



# UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Maintenance of International  
Peace & Security: Addressing  
Challenges in the Middle East

**GLOBAL CLASSROOMS DC**  
**SPRING 2024 MODEL UN CONFERENCE**



# CONTENT TABLE

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE: United Nations Security Council..... 2

GCDC Spring 2024 Conference: Crisis Procedures.....2

Statement of the Problem:.....3

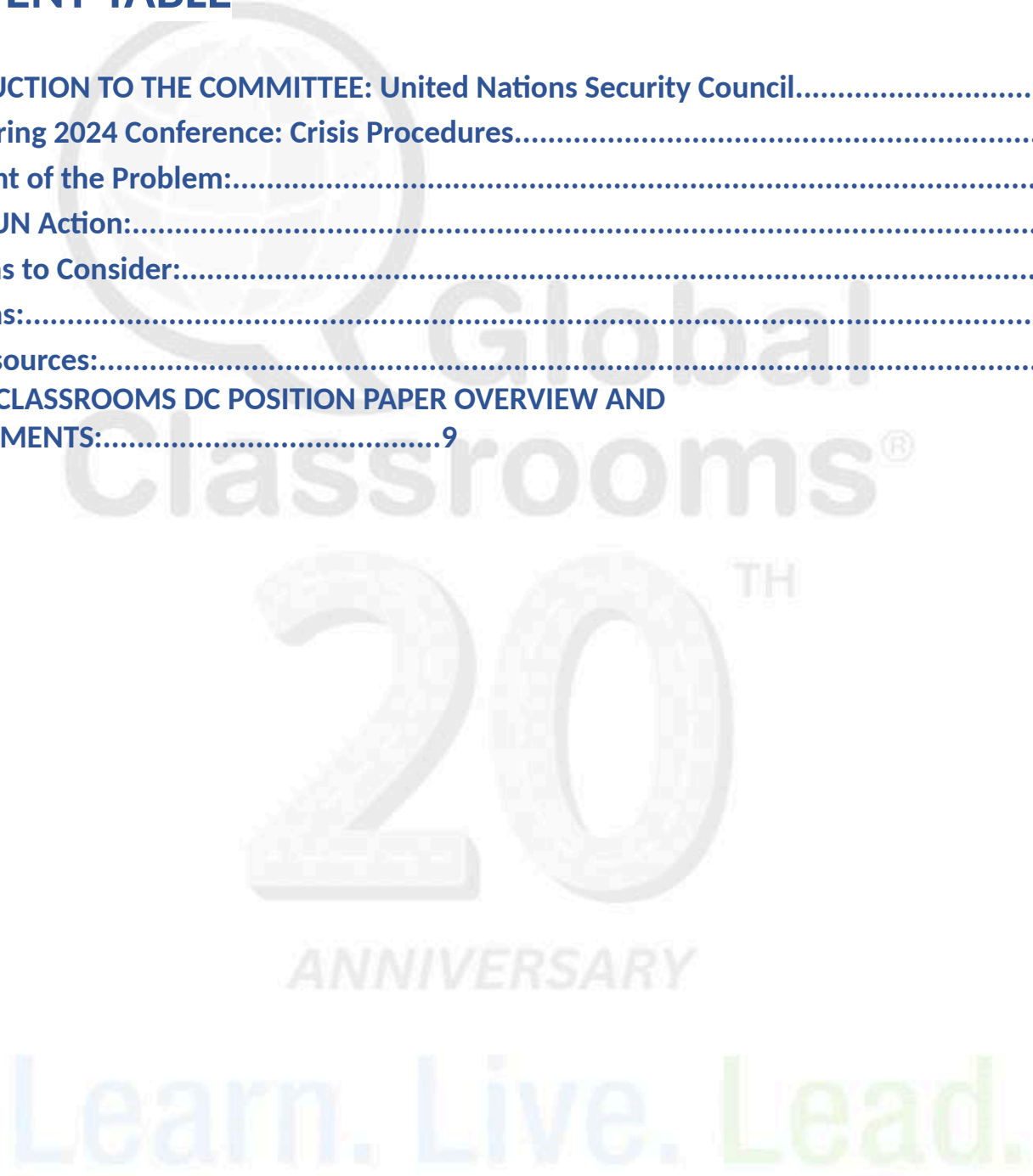
Current UN Action:.....6

Questions to Consider:.....6

Key Terms:..... 7

Extra Resources:.....8

GLOBAL CLASSROOMS DC POSITION PAPER OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS:.....9



## INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE: United Nations Security Council



The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of six principal organs of the United Nations and is tasked with maintaining international peace and security. While other organs of the UN, like the UN General Assembly, can only make recommendations, the Security Council has enforcement power to carry out their recommendations: UN peacekeeping operations are implemented by the Security Council under the command of the Secretary-General. The Security Council is led by five permanent members: the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China. These five countries led the Allied Powers during WWII and gained permanent seats on the Council when the United Nations was founded as a result. All permanent members of the Security Council have veto

power, meaning if even one permanent member votes against a resolution, that resolution fails. As a result, the Security Council is prone to deadlocks on controversial issues when the P5 cannot agree on a response. Conversely, when the Security Council does pass a resolution, it carries significant weight because it implies universal agreement among the major world powers. The Security Council also has ten non-permanent members, who are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. As of 2024, the non-permanent members are Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

The Council can take several different actions to respond to an international crisis. These can range from relatively minor responses, such as calling for a ceasefire or establishing an investigation, to major interventions such as imposing sanctions, sending peacekeepers, or even authorizing member states to go to war. In addition to short-term crisis management, the Security Council deals with long-term strategic decision-making for the international community, such as letting new members into the United Nations, developing long term strategies for specific peacekeeping operations or regional issues, and crafting international responses to specific issues, such as nuclear proliferation, environmental degradation, or terrorism.

### GCDC Spring 2024 Conference: Crisis Procedures

This committee will operate as a crisis committee – delegates will work on *committee directives* instead of a draft resolution and will have a crisis director along with their chair. Delegates will **NOT** have individual powers, but will be able to request for crisis updates regarding ongoing developments (facts and figures). In addition, there are some unique rules that apply to the Security Council at the 2024 GCDC Spring Conference. First, delegates that are representing the P5 (USA, UK, France, Russian Federation and China) have the option for a motion for fait

<sup>1</sup> "Current Members," UNSC.

[https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members#:~:text=PERMANENT%20AND%20NON%2DPERMANENT%20MEMBERS&text=Five%20permanent%20members%3A%20China%2C%20France,Ecuador%20\(2024\).](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members#:~:text=PERMANENT%20AND%20NON%2DPERMANENT%20MEMBERS&text=Five%20permanent%20members%3A%20China%2C%20France,Ecuador%20(2024).)



accompli. This motion can only be made by a P5, does not require a second, and only P5 members can vote on this motion (requires a simple majority to pass).

This motion acts like an unmoderated caucus (P5 delegate that makes this motion must specify the time limit). Bear in mind that while this is occurring, debate can continue in the Security Council, as a quorum (minimal acceptable number of individuals) for the Council is 5 delegations present to continue debate.

This motion can only be made after draft resolution/directive blocs have been formed, and when the Chair is aware of various blocs currently working. The goal of the fait accompli is for the P5 members to discuss the various draft blocs, and how to ensure that during voting procedures, members do not initiate a veto. All voting procedures in the Security Council on substantive matters (passage of draft committee directives) require a simple majority for passage, and all votes will be conducted as Roll Call Votes. Simple placard votes and motions to adopt by consent/acclamation will NOT be entertained.

## Statement of the Problem:

### *Background:*

The Middle East is a geopolitical area spanning across several countries, it includes the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant (consists of countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Israel/Palestine, and Syria), Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq. Its complex political landscape has been significantly influenced by historical legacies, such as colonialism and nationalist movements, as well as ongoing geopolitical turmoil. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, created by the United Kingdom and France in 1916 (after World War I), divided the Middle East into nation-states without consideration for local demographics, historical ties, and/or input from communities living in the region. These arbitrary divisions are often viewed as a significant driver of conflict in the region.<sup>2</sup>

