



SRMUN ATLANTA 2018

Our Responsibility: Facilitating Social Development through Global Engagement and Collaboration

November 15 - 17, 2018

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Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2018 and the League of Arab States (LAS). My name is Ryan Baerwalde, and I will be serving as your Director for the LAS. This will be my fifth conference as a SRMUN staff member. Previously, I served as the Assistant Director of the Security Council (SC) for SRMUN Atlanta 2015, Director of the SC at SRMUN Charlotte 2016, Assistant Deputy Director-General of Crises at SRMUN Atlanta 2016, and Deputy Director-General at SRMUN Atlanta 2017. I currently work as an Admissions Counselor for Valdosta State University. I hold a Masters of Arts in International Security from the University of Denver and a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science from Valdosta State University. Our committee's Assistant Director will be Austen Brennen. This will be Austen's first time as a staff member but he is not new to the SRMUN scene as he has previously been a delegate at our SRMUN Atlanta 2017. Austen has completed a Bachelors at Campbell University where he majored in Homeland Security, and will be starting his graduate studies at American University this fall.

The Mission of LAS is to forge cooperative solutions to economic and security problems for the region and its 22 Member States. Considering the seriousness of the conflicts throughout the region, multilateral solutions developed by LAS are needed now more than ever.

By focusing on the mission of the LAS and the SRMUN Atlanta 2018 theme of "*Our Responsibility: Facilitating Social Development through Global Engagement and Collaboration*," we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

I. Open Agenda

The background guide provides a strong introduction to the committee and the topics and should be utilized as a foundation for the delegate's independent research. While we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 26, 2018 by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website.**

Austen and I are enthusiastic about serving as your dais for the LAS. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you in the near future. Please feel free to contact Deputy Director-General Jacob Howe, Austen, or myself if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

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Committee History of the League of Arab States

In 1944, the Member States of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Transjordan (Jordan), and Lebanon sent delegates to discuss the future of a Pan-Arabic government, as well as removing influence of foreign powers inside the region.¹ This led to the signing of the Alexandria Protocol on October 7, 1944, which authorized the creation of the organization that would become the League of Arab States (LAS).² The goal of the LAS is to strengthen the ties of all Arabic governments through joint defense and coordination of implementing policy, reducing foreign influence in the region, and obtaining statehood for Palestine.³ The LAS operates under the guidance of the League of Arab States Charter, which was signed on March 22, 1945 in Cairo.⁴ The signatories of the founding Charter were Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Transjordan.⁵ The Charter acts to endorse the idea of an Arabic homeland, while ensuring the individual sovereignty and interests of the Arabic Member States.

The body of the LAS meets twice a year, in March and September, with emergency summits being allowed upon the request of two or more Member States.⁶ The main body of the LAS is the Council of the Arab League.⁷ There are also seven specialized committees that fall under the jurisdiction of the Council, which are: Communications, Cultural, Economic, Health, Legal, Political, and Social.⁸ Each Member State receives equal voting rights, regardless on the size of the delegation present.⁹ The Council's Presidency rotates between Member States, with Lebanon currently holding the title. The headquarters of the LAS is located in Cairo, but is allowed to convene at any location deemed by the LAS.¹⁰ The Executive of the LAS is the Secretary General (SG), whose responsibilities are to oversee departments, represent the interests of the LAS in other international forums, and mediate disputes between Arab States.¹¹ The SG is selected by the League Council with a two-thirds majority for a renewable five-year term.¹² Currently, Ahmed Aboul Gheit of Egypt is the incumbent for the office of SG.

Unless otherwise stated in the Charter, a simple majority is needed for policy or regulation to be adopted by the body with resolutions only binding for Member States who voted in favor.¹³ This developed a challenge of holding Member States accountable for implementing council resolutions and questions the validity of the LAS since Member States can ignore resolutions unfavorable to their domestic and foreign policy.

While the LAS maintains a cooperative relationship with the United Nations (UN) and other organizations, it is autonomous. The UN has a specific office for maintaining the LAS as a permanent observer, which allows LAS to send delegates attend and speak on behalf of the LAS whenever relevant.¹⁴ Despite the LAS' stance on reduction of foreign influence, Arab Member States still cooperate with international actors and organizations to solve crises inside Member States' borders.

LAS' first major action occurred in 1948, when the League intervened in the Arab-Israeli War on behalf of the Arab population uprooted by Israel in Palestine.¹⁵ While the conflict did not end in favor of the Arab coalition, it led to the signing of the Joint Defense and Economic Co-operation Treaty, which was a result of the growing influence of

¹ Alexandria Protocol, "League of Arab States," Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/alex.asp (accessed April 17, 2015).

² Protocol, "League of Arab States."

