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Kiadó

Miskolci Egyetem

Bölcsészettudományi Kar

Alkalmazott Társadalomtudományok

Intézete

A szerkesztőség címe:

Miskolci Egyetem BTK

Alkalmazott Társadalomtudományok
Intézete

3515 Miskolc-Egyetemváros

Telefon: (46) – 565111/21-84

E-mail: btk.atti@uni-miskolc.hu



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Kenaar Arij

The Role of International Bodies in Solving Conflicts in the Middle East

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Abstract

This research paper examines the conflict resolution process in the Middle East, focusing on the roles of the United Nations, European Union, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in this process. It also contains an analysis of peacekeeping operations, mediation, humanitarian assistance, and diplomatic efforts in this field. This paper argues that while it is true that international organizations operate deeply in global conflicts, several limitations occur where they constrain the organizations' effects structurally, politically, and legally. These international bodies face challenges during their performance, such as great power rivalry, veto power usage, state sovereignty, and institutional weakness. Through a case study on the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), this research sheds light on how a fragmented mandate, political alignment, and lack of neutrality affect the success and failure of international intervention. However, the Taif Agreement succeeded in achieving peace and institutional reconstruction.

This research concludes that international efforts are important in this interconnected world in order to maintain peace, but their success is strongly tied to coordination between the concerned bodies, political will, institutional reform, and local legitimacy.

Keywords: International Organizations, Conflict Resolution, Middle East, Great Power Politics, Lebanese Civil War

I. Introduction

The Middle East has always been a central arena for global politics, where ideologies vary, and interests compete. For decades, this region has been a site of conflicts and a major war zone for Arab and foreign states, with conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Lebanese Civil War, Syria, Yemen, and the conflict in Iraq. Each of these conflicts has been a major focus for international organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which play important roles as mediators,

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peacekeepers, and providers of humanitarian aid. To understand global politics, it is important to know how those organizations work and cooperate to achieve resolutions, where their interconnections are a key factor in achieving peace.

From an academic perspective, this research is significant. The Middle East is a key setting in which to examine how international conflict resolution systems strengthen and how multilateral diplomacy can also fail.

The main goal of this study is to examine how international organizations generally deal with conflicts and what measures they take to implement peace, in addition to explaining real experiences and how they have helped to resolve these conflicts.

This topic was chosen because it is both timely and of personal interest. The Middle East is always in the news, and as a Lebanese student studying International Relations in Europe and someone interested in understanding the international political system, I wanted to know why organizations set up to maintain international peace seem so limited in this area. This topic has allowed me to explore the ideals of the UN Charter, such as human rights, equality, and collective security, and how they are actually implemented in real-world conflicts.

The central idea of this research is as follows: even though international organizations are powerful and have resources, their actions remain limited mainly because of three factors: the influence of powerful countries on the decision-making process, local leaders and sovereignty, and the built-in limits of the global governance system. While these organizations have succeeded in resolving conflicts and providing humanitarian aid, their overall impact is often weakened by a lack of enforcement power and the domination of powerful states' agendas.

I used an analytical approach to conduct this research, focusing on institutional documents, official reports, and academic studies. I focused on interventions and mediation activities across various conflicts to identify broader trends rather than only isolated events. This method allowed me to critically assess both the successes and failures of international missions, especially the balance between the ideal norms of such organizations and practical actions. By using the Lebanese Civil War as a case study, I grounded the theory in real-world examples of diplomatic work and conflict management.

There were many challenges, such as limited access to sources due to their sensitivity or incompleteness. In addition, the dynamic nature of the Middle East political system made it hard to find information about the latest developments.

The 2 main questions in this research are: How do international organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, Arab League, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation work to resolve conflicts in the Middle East, and what factors determine their success? To what extent do political, structural, and legal constraints, such as great power rivalry, state sovereignty, and institutional limitations, limit or undermine the ability of international bodies to achieve sustainable peace in the region?

Moreover, the 2 hypotheses raised in this research are: first, the international bodies play an important mediating and humanitarian role in Middle Eastern conflicts, but their effectiveness legally depends on the cooperation of great powers and the political will of regional actors. Second, the persistent influence of international power politics, with the legal and institutional weaknesses of international organizations, significantly undermines their ability to implement resolutions and achieve a maintained peace in the Middle East.

