



LUMS  
RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL  
OFFICIAL STUDY GUIDE



HUJAT-E-HAQ  
(MODEL UNITED NATIONS)



# INTRODUCTION

This study guide has been prepared to help students and institutions understand what to expect in the Hujjat-e-Haq category to ensure a smooth and engaging experience. The LUMS Religious Festival aims to encourage religious identity among the youth and facilitate intellectual religious discourse, precipitating a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive, accepting, and diverse society.

## OVERVIEW

### **WHAT IS HUIJJAT-E-HAQ?**

Huijjat-e-Haq hosts a Model United Nations conference where students step into the roles of diplomats representing countries within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Participants debate pressing geopolitical issues, negotiate solutions, and draft resolutions to address real-world challenges facing the Muslim world. It is a platform to enhance public speaking, critical thinking, and diplomacy skills while engaging with complex questions of faith, politics, and international relations.

Delegates will be assigned one of the 57 OIC member states and are expected to represent its policies and perspectives during discussions. The format includes opening speeches, moderated caucuses for structured debate, unmoderated caucuses for bloc negotiations, and collaborative resolution drafting. The council will be in session throughout the duration of LRF (Friday to Sunday) at scheduled times.

### **THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION**

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the world's second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, established in 1969 to promote and protect the collective interests of the Muslim world. With 57 member states spanning four continents, the OIC's primary mission is to foster



unity, address challenges facing Muslim populations globally, and contribute to international peace and security.

However, the OIC has faced persistent criticism for its inability to mediate conflicts among its own members. From the Saudi-Iranian rivalry to Turkish-Egyptian tensions, from the devastation in Yemen to the fracturing of Libya, OIC member states have frequently found themselves on opposing sides of violent conflicts—raising fundamental questions about whether the organization can fulfill its founding promise of Muslim solidarity.

## AGENDA

### **Wounds Self-Inflicted:**

Addressing Intra-OIC Conflicts, Proxy Wars, and the Humanitarian Imperative for Accountability and Reconciliation

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA**

The Muslim world stands at a crossroads. While the OIC charter speaks of brotherhood, solidarity, and collective action, the reality on the ground tells a different story. Across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa, OIC member states are engaged in proxy wars, military interventions, and geopolitical competitions that have resulted in some of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes.

Yemen, once called "Arabia Felix" (Happy Arabia), now hosts the world's largest humanitarian crisis—driven primarily by a Saudi-led coalition of OIC members. Libya, torn apart by competing interventions from Turkey, Egypt, and the UAE, remains fractured a decade after Gaddafi's fall. Sudan's civil war sees regional powers backing opposing factions. The promise of Muslim unity rings hollow when Muslim bombs fall on Muslim cities.

This committee will not engage in comfortable abstraction. Delegates must confront uncomfortable truths: that their countries may bear direct responsibility for humanitarian suffering, that geopolitical interests have trumped Islamic principles of protecting civilian life, and that the OIC as an institution has largely failed to prevent or resolve conflicts among its own members. Only through honest reckoning can the path to reconciliation begin.



# KEY TERMINOLOGY

**Proxy War:** A conflict in which major powers support opposing sides without directly engaging each other, using local actors to advance their strategic interests.

**Humanitarian Intervention:** Military action ostensibly undertaken to protect civilians or address humanitarian crises, often contested in international law.

**Sphere of Influence:** A region where a state exercises predominant political, economic, or military control, often to the exclusion of other powers.

**Regional Hegemony:** Dominance by one state over others in a geographic region, pursued through economic, military, or diplomatic means.

**Sectarian Conflict:** Violence organized along religious denominational lines, particularly the Sunni-Shia divide within Islam.

**Coalition Warfare:** Military operations conducted by multiple allied states, such as the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

**Arms Embargo:** A prohibition on the sale or transfer of weapons to a particular country or conflict party.

**War Crimes:** Serious violations of international humanitarian law during armed conflict, including attacks on civilians and use of prohibited weapons.

**Accountability Mechanisms:** Legal and institutional frameworks for investigating violations and holding perpetrators responsible.

**Reconstruction:** The process of rebuilding physical infrastructure, institutions, and social fabric following armed conflict.

**Mediation:** Third-party facilitation of negotiations between conflict parties to reach a peaceful settlement.



**Normalization:** The process of establishing or restoring diplomatic relations between states, such as the Abraham Accords.

**Food Insecurity:** Lack of reliable access to sufficient affordable, nutritious food—affecting millions in Yemen and Sudan.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** People forced to flee their homes but remaining within their country's borders.

**Blockade:** The sealing off of a place to prevent goods or people from entering or leaving, with severe humanitarian consequences.

## CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Below are the conflict analysis:

### YEMEN

#### Background

Yemen's current crisis began in 2014 when Houthi rebels, formally known as Ansar Allah, seized the capital Sanaa and forced President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi into exile. In March 2015, Saudi Arabia assembled a coalition of Arab states—including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Egypt—to intervene militarily, launching Operation Decisive Storm with the stated aim of restoring the internationally recognized government,

What was promised as a swift operation has become the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe. Nearly a decade later, the conflict has killed an estimated 150,000 people directly, with hundreds of thousands more dying from disease, malnutrition, and lack of medical care. Over 21 million Yemenis—more than two-thirds of the population—require humanitarian assistance.



## **Key Actors and Their Roles**

**Saudi Arabia:** Leads the coalition, conducts majority of airstrikes, maintains naval blockade, provides ground forces in limited capacity. Justifies intervention as response to Iranian expansionism and threat to regional security.

**United Arab Emirates:** Initially a key coalition partner with significant ground presence, particularly in southern Yemen and along the Red Sea coast. However, the UAE has pursued its own agenda, supporting southern separatist forces (STC) that oppose the Saudi-backed government, creating a "war within a war."

**Iran:** Provides political support, military advisors, and weapons to Houthi forces, though the extent of Iranian control over Houthi decision-making is disputed. Iran's involvement has enabled Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi territory and shipping.

**Houthi Forces (Ansar Allah):** Control northwestern Yemen including Sanaa, where the majority of the population resides. Accused of human rights violations including child soldier recruitment and attacks on civilian infrastructure.

## **Humanitarian Impact**

The coalition's naval and air blockade has restricted food, fuel, and medicine imports to a country that imports 90% of its food supply. Coalition airstrikes have hit hospitals, schools, weddings, and funerals—documented by UN investigators as potential war crimes. Cholera outbreaks have infected over 2.5 million people in what the WHO called the worst outbreak in modern history.



## Key Statistics

Indicator	Figure
Deaths (Direct Conflict)	~150,000
Deaths (Humanitarian Crisis)	~227,000+
People Requiring Aid	21.6 million
Internally Displaced	4.5 million
Children Facing Acute Malnutrition	2.2 million
Coalition Airstrikes (2015-2022)	~25,000

## Questions for Committee

- How should the OIC address the humanitarian catastrophe when its own members are primary belligerents?
- What accountability mechanisms should apply to coalition states for documented civilian harm?
- Can the OIC mediate between Saudi Arabia and Iran to achieve a sustainable ceasefire?
- What role should the OIC play in Yemen's eventual reconstruction?
- How can the organization prevent similar intra-OIC interventions in the future?



# LIBYA

## Background

Libya's descent into chaos began with the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi. In the power vacuum that followed, the country fractured between competing governments, militias, and tribal factions. By 2014, Libya had split between two rival administrations: the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar in the east.

What makes Libya particularly relevant to this committee is that OIC member states have taken opposing sides, transforming an internal conflict into a regional proxy war. Turkey and Qatar back the Tripoli government; Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia support Haftar. The result has been military escalation, prolonged suffering, and the complete collapse of Libya's oil-dependent economy.

## Key Actors and Their Roles

**Turkey:** Deployed military forces, drones, and Syrian mercenaries to support the GNA, turning the tide when Haftar's forces besieged Tripoli in 2019-2020. Turkey's intervention is linked to Mediterranean gas disputes and ambitions to establish a permanent military presence in North Africa.

**United Arab Emirates:** Provided extensive military support to Haftar including drones, aircraft, and mercenaries. Established air bases in eastern Libya. The UAE views political Islam—associated with the Tripoli government—as an existential threat to Gulf monarchies.

**Egypt:** Supports Haftar due to shared hostility toward the Muslim Brotherhood and concerns about border security. Egyptian forces have conducted airstrikes inside Libya.

**Qatar:** Backed GNA-aligned forces, competing with UAE and Saudi Arabia as part of broader Gulf rivalries that played out across the region during the 2017-2021 blockade period.



## **Current Situation**

A UN-brokered ceasefire in October 2020 halted major fighting, but Libya remains divided. Foreign forces and mercenaries from multiple OIC states remain on Libyan soil in violation of the ceasefire agreement. Planned elections have been repeatedly postponed. Oil production fluctuates based on political tensions. The country's sovereign wealth—Africa's largest oil reserves—continues to be fought over rather than used for reconstruction.

## **Questions for Committee**

- How can the OIC facilitate the withdrawal of foreign forces from member states Turkey, UAE, and Egypt?
- What framework should govern post-conflict Libya's relationship with intervening OIC states?
- Should OIC members face consequences for violating Libya's sovereignty?
- How can competing Turkish and Emirati interests be reconciled to enable Libyan reunification?

