



THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Final Insights Report
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ECOPEACE
MIDDLE EAST

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ADENAUER
STIFTUNG**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Climate variability is generally not regarded as a direct cause of conflict but rather as a phenomenon that can worsen or exacerbate pre-existing sources of instability. The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in December 2019 added another factor of instability to vulnerable regions, like the Middle East, challenging the resilience of its political, social, and economic structures, and increasing the chances that the heightened tensions within countries, and between the countries themselves, will escalate and boil into violent conflicts. Due to that multi-layered challenge, EcoPeace ran an online simulation in order to map and identify the connection between climate change and national and regional security issues in the MENA region, and develop policy options that will effectively address these issues.

GOALS

The goals of this simulation were:

- » To provide a better understanding of potential environmental and health-related risk factors that could affect the region due to the climate crisis.
- » To further educate policymakers and opinion shapers from the fields of diplomacy and national security on the environmental and public health challenges of the region.
- » To promote cooperation, engaging the participants in an online discussion encouraging joint regional planning.

To provide a synthesis of the findings from the simulation in order to inform relevant policymakers.

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to identify and map the connection between climate change and national and regional security issues in the MENA region, and develop policy options to effectively address these issues, the simulation primary research questions were:

- » What are the primary security risk factors that are most likely to be impacted by the escalating environmental and health-related factors in the MENA region?
- » What are the critical risk factors that require these countries to cooperate with each other?
- » What are the best policy options that these countries can apply in order to address these emerging risks?

THE SIMULATION

During October 2020, EcoPeace team partnered with a diverse group of 30 Middle East experts for a three-day simulation. During the three days, this group identified potential national and regional initiatives that might solve existing and emerging challenges derived from the current convergence between climate change, national security, and the coronavirus pandemic.

On the first day of the simulation, the participants were presented with the opening scenario. In response to this, they developed 25 different policy proposals. On the second day, the participants were presented with two extreme and disruptive events in the region that demanded out-of-the-box thinking and proposals for joint and regional initiatives. In the third phase, the participants were presented with a second scenario based on the actions taken in Round 1. In this phase, the participants generated 16 new joint regional initiatives in response to the wildcards and the scenario presented in Round 2.

FINDINGS

If all of the findings and recommendations were to be condensed into a single insight, it would be this: **regional collaboration between Jordan, Palestine, and Israel to solve water scarcity and water security is desired and feasible. While participants understood that water issues are highly political issues, the cross-cutting nature of water issues and the need for adequate water resources to meet basic human needs, economy, health and nature, creates the opportunity to expand the involvement of a broad set of actors, technical, finance, private sector, community and civil society to help create the political will needed to resolve cross border water issues. Many of the proposals therefore focused on the entry points that would allow the involvement of broader actors and interests beyond the more traditional political actors, that could help bring a resolution to the water aspects of the conflict.**

Another key finding points to the crowd's shared perception that climate change with all its dangers and challenges is still seen as a multiplier of opportunities. To this end,

many experts discussed ways to move the water and COVID crises in the region away from the political sphere that impedes progress and into the technical and financial arenas, where different actors can be brought to bear in multi-lateral problem-solving.

Lastly, the crowd underscored the pivotal role of continued involvement of global and regional actors, particularly for financial underwriting. According to the participants, this involvement is essential to prevent further instability in the region and enhance regional cooperation that will better tackle the region's most pressing challenges.

As such, the participants came up with some creative policy options that would involve several global and regional actors, particularly in the tri-state area of Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. For example, one policy proposal called for establishing an international body consisting of the US, EU, UAE, Egypt, Qatar, and others under the UN and NATO's aegis. This body would operate under a 25-year lease and would hold, develop, and operate all water, sanitation, and energy infrastructure in Gaza.

The proposals and insights in this report express the opinions of the simulation participants as individuals and do not necessarily represent the views of EcoPeace Middle East and/or the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.



CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND:

Experts studying the convergence between climate change and national security often describe the former as a threat multiplier. Climate change itself is generally not regarded as a direct cause of conflict, but rather as a phenomenon that can exacerbate pre-existing sources of instability. For example, extreme climatic events such as heatwaves, droughts, and floods, together with intensifying rises in temperature and sea level, can pose a significant threat to the already-fragile water, food, energy, and health insecurity of the Middle East region.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in December 2019 added another factor that contributes to the region's vulnerability, challenging the resilience of the political, social, and economic structures in it and increasing the chances that the heightened tensions within countries, and between the countries themselves, will escalate and boil into violent conflicts.

As such, many experts believe that the combination of an ongoing pandemic and an ongoing climate crisis is driving the security environment of the Middle East toward a perfect storm that the countries in the region must do everything to avoid and prepare for.

In order to understand how the combination of an ongoing pandemic and an ongoing climate crisis might potentially impact the current security environment of the Middle East, EcoPeace ran an online simulation to help understand the potential effects of

this dynamic and propose policy responses to the challenges caused by climate change to regional actors.

The participants in the simulation were tasked with proposing policy responses of key regional and international actors to the environmental challenges caused by climate change in the Middle East, as well as to respond to the ongoing coronavirus crisis and global economic crisis. The participants were then asked to work together on a joint regional initiative to deal with the impact of climate change on the Middle East and to explore the critical issues that regional and international actors need to work on to effectively deal with the challenge of climate change for the Middle East region.

This document provides an overview of the simulation and an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the insights that emerged from the experts' proposals and discussions during the simulation. This includes insights referring to the actors in the simulation and general insights that relate to regional and thematic trends relevant to the topic of the simulation.

1.2 SIMULATION GOALS

The simulation had the following goals:

1. To provide a better understanding of potential environmental and health-related risk factors that could affect the region due to the climate crisis.
2. To further educate policymakers and opinion shapers from the fields of diplomacy and national security on the environmental and public health challenges facing the region.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The simulation sought to identify and map the connection between climate change and national and regional security issues in the MENA region. In addition, it sought to develop policy options to effectively address these issues. It aimed to do so by answering the following questions:

- » What are the primary security risk factors that are most likely to be impacted by the escalating environmental and health-related factors in the MENA region?
- » What are the critical risk factors that require these countries to cooperate with each other?
- » What are the best policy options that these countries can apply in order to address these emerging risks?

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE SIMULATION:

In order to achieve the simulation's goals and answer the above research questions, EcoPeace partnered with a diverse team of experts in a simulation that ran in October 2020. The simulation ran for a period of three days, between October 27 and October 29, and included two rounds.



Round 1: National Policy Options. In the first round, the participants were asked to respond to an opening scenario that presented them with a crisis situation involving a climate crisis, the coronavirus crisis, and a global economic crisis. In response to this crisis situation, participants were asked to propose policies that their actor could take.



Wild Cards and Methodological Break. Between the first and the second rounds, the participants were given a methodological break to reflect on the best practices on how to better cooperate to address the challenges presented in the first scenario. During this break, the participants were presented with two wild-card scenarios. These were scenarios that presented unexpected developments that have a direct impact on regional actors and the political and security dynamics explored in the simulation:

1. A Hamas victory in both the Palestinian Parliament and the presidency, and a call of international and regional actors on Israeli and Palestinian governments to come to an agreement over the management of natural resources between them.
2. An urgent need for a regional COVID-19 vaccine alliance, following the announcement of an upcoming release of a vaccine for the coronavirus.



Round 2: Regional Initiatives. In the second round, participants were presented with a scenario based on the actions taken by all the actors in Round I. They were then asked to develop policy options aimed at fostering regional initiatives between regional and international actors to deal with the challenges presented in the second scenario.

The participants were asked to draft joint initiatives involving other actors in response to these two events. The rationale for the additions between the two rounds was to prepare the participants to work together on joint initiatives before the second round of the simulation.

1.5 THE SIMULATION IN NUMBERS

In total, 30 different participants actively participated in the simulation, 41 new proposals for the actors (25) and joint regional initiatives (16) were proposed, and more than 80 comments and endorsements were given by the participants throughout the entire exercise.



