



2009 - 2010 Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Joint Defense Council

National Model Arab Leagues

(i.e., the National University or National High School MAL, Spring '10, in Washington, DC)

www.ncusar.org/modelarableague

National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



1. Reviewing and strengthening the Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols (1977) with special regard given to the treatment of prisoners of war and the protection of civilians in occupied territories

What's the issue?

The Geneva Conventions are four international treaties (and their additional protocols) that were written in 1949. They are widely regarded as the core of humanitarian law. They provide a code of conduct when dealing with different peoples in a time of war. Unfortunately, those who ratified the treaties often violate these conventions. It is important to review them in order to strengthen the Arab League's commitment to following the treaties and their protocols.

Relevance to the Arab World

The Geneva Conventions are especially relevant to the Arab World, as it seems to be in a perpetual state of war and conflict. It is important to give special regard to the treatment of prisoners of war and the protection of civilians in occupied territories because many countries in the Arab League have prisoners of war. Palestine is currently an occupied territory, and while these protocols would be more relevant there if Israel were present for these discussions, Palestinian government has to deal with Israeli citizens in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as their own citizens.

Questions to Consider—*from your nation's unique perspective*

- Did my country ratify the Geneva Conventions?
- Do we currently have prisoners of war?
- Are we in a conflict currently?
- In what conflicts have we been involved in the past, and did we violate any international laws during that conflict?
- How can we strengthen the Geneva Conventions?
- What are the problems with the way the Geneva Conventions stand now?
- How are the Geneva Conventions not being enforced worldwide?

Resources to Review

<http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/CONVPRES?OpenView>

Text of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols

2. Responding to insurgent violence that threatens the territorial integrity and the maintenance of order in member states

What's the issue?

Insurgent violence is rebellion or violence that comes from within a country, against one's own government. It threatens the stability and territorial integrity of a country and a region. It is hard to control and hard to fight, as it comes from grassroots movement fueled by some sort of political or religious ideology. It almost always involves terrorism and some kind of subversion, that is, undermining of the government. It usually is fought through counter-insurgency warfare. However, this can sometimes result in civil war and is costly to the government or governments involved.

Relevance to the Arab World

This issue is particularly relevant to the Arab World, especially in the case of Iraq, where insurgent violence is prevalent. Also, much of the Somali civil war is based on insurgent violence. Insurgency is almost always present in the Arab world during conflict, such as in Lebanon during the 2007 Lebanon conflict. It is important to strive toward quick resolutions to insurgent violence as much of the insurgency occurs in countries with already weak or recovering political structures, or where those structures do not exist (as in the case of Somalia).

Questions to Consider—*from your country's unique perspective*

- How has insurgency affected my country?
- What has my country done in the past to battle insurgent violence, whether in my country or elsewhere?
- What are some ways to battle insurgency beyond counter-insurgency warfare?
- What are the causes of insurgent violence?
- Where are these issues most present today?

Resources to Review

<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/57JNHY>

The Martens Clause and the Laws of Armed Conflict

<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/download/English/JulAug05/lynn.pdf>

Patterns of Insurgency and Counter-insurgency

3. Scrutinizing the role of foreign military assistance or presence in meeting regional security concerns, as both protection to territorial integrity and threat to national sovereignty

What's the issue?

Due to international bodies such as the United Nations, many countries intervene in conflicts in which they are not directly involved. This sometimes causes problems, as it threatens the independence of sovereign states and adds more conflict that was originally present. Also, some countries go into conflict without fully understanding the dynamics of the region and territory. It is important to maintain the integrity and sovereignty of any country, and therefore foreign military assistance does need to be scrutinized. However, keep in mind that scrutinize and criticize are two different things. Be careful and keep an open mind when scrutinizing (examining closely) the issue of foreign military assistance.

Relevance to the Arab World

This issue is relevant to the Arab World because all too often foreign military assistance (both wanted and unwanted) is deployed to this region, as in the U.S. military initiative in Iraq. Another example within the Arab world is Syria's prolonged stay in Lebanon. As is the case with insurgent violence, foreign military assistance can undermine an already unstable political system or government. Although, it can also be a great help to the country or region. This is why the system needs to be scrutinized as opposed to criticized.

Questions to Consider—*from your country's unique perspective*

- How has my country been involved with foreign military assistance?
- Has my country ever needed this assistance or been a presence in another country?
- Has my country's government ever spoken out in favor of or against this sort of presence?

Resources to Review

<http://igcc.ucsd.edu/pdf/policypapers/pp26.pdf>

4. Defining and developing a humanitarian assistance mechanism and related training for a joint-Arab peacekeeping force

What's the issue?

There are many humanitarian organizations that exist worldwide and provide training for peacekeeping forces. However, very few of these organizations exist solely within the Arab world. The Arab Peace Initiative was signed in 2002, but it addresses the relationship between Arab states and Israel more than peace between Arab states themselves. It is important to have this sort of peacekeeping mechanism in place in order to promote peace in the region as well as to ensure the continued process of stabilizing countries in the region.

Relevance to the Arab World

As I stated before, there is no current system in the Arab League that promotes peace amongst Arab nations. A joint-Arab peacekeeping force would address issues such as the civil war in Somalia, the insurgency in Iraq, as well as other issues currently facing the region. It would also provide a more united front toward Israel and would hopefully promote a peaceful resolution to that conflict as well. This sort of effort is progressive and moves toward a future of peace, reconciliation, and understanding while further securing borders and protecting the sovereignty of member states.

Questions to Consider—*from your country's unique perspective*

- What peacekeeping efforts has my country been a part of before?
- How would my country benefit from this sort of effort?
- How can we go about forming a joint-Arab peacekeeping initiative?
- What will the challenges be?
- What common ground can we share with other countries?
- What other resources can we use to form this initiative?

Resources to Review

<http://www.al-bab.com/Arab/docs/league/peace02.htm>

Arab Peace Initiative