Political instability and the prevalence of authoritarian regimes remain pervasive throughout the region. Foreign intervention has also played a significant role in shaping the dynamics of the area. As demonstrated by the Arab Spring<sup>3</sup>, the pursuit of democracy and political reform remain a central aspiration in many parts of the Middle East. While some countries have made progress, authoritarian regimes still suppress dissent and restrict political freedoms. Foreign powers have also often sought to exert influence through various means, including military intervention, economic assistance, and diplomatic pressure. Furthermore, the influence and interventions by foreign powers still remains a prominent factor in the Middle East. Foreign influences have sometimes exacerbated existing tensions and contributed to further instability in the region, rather than facilitating the establishment of stable systems.

### *Current Situation:*

The international community is deeply concerned regarding the current and ongoing humanitarian crises in the region. Several regions, including Gaza, Yemen, and Syria, are grappling with devastating humanitarian crises marked by poverty, famine, displacement, and insufficient delivery of life-saving aid. The recent Israel-Hamas war has been a pivotal inflection point, as its effects have spilled over into other areas of the Middle East, from shipping in the Red Sea to bombing of international airports. The Security Council emphasizes the need for immediate, adequate, and long-lasting solutions to these conflicts and reiterates the need to uphold international peace, security, and universal human rights in the region.<sup>4</sup> Please find below a review of these humanitarian crises and conflicts.

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<sup>2</sup> "Timeline: The Middle East Conflict." Al Jazeera, 2008. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2008/1/21/timeline-the-middle-east-conflict>.

<sup>3</sup> [Key Terms](#)

<sup>4</sup> UN News, "Security Council meets over widening Middle East crisis." United Nations, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145487>.

### Priorities to be discussed:

- The spillover effects of the Israel-Hamas war on Yemen, and Syria.
- The humanitarian challenges in Gaza and the issue of Israeli hostages.
- Strategies for brokering peace and sending life-saving humanitarian aid to said regions.
- Promoting stability across the Middle East through addressing political, diplomatic, and developmental concerns.
- Encouraging agreement and cooperation among primary stakeholders within and beyond the Middle East.
- The humanitarian impacts of sustained and indiscriminate airstrikes in the region.

### Gaza:

5



The Israel-Hamas war is one of the major conflicts in the Middle East and has the potential to exacerbate other conflicts in the area. On October 7, 2023, Hamas—a Palestinian militant group based in the Gaza Strip—launched an attack against Israeli civilians, killing 1,200 people (including 33 children) and abducting 250 more. In retaliation, Israel (backed by the United States and other western allies) began a months-long series of indiscriminate airstrikes on Gaza in an effort to destroy Hamas. The attacks on Gaza launched a severe humanitarian crisis that has killed over 30,000 Palestinians (including more than 13,800 children) and left thousands more wounded.<sup>6</sup> While this session’s focus is to address mitigation

strategies in the *current and ongoing* Israel-Hamas war, it is pertinent to note that these crises are part of the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, wherein the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza are under an illegal military occupation imposed by Israel. Additionally, Palestinian militant groups (such as Hamas) have coordinated attacks disproportionately harming Israeli civilians over the years.

Gaza currently stands on the verge of famine. On March 25, 2024, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution that demanded an immediate temporary ceasefire in Gaza for the holy month of Ramadan; 14 member states voted for the resolution, with the United States as the one abstention.<sup>7</sup> While the Israeli ambassador has criticized the resolution for not directly condemning Hamas, the resolution did call for the unconditional release of all hostages in addition to an end to barriers to international aid.<sup>8</sup> The ceasefire is yet to be adequately implemented on the ground. Amidst divided international opinion, the international community may face difficulties in launching coordinated efforts to alleviate the conflict and provide necessary humanitarian assistance. Also, the Secretary General of the UN has warned of a further “spillover of the Gaza conflict across the region.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> “Gaza Strip in maps: How life has changed.” BBC, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20415675>.

<sup>6</sup> Roberts, Les, “The Science Is Clear. Over 30,000 People Have Died in Gaza.” TIME Magazine, 2024, <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>.

