**Royal University of Law and Economics**

**Final Report on**

# Exploring the Causes of Conflict in the Middle East

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# ABSTRACT

Today, many countries and territories have recovered from the chaos of war and have begun to build their nations year after year. However, some countries have been able to find complete peace, while others are still in the throes of chronic war. Even more, some areas have become a bloodbath and a political tool of the ruling leaders. Obviously, like the countries in the Middle East, so far it seems impossible to maintain social stability and security. Due to disagreements between neighboring countries, especially territorial disputes, all countries have launched attacks on each other, as well as interference from superpowers has led the region into endless conflicts. Moreover, the bloodshed continued until the New Arab world, with its long-ruling leader, led the country into decades of corruption, poverty, and unemployment.

So, in this thesis we will explore the root causes of the wars in the Middle East and why many countries in the Arab region are still not as peaceful as other countries. The research and analysis in the thesis are divided into four different chapters. The first chapter is to find out some information and history related to the Middle East, as well as other events that caused the region to fall into the flames of war, as well as scope, research structure, limitation of the research, research methodology, and literature review. The second chapter deals with the emergence of territorial disputes between Arab and Israel, as well as regional crises. The third chapter is about the emergence of the Arab Revolution, which is the main reason why many countries in the Arab region are still at war. In particular, the fourth chapter is about the reactions and interventions of international institutions and superpowers such as the United States, the European Union and the United Nations.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

US      :          United States

EU      :           European Union

UN      :           United Nations

UAE    :          United Arab Emirates

NATO :          North Atlantic Treaty Organization

MENA:          Middle East and North Africa

GDP    :          Gross Domestic Product

FSA     :          Free Syrian Army

CSL     :          Cooperative Security Location

FOS     :          Forward Operation Sites

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Background Information

The Middle East is a geographical and geopolitical region which is located in part of western Asia, northern Africa and southeastern Europe. The western border of the Middle East is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, where are territories of Israel, Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, and Syria. the southern of the Middle East surrounded by the Red and Arabian seas where are states of Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Oman. While Iraq and Jordan connected to the western part of the region. At the center of the region there are Persian Gulf, Including the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iran.[1]

The Middle East is a region which takes over a unique geographical and strategic position. Therefore, it is true that every super power country tries to interfere and seeks to advance its interests in this region. Beside of its geographical and strategic uniqueness, the Middle East is also known as an area where there are three centers of major religious such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Because of these religious divisions, religious issues in the Middle East have become one of challenges for all countries in the region for decades. In terms of the economy, the Middle East is rich in natural resources, especially fossil fuels.[2] In the early nineteenth century, the Middle East's territories became the target of many superpower countries in Europe to colonize the region. The purpose of this attempt is to occupy its natural resource and geostrategic location. In addition to the above reason, the Middle East has been blockaded by international conflicts. Not only that,

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[1] "What Is the Middle East and What Countries Are Part of It?" *WorldAtlas, 2018,* https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/me.htm
[2] Yannis A. Stivachtis, "Conflict and Diplomacy in the Middle East: External Actors and Regional Rivalries," *E-International Relations. 2018.* p. 1.

the region has fallen into crises in which both great and regional powers compete for territory's influence.

For many decades, The Middle East has been one of the most conflict-prone regions and its conflict not only occurred in modern history but also took place since 1897, the battle between Ottoman Empire and British Empire. Ottoman Empire had dominated the Middle East for more than 600 years ago, yet at the end of World War I, Ottoman Empire was defeated by British Empire and their allies. After that the important regions of the Middle East were taken control by both great power countries, British and France[3]. In order to advance their interests over the area of neutral resources, including oil, British and France decided to reform the borders of the Middle East Countries. British dominated Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, and a chunk of Saudi Arabia. While France took over control of Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. As they divided the land without consideration of the diversity of local cultures, the land dispute in those regions started to erupt and led to war which had many sides involved.

In 1948 after the second World War, it was the time when the conflict between Israel and Palestine began. The root cause of this conflict took place after the establishment of the state of Israel, and most of the Middle East countries refused to recognize Israel to exist, many countries of the Middle East including Arab, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq declared to attack and invade the state of Israel, but their attempt was not successful. By the end of 1949, the war between the Arabs and Israel had ceased but it happened again in 1956 when Egypt fought in a war with British

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[3] Yannis A. Stivachtis, "Conflict and Diplomacy in the Middle East: External Actors and Regional Rivalries," *E-International Relations. 2018.* p. 10.

and France over the Suez crisis[4]. During that time, Israel decided to support British by sending its armies to fight against Egypt.

Because many countries of Arab states had tried to attack Israel from time to time, this would have led Israel to feel insecure, and threatened. Hence, in order to protect itself, Israel imposed a war which was called Six-Day war in 1967. As a result, Israel has captured some parts of Arab regions, including Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan. The states of Arab, particularly, Egypt had not ended yet this way and both sides continued to fight against each other year to year.

Until 2010 another root cause of conflict started to provoke the regions into war again. It was time when a new revolution known as the Arab Spring began. Most countries in the Middle East which face a poverty crisis, and bad regime including Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon started to follow the Arab Spring revolution. This revolution caused the event of civil war in many countries in the Middle East uprising and led to the removal of some rulers in the regions.

For the above background history, these could be some reasons and information which disclose the root cause of conflicts in the Middle East and also these could be the issue on which international relations students should study. Even though the conflict in the regions have happened for decades and got many reactions from either the inter-states and governments, there is no resolution that can end the conflict effectively. Moreover, A hundred civilians suffered and died because of the civil war in the regions every single day. The increase of refugees who have fled to other countries in order to survive still remains a main challenge for international institutions and

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[4] "Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *HMSO, London, 1993*, p. 5.

state actors. And up until now, the conflict in the Middle East remains sensitive and challenging for all over the world.

## 1.2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to provide knowledge as well as to understand the roots of chronic conflicts in the Middle East. In addition, the region is considered to be a complex geopolitical region which is involved with many parties, either intergovernmental and countries in the region and the outside world. This research will highlight the main reasons for the outbreak of conflict in the region, especially the territorial war between Arab and Israel, why this war broke out, and to find out why the crisis of chronic war in The Middle East continues to this day, as well as how superpowers, especially international institutions, will take steps to maintain peace in those countries. In addition, we aim to provide knowledge related to problem solving that is important for international relations students.

## 1.3. Scope and Limitation

In this study, we focus on the events of the first territorial dispute between Arab and Israel and other major regional crises, such as the Suez Canal Crisis, the Six-Day War between Israel and the Arab countries, and the war of Yom Kippur day and so on. In addition, we also show the events after each war, how those countries suffered and what is going on in the aftermath. Moreover, we will also discuss the crisis of the chronic war during 2010, when the Arab world was occupied by many dictators, and also the time when the events of the Arab Spring erupted. In this Arab Revolution, we have mentioned only a few important countries to discuss the origins of the revolution, including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria. We also provide the overall background and reasons why each country decided to stand up against the ruling government. This

research paper will highlight the great powers such as Britain, France, the United States and NATO member countries that have intervened and interfered in the internal politics of the Middle East. Furthermore, this research paper will cover up the reaction from the United Nation on how it is going to adopt the resolution to create peace in the region.

## 1.4. Research Methodology

This research paper is based on the books and research articles of previous scholars who studied and analyzed various conflict issues in the Middle East. Some of the studies are excerpted from books published for university students studying international relations for further analysis and research. In addition to many other parts of the study, this research is also based on specific data collected from the official websites of various international institutions and news organizations. In other sections, the solution to finding peace is mentioned, collected from the official website of the United Nation. Moreover, the final report includes the opinions of the lecturer and the writer's perspective to analyze the foreign policy of the international world toward the Middle East.

## 1.5. Research Problems

Today, many countries in the Middle East are facing many problems, especially internal conflicts between states, governments and the people, which has led to the region's relentless civil war. In addition, bloodshed in those areas has resulted in the death of innocent people in some lands on a daily basis. The complex challenges of the region have also shaken the world, reflecting the refugee crisis, poverty and regional instability. For years, the Middle East did not seem to have a taste for peace. In particular, the civil war in Syria, which has continued since the beginning of the Arab Revolution in 2010. Therefore, in this study, three important questions will be asked:

1. What are the main causes of incessant conflict in the Middle East?

2. Why the outbreak of the Arab Spring? And which countries have been affected by this revolution? What will be the end result of all those countries after this revolution is over?