30 DIFFERENT PARTICIPANTS
have actively participated



41 NEW PROPOSALS
for the actors and regional joint initiatives were proposed in total



80+ COMMENTS AND ENDORSEMENTS
were given through the entire exercise



US
7 NEW POLICIES



ISRAEL
3 NEW POLICIES



PALESTINE
6 NEW POLICIES



ARAB LEAGUE
3 NEW POLICIES



JORDAN
5 NEW POLICIES



EU
1 NEW POLICY

ROUNDS



ROUND 1 (+ WILD CARDS)
25 NEW POLICY PROPOSALS + 9 NEW JOINT INITIATIVES



ROUND 2
7 NEW REGIONAL ALLIANCES

1.6 THE CROWD

The 30 experts that participated in the simulation were asked to role-play one of six actors, which were split into separate teams: Israel, Jordan, Palestine, the United States, the European Union, and the Arab League. As such, they were asked to go into their actor's shoes and advise the leadership of each actor on what they think would be the best policy and response to the unfolding situation.

In terms of policy proposals, the US team was the most active and presented seven new policies. Participants in Team Palestine proposed six new policies, Team Jordan developed five new policies, Team Israel and Team Arab League each came up with three new policies each, and Team EU presented one new policy.

30
PARTICIPANTS



6
TEAMS



US



JORDAN



ARAB LEAGUE



PALESTINE



ISRAEL



EU

1.7 SCREENSHOTS OF THE SIMULATION

The Climate Crisis and the Changing Security Environment of the Middle East

Created by Lironne Alice Korel, last modified by Chen Keeler [Staff] on Oct 28, 2020



Background
Background on the simulation.

Instructions & FAQ
How to use the platform & answers to frequently asked questions.

Participants
See which analysts are participating in this simulation.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST							2020
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	



Joint Initiatives Forum



Click here to access team Israel



Click here to access team Jordan



Click here to access team Palestine



Click here to access team USA



Click here to access team Arab League



Click here to access team EU



Click here to access team WHO



Click here to access team Russia

Background

Created by Lironne Alice Korel, last modified on Oct 28, 2020



This page contains background to the simulation and instructions for analysts. This is required reading for all participants. Recommended reading can be found in the Background Reading and Resources page.



Introduction

Experts studying the convergence between climate change and national security often describe the former as a threat multiplier. Climate variability itself is generally not regarded as a direct cause of conflict but rather as a phenomenon that can worsen or exacerbate pre-existing sources of instability.

For example, extreme climatic events such as heatwaves, droughts, and floods, together with intensifying rises in temperature and sea level, can pose a significant threat to the already-fragile water, food, energy, and health insecurity of the Middle East region.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in December 2019 added another factor that contributes to the region's vulnerability, challenging the resilience of the political, social, and economic structures within it and increasing the chances that the heightened tensions within countries, and between the countries themselves, will escalate and boil into violent conflicts.

As such, many experts believe that the combination of an ongoing pandemic and an ongoing climate crisis is driving the security environment of the Middle East toward a perfect storm that the countries in the region must do everything to avoid and prepare for.

Primary Research Questions:

In this simulation, we aim to identify and map the connection between climate change and national and regional security issues in the MENA region. In addition, we aim to develop policy options to effectively address these issues. We intend to do so by answering the following questions:

- What are the primary security risk factors that are most likely to be impacted by the escalating environmental and health-related factors in the MENA region?
- What are the critical risk factors that require these countries to cooperate with each other?
- What are the best policy options that these countries can apply in order to address these emerging risks?

Goals
In this simulation, we have the following goals:

- To provide a better understanding of potential environmental and health-related risk factors that could affect the region due to the climate crisis.
- To further educate policymakers and opinion shapers from the fields of diplomacy and national security on the environmental and public health challenges of the region.
- To promote cooperation, engaging the participants in an online discussion encouraging joint regional planning.
- To provide a synthesis of the findings from the simulation in order to inform relevant policymakers.

SIMULATION OVERVIEW:

The simulation will run online, via a customized virtual platform that we have specially prepared. It will consist of two rounds with a methodological break between them.

ROUND I (October 27th)
The participants will be presented with the opening scenario. This will present them with a crisis situation that involves two or more of the actors in a confrontation with each other.

METHODOLOGICAL BREAK (October 28th)
Participants are encouraged to use that day to engage in discussions on other policies and endorse policies they support in Round I.

ROUND II (October 29th)
The participants will be presented with the scenario based on the actions taken by all the actors in round I. The participants will then be asked to develop policy options for their actor.



30+
Participants

Participants will be divided into eight teams:










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No labels Report

Team Jordan

Created by Lironne Alice Koret, last modified by Oren Kesler [Staff] on Oct 29, 2020



Welcome to Team Jordan

You are advising the Jordanian leadership in this exercise. Your goal is to provide policy options and responses.

Instructions

- Scroll down to read the scenario for the current round. Please note that round 1 will be made available on October 27th, and round 2 on October 29th. Each will last 24 hours.
- After reading the scenario for the round, you will be asked to add a policy for your actor. You can do this by clicking on "Add policy."
- You are encouraged to engage with other policy proposals. Click on a policy, read, comment, and "like" to endorse it.
- After the first round, you will be asked to vote for the most robust proposal.
- During the methodological break on October 28th, EcoPeace and Wikistrat will use the voting results to inform the creation of the scenario for round 2.
- After round 2 ends, you will be asked to vote again.
- Throughout the simulation, you will be encouraged to enter the Joint Initiatives Forum to either add an initiative or engage with an existing one. These initiatives are public to all participants and can include one or more actors.
- If you have lingering questions, you can watch a tutorial and frequently asked questions by clicking here. If you need help, you can contact the project's manager, Einat Elazari, at einat.elazari@wikistrat.com

Team Members

View your team members



Joint Initiatives

Talk to other teams and collaborate



Newsroom and Public Announcements

Latest news and announcements



Team Palestine

Created by Lironne Alice Koret, last modified by Oren Kesler [Staff] on Oct 29, 2020



Welcome to Team Palestine

You are advising the Palestinian leadership in this exercise. Your goal is to provide policy options and responses.

Instructions

- Scroll down to read the scenario for the current round. Please note that round 1 will be made available on October 27th, and round 2 on October 29th. Each will last 24 hours.
- After reading the scenario for the round, you will be asked to add a policy for your actor. You can do this by clicking on "Add policy."
- You are encouraged to engage with other policy proposals. Click on a policy, read, comment, and "like" to endorse it.
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Team Members

View your team members



Joint Initiatives

Talk to other teams and collaborate



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Latest news and announcements



Round 1 Round 2

This round concluded on October 28, 09:00 AM London time

Boiling Waters of the Middle East



January 2021: COVID-19 – No Vaccine in Sight

Click here to read

An Economic Crisis

Click here to read

Water Shortages

Click here to read

A UN Summit

Click here to read

Questions to consider

In light of these developments, what actions should Jordan take?

Add Policy

Page	Summary	Author	Replies	Likes
Agriculture Strategy to achieve sustainable development goals (done by - Dr. Masnat Al-Hyari)	Agriculture Strategy to achieve sustainable development goals : Agriculture and food sectors are main contributors to several SDGs with numerous targets. Sustainable agriculture and nutritious food drive economic growth and healthy life mainly in rural areas, protect natural assets, and offer inclusive livelihoods for vulnerable communities. Population increase, limited natural resources...	 Oct 28, 2020 @Anwar	1	2
Attract more investments in water related business	What goals does this policy aim to address? • Attract investors in water quality field • Decrease the water need impact as a limited factor for many national projects such as mining, • Reduce the dependence on fossil fuel.	 Oct 27, 2020 @Dawoud	2	2
Example Policy: Ask for US support and rally around the flag	As Jordan's economic woes continue and economic aid from the Gulf States significantly decreases, the Kingdom turns to the US and presents itself once again as a strong pro-American ally and a bastion of moderation in the Middle East - asking the US for economic aid. Aboullah also addresses the...	 Oct 18, 2020 @Lironne Alice Koret	0	1
Increase financial support to the farmers.	Jordan passes through various recession during last 20 years, affecting the economy as a whole, and people's livelihood in specific, due to many reasons among which is the climate changes and significant decrease in the production and efficiency from all perspectives of economy. The established supply chains in Jordan...	 Oct 28, 2020 @Bilal	0	0
Provide a holistic understanding of the role of institutions in developing adaptive capacity to the near-term effects of climate change at the regional level	Provide a holistic understanding of the role of institutions in developing adaptive capacity to the near-term effects of climate change at the regional level, Comparing cost of adaptation tools and adaptation micro plus macro projects to the extreme cost of CC losses in line with each country's NAP	 Oct 28, 2020 @Zain	0	0
Short and long term strategies	Climate change has made Jordan drier and the coming decades will see temperatures rising further and rain becoming more unpredictable. Water scarcity is only going to get much worse in the coming years. Water security is widely recognized by policy makers and academics as a global risk and policy challenge...	 Oct 28, 2020 @Muth	0	1

1.8 Q&A WITH ECOPEACE DIRECTORS

”



GIDON BROMBERG
ISRAEL CO-DIRECTOR



NADA MAJDALANI
PALESTINE CO-DIRECTOR



YANA ABU-TALEB
JORDAN CO-DIRECTOR

At a time of acute crisis, nations can capitalize on their relative natural advantages to create healthy interdependencies that boost cooperative efforts.

