



MUNES

'26

**STUDY GUIDE**

**Arab League**

## **Table of contents**

1. Letter from the Secretariat
2. Letter from the Chairboard
  - 2.1 Letter from the Main chair
  - 2.2 Letter from the vice chair
3. Introductions
  - 3.1 Introduction to the committee
  - 3.2 Introduction to the Agenda Item
  - 3.3 Key terms and Definitions
4. Historical background prior to the committee
  - 4.1 Orientalism and the Formation of Western Narratives
  - 4.2 The Impact of Colonialism on the Perception of the Middle East
5. The importance of the Middle East
  - 5.1 The Geography of the Middle East and the Culture
  - 5.2 The terminology of the Middle East
  - 5.3 The demography of the Middle East
    - 5.3.1 The ethnic groups
    - 5.3.2 Immigration in the Middle East
    - 5.3.3 The religions in the Middle East
    - 5.3.4 The languages in the Middle East
  - 5.4 The Economics in the Middle East
6. Islamophobia
  - 6.1 Common stereotypes about Muslim people in Europe
  - 6.2 Global reasons of Islamophobia
    - 6.2.1 Important Historical events

6.2.2 Immigrant crisis in Europe

6.2.3 How its pictured on the media

6.2.4 Impact of the government styles

7. Organizations working with the Arab League

8. Questions to ponder

## **2.1 Letter from the Main Chair**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUNES '26. I am Eymen Keklik, I am a 10th-grade student in Fatih Fen High School. I am very excited to be the Main Chair for the Arab League Committee. Also, I must state that I am very happy to work with Bilge Hayat .

I believe that we have a very interesting agenda and it will be a very fun committee with many fruitful sessions. Through our constructive and resourceful debates I think that we will find a sufficient and lasting resolution. I look forward to seeing creative ideas and solutions in this committee that will spark our discussion.

To help you prepare, we have put together all the key information about the agenda and the Arab League committee in this Study Guide. Remember, this guide is here to help you fully understand the content and the flow of the debates. Please use this valuable resource whenever you are researching and preparing for the committee.

I am really looking forward to meeting all of you and having a productive committee with strong debates. I am sure you will all have a great and memorable time at the conference.

## **2.2 Letter from the Vice Chair**

Greetings dear delegates,

I am Bilge Hayat Dal. I will serve as your Vice chair in this conference. This will be my third chairboard experience and it's a pleasure to be in the chairboard of this amazing organization next to Eymen.

Delegates fasten your seatbelts because this conference is going to be just like a rollercoaster! We will be stressed, we will be excited but most importantly we will have a lot of fun. And in the end I am sure that every delegate in the committee will have learned something new.

We highly encourage everyone to read this study guide and work individually in order to have fruitful debates. We have a pretty interesting and important agenda item. Especially with USA declaring war against Iran this committee has gained more and more value over the last week. The world needs bright ideas particularly at times like this.

I am very excited to meet all of you in this great committee! Don't forget to study!

## **3.1 Introduction to the Committee**

The Arab League is a voluntary regional organization that consists of 22 member countries and 7 observer countries. These member countries are all located in either the Middle East or North Africa. The Organization was found by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen in 1945 mostly in order to coordinate policies and promote common interests. The organization has some important functions such as:

1. Being a negotiator between the member states in crises times/conflicts.
2. Presenting a unified stance on important issues such as the palestinian question (through its council which meets once in two years)
3. Making contracts in order to take aggression on one member of the organization as a threat to all.
4. Launching a partnership on economic development, health, social welfare etc. (For example: Arab Charter on Human Rights)

This committee is a semi crisis committee which means the delegates are obligated to both solve crises and write a resolution paper.

### **3.2 Introduction to the Agenda Item: Developing New Ways to Combat Racism and Stereotypes Against Middle Eastern Countries**

The agenda item "Developing New Ways to Combat Racism and Stereotypes Against Middle Eastern Countries" highlights the increasing issues pertaining to racism, misinformation, and negative portrayals against the Middle Eastern countries in global discourse. In various global forums, the narrative about the Middle Eastern region has often been impacted by political tensions, media representation, and cultural differences. As a result, the region has continued to face issues with stereotyping not only at the country level but also at the individual level for those belonging to the Middle Eastern culture across the globe.

The purpose of this committee is not to discuss and debate different geopolitical issues, but rather to discuss the social and institutional structures that enable the spread of racism and stereotypes. The delegates are encouraged to think about the role of the media, the spread of misinformation through the internet, and the role of politics in shaping the world's view of Middle Eastern countries. However, the role of education and international cooperation must also be taken into account.

In this light, the agenda proposes the establishment of new and innovative policy frameworks to reduce prejudice and promote intercultural understanding. This could be achieved through the establishment of international guidelines for the media, regional cooperation programs, educational programs, and the use of technology to reduce misinformation. This way, the committee would be able to create a sustainable dialogue to promote new and effective

strategies to challenge prejudice and promote a more positive and respectful world view of the Middle East.

