

# TAEMUN VII

December 6-7, 2019



## BACKGROUND GUIDE

### The League of Arab States (LAS)

*Topic A: Civil War of Yemen*

*Topic B: Post-Conflict Restoration of Syria*

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Hello Distinguished Delegates,

My name is Neola Dsouza, and I will be your director for The League of Arab States at TAEMUN VII. I am a freshman at Thomas Alva Edison High School. I am currently in the Global STEM Challenges Program, and I also play the violin in the Musikfest Chamber Orchestra. Besides playing the violin, I also like to read and I used to play basketball.

This is my first year as a director for TAEMUN and also my first year of Model UN. Model UN has allowed me to become more comfortable with public speaking, a skill that I lack. Along with public speaking, MUN has helped me talk to new people comfortably when I network during committee. McMUNC V was the first conference I had participated in, and it was really exciting. I was able to learn so much about a topic that was prevalent in today's media, and understand other countries' perspectives. I hope you enjoy this conference and good luck at TAEMUN!

Kindly,

Neola Dsouza

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## **Topic A: Civil War of Yemen**

### **Background**

The world's worst humanitarian crisis is happening in Yemen. Set on the course to become the world's poorest country, Yemen is in dire need of aid. The Civil War of Yemen is currently being fought between the Cabinet of Yemen, the Supreme Political Council, and Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The Cabinet of Yemen is the governing body of Yemen and consists of former president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, the Yemen National Army, and pro-Hadi security forces. The Supreme Political Council is a directorial body founded by Houthi Ansarullah and the General People's Congress (GPC) with plans to rule Yemen. They are allied with the Houthis, an Islamic armed political movement, and Iran. The Houthis are working with forces loyal to former Yemen president Ali Abdullah Saleh. Primarily, the civil war is being fought between the Cabinet of Yemen and the Supreme Political Council, with both groups claiming to rule the Yemen government. Even though the war started in 2015, there are a few important events that contributed to the war prior to 2015.

From 2003 to 2009, the Houthi movement from Northern Yemen protested the exclusion of a local Muslim sect and fought six wars against Saleh's forces. In 2012, Saleh resigns from office and Hadi becomes president with the promise of an inclusive and federal constitution. In 2013, AQAP survives military onslaught and stages multiple attacks on Yemen. In 2014, the Houthis advance south and take control of Sana'a, the capital of Yemen with the help from their former enemy Saleh. After being removed, Saleh formed an alliance with the Houthis. In January 2015, the conflict officially began when the opposition invaded the presidential residence and

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forced Hadi, as well as his government, to resign. This lead to the intervention of the Saudi-led coalition, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. The coalition launched airstrikes against Houthi troops. On March 23, 2015, the troops allied with the Houthis took control of Aden International Airport, while Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia. In April 2015, the United Nations Security Council put an arms embargo on the Houthis and also demanded that they leave their captured territory. In September, Hadi came back to Aden after the Saudi-coalition claimed the city back. In the summer of 2016, the United Nations sponsored peace talks between the Cabinet of Yemen and the Houthi rebels.

After trying to switch sides to fight against the Houthis, former president Saleh was killed in December 2017. His forces were defeated only two days after his death. In early 2018, southern Yemen separatists, called the Southern Transitional Council (STC), worked alongside with the Hadi government. Unfortunately, the STC accused the government of discrimination and corruption as they seized many government buildings and offices in Aden. By the end of January, the Council had control of most of the city. In September of 2019, a ceasefire was enacted in multiple parts of Yemen. The UN Special Envoy for Yemen stated that this ceasefire was a step forward in the peace process created by the Stockholm agreement. The Stockholm agreement would include the demilitarization of key ports in Yemen and prisoner exchanges.

### **Current Situation**

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (UNOCHA), at least 24 million people in Yemen are in need of humanitarian aid. With the Houthis seizing control of the Hodeidah port and most of Northern Yemen, food and supplies are not being

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diverted to where it is needed the most. With only half of Yemen's hospitals and health centers in working conditions, the amount of medical supplies are scarce. Many Yemeni citizens are needing protection and the Yemeni soldiers are needing supplies and resources. The US and UK have taken major roles in aid by manufacturing arms and selling them to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who have been fighting against the Houthi rebels in order to take the control of Yemen away from them.

**Past League of Arab States Actions**

In response to the conflicts in Yemen and surrounding the country, the League of Arab States has proposed a joint military force. This idea, first proposed by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, would aim to provide results to the civil war. The military force would be supervised by the chiefs of staff of Arab armed forces. Along with this, a few of the countries from the LAS are also part of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

**Questions to Consider**

1. How can your country confront the issues that the people in Yemen face?
2. Should your country take part in the Yemen Civil War, whose side would your country support and be on?