What did you learn from the simulation?

The simulation exercise provided a good basis for measuring several of EcoPeace’s suggested policies which were originally designed to enhance the adaptive capacity of nations in our region to combat the mid- to long-term threats of climate change and emergencies such as the COVID crisis. The scenarios validate policy proposals and regional solutions EcoPeace has been advocating for.

What challenges mentioned in the simulation do you think EcoPeace could help with?

EcoPeace’s policy proposals are designed to fit as conflict prevention as well as conflict resolution, so they remain valid with the worst-case scenario or absent it. The proposed scenarios in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict beget separating water issues from the more complex final status agreements. The process of disentangling complex problems begets a more creative approach and a paradigm shift in perceptions of which EcoPeace’s initiatives are designed to achieve.

In your opinion, how can an acute crisis situation like the one mentioned in the simulation increase regional cooperation between different regional actors?

The need for regional cooperation is justified by highlighting the limitations of unilateral solutions in the midst of conflict. At a time of acute crisis, nations can capitalize on their relative natural advantages to create healthy interdependencies that boost cooperative efforts without compromising national sovereignty. It acknowledges the possible triggers of conflict and threat multipliers to national and regional security and suggests opportunity multipliers for mid- to long-term solutions beneficial to all parties involved.



CHAPTER 2

ACTORS' ANALYSES

INSIGHTS



CHAPTER 2

ACTORS' ANALYSES – INSIGHTS**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will provide an analysis of the policies and trends that were raised by the different actors in the simulation: Jordan, Palestine, Israel, The EU, The Arab League, and the US. During the three days of the simulation, 30 participants in six teams provided a total of 25 new policies for the actors they were assigned to and 16 new joint initiatives calling for joint action with the other actors in the simulation.

The US was the most productive actor in terms of policies (7) and joint initiatives (7), highlighting the essential role of this actor in the region. In their policies and joint initiatives, the participants in Team US mentioned the strength of this actor in terms of its ability to provide financial assistance, technical training on water issues (among others), and its political influence on other actors that can help in establishing strong regional mechanisms for sustainable cooperation to tackle the challenges presented.

This chapter focuses on the analysis of each actor's own priorities, challenges, and interests. The analysis of the different actors highlights a strategic insight: when it comes to the issue of water scarcity and water security, all the actors are well aware of the advantages and disadvantages they have on the issue and see collaboration as feasible, constructive, and beneficial to all. In other words, the different actors in the region have a strong will to cooperate on this issue, given the right framework. According to the different policies and initiatives, the establishment of a depoliticized mechanism of cooperation with the involvement of key regional and international organizations is the key to achieve the correct framework.



2.1 JORDAN

CLIMATE CHANGE HIGHLIGHTS THE CENTRALITY OF AGRICULTURE

Participants in Team Jordan added five policy options, which discussed in different ways the issues of **agriculture and the farming sector**. The experts expressed the need to look at these issues with more urgency due to the context of climate change.

1. **Sustainable agriculture is key to Jordan's economic prosperity** – Two of the five policy options proposed by the participants emphasized farming and sustainable agriculture, and the crowd agreed that the latter must be made front and center in any sustainable economic strategy for Jordan. This entails supporting farmers to enhance their access to markets, to improve their skills, and to increase productivity while protecting the environment (soil, water, air, and biodiversity).
2. **The water shortage is an opportunity for stronger regional alliances and new solutions** – Most of the experts on Team Jordan noted that as water shortages increase in the kingdom, the government will have to work toward water security in close cooperation with allies, such as Israel, emphasizing a strategy of de-escalation on political issues. One policy stood out with its recommendation to invest in alternative energy use in processes, such as desalination for the production of drinking water.
3. **Financial assistance remains a cornerstone of Jordanian strategy and a potential weakness of potential climate-change development plans.** The participants in Team Jordan highlighted the Jordanian actor's dependence on regional and international aid in order to achieve its sustainability development goals. **Any Jordanian development plans (in the context of water projects, agriculture, or energy) depend on external financial assistance. This highlights the dependency of Jordan's ability to deal with climate and regional crises on external factors.**

”

“Sustainable agriculture and nutritious food drive economic growth and healthy life, mainly in rural areas, protect natural assets, and offer inclusive livelihoods for vulnerable communities.”

**Masannat, participant
in Team Jordan**

POLICY PROPOSALS, ROUND I – JORDAN

Policy Number	Title	Summary
1	Agriculture strategy to achieve sustainable development goals	Supporting smallholders to enhance their access to markets, improve their skills, and increase their productivity, while scaling-up innovations in Jordan in order to drive economic growth and healthy life.
2	Attract more investments in water related business	Attract investors, decrease the water need impact as a limited factor for many national projects such as mining, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
3	Increase financial support to farmers	To minimize the impact of climate crises, more financial support should be availed to the farmers to upgrade their capabilities to live and decrease their suffering.
4	Provide a holistic understanding of the role of institutions in developing adaptive capacity to the near-term effects of climate change at the regional level	CBOs,NGOs, private and public sector can help address Regional CC adaptive capacity issues, and improve understanding of the role of collaboration in promoting adaptive capacity of complex social-ecological systems.
5	Short and long term strategies	Developing awareness campaigns on water efficiency in the short term as well as a monitoring plan on locations of water network leakages and violations, and building water treatment plants in the long term.



2.2 ISRAEL

BY FOCUSING ON WATER, ISRAEL CAN PLAY A PRO-ACTIVE ROLE IN MITIGATING THE REGION'S MULTIPLE CRISES

Team Israel proposed three different policy options in the first round. **All three were related to water issues**, emphasizing the significance placed on water security in the region in the eyes of the Israeli actor and its ability to play an active role in assisting in solving the region's current water-related challenges.

1. ***In the issue of water shortage, international institutions are part of the solution*** – In two of the three policies mentioned by the participants of Team Israel, international non-governmental actors like the International Water Association (IWA) and the World Bank were asked to provide professional guidance “on implementing immediate steps to reduce water loss in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and on steps for the longer run.” – Pnina, participant in Team Israel.
2. ***Israel is an active part of the solution*** – In all the proposed policies, Team Israel experts agreed that Israel should play a role in facilitating a stronger water security framework to the region and work to solve the water shortage problem by using its desalination technology and implement measures to reduce water loss in the water system. According to Pnina, participant in Team Israel, “Israel can assist by cooperating with such experts, easing the entry of people and equipment through Israel’s points of entry, and by taking upon itself some of the financing.”
3. ***Water Security in Jordan and Palestine guarantees stability*** – According to all three proposed policies, the current crisis only emphasizes to the Israeli actor the need for further stabilization efforts in the region. According to the experts in Team Israel, Israel can help do that by building two desalination plants that would address both water and financial deficit issues in Jordan and the PA, and providing financial assistance aimed to improve Jordan and the PA’s ability to finance water shortage solutions.

”

“Israel declares that it will answer immediately any water shortages that threaten the Palestinians and that it is ready to increase water supply to Jordan. As a follow-up, Israel supplies Gaza with extra water and electricity to prevent humanitarian crisis and insecurity.”

