kids then a lone wolf. These reports ask serious questions about how we deal with radicalization, and possible solutions to decrease its potency, unfortunately the solution will not be an easy one.

Current Situation

The problem as it stands today is increasing terrorist threats in the middle east and abroad. The goal of this committee is to fight terrorism and radicalism, two ideas that largely go together. In the past two years there have been 45 recorded instances of terrorist attacks involving ISIL, and hundreds of others involving the Taliban and other related splinter groups. The heart of the issue lies in the instability of many middle eastern countries, which has allowed ISIL and other terror groups to gain a strong foothold. There are many different ways to approach this issue, but all of them will have to involve cooperation and communication between members of the League.

Role of the Arab League

The role of the Arab League is to work together to fight terrorism and radicalization. Recent action by the League in August regards working on

⁶ Travis, Alan. "MI5 report challenges views on terrorism in Britain." The Guardian. August 20, 2008. Accessed March 13,



agreements related to counter-terrorism.⁷ There is already a separate division under the League of Arab nations that specifically deals with terrorism, but none that deal with radicalization. The League has preferred to take a more hands-on approach when it comes to solving issues, focusing less on radicalization and more on terrorism as a whole in the middle east. Moving forward the League will have to take some definitive steps towards fighting terrorism, as well as radicalization, in vulnerable countries. In addition, support and help must be provided effectively to properly solve this issue. The solution to terrorism is a long term one, and must be budgeted and planned as such.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent are Arab nations responsible for the growth of international terror?
2. What can Arab states do to curb radicalization and terror groups?
3. What are the root causes of terror and radicalization? How can they be combatted?
4. How can Arab states cooperate with Western countries to stop terrorism?

⁷ Agency, Qatar News. "Arab League Working on Enhancing Counter-Terrorism Tools, Official Says." En-us. August 17, 2016. Accessed March 13, 2017.



Topic II: The Protection of Minorities

Introduction

In the Middle East, minority groups such as the Egyptian Coptic Christians, Israeli Arabs, Turkish Kurds, Palestinian Jordanians, Algerian Berbers, Saudi Shia Muslims, Assyrian Christians, Turkmen and Yazidis, are experiencing hostility from extremist groups and even government bodies. The two greatest sects of Islam, per practicing population in the Middle East, are the Shia Islam and the slightly more popular Sunni Islam. But between the thresholds of these sects lie various other religious practices including Judaism and Christianity, both of which are openly discriminated against. However, the prominence of discrimination stems far beyond this point, as women are considered of a lower stature in society and migrant workers in the Gulf States are exposed to extremely exploitative labour conditions. One of the most pressing attacks of a minority group is orchestrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), against the Yazidi peoples in Northern Iraq. Classified by the United Nations as a genocidal act, it led to the exile the abduction of 7,000 Yazidi women and massacres that killed at least 5,000 Yazidi civilians.⁸ In addition to the targeting of Yazidis, ISIL has also targeted Christians and Shia Muslims. ISIL has consistently been involved in ethnic cleansing of minority groups. There are many reports of ISIL soldiers separating Christians and Shias from Sunnis and executing them.

⁸ MailOnline, Steve Hopkins for. "Full horror of the Yazidis who didn't escape Mount Sinjar: UN confirms 5,000 men were executed and 7,000 women are now kept as sex slaves." Daily Mail Online. October 14, 2014. Accessed March 13, 2017.



Current Situation

ISIL continues to carry out attacks targeted at minorities in the Middle East. On February 4th of 2016, The European Parliament has officially recognized that ISIL is committing genocide against Christians and Yazidis.⁹ In addition to this, the middle east has seen a rapid decline of minorities. At the dawn of the 20th century, Christians accounted for around 14% of the population in the middle east, now just over a century later, the number is 4%.¹⁰ In 2014 ISIL started a brutal campaign in Mosul (a city in northern Iraq). Christian inhabitants of the city were presented with three options: convert to Islam, pay a tax on all non-Muslim people or face the possibility of death.¹¹ This trend of forcing out Christians is becoming more and more common across the middle east. In addition to Christians, other non-religious minority groups such as migrant workers also experience discrimination. There have been reports of exploitative work, as well as sexual and psychological abuse of migrant workers in the middle east, particularly in the Gulf States (Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman). An example of this is the mistreatment of migrant workers in Qatar in preparation for the 2022 World

⁹Kaplan, Michael. "ISIS Genocide Against Christians, Yazidis? European Parliament Recognizes Islamic State Targeting Religious Minorities." International Business Times. February 04, 2016. Accessed March 13, 2017.

¹⁰ Terrorism-Tools-Official-Says. "And then there were none." The Economist. January 02, 2016. Accessed March 13, 2017.

¹¹ ibid



Cup. The International Trade Union Confederation predicts that 4,000 migrant workers will die before 2022 if major reform is not implemented.¹²

Role of the Arab League

As of August 13th, 2014, the Arab League accused ISIL of committing crimes against humanity, and is working in conjunction with the UN to provide aid.¹³ Though the Arab League has condemned ISIL, the issue of minorities in the middle east is a vastly complicated one as many of the members of the League has differing opinions on the issue at hand. A large divide has to do with the differences between Shia and Sunni sects of Islam. For example, in Iraq, out of the 99% of the population that is Muslim, 60-65% identify as Shia and 32-37% identify as Sunni.¹⁴ This demographic makeup has been credited with the recent collapse of the Iraqi regime and growth of ISIL as the Shia dominated government that took power after Saddam Hussein significantly isolated Sunni populations who later sympathized with ISIL. It is important to consider the problems caused by government mistreatment of minorities and their political disenfranchisement. Issues like this will have to be grappled with if any positive changes are to be made.

¹² Gibson, Owen. "Qatar pressed to protect World Cup workers as deaths continue to rise." Modern-day slavery in focus. May 01, 2014. Accessed March 13, 2017.

¹³ "The Avalon Project : Pact of the League of Arab States, March 22, 1945." The Avalon Project : Pact of the League of Arab States, March 22, 1945. Accessed March 13, 2017.

¹⁴ "The World Factbook: IRAQ." Central Intelligence Agency. January 12, 2017. Accessed March 13, 2017. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>.



Questions to Consider

1. How will the League prevent ISIL and other militants from targeting minority groups?
2. Which minority groups face the greatest risks and should be focused on?
3. How will governments overcome biases against certain minority groups?
4. How can governments be held accountable for their treatment of minorities?