



# THE OLIVE BRANCH

MODEL UNITED NATIONS NEWSLETTER



VOL III ISSUE II

February 2015

ONLINE EDITION

Model United Nations  
Conference Calendar

April 2-4, 2015  
THIMUN Qatar  
Northwest  
Film Festival

Model United Nations  
Conference Calendar

Would you like to see  
your MUN event here?  
Tweet us @bestdelegate

## Baluchistan Topic Removed from HRC1 Discussion at THIMUN Qatar

By: Aya Nassif



In air of nervous excitement pervaded HRC1 on Wednesday

morning. Delegates who had spent months laboring in preparation of their resolutions eagerly awaited the opportunity to voice their opinions. Many had flown thousands of miles and paid thousands of dollars for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. "It was a ten-hour flight from China," said the delegate of Slovakia. "And I have been working on my resolution on Baluchistan for about a month."

Baluchistan is contained largely in a sparsely-populated region of Pakistan. The inhabitants of this region compose a unique ethnic group, which was absorbed into Pakistan in 1947. Strong tensions generated by cultural differences exist between the Pakistani government and the inhabitants of Baluchistan, leading to political turmoil.

The microphone in HRC1 screeched to life. The chairs introduced Lisa Martin, the director of THIMUN Qatar, to make an unfortunate announcement. The Pakistani government viewed debate about the issue of Baluchistan as "a breach of national sovereignty" and "hostile."

See Baluchistan on Page 6.

## THIMUN Hosts First All-Arabic Committee

By: Aya Nassif

Upon initial inspection, Room 241 is no different from any other room at THIMUN Qatar. Delegates sit around the podium, pens and coffees in hand, faces turned toward the chairs at the front of the room, quietly exchanging clauses and opinions. Not just any delegate, however, could succeed in this space. Not a single word of English can be found here during debates. Every paper is covered with Modern Standard Arabic script. The procedures projected onto the wall are in Arabic. The chairs moderate in Arabic.

This special committee, the first of its kind at any international MUN conference, opened Tuesday, manifesting eighteen months of work by sponsor Nabila Elassar and others. "If we paid Nabila for all of the time that she has spent on this project, MUN would be broke," said THIMUN Qatar Director Lisa Martin. The difficulties inherent in holding this committee demanded meticulous planning and thoughtful organizing from Elassar, who decided to go on leave from her full-time job at Stanford University in order to run the project. Primary among the obstacles Elassar

had to overcome was Modern Arabic's misrepresentation. Modern Standard Arabic has differentiated over hundreds of years into various local dialects; most students no longer speak Arabic as their first or even second language, learning it instead as a third or fourth. In order to make the Arabic Committee a reality, Elassar

had to dispel the notion of inferiority — a stigma that Arabic does not carry English's prestige. She campaigned for higher membership in the Arabic Committee...

See RCMENA on Page 6.



# First Delegation from Their Nation

*From skateboarding to debating, the first delegation from Afghanistan reveal their thoughts on their phenomenal THIMUN journey.*

By: Hannah Akhtar  
& Habiba Sallam

Prior to their arrival in Qatar, the dedicated individuals of the Afghan delegation were also part of the Super English School, where they spent a couple of hours each Saturday in the company than none other than Mr. Peter Dalglish.

To begin the interview, the young delegates (Mursal Saidali, Delegate of Djibouti in GA6, and Sulaiman Sulaimankhil, Delegate of Djibouti in GA3) gushed about their happiness to be the first from their homeland to be involved in THIMUN Qatar.

“It’s great that we are going to make history, the first MUN students from Afghanistan. We feel very grateful to be able to do this!” exclaimed Mursal with a smile.

This is a significant break-



through not just for THIMUN history but for the history of the nation of Afghanistan. These incredible young individuals are a symbol of hope for all those suffering in their home country. They exemplify a brighter future for all the individuals who are currently unable to attain an education.

