

**Research Report**  
**Model United Nations**  
**Development Programme**  
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**UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION  
(UNIDO)**

**CREATING INFRASTRUCTURAL  
INTEGRITY IN POST-CONFLICT NATIONS**

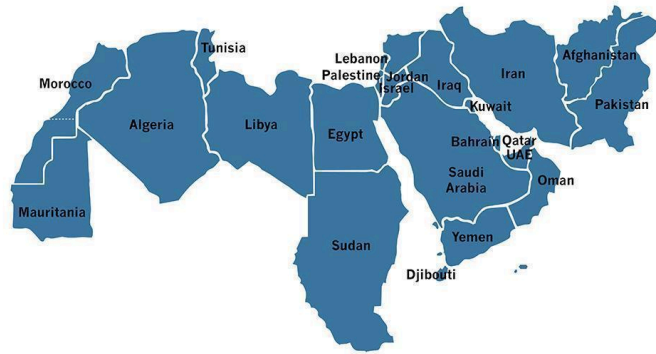
**DENİZ YÜCEL**





## Basic Overview of the Issue

The Arab States of the Middle East and North America (MENA) have historically been the center of rich culture and geopolitical significance. However, the region has also endured decades of violent war, underdevelopment, and political instability throughout the years. From ancient empires to ongoing modern struggles, war, and armed conflict has left many Arab States with profound impacts on their people, society, and landscape. The damage to infrastructure left countries such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya with shattered economies, broken societal systems, and cities reduced to rubble. Access to survival and recovery has gotten increasingly difficult as post-conflict states cannot find the resources to repair their facilities such as water systems, healthcare infrastructure, and transportation networks.



*Image 1: Map of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region*

The importance of infrastructure for a country is substantial. It is the basis of human livelihood and is required for a country to perform its necessary activities and maintain a healthy societal life. The issue of infrastructural reconstruction is not only about physical rebuilding but also addressing the fundamental causes of the instability in the region. As a nation's infrastructure reflects its level of development; stable, and resilient infrastructure translates to a strong economy and political stability. The objective of this report is to delve into the multifaceted challenge of creating infrastructural integrity in post-conflict nations by giving a comprehensive overview of the region's historical and modern dynamics and socioeconomic state. The goal is to identify the most effective ways to achieve infrastructural integrity.



## Explanation of Important Terms

### *Political Stability*

“Stable governance is the mechanism through which the basic human needs of the population are largely met, respect for minority rights is assured, conflicts are managed peacefully through inclusive political processes, and competition for power occurs nonviolently.” (United States Institute of Peace)

### *Infrastructural Integrity*

The structural durability and efficiency of a country, state, or region's systems such as energy, communication, transportation, and energy.

### *Capacity Building*

“The process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.” (United Nations)

### *Humanitarian Assistance*

“Humanitarian assistance is intended to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur.” (Global Humanitarian Assistance)

### *Post-conflict Countries*

“A country that has achieved a peaceful resolution to a protracted civil war and where governmental, non-governmental, and international institutions attempt to assist in stabilizing the political, economic, military, and social structures through a host of reconstruction projects.” (IGI Global, 2015)

### *Urban Planning*

“Design and regulation of the uses of space that focus on the physical form, economic functions, and social impacts of the urban environment and on the location of different activities within it.” (Britannica)

### *Peacebuilding*

“Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict



management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development.”  
(United Nations, 2010)

### Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

“Public-private partnerships combine the deployment of private sector capital and, sometimes, public sector capital to improve public services or the management of public sector assets. By focusing on public service outputs, they offer a more sophisticated and cost-effective approach to the management of risk by the public sector than is generally achieved by traditional input-based public sector procurement.” (IMF, 2001)

## Detailed Background of the Issue

### History of Conflict in the Arab States

The geopolitical significance of the Arab States has been a cause for conflict in the region throughout history. Referred to as the “Cradle of Civilization” in ancient times for its development of the world's first complex urban center and agriculture systems, the Middle East held global prominence. Located at the crossroads of many civilizations since the ancient period, many nations have been subjected to power struggles and colonialism by European powers. The history of colonialism in the Arab States led to undeveloped infrastructure and the economy was reliant on resource extraction, most notably oil. Unethical treaties and divisions during the period sowed the seeds of future conflicts. One example is the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916. Borders of the Middle East were drawn in a secret agreement by the British and France in a way that divided the ethnic and religious communities of Arab provinces. The agreement is regarded as the cause of the subsequent violence in the Middle East, from the occupation of Palestine to the rise of Iraq.