### **3.3 Key Terms and Definitions**

Racism is defined as prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against people or groups based on their race, ethnicity, or culture. Racism can be both institutional and individual in nature. Racism and racist ideologies have been used in the past to justify inequality, exclusion, and discrimination in different societies across the world. Racism in Middle Eastern countries involves cultural and religious misunderstandings, leading to unfair generalizations about people in these countries. Racism can be fought through the development of effective strategies that include legal, educational, and public awareness approaches, as well as international cooperation in the promotion of equality and respect for diversity.

Stereotypes are "simplified and widely accepted images or descriptions of a particular group of people, often based on incomplete information." Stereotypes, though at times seemingly neutral or even favorable, often result in harmful generalizations that do not account for the complexity and diversity of societies. Stereotypes about Middle Eastern nations often depict the region as conflict-ridden, politically volatile, and culturally traditional. These portrayals do not account for the tremendous diversity in terms of language, culture, economy, and politics that exists in the Middle East. These generalizations may affect public opinion, foreign policies, and perceptions of people of Middle Eastern descent. Stereotypes need to be overcome by developing critical media literacy, intercultural dialogue, and balanced portrayals in education and media.

Islamophobia in essence, means the fear, hatred, or intolerance of Islam and Muslims. It is, in fact, an act of religious discrimination, although it is often linked to racist discrimination, particularly against people of Middle Eastern and North African descent. Islamophobia can be seen in discriminatory practices and legislation, social exclusion, hate crimes, and political and media representations that are Islamophobic in nature. In fact, Islamophobia in many countries across the world gained momentum in the early 21st century due to geopolitical and security concerns in the world. However, it is important to understand that Islam cannot be linked to political and security concerns in the world, and it is not correct either, as said by scholars and human rights activists.

Cultural Misrepresentation is the misrepresentation of culture or society. It is the inaccurate, selective, or unfair representation of culture or society. It is the misrepresentation that often takes place when dealing with complex cultures or societies that are reduced to a limited number of images or assumptions that do not accurately portray the reality of the culture. In many cases, the Middle Eastern culture has been misrepresented, as many representations have focused on the high levels of conflict, extremism, and restrictions that exist in the culture, while ignoring the high levels of intellectualism, scientific discovery, and diversity that the culture has to offer.

Media Bias is defined as the “tendency of news organizations or media platforms to convey information in a way that is biased towards certain ideas or perceptions over others.” In the case of Middle Eastern countries, the presence of media bias may result in the emphasis of conflicts, terrorism, and political instability, while ignoring other important issues like social development, technological advancements, and cultural achievements. Since the media has a significant influence in the global community, post-truth information can have a considerable effect on global perceptions and may even enhance pre-existing stereotypes. Encouraging responsible journalism and multiple information channels is essential to combat this problem.

Hate Speech can be defined as “expressions that promote discrimination, or violence against people or groups of people just because of their race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or cultural background.” In the modern world, hate speech can come in many forms, including speeches, media channels, online communication, and even political speeches. With the digital age, social media has become one of the most dominant mediums of hate speech, allowing harmful ideas to spread to a global audience. Communities associated with Middle East have often been victims of hate speeches, especially during infamous political situations.

Discrimination refers to the unfair or differential treatment of people based on their ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, or cultural background. In other instances, discrimination can take different forms, including employment discrimination, educational discrimination, housing discrimination, and exclusion from public services. In some instances, people from the Middle Eastern ethnic group have been subjected to some form of discrimination in different parts of the world due to stereotypes or geopolitical issues concerning the Middle Eastern region. This can have negative implications for social integration. To combat discrimination, there is a need to have strong anti-discrimination laws that protect the rights of all people.

Cultural Diplomacy refers to the utilization of cultural exchange, artistic collaboration, and educational initiatives as means of strengthening international relations and promoting understanding between different cultures. It can be used by different nations to promote dialogue and understanding between different nations, helping to avoid misunderstandings between different nations of the world. Cultural diplomacy can be very useful for the Middle Eastern nations, as they can utilize this platform to show the world the historical contributions made by this region to the field of science, philosophy, and art, along with promoting the cultural activities of the current era.

Intercultural Dialogue is the constructive and respectful dialogue between two or more people from different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. The objective of intercultural dialogue is to foster understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among diverse cultures and societies. Intercultural dialogue helps individuals to question their assumptions and learn directly from the perspectives and experiences of others. In the context of combating racism and stereotypes against Middle Eastern countries, intercultural dialogue can be an effective tool for replacing misconceptions and stereotypes with accurate understanding. Educational exchanges, international conferences, and community programs

have advocated intercultural dialogue as an approach for building more inclusive and peaceful societies.

Digital Misinformation is defined as false information or misleading information that is spread via digital media channels such as social media, websites, or even messages. Due to fast communication via digital media, misinformation is able to spread quickly and affect public opinion and even strengthen stereotypes. In terms of discussions about countries in the Middle East region, for instance, misinformation could take the form of false information about politics, religion, or even culture. Such false information could lead to fear, misunderstanding, or even hatred for certain communities. To combat digital misinformation, media literacy, fact-checking, responsible media governance, and international cooperation in fighting false information are important.