Gideon, participant in Team Israel

POLICY PROPOSALS, ROUND I – ISRAEL

Policy Number	Title	Summary
1	Ask for the assistance of experts from the International Water Association (IWA) and the World Bank	The situation is an opportunity to implement measures to reduce water loss in the water system in the long term, calling in the IWA (for example to work on the use of District Metered Areas) and the World Bank.
2	Israel declares that it will answer immediately any water shortages that threatens the Palestinians	Israel supplies Gaza with extra water and electricity to prevent humanitarian crisis. It also defuses tensions by talking to the PA, Jordan, the UN, the USA and the EU.
3	Separating the finance of water and sewage infrastructure from government budget	Water security, stability and resilience in time of crisis are assured by financial stability



2.3 PALESTINE

PROGRESS THROUGH COOPERATION AND DEPENDENCY ON EXTERNAL ACTORS

Experts on Team Palestine introduced six policy options that can be divided into two main categories of emphasis: **1) Palestinian self-starters in cooperation** with Israel on water issues and the economy, **2) reliance on regional and global actors**, such as the Arab League and the EU, for financial aid and proposed project execution and management. The latter emphasis tends to place responsibility on Israel for a Palestinian failure to reach water security and energy supply.

1. **Building Palestinian self-sufficiency is crucial for economic sustainability** – *Experts agreed that improving energy and water supply through projects, such as the construction of desalination plants or power plants, is a vital component in local, regional, and international efforts to elevate Palestinian economic and living standards. To achieve this, participants proposed policies to achieve a fair distribution of water resources between Palestine and Israel, restructuring the Palestinian institutions, and strengthening and democratizing the public institutional structures such as unions, peasants, and farmers' unions.*
2. **Creating a space for peaceful solutions to water issues with the assistance of Regional and International Actors** – *Participants proposed using the recent Arab peace agreements between the UAE and Bahrain with Israel as **leverage in order to help prioritize water and energy issues** in water negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Several policy options bring up the need to increase Palestine's per capita share of the region's water resources.*
3. **Recalibrating and restructuring Palestinian practices of self-governance** – *Some experts highlighted the need to **recalibrate the role of the PLO to better deal with domestic and regional challenges**, redefine its function, and revamp its institutions in light of continued economic distress and lack of progress toward Palestinian statehood.*
4. **Cooperation on water issues is feasible** – *Palestine and Israel are involved in three main joint initiatives: a joint economic forum of Israeli and Palestinian economists to foster joint trade partnerships; establishing a water-energy nexus for mutually beneficial exchanges of water and energy between Palestine, Israel,*

”

“Putting pressure on the Arab countries that have signed peace and cooperation agreements with Israel in order to move the water issue and calling on the international community and the European Union to raise the level of support and funding for the water and agricultural sectors.”

Haitham, participant in Team Palestine

and Jordan; and lastly, an EU initiative that incentivizes Palestinians and Israelis to collaborate on maximizing water supply to Palestine. With two of the three initiatives mentioning collaboration on water issues, it is clear that the different actors see a collaboration between Palestine and Israel on water issues as something that could work with the assistance of regional and international actors.

POLICY PROPOSALS, ROUND I – PALESTINE

Policy Number	Title	Summary
1	Benefiting from the Arab peace agreements signed recently with Israel in resolving the water crisis in the Palestinian territories and raising the per capita Palestinian share of water	Putting pressure on the Arab countries that have signed peace and cooperation agreements with Israel in order to move the water issue, and calling on the international community and the European Union to fund the water and agricultural sectors.
2	Fair Water Distribution	Request from the UNSC and the relevant international Organizations to form an international committee to work on a fair distribution of water resources between the Palestinians and the Israelis.
3	Integrated Policy	With the UN, actions in Palestine include: non-violent protesting campaigns against water areas under Israeli control; a water efficiency program domestically; plans to build the desalination water plant and power generations in Gaza and West Bank, and integrated water energy networks at regional level.
4	Restructuring the Palestinian institutions to face internal and external challenges	Renewing structures of the Palestinian Liberation Organization with task of liberation and national construction; developing policies for income redistribution; defining roles/responsibilities of each party; strenghtening popular organizations in the field of land and agriculture; food sovereignty.
5	Shared Palestinian Israeli environmental reality	Building an ecosystem for common activities and programs to fight climate change (defining priorities, joint cadres, international monitoring).
6	Transferring investments and industries to the Palestinian areas and to promote socio-economic linkage plan between Palestine and Israel	Developing a societal economic policy; defining economic zones to expand regional/international economic connectivity; leveraging Palestinian-Israeli academic experience.



2.4 THE ARAB LEAGUE

JOINT ACTION UNDER ONE UMBRELLA

The Arab League team initiated three policy options, with a notable **emphasis on water issues**. A common theme in the proposed options was a call to wealthier Arab countries to pick up the tab for any regional cooperation efforts involving sustainable and integrated water management.

As an actor, the Arab League was involved in one joint initiative with the US to remove the blockade from Qatar. The goal was to engage Palestinians in active diplomacy, unify Palestinian factions, and prevent further escalation of tension.

1. **Promoting cooperation through the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus approach** – Experts suggested the need to catalyze action for the mainstreaming, financing, and **implementation of a Water-Energy-Good-Eco Nexus throughout the region**. Experts shed light on the existing option to join the Union for the Mediterranean in order to enhance regional cooperation toward sustainable and integrated water management. While the Arab League could itself be used as an umbrella organization to promote this approach, this type of strategic framework was not raised by the actor.

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“The Nexus represents a promising vehicle for promoting considerations on cross-cutting issues. The Nexus can assist in the efforts to further mainstream these issues in addition to its pivotal role in promoting green job creation.”

Khalid, participant in Team Arab League

POLICY PROPOSALS, ROUND I – THE ARAB LEAGUE

Policy Number	Title	Summary
1	Arab League Initiative: Water and Stability in the Arab Countries	Gulf countries involved in a joint conference on natural resources management and ecosystems, even to look for technological solutions to face water shortage. The Arab league supports the King Abdullah peace initiative to end the historic Arab Israeli conflict.
2	Establishing COVID-19 Trust Fund for Arab nations	The Arab league calls for a summit to establish a trust fund to provide low interest loans to both governments and businesses to recover.
3	Joining the Union for the Mediterranean Regional Water Policy Framework for Action 2030	Introducing the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus approach, and catalysing action for its mainstreaming, financing and implementation in UfM Member States, at the national and local (basin) levels as well as in the UfM region.

2.5 US

GO BIG OR GO HOME

Experts on Team US launched seven policy options in response to the simulation's 2021 climate crisis events and the changing security environment in the region. All proposed policies reflected the United States' position as a global actor and, as anticipated, experts on the US team focused on concerted actions that bring together regional actors. **The majority of experts introduced strategies for resource and technology sharing and water and waste management.** One policy option stood out in its approach by suggesting the revival of the Red- Dead Sea Project to address the climate- and COVID-induced water crisis in the tri-state area of Jordan/Palestine/ Israel.

The US was involved in or initiated four joint proposals. It participated in one initiative with the Arab League in an attempt to remove the blockade from Qatar. The goal was to engage Palestinians in active diplomacy, unify Palestinian factions, and prevent further escalation of tension. It is noteworthy that the PO underscored the usual role reserved for the US as an underwriter and financier. In this scenario, the US agrees to sell F35 jet fighters to Qatar in return for using its political leverage with Hamas to form a unity government with Fatah. In a second PO, the US calls on the EU to set up an international body ("a mechanism") to handle all water, sanitation, and energy issues in Gaza. Again, there is a clear perception of initiation and underwriting roles for the US as well as the EU.

1. **Coordinate international efforts** – *According to some of the experts, the US could position itself to lead a concerted effort that involves other global actors, such as the World Health Organization, the UN, the IMF and World Bank, and the EU. Other experts included regional actors like the GCC. The main objective of bringing in these actors is to provide financial lubrication for proposed efforts and their executive management. Interestingly, while many of the experts on Team US brought up the pandemic as a contributing factor in the proliferating regional economic and health crises, only one policy option used COVID as a single-issue driven response to the simulation's given circumstance of "no vaccine in sight." In this policy option, the experts engaged with the idea of the US creating a coronavirus taskforce for the region and spearheading international efforts to amass healthcare equipment, PPE, and field hospitals to mitigate the cross-border spread of COVID-19.*

2. **Pushing forward ambitious projects** – Many of the policy options suggested by the experts on team USA involved **ambitious enterprises, including the Red/Dead Sea Project, construction of desalination plants, and advancement of solar energy farms**. The regional clout and economic power of the US was seen by the participants in Team USA as central to addressing the region's multiple problems. In addition, some of the experts suggested that the US will look to restore its global leadership by leading and coordinating efforts to solve the crises facing the region.

Some experts agreed that such projects could be attainable. According to Yana, participant in Team US, "Most viable economically and respond to climate mitigation and adaptation and will create the necessary steps for peacebuilding in the region."

