



2009 - 2010 Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Special Committee on Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

ALL Regional Model Arab Leagues

(i.e., not the National University or National High School MAL, Spring '10, in Washington, DC)

www.ncusar.org/modelarableague

National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



1. Examining consequences of the emigration of vital human capital on member states including possible strategies for encouraging their repatriation and/or investment in their homelands

What's the Issue?

This question basically deals with the eternal problem of “brain drain” (vital human capital) on countries in conflict or with lower levels of development. The question is phrased in a way as to determine the goals of any resolution you write: “encourage their repatriation” and “investment in their homelands.” So the main purpose of any resolution that comes from the committee should be solving how to meet those goals; what methods and actions should the Arab League take to reverse the brain drain problem? Also note, this topic stretches the scope of this committee, focused on refugees and IDPs, to include migrants that leave due reasons other than personal security. However, it will be in the interest of several Arab states (not all) to ignore this division and discuss persons that migrate due to a wider range of *human* security issues.

Relevance to the Arab World

This is a problem of nearly every Arab state, and has become a very acute problem in some areas. Obviously the Gulf states have less to worry about regarding brain drain, but they, too, lose important intellectual capital each year. States where brain drain is a particularly crippling problem are those in conflict or political instability (Palestine, Somalia...), those with fewer economic opportunities or low levels of development (Egypt, Mauritania, Yemen...), or those with fewer personal freedoms. The ‘consequences’ that must be ‘examined’ are widespread and critical to development in the Arab world. The solutions you propose should deal specifically with the concerns of your country with regard for the concerns of your fellow Arab brothers and sisters.

Questions to Consider

- ❖ What are the leading reasons intellectuals and those with more education decide to leave the Arab world
- ❖ What are the leading draws of places where Arabs decide to move such as Europe and the United States?
- ❖ How can individual states’ problems with brain drain affect the collective group of Arab states?
- ❖ How can the Arab League address causes when they are different for each state?
- ❖ Are there any models for reversing brain drain in the international community that can be studied and replicated?
- ❖ What are the roles of educational institutions, national and local governments, NGOs, and companies in retaining intellectual capital?

Resources to Review

Government Initiatives Needed to Lure Arab Talent Back Home (report): Talent-exporting Arab Countries Lose USD1.57 billion Annually from Brain Drain; 54% of Arab Students Studying Abroad do not Return to their Home Countries

<http://talentpublic.net/NewsDetails.aspx?ID=2>

Arab Declaration on International Migration (refers to a number of helpful Arab League resolutions and relevant international conventions on pages 1 and 2)

http://www.poplas.org/upload/mig_dec_en.pdf

ILO Global Job Crisis Observatory: Arab States

http://www.ilo.org/pls/apex/f?p=109:2:0::NO::P2_REGION:AS

ILO: The Management of Irregular Migration and its Consequence for Development: Gulf Cooperation Council

http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_105105/index.htm

UNESCO Brain Gain Initiative (a good example of a practical solution to start reversing brain drain already proposed and in action)

<http://www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/themes/reforming/brain-gain-initiative/>

2. Addressing existing protection gaps and considering measures to ensure that vulnerable populations in forced or voluntary migrations, including asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees, and stateless persons, are protected according to international law and standards

What's the Issue?

This is a complicated topic with a simple aim: find and address migrant groups that are not currently protected, namely migrants that are vulnerable but do not fit into categories already identified and targeted by aid organizations. The largest groups to consider here are those that are forced to migrate, and those that voluntarily return to their homes but are still vulnerable and/or have lost their property. Current categories are listed: “asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees, and stateless persons. It is important to understand the differences between these categories, and then determine types of migrants not receiving recognition or aid.

Relevance to the Arab World

Conflicts are complicated, and the Arab world has no shortage of conflicts and complications. Refugees and other categories of migrants mentioned in the topic live in each Arab state with large clusters coming from places like Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia, and elsewhere. Because of the intricacies of conflict, populations move for different reasons, and are thus categorized differently. Displaced populations drain human and monetary capital from ‘displacing states’, and put undue strain on ‘receiving states.’ The goal, then, is to identify as many of these people as possible and address their needs for the good of all states.

Questions to Consider

- ❖ How might addressing refugee issues in other countries benefit all Arab states?
- ❖ How many displaced persons live in my country? Where are they from?
- ❖ What resources do displaced persons in my country have? Who is helping them?
- ❖ What rights are afforded to displaced persons in my country? Does my country accept displaced persons? Are they offered citizenship or other rights?
- ❖ What mechanisms already function to identify displaced persons? What would an Arab League role in that process look like?
- ❖ What is the proof that there is need for action in this area?
- ❖ How will those that do not want to return be handled, particularly if the ‘receiving state’ does not want them to stay?

Resources to Review

UNHCR Website (review what types of displaced persons are recognized, where they are...)

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

UNRWA Website (UN agency mandated to help Palestinians specifically)

<http://www.un.org/unrwa/english.html>

ANERA: independent non-profit agency working to improve the lives of Palestinians

<http://www.nera.org/>

Human Rights Watch Reports (enter your search options, also News section helpful)

<http://www.hrw.org/en/publications/reports?filter0=692&filter1=11>

Refugees International

<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/who-we-are>

3. Developing League standards for accurate reporting, documentation, and record-keeping of refugee and IDP (internally displaced persons) populations

What's the issue?

Similar to topic 2, this issue has a more specific goal: setting standards. The language of the topic indicates that resolutions on this topic should not aim to resolve refugee issues, provide them assistance, or impact the conflicts and conditions that displace people. Resolutions should examine the various ways displaced persons are recognized and recorded and propose ways to make them more accurate. For example, a resolution proposing a new fund for refugees would be out of order.

Relevance to the Arab World

The question implies that reported numbers of refugees and IDPs are not accurate, which is a problem because these numbers are sometimes manipulated for various reasons. Some states may downplay their numbers as a way to minimize international attention, or perhaps inflate their numbers to maximize international aid. These are just examples of reasons why a more accurate, comprehensive record-keeping might be necessary.

Questions to Consider

- ❖ What are the benefits or drawbacks to more accurate reporting?
- ❖ What is the current method and capacity to track displaced persons? Which organizations and agencies are responsible for tracking?
- ❖ Which states host larger displaced person populations? What reason would they have to manipulate the numbers?
- ❖ How can the Arab League as an institution improve the accuracy of reporting?
- ❖ What are the roles of 'displacing states' and 'receiving states' with regard to recording and documenting displaced persons?
- ❖ How are these issues complicated by gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and age issues?

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