Cultural Identity is defined as the traditions, values, and beliefs that people in a certain group share. These define their identity. In this respect, people in the Middle Eastern region have unique cultural identities due to their historical experiences. These experiences have been influenced by various civilizations, religions, and ethnic groups. Thus, understanding this diversity is important in clearing misconceptions about this region. Understanding and promoting respect for cultural identity is important in creating a conducive environment for peaceful coexistence among people from various communities.

Social Prejudice is defined as preconceived opinions or attitudes towards people or groups that are not based on individual experiences or real knowledge. Prejudice among people in this region has been influenced by various factors. These factors include social stories, media influence, or lack of interaction among people. Most people in this region have been prejudiced against due to various conflicts in this region. However, this is not based on real knowledge about this region. Thus, understanding this region is important in clearing misconceptions about this region. Understanding this region will create a conducive environment for peaceful coexistence among people from various communities.

Xenophobia, which is the fear or hatred of others, can be defined as the hatred or fear of those perceived as foreigners or outsiders. Unlike racism, which is usually based on differences in race, xenophobia is usually based on perceived differences in culture, economics, or national identity. People from Middle Eastern countries can experience xenophobia in countries where issues of immigration or cultural diversity are politically debatable. In order to fight xenophobia, it is necessary to promote cultures that emphasize common human values.

Cultural Exchange Programs can be defined as initiatives that allow individuals from different countries to experience each other's cultures. This can be done through education, travel, or other joint initiatives. Cultural exchange programs usually involve students, researchers, artists, or other professionals from different countries. This is usually done to allow individuals to acquire first-hand knowledge of different cultures, thus avoiding

stereotypes. Cultural exchange programs are usually recognized as effective tools for building international cooperation.

Public Diplomacy is defined as efforts by a government, institution, or organization to communicate directly with people in another country in order to influence their views and build international relations. Unlike traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy does not involve negotiations between countries. Instead, it seeks to influence public opinion through media campaigns, educational efforts, cultural exchange, and international broadcasting. Public diplomacy plays a vital role in combating stereotypes about Middle Eastern countries. It could also play a vital role in creating a more constructive dialogue between people from different countries.

Ethnic Profiling is defined as targeting people for suspicion, investigation, or surveillance based on their ethnicity, nationality, or religion. This has been criticized by many human rights organizations. It is believed that this could lead to discrimination against people and their civil rights. People from Middle Eastern origin have been a victim of ethnic profiling in many parts of the world. Many international organizations urge their countries to ensure that security measures respect human rights and do not involve any discriminatory practices.

Cultural Awareness is the recognition and appreciation of cultural differences between various cultures and societies. It is the understanding that cultural traditions, cultural beliefs, and cultural norms differ between cultures. Cultural awareness helps individuals look at cultural differences in a positive light, rather than judging them. The promotion of cultural awareness through education helps eliminate stereotypes and develop a more respectful attitude among cultures worldwide.

Global Cultural Representation is the way in which cultures and societies are represented in the world. The representation must be balanced in order to eliminate stereotypes. The way in which some parts of the world are represented, for instance, can greatly influence the way in which people perceive it. The improvement of global cultural representation for Middle Eastern cultures can lead to an understanding of the region's significant contributions to the world in terms of science, philosophy, literature, and art, as well as an accurate perception of the region's current culture.

## **4. Historical Background Prior to the Committee**

### **4.1 Orientalism and the Formation of Western Narratives**

The idea of Orientalism is one of the most important ideas in understanding the history of stereotypes and racialized stories about the Middle Eastern nations. The term refers to a school of thought in academia, art, and politics that sought to understand and make sense of

the “Orient,” i.e., the Middle East and North Africa, from the perspective of Western scholars, artists, and political actors. The history of relations between the Middle East and Europe stretches back centuries, but Orientalism emerged in its most significant form in the 18th and 19th centuries with the emergence of Western political and intellectual presence in the region. Orientalist stories about the region portrayed it as exotic, mysterious, and very different from the Western world. Through literature, paintings, travelogues, and early scholarly works, the region was often portrayed as a region of tradition, religious conservatism, and political instability. These stories were not necessarily wrong in their assessment of the region, but they were often simplistic and portrayed the region in such a way that it was seen as very different from the Western world and thus created a number of stereotypes about it that portrayed it as stagnant and resistant to change.

The influence of such Orientalism was not restricted to the realm of art and literature but also extended to the field of academic research and policy development. Western research on the Middle East, particularly at the beginning of the modern era, was largely guided by a perspective that focused on differences instead of diversity. The narratives of Middle Eastern societies, as depicted through such an Orientalist perspective, largely contributed to the development of intellectual narratives that guided Western perceptions of Middle Eastern politics and society. In the modern era, scholars and intellectual critics of culture have largely begun to address the influence of Orientalism as a perspective that contributed to the misrepresentation of Middle Eastern societies. The Middle East has been at the forefront of scientific, philosophical, and cultural development throughout history, particularly during periods such as the Islamic Golden Age. However, such contributions were largely overshadowed by Western narratives that focused on differences instead of shared historical ties.