3. What are the measures taken by superpower countries and international institutions in the Middle East?

## 1.6. Literature Reviews

The literature review aims to focus on research such as books, essays, reports, and journals of scholars who have previously studied and analyzed complex issues in the Middle East. One of these literature reviews had raised the issue of territorial disputes that have arisen since the inception of the state of Israel, which was written in, **"From coexistence to conquest; international law and the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1891-1949"**, authored by Kattan. in this book dealt with; the partition of Palestine, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian refugees, and the creation of Israel. In this literature, the authors as well pointed out the first event which took place after WWI, when Ottoman Empire was defeated by British Empire and their allies, and most of the regions of the Middle East were taken control by both great power countries, British and France. Kattan's view was that "*It is equally lamentable that neither the League of Nations nor the United Nations has managed to resolve the conflict. And it is a real travesty that Israelis and Palestinians keep killing each other when neither is to blame for starting the conflict.*" However, Kattan also described that *"There are many ways in which the conflict could be resolved if politicians on both sides of the divide were to be more courageous and imaginative."*[5] In another research paper of Dr. Charles D. Smith, University of Arizona, "**PALESTINE AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT: 1948-1970**" dealing with the involvement of great powers in the Cold War in order to spread its influence in the Middle East. In his research had mentioned two

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[5] Victor Kattan, "From coexistence to conquest; international law and the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1891-1949," *Pluto Press, 2009,* p.171.

frameworks which led to the Arab-Israeli conflict. One is the regional within the Middle East and the global environment characterized by the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc on the one hand and the Western powers, notably the United States, Britain, and France, on the other. These files focus more on the region, though some consider the likelihood of a Middle East Command to serve as a bulwark against communist influence, that might include Israel.[6]

The research is also based on the book's title, **"The Revolution in the Arab World"**, which was written by Marc Lynch, associate professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University, and Blake Hounshell, a managing editor of Foreign Policy. This literature deals with the political crisis and the root causes of the Arab Spring in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria. In this literature, the authors had claimed that since the start of the Arab Spring in 2011, it had already caused instability in the Middle East and brought the region into the civil war. He also stated that it is difficult to know whether the emergence of this revolution has really brought about the real transition of the old regime to democracy, regional stability and political solutions or not. Not only that, the author also discussed the reason why these revolutions succeeded in some countries including Tunisia, and Egypt, while so many others countries had failed. He had answered that because of the power of the youth, in Tunisia, who could not stand living in a society full of corruption and poverty, they arose to form a powerful opposition movement and sought a new regime transition. In Egypt, in particular, the United States has played a key role in helping insurgents to make a change of leadership.[7]

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[6] Charles D. Smith, "PALESTINE AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT: 1948-1970," *Cengage Learning, 2005*, p.2.
[7] Marc Lynch, "The Revolution in the Arab World," *Foreign Policy Magazine, 2011,* p.1-2.

In addition, many scholars and analysts have written books on issues related to these complex issues to help international relations scholars better understand the new revolution in the Middle East, including the book title, **"The New Arab Wars: Uprising and Anarchy in the Middle East"** and "**The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East**" by Marc Lynch, associate professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington, described what happened in the Middle East and provided guidance on what will happen after the end of the civil war in the region. He believed that every revolution could bring about change in different ways, and according to his point of view, revolution can bring peace and change, but before peace can be achieved unless these nations must go through the fires of war and bloodshed for decades.[8]

# Chapter 2: The Major Conflicts in the Middle East

## 2.1. The Arab-Israel War

Before we understand the conflict between the Arab state and Israel, we should clarify that Palestine is a region that is part of Arab League. Therefore, when you hear the word Arab-Israel War or Israel-Palestine conflict, they are the same conflict which happened in 1948 following World War II. About 600 years ago, most regions of the Middle East were occupied by Ottoman Empire.[9] During the rule of Ottoman Empire, there were many countries of the Middle East that were under its colonization including Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Egypt, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Some were part of Arabia.[10] Until 1922, Ottoman Empire lost the battle in the war between Great British and France. The territories used to be

[8] Marc Lynch, "The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East," *New York, 2012,* p.3-4.
[9] "The Ottoman Empire" *eHistory, 2010,* https://ehistory.osu.edu/articles/ottoman-empire
[10] "Origins of the Ottoman Empire" *History, 2017,* https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/ottoman-empire

dominated by Ottoman Empire were handed to British and France to colonize after Ottoman Empire regime ended. Those two superpower countries emphasized only their own interest and looked forward to the advantages of natural resources in these regions. At the time of British and France's mandate, the Middle East was spread into two parts, some parts including Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, and a chunk of Saudi Arabia were dominated by the Great British and some parts including Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia were dominated by France. The Great British governments had controlled Palestine for over years, but at the end of World War II, British was exhausted from the war, lack of resources supply, and the increasing tensions in the regions, hence, it decided not to be involved in Palestine anymore. After the withdrawal of British mandate, the United Nations started to take control over the mandate of Palestine instead by creating the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.[11] In 1947, the United Nation proposed an implementation of a plan to partition Palestine into two separate independent states and one international territory: Arab state, Jewish state and the City of Jerusalem where it belongs to international. On the next day, after the proposal on implementation of a plan to divide the state, many neighboring Arab countries were not satisfied and rejected the plan. Moreover, they believed that it was unfair for Palestine since the majority of Palestine population was Arabian. Therefore, there was no reason that behalf of Palestine territory should be cut out to Jewish people. However, the disagreement of Arab state over the controversy of declaring Jewish as an independent state was not successful because Jewish itself had the United States as a main supporter.

On May 15, 1948, the Israel state was established under recommendation of the General Assembly of the United Nation and was recognized by the United State and Soviet Union. As a

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[11] Alejandro Montero Ortiz, "The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: An Analysis of Palestine's Bid for Statehood," *CEI International Affairs. 2015*. p. 4-5.

result, the war between Israel and other five Arab nations such as Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon occurred, namely, Arab-Israel war or Israel-Palestine War. Nothing had changed since 1947, the plan to invade from the Arab countries to the Israel state continued to fail again. Although the Arab nations togethers declared war against Jewish, Israel still got victory due to the strongest supporters from the United States, and well prepared.[12] In 1949, one year after the Arab-Israel war had ended, the state of Israel and the Arab states signed an armistice agreement in order to stop fighting and to discuss ways of making peace. However, the war between the Arab-Israel had led to draw the new boundaries beyond the United Nations partition plan in 1947. The region known as Palestine now was spread more into three parts which were occupied under different political regimes. Over 77 percent of the territory of Palestine was dominated under Israel security, the coastal plain around the city of Gaza was controlled by Egypt, and East Jerusalem and the hill country of central Palestine (the West Bank) were taken by Jordan.[13]

## 2.2. The Suez Crisis

The Suez Canal is located in Egypt territory and was originally built in 1859 by a France diplomat, Ferdinand de Lesseps. After ten years of construction, the canal was completely opened and operated by a private company in 1869. The Suez Canal was extremely important to international states for trading, and transaction during that time. About 1.5 million barrels of oil were transited through the Canal a day, and about 1.2 million of which were exported to Western Europe. This amount of oil supplies was equal to two-third of Western Europe's total consumed oil. Each year Egypt received about $17 million, while the company operating the canal could make

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[12] Harvey Sicherman, "Establishment of Israel," *Britannica. 2021.* https://www.britannica.com/place/Israel/Establishment-of-Israel#ref219421
[13] Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, "Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer," *MERIP, 2014*, p. 5.

in total profit about $31 million a year. The truth behind is that the company that operated the Suez

Canal was under control by Western European states, British and France.[14]

Until 26 July, 1956, under the president of Egyptian, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Suez Canal was

nationalized. The Suez Crisis immediately erupted, joined by Great British, France, and Israel who

opposed Nasser's action. On October 29, 1956, Israel was the first attacker to invade Egypt and

two day later, there were two more military forces from British and France to join the battle. The

British and French sent their troops to land at Port Said and Port Fuad and took control of the area

around the Suez Canal. Israel captured Gaza, Rafaḥ, and Al-ʿArīsh and occupied most of the

peninsula east of the Suez Canal in just only five days.[15]  In response to this attack, Egypt blocked

the Suez Canal and did not allow any transportation to navigate in the canal. Later on, the crisis

was noticed by the United Nations and International community. The UN passed Resolution 997

on 2 November 1956, which called for a cease-fire, the reopening of the Suez Canal, and the

restoration of secure freedom of navigation. In addition, On December 3, the British government

announced that it would withdraw its troops over the next few weeks. France and Israel soon also

withdrew, and Egypt reopened the canal under its own control the following April.[16]

## 2.3. Six-Day War

As we already know, in 1948 after the establishment of the state of Israel many Arab states

declared a war against Israel in order to invade its territory, yet in 1949, the war between the Arab

and Israel was ended with armistice agreement and Israel was victorious. However, the Arab

nations would not remain silent, their retreat was just to get back energy and prepare for the next

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[14] Rose McDermott, "Risk-Taking in International Politics: the 1956 Suez Crisis," *The University of Michigan Press, 1998*, p. 137, https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472108670-06.pdf
[15] "Suez Crisis," *History, 2009,* https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/suez-crisis
[16] James M. Boughton, "Northwest of Suez: The 1956 Crisis and the IMF" *IMF, 2000*, p. 426.

war. At that time, Israel became a state surrounded by enemies which were neighboring the Arab states. For instance, the Israel state was nine miles from Jordan and Egypt, therefore, it could be attacked at any time. Because of these concerns that could lead Israel to an insecure and dangerous area as well as the fear that the Arab countries would attack its territory again, Israel had to be well organized if any states of the Arab want to invade its territory again.