In support of this claim, one expert noted that the cost of desalination has rapidly fallen, and it is led by the private sector in Israel. The same is true for the cost of solar in Jordan. Most experts on the US team concur that private-sector-led solutions are something that would be very attractive to a US administration, particularly at a time of economic crisis when there is little appetite in Washington for development money.

3. **Sharing is caring** – The majority of experts on Team US introduced some version of the approach where the US provides incentives for key actors in the region to share water and other resources, and promotes investments in technology that can provide long-term solutions. Fredric from Team US weighed in with a caveat to US leadership on this issue: "The US can be a leader in investing resources and promoting/facilitating efforts by others. Because of issues of trust and credibility, and existing stresses and conflicts, this would need to be managed carefully. The use of neutral organizations and diverse institutions would be critical."

POLICY PROPOSALS, ROUND I – US

Policy Number	Title	Summary
1	Call for a concerted action on 3 fronts	Lead by the WHO, offering medical and financial aid; involving the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; and working with the EU to adopt water measures and plans.
2	Proposal to Appoint a US Special Envoy and Create a Coalition of the Willing to Address Bilateral Israeli / Palestinian Water Crisis Issues and Advance a Regional Water Energy Nexus	Israeli-Palestinian negotiations over water allocation; having the Arab Gulf states covering the cost of desalinated water sold to Gaza; a modern desalination plant in Gaza; a sanitation plan in Palestine; a World Bank fund to finance Gaza; reinstating USAID funds to Palestine; launching the Partnership Fund for Peace; increasing desalinated water from Israel to Jordan; having a Desalinated Water Energy Commission under the WB.
3	U.S. Initiatives combining leadership and international institutions	Forming concrete organizational and financial ideas on administrative level, and creating international coalitions.
4	U.S. creates coronavirus task force for the region	Establish a system to ensure long term water security and limit cross-national social unrest through cooperative approaches to the region's shared environmental issues.
5	U.S. calls for new international body to manage all water, sanitation and energy issues in Gaza	Establishing an international body under the UN and NATO and operate under a 25-year lease all water, sanitation and energy infrastructures in Gaza. The US will also announce any relief/military aid.
6	U.S. initiative to revive the Red Dead project between Jordan, Israel and Palestine	The US calls for a summit to sign a trilateral agreement to begin the implementation of phase one of the Red Dead Project. The GCC countries which signed agreements to cover costs for Jordan and Palestine will be invited.
7	U.S. promotion of immediate aid, resource sharing, and technology development	The US addresses the crisis, on both short-term and long-term ways, by providing resources and mobilizing other public and private parties to do likewise. It includes immediate humanitarian aid, incentives to share water and resources, investments in technology.

2.6 EU

THE EU - CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH WATER ISSUES

Experts on Team EU created one policy option that was driven by a narrow objective to **create a global fund for desalination plants in the Middle East**. The underlying motivation for this policy option, as presented by one expert, was to avert or mitigate a mass migration crisis that would likely result from escalating water issues postulated in the simulation's background. It would also serve as a way for the EU to take the lead preventing in a looming conflict. While the proposal does not specifically address water scarcity or water security in the region as an issue, it is implied in the strategy to bring about a solution.

The EU initiated one response to the water crisis in the form of a call to action on the part of Israel, Palestine, and Jordan in a policy option that would purportedly incentivize the three actors to collaborate on water supply issues, by identifying and providing funding to optimal technologies. Like in the cases of the US and the Arab League, the role reserved for the EU is one of financial assistance and mediation between regional actors.

1. **Preventing an unwanted spillover into Europe** – *The only policy option put forth by experts on the EU team highlights a plausible motivation for the actor, **not so much to assist those in need, but rather to thwart a spillover** of the shocks of the region's multiple crises into Europe. In the process, the EU takes the opportunity to lead an effort that will also benefit the Middle East. "A water crisis seems to offer an opportunity for the EU to bring its unique added value (and economic clout) to resolve potential conflict," according to Calev, participant in Team EU.*

POLICY PROPOSALS, ROUND I – EU

Policy Number	Title	Summary
1	An EU led Global Fund for desalination plant	Call for a conference with regional states plus EU,USA,China and Russia; creating a fund for desalination plants in key states; alleviating tensions between Israel and its neighbours and preventing mass migration to the EU.



CHAPTER 3
**KEY SIMULATION
INSIGHTS**



CHAPTER 3

KEY SIMULATION INSIGHTS

This chapter is based on all the policies the different participants proposed in the joint initiatives forum in response to the wild cards and the scenario presented in Round 2. Experts from all teams added a total of 16 joint initiatives: participants in Team US proposed 7 joint initiatives; Team Palestine and Team Arab League proposed 3 joint initiatives each; and Team Israel, Team Jordan, and Team EU proposed one joint initiative each.

This chapter underscores several thematic issues or trends that were observed throughout the simulation. These issues ranged from water scarcity and shared technology to sustainability, regional cooperation, and international investment and oversight. The most notable trend in the majority of these proposals is the perception of joint economic initiatives that mutually incentivized regional players, along with an exchange of knowledge, technology, and training in water issues, that is much needed and beneficial to all the regional actors. Moreover, the role of the regional and international actors in the simulation, mainly the US and the EU, is in creating or assisting with establishing the mechanisms for that mutual collaboration in the region.

Although specifically mentioned in one of the wild cards as a crucial issue, no actor other than the US addressed COVID in the joint initiatives. The overriding concerns of the regional actors, mainly Palestine and Jordan, appeared to rest with water and energy issues, as well as economic distress. The latter was presented by most of the participating experts as a direct result of a political standstill on water and energy supplies or distribution.

Several thematic trends emerged from the simulation:

1. **Water scarcity, water security, and shared resources** – Water issues in various forms played an important role in most policy options introduced by all participating teams. A repeated theme was that of water-energy intersection and interdependence.

Indeed, there was broad agreement between most experts on the feasibility of an initiative that builds on the comparative advantages of the three countries and forges healthy interdependencies.

Although suggested by one expert, the idea that the water crisis in the tri-state area ought to be linked to other water crises (e.g. in Egypt created by Ethiopia's GERD, or in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey related to record low water levels in the Euphrates) did not receive much traction in the simulation.

2. **Sustainability and climate change** – Sustainability as it relates to water scarcity, water security, alternative energy, and emerging technologies, particularly in agriculture. In a cross-view of the team policy options and joint initiatives, it is clear that most actors shared the perception that climate change with all its dangers and challenges is still seen as a multiplier of opportunities. To this end, many experts discussed ways to move the water and COVID crises in the region away from the political sphere that impedes progress, and into the technical and financial arenas, where different actors can be brought to bear in multi-lateral problem-solving. *"Bringing in non-governmental actors, who have different, very powerful motivations to solve problems, it can make resources available that would not otherwise be focused on these issues."* – Fredric, participant in Team USA.
3. **Sanitation and sewage issues** – Increased water supply and treatment of sewage will improve underlying health concerns related to the COVID pandemic, particularly for Israel, preventing a possible resurgence of infections in Israel due to lack of water for hygiene purposes in Jordan, the West Bank, and Gaza.
4. **Continued reliance on global and regional involvement, particularly for financial underwriting** – Experts came up with some creative policy options that would involve several actors on the global stage as well as regional actors, particularly in the tri-state area of Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. One proposal, that was a response to the Hamas election victory wild card, called for the establishment of an **international body, consisting of the US, EU, UAE, Egypt, Qatar, and others, under the aegis of the UN and NATO**. This body would operate under a 25-year lease and would hold, develop, and operate all water, sanitation, and energy infrastructure in Gaza. Experts expressed **mixed support for the traditional idea of financial underwriting** in the form of *"emergency money that comes from the Gulf states, the EU, the USA, and Japan to Jordan and the Palestinians"* – Gideon, participant in the Team Israel.

Conversely, many experts came together to suggest other forms of continued reliance on external involvement:

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"Water-Energy Nexus: Examine [the] potential for mutually beneficial exchanges of water and energy between Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. All countries could potentially benefit from a regional project in which Jordan supplies renewable energy to all countries and Israel and/or Palestine supplies Jordan with desalinated seawater."

Bashar, participant in Team Palestine

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"The initiative would help ensure that water and energy needs of each side are met efficiently while strengthening regional ties (by creating mutual dependencies around core interests) and providing all parties with a strong incentive to resolve conflicts, mitigate tensions, and enhance cooperation across the board."