The legacy of Orientalism can still be seen in modern media and political discourse. For instance, many of the stereotypes that have been attributed to the Middle East, such as the perception that the region is conservative or that there is a lot of conflict in the region, can be seen to have been influenced by Orientalism. Although communication and research have greatly increased globally in recent years, the history and stories that were developed in the past still have some effects on how people view things in the modern world. Orientalism is, therefore, a key concept to understand when discussing the history of racism and stereotypes against Middle Eastern countries. Understanding how some of the issues came to be in the past can help in identifying some of the issues that have influenced global perceptions in the modern world.

## **4.2 The Impact of Colonialism on the Perception of the Middle East**

The period of colonization was of utmost importance in the development of international perceptions of the Middle East. This period also contributed to the development of

stereotypes that are used in modern times. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, several countries in Europe extended their political and economic influence in the Middle East and North African regions. This was done in the larger international environment that was characterized by the actions of colonial countries, which sought to justify their actions by claiming superiority over the cultures they encountered. In their attempts to do so, the colonial governments in the Middle East sought to portray the region as politically unstable or culturally underdeveloped. This was done in order to justify their control of the region. In their actions, the colonial governments in the Middle East failed to acknowledge the political systems, cultures, and intellectual capabilities that were already in existence in the Middle Eastern regions before the arrival of the colonial governments. Besides the political environment, the period of colonization also contributed to the development of stereotypes in the region. Colonial administrators and researchers commonly described this region in ethnographic accounts, historical writings, and educational literature that focused on the differences between European and Middle Eastern cultures. Though some of this literature provided important historical information, some writings reflected hierarchical ideas about cultural evolution and politics. These ideas dominated international understanding of this region for many decades.

The influence of colonialism was also felt in the way the borders, political systems, and national identities of the countries took shape. The way the borders were drawn and new political systems were established in the early 20th century had significant implications for the region. The political tensions and conflicts that took place over the years were not fully understood when they were described in simple terms, considering the history of the political systems that were established. The influence of colonialism was also felt in the way the Middle East was described in the education and media systems of the world. The simple descriptions of the Middle East, focusing on the political issues and cultural differences of the region, did not take into account the history of diversity and social dynamics of the region. Over the years, these descriptions gave rise to stereotypes of the Middle East as a region known for political issues and not for its contributions to culture and knowledge.

Today, we understand that in order to combat stereotypes and discrimination in the present, we must first understand the colonial background of those stories. If we look at how colonial power relations have influenced global understanding of the Middle East, we can understand where many misconceptions come from. In order to combat racism and stereotypes against Middle Eastern countries, we must first understand the historical impact of colonial stories. With balanced historical research, education, and intercultural dialogue, we can create a more accurate understanding of the region.

### **4.3 The Post-9/11 Era and the Rise of Global Islamophobia**

The early period of the 21st century was marked by a major turning point in the way that people across the globe viewed the Middle Eastern region. This was especially the case in the

aftermath of the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001. These attacks had major political, social, and cultural impacts across the globe. In addition to having impacts on the way that international security policies were formulated, the terrorist attacks also had impacts on the way that people viewed and discussed Middle Eastern countries and the Muslim population. In the aftermath of the attacks, many countries across the globe initiated security policies that sought to prevent terrorism and promote security. Although these policies were intended to address security concerns in a positive manner, they also had major impacts on the way that people viewed issues such as immigration, culture, and international relations. In some instances, security issues came to be viewed in terms of religion and region, leading to the formation of generalizations about the Muslim population and Middle Eastern countries. Media coverage during this time had a significant influence on the way people viewed the region. The constant flow of information about conflicts, radical groups, and political tensions within the Middle Eastern region created an image that this region, among other areas, was associated with instability and conflict. Although these issues were an integral part of the geopolitical environment, they overshadowed the diversity within the region.

As a result, many people of Middle Eastern descent felt that they were facing even higher levels of discrimination, prejudice, and exclusion within different parts of the world. Human rights groups and academic researchers reported that many hate crimes, discriminatory rhetoric, and negative stereotypes against Muslim and Middle Eastern people were on the rise. All of this has led to the rise of Islamophobia as a global social problem. At the same time, many global organizations and civil society groups are working to advance different policy initiatives that can help to promote greater levels of tolerance and intercultural understanding. Combating hate speech, promoting positive media representation, and dialogue between different groups are very important initiatives that are being taken to counter the rise of prejudice.

The post-9/11 era also highlighted the impact of globalization and digital communication on the spread of narratives and stereotypes. Social media platforms and online forums made it possible for both accurate information and misinformation to circulate rapidly across borders. While digital communication created opportunities for cultural exchange and dialogue, it also allowed stereotypes and discriminatory rhetoric to spread more quickly than ever before. Understanding the historical context of the post-9/11 period is therefore essential for analyzing contemporary stereotypes and racism directed toward Middle Eastern countries. The intersection of security concerns, media narratives, and political discourse during this period played a major role in shaping global perceptions that continue to influence international relations and social attitudes today.

Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that recognizes the complexity of global security issues while also promoting respect, cultural understanding, and accurate representation of Middle Eastern societies. By learning from the developments of the early 21st century, policymakers and international organizations can work toward building a more inclusive and informed global dialogue.