The five delegates of the Afghan delegation

are eager to contribute to the debates and agree on resolutions in order to gain knowledge and experience. “The best part for me was debating,” said Sulaiman Sulaimankhil, one of the members of the delegation. He then added, “It was awesome.”

When asked to reflect about the main differences between Qatar and Afghanistan, Mursal

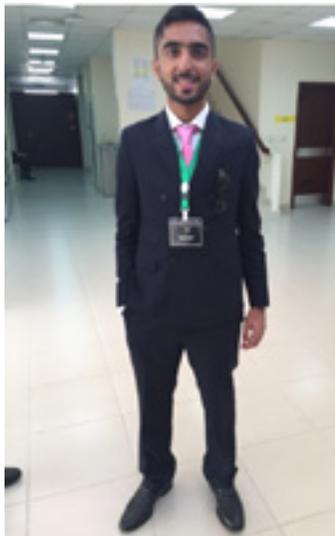
Saidali and another Afhani delegate solemnly admitted, “Qatar is a very developed country, and our country isn’t as developed, and it’s awesome to be able to roam around and skate freely.”

To conclude the interview, the pair discussed the relevance of MUN for youth and how important it is for them to get involved.



# BayMUN 2015 a Huge Success

By: Yusuf Jailani  
BayMUN Secretary-General



Pictured above: Yusuf Jailani,  
BayMUN Secretary-General

If there is one extracurricular activity that will have a lasting impact on me, it is without a doubt MUN. I have been a regular participant in MUN conferences during my high school years, and my experience with this unique system reached its zenith when I became the Secretary-General of BayMUN 2015 – the first THIMUN affiliated conference in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

My experience in 2015 has al-

lowed me to reach several new heights in terms of my character, MUN knowledge, and leadership. I was the leader of the BayMUN team, which was comprised of almost 25 students and 6 teachers. The teachers and students were placed into different teams, in which they worked assiduously to make the conference a success. As I worked with each of the teams, I began to gain new perspective into the art of leadership. I began to see the different ideas people could bring to the conference, and I relished the inputs of every person.

Moreover, I had grown used to being a participant in Model UN conferences as a delegate or chair on all previous occasions, but BayMUN 2015 was my chance to be part of the managerial aspect of the conference, as part of the wonderful team that made this conference such a unique experience for all.

BayMUN is the biggest conference on the island of Bahrain, with this year's conference hosting around 500 participants from 15 public and private schools from around Bahrain. I hope and am sure that BayMUN will only continue to excel in this unique system we call Model UN.



Pictured above: Conference Staff Prepares for BayMUN 2015

## Was Confused, Now Convinced!

By: Tamer Kabo

First of all, before I start, I want to quote what a really close friend said while we were researching for a Model UN conference together: "If you can't convince them, confuse them."

I still remember the day I started my Model United Nations career at EurasiaMUN 2014. My team friends and I were really anxious and excited. I was new to MUN, so I even wrote a speech (I never write speeches). It was 2am, and we were learning how to write a resolution from the internet. We wrote a small, five-clause resolution which would be ignored on the first day of conference. It was fine, though- the experience was more valuable than anything. I didn't really speak, I was confused and stunned, wondering what I would have talked about if I had the floor. I didn't really talk though, just watched and learned.

As time passed by, I studied and practiced MUN. I attended many more conferences and became first the assistant and subsequently the head of student offices for my team. While all this was happening, I never forgot where I came from and how I started off as a delegate. While teaching and training new delegates, I always recalled past days, understanding how they felt to this new confusing but tempting ambiance.

But conferences are never enough for a MUNer. While at Turkish International Model United Nations (TIMUN), a friend of mine had recommended trying O-MUN. He said it was cool and that you could even debate while in your pajamas, laying down and watching YouTube videos all at the same time. I, as a not-really-serious debater, was really pulled into this. I said, "Why not?" and registered in a debate. The debate went on and on and I prepared a speech in my head. I didn't end up doing the speech, but the debate was fun. The moderation was perfect, and everyone was friendly.