### Modern Conflicts and Civil War

With the wave of decolonization in the mid-20th century, the Arab States reached independence but peace was not entirely restored. The newly independent states were left with internal divisions and authoritarian regimes. Shortly after their independence, the Arab-Israeli conflict led to several wars and further destabilized the region.



The following centuries introduced a series of conflicts for the Arab States. The Gulf War of 1990-1991 extensively damaged Iraq's communications, electricity supplies, bridges, and roads while causing serious environmental destruction. Following the war was the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq plunging the country to years of violence leading to the destruction of the cities of Fallujah, Baghdad, and Mosul further destabilizing the region. In 2011, the political uprisings and protests against the authoritarian regime began in the countries of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. Regarded as a turning point in the history of the region, the Arab Spring, while leading to significant political impact, caused severe damage to the infrastructure as a result of the protests. Since 2011, the Syrian Civil War has been the source of major instability within the region. Beginning after the demonstrations that took place during the Arab Spring, the civil war resulted in the creation of the largest refugee population in the world. It is estimated that the country has suffered from \$400 billion worth of war-related destruction on the country's infrastructure. The situation has since worsened following the events of the February 2023 earthquakes and the aftermath of human and material damage. The absence of necessary health and sanitary facilities resulted in disease outbreaks due to poor sanitation and collapsing healthcare. It is named to be one of the worst humanitarian crises of the 21st century and the effects of the damage to infrastructure remain active to this day. Beginning in 2014 when the region was destabilized from the Arab Spring uprisings, the impacts of the Yemen Civil War continue to be devastating. 60 percent of the number of deaths are indirect and caused by the lack of access to food, healthcare, and shelter as a result of the war. The estimated loss of the country's potential gross domestic product (GDP) since 2015 is US\$126 billion with 15.6 million people pushed into extreme poverty and 8.6 million into undernutrition. Today, 21.6 million Yemenis remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The effects of past cycles of violence and conflict are still present to this day. Targeting critical infrastructure is practiced as a means to weaken nations by posing a threat to their economic activity and the livelihood of their people and past attempts have left lasting scars on urban and rural areas alike. The reconstruction and stabilization efforts not only aim toward physical recovery but also address the root causes of conflict and are a testament to resilience.



## Challenges of Reconstruction

The challenges that come with post-conflict reconstruction are not easy to overcome. While discussions on the reconstruction of infrastructure are on the physical damages caused and logistic difficulties, they can never be separated from the political contexts and implications. The infrastructural damage in the Arab States is a result of long-term war and armed conflict. To restore the infrastructural integrity of nations one must be aware of the interconnected obstacles that hinder the process of development.

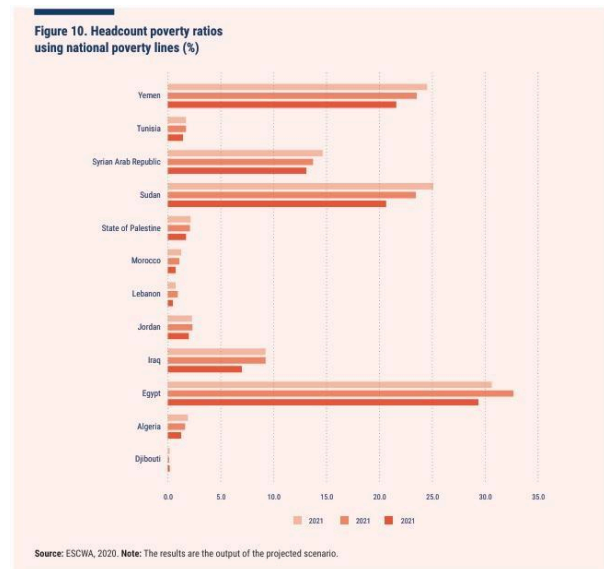


Image 2: The ESCWA Multidimensional Poverty Report, covering ten countries in the Arab region; headcount poverty ratios for 2019-2021 using national poverty lines;