## **5. The Middle East**

### **5.1 The Geography of the Middle East and the Culture**

The Middle East is an intercontinental region in Africa-Eurasia that generally encompasses Western Asia, the whole of Egypt and Turkey . The term came into wider use in the early 20th century to replace the term 'Near East'. The broader concept of the 'Greater Middle East' (also known as the Middle East and North Africa or MENA) also includes the Maghreb, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, the Comoros, Afghanistan, Pakistan and, at times, Transcaucasia and Central Asia. The term 'Middle East' has led to some confusion regarding its varying definitions.

Most Middle Eastern countries (13 out of 18) are part of the Arab world. The most populous countries in the region are Egypt, Iran and Turkey, whilst Saudi Arabia is the largest Middle Eastern country by area. The history of the Middle East dates back to ancient times, with the region's geopolitical importance having been recognised for thousands of years. The origins of many major religions, including Judaism, Christianity and Islam, lie in the Middle East. Arabs form the majority ethnic group in the region, followed by Turks, Persians, Kurds, Azeris, Copts, Jews, Zazas, Syrians, Iraqi Turkmen and Cypriots.

The Middle East generally has a hot and arid climate; a few major rivers, such as the Nile Delta in Egypt and the Tigris and Euphrates basins in Mesopotamia (Iraq, Kuwait and eastern Syria), provide irrigation to support agriculture in limited areas, as does the Fertile Crescent. Most of the countries surrounding the Persian Gulf, particularly the monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula which benefit economically from oil exports, possess vast crude oil reserves. Due to its arid climate and heavy reliance on the fossil fuel industry, the Middle East is a region that both contributes significantly to climate change and is expected to be severely and negatively affected by it.

### **5.2 The Terminology of the Middle East**

The term 'Middle East' may have originated in the 1850s within the British India Office. However, it gained wider recognition when the American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan used the term in 1902 to 'define the region between Arabia and India'. During this period, the British and Russian Empires were competing for influence in Central Asia in a rivalry known as the Great Game. Mahan recognised not only the region's strategic importance but also the central role of the Persian Gulf. He labelled the area surrounding the Persian Gulf as the Middle East and stated that, following the Suez Canal in Egypt, it was the most crucial chokepoint that Britain must control to prevent the Russians from advancing

towards British India. Mahan first used this term in an article titled 'The Persian Gulf and International Relations', published in the British journal *National Review* in September 1902.

Mahan's article was reprinted in *The Times* and was followed in October by a 20-part series entitled 'The Middle East Question', written by Sir Ignatius Valentine Chirol. During this series, Sir Ignatius expanded the definition of the Middle East to include "the regions extending to the borders of India or commanding the approaches to India". After the series ended in 1903, *The Times* removed the quotation marks from subsequent uses of the term.

Until the Second World War, the term 'Near East' referred to the regions centred on Turkey and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, whilst the 'Far East' was centred on China and the 'Middle East' referred to the region as a whole. This encompassed the area from Mesopotamia to Burma, that is, the region between the Near East and the Far East. In the late 1930s, the British established the Middle East Command in Cairo for their military forces in the region. From that time onwards, the term 'Middle East' gained wider usage in Europe and the United States, alongside other applications, particularly following the establishment of the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC, in 1946.

Whilst non-Europe-centric terms such as 'Southeast Asia' or 'Swasia' are rarely used, the inclusion of Egypt—an African country—in the definition calls into question the merit of using such terms.

### **5.3 The Demography of the Middle East**

#### **5.3.1 The Ethnic Groups**

The largest ethnic group in the Middle East is the Arabs, followed by various Iranian peoples and then Turkic peoples (Turks, Azeris and Iraqi Turkmen). The indigenous ethnic groups of the region include Arabs, Ayrami, Assyrians, Baloch, Berbers, Copts, Druze, Cypriot Greeks, Jews, Kurds, Lurs, Mandaean, Persians, Samaritans, Shabak, Tatars and Zazas. European ethnic groups forming a diaspora in the region include Albanians, Bosniaks, Circassians (including Kabardians), Crimean Tatars, Greeks, French Levantines, Italian Levantines and Iraqi Turkmen. Other migrant populations include Chinese, Filipinos, Indians, Indonesians, Pakistanis, Pashtuns, Gypsies and Afro-Arabs.

#### **5.3.2 Immigration in the Middle East**

Migration has always posed a significant risk to labour market pressures in the Middle East. During the period between the 1970s and the 1990s, whilst the Arab states of the Persian Gulf provided a rich source of employment for workers from Egypt, Yemen and the Levant, Europe attracted young workers from North African countries, owing both to geographical proximity and the legacy of colonial ties between France and the vast majority of North African states." According to the International Organisation for Migration, there are 13 million first-generation migrants from Arab countries worldwide, and 5.8 per cent of these live in other Arab countries. Migrants from Arab countries contribute to the circulation of

financial and human capital within the region, thereby significantly promoting regional development. In 2009, Arab countries recorded a total remittance flow of 35.1 billion US dollars sent from other Arab countries to Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, which is 40 to 190 per cent higher than trade revenues between these countries and other Arab countries. The civil war in Somalia has greatly increased the size of the Somali diaspora, as the best-educated Somalis have migrated to the Middle East, as well as to Europe and North America.