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## **Topic B: Post-Conflict Restoration of Syria**

### **Background**

The Syrian Civil War can be referred to as the second deadliest war in the twenty-first century. With that being said, the restoration of Syria would be massive. In order to restore post-conflict Syria, it is imperative to know the conflict behind it. The Syrian Civil War started in 2011 and is still currently being fought. As of now, the main factions in the war are the Syrian Arab Republic, the Interim Government, the Islamic State of Iran and the Levant (ISIL), and the Syrian Democratic Council. The Syrian Arab Republic is a country in Western Asia led by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and consists of the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF). The Interim Government is the Syrian opposition that includes the Free Syrian Army, founded by generals of the SAF who wanted to take down Assad's government. ISIL, known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is a terrorist group. The Syrian Democratic Council is the political body of the Syrian Democratic Forces in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.

The conflict began in March 2011, when many Syrians protested the demand of an increase in freedom of expression in the city of Daraa. After the protest, security forces opened fire in retaliation towards the protestors, killing four people. On August 18th, 2011, US President Barack Obama tells Assad to resign and freezes Syrian government assets. On February 23rd, 2012, the League of Arab States and the UN both chose Kofi Annan as their Special Envoy to Syria. Annan was a diplomat from Ghana and also served as the seventh Secretary-General of the UN. On March 16, Annan proposed a six-point peace plan to the United Nations Security Council. The plan insisted on the withdrawal of troops and weapons from cities, the distribution of humanitarian aid, and a UN-backed ceasefire. The deadline for accepting this plan was April 10th and it was claimed

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that the Syrian government had agreed to this plan, but by May 1, both sides had disrupted the ceasefire and had failed to comply with the peace plan. This had marked the end of Annan peace initiative. During June 2012, the UN hosted a conference in Geneva to address the issues and negotiate solutions for the civil war. In May 2013, the Syrian Republic gained a new ally, the Hezbollah group from Lebanon. Both groups took control of the town of Qusair. In early September 2013, the UNSC ordered for Syria to demolish their supply of chemical weaponry, after alleged chemical weapons attacks on the city of Damascus. On October 14, 2013, Syria signs the Chemical Weapons Convention which forbade them from making or using chemical weapons. All of the weapons were successfully removed by June 30th, 2014. During late September of 2015, Russia decides to launch airstrikes on Syria, while also becoming an ally of the Syrian Republic.

After a brief ceasefire, pro-government and Russian forces bombed the rebel-held city of Aleppo in September 2016. This city had the largest economy of the country and it is the second largest city in Syria. Alongside the bombs, many warplanes released bombs that destroyed many hospitals, aid workers, and civilians. ISIL was beginning to destabilize while under the pressure of three coalitions: the pro-Assad forces supported by Russia and Iran, Kurdish forces with US allies, and the Turkish coalition of rebel forces. In October 2017, the Syrian Democratic Forces stated that Al-Raqqah, ISIL's capital in Syria, had been fully removed of ISIL forces. In mid-2018, pro-government forces decided to take control of opposition-held areas in the southern province of Dar'a. After their success, Syria and Russia made a deal with the rebels, allowing them to safely travel to Idlib, the last of the rebel-held territories, in exchange for the control of southwest Syria. In late 2018, Russia and Turkey established a demilitarization zone in the province of Idlib. This zone soon falls apart and in August 2019, the US and Turkey set up a demilitarized zone in northern Syria. In late October, Turkey had decided to invade northern Syria.

## Current Situation

The cost of destruction of the whole war is estimated to be 400 billion dollars, and there are 6.8 million internally displaced people in the country. With the war still being fought, Assad is in favor of restoring Syria and stated that he could loan money from allies and the state treasury. In 2019, the Iran and Syrian government signed an agreement in which Iran would help build Syria's energy grid. The only issues in this process, are the lack of building materials, and the lack of efficient management of resources. Nevertheless, the restoration effort has been limited but it has been directed to a few of the Syrian cities.

## Past League of Arab States Actions

From the time period of November 2011 to January 2012, the LAS tried two attempts at arranging peace in Syria. In early November, the LAS proposed a peace agreement that would include the withdrawal of armies and tanks from cities and the release of prisoners. The government of Syria agreed to this but after a few days, 23 people were killed and after a week, 300 people were killed. The Arab League then suspended Syria's membership. On December 19, foreign observers from the LAS were allowed to monitor the prisoner exchange in Syria. After a month, Saudi Arabia pulled its monitors out but encouraged China, Europe, and Islamic states to pressure Syria into agreement with the plan. Towards late January, Assad turned down the Arab peace plan. The LAS then halted the mission and withdrew all of their monitors on January 28th, 2012. In June 2012, the LAS and the UN sponsored a conference in Geneva as a response to the little success they had from their prior attempts. The conference included 70 nations and was about possible solutions and negotiations about a new governing party in Syria.

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**Questions to Consider**

1. Should the UN or LAS take action in the future restoration of Syria? What would they do?
2. What steps would your country take, in order to aid Syria?

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