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MES: Topic 2 - Religious Tolerance

YUNMUN XXXIV

The Middle East is home to many religious communities. While primarily Islam, there is also Christianity, Judaism, and other minority religions. Sectarian divides, particularly between Sunni and Shia Muslims, have fueled conflicts and created an atmosphere of intolerance. This in turn has given rise to religious discrimination, violence, and persecution against religious minorities, undermining social cohesion and political stability in the region.

Over the years, initiatives, large and small, have been put into place with the goals of promoting religious tolerance and bridging the sectarian divide in the Middle East. These include diplomatic efforts to mediate conflicts and promote dialogue between religious and sectarian groups. Various organizations, including the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, have worked to highlight religious discrimination and advocate for the protection of religious minorities' rights, particularly through the OHCHR[1]. Initiatives to bring religious leaders[2] and scholars from different faiths together for dialogue and cooperation have been promoted to foster understanding and tolerance. Lastly, efforts to resolve ongoing conflicts in the region, such as the wars in Syria and Yemen, have aimed to address the underlying sectarian tensions and promote religious tolerance[3].

To effectively address the issue of religious tolerance in the Middle East and the sectarian divide, it is important to consider the following and how your country acts, believes, and responds to these:

- What are the root causes of sectarian divisions and religious intolerance in the Middle East, and how have these issues contributed to regional conflicts and instability?
- What lessons can be drawn from previous international efforts to promote religious tolerance and mitigate sectarian tensions in the Middle East, and how can these lessons inform future strategies?

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[1]https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-all-forms-intolerance-and-discrimination

[2] https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/our-work/Doc.14_MENA%20Plan%20of%20Action.FINAL.pdf

[3] https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/62375

- How can states and international organizations work together to protect the rights of religious minorities in the Middle East and ensure their safety and freedom of worship?
- In what ways can conflict resolution efforts in the region address the underlying sectarian tensions and promote reconciliation among religious and sectarian groups?
- Are there successful models of religious tolerance and coexistence in the Middle East that can be replicated or adapted in other parts of the region?

As a reminder, please ensure that all position papers submitted are entirely your own work, as there is a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Please also be cognizant that your papers reflect the opinion of your country, not your own. .If you have any further questions or need clarification, please email me at jenglano@mail.yu.edu. I look forward to working with all of you.

Best of luck,
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Chair, Middle East Summit
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