<sup>7</sup> UN News, “Gaza: Security Council passes resolution demanding ‘an immediate ceasefire’ during Ramadan.” United Nations, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147931>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> “UN Talks on Yemen.” Aljazeera English, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETmaSVqPDow>.

## Yemen:

10



Since 2015, Yemen has been embroiled in a civil war — with many analysts now characterizing it as a proxy civil war — between its internationally recognized government, supported by a Saudi-led coalition, and the Houthis, a non-state Shia Islamist political and military organization. The origins of the conflict between the government and the Houthis lie in political tensions, such as the government's close alliances with foreign powers—such as Israel and the United States—that the Houthis oppose, among other factors. Additionally, many analysts point to sectarian differences between the Shiite Houthi coalition and the Sunni-majority government as another source of tension.<sup>11</sup> The Houthi movement garnered support by

organizing around economic issues, such as protests against fuel price hikes, and tapping into political frustrations stemming from the Saudi and US-coordinated transition (backed by the UN) from President Saleh to the current President Hadi in Yemen during the Arab Spring.<sup>12</sup> Despite their contentious relationship with President Saleh, the Houthi movement felt marginalized by the transition due to foreign involvement, their lack of input in the political process, and the persistence of a Sunni government, leading to their opposition to the transition.<sup>13</sup> This war has also created a humanitarian crisis in which an estimated 4.5 million people in Yemen have been displaced, often experiencing multiple displacements a year, and 21.6 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup> The situation is further complicated by the involvement of additional factions, such as separatist groups backed by the UAE and militant Islamist organizations.

There have been various attempts to broker peace in Yemen. The United Nations brokered a ceasefire in April 2022, bringing down civilian casualties. The ceasefire expired in October 2023. In response to the Israel-Hamas, the Houthis (they are allied with Hamas) began targeting ships in the Red Sea traveling to or from Israel.<sup>15</sup> These attacks severely undermined peace efforts, they have also disrupted oil shipments and flow of humanitarian aid.<sup>16</sup> The United States and its allies have responded to the disruption in international shipping by striking Houthi positions in Yemen resulting in civilian casualties and further worsening of humanitarian challenges. Additionally, the Houthis have not been deterred and have said that their attacks on commercial ships will continue until Israel continues its attacks on Gaza.<sup>17</sup>

## Syria:

<sup>10</sup> Harbage and

<sup>11</sup> “Who are Yemen’s Houthis? Wilson Center, 2022. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/who-are-yemens-houthis>.

<sup>12</sup> Robinson, “Yemen’s Tragedy, War, Stalemate, and Suffering

<sup>13</sup> Riedel, “Who are Houthis, and why are we at war with them?” Brookings, 2017.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/who-are-the-houthis-and-why-are-we-at-war-with-them/>.

<sup>14</sup> UN Refugee Agency, “Yemen Crisis Explained.” UNHCR, 2024, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/yemen-crisis-explained/>.

<sup>15</sup> Minor & Huggard, “How the Houthis joined the Israel-Gaza crisis.” Brookings, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-the-houthis-joined-the-israel-gaza-crisis/>.

<sup>16</sup> “Yemen warring parties commit to a ceasefire, UN-led peace process, says envoy.” Aljazeera, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/23/yemen-warring-parties-commit-to-ceasefire-un-led-peace-process-says-envoy#:~:text=The%20plan%2C%20along%20with%20a,Hodeidah%20port%E2%80%9D%2C%20it%20added.>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



After 13 years, the Syrian crisis remains the largest displacement crisis in the world, with over 12 million displaced in the region.<sup>18</sup> 8.8 million people were affected by the February 2023 earthquakes, in addition to the 15.3 million Syrians in need of humanitarian aid even before the earthquakes.<sup>19</sup> The UN Refugee Agency is currently working with the governments of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye to alleviate the displacement crisis to prevent pathways to resettlement for Syrian refugees: over 753,000 Syrian refugees are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2024.<sup>20</sup> The crisis which initially began as uprisings against the government, progressed into a proxy civil war between the Syrian government backed by Russia and Iran, and the Syrian rebel groups supported by the the United States and their allies (like France, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia). The Islamic State, another non-state militant group has also been a pivotal player in the region, it began seizing control in the region in 2013. In response several western powers including the US backed by western powers (and Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia), and Russia (at the request of the Syrian government) have launched around eleven thousand airstrikes on IS targets.<sup>21</sup>