Barak, participant in Team EU

- **US investment** in Vaccine Alliance. Many of the experts expressed their dissent to the idea of holding medical care hostage to a political solution, as was laid out in the wild conditioning US support for the Vaccine Alliance on the acceptance of a two-state solution.
 - A call to reinstate USAID funding to the Palestinians, as well as launch the Partnership Fund for Peace.
 - **Under the aegis of the World Bank, a regional Desalinated Water-Energy Commission** is established regulating the sale of desalinated water from Israel and Gaza to Jordan and Photovoltaics (PV) electricity from Jordan to Israel and West Bank/Gaza.
 - **Depoliticization of regional water and health crises** – In various policy options, discussions on water solutions intersected with a call for continued reliance on global involvement. In one example, experts repeated the idea of **moving crises issues like water away from the political sphere** that impedes progress, and into the technical and financial arenas. To this end, a “Regional H2O Hudna” was proposed that, with American support, would formalize a natural resource agreement: *“A green-blue new deal and regional COVID cooperation framework in the form of a thirty-year hudna truce.”* – Uri, participant in Team USA.
 - **Environmental education as a component of regional cooperation** – Several Experts discussed the significance of creating an educational infrastructure to help institute proposed collaborative environmental efforts in the region, with one of the main goals being *“[to] develop bottom-up education strategies for encouraging long-term regional cooperation and peacebuilding.”* – Leah, participant in the USA team. This would serve the goal of reshaping the Arab region’s adaptability to the impacts of climate change. Many of the experts agreed that *“the water sector lags behind other sectors, such as energy, in responding to the impacts of climate change.”* – Khalid, participant in Team Arab League.
5. **Regional collaboration on COVID-19** – All experts highlighted the need to cooperate on the immediate threat posed by the seemingly intractable pandemic. **The COVID-19 Vaccine Alliance** would be an effective way to distribute vaccines, maintain or coordinate region-wide health care, prevent clusters and spikes, and subsequently help prevent new rounds of lockdown measures. In addition, an alliance would help all parties focus on climate adaptation and mitigation measures as priority issues as a means to stimulate the economy and advance social progress in the aftermath of COVID-19.
 6. **The combined crises underscore the role of institutions in solving collective problems** – Participants from all teams in the simulation (regardless of the relative power of their actors) called on institutions – particularly international non-governmental organizations – to intervene and assist in solving the various regional challenges discussed in the simulation. The types of assistance discussed include technical expertise (on water management and sanitation issues), economic assistance (from the World Bank and the IMF), and water distribution issues (between Palestine and Israel).
 7. **The need for both short-term and long-term solutions to address regional water security issues** – While participants proposed various short-term policies focusing on solving the immediate challenges presented in the

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Israel should “ask for the assistance of experts from the International Water Association (IWA) and the World Bank to advise on implementing immediate steps to reduce water loss in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and on steps for the longer run.”

Pnina, participant in Team Israel

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“Palestine should request from the UNSC and the relevant international organizations to form an international committee to work on a fair distribution of water resources between the Palestinians and the Israelis.”

Ali, participant in Team Palestine

simulation (such as reducing water loss in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), they also emphasized the need for long-term solutions to help the region survive and recover in the coming decades. Such long-term solutions include building farmers' capacities, forming a marketing cooperative and establishing a trust fund for providing farmers with financial compensation in the event of flood or disasters, drafting a long-term plan to strengthen water security, and using economic and political incentives (by the US) to encourage cooperation between regional actors.

8. **The environmental and economic crises could be an opportunity for internal changes and restructuring among regional actors** – In addition to presenting opportunities for environmental cooperation between regional and international actors, the combined challenges were also seen by participants as an opportunity for domestic changes in political and governmental institutions.

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The US should “use economic and political incentives to compel MENA actors to cooperate on long-term projects in order to address the region’s shared environmental issues.”

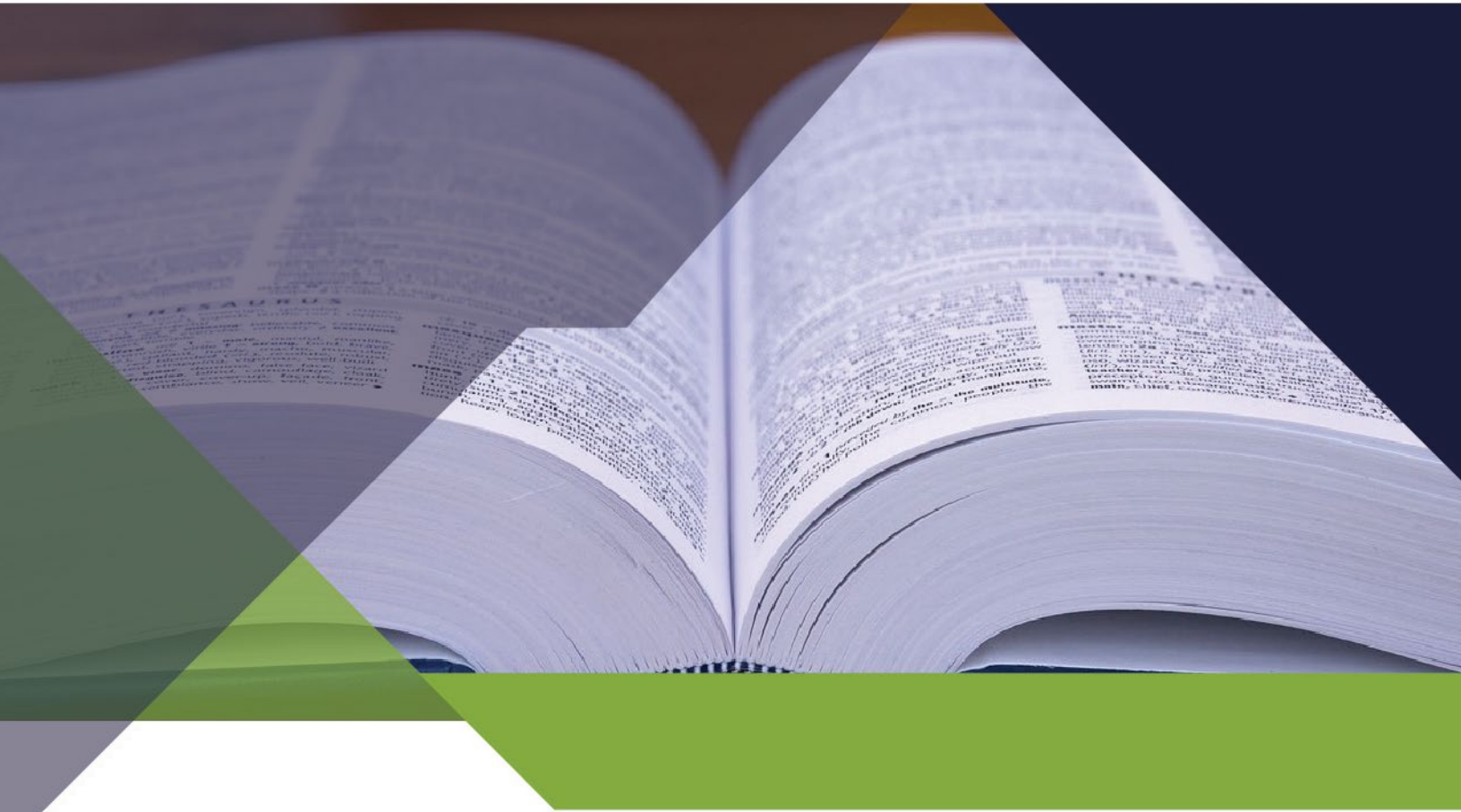
Leah, participant in Team USA

JOINT REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Policy Number	Proposing Actor	Title	Summary
1	Arab League	A new Arab League summit to invest in Sudan and forming a new Arab joint force	A new summit is needed to turn Sudan into the Bread Basket of the region and to form an Arab Army due to the security risks highlighted under the new scenario.
2	US	Create educational infrastructure to help institute proposed collaborative environmental efforts in the region	Educational infrastructures (campaigns, education systems) are fundamental in order to establish grassroots changes in how the regional actors view their neighbors and value their aid.
3	Israel	Emergency support from the international community	Emergency money comes from the Gulf states, the E.U. the U.S.A. and Japan to Jordan and the Palestinians. Israel fulfills its new water commitments to its neighbors.
4	Arab League	A Joint Water Climate Finance Initiative proposal	The partnership aims to empower water strategies in the Arab countries; understanding the methodologies and costs for climate investments; understanding the Green Climate Fund; identifying potential GCF water projects.
5	Palestine	Organizing the policy of tax collections and financial benefits for the Palestinian	The economy of the Palestinian Authority is based on the state's tax revenues, which the Israeli side collects at an agreed rate. Accordingly, addressing this issue has an impact on the policy of organizing and developing the work of the Palestinian Authority