Like Israel's expectation, in 1967 the Arab States and its neighboring countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Jordan had deployed their troops to the border land of Israel. On the 16th May 1967, the United Nation peacekeeping army force standing in Sinai was replaced by Egypt's army force under President Nasser's command. Not only that, President Nasser blocked the waterway, Aqaba Gulf in order to prevent the Israel ship from entering through the Tiran Straits as well.[17] In this second the Arab-Israel war was joined not only by the Arab states but also involved by the Soviet Union and American as the supporters. For those two superpower countries played a significant role in the conflict through providing supplies either in military force and weapons for both sides. In response to the threat of the Arab states, Israel had to protect itself immediately by sending the air force to the border land. As a result, in the early morning, on the 5th June 1967, Israel launched preemptive air strikes to attack Egypt aircraft without notice. In this surprise attack, most Egypt military bases and aircraft were destroyed completely by not giving them even a chance to counter back. About 15,000 of Egyptian soldiers were killed, 600 of tanks and 500 of aircraft were destroyed. In the day following, most of Jordanian, Iraqi and Syrian's air forces were also destroyed by Israel's air strike. With this attack, Israel took only six days to remove over thousands of the Arab states soldiers and conquered most areas of the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, Gaza and

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[17] Kardo Rached, "The Six-Day War and Its Impact on Arab and Israeli Conflict," *David Publishing, 2017,* p. 92.

Golan Heights. In addition, Israel's borders were expanded more to three and a times if compared to the original size partitioned by the United Nations in 1947.

On the 22nd November 1967, The United Nations adopted Resolution 242, which called Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories of the Arab states. the Resolution 242 expressed the fair and lasting peace on two principles:

1. The withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the occupied territories.

2. Respect for and recognition of any sovereignty.

3. A solution to the Palestinian refugee problem.[18]

To the Arab countries, this Resolution was acceptable, and made them willing to settle the conflict peacefully with Israel. However, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria demanded Israel to recede its arm forces from the conquered Arab countries first. In return to this requisition, Israel insisted that all the Arab nations should first recognize Israel's existence and make peace so that the withdrawals and the refugee issue would be negotiated later on. This could be an excuse that Israel used the occupied territories as a tool for making peace, and the strategy to force the Arab states to recognize its severity.[19] The many attempts of the Arab states to gain their lost territories back were not successful. Instead, these wars changed the balance of power in the Middle East, especially, the state of Israel's military power became stronger than any of the Arab states, and it strengthened the terms of diplomatic and economic relations with the power states as well.

## 2.4. Yom Kippur War

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[18] The United Nations, "Resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967," *United Nations, 1967*,
https://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/5ba47a5c6cef541b802563e000493b8c/7d35e1f729df491c85256ee700686136?OpenDocument
[19] The United Nations, "The Question of Palestine and the United Nations," *New York, 2008*, p. 16.

Following the conflicts from 1948-1967, the Arab countries had lost in the battles between the state of Israel twice, including the Arab-Israel War, and the Six-day War. As a result, Israel was a victor, and conquered almost 78 percent of the land of neighboring Arab countries, including the Sinai Desert and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. It brought the greatest shame on the Arab and its allies that they were defeated by a small and new birth land like Israel twice in history. Not until five years later, in the Anwar Sadat regime, he initiated his allies in the Arabs to avenge Israel and recapture the regions that Israel had conquered.[20]

October 6, 1973 the War between the Arabs and Israel emerged again, known as the Yom Kippur War. This war erupted in response to the Six-day War in 1968, when Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were a failure and Israel was a victor who captured most of the Arabs' lands. The Yom Kippur War happened on the holiest day for Jew's people when they celebrated the Yom Kippur festival. At that time, Egypt used the same strategy as Israel used in the Six-day War in 1967. Without preparing for a war, Israel had experienced the surprise attack from the Arab states as if she did to the Arabs during the Six-day War. In order to win this battle, Egypt had sent its military to the Sinai and Syria had sent its arm force to the Golan Heights. However, the Arab army forces seemed like they would lose the battle again. In addition to the root cause of the conflict, there were not only the Arab states who initiated to attack Israel but also had the outside world states to support behind. And that was also the reason why Israel was tough to defeat. Moreover, the conflict took place amid the Cold War when there was a competition between the Soviet Union and the United States, so it would be a chance for these two superpower countries to drive advantages by

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[20] Cierra Bakhsh, "Historiography of the Yom Kippur War," *Fordham University, 2020*, p. 2.

influencing their ideology to the Middle East. As a result, the Soviet Union became a supporter of the Arabs, and the United States was a supporter of Israel.

## 2.4.1. Consequences of the Yom Kippur War

Despite the Arab states and Israel having signed the armistice agreement together since 1967 to ceasefire, they would not forget about the embarrassment of their failure and the losing of most of the Arab lands to Israel's conquest. Therefore, when Anwar Sadat became a president of Egypt, he sought to recapture the territories back from Israel. On the day of the Yom Kippur celebration, it was not only a holiday for Jewish but also the day when Israel was surprised by the attack from Egypt and Syria. Since both sides had the power countries as supporters behind, the conflict became a proxy-war, and caused destructive impact on both Arabs and Israel. However, for the Arab states, this war was not in vain, at last they could demand Israel to return their lands back. As a result, in 1974, Egypt and Israel agreed to sign an agreement, which called for Israel to return the Sinai region back to Egypt and in 1979 was the time for the peace agreement was signed by the Arab states and Israel. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, Syria lost even more territory in the Golan Heights, and in 1979 Syria insisted on other Arab states to vote to expel Egypt from the Arab League.[21]

As we can see, many conflicts have erupted in the Middle East since World War I, and still continue for decades. Three consecutive wars between Arabia and Israel have erupted over the creation of the state of Israel, and it has resulted in a number of crises, such as geopolitical upheaval, refugee issue, and civil war in Lebanon.

## Chapter 3: The New Conflicts in The Middle East

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[21] "Yom Kippur War," *History, 2009*, https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/yom-kippur-war

## 3.1. The Arab Spring

When a country is occupied by a tyrant leader, it is inevitable that the country will not resort to violence or conflict between the government and the citizens. Obviously, in the modern Arab world, as every nation in the Middle East has just emerged from the fires of the Cold War, the new conflicts in the region have escalated again. For instance, the Arab spring was an example that could not be ignored by international states and governments. Nothing happens for no reason, like the cause of this Arab revolution. It was a time when all the Arab countries were under the rule of the leaders who ruled for years. Moreover, whenever a country has an incompetent leader, it causes all those countries to face many problems such as economic crisis, poverty, corruption and unemployment. For these reasons, many Arab countries are protesting against the government to change the political regime as well as to seek welfare for their country.

The Arab Spring first took place in 2010 in Tunisia, a country plagued by social instability due to dictatorial leaders refusing to step down. During the eruption of this revolution, many other Arab countries that were experiencing similar crises began to demand a change of leadership and a better prosperous nation. All the Arab countries involved in taking this revolution as a means of overthrowing the long-ruling leader are: Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. But the important thing we should know is that not all Arab countries following the Arab Spring received what they expected. Only a few Arab countries carried out this revolution and succeeded, these included Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. In particular, for some countries such as Syria it not only did not change for the better, but also caused a chronic crisis in the country. A number of protesters were killed in this event and were counted as 97 in Bahrain, 338 in Tunisia, 841 in Egypt, and nearly 2000 protesters in Yemen, 25000 in Libya and 100,000 in Syria were reported dead.

