

RENMUN VIII

The Restoration of Serenity



March 4th & 5th 2023

Chair Report

**Addressing the Issue of Terrorism in Arabic
Nations**

Chair Introduction

On behalf of the RENMUN secretariat and ourselves, we would like to formally thank you for choosing to participate in this conference, and are delighted to have you in the Arab League. To briefly introduce ourselves, we are Darin Lee and Vanessa Kan, a Year 12 student at the Chinese International School and a Form 4 student at Diocesan Girls School respectively.

The Arab League is an intermediate level committee, aimed at bolstering the skills of advanced delegates and embracing less advanced delegates to experiment with different skills. The committee mainly addresses political issues in Arabic nations, striving for peace and prosperity in the Middle East. We expect delegates to attend the conference well prepared and having conducted sufficient research regarding the two topics at hand. We also hope that delegates will use the chair reports as an integral resource when devising methods to mitigate the situation at hand. In terms of our expectations during the conference, we hope that delegates will be professional and mature when discussing the topics at hand and be respectful of the different cultures, stances, and opinions of countries and delegates. When possible, we urge delegates to revolve solutions around the achievement of peace and avoid propositions that might aggravate the situation at hand. With that being said, we would like delegates to use RENMUN as an opportunity to form strong bonds with fellow delegates and have fun, broadening horizons and perspectives through fruitful discourse.

Should you have any questions or queries, feel free to contact either one of us and we will try our best to aid you. We wish you luck in your preparations and look forward to meeting you all!

Best regards,
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Topic introduction

Member nations of the Arab League have long been mired in conflict and turmoil, ranging from religious wars to battles for natural resources such as oil. Though terrorism is a global matter, including various stakeholders and terrorist organizations from all over the world, member nations of the Arab League have been struck hardest by its impacts. Though ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Boko Haram are some of the most prominent and notable terrorist organizations, known for inflicting unimaginable damage to civilians all across the Middle East and North Africa, the true number of terrorist organizations in the region is simply unimaginable. These organizations may range from large-scale, transnational syndicates such as those mentioned above, to gangs that terrorize neighborhoods with violence and by invoking fear in innocent civilians. The only thing that is certain is that the Arab League must find an effective solution to the matter before it escalates.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Islamic Terrorism	Acts of terrorism that are carried out with religious motivations and by Islamic extremist groups. In the context of debate on this topic, terrorism will typically refer to Islamic Terrorism, but can also include non-religious terrorism such as acts of extreme violence with the purpose of gaining monetary or political benefits.
Extremist Groups	A group or organization with certain views that are deemed as radical, typically acting in a violent and extreme manner to achieve their goals. However, one does not have to commit an extreme act to be considered an extremist, and advocacy for extreme views can also make an individual an extremist.
Istishhad (Martyrdom)	The Islamic notion of sacrifice for the greater good. Roughly translating to “heroic death”, this concept is used as Islamic terrorists’ justification for carrying out suicide attacks. The belief that martyrdom for the advancement of Islam is justified and even honored has been manipulated into a military strategy by many Islamic extremist

	groups.
Jihad	The Islamic term for “holy war” and “struggle”, referring to efforts made to advance Islam and improve life for Muslim communities around the world. Islamic terrorists are typically jihadists as well, acting to combat non-Muslim governments and spread the glory of Islam.
Quran	A religious, didactic text and the equivalent of a bible to Muslims. The Quran was deciphered by the Prophet Muhammad, containing divine messages and conveying the acceptable Muslim way of life. The contents of the Quran are strictly adhered to by Muslims around the world, and are recited in daily prayers.
Secularism	The idea that the state should be separated from religion. Most Western countries are secular states, while essentially all members of the Arab League are not. Secularism is a concept that Islamic groups heavily oppose, believing that Islam should be at the core of public life and also political structures.
Proxy War	Armed conflict between two or more entities on behalf of other entities. An example is the Yemeni Civil War, where Saudi Arabia is intervening on behalf of the Yemeni government, while Iran is assisting the opposition Houthi tribe. Terrorist groups are often funded by states or non-state actors with the purpose of achieving political results through proxy warfare.
State Sponsor of Terrorism	A nation or state that actively supports one or more terrorist groups through financial, military, and other means of assistance. As of today, there are only a handful of nations designated by the international community as state sponsors of terrorism due to lack of concrete evidence. However, many nations in the Arab League allegedly have affiliations with terrorist groups, although they have repeatedly denied these

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Background Information

Conquests for the betterment of Muslim societies around the world, or jihads, have been applauded within Arab nations since the establishment of Islam, with the idea of promoting Islam being a core value of the Quran. These conflicts typically took place between nations, more specifically between Muslim and non-Muslim nations, with the one of the most famous being the Arab Revolt. Taking place during World War I, the Arab Revolt saw the fall of the Ottoman Empire's influence in the Arabian Peninsula, and eventually led to the establishment of Saudi Arabia. Since then, Saudi Arabia has taken leadership over the Arabian Peninsula, advocating for a region protected by Islamic jurisprudence and driven by ideals denoted in the Quran.