6	US	U.S. Biden Administration calls for "Regional H2O Hudna"	Biden Administration calls on side to formulize natural resource agreement, green blue new deal and regional covid cooperation framework in the form of a thirty year hoodna truce.
7	US	U.S. Biden Aministration calls for the creation of a Middle East Green Blue New Deal Alliance	The 'Middle East Green Blue New Deal Alliance' focuses on water issues, and sees the Middle East leading the global climate effort by adopting a set of targets related to climate adaptation and mitigation by 2050.
8	Palestine	A joint economic initiative	Launching a joint economic initiative between the Palestinian and Israeli economists to announce a joint economic trade and partnership in the region to implement it.
9	Jordan	Conducting advocacy and assessments of the current needs, and conduct effect fund raising activities	Establishing Government Task Force in the Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan and develop a plan even by identifying potential partners.
10	Palestine	Examine potential for mutaully beneficial exchanges of water and energy between Jordan, Palestine and Israel	All countries could potentially benefit from a regional project in which Jordan supplies renewable energy to all countries and Israel and/or Palestine supplies Jordan with desalinated seawater.
11	US	Global Technology Pilot Porject on Water and COVID issues	Using the Middle East for a pilot project to mobilize public,private, and academic resources in a joint effort to develop creative solutions to address the water and COVID challenges.
12	EU	Initiating short-term interventions for optmizer water supply in Palestine and Jordan (EU Initiative)	Incentivizing Palestinian-Jordanian-Israeli collaboration on water supply, by identifying and providing funding to optimal technologies for addressing shortfalls in current water supply in Palestine and Jordan.
13	Arab League	Joint Arab League-U.S. Initiative to end the blockade on Qatar and allow for active diplomacy to achieve Palestinian unity and prevent further escalation	A joint initiative to use the US influence among GCC countries to end the blockade on Qatar, to normalize relations between Qatar and Israel with the blessings of the Arab League, and to use Qatar's political leverage with Hamas to achieve Palestinian unity.
14	US	New international mechanism to handle all Gaza water, energy and public health issues and projects	A means for all stakeholders to cooperate without needing to withdraw from their stated political grand visions to suffering internal political price. It will ensure supply of water and electricity needed as well as covid-19 relief.

15	US	U.S. appoints a Special Envoy (Sherri) to lead Israeli Palestinian water & natural resource negotiations and calls on EU and Arab League to join a 'Coalition of the Willing' (Oded) to advance a Water Energy Nexus and create a COVID 19 Vaccine Alliance	It includes: Israeli-Palestinian water agreement; Arab Gulf states cover the cost of desalinated water from israel to Gaza and a detailed sanitation plan from Palestine; World Bank Trust Fund to support Gaza; USAID funds to Palestine; Partnership Fund for Peace; US invests in Vaccine Alliance; Isreali-Jordanian agreement for selling water and PV electricity; establishing Desalinated Water Energy Commission.
16	US	U.S. calls the EU to establish joint mechanism overseeing all Gaza related civic issues and mandating both civic and military aid and deals base don local and regional consent and cooperation under such mechanism	The goal is to achieve Israel, Hamas and PA cooperation using an international body to handle all water, sanitation and energy issues in Gaza. By passing existing local and regional stakeholder, the US wants to achieve solutions quickly.



ANNEX A

SCENARIO I, II, AND WILD CARDS



ANNEX A SCENARIO I, II, AND WILD CARDS

SCENARIO I: (DAY 1)

January 2021: COVID-19 – No Vaccine in Sight

It is February 2021. It has been more than a year since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus and the global death toll has risen to 1.5 million deaths. With no vaccine in sight, governments across the world are taking harsh measures in an attempt to control the situation by closing their borders and imposing tougher restrictions on travel and trade.

In the Middle East, more than 200,000 people have died from COVID-related illnesses so far. Countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia are suffering from the collapse of their national health services and struggling to impose local restrictions on movement and social distancing in order to contain the spread of the pandemic.

Israel has experienced a sharp increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, which spilled over into Palestine. As a result, the public health systems in the West Bank and Gaza are overwhelmed, causing Palestinian patients to be turned away from treatment in Israeli hospitals.

An Economic Crisis

Earlier in January 2021, the World Bank issued a new economic outlook report. They envisioned a 7.2% contraction in global GDP in 2021, much worse than the 5.2%

suffered in 2020. "COVID-19 would lead to the deepest global recession in decades, despite the extraordinary efforts of governments to counter the downturn with fiscal and monetary policy support. Over the longer horizon, the deep recessions triggered by the pandemic are expected to leave lasting scars through lower investment, an erosion of human capital through lost work and schooling, and fragmentation of global trade and supply linkages," says the report.

As the global economy shrinks, global oil prices plunge to a record low of \$22 per barrel in February of 2021. Oil and gas producing countries in the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait, experience slow economic growth and announce a series of immediate actions to balance their budgets and cut expenses.

Other countries in the region, such as Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan, that are highly depended on loans and aid packages from the Gulf states are finding it hard to find financial alternatives and seek the aid of the IMF, which in return requires them to go through a series of reforms, cut budgets, and increase taxes. In addition, the crisis is forcing thousands of foreign workers in the Gulf to return to their home countries, which is worsening the economic crisis in their origin states.

Water Shortages

As a result of the economic crisis, governments, NGOs, and international organizations are drastically cutting their budgets, minimizing – and in some cases holding – all works related to the maintenance and development of water and wastewater infrastructure. As a result, water pollution, over-pumping from aquifers, water theft, and leakages leads to a broad water crisis across the MENA region, made worse by a new cycle of droughts due to climate change.

In Palestine, the quality of the drinking water supply, already in bad shape in the period prior to the pandemic, has worsened especially in Gaza. It adds to the public's frustration caused by the worsening COVID-19 situation. This, in turn, leads to an increased pressure on the Palestinian Government to act. In addition to water shortages in West Bank which are leading to over-pumping from groundwater basins, causing weekly clashes between the Israeli forces and Palestinian protestors over water rights and use. "The water situation in Gaza and the West Bank is at an all-time low," writes OCHA in a new report. "The economic crisis is affecting the overall resilience of communities in Palestine, who are dependent on expensive water deliveries by water tankers."

The water issue and clashes with the Israeli Forces turn into a hot political topic in Palestine, where politicians are competing in the presidential elections in the quest to find a successor.

In Jordan, water scarcity is leading to social unrest in times of a worsening economic crisis. "There is a pandemic, our health system is collapsing, and yet there are still Jordanians who can't even wash their hands," says an anonymous source to the NYT, quoted in an article about the growing water tensions between Israel and Jordan. "It's time we stop asking and start taking what is rightly ours."

In Israel, the new PM, Naftali Bennett, is leading a right-wing government and actively seeking to bring back the plan to annex one-third of the West Bank and the Jordan Valley into the Israeli border. "It's time we stop apologizing. It's our land, our water, and our history" he says in an interview to Israeli News 12. "I'm sad to see Israeli soldiers having to deal with political, so called 'water protests.' This can't continue."

The combination of internal pressures within Hamas and lack of agreement with Israel coupled with a tighter right-wing government in Israel leads to a lack of breakthrough on Gaza infrastructure advancement, making COVID-19 and public health measures even more difficult.