Moreover, those countries that sought to reformation their regime also face economic crises which lead to increased poverty in countries. For example, more than 10 percent of Tunisia and Egypt's GDP are relayed on tourism, yet after the Arab spring erupted in 2010, tourism in those countries declined by over 60 percent.[22]

These are just a few brief facts of what had happened during the Arab spring, and in this chapter, we will study in detail on the events of the Arab Revolution, from 2010 to the present. Moreover, we will look forward to the relations between the Middle East and the outside world. In particular, the diplomatic, political relations and the interventions from international institutions and superpowers such as the United States and the Western world.

## 3.2. The Arab Spring Timeline

### 3.2.1. Tunisia (17 December 2010 – 14 January 2011)

Tunisia was the starting point of the outbreak of the Arab Spring, and since then every other Arab country has embarked on this revolution. It was on 17 December, 2010, there was a Tunisian man, who set himself on fire to protest a police officer after getting abused without reason while he was selling fruit on the street. His name was Mahamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old street vendor.[23] During that time, it was the regime of the Ben Ali government, who came to power in Tunisia, and led the country to corruption, poverty and violence against human rights. After Mahamed Bouazizi burned himself, he was sent to the hospital, however, 90 percent of his body was burned, and He died on January 5, 2011. The situation in Tunisia became worse and worse when the majority of Tunisian including students, teachers, lawyers, Journalists, and opposition politicians began to

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[22] Daan Blitz, "The Arab Spring: A parsimonious explanation of recent contentious politics," *Radboud University Nijmegen, 2014*, p. 1.

[23] Alasdair McKay, "The Arab Spring of Discontent," *e-International Relations, 2011*, p.4, https://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/arab-spring-collection-e-IR.pdf.

protest and took this opportunity as an excuse to condemn the government and demand president Ben Ali to step down.[24]

Until the 12th day of January an outbreak of disorder by a group of youths in the capital of Tunis erupted which led the state into chaos and mass uprising. The situation in Tunisia deteriorated rapidly as the government deployed its military to prevent riots and imposed a national curfew. In response to this situation, on January 13, the president of Tunisia Ben Ali had released a statement on television that he would resign from his position after finishing his ruling in 2014. However, the demonstrators would not agree with this negotiation, and they insisted on Ben Alin to end his mandate immediately as soon as possible. As such a dispute between the government and demonstrators could not reach a solution, the government of Tunisia decided to impose a state of emergency on January 14, prohibiting gathering of over three people, and authorizing the use of force against protesters. Most of the protesters were detained and reportedly tortured, and nearly 200 people were killed in the action of uprising. On the same day, the president Ben Ali had resigned from his position and fled to Saudi Arab. In the aftermath, Tunisia became the first nation practicing the Arab Spring revolution that was able to cause the removal of the ruling government successfully.[25]

### 3.2.1.1. Tunisia Aftermath of Arab Spring

**Democracy**

It is true that all outbursts of violence in the protests were spanked for any reason. The same thing happened in Tunisia because the leaders who did not have the ability to govern the country

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[24] Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin, "The Root Causes of the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution and Egyptian January 25 Revolution," *International Journal of Islamic Thought, 2018*, p.70-71.
[25] Adam Zeidan, "Arab Spring: pro-democracy protests," *Britannica, 2011,* https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring.

well plunged their country into many crises, including undemocratic, poverty, economic crisis, unemployment, and injustice. However, every Tunisian citizen could not take it anymore, therefore, they need to do something in order to seek a better world and living standard. As a result, on December 17, 2010, there was a new birth of Arab revolution, namely, the Arab Spring. To this demonstrator it took only one month to reform the entire state of Tunisia into a new regime under a new government authority. Moreover, after the former leader of Tunisia, Ben Ali had fled to Saudi Arab and stepped down on January 14, 2011, it was the great result that every protester expected to happen. Later on, the new Prime Minister, Mohamed Ghannouchi was announced as the Prime Minister of Tunisia. However, Mohamed Ghannouchi was a former member of Ben Ali's political party so that it could not satisfy the demonstrators. On February 27, 2011, Mohamed Ghannouchi stepped down and was replaced by Beji Caid Essebsi. Until July 24, 2011, an official election was held by the Tunisian government, and there was an Islamist party, Ennahda winning 90 seats with more than 40 percent of the vote. On December 14, 2011, Hamadi Jebali, a member of Ennahda was appointed to be a prime minister of Tunisia.[26]

**Economy**

In terms of economics, it was also one of the major causes of the Arab Spring that erupted in 2010. Fortunately, after the success of the removal of former prime minister, Ben Ali, the economy in Tunisia rapidly rebounded in 2012. Obviously, both agriculture and human services sectors were growing nearly 30 percent. Moreover, the GDP of Tunisia increased by 2 percent in 2011, 2.7 percent in 2012, 3.3 percent in 2013 and 8.8 percent in 2020.[27] The Arab Spring has had a devastating effect on Tunisia's total economy with a reduced per capita estimate of $ 600 per

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[26] Adam Zeidan, "Jasmine Revolution," *Britannica, 2011,* https://www.britannica.com/event/Jasmine-Revolution
[27] "The World Bank in Tunisia," *WorldBank, 2020*, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/overview

product in 2011, $ 574 (5.1 percent) in 2012 and $ 735 (6.4 percent) in 2013. In the first year of 2011, the losses were significantly higher, and by 2013, the losses increased further.[28] Moreover, the main channel through which the Arab Spring had seriously affected the Tunisian economy was through investment. In addition, the high youth unemployment rate was estimated at 27% in 2010 and Tunisia's economic disparities have been plagued by high levels of corruption in the past year of 2011. As for soft investment from abroad and tourism, which also declined, Tunisia had lost 3.5 percent to 4.5 percent in a year.[29] By 2011, in the second and fourth quarters, the unemployment rate was 18.9 percent, equivalent to 738,400 of unemployed, and about 60 percent were women, according to the figures of the National Institute of Statistics (INS). At this point, it shows that the Ennahda Party's economic development strategy was less focused on rehabilitating the poverty of the people in the region. However, it was not entirely possible to blame Ennaha's leadership, as Tunisia's economy had been facing crises left by previous leaders, especially the corruption of Ben Ali.

### 3.2.2. Egypt (January 25, 2011 - February 11, 2011)

Following the rise of the Arab Revolution in Tunisia, the revolution marked a turning point in the resignation of Prime Minister Ben Ali. After the success of the revolution, other Arab countries that were in a similar situation to Tunisia began to regain their strength and protested to force their leader to step down from its positions. Likely, Egypt, which was stuck in a crisis of human rights, poverty and unemployment for decades under the Hosni Mubarak regime. Therefore, the people of Egypt began to choose January 25, 2011 to be the day of the demonstration, demanding Hosni Mubarak to resign immediately. It was on that day that the Arab Revolution began in Egypt. In a

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[28] Matta, Appleton, and Bleaney, "The Impact of the Arab Spring on the Tunisian Economy," *Oxford University, 2016*, p. 232.
[29] Nicholas Kitchen, "After the Arab Spring Power Shift in the Middle East?" *LSE Research Online, 2012,* p. 21.

protest to demand that the Prime Minister, who has been in power for more than 30 years, take only 18 days, and as a result, on February 11, 2011, Prime Minister Hosni Mubarak resigned from his position immediately. However, between January 25 and February 11, many protesters were killed, with about 846 killed and more than 6,467 injured in the action of demonstration.[30]

When Prime Minister Mubarak resigned, the government of Egypt was changed to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the constitution was suspended, and both houses of parliament were dismissed. A few months later, a new government was formed and a constitutional declaration was issued, which included a timetable for shifting power from the Supreme Council to an elected parliament and president. It was at this time that Egyptian perceived the true taste of democracy, and it was also the time to rebuild a stable democratic regime. Until 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Morsi, became a first democratically elected president of Egyptian. However, he was removed from post-president after only one year in his regime when there was another revolution against the Muslim Motherhood. Despite of Muhammad Morsi was elected as a democratically president but the new policy of this new government was opposed to revolution's goals. As the Muhammad Morsi became a ruler, he tends to manage the process of state's transition rather than maintain the security of nation. Such a challenge had led Egypt into violent confrontations between the government and the street protesters once again when the president Mohammad Morsi planned to reform a constitution which would expand the president's power.  In some parts of the Sinai Peninsula, such as the northeast area of Rafah, Egypt's military base, and the border of Israel were repeatedly attacked, which caused many Egyptian forces to be killed. By the end of 2012, the political situation as well as peace seemed to be more stable, and the government was able to restore

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[30] Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin, "Rethinking the 'Arab Spring: The Root Causes of the Tunisian Jasmine," *International Journal of Islamic Thought, 2018*, p.75.