From the 1920s to the late 1960s, The Arab Revolt, along with the leadership of Saudi Arabia, inspired many Muslim dominant nations to fight for independence from the colonial powers that had possession over their territories. In 1967, British Forces left the capital of Yemen, Aden, marking the complete independence of Middle Eastern states from Western imperialism. These fights for independence were generally peaceful, typically occurring in the form of protests, political lobbying, and ultimately a referendum. With rising Arab nationalism in the backdrop of all events, most of the newly liberated nations established monarchies or authoritarian governments in hopes of successfully transitioning from colonial rule. These nations saw much peace and prosperity with the discovery of oil in many nations in the Middle East and North Africa, gaining the financial capabilities to modernize and develop infrastructure. Of course, there were exceptions to this peace and control, such as the kidnappings, killings, and bombings that occurred during the 1972 Munich Olympics. In this devastating event, Palestinian extremist groups decided to make a statement by murdering Israeli athletes, hoping to assert Palestinian superiority and promote their cause. However, it was the 1979 Iranian Revolution and Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan that completely altered the dynamics of the Arab World and brought about the rise of terrorism.

The Iranian Revolution saw the removal of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi from power, and a change in Iran's political system from a pro-West secular monarchy to an anti-West Islamic theocracy led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini's faction was different from that of other Arab nations as he sought to unite the Arab world under an extreme interpretation of Islam rather than a shared sense of Arab patriotism. The ease and speed in which Khomeini and his supporters overthrew the Shah was also notable, sparking fear in many of Iran's Arab neighbors, as they

believed that this successful movement would inspire extremists to follow Khomeini's example and revolt. The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, on the other hand, similarly set a precedent for terrorism and, in a sense, normalized using extreme measures to achieve victory in war. The invasion began in December of 1979, and after 10 grueling years of battle and the loss of many innocent lives, the mujahideen, roughly translated to "those engaged in jihad", drove Soviet troops out of Afghanistan. Despite major funding and support from the United States, this was the first time a Middle Eastern nation won a major war against a global superpower. As a result of this victory, the many smaller groups that fought as a part of the mujahideen started to gain prominence and inspired by the success of their extreme tactics, began to operate as independent organizations, one of the most infamous being Al Qaeda. Though the Soviet Afghan War gave birth to many terrorist organizations, its main contribution to the development of terrorism was that it resulted in an influx of battle-hardened, war-hungry soldiers and militants, many of which were quickly recruited into existing extremist groups or eventually created their own groups. Most of these terrorist organizations called for the ostracisation of a specific group of people in favor of their own demographic, with some examples being groups that advocated for the destruction of the West in favor of Islam, the eradication of Sunni Islam in favor of Shia Islam, and many other preposterous causes.

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, of a total of 70,676 terrorist attacks taking place between 2011 and 2017, 60,320 occurred in Arabic nations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region — a staggering 73% of the global total. Though terrorism impacts all nations, it is evident that the member states of the Arab League have taken the biggest hit, with member nations such as Somalia, Iraq, and Syria (suspended from the league) leading the Global Terrorism Index. These terrorist attacks have severely impacted civilian life and created a negative perception of Arab nations. As a result of association, many ignorant individuals have been brainwashed into believing that all Arab nations are affiliated with terrorist organizations, and in some extreme and insensitive cases, that all Muslims and Arabs are terrorists. Though these claims are wildly unjust and discriminatory, there is clearly a need for Arab League members to step up their fight against terrorism and protect its people from such injustice.

Potential Clashes

Corruption and Collusion with Terrorist Groups

Many terrorism groups are supported by state sponsors, receiving certain legal protection from prosecution and essentially being used as militias to carry out illegal operations. One of the most notable alleged cases of state sponsored terrorism was that of the Muslim World League, a Saudi Arabian charity entity that funneled money directly from the House of Saud to the hands of terrorist groups. Although Saudi Arabia has maintained a stringent anti-terror policy, many investigations have come to the conclusion that Saudi Arabia is a direct financier of Al Qaeda and many of its operations. Similarly, Qatar has faced many allegations of state sponsorship of terrorism, specifically during the Libyan Civil War. However, the lack of decisive evidence, potentially sprinkled with a hint of corruption, has led no formal charges to be made against any of these governments. The list of alleged state sponsors of terrorism goes on and on, but one thing is certain: justice must be served. Member nations may have different interpretations of justice, with some believing that increased transparency in the form of audits on state transactions is the key to the solution, while some may believe that justice should be delivered within their own nation, and that their nation's affairs are not the business of other member nations.

Religion as a Justification for Violence

The Arab League is comprised of states that either follow some form of Islamic jurisprudence or have a predominantly Muslim population. Extremist terrorist groups in Middle East and North African region often take advantage of this to justify their own actions and recruit more people to their cause. Employing the guise of fighting a jihad to promote Islam and to liberate the Muslims of the world, terrorist groups glorify their acts of violence as following their interpretation of the Quran. An example of this is suicide bombings, which groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS have claimed to be an act of Istishhad, or martyrdom for Islam. Member nations must assess the notion that religion is a justification for violence, clearly defining what constitutes a violent act and what can be considered as simply adhering to Islam. Delegates should also address the issue of religious education, ensuring that extremist ideals do not enter children's minds when they are learning about Islam at a young age and that terrorist groups are unable to brainwash young minds into viewing religion as a justification for terrorism.