I thought that this might even be better than normal MUN.

After that, the rest came easily. I started attending more and more O-MUN conferences and ended up becoming the Executive Administrative Officer of Turkey. That was a really great achievement, and I was really honored to earn it. My mission was mostly about outreach and finding delegates who would like to join an O-MUN session as a delegate or just observe and learn.

I would also like to tell a small memory of mine while working for O-MUN. It was while my school's conference, ITU Invitational Model United Nations (IIMUN) 2014, was taking place. The National Liaison of Turkey, Efe, a close friend of mine, was also there. He told me that we would make a presentation at the end of the General Assembly, and I obliged. Little did I know that the Special Committee I was in wasn't going to the GA and that I was going to be in the session while the presentation was meant to be made. After the session, I flew to the General Assembly room. Efe had already started presenting with Cem, our tech manager, watching online. He was talking about how to handle debate. I flew to the stage and stood next to him. He introduced me and handed the microphone over. I had nothing prepared to say, but luckily, with two years of training, I started to talk almost automatically. I talked about why and how delegates use debate. At the end, everyone started clapping for me, and after that I received a text from Cem saying, "Oh, did you really hijack his presentation?"

In conclusion, O-MUN has changed my MUN life in a big way. I was quickly brought into the greeting community and became a part of the international family sooner than I imagined. After I had a position as the Executive Administrative Officer, my responsibilities and areas of work grew, as well as my sense of responsibility and my talents towards them.

# Reflections on France's Tragic Events

By *Rayane Haddar*

On Wednesday, January 7th, 2015, two gunman entered Charlie Hebdo's office and killed twelve journalists, including the editor-in-chief and two French policemen, one of whom is named Ahmed.

Their target, Charlie Hebdo, is the symbol of a generation. A lot of people who grew up in the '60s and '70s are very familiar with the newspaper's genre and cartoons. Charlie Hebdo embodies freedom of speech, the free journalistic spirit, and passion. The publication said things others would not dare to, they made their voices heard, they did not back off in the sight of fear, and they delivered great pieces of journalism.

France is hurt. France is scared. France is united. The world pays tribute to Charlie Hebdo, from Jon Stewart, to *Algerie-Focus.com*, to *The New Yorker* and its great cover.

Let's talk about the assailants: Cherif and Said Kouachi, the gunmen, are French and Algerian. Like a lot of people in France, including myself, their parents immigrated to France in the 1950s and 1960s, when France needed a cheap workforce.

Of course, the Kouachis identified themselves as "dihadistes" and killed those journalists in revenge for their provocative representation of the prophet Muhammad.

I want make something clear:

This isn't about Islam. This isn't about extremism.

A lot of political figures and media outlets rushed to denounce radicals and heralded a message of peace and tolerance, specifically that we should not fall into the abyss of fears and that there was a difference between "moderate Islam" and "radical Islam."

While this is certainly true, it can't be identified as the main cause of such acts. Extremism is the surface of the problem; it is the consequences of other underlying forces.

If we scratch a little bit, we can see that those "perdus," as described by the media, are indeed "perdus" because of socioeconomic, cultural, and historical issues that go all the way back to the '60s.

Let me try to explain this. When our parents came to France, they had a strong Algerian patriotism instilled in them. They loved the country where they grew up but had to immigrate to France in search of economic opportunities. They weren't welcome in France, which was still emotionally recovering from the Algerian War of Independence. So they lived their lives every day, they went to work with their head down, and they paid their taxes, living with the hope of one day coming back to their beloved country.

But they never came back. They stayed and instilled in their children society's fears. They subconsciously transferred this feeling of segregation to their children. They established a distinction between "the whites, the real French" and them. Thus, people like me, who didn't grow up in Algeria, who don't really know what the Quran says or Algeria's full history, do not identify as either French or Algerian. There is nothing to hold on to, nothing to identify to, nothing to feel proud about. You are living in a country where you don't feel you are considered as French, because of the aforementioned cause amongst other ones, and you go back every summer to a country where you are considered as second-class citizen, which is even worse: you're called "l'immigré."