peace in the country, especially by easing the serious conflict of terrorist attacks. However, the situation in Egypt began to escalate again in mid-2013 due to the emergence of sectarian divisions between supporters and opponents of Morsi. In addition to this tension, Morsi's opponents were dissatisfied with the way Morsi led the country, especially the management of social justice and socioeconomic conditions that did not match the revolution's goals.[31] The controversy between Morsi supporters and his opponents has left scores dead and injured at more than 1,150 protesters in 2013, after Morsi's removal.[32]

Later on, Egypt was led by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who had been led the demonstration against the new president Muhammad Morsi. In May 2014, al-Sisi was elected to be an official leader of Egypt, and in March 2018, once again, he was elected to be a president of Egypt for a second term. Despite repeated changes of leadership, Egypt did not seem to have achieved peace completely. During the reign of the new leader al-Sisi, domestic unrest intensified as Egypt plunged into a growing crisis of terrorism, especially in 2015. More than 1,300 people have been killed and injured in the terrorist attacks. Given the challenges posed by such an unstable country, President al-Sisi is deeply embarrassed and shows that Egypt under his leadership is indeed weak and incapable of Ensuring security and stability in Egypt. Especially from 2017 to 2018, under the al-Sisi regime did not seem to be very successful due to the increasing number of terrorism attacks.[33] However, in mid-2018, Egypt under the al-Sisi regime in the second term after the election seems to have regained hope for Egyptian. al-Sisi began to restore its control of Sinai and military power to fight against terrorism attacks in exchange for military aid and economic aid.

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[31] Khader Sawaed, "Egypt's Challenge of Stateness After the Arab Spring," *iNSS, 2019*, p.54-56.
[32] Omar Shakir, "All According to Plan: The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt" *Human Rights Watch. 2014,* https://bit.ly/21djjFN.
[33] Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2017

### 3.2.3. Libya (17 February 2011 - 20 October 2011)

It is no different from other Arab countries, Libya has been ruled by a tyranny, Muammar Qaddafi for 42 years. Qaddafi has been in power since 1969 and has pledged with his people to ensure the country's stability and democracy. During Qaddafi's tenure, he disbanded many oppositions political parties and imprisoned them without trial. Not only that, all civil society institutions were not very developed, and almost all sectors in Libya, such as education, health, industry, and agriculture, were not progressing at all. Leading the country against his own promises has angered the Libyan people, hence, followed by an Arab uprising erupted in 2010 in Tunisia that prompted the Libyan people to protest for removal of Qaddafi.[34] On 17 February 2011, a revolution influenced by the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt also took place in Libya. However, Qaddafi refused to step down easily and even used his authority to command the arm forces against the demonstration movement. Moreover, all media outlets in Libya have also been cut off, including Aljazeera and Facebook in order to prevent spreading to the outside world.[35]

The use of military forces against the protesters did not improve anything, but instead this could ignite the anger of the protesters, and the revolutionary movement became more widespread. Just in the first week of the demonstration campaign hundreds of people were killed by the arm forces of Qaddafi. All the deaths have angered the Libyan people, especially the families of the victims, and demanded revenge. In this situation, despite the intervention of international institutions, they could not help nothing. Many questions had been raised whether the fate of Libya can be as successful as other Arab countries such as Tunisia and Egypt or not? And if Qaddafi's brutal use of force against the demonstrators was successful, would other Arab leaders follow his example?

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[34] "Unfinished Revolution, page," *Ibrahim Fraihat, 2016*, p. 21.
[35] Marc Lynch, "The Arab uprising: The unfinished revolution," *Publicaffairs New York, 2013,* chapter7.

But if the opposition succeeded in overthrowing Qaddafi, what country would this Arab revolution spread to? As a result, on February 20, protesters successfully recaptured control of Benghazi. In a short time, the area has become a New Haven for the Libyan people under the control of the opposition. However, Qaddafi's forces did not remain silent and ordered more troops to be deployed in other cities to prevent further insurgents from invading. On February 21, the influential Islamist, Yusuf al-Qaradawi had encouraged Libyan soldiers to assassinate Qaddafi on Aljazeera's television and asked those seeking to end Qaddafi's regime to take part.[36] Later on, October 20, 2011, the leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi had been assassinated, and his death even brought more instability to some regions such as Libya, Mali, Niger, and Southern Algeria.

## 3.2.3.1. The External Involvement

While Libya was in the throes of war between insurgents and Qaddafi government forces, other European countries such as the French, British, the US and the UN also intervened. On 17 March 2011, the United Nation Security Council adopted a resolution 1973, which called for a no-fly zone, in order to prevent attacks on civilian targets. But before the UN issued a proclamation on a ceasefire in Libya, French and British had already intervened by providing military assistance to counter Qaddafi's forces.[37] Under the pretext that France was engaging in the flames of Libya's civil war, it was because at the time that French President, Sarkozy did not seem to have the support of his people, so the intervention in Libya is a way to further his popularity, as well as undoing the mistake he made in joining the army to help former Prime Minister Ben Ali during the Arab Spring

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[36] , "Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi:Theologian of Terror," *New York, 2013,*
https://www.adl.org/news/article/sheik-yusuf-al-qaradawi-theologian-of-terror
[37] Attir, M. O., & Larémont, R. R, "Euro-American foreign policy, the fall of the
Qaddafi regime, and the consequences for migration." *Journal of the Middle East & Africa, 2016*, p. 85–100.
https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2016.1152572

erupted in Tunisia.[38] Non-NATO members, Qatar and UAE countries have also initiated the provision of humanitarian aid and peacekeeping forces to Benghazi. Partly, the US under the Obama administration, seems they did not want to be involved with Libya's civil war since they hesitate over the costs and risks of military intervention.[39] However, the interference from European and NATO members did not adhere to the UN resolution on ceasefire, in contrast, they exacerbated the situation in Libya even more bloody. There was only one reason for this interference: personal interests, because other countries in the West had poor relations with Qaddafi, so to benefit more from Arab countries, the West had to incite the rebels to pull Qaddafi out of office.[40] In addition, most of the benefits to the West was to strengthen their economy, as Libya is a major source of oil and many oil refinery industries were under Qaddafi.[41] In order to take these advantages the West had to end the Qaddafi regime, hence the Western companies were able to invest in oil production, especially France was the sixth largest trading partner of Libya.[42] Not only the West was involved in the civil war in Libya, but also some of the Gulf States such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE attempted to use the conflict in Libya to spread their regional influence. Those states had used the media as a means of exposing human rights abuses in Libya, and this was the reason why the superpowers intervened in this crisis.[43] The unrest in Libya escalated as Qatar and the UAE provided aid to the rebels and continued to provide more aid despite

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Hana, V, "Beyond the Revolution External Actors in Pre- & Post-Revolutionary Libya," *Obrana a Strategie,2017*, https://doi.org/10.3849/1802-7199.17.2017.02.101-116
[41] KHAN, M., & MEZRAN, K. "No Arab Spring for Algeria," *Atlantic Council, 2016,* http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep0347
[42] Hana, V, "Beyond the Revolution External Actors in Pre- & Post-Revolutionary Libya. Review of Current Research," *Obrana a Strategie , 2017,* p. 101-116. https://doi.org/10.3849/1802-7199.17.2017.02.101-116
[43] Lynch, M, "The New Arab Order: Power and Violence in Today's Middle East," *Foreign Affairs, 2018,* p.116–126. https://libproxy.albany.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rc h&AN=131527251&site=eds-live&scope=site

the fall of the Qaddafi regime.[44] At that time Libya was considered to have the highest level of interference from other countries, including the West and the Gulf States, as well as international bodies such as the UN, the Arab League and NATO.

### 3.2.3.2. After the Fall of Qaddafi's Regime

After the fall of Qaddafi regime, Libya still did not seem to bring peace because as if during the outbreak of the civil war, Libya was divided into many different areas between the government-occupied areas and the areas occupied by insurgents.[45] Many areas of Libya are under different occupations due to the culture of the victors. The culture of victor was practiced, whenever a rebel group or the government restored an area that was dominated by an opponent, that area would be under their control. During that time, one area was controlled by a single group, and in addition, Tripoli was attacked by several groups on purpose of domination, including Qaddafi supporters. As a result, in 2013, the military took over some areas which were the region of the oil refining industry and sold them on the illegal market, reducing oil production by 1.4 million barrels per day.[46]

Partly, Libya's economy, despite the end of the civil war, seems to be failing due to political uncertainty and a lack of security in the country. Social unrest has led to soft foreign investment and a declining workforce, especially in the oil industry sector. Moreover, gross domestic product (GDP) of Libya had fallen by about 60 percent in 2011 and oil production fell by about 1.77 million barrels a day. Libya had also faced economic sanctions from the UN since the outbreak of the Arab

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[44] Boduszyński, M. P, "The external dimension of Libya's troubled transition: the international community and 'democratic knowledge' transfer," *Journal of North African Studies, 2015*, p. 735-753. https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2015.1081462

[45] Patrick Cockburn, "Special Report: We All Thought Libya Had Moved On—It Has, but into Lawlessness and Ruin,"*Independent, 2013,* https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/special-report-we-all-thought-libya-had-moved-on-it-has-but-into-lawlessness-and-ruin-8797041.html.