The recent conflict between Israel and Hamas has only exacerbated the Syrian humanitarian crisis. To strike targets allegedly affiliated with Iran, which Israel accuses of aiding Hamas, Israel has repeatedly attacked both Damascus and Aleppo airports.<sup>22</sup> Also the continued conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah also has the potential to worsen the situation in Syria, as an escalation of the conflict would almost certainly threaten the Syria-Lebanon border.<sup>23</sup>

All of these areas face issues of food insecurity, lack of medical assistance, and forcible displacement. As UNSC members, it is your responsibility to ensure that civilian casualties are kept to a minimum and that humanitarian aid is able to reach those who need it most. Additionally, member states must respond to rapidly-changing situations involving violence, hostages, civil war, and piracy in order to be fully effective in the region.

### Ongoing UN Action:

As highlighted in the aforementioned section, on March 25, 2024, the UN Security Council passed a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which will end on April 9, 2024. The resolution passed by a vote of 14–0, with the United States as the one abstention. The resolution also called for the immediate release of hostages and humanitarian access to Gaza.<sup>24</sup> While there are hopes that this resolution will lead to a more permanent ceasefire, such an outcome would require greater cooperation among the P5 and possible concessions from both sides of the conflict.

There are three current UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East.<sup>25</sup> The first is the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, the border region captured from Syria by Israel in 1967. Peacekeepers currently occupy the area to supervise the implementation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces

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<sup>18</sup> UN Refugee Agency, "Syria Situation." UNHCR, 2023, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/syria-situation>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Lund, Aron, "What the war in Gaza means for Syria." The New Humanitarian, 2023, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2023/12/07/what-war-gaza-means-syria>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> UN News, "Gaza: Security Council passes resolution demanding 'an immediate ceasefire' during Ramadan." United Nations, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147931>.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Peacekeeping Chief visits UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East working to prevent a further escalation of conflict." 2024, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/peacekeeping-chief-visits-un-peacekeeping-missions-middle-east-working-to-prevent-further-escalation>.



Agreement between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>26</sup> The second is the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Jerusalem to supervise the armistice agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors. UNTSO liaises with government authorities and deploys military observers to assist in the agreement's implementation.<sup>27</sup> There is also the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, which supports de-escalation in southern Lebanon.<sup>28</sup> All of these forces work toward permanent peace and de-escalation in the Middle East region.

As for humanitarian efforts, the UN Refugee Agency has been on the ground since the start of the crisis providing shelter, lifesaving supplies, clean water, hot meals, and medical care.<sup>29</sup> Following the 2023 Turkiye-Syria earthquakes, UNHCR has delivered protection assistance, including psychosocial support, to more than 311,000 people affected by the earthquakes.<sup>30</sup> In Yemen, the UN Refugee Agency helps over one million displaced Yemeni families meet their basic needs through the provision of shelter, cash assistance, registration services, and legal aid, and also offers specialized relief items to address the specific needs of displaced communities such as mattresses, sleeping mats, kitchen items, and core household products.<sup>31</sup>

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What are your country's tactical and strategic alliances with the primary players in the region?
- What support does/has your country or allies provided to mitigate the aforementioned humanitarian crises in the region?
- What are some non-violent strategies, such as diplomatic proceedings, that can be implemented to resolve conflict and sustain peace in the region?

### KEY TERMS:

**Arab Spring:** A wave of pro-democracy and anti-government uprisings which manifested throughout the Middle East and North Africa in 2010 and 2011.<sup>32</sup>

**Houthi Movement:** A non-state Shia Islamist political and military organization.

**Hamas:** Palestinian sunni-Islamist militant group.

### EXTRA RESOURCES:

- [UN Press Release: Spillover effects of Israel-Hamas war](#)
- [UN News: Yemen: Recent progress marred by Gaza war fallout, UN envoy reports](#)
- [TRT World: UN warns of Syria danger, 'spillover' from Israel's war on Gaza](#)

## GLOBAL CLASSROOMS DC POSITION PAPER OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

### What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a short document that outlines a country's opinion on an issue. The paper includes a short summary of what the issue or problem is, explains why the country is interested in the issue, and communicates

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> UN Refugee Agency, "Syria Refugee Crisis." UNHCR, 2024, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/syria/>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> UN Refugee Agency, "Yemen Refugee Crisis." UNHCR, 2024, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/yemen/>.