# **HORN OF AFRICA & SUDAN**

## **Gulf Competition in Africa**

The Horn of Africa has become a new arena for Gulf state competition. The UAE has established military bases in Eritrea and Somaliland, invested heavily in port infrastructure from Djibouti to Mozambique, and cultivated relationships with governments across the region. Turkey has built its largest overseas military base in Somalia and expanded economic ties throughout East Africa. Qatar and Saudi Arabia compete for influence in Sudan and Ethiopia.

This competition has accelerated following the Abraham Accords, as Gulf states seek to project power beyond the Middle East and secure Red Sea shipping lanes. For African OIC members, this presents both opportunities (investment, development) and risks (becoming pawns in others' rivalries, sovereignty erosion)



## **Sudan's Civil War**

Sudan's April 2023 civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has created another humanitarian catastrophe with OIC fingerprints. The UAE has been accused of providing military support to the RSF through its relationships in the region, while Egypt backs the SAF. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, despite jointly mediating initial peace talks, have competing interests in Sudan's future.

The conflict has displaced over 10 million people—the world's largest displacement crisis—and created famine conditions in Darfur. Once again, OIC members find themselves supporting opposing sides in a conflict devastating a Muslim-majority population.

### **Key Questions**

- Is Gulf competition in Africa a new form of colonialism by OIC members over fellow members?
- How should the OIC address allegations of UAE support for RSF atrocities in Sudan?
- What principles should govern OIC member state military presence in other member states?
- Can the OIC develop a framework preventing African members from becoming proxy battlegrounds?

## **THE SAUDI-IRANIAN RIVALRY**

### **Root Causes**

The Saudi-Iranian rivalry represents the most destabilizing fault line within the OIC. Though often characterized as Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict, the rivalry is fundamentally about regional hegemony: two oil-rich powers competing for leadership of the Muslim world. The 1979 Iranian Revolution transformed this competition, as Iran's theocratic government sought to export its revolutionary model while Saudi Arabia positioned itself as defender of Sunni orthodoxy.

This rivalry has manifested violently across the region: in Lebanon (Hezbollah vs. Saudi-backed factions), Iraq (Shia militias vs. Sunni groups), Bahrain (2011 uprising),.



Syria (opposing sides of civil war), and most devastatingly in Yemen. Every major conflict in the Middle East over the past two decades has featured Saudi-Iranian proxy dimensions

### **Recent Developments**

In March 2023, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced a Chinese-brokered agreement to restore diplomatic relations after seven years of severed ties. This historic development offers hope for de-escalation, but fundamental tensions remain unresolved. The agreement has not ended Iranian support for Houthis or Saudi concerns about Iranian regional influence. Whether rapprochement can translate into conflict resolution in Yemen, Lebanon, and elsewhere remains uncertain.

### **Implications for OIC**

The Saudi-Iranian rivalry has paralyzed the OIC, which requires consensus for meaningful action. Member states are often forced to choose sides, fragmenting collective response to issues from Palestine to Islamophobia. Any serious reform of the OIC must address this central rivalry—either through robust mediation mechanisms or structural changes that prevent bilateral disputes from blocking organizational function.

## **OIC INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS**

### **Why Has the OIC Failed?**

The OIC's inability to prevent or resolve conflicts among its members stems from structural weaknesses built into the organization from its founding. Unlike the European Union, the OIC has no supranational authority, no enforcement mechanisms, and no consequences for members who violate its charter principles. Decisions require consensus, meaning any powerful member can block action that threatens its interests.

Saudi Arabia's outsized influence—as host of Islam's



holiest sites and the organization's largest funder—means the OIC rarely takes positions that conflict with Saudi foreign policy. This structural imbalance has made the organization ineffective when Saudi interests are directly involved, as in Yemen.

### Potential Reforms

- **Mediation Authority:** Establish a standing OIC mediation body with authority to intervene in member-state conflicts, modeled on the African Union's Peace and Security Council.
- **Humanitarian Red Lines:** Define actions (blockades causing famine, attacks on hospitals) that automatically trigger OIC review and potential sanctions regardless of which member is responsible.
- **Voting Reform:** Move from consensus to qualified majority voting on humanitarian matters, preventing single-state vetoes on urgent crises.
- **Independent Investigation:** Create an OIC human rights body capable of investigating member states, similar to UN special rapporteurs.
- **Reconstruction Fund:** Establish mandatory contributions to a fund for rebuilding countries damaged by intra-OIC conflicts, funded proportionally by GDP.