The extent of physical damage sustained from conflict in the Arab States can hardly be exaggerated. Many cities have experienced near-total devastation, such as the old city of Aleppo in Syria, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage site with an estimated amount of 33,500 buildings destroyed. The cost of repairing entire cities' healthcare facilities, energy infrastructure, transportation networks, and water systems exceeds the resources of national governments, especially with their economies weakened by conflict. The United Nations Economic and Social Council for Western Asia (ESCWA) Multidimensional Poverty Report shows the alarmingly high poverty ratios of countries such as Yemen, Syria, Sudan, and Egypt, all of which were subjected to prolonged conflict. The figures in the data show that the reconstruction process requires attention from international allies and organizations to provide funding and support.

Along with the shattered economy, the conflict states' efforts are hampered by weak governance structures that lack the legitimacy and capacity to organize rebuilding projects. Conflicts erode governance institutions and increase transaction costs making it difficult for principals to monitor their agents. Geopolitical tensions also complicate the delivery of



humanitarian aid and assistance. The absence of a unified government and the presence of corruption and mismanagement in the government cause inefficiencies in the reconstruction processes. Such was the case with Iraq losing billions of dollars due to misjudgment in its efforts for post-2003 reconstruction. This is why external actors such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran play pivotal roles in shaping the trajectory of the reconstruction processes as well as international organizations like the UNDP. This involvement however can lead to the hindrance of the process if political rivalry gets involved.

## Major Parties Involved

### *Saudi Arabia*

A leading provider of humanitarian aid to post-conflict Arab States, Saudi Arabia plays a pivotal role in reconstruction efforts by offering financial support and resources and infrastructure projects. Since the establishment of “The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief)” in 2015, the establishment has provided many post-conflict nations such as Syria, Yemen, and Iraq with food, shelter, clean water, and medical supplies. While allocating billions of dollars in humanitarian aid, Saudi Arabia also plays a big part in the reconstruction process of the infrastructure of post-conflict nations. Through the non-profit organization “Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen” established in 2018, Saudi Arabia led its projects to revitalize critical infrastructure by building roads, ports, schools, and hospitals in Yemen. The country utilizes its private sectors towards the efforts of reconstruction, an example being Saudi Arabia’s leading energy company International Company for Water and Power Projects (ACWA Power) with its efforts to implement renewable energy projects in post-conflict areas to address the electric shortages.

### *Syria*

The center of a devastating ongoing conflict of the Syrian Civil War that resulted in the lives of over 500,000 people and displaced millions, Syria has faced massive destruction to its infrastructure and industry which had a significant impact on its economic development and social harmony. While the Syrian leadership has taken its approach to rebuilding projects and initiated the reconstruction phase, the efforts are concentrated on cities that are crucial to maintaining governmental control, ultimately reflecting the politico-economic priorities of the government's intentions of consolidating power over the quality of its people's living



conditions. This is why international partnerships and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Mercy Corps are important to Syria's reconstruction process. Russia is one of Syria's international allies with its focus on the economic reconstruction of the nation. Rebuilding transportation networks such as highways and railways and signing contracts for Russian energy companies to operate their oil and gas facilities Russia's strategic support solidifies its economic foothold in Syria. Turkey is the main international actor in the effort to rebuild and stabilize areas under influence with its investments in infrastructure rehabilitation, education, and health.

### *Yemen*

Yemen was the subject of The Yemen Civil War which was a prolonged conflict that began in 2014 and has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis as the country's infrastructure was destroyed along with its economy, making the restoration process increasingly difficult. In a rural country where more than half of the population resides in villages, access roads have become inadequate with decades of conflict and inefficient maintenance. Ranking 183 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index, poverty increases with the ongoing conflict with 80 percent of the population falling under the poverty line. Major roads and transport systems have been destroyed leading to the displacement of 4.5 million people, about 14 percent of the population. The situation in Yemen currently requires \$2.7 billion to support the rebuilding of its infrastructure according to the UN. While the country received funding and humanitarian aid from its government and international allies, the funding has shrunk as the conflict continued, leaving unmet requirements of \$2.3 billion.