### **5.3.3 The Religions in the Middle East**

The Middle East is highly diverse when it comes to religions, and many of these originated in the region. Islam is the largest religion in the Middle East; however, there are communities belonging to religions that emerged in the Middle East, such as Judaism and Christianity. Christians account for 40.5% of Lebanon's population, and the President of Lebanon, half of the cabinet and half of the parliament follow one of the various Lebanese Christian denominations. There are also significant minority religions such as the Bahá'í Faith, the Ahl al-Haqq, Yazidism, Zoroastrianism, Mandaism, the Druze and the Shabak. In ancient times, it was home to the religions of Ancient Mesopotamia, the Canaanite religions, Manichaeism, Mithraism and various monotheistic Gnostic sects.

### **5.3.4 The Languages in the Middle East**

The five most widely spoken languages are Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish and Hebrew. Arabic and Hebrew belong to the Afro-Asiatic language family, Persian and Kurdish to the Indo-European language family, and Turkish to the Turkic language family. In addition, around 20 minority languages are spoken in the Middle East.

Arabic, in all its dialects, is the most widely spoken language in the Middle East, and Standard Arabic is the official language throughout North Africa and in most countries of Western Asia. Arabic dialects are also spoken in some neighbouring regions of non-Arab Middle Eastern countries. It is a member of the Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Several Modern South Arabian languages, such as Mehri and Sokotra, are also spoken in Yemen and Oman. Another Semitic language, Aramaic and its dialects, is spoken primarily by the Syriac and Mandaean. In Egypt, there is also a community speaking Berber languages, known locally as Siwa. However, this is a non-Semitic Afro-Asiatic language.

Persian is the second most widely spoken language. Whilst it is primarily spoken in Iran and certain border regions of neighbouring countries, the country is one of the largest and most populous in the region. It belongs to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. Other Western Iranian languages spoken in the region include Persian, Deylami, dialects of the Kurdish languages, Semmani, Luri and others.

English is one of the official languages of Agrotur and Dikelya. It is widely taught and used as a second language, particularly among the middle and upper classes, in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Kurdistan, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. It is also the primary language in some of the Emirates of the United Arab Emirates.

French is taught and used in many state institutions and the media in Lebanon. It is also taught in some primary and secondary schools in Egypt and Syria. Maltese, a Semitic language spoken primarily in Europe, is also used by the French-Maltese diaspora in Egypt.

#### **5.4 the Economics of the Middle East**

Economies in the Middle East range from very poor (such as Gaza and Yemen) to extremely wealthy countries (such as Qatar and the UAE). Generally speaking, according to The World Factbook, all countries in the Middle East were maintaining a positive growth rate as of 2007.

According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators database published on 1 July 2009, the three largest Middle Eastern economies in 2008, in terms of nominal GDP, were Turkey (\$794,228), Saudi Arabia (\$467,601) and Iran (\$385,143). In terms of nominal GDP per capita, the top-ranking countries were Qatar (\$93,204), the United Arab Emirates (\$55,028), Kuwait (\$45,920) and the Republic of Cyprus (\$32,745). Turkey (\$1,028,897), Iran (\$839,438) and Saudi Arabia (\$589,531) are the countries with the largest economies in terms of GDP-PPP. In terms of per capita income (PPP), the top-ranked countries are Qatar (\$86,008), Kuwait (\$39,915), the UAE (\$38,894), Bahrain (\$34,662) and Cyprus (\$29,853). The country with the lowest per capita income (PPP) in the Middle East is the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank (\$1,100).

The economic structure of Middle Eastern countries varies in that whilst some countries are heavily dependent on the export of oil and oil-related products (such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait), others have a considerably more diversified economic base (such as Cyprus, Israel, Turkey and Egypt). Industries in the Middle East region include oil and oil-related products, agriculture, cotton, cattle, dairy products, textiles, leather goods, surgical instruments, and defence equipment (weapons, ammunition, tanks, submarines, fighter aircraft, UAVs and missiles). Banking is a significant sector of the economy, particularly in the case of the UAE and Bahrain.

With the exception of Cyprus, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon and Israel, tourism has remained a relatively underdeveloped sector of the economy, partly due to the region's socially conservative nature and the political unrest in certain parts of the Middle East. However, in recent years, countries such as the UAE, Bahrain and Jordan have begun to attract a greater number of tourists due to improvements in tourist facilities and the relaxation of restrictive tourism policies.

Unemployment is particularly high in the Middle East and North Africa region, especially among young people aged 15–29, a demographic representing 30% of the region's total population. According to the International Labour Organisation, the total regional unemployment rate in 2005 was 13.2 per cent<sup>0015</sup>, and among young people it stood at 25 per cent, reaching as high as 37 per cent in Morocco and 73 per cent in Syria.

## **6. Islamophobia**

## 6.1 Common stereotypes about Muslim people in Europe

### 1. “Muslims are inherently violent or linked to terrorism”

This is one of the most widespread stereotypes. It falsely associates an entire religion with extremist groups.