WILD CARDS (DAY 2)

Wild Card 1:

Hamas wins both Palestinian Parliament and the presidency. A call on Israeli and Palestinian governments to come to an agreement over the management of natural resources between Israel and Palestine

Following international pressure on the Palestinian Authority, elections are held in the West Bank for both the Palestinian Parliament and the presidency. Once the elections' dates are set, Hamas declares that it will run candidates in both elections. After an intense and heated campaign by both Hamas and Fatah, Hamas wins a landslide victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections, winning 87 seats in the 132-member legislature, and Khaled Mashal is elected as the new Palestinian president. Immediately following the announcement of the elections' results, PM Bennett issues a short statement announcing that Israel does not recognize any Palestinian government that is headed by Hamas as such a government "shows the Palestinians' commitment to the destruction of Israel and principled rejection of any political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The new Hamas-led government decides to take the Palestinian People to an armed struggle against Israel, uniting the different Palestinian factions behind it in response to local pressures following daily clashes with Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank. In parallel, back screen negotiations held in Oman between the EU, the United States, and Iran lead to a new deal with Iran, which removes the Iranian nuclear threat from the Middle East, and removes Iranian Support for Hamas. Following the announcement of this agreement, Germany calls for a de-escalation agreement between the Hamas Government and Israel, which includes the US, the EU, and the Arab League. As a first step to kickstarting the agreement, Germany, the US, the EU, and the Arab League call for a break in the all or nothing paradigm of the Oslo Accords and call on Israeli and Palestinian governments to come to an agreement over the management of natural resources between Israel and Palestine.

Wild Card 2:

An Urgent Need in Regional COVID-19 vaccine alliance.

COVID-19 Infection rates in the MENA region have skyrocketed. Hospitals in Israel, Palestine and Jordan are no longer coping and doctors are having to choose who to keep alive.

Lexivac Biopharma, an American pharmaceutical company, announces that it is two months away from releasing a vaccine for COVID-19. According to a statement issued by the company, the vaccine it is developing for the novel coronavirus has passed the final stages of clinical development and is already under advanced regulatory review and has been approved by the FDA. To prevent the problem of 'vaccine nationalism' and ensure equal access to the vaccine in the Middle East – a region considered especially vulnerable to the coronavirus – the UN Secretary-General António Guterres urges countries in the region to join forces and form a regional alliance whose members' citizens will have access to the vaccine once it is released. This would be a regional version of the COVID-19 Global Access (COVAX) initiative, a global

collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines.

The Gulf States are the first countries to endorse the idea of a regional COVID-19 vaccine alliance. The UAE praises the proposal and pledges US\$420 million to support regional access to COVID-19 vaccines, describing Emirati support as the initial part of the UAE's "forward-looking" vision for the Middle East. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain then invite Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority to join this alliance, describing these invitations as part of the "new Middle East" brokered by the Abraham Accords.

Qatar declares that the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), its sovereign wealth fund, owns a company that is developing a leading coronavirus vaccine. As COVID cases rise dramatically in Gaza and the West Bank, Qatar announces, through a proposed diplomatic initiative, its willingness to cover all Palestinian costs and mediate coordination between all sides in demand for PA reconciliation with Hamas to form a unity government and for Israel to recognize a special status for it (Qatar) in the Temple Mount to balance UAE efforts and initiatives to change the status quo of the site.

The Biden Admin announces its intent to fund the regional distribution of a coronavirus vaccine in the Middle East, but declares that its funding for vaccine measures in the area would be based upon Israeli and Palestinian declarations of a two-state solution along the 1967 lines with a clear timetable for the establishment of a Palestinian state, as well as Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. With election prospects in Israel looming once again, Israel's political system is in turmoil. As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Israel and the West Bank, a fake news story alleging the spreading of the coronavirus by Jewish settlers among Palestinians spreads through Palestinian social media and sets off widespread protests and violence clashes toward both Israel and the Palestinian leadership.

SCENARIO II (DAY 3)

The Crisis Escalates

It is September 2021. Governments across the world continue to struggle in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, and the global coronavirus death toll has risen to 4.8 million deaths. While China and Russia have declared that they are in the final stages of producing a vaccine for COVID-19, no approved vaccine is yet in sight. International travel and movement across borders have almost completely stopped, and many governments in Western Europe, Africa, and the Middle East have implemented lengthy national lockdowns in an attempt to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The global economic crisis continues to deepen. With global trade and supply chains disrupted, exports of food and essential products have become more difficult and countries are forced to rely on local production for their national needs. Per capita income in most emerging and developed economies continues to shrink, and workers in the informal sector – which represents more than 40% of total employment in most MENA economies – have been hardest hit by the continuing economic crisis. Global inflation and unemployment numbers rise to unprecedented numbers, and the World Bank estimates that no improvement will be evident in the global economy until at least mid-2024.

The Middle East continues to suffer from the impact of the coronavirus and the global economic crisis, and the water crisis in the region continues to worsen. Public health systems in Palestine have collapsed, and Israel and Jordan's health systems are close to their breaking points.

A Second UN Summit

In response to these developments, the UN convenes a second regional summit on September 21, 2021. The summit is aimed at enhancing regional collaboration between the MENA countries and builds on the actions taken by regional governments and international actors over the last six months.

As the summit commences its first day of deliberations, the participants in the event present their actions to address the challenges facing the region:

Israel declares that it is ready to offer immediate assistance to address any water shortages that threaten the Palestinians and that it is ready to increase the water supply to Jordan. In addition, it asks for the assistance of experts from the International Water Association (IWA) and the World Bank to advise on implementing immediate steps to reduce water loss in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It also declares its agreement to join any plan proposed by the IWA to address water loss issues in Palestine and Jordan.

Jordan declares that it has increased the government's investment in promoting the use of new technologies to help the agriculture and food sectors to reduce costs and water use, and increase productivity. It also announced that, despite the economic situation, it will increase financial support to farmers, by seeking and approaching donors and by providing microloans. Jordan also declares that its Ministry of Water and Irrigation will begin awareness campaigns about water efficiency in local communities through community-based organizations and will invest in the development of a monitoring plan to find out the locations of water network leakages and violations.

On the regional level, the King of Jordan issues a diplomatic campaign among the Gulf states to gain financial support to build water treatment and desalination plants in Aqaba. Since these plants require high energy, Jordan seeks investments in renewable energy technology from private firms and international organizations.

At the UN summit, Jordanian Officials reach out to the Israeli delegation and ask to negotiate over the Jordan River, under the supervision of the Arab League, to increase the amount of water Israel gives to Jordan every year by 25% and to increase Israeli investment in desalination technology provided to Jordan.

Palestine requests that the UN form an international committee to promote a fair distribution of water resources between Palestine and Israel to fix the unequal access to water between the two states. In addition, it calls on the international community and the European Union to increase the financial support they provide for water projects in Palestine.

The United States reinstates USAID funding to the Palestinians and launches the Partnership Fund for Peace and promotes investments by other countries in joint efforts. At the regional level, the Administration calls on all sides to allow private sector investment in both desalination and renewable energy to unleash a new era of cooperation and the creation of healthy interdependencies between Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank/Gaza. To advance these efforts, the US appoints a Special Envoy to help coordinate regional efforts and promote US interests in the context of the current crisis.

The Arab League creates a new working group focusing on mitigating the economic impact of COVID-19 in Arab countries. While praising the efforts of the United States and other actors focused on resolving the water crisis in Palestine, the representative of the League states that it views COVID-19 as the greater threat to the region in the short- and medium-range and, therefore, focuses on coordinating and supporting Arab states' responses to the pandemic.

The European Union (EU) announces its readiness to create a fund and promote donations from private and state actors to build desalination plants in Jordan and Palestine. Focusing on the short term, the EU announces an aid package composed of financial and technical resources to ensure basic services for the local population in areas hit by the water crisis. It also announces its readiness to play a mediating role to help resolve water disputes between the countries involved and develop best practices in regional climate cooperation.

Building A New Regional Alliance

In a speech delivered to the summit participants on the last day of the summit, the United Nations secretary-general, António Guterres, states: "The region is facing a grave climate emergency. Climate disruption in the Middle East is happening now, and it is impacting all of us living in this region, irrespective of politics or religion."

Guterres concludes his speech by calling on regional leaders to seek an environmental regional protocol and alliance, aimed to promote collaboration between the nations of the region. "In the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference, we got 196 parties to agree on aims to limit global warming. It's time for the nations of the Middle East to take the lead and set a new road map and goals to face the current climate challenges and risks. Leading the way for a new future."

While all the delegations welcome the idea of building a regional environmental alliance, aimed at increasing collaboration between the nations of the Middle East, they are faced with a challenge: how should such an alliance look like and operate, balancing between national interests, while at the same time effectively responding to the region's challenges.



**THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE
CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT
OF THE MIDDLE EAST**