### *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*

The UNDP plays a pivotal role in efforts to restore infrastructural integrity in post-conflict nations. Focusing on promoting sustainable recovery, UNDP is active in more than 40 countries supporting its act of interconnected initiatives to ensure peaceful development. The organization has been working towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Arab States' infrastructure by collaborating with local authorities to restore electricity grids in Yemen with its "Yemen Energy Recovery Program", focusing on the restoration of infrastructure that is vital for economic activity with its "Funding Facility for Stabilization" program in Iraq and providing support and technical assistance to local





governance in Mosul along with its countless other projects. The UNDP also collaborates with private sectors, NGOs, and other UN branches to maximize the impact of its programs.

### *World Bank*

One of the world's largest sources of development assistance, the World Bank's efforts in the Arab States focus on supporting funding reconstruction and economic recovery projects. One example for the projects funded by The World Bank is the "Transport Corridors Projects" in Iraq which aimed to rehabilitate critical highway and road selections along the north-south transport corridor in the country. The organization employs local labor for its projects which create thousands of job opportunities for the people and provide immediate income opportunities.

### **Chronology of Important Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
<b>2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991</b>	The Gulf War was an armed conflict led by the United States with coalition forces from 35 nations. The initial conflict began with Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in order to acquire their oil supply. The US led the war in order to expel Iraq troops from Kuwait. The aftermath of Iraq's loss was a major humanitarian crisis with significant damage to the infrastructure of the country



	and many means of modern life support destroyed.
<b>March 20, 2003 - December 15, 2011</b>	Sometimes referred to as the Second Persian Gulf War, the Iraq Invasion followed the events of the Gulf War. The war on Iraq was brought on by the United States's claims of Iraq manufacturing and harboring weapons of mass destruction. The invasion left Iraq with a severely damaged economy, military, culture, and infrastructure.
<b>December 2010 - 2013</b>	Arab Spring was a series of political uprisings aimed to challenge the region's authoritarian regimes. Beginning in Tunisia, the anti-government protests spread to Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain. The demonstrations were met with violent responses from the authorities and counter demonstrations. The prolonged conflict led to large-scale destruction of infrastructure and economy.



<b>2011 - Present</b>	<p>Riding the wave of the Arab Spring, the Syrian Civil War began when the protests threatened the rule of the Syrian president. The violence used to suppress the uprisings soon turned into a full-fledged civil war with the forming of opposition militias. The civil war became the cause of instability in the Middle East that remains to this day. Resulted in a case of massive displacement. The destruction of the infrastructure prevented many refugees from returning to their homeland.</p>
<b>2014 - Present</b>	<p>The Yemeni Civil War began in late 2014 with the Houthis' takeover of the capital city of Sanaa. The conflict soon became a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran which aided the Houthis. Yemen suffered from infrastructure destruction amid air strikes, economic blockage and is currently regarded to be facing one of</p>



	<p>the world's worst Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) crises along with the starvation and displacement of millions of civilians.</p>
<b>2018</b>	<p>Iraq Reconstruction Initiatives refers to the international efforts to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure of Iraq after the US invasion in 2003. The efforts consisted of projects implemented to upgrade water systems, transportation systems, housing, rebuilding of schools and hospitals, and electricity production. The projects were funded by the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund and funds administered from various sources have been administered by the UN and World Bank. Since the start of the initiatives, the aid has been plagued by poor administration and coordination.</p>
<b>4 August 2020</b>	<p>The Beirut Explosion was a disastrous explosion</p>



	<p>triggered by a fire in a warehouse in the Port of Beirut that contained large amounts of ammonium nitrate. Due to the port's close proximity to residential areas, 77,000 apartments were damaged resulting in the displacement of 300,000 people along with severe damage to energy infrastructure, roads, water supply, and several public services. The estimated damage is \$8 Billion according to the World Bank.</p>
<p><b>October 23, 2020</b></p>	<p>Libya's Ceasefire agreement was signed in 2020 after the Second Libyan Civil War; a prolonged conflict by rival groups seeking control of the territory and petrol resources of Libya. Since the agreement, Libya has not experienced a repeat of any large-scale violence. Following the agreement, efforts to rebuild damaged airports and oil facilities resumed.</p>