[46] Azeem Ibrahim, "RISE AND FALL? THE RISE AND FALL OF ISIS IN LIBYA," *Independently published, 2020*, p.36.

Revolution in February. However, the oil industry rebounded a year after Qaddafi's death, with oil production rising by about 1.6 million barrels a day. In addition, the oil industry contributes about 70 percent of Libya's gross domestic product, 95 percent of exports and 90 percent of government revenue.[47]

### 3.2.4. Yemen (27 January 2011 - 23 November 2011)

Yemen is not much different from other Arab countries, Yemen also has the same fate as other Arab countries, under the rule of Ali Adullah Saleh, who had been in power for 33 years. Saleh became President of Yemen in 1978, yet under his regime Yemen was divided into North and South Yemen, then in 1990 the two regions were reunited. However, in 1994, the southern region demanded secession, but was defeated in the civil war led by Saleh. After the end of the civil war, Yemen also suffered severe damage, especially in the face of political and economic crisis. It was not until 2004 that civil war broke out again between Saleh's army and the Houthis. The war broke out six times in a row and lasted until 2010.[48] Under Saleh's leadership, Yemen became the poorest country in the Arab world with 24 million population and an estimated 135,000 villages and communities. Yemen was also considered as a country with a high population growth rate of 3% per year in the world. The unemployment rate is about 40 percent to 43 percent of the population live under the poverty line. In this country, about 29% of the population are women and 69% are men. In addition, about 50% of women do not have a higher education. In addition to these challenges, Yemen was also facing declining oil and water resources, as the entire oil industry

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[47] U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Libya: Analysis," *June 2012*.
[48] Ibid p.39

needed to spend more money on manpower, thus causing a sharp decline in oil production for a decade. At the same time, the country's water resources were in short supply.[49]

Another major challenge is the emergence of Islamist groups in the north, the Houthi-led insurgency, which has left Yemen further under threat from Islamists. To curb the spread of Islamist influence, Salleh amended the constitution and resumed his presidency. As a result, on January 15, 2011, the day after Tunisian President Ben Ali stepped down in protest of the Arab Revolution, many people in Yemen began to protest against Salleh to resign from his position immediately as well. Many Yemenis gathered in front of Sanna Square to demand Salleh to step down. In response to the opposition, Salleh promised not to join the election in the next term.[50] However, more than 10,000 protesters chose cities as demonstrations, including Taiz, Aden and al-Mukalla. In Taiz, the city was renamed to Hurriyah City, and the demonstrators there demanded the elimination of the formation of fake political parties to cover up corruption in the political system. In response to opposition from the rebels, Salleh set out a number of strategies, including arrests and the use of violence. As the situation worsened, on January 23, Yemeni security forces decided to release eight insurgent leaders and one protest leader in Sanaa and Taiz. In addition, Salleh also announced some economic reforms. These include raising wages, providing food and gas for the military and security forces, raising wages for workers, halving taxes and increasing social welfare for half a million poor families.[51] Even so, Salleh has not been able to completely stop the violence in the country, and Salleh's forces continue to use force against protesters. Until February 25, a 17-year-old protester was shot dead by police.

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[49] Fattah, K. "Yemen: A Social Intifada in a Republic of Sheikhs," *Middle East Policy,2011*, pp. 79-85
[50] Gordon, S, "Taiz: The Heart of Yemen's Revolution. Critical Threats," *criticalthreats, 2012,* http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/gordon-taiz-heart-yemen-revolution-january-12-2012
[51] Boucek, C and Revkin. M, "The Unraveling of the Salih Regime in Yemen," CTC *Sentinel, 2011*, p.1-4.

On March 23, the Civil League released its list demand: "Immediate overthrow of the regime, arrest of those involved in fraud or Corruption, drafting a constitution to change the political system from president-to-president Parliament, government, decentralization and full transparency." Tensions in Yemen continued to rise, attracting a lot of interest from neighboring countries and the international community. They pressured Salleh to negotiate peacefully with the protesters. After days of negotiations, finally in late November, Salleh decided to sign an agreement to transfer power to Haddi instead in exchange for immunity from prosecution. In February 2012, Haddi became the only candidate joining the election and ran for president for two years.[52]

### 3.2.4.1. The Challenges After Political Transition

Despite the changes in the political regime under Haddi, there are still challenges left over from the Salleh regime, especially the Houthi crisis, Islamist extremism and the economic crisis. The political situation in Yemen had become a tool for the elite's group to use, and all of them have tried to compete for control of the political system, security and economic power. Chaos in such a political system is due to the fact that former President Salleh had been linked to the roots of politicians in the government's system, which had allowed him to remain in power even after stepping down. Not only that, Salleh was still the head of Yemen's ruling party of president Haddi as well. Salleh was also found to be involved in terrorism group, particularly in aiding Houthis rebels in the north.[53] But after Haddi took office, he began to erode Salleh's influence in the government, especially dismissing politicians associated with Salleh. In addition, Haddi also formed a new military force and recruited new soldiers to serve in the army. As a result, under the

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[52] Noah Tesch, "Transfer of power to Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi," britannica, https://www.britannica.com/place/Yemen/Transfer-of-power-to-Abd-Rabbuh-Mansur-Hadi
[53] Robert F. Worth, "Even Out of Office, a Wielder of Great Power in Yemen," *New York Times, 2014*, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/01/world/middleeast/even-out-of-office-a-wielder-of-great-power-in-yemen.html?_r=0.

political and government system reformation led by Haddi was successful, he could weaken Salleh's influence as well. Furthermore, Haddi was finally able to take full control of the country.[54] In addition to the challenges of political instability, Yemen also faced an economic crisis. Because Yemen's economy relies solely on crude oil, and under Salleh's regime, the proceeds of oil refinement were provided to his supporters instead of to the country's development. Thus, oil resources are declining sharply. In addition, Yemen's population has grown significantly, making it one of the poorest countries in the Arab world and earning less than $ 2 a day. Since the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, the situation of this country's economy has deteriorated year by year.[55] Unemployment rate was also rising steadily, rising by more than 50 percent and forcing hundreds of Yemenis to work abroad.[56]

### 3.2.5. Syria (17 December 2010 – 2013)

The events of the Arab Spring that took place in Tunisia continued to affect other Arab countries, and all the countries affected by the crisis of this revolution had shown different effects. For instance, Syria had been plagued by civil war for years following the outbreak of this revolution. A possible reason for the revolution to have erupted in Syria is the dissatisfaction of the people and the opposition with Bashar al-Assad's leadership style. In addition, there was a number of reasons left over from the generation of Hafez al-Assad, who was the father of Bashar al-Assad, because under the rule of Hafez al-Assad for decades did not bring any development in Syria, on the contrary, he had made economic and social inequalities and used them as a means of governing

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[54]Hill, Salisbury, Northedge, and Kinninmont, "Yemen: Corruption, Capital Flight and Global Drivers of Conflict," *Chatham House, 2013,* p. 28.

[55] Mohammed Mukhashaf, "Al Qaeda Linked Group Blows up Gas Pipeline East of Yemen," *al-Arabiya, 2012.* https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012%2F04%2F27%2F210596

[56] David Arnold, "Saudi Deportation Policies Impact Yemen," *Voice of America,2013*, https://www.voanews.com/world-news/middle-east-dont-use/saudi-deportation-policies-impact-yemen

power.[57] In 2000, Assad succeeded Hafez al-Assad as leader of Syria. As Assad was educated in western countries, his policies also seem to have shifted to European countries, especially relations between Syria and the Western powers improved gradually. Under Assad, Syria's economy has also grown, but oil revenue has fallen which caused the gross domestic product to grow by an average of only 5.5 percent between 2005 and 2009. The unemployment rate is just over 8 percent, as many Syrians can find work in the Gulf countries. But the biggest challenge of the country's economic crisis was foreign debt, which accounts for 12.5 percent of GDP, mostly owed to Russia.[58] In addition to the economic crisis, Syria was also facing a religious crisis, as it has many different religious denominations and requires proper zoning for each sect. 75% Sunni, of which 14% is Kurdish Sunni, 12% Alawite, 10% Christian, 4% Druze, and 1% Yezidi. In early 2011, the tension of the Sectarian conflict began to emerge, and at that time, Bahsar al-Assad imposed restrictions on religious rights, including Christians being allowed to worship freely unless they did not oppose his regime. Bashar al-Assad also restricted Sunni religious freedom by controlling the selection of imams and banning them from participation in government and political parties. Similarly, the issue of democracy in Syria was also a big challenge. No political party has been formed to compete with Bashar al-Assad, and the Ba'ath party has been formed just to cover up its violation of democracy. So, it means that no one could replace Assad's post-president, and he must rule the country without election.