## QUESTIONS

### A Resolution Must Answer

1. What immediate steps should be taken to address humanitarian crises in Yemen, Sudan, and Libya, recognizing that OIC members bear direct responsibility?
2. How can accountability mechanisms be established for OIC member states responsible for civilian harm, while maintaining organizational unity?
3. What framework should govern military intervention by one OIC member in another, and what consequences should follow violations?



4. How can the Saudi-Iranian rivalry be managed to prevent it from paralyzing OIC action and fueling proxy conflicts?
5. What structural reforms to OIC decision-making would enable the organization to address intra-member conflicts effectively?
6. How should the OIC address the humanitarian impact of blockades and sieges imposed by member states?
7. What role should the OIC play in post-conflict reconstruction, and how should financial burdens be distributed among members?
8. How can smaller OIC members be protected from becoming arenas for larger members' geopolitical competition?
9. What mechanisms can prevent arms flows between OIC members from fueling internal conflicts in other members?
10. How should the OIC balance respect for sovereignty with responsibility to protect civilian populations from member-state actions?

## COUNTRY POSITIONS OVERVIEW

The following provides brief guidance on key country positions. Delegates should conduct additional research to understand their assigned country's specific interests and constraints.

### **Major Regional Powers**

**Saudi Arabia:** Must balance defending Yemen intervention with acknowledging humanitarian catastrophe. Likely to resist strong accountability language while supporting humanitarian access improvements. Key interest in containing Iranian influence.

**Iran:** Will highlight coalition abuses in Yemen while deflecting criticism of Houthi support. Interested in using committee to challenge Saudi regional



leadership. May support OIC reforms that reduce Saudi institutional dominance.

**United Arab Emirates:** Faces criticism for Yemen role, Libya intervention, and alleged Sudan involvement. Has partially withdrawn from Yemen but maintains regional ambitions. Likely to emphasize counterterrorism justifications.

**Turkey:** Defends Libya intervention as supporting legitimate government. Competes with UAE and Egypt across multiple theaters. May champion OIC reform as counter to Saudi dominance.

**Egypt:** Supports Haftar in Libya, backs SAF in Sudan, concerned about Ethiopian dam. Will resist language constraining military action against perceived Islamist threats.

**Qatar:** Experienced blockade by fellow OIC members (2017-2021). Natural advocate for protections against intra-OIC coercion. Backs different factions than UAE/Saudi in several conflicts.

### **Affected States**

**Yemen:** Devastating humanitarian crisis gives moral authority but limited negotiating power. Will demand accountability and reconstruction commitments.

**Libya:** Divided delegation must navigate representing fractured country. Interest in foreign force withdrawal and sovereignty restoration.

**Sudan:** Active civil war limits effective participation. Likely to call for ceasefire support and humanitarian access.

**Somalia:** Hosts Turkish military base, received UAE investment. Balancing act between competing Gulf interests

### **Potential Mediators**

**Oman:** Traditional neutral mediator, facilitated Yemen talks. Natural candidate to lead reconciliation efforts.

**Kuwait:** Hosted Yemen peace talks, maintains relationships across Gulf divides.



**Malaysia/Indonesia:** Major non-Arab OIC members without direct stakes in MENA conflicts. Can advocate for reforms from neutral position.

**Pakistan:** Nuclear power with relationships to both Saudi Arabia and Iran. Historically avoided taking sides in Gulf disputes.

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

Delegates are encouraged to consult the following resources for additional background. Given the rapidly evolving nature of these conflicts, recent news coverage is essential for understanding current dynamics.

### Academic and Policy Sources

- International Crisis Group - Yemen, Libya, Sudan reports
- Brookings Institution - Middle East Policy Center
- Carnegie Endowment - Middle East Program
- European Council on Foreign Relations - MENA Analysis
- Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network
- Arab Center Washington DC

### News Sources

- Al Jazeera English
- Middle East Eye
- The New Arab
- Arab News
- Al-Monitor
- Reuters Middle East

### UN and International Organizations

- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) - Yemen, Sudan, Libya updates
- UN Panel of Experts reports on Yemen
- UN Human Rights Council documentation
- World Food Programme situation reports
- OIC Official Website and Summit Declarations



**A Note on Preparation:** This committee deals with ongoing human suffering caused by decisions made by governments delegates will represent. Approach your research with the gravity it deserves. Understanding the humanitarian impact of policies is as important as understanding the strategic rationales behind them. The goal is not to "win" debates but to engage seriously with questions of accountability, reconciliation, and reform that have life-and-death implications for millions of people across the Muslim world.

*"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided."*

(Quran 3:103)

**BEST OF LUCK!**

For questions regarding this committee, please contact the LRF organizing team at [faith@lums.edu.pk](mailto:faith@lums.edu.pk) or through the LUMS Religious Society Instagram @lrs.lums