\* In reality, the vast majority of Muslims condemn violence and terrorism because the religion has many teachings about peace and respect.

\* Extremist groups represent a tiny fraction and are rejected by most Muslim communities.

### 2. “Islam oppresses women”

People often assume Muslim women have no rights or agency.

\* While gender inequality exists in some Muslim-majority societies, that’s often tied to cultural, political, or economic factors; not just religion.

\* Many Muslim women actively choose how they dress and live, including wearing the hijab.

### 3. “All Muslims are the same”

This stereotype ignores the diversity within Islam.

\* Muslims come from many countries, cultures, ethnicities, and languages.

\* Practices and interpretations of Islam vary widely (e.g., differences between Indonesia, Turkey, Nigeria, etc.).

### 4. “Muslims don’t integrate or are anti-Western”

Some believe Muslims refuse to adapt or are opposed to Western values.

\* Many Muslims live in Western countries and are fully integrated members of society.

\* Like any group, individuals vary—some are more conservative, others more liberal.

### 5. “Muslims are trying to ‘take over’ or impose their beliefs”

This is often tied to conspiracy theories (e.g., “Islamization”).

\* There is no unified global agenda among Muslims.

\* Like any religious group, Muslims vary widely in beliefs and goals.

\* These narratives often exaggerate demographic trends or political influence.

### 6. “The hijab is always forced”

The headscarf is often seen only as a symbol of oppression.

\* For some women, it is imposed—but for many others, it is a personal or religious choice.

\* Meanings of the hijab differ depending on individual beliefs and cultural context.

## 6.2 Global reasons of Islamophobia

### 6.2.1 Important Historical events

#### ***Medieval & Early History***

The Crusades (1095–1291)

- \* A series of wars between Christian European kingdoms and Muslim powers over the Holy Land.
- \* These conflicts framed Muslims as “enemies of Christendom” in European imagination.
- \* This helped create early religious hostility and “us vs. them” thinking.

The Reconquista (ended 1492)

- \* Christian kingdoms in Spain gradually reconquered territory from Muslim rule.
- \* Afterward, Muslims (and Jews) were expelled or forced to convert.
- \* This reinforced the idea that Muslims were outsiders who didn’t belong in Europe.

The Fall of Constantinople (1453)

- \* The Ottoman Empire captured a major Christian city.
- \* In Europe, this intensified fear of Muslim expansion and power.
- \* The Ottoman Empire was often portrayed as a civilizational threat.

Colonial & Orientalist Era

European Colonialism (18th–20th centuries)

- \* European powers colonized many Muslim-majority regions (North Africa, Middle East, South Asia).
- \* Colonizers often depicted Muslims as “backward,” “irrational,” or inferior to justify control.
- \* These ideas were reinforced through academic and cultural movements like Orientalism.

The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire (1922)

- \* After World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed.
- \* Western powers redrew borders in the Middle East, often creating instability.
- \* This period deepened political tensions and stereotypes about Muslim societies.

#### ***Late 20th Century Conflicts***

The Iranian Revolution

- \* Established an Islamic Republic in Iran.
- \* Western media often portrayed it as proof that Islam and democracy are incompatible.
- \* It contributed to fears of “political Islam.”

The Gulf War

- \* Brought Middle Eastern conflicts into global media.
- \* Reinforced associations between Islam, war, and instability in public perception.

### ***21st Century Turning Point***

The September 11 attacks

- \* A major turning point in modern Islamophobia.
- \* Carried out by extremists claiming Islamic justification, but widely condemned by Muslims globally.
- \* Led to increased surveillance, discrimination, and suspicion toward Muslims, especially in Western countries.

The War on Terror

- \* Included wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- \* Media and political narratives often blurred the line between extremists and ordinary Muslims.
- \* Policies like profiling and travel bans contributed to systemic Islamophobia.

Recent Developments

The Syrian Civil War & Refugee Crisis

- \* Large numbers of refugees fled to Europe and elsewhere.
- \* Some political movements framed Muslim refugees as threats to culture or security.
- \* This fueled anti-Muslim sentiment and far-right rhetoric.

## **6.2.2 Immigrant crisis in Europe**

### ***1. Linking immigration with religion***

Many of the refugees arriving in Europe came from Muslim-majority countries like Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

As a result, immigration debates often became framed as “Muslim migration,” even though migrants are diverse. This created a *\*mental shortcut\** where:

- \* “immigrant” = “Muslim”
- \* “Muslim” = “outsider”

That simplification feeds stereotypes globally.

### ***2. Media amplification***

Media coverage plays a huge role:

- \* Sensational stories (crime, cultural clashes, terrorism fears) get more attention.
- \* Positive stories (integration, education, contributions) get less coverage.

After events like the Paris attacks, some media outlets and commentators linked terrorism broadly to Muslim populations, even though extremists represent a tiny minority. This association spreads fear far beyond Europe.

### **3. Rise of populist politics**

The crisis strengthened far-right and anti-immigration movements across Europe:

- \* Parties framed migration as a “threat to identity”
- \* Some politicians used explicitly anti-Muslim rhetoric

These narratives don't stay local, they spread globally through social media and political influence, normalizing Islamophobic language in other countries too.

