



# AUS MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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**POSITION PAPER - ARAB LEAGUE**  
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*Position Paper for the Arab League*

The Arab League, formally known as the League of Arab States is an Intergovernmental Organisation formed on March 22, 1945, in Cairo, Egypt. It is a consortium of twenty-two Arab states that endeavour to achieve close collaboration to safeguard their independence and sovereignty. The League has been crucial to the region's economic development and political stability in recent years. Its role in recent issues such as the 2011 Libyan Revolution and the 2011 revolt in Syria has been remarkable.

The issues before the Arab League are 'The Repatriation of Arab Refugees' and 'Lebanon: A Global Crisis'. The delegation of the Egypt aims at cooperating with the committee and contributing to it to find solutions for these crucial problems.

**I. The Repatriation of Arab Refugees**

The wars in Syria, Libya, Yemen and Iraq, and the longstanding Palestine-Israel conflict have led to the creation of the world's largest wave of migration since World War II. Years of political and socioeconomic instability in the Middle East and African region have contributed to a massive 40% of the total refugee population of the world. The Syrian Civil War of 2011 resulted in the world's largest refugee and displacement crisis with 6.8 million refugees and 6.57 million displaced internally. Similarly, the Arab-Israeli Wars, the Yemeni Civil War 2015 and the Libyan Civil War 2014 have forced millions of people to flee from their houses.

Refugees migrate to neighbouring countries to escape violence and tumultuous war conditions that affect their physical and mental well-being. Türkiye, Colombia, Germany, Pakistan, and Uganda host 36% of the refugees. Türkiye alone hosts 3.7 million people, the largest number of refugees from Syria. Lebanon and Jordan are among the other countries to host Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Currently, the host countries are facing challenges to accommodate refugees and provide them with long-term settlements because of the lack of resources. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the economies of these countries hard making it nearly impossible to provide financial support to the refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), believes that repatriation is the long-term solution for refugees, given that it is done voluntarily. In 2022, Lebanon, with financial assistance from the United Nations carried out voluntary repatriation of the Syrian Refugees.

Egypt is presently home to an estimated 430,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers originating from 59 distinct nationalities. Noteworthy is the recent shift in demographics, with Sudanese nationals assuming the foremost position, closely trailed by Syrians. The compelling factors driving this phenomenon include heightened conflicts and political instability in East Africa, the Horn of Africa, as well as ongoing unrest in Iraq and Yemen. Consequently, a considerable number of individuals from South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Yemen, Somalia, and Iraq have sought refuge within Egypt's borders.

As of November 19, 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports a diverse refugee population encompassing 169,000 Sudanese, 152,545 Syrians, 35,917 South Sudanese, 30,713 Eritreans, 17,277 Ethiopians, 8,034 Yemenis, 7,163 Somalis, 5,541 Iraqis, and individuals representing over 50 other nationalities. Egypt now hosting the largest recorded population of registered refugees and asylum-seekers in its history, underscoring the acute humanitarian challenges posed by the Sudanese and Syrian crises (Refugee Context in Egypt - UNHCR Egypt, n.d.).

Egypt would like to urge the League towards formulating policies to uplift and establish self reliance among the refugees. Economic and social inclusion will give them an opportunity to grow and contribute to the host nations' economy. This will give them the status of an asset rather than a liability to the host nations. In cases where repatriation is possible, Egypt would like to appeal to the UN to assist war-torn nations to rebuild and welcome their citizens back

to their countries.

## **II. Lebanon: A Global Crisis**

Lebanon is a Middle Eastern Country sharing borders with Syria, Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. It is one of the 51 founding members of the United Nations which signed the UN Charter on June 26, 1945. A country which once known as a middle-income country is now experiencing the world's worst economic meltdowns in the last 150 years with 74% of its population living in poverty, on less than \$14 per day. The World Bank has named this crisis a 'deliberate depression' insinuated by a complacent ruling class. Triple-digit hyperinflation has taken hold; between June 2019 and June 2021, inflation soared to 281% resulting in the depreciation of the local currency by 90%. Since 2019, the cost of food alone has soared by 550% increasing food insecurity. In 1 out of 10 households, an adult went without eating for an entire day because of a lack of money. Power cuts last for days and internet services have become rare. Day-long queues for staples like bread and gas have become common. Its healthcare system is crumbling with the shortages of medications from OTC painkillers to cancer treatments. COVID-19 further exacerbated the humanitarian and socioeconomic crisis and crippled the healthcare system of the country. The World Bank has introduced the 3RF plan post the Beirut port explosions and established the Lebanon Financing Facility to facilitate recovery. The Arab League also sent a delegation to Beirut in August 2021 with the vision to strengthen the diplomatic relations between Lebanon and the GCC and support them in their hard times.

Lebanon's downfall can be traced back directly to its governance system post-civil war. The new government was not designed to address the extent of death and destruction but to bury the past under the 1991 amnesty law that enabled sectarian warlords to become sectarian political leaders. The amnesty law apotheosized unaccountability at the state's highest levels. The deal that ended the civil war was the Taif Agreement which divided the country into eighteen officially recognized sects. Although this sectarianism was supposed to be temporary, three decades later it is well-rooted in the country's government. In recent times, the 2020 Beirut explosion, which took the lives of 218 people, was one of the ugliest manifestations that summed up everything that has gone wrong in Lebanon since the 15-year-old civil war ended in 1990. The country has collapsed under a series of crises; the Beirut blast was the first weakening in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic and the condition of the refugees hosted by Lebanon. Refugees from Syria and Palestine live in refugee camps in the country in the poorest of living conditions and extreme poverty with no access to healthcare and educational facilities. In 2021, The Emergency Response Plan was introduced to meet the needs of the vulnerable Lebanese, migrants and refugees affected by the crisis.

According to Egypt, the best solution for the revival of Lebanon would be to form a new and accountable government free from prejudices, biases and corruption. The country needs political leaders who would dedicate themselves towards the betterment of the people and improving their living. The lives and future of the people of Lebanon and the Syrian and Palestinian refugees are at stake and no more delay can be made to tend to the situation. Egypt would like to urge the committee to take urgent measures to control and resolve these conditions before they worsen any further.

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