<sup>32</sup> "Arab Spring





the country's stance on what should be done to address the issue. A position paper is written as if you were the actual representative of the country stating its position. Your personal opinions on the issue should not be included. A position paper is not a summary of your country's GDP, government, economy, languages, etc. unless directly relevant to the issue. Only one position paper is written per country, per grade school committee; if there are 2 or 3 delegates representing the same country on a committee, they should write the paper together.

### **Why write a Position Paper?**

Writing a position paper will help you organize why an issue matters to your country and what your country wants done on the issue. The first thing you will likely do in committee is present an opening speech about your country's position. You should be able to pull portions of a well written position paper into an introductory speech on your country's perspective. Also, your delegation is not eligible to win best / outstanding delegation without the submission of a position paper. There are separate awards given for best position paper.

### **How to Write a Position Paper**

- (1) Research the Issue. The questions you want to answer are:
  - How does this issue affect your country?
  - How does this issue affect your country's neighbors or allies?
  - Is this a global problem that impacts everyone?
  - What would your country like to see done on this issue?
  - Are there countries or groups of people who will be particularly sensitive to addressing this issue?
  - Are there any conventions or resolutions on the topics that your country has signed or ratified?
  - What are UN actions on the issue? Has your country supported or opposed these actions?
  - Keep in Mind: What a country says, and what it actually believes should be done may be different. Also, some countries may believe that no action should be taken on an issue. They may disagree with how others feel or may not want international involvement. It is okay if your position is that the international community should do nothing, but you will need to explain why.
- (2) Brainstorm Specific Actions. Come up with 3-4 specific things that can be done to reach the outcome your country desires. For example: "The United States believes we should send a peacekeeping mission to monitor human rights abuses in Syria and encourage talks between both sides." You will present these ideas in committee as possible solutions to the problem and attempt to pass a resolution which includes these actions.
- (3) Outline Your Paper. Make an outline of what points you want to cover in your paper and the order in which you would like to address them. Remember a good paper should briefly explain the problem, explain why your country cares about the issue, and inform others what your country should like to see done. If you know other countries favor a solution that you will disagree with, make sure to include why your country disagrees.
- (4) Write your Paper. Position papers should be no more than one page long and be written from the perspective of the country you are representing. Rather than being a report on the topic, a position paper should explain what your country wants to see done to address the issue. Start by giving a brief summary of the issue and how it impacts your country. Then explain the specific actions you would like to see taken. Close by summarizing your country's overall position. Proper grammar and spelling are a must.

### **Award Criteria and Eligibility**

- Each Committee is giving out the following awards – Honorable Mention, Outstanding Position Paper, and Best Position Paper.
- The ideal position paper will have a clearly defined and summarized topic with your country's position



clearly outlined. Points are also awarded for organization, style and correct grammar.

- GCDC Staff will be fact checking position papers, so be sure to include the most up to date information and a bibliography (if using in text citations, a Works Cited page MUST be included)
  - Proper source citation: if an idea or quote came from another source, you must provide a footnote / citation.
- Papers will be disqualified if the conference staff has discovered that students did not write their own papers or that content has been plagiarized.
- Make sure your position paper must have the required header below! Do not create any additional title pages - points will be deducted for improper format.
- Formatting Requirements: **500-1000 words**. Times New Roman font, 12- point size
- **POSITION PAPERS MUST BE SENT IN AS A PDF ATTACHMENT TO [gcdc@unanca.org](mailto:gcdc@unanca.org) by APRIL 22nd, 2024 AT 11:59 PM EST (extensions may be granted on a case by case basis and must be requested before the due date).**

**REQUIRED POSITION PAPER HEADER**

**Committee:**

**Country:**

**Topic School:**

**Delegate Name(s):**