The Distribution of Humanitarian Aid

Though all members of the Arab League wish for regional stability and the welfare of all citizens, not all of them have the resources and capacity to assist in the matter. More economically developed nations within the Arab League may have the resources to provide aid, but not all of them may choose to do so due to their varying foreign policies. As a delegate, you must assess your country's financial capabilities

and foreign policy when deciding whether or not to commit to the distribution of humanitarian and financial aid to victims impacted by terrorism. You should also examine your country's interactions with other Arab League nations and even with nations outside of the Arab League when deciding the extent to which your country is open to accepting aid.

The Extent of Foreign Intervention

Although debate is restricted to members within the Arab League, the issue of terrorism is not limited to Arab nations. The United States, for example, is a major stakeholder in the global War on Terror and has made major efforts to eradicate groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS. The European Union has also designated many extremist groups as terrorist organisations, providing intelligence and support to local agencies in Arab nations to combat terrorism. Because the Arab League is considered to be a council of allies, producing resolutions that typically pass unanimously, member nations must determine their stance on foreign intervention regarding terrorism in Arab nations. Some nations such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt are strong allies with the West, while states such as Palestine have a less open relationship with the West. As such, member nations will have to debate and discuss whether or not they would accept foreign intervention in the realm of Arab League affairs.

The Question of Trials and Extradition

There currently is a lack of a clear framework for trying and extraditing captured terrorists. Terrorist organisations typically operate transnationally across the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), and sometimes even in Asia, Europe, and North America. This makes it difficult to locate the leaders of these organisations and even harder to capture them. In the past, foreign agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) have cooperated with local agencies to capture terrorist leaders, extraditing them to be tried in the United States and United Kingdom afterwards. However, the extradition process has been done on a case by case basis, and there lacks a uniform judicial procedure for handling captured terrorists. Member nations must determine their policy regarding bringing terrorist organisations and their leaders to justice in a way that is impartial and holds these individuals accountable for their actions. Delegates may potentially opt for a centralised organisation similar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to handle all terrorist related matters within the Arab League, or, conversely, decide that captured terrorists should be tried where they are captured.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
Saudi Arabia and Egypt	As two of the leaders in the Arab League, Saudi Arabia and Egypt will be responsible for setting a strong example for fellow member nations. Both nations have expressed their discontent with the situation and have committed to combating terrorism. However, allegations of state sponsorship of terrorism, as well as a lack of concrete improvement to the situation, show that these two nations still have a long way to go.
Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Somalia	These nations have been struck hardest by terrorism, either being ranked in the top 10 of the Global Terrorism Index, or being frequently accused of sponsoring terrorism. In fact, Syria has been suspended from the Arab League due to numerous allegations, but will remain a member of this committee.
Less economically developed Arab League nations	Most of the Arab League member nations wish to counter terrorism and ensure peace and stability for their civilians. For the less economically developed countries, the delegates' priorities will be to craft resolutions that funnel resources to their governments for the purpose of distributing aid. These less developed nations are also more susceptible to terrorist attacks due to internal instability and weak militaries, and may be looking to gain some form of military aid in the case of an attack.

Possible Solutions

There are numerous possible courses of actions, but resolutions can include some of the following solutions:

- Humanitarian Aid
- Joint Counterterrorism Commission
- Centralised Court for Terrorists
- Increased Military Presence and Surveillance in Areas Controlled by Terrorists
- Modifying and Optimising the Religious Education System

Past Actions

- Sanctions on Terrorist Groups (freezing of bank assets, targeting leading individuals within organisations, restricting border entry for recognised terrorists)
- Modifications or Implementations of Anti-terror Legislations (revisiting broad/vague vocabulary in anti-terror legislations, creating new and stringent legislations, introducing harsher penalties for perpetrators)
- Increased Allocation of Resources (increased financial support for terrorism task forces, increased allocation of manpower)
- Joint Counterterrorism Taskforces (taskforces between Western nations and specific Arab countries facing imminent threat)

Guiding Questions

1. How can Arab League nations collaborate to locate and monitor terrorist organizations in the region?
2. Does your nation believe that national sovereignty and privacy in certain areas such as intelligence, surveillance, and more should be sacrificed in the name of combating terrorism?
3. Is your nation financially capable of providing humanitarian aid or even financial assistance to those impacted by terrorism? Is your nation willing to commit to this kind of support?
4. How can a centralized system within the Arab League be created to classify and label terrorist organizations?
5. Should captured terrorists be tried by the country they are arrested in, or should they be subject to judgment by a special form of court?
6. How can member nations combat corruption within the government and national institutions in regards to terrorism?

Bibliography + Extra Reading

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