³ Chris Toffolo and Peggy Kahn, *The Arab League* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2008), 44.

⁴ *Charter of Arab League*, The League of Arab States, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ab18.html> (accessed April 17, 2015).

⁵ *Charter of Arab League*.

⁶ *Charter of Arab League*.

⁷ *Charter of Arab League*.

⁸ *Charter of Arab League*.

⁹ *Charter of Arab League*.

¹⁰ *Charter of Arab League*.

¹¹ *Charter of Arab League*.

¹² *Charter of Arab League*.

¹³ *Charter of Arab League*.

¹⁴ "What is a Permanent Observer?," The United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/members/aboutpermobservers.shtml> (accessed April 19, 2015).

¹⁵ "The Arab League," Council of Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/arab-league/p25967> (accessed February 28, 2015).

Israel in the region, and the creation of the Joint Defense Council (JDC), an organization charged with organizing mutual defense.¹⁶

In 2005, the Arab Parliament began conducting business as a body of the LAS.¹⁷ The Arab Parliament is unique in the sense that it embodies the thoughts and opinions of Arabic citizens, as opposed to the governments, and aims to strengthen democratic ideals in the region.¹⁸ The purpose of the Parliament is to rule on matters pertaining to social, economic, and cultural issues.¹⁹ The Parliament has no authority outside of giving statements, but still has seen success. In regards to the crisis in Somalia, in 2006 the Arab Parliament requested Ethiopia to remove all troops and petitioned the United Nations Security Council to remove all foreign presence.²⁰ Due to the ongoing repression of the people of Syria by the Assad regime, the Arab Parliament submitted the recommendation to suspend the status of Syria as a member of the LAS.²¹ The recommendation was adopted by the Council and Syria had its membership suspended on 16 November, 2011.²² As the Syrian conflict has continued to rage, the LAS has found itself locked in heated internal disagreements concerning how to best bring about a resolution to the crisis. As of April 2018, the LAS has focused its efforts on investigating chemical weapon attacks allegedly launched by the Assad regime, and condemning Iran's continued involvement in the country.²³ Although the LAS as an organization has not been directly involved in the fighting, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have engaged in combat.

The Organization originally functioned to curb foreign influence and protect Palestinian interest expanded to include taking stances in protecting the right of protesters during recent demonstrations, monitoring of conflict to ensure protection of non-combatants, and holding conferences emphasizing the importance of Arabic Human Rights.²⁴ During the 26th Arab Summit in March 2015, the Conference concluded with the Council voting in favor of the creation of a military force to combat the increasing problem of terrorism in the region.²⁵ The clearest example of this military coalitions' viability and effectiveness is the fight against the terrorist organization, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Member States have contributed to the fight against ISIL in Libya, Iraq, and Syria.²⁶ An emerging security threat for the LAS is the renewed tensions between Israel and Palestine, which has seen multiple bouts of violent unrest, resulting in multiple casualties. Should this seemingly ceaseless crisis erupt into more widespread violence, LAS would likely be drawn into the conflict. In order to take proactive steps towards avoiding such an outcome, LAS has hosted a summit regarding the recent violence in Gaza.²⁷

¹⁶ "The Arab League."

¹⁷ "The Arab League."

¹⁸ "Background: The Arab Parliament," European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/dmed/dv/5b_arabparliame/5b_arabparliament.pdf (accessed April 14, 2015).

¹⁹ "Background: The Arab Parliament."

²⁰ Chris Toffolo and Peggy Kahn, *The Arab League*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2008), 51.

²¹ "Arab League Parliament Urges Syrian Suspension," Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/09/201192017594330402.html> (accessed April 14, 2015).

²² "Syria Suspended from Arab League," The Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/12/syria-suspended-arab-league> (accessed April 13, 2015).

²³ "Arab League Calls for Syria Chemical Attack Investigation," Deutsche Welle, April 15, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/arab-league-calls-for-syria-chemical-attack-investigation/a-4339773>, (accessed May 21, 2018).

²⁴ "Arab Charter of Human Rights," Humanrights.ch, <http://www.humanrights.ch/en/standards/other-regions-instruments/arab-charter-on-human-rights/> (accessed April 15, 2015).

²⁵ "The All Arab Army," Foreign Affairs, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143648/michael-broening/the-all-arab-army> (accessed April 17, 2015).

²⁶ "Arab League agrees to use military force against ISIS in Libya, unsure on airstrikes" Washington Times, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/aug/18/arab-league-agrees-use-military-force-against-isis/> (accessed April 4, 2018).

²⁷ "Arab league to hold emergency Palestine meeting," The New Arab, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/4/2/arab-league-to-hold-emergency-palestine-meeting>, (Accessed April 4, 2018).