In short, this research shows that while the international organizations are the main bodies that are responsible for maintaining international peace and security, their effectiveness is strongly linked to their ability to coordinate and cooperate, distribute tasks, and expand an interconnected network to cover all aspects. Understanding this not only improves academic knowledge but also contributes to highlighting existing gaps, allowing new ideas to be developed to overcome real obstacles that such organizations may face.

II. International Bodies as Key Actors in Conflict Resolution in the Middle East

II.1. The United Nations and Its Framework for Peace and Mediation

II.1.1 Historical background of UN involvement in the Middle East

The United Nations was established after World War II, following the failure of the League of Nations to prevent that war. It was established in 1945, a year that significantly changed the world order. In San Francisco, 50 nations were invited to attend a conference in order to draft a new framework for maintaining international peace and security and preventing new wars.(UN 2025a.)The UN's first major engagement in the Middle East was the Palestine question (1947–1948), which at that time tested the UN's peacekeeping and mediation capacity, represented by the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), whose main role was to monitor the ceasefire. Moreover, during the Cold War (1950s–1970s), the UN gained a wider role in the Middle East as it faced new crises that required diplomacy and peacekeeping, and it created the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) and established missions in Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai.

II.1.2 Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution (Peacekeeping, Mediation, Resolutions)

According to Article 33 of Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, the nation states must first use negotiation and diplomacy when dealing with a dispute, force should not be used at this stage. In addition, the Security Council can call upon the parties, when necessary, to settle a dispute. Articles 33 to 38 of the UN Charter set out the peaceful steps that should be taken by the parties in any conflict before it escalates into a threat to international security. They clearly emphasize the importance of the initial stages, in which the parties must seek solutions through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, communication, and cooperation in order to overcome the issue without creating further conflicts or

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leading to war. Every member state, or any state that accepts the UN charter, should first bring the dispute to the Security Council or the General Assembly to put the topic on the table and examine it to reach an appropriate resolution. Because of issues related to wealth sharing, power sharing, human rights, and security, the role of international organizations has moved beyond securing a ceasefire and has started to focus on achieving comprehensive settlements.

The United Nations uses different mechanisms to address conflicts, but some are particularly important, such as mediation, peacekeeping, and resolution. Mediation is a diplomatic tool through which a third party intervenes in a conflict to help the parties reach a mutual agreement. This step is often carried out by the General Assembly or a special envoy who conducts diplomatic communication between the parties. It is true that this mechanism depends on diplomatic dialogue and is theoretically effective, but in reality, it differs. Major powers often manipulate this process and prioritize their own interests in the ongoing situation rather than focusing on resolving the conflict. Secondly, peacekeeping is another crucial way to address the conflict itself. This tool provides the organization with daily and updated information, especially when there is a risk escalation. UN peacekeepers are not an enforcement tool, as many people think, but they may use force in order to defend themselves or to protect their mandates (UN 2025b). These peacekeeping missions are facing problems and are increasingly raising their concerns. This is because the forms of warfare are changing rapidly, and peacekeepers are facing greater threats, especially in some African regions, where significant measures have been taken to protect these missions (Anyadike 2025). Thirdly, Security Council resolutions are the most formal tool to maintain international peace and security, with the council acting under Chapters VI and VII, as in resolutions 242 and 338, that highlight the idea of 'The Land for Peace'. Together, these three mechanisms, mediation, peacekeeping, and the Security Council resolution, are the core instruments of the United Nations, and theoretically, they can guarantee a peaceful world. However, what has happened in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Palestine, has shown the opposite, as such organizations failed at first to maintain peace in these countries and took considerable time to gain the capability to intervene in the conflicts and set limits.

II.1.3 Achievements and Limitations of UN Interventions

These achievements can be divided into several sectors, such as achievements in establishing and sustaining peacekeeping missions, providing humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians, and conducting diplomatic mediation.