## Relevant International Documents

- Adopted by the General Assembly, 18 November 2024 (**A/RES/79/12**)  
“Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States”  
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/354/80/pdf/n2435480.pdf>
- Adopted by the Security Council at its 7426th meeting, 14 April 2015 (**S/RES/2216**)  
“Humanitarian Access and Infrastructure Protection in Yemen”  
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/103/72/pdf/n1510372.pdf>
- Adopted by the Security Council at its 7251st meeting, 27 August 2014 (**S/RES/2174**)  
“Supporting Stability in Libya”  
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n14/519/62/pdf/n1451962.pdf>
- Adopted by the Security Council at its 8531st meeting, 21 May 2019 (**S/RES/2470**)  
“UN Assistance Mission in Iraq”  
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n19/148/88/pdf/n1914888.pdf>

## Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In the past, many attempts have been made by the United Nations and also NGOs and National efforts. The UNDP has implemented several resilience and crisis responses such as the “Yemen Resilience Program”, the “Iraq Recovery and Resilience Program” and the “Syria Crisis Response”. These projects aim to provide immediate stabilization as well as long-term stability through restoring essential services and basic infrastructure in an effort to recover the livelihood of nations. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) is a UN program established in 1976 that focuses on sustainable human development and settlement. The organization has led rebuilding projects in Mosul to reconstruct housing and important marketplace destroyed during the ISIS invasion. UNESCO launched an initiative for the restoration of the Al Nouri Mosque which was heavily damaged during conflict in Mosul under their project “Revive the Spirit of Mosul”.

Regional cooperation methods were made by the Arab states. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia have contributed financial aid in post-conflict restoration in Libya, Yemen, and Syria. One of the



notable efforts is the KSRelief projects in Yemen.

International organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were key for financial and technical stabilization and assistance in reconstruction projects. The World Bank has led projects in Yemen and Iraq focusing on emergency recovery and infrastructure, repairing sanitation services and transport infrastructure while using local labor and creating job opportunities.

## **Solution Alternatives**

Alternatives to this issue could focus on renewable energy projects to rebuild damaged systems while adopting sustainable practices that minimize environmental impact and reduce reliance on imported fuels. Adopting solar, hydropower, and wind-powered energy systems to replace fossil-fuel-based infrastructure will help reach energy independence and stability while aligning with sustainable development goals. This approach is suitable for the Arab State's open landscapes and rural areas.

Post-conflict destruction of cities and living areas would benefit from modern urban planning to combat issues such as inefficient transport systems and overcrowding. Redesigning cities focusing on smart infrastructure and structural resilience will help nations withstand future challenges.

With the age of technological development, incorporating high technology such as Artificial Intelligence into reconstruction efforts can optimize the process. Advanced AI-powered systems can utilize risk assessment, real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, threat detection, and adaptive response mechanisms in order to build resilient infrastructure and safeguard critical infrastructure.

These solution alternatives could be supported by regional collaborative projects among Arab States such as joint initiatives and shared energy projects which will also optimize the use of shared resources, and promote and enhance connectivity and dependence between affected nations.

International funding from organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) can provide grants and loans for large-scale reconstruction efforts.



## Useful Links

- <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/09/infrastructure.pdf>  
Recovery of Services and Infrastructure in Syria. “Not If, But How?” (UN HABITAT)
- <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/zh/235401491413228678/pdf/114057-REP-LACEMENT-PUBLIC-4-17-10-am-Online-MEM-SPRING-2017-FINAL.pdf>  
World Bank Middle East And North Africa Region Mena
- [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/pbso\\_sustaining\\_peace\\_-\\_infrastructure\\_for\\_peace.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/pbso_sustaining_peace_-_infrastructure_for_peace.pdf)  
The role of infrastructure in building and sustaining peace - UN OPS
- <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/public-private-partnerships-infrastructure-development-arab.pdf>  
Public-Private Partnerships For Infrastructure Development In The Arab Region - Economic And Social Commission For Western Asia (Escwa)
- <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/CDP-bp-2005-8.pdf>  
Reconstruction, Development And Sustainable Peace: A Unified Programme For Post-Conflict Countries - United Nations Department Of Economic And Social Affairs
- <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil.ctc/files/cted-tr-ends-report-march-2017-final.pdf>  
United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate Report On “Physical Protection Of Critical Infrastructure Against Terrorist Attacks”

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