The regime of Bashar al-Assad had continued until 2010, when several Arab countries were affected by the Arab revolution, which spread from Tunisia. Later, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen succeeded in overthrowing their leaders, prompting opposition groups against the Syrian

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[57] Nicholas Kitchen, "After the Arab Spring Power Shift in the Middle East?" *LSE research Online, 2012,* p.37.
[58] V.P. Haran, "Roots of the Syrian Crisis," *IPCS Special Report, 2016,* p.2.

government, especially young people, who wanted to end poverty and unemployment in the country, and began to rise up against Bashar al-Assad. As a result, on January 26, 2011 a revolution began, plunging Syria into the brink of a never-ending civil war. In response to the demonstration, the Syrian government had proposed three measures: the resignation of the president, a change in the political, social and economic system, or the use of military force to quell the insurgency.[59] However, the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Syria in the early year of 2011 was not very serious. As of mid-March 15, 2011, clashes between opposition groups and the government in Deraa had escalated after the arrest of a student who painted revolution slogans on a public wall. Tensions escalated as security forces launched an offensive against protesters, leaving many dead. In mid-2011, the Syrian people and many defectors from military forces formed a new rebel group called the Free Syrian Army (FSA). The government's control over protesters has failed, and some villages and towns have fallen under FSA control. Until September, the FSA launched a major offensive in Rastan. As a result, the protests of the demonstrators posed a serious threat to government forces, and the government eventually decided to change its strategy.[60]

In early 2012, the government siege and immediate attack on protesters in the city of Homs was the third phase of the Syrian civil war. However, protesters were able to take control of many parts of Homs, with more than 600,000 people in attendance. During February, the Syrian government also launched a series of siege attacks and bombings in Baba Amr, which was a rebel stronghold. Since the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Syria until February 2012, Bashar al-Assad had not launched airstrikes. But to quell the insurgency, during April and May, the Assad

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[59] Marian Zuber, "ARAB SPRING AS A BACKGROUND OF CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA," *Military University of Land Forces, 2018*, p.245.
[60] Adams, Simon, "Failure to protect: Syria and the UN security council," *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2015,* p.5.

government decided to use air force to quell the protests. Helicopters and soldiers began launching attacks, killing protesters and many innocent people. At least 110 fighter jets and more than 60 fixed wing aircraft were used to dismantle the rebels.[61] FSA insurgent movements intensified, until mid-2012, with some northern and southern rural areas controlled by the insurgents. In addition, in some areas, such as Damascus and Aleppo, Syria's central political and economic region, there had also been clashes between insurgents and the government army forces. [62]

In 2013, the conflict in Syria began to reach the fourth stage as the civil war led to the use of military force and there were external factors involved. For the government, there was military assistance from Iran and Russia and the opposition group had the support of the Gulf states. This protracted war has left Syria in a precarious political situation and has led to different occupations. In the west, from the Latakia coast down to the border with Lebanon and south to Damascus, the government maintains command of a large contiguous strip of land comprising roughly one third of the country. In the northeast ethnic Kurds have used the civil war to carve out an independent statelet for themselves. Meanwhile the Euphrates valley from the north to the southeast of the country is controlled by various opposition forces that often find themselves competing with one another, as well as fighting the government.[63]

# Chapter 4: International states involvement

## 4.1. The United States and the Middle East

[61] Holliday, joseph, "The Assad Regime: From Counterinsurgency to Civil War," *the Institute for the Study of War, 2013*, p.8.

[62]  MacFarquhar, Neil, "Syria denies attack on civilians, in crisis seen as civil war," *The New York Times, 2012*, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/16/world/middleeast/syria-denies-use-of-heavyweaponsin-deadly-village-fight.html.

[63] Aziz Ur Rehman, "Syrian Civil War & Struggle for Survival of Assad Regime and Its Impacts On Wider Middle East," *LAMBERT Academic, 2015*, p.39.

The United States has had relations with the Middle East since the end of the Cold War, and it has played an important role in all of the Arab countries. But for countries in Europe and other parts of Asia, their relations seem to be weak at that time. In 1990, the United States expanded its security in parts of Iraq which was under control of Saddam Hussein's regime. At the same time, Washington intervened in the territorial war between Israel and the Arab world, but failed to bring peace to those countries. Following the intervention of the Arab-Israel event, the United States became increasingly involved in the conflict in the Middle East. In particular, increasing ties between Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and Libya. If we go back to the first event of the territorial dispute between the Israel-Palestine 1947-1949, the United States and the Soviet Union had the same position: both countries supported the UN General Assembly in 1947 in the partition of Palestine's territory to the Jewish. In addition, the two powers also recognized the state of Israel as an independent state after the UN declared the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and the two countries also provided military assistance to Israel to counter the Arab countries as well. The main reason why the United States has such a position on Israel was because the United States wants to ally with the state of Israel to increase its power in the Middle East, on the other hand, during that time it was Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, so the United States must find ways to curb Soviet influence.[64] However, Israel did not seem willing to ally with the Soviet Union, thus the Soviet Union began to gradually increase its ties with the Arab world. In 2003, the United States launched an invasion of Iraq and aided in fighting the insurgency until 2011. The United States later withdrew from Iraq, and as the Arab Spring erupted, it shook US-Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen relations, and plunged some Arab countries into war,

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[64] Arnold Krammer, "The Forgotten Friendship: Israel and the Soviet Bloc, 1947–53," Urbana*: University of Illinois Press, 1974.*

especially Syria. So far, the US position on the Middle East has been in five areas: ensuring the free flow of oil; preventing nuclear proliferation; fighting terrorism; maintaining the security of Israel; and promoting democratization. During the Arab spring, the United States took advantage of many areas, including deterring and disrupting foes and successfully reassuring allies. Because at that time it was a good opportunity for the United States to ignite more problems in the region.

### 4.1.1. US Security Relation in the Middle East

The United States has strong security ties in the Middle East. These include cooperation agreements, protection of military bases and access rights. In addition, the United States is committed to working with allies in the Arab world, such as the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and Israel, to defend against threats from their enemies. US bases in the Middle East were also extensive, including Forward Operation Sites (FOS), Cooperative Security Location (CSL), forces along the Gulf states, bases in the eastern Mediterranean and the Horn of Africa.[65] In 2015, US Air Force bases in Kuwait, UAE, Qatar and Turkey.[66] In addition, several naval forces were also deployed to protect the waters of the area. Such an arrangement was a US strategy to deploy its forces closer to the crisis-ridden region.[67] To launch an offensive against the Islamic State, the United States and its allies have partnered with Turkey and set up bases in Jordan and other states in the region. At the beginning of the summer of 2013, the United States deployed an additional 10 navies, including the aircraft carrier the USS Nimitz, into the Red Sea in preparation for a possible limited strike against Syria.[68] The United States had also signed several agreements with the

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[65]Michael Lostumbo et al, "Overseas Basing of US Military Forces: An Assessment of Relative Costs and Strategic Benefits." *RAND Corporation, 2013*, p. 24.
[66]Jeff Schogul, "F-15Cs deploy to Incirlik to protect Turkish airspace," *Air Force Times, 2015,* < http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/11/06/f-15cs-deploy-incirlik-protect-turkishairspace/75288330/>.
[67]Joshua Stewart and Sam Fellman. "Pentagon: US Navy Carrier Fleet Cut to One in Gulf." *Defense News, 2013,* http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130206/DEFREG02/302060020/PentagonU-S-Navy-Carrier-Fleet-Cut-One-Gulf
[68] Andrea Shalal-Esa, "More Than 10 Ships Near Syria as USS Nimitz Carrier Group Movies into the Red Sea,"

smaller states of the Arab Peninsula to seek alliances that could enable the United States to establish military bases in those areas. In fact, Kuwait, a major non-NATO ally, allowed the United States to set up more than 20,000 military bases during the Iraq war. Although the United States has withdrawn its forces from Iraq, Kuwait remains a key strategic area for US cooperation.