Experience shows that the success of UN peacekeeping missions is highly linked to four major points; when these are achieved, experts can say that the mission has been accomplished (UN 2025c). First, restoring the state's ability to provide security and public order to citizens and institutions. Second, work to boost the presence of law and respect for rights. Third, supporting the political system, which is the most fragile structure in any state after conflict. Fourth, promoting social and economic recovery and development by providing human and financial aid and organizing workshops for the public to spread knowledge about the requirements for recovery after war. According to these points, the United Nations has successfully created long-term peacekeeping missions that are responsible for limiting potential escalations that may appear, in addition to maintaining ceasefires in some regions, such as the UNDOF in the Golan Heights and UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

United Nations agencies such as UNHCR, UNRWA, and WFP have expanded the humanitarian relief network, saving millions of lives in conflict areas, especially in Palestine, Syria, and Yemen. In 2024, the UN and partner organizations spent \$46.4 billion to help 180.5 million people in 72 countries, with the largest share of this budget going to the Middle East and Africa due to the scale of the crises there (Global Humanitarian Overview 2024).

Diplomatic mediation is a continuous task for international organizations, which are constantly working on this topic through organizing conferences and holding meetings. As a real-life example, we can consider the diplomatic mediation between Israel and Hamas, which been conducted mainly in Egypt and Qatar. Egypt shares borders with Israel, and Qatar has become an important diplomatic and financial intermediary between the two parties, with Cairo often hosting indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas, while Doha serves as a venue that brings the international community and Hamas to the same table (Amit – Parkash 2025). The achievements of diplomatic mediation are also reflected in peace agreements that were successfully reached and maintained

for a period of time, such as the Arab-Israeli Armistice Agreements of 1949, the Iran-Iraq ceasefire of 1988, and the Yemen Stockholm Agreement of 2018.

Although international organizations are considered important global actors and have political presence and influence, they still face some limitations that sometimes prevent them from providing the minimum levels of assistance. These limits are no longer hidden, they are now globally recognized and well known, such as veto power, state sovereignty, the interests of major powers, and private agendas. Veto power is considered one of the most powerful tools to block a decision and can be used by any of the five permanent states of the Security Council (Better World Campaign 2025). For example, the United States first used its veto power to block a decision to agree on a ceasefire in the Arab Israeli conflict (Shahood 2024). States also sometimes refuse the intervention of international organizations in their political system when they consider it a violation of sovereignty, this is what happened in Syria and Iraq when the UN security Council authorized cross border humanitarian aid, which the Syrian government considered it as a breach of national sovereignty, and similarly when the United States invaded Iraq without explicit agreement of the security council, which was considered a violation of national and international law (UN 2014).

II.2 Complementary Roles of Regional and International Organizations

II.2.1 Arab League Initiatives and Mediation Efforts

The Arab League, established in 1945, was the first regional organization of its kind in the Arab world, aimed at boosting unity, coordinating political action, and implementing peaceful solutions to inter-Arab disputes. For many years, the main focus of this organization was the inter-Arab conflicts, such as Lebanon-Syrian tensions and the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially because the Arab League is based in Egypt, a key state that shares a border with Israel. This organization has been involved in many crucial developments in the Middle East, for example, during the Syrian crisis, the United Nations extended its cooperation with the Arab League in order to coordinate political, financial, and

social support for the state (UN 2025d). The Arab League is well aware of the importance of maintaining friendly relations with the United Nations, as emphasized by Ahmed Attaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, when his country held the Council presidency in January. The organization has successfully brokered agreements that made a difference in the region's history, such as the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, which was later recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, contributing efficiently in diplomatic dialogues in international and regional conferences. Besides that, the Arab League played a critical role in ending the Lebanese Civil War, where they made the Taif Accord, which was mediated by the Saudi and supported and coordinated by the Arab League, bringing an end to fifteen years of civil war (Kamrava 2013).

II.2.2 The European Union's Diplomatic and Humanitarian Engagement

The European Union plays an important role as a normative power that is responsible for promoting peace and democracy and for ensuring the protection of human rights, mainly through diplomacy, aid, and missions to the region. Its major contribution is in the financial and technical sectors