If you add on top of that the socioeconomic problems that have always triggered bad behaviors amongst youth who grew up in poverty, regardless of their country, color, or religion, then you'll find the real issues.

The classic path taken by so-called extremists is the following: grew up in poverty, parents not really present, lack of dialogue, high school dropout, drug dealer, realize that they have hurt their parents, find religion as a getaway, religion becomes essential to their life. Over and over and over again.

What France needs is a political leader who will address those issues and acknowledge the deeply-rooted cause of such extremism in France. 20-year-old kids don't stab police officers in the name of Islam if they had a decent upbringing.

Their parents failed them (but again, let's remember the historical context), the Republic failed them, and school failed them (lack of personal expression in the curriculum as well as emphasis on individuality, but that's another debate).

Yet again, this is no reason for us to give in, to get scared. We are a nation with democratic institutions that uphold our dearest values and that will continue to ensure our rights.

What scares me is not the handful of extremists in Europe who are ready to slaughter their fellow citizens, but, rather, it is the abandoned youth in Syria, Darfur, South Sudan, Burma, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and so forth that are being destroyed by wars.

As winter storms are making the lives of Syrian refugees harder, we need to remember that there are millions of kids who are growing up with nothing to hold on to as well, with shattered families and broken dreams, with no education and their war-torn communities as the backbone of their only memories.

While we lost 12 of our finest journalists on January 7th, we need to remember that more than 2,000 Nigerian lost their lives just days later because so-called extremists slaughtered them again.

We need to remember that the freedom of speech we hold so dearly is also being attacked in other countries like Algeria, where the *Algerie-Focus.com* Editor-in-Chief is being called to do his "service national" after he denounced corruption on national television, although the law says that a man over 30 years who has graduated from university and has kids is exempted from it. In the same country where the finalist of one of the most prestigious literary awards is a fatwa victim. In Egypt, where *Al-Jazeera* journalists are still being held prisoners.

#JeSuisCharlie

*Continued from Page 1: RCMENA*

posting signup sheets around the Qatar National Convention Centre and urging the Press Team to provide frequent coverage.

“The delegates are so brave,” said Elassar, who herself learned Arabic as her fourth tongue. “They are debating hard topics in a language that many do not know well.” Many schools in the Middle East implement Arabic curricula that, according to Elassar, are not engaging enough to coax students from their contentment with learning only English for large-scale communication. This disparity manifests in all-Arabic academic endeavors: Arabic language databases, for example, do not contain the same volumes of information that English ones do, forcing delegates to draw from English sources and then translate the information into Arabic, a process Elassar has tirelessly helped them with for months.

During indoor break, Elassar became immediately surrounded by delegates from the committee. In casual conversation, they transition from Arabic to English with an ease that seemed to contradict their relative unfamiliarity with the former. Elassar talked animatedly with them about the chairing and debating processes, listening to their viewpoints on the topics and prompting them to look harder and think deeper.

Nabila passionately believes that Model UN can have profound effects in teaching kids to think, having undergone enormous personal development in the program herself. “As I grew older, I discovered I can think, research, and come up with solutions for things that haven’t been solved yet. You discover, as a chair: I can teach, I can change people, I can inspire people. I can make other people develop the skills that made me a different person when I joined MUN.

“I was sadder about MUN ending than about anything else in my entire life,” she confessed. She moved from one rigorous college track

and job to another, but could never seem to leave MUN behind. So upon discovering the newly-founded Best Delegate program, she immediately applied, living the ideal that Model UN’s impact can and should extend far past the boundaries of conference centres.

Debates at THIMUN often feel abstract and impersonal — but the Arabic Committee solely discusses topics that “we [in the Middle East] talk about everyday at home.