### **4. Social media and globalization of fear**

Platforms like Facebook, X, and YouTube allow:

- \* Viral misinformation about migrants
- \* Echo chambers that reinforce anti-Muslim views

A single incident in Europe can quickly shape opinions in places like the U.S., India, or elsewhere.

### **5. Cultural anxiety and identity politics**

Large-scale migration triggered fears in some European societies about:

- \* Losing cultural identity
- \* Changes in secular vs. religious balance

These anxieties are often projected onto Islam as a whole, reinforcing the idea that Islam is “incompatible” with Western values—another key Islamophobic narrative that spreads internationally.

### **6. Feedback loop effect**

There's a cycle:

1. Migration increases visibility of Muslim communities

2. Fear-based narratives grow
3. Islamophobia rises
4. Discrimination and exclusion increase
5. Integration becomes harder
6. Tensions rise, reinforcing stereotypes

This loop doesn't just stay in Europe, it influences global attitudes.

### 6.2.3 How its pictured on the media

**\*Association with violence:** Muslims are often disproportionately linked to terrorism in coverage, especially after events like the Paris attacks, creating the false idea that violence is typical rather than rare.

**\*Portrayed as “foreign” or incompatible:** Media narratives sometimes frame Muslims as outsiders who don't fit into “Western values,” reinforcing an us-vs-them mindset.

**\*Focus on oppression stereotypes:** Muslim societies are frequently depicted only through issues like women's oppression, ignoring diversity and agency.

**\*Lack of positive representation:** Everyday lives, achievements, and normal experiences of Muslims receive far less attention than negative stories.

**\*Generalization:** Actions of individuals or extremist groups get applied to all Muslims, turning a diverse global community into a single stereotype.

### 6.2.4 Impact of the government styles

**\* Association with authoritarianism:** When countries like Saudi Arabia (monarchy) or Iran (theocratic system) are portrayed as restrictive or undemocratic, some audiences wrongly assume Islam itself promotes these systems.

**\*Media generalization:** Political repression or lack of freedoms gets framed as “Islamic,” even though governance styles vary widely across Muslim countries.

**\*Reinforcement of stereotypes:** These portrayals feed the idea that Islam is incompatible with democracy or human rights.

**\*Ignoring diversity:** Muslim-majority countries have many different political systems, but media focus on a few high-profile examples creates a distorted global image.

## **7. The Strategic and Economic Collaborations of the Arab League**

The Arab League is a regional organization whose objective is the political and economic unification of the Arab world. In order for the Arab League to fulfill its objectives, it has established strong institutional relationships with various global institutions. Among the best-known relationships is the partnership with the United Nations (UN). This partnership is established through periodic meetings between the Arab League and UN agencies such as UNHCR and UNDP. Through this partnership, the Arab League has been able to resolve critical issues affecting the region, such as the refugee crises in the Levant region and the sustainable development goals in North Africa and the Middle East.

Diplomatically, the Arab League has a strategic bond with the European Union (EU). By virtue of geography and shared interests in the Mediterranean basin, these organizations share some interests in fighting terrorism, migration management, and security issues in general. This bond between the EU and the Arab League is not only political in nature; there is economic cooperation in the region geared towards stability in the region. Through joint summits, these organizations seek to address their challenges in the world together, with the Euro-Mediterranean region being a zone of cooperation rather than conflict.

Apart from the political and security alliances, the Arab League is getting involved with international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Such partnerships are vital for building the economy of the member states of the Arab League, especially when the economies of the countries are facing instability. By partnering with the World Bank, the Arab League is helping the countries of the region build large-scale infrastructure projects. At the same time, the IMF is providing a platform for the countries of the region to introduce structural reforms to attract foreign investments. Such cooperation is vital for the economic growth of the Arab countries.

Additionally, the Arab League has a vital role to play in the "South-South" cooperation network through its association with the African Union (AU) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This is because a significant number of the Arab League's members are African nations; thus, the partnership with the AU is vital in ensuring that food security concerns are addressed in these nations. On the other hand, the partnership with the OIC enables the Arab League to present a united front in matters of cultural identity and religious heritage. This way, the Arab League can effectively navigate the complexities of global diplomacy while protecting the interests of its members.

## **8. Questions to Ponder**

1-) In what ways do collaborations with international organisations like the UN and EU help in addressing global issues like Islamophobia and regional instability?

2-) How do the diverse cultures and economies within the Arab League impact the organisation's ability to present a unified league to the rest of the world?

3-) What role should education and youth-led initiatives play in changing global perceptions and fostering intercultural dialogue?

4-) What actions does the Arab League have to take to protect the rights of immigrants and stop the negative migrant crisis image in the media?

5-) What long-term global strategies are needed to prevent migration issues from being misused to justify Islamophobia?

6-) To what extent does international media contribute to Islamophobia, and how can the Arab League promote more accurate representation of Islam?

7-) How could the organisations working under the Arab League be improved to be more efficient while fighting against islamophobia?

8-) How could the common stereotypes about Muslim people be broken in european countries? What could be done in order to have healthier relations with the countries in the area?