## 4.1.2. U.S. Reaction to the Arab Spring

In Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen, the United States openly supported the Ben Ali, Mubarak, and Saleh regimes before and during the mass protests. However, when it became clear the dictators were collapsing, the United States changed tactics by siding with the revolutionary forces while working, especially in the Egyptian and Yemeni cases, to maintain the main power structures which would serve American interests. In Libya, the United States managed to re-orient the revolutionary process from being one of nonviolent resistance to an all-out war launched by the local opposition and Western powers, which resulted in the destruction of the main structures of the state and its power. In other Arab countries (mainly Bahrain), the United States assisted the regimes in aborting the uprisings and crushing the nascent democratic movements before they could reach critical mass, thus reinforcing existing political orders.

In Egypt, the United States sought to secure the Mubarak regime during the January 25 mass uprising. In the early days of the protests, the Obama Administration supported the official position of the Mubarak regime by making lukewarm statements about the need for reform from within the regime, and by calling for the need to give the government an opportunity to deal with the revolt. However, after it became clear that the revolution was gaining momentum, the United States changed sides and openly endorsed regime change in Egypt. It also began implementing a new

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*Reuters, 2013.*

strategy to influence the course of events in post-Mubarak Egypt, which was centered on creating an alternative client regime. The US support for Egypt's ruling military junta was understandable given that the majority of aid sent to the country has gone directly to the armed forces, including US$1.3 billion in 2011 alone.[69] Indeed, the Obama Administration was keen to maintain this level of funding despite America's own financial troubles. This gave the United States substantial leverage over the SCAF and the power to influence its policies.

In the case of Libya, the United States moved quickly to act and to seize the moment which it had seemed about to miss in Egypt, as it had long-standing bitter memories with Qaddafi. It took advantage of the Libyan uprising, which erupted on February 17, 2011, and strove to position itself at the heart of the crisis in an attempt to secure its interests in the oil-rich country, and to divert and block the revolutionary mass movements that only weeks earlier had toppled the US-backed regimes in Tunisia and Egypt.

## 4.2. European and the Middle East

Since the Middle East attended the 1991 peace conference in Madrid and Washington, the European Union has gradually begun to forge closer ties with the Middle East. The European Union has been expanding cooperation between countries in the Middle East through trade and culture in the region for decades. In particular, the EU and its members have been actively involved in resolving a number of conflicts in the Middle East, including the EU Mission to resolve Palestinian territorial disputes, the EU Border Assistance Mission on the Gaze-Egypt border, and other issues.[70] And security issues in Lebanon. In the first seven months of the Arab Revolution, which began with the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia on December 17, 2010, the

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[69] Global and Regional Approaches to Arms Control in the Middle East: A Critical Assessment from the Arab World
[70] "European Council declaration on Egypt and the region," February 4, 2011.

European Union made it clear that it was a performer and a spectrum, using both activism and passivism in the wrong way. Against this background and based on the EU's recently adopted Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, this article aims at understanding this dualism more precisely and shedding some light on the EU's rather anachronistic foreign policy behavior in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in recent months.[71] The article identifies five dichotomies, all of which contribute to the situation in which the EU continues to be torn between being a relevant political actor in the MENA region and a simple spectator that continues to be overwhelmed by local and regional political developments. During the Tunisian uprising the EU already displayed an image of a rather fragmented and heterogeneous spectator. While the majority of EU governments opted for a wait-and-see approach in order not to offend the Tunisian regime in the event that the uprising turned out to be unsuccessful, France even offered the Tunisian security forces material support and expertise on crowd control, through the then Foreign Minister Alliot-Marie.[72]

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[71]http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/headlines/content/20110526STO20294/html/Syrianuprising-a-spring-not-in-bloom.
[72] Elfriede Regelsberger, "The EU as an actor in foreign and security policy: some key features of CFSP in a historical perspective", *CFSP Forum,2007*, p. 1-8.

# CONCLUSION

To recap all the key concepts in writing the thesis above, we would like to return to answer the questions which were given in the first chapter and provide an explanation of each question in this section. The most important question in this research is, "what is the root cause of the endless conflict?" This research paper has found out that the conflict in the Middle East was initially caused by the intervention of superpowers such as Britain, France, the Soviet Union and international institutions. Apparently in the research of Dr. Charles D. Smith pointed out that interference in the internal affairs of the Middle East, especially the decision to divide the territory within the British supported to UN to do so, has had a devastating effect on both Palestinian and Jewish peoples. This partition of territory demonstrated that these superpower countries and international institutions seem to have no consideration and responsibility for the people living in the region. As a result, the declaration of Arab territory under the state of Israel has made many Arab countries dissatisfied with the state of Israel, especially Palestine, which does not recognize Israel as an independent state. For this reason, the Middle East began to shake the region due to territorial disputes between Israel and many Arab countries. The conflict continued until 1956 when the Suez Canal Crisis broke out, prompting Egypt, Britain and France to launch an offensive. At that time, Israel also joined the support of the British. This conflict also showed that it was due to the interference in the internal affairs from the superpowers. On the other hand, the fact that all those European countries are involved in the Middle East is also due to the interests in Egypt. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East remains a challenge for the world, whether international institutions or superpowers came to intervene. Likely, Kattan's research also showed that despite the intervention of these international institutions, there was no resolution for rebuilt peace in the region. The conflict could

be resolved unless the countries in the Middle East begin to negotiate peacefully on their own, without involvement from the outside world.

Come to the second question "Why the outbreak of the Arab Spring? And which countries have been affected by this revolution? What will be the end result of all those countries after this revolution is over?" The answers are given in Chapter 2, which deals with the major events of the Arab Spring. During that time many countries in the Middle East were occupied by dictators, which had brought many consequences to the people, especially the leadership of a society full of corruption, partisanship, poverty crisis and high unemployment rate. It was not until 2010 in Tunisia that a street fruit seller, Mahamed Bouazizi, decided to commit suicide, self-immolation because he could not endure a society fulfil of corruption. His suicide had ignited the anger of the Tunisian people and on December 17, 2010 the Arab Spring erupted. In addition, this Arab revolution also spread to other Arab countries such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria after Tunisia succeeded in overthrowing its leaders. The end result, after the outbreak of the Arab Revolution, changed some countries, while others fell into civil war that continues to this day. The recurrence of such conflicts and chronic wars in the Middle East is not only due to the internal factors of the ruling country, it is also combined with external factors. In fact, there was support from superpowers, especially the United States and Russia, to compete for power and interests in the Middle East. These two countries are trying to get Arab countries to ally with, therefore, even if all those Arab countries want to regain peace, it will take decades. On the other hand, countries that are permanent members of the UN, such as the United States and Russia, are still trying to interfere in the internal affairs of the region, even if it is a violation of international law. As pointed out by authors, the Regional and International Organization also played the role of mediator in the Syrian crisis but with no success in resolving the conflict. Even the United Nations, UN Security Council,

and great powers also failed to stop the conflict in Syria. This is largely due to the complexity of the Syrian conflict, its regionalization and internationalization. Regional and international actors are involved in the Syrian conflict and the League has no control on these actors. The conflict between Syria on one hand and Saudi Arabia and Qatar on the other also negatively affected the ability of the League to mediate in the Syrian conflict.

# RECOMMENDATION

Achieving peace in the Middle East requires the government and the people, as well as all insurgent groups, to negotiate and to avoid a bloody war that could lead to bloodshed and the death of innocent civilians. In addition, all major powers and international institutions should urge the Middle East countries to do more to end the war and return to negotiations to find solutions and the root causes of the problem instead. In particular, all superpower countries such as the United States, Russia and all EU member states should stop providing military aid or weapons to those countries. On the other hand, the UN must play an important role in coordinating in resolving this issue in order to find peace and stability in the region. And, of course, in order to make peace in a region, all parties must participate and strictly abide by international law.

- The superpowers should stop interfering in the Middle East, especially they should stop providing military assistance or weapons to conflicting parties in the region.

- For internal actors, they should stop receiving aid and engaging with all those superpowers and start resolving issues with the parties in the region through negotiations as much as possible.

- For the directors in each region, they should change the regime and adhere to democracy with fair and just elections, and eliminate the partisans, corruption, and begin to develop the nation according to what the people want.

- For the rebellious groups, they should stop using violence as a means to overthrow aid governments, instead they should exercise the right to freedom of expression to find specific problems which could be solved peacefully.

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