“We can debate world issues very easily, but sometimes in reality, especially with all the ongoing conflicts, people at home — speaking from a personal place — don’t debate things diplomatically. We hear rumors and don’t know who to trust, and nothing’s certain. What is needed more than anything is the ability to objectively analyze and propose solutions without getting angry and fighting with people who disagree with us.”

Remaining dispassionate and broad-minded about such personal topics can prove challenging for many delegates. “But if you understand the case properly and can debate diplomatically from the viewpoint of your delegation, hopefully the resolution that comes out will be balanced and effective in proposing practical solutions,” says Elassar. “And if the delegates can speak diplomatically, then they can teach the people around them how to do it as well.”

Elassar views the Arabic committee as the beginning of a mass social movement, one designed to render Arabic a uniform living language spoken across the Middle East in order to cultivate the next generation’s problem-solving abilities. “I believe that MUN has the power to affect positive impacts when it comes to world issues that are just massive,” she said. She hopes that the Arabic Committee and similar language- and culture-focused initiatives can become a staple at Model UN conferences, and that, ultimately, the delegates in these committees emerge as the leaders and diplomats the Middle East, and entire world, will need.

*Continued from Page 1: Baluchistan*

“This is the one thing you have come prepared for,” she continued. “You’ve spent a lot of time on this, and it’s not fair to put you in a situation where you can’t read your prepared speech, but for the rest of the committee this issue will not be debated.”

Despite Ms. Martin’s assurances that THIMUN was purely an academic exercise and an opportunity for international dialogue, those requesting the removal of the Baluchistan issue refused to budge. “I’ve done MUN for almost twenty-five years, and I’ve never seen a situation like this, I hope I never have to see another one,”

said Martin sadly.

However, those most affected by this shocking turn of events were the delegates who went to lengths to bring this contentious issue to light. “It’s absurd,” said one delegate. This form of censorship violated the spirit of THIMUN, which is supposedly a forum for free speech and collaboration. Another delegate who researched Baluchistan explained that refusal to allow discussion on controversial problems prevents those problems from being solved. “The fact that [Pakistani government officials] aren’t allowing us to debate this issue means that they’re hiding something.”

The UN was designed to solve global problems

larger than any individual or country, and it provides a global force of mediation, transcending corruption in any national government to provide more universal sources of protection. Model UN is supposed to reflect this ideal in its operation, contending with difficult problems to prepare future generations for finding solutions. When the UN becomes censored, permitted to discuss only those issues that are not controversial or accusatory, it ceases to serve its purpose as a promoter of justice.

Today, it seems that we are not ready to address the injustices facing Baluchistan. But that does not mean that these issues don’t matter. As Ms. Martin said, “What you say and do in this room matters greatly to a lot of people.” That is why they’re pulling the issue: because it matters; because if we debate it, we can raise unwanted awareness; because Pakistan believes that we can make a difference.

Have a story idea?  
Send us a tweet at  
[@bestdelegate](https://twitter.com/bestdelegate)

*Continued from Page 3: Dalglish*

a succinct response: “Find an issue. Make it yours. Do the reconnaissance. Stay focused.” Dalglish undertook his first such mission when he was only thirteen. After hearing about Cesar Chavez’s fight for Californian migrant workers’ rights, the young Dalglish organized a large group of friends and schoolmates to stake out grape stands in their local markets and inform shoppers that buying California grapes directly supported worker exploitation. Chavez’s campaign ultimately resulted in collective bargaining rights for workers and national empathy with the cause. “It wasn’t because of me, of course,” conceded Dalglish, but his effort made more of a positive impact than sitting on his hands would have.

Peter Dalglish has unwavering faith in young people’s capacity to transcend obstacles and solve problems. He has demonstrated his conviction by choosing to work with the most disadvantaged demographics in the world, seeing talent and potential in every individual through the smokescreens of educational or socioeconomic disadvantage. Dalglish understands that children are adaptable and willing to learn when one plays to their strengths. To some extent, he views his work as an investment in the future. “The solutions will not be found with old people,” said Dalglish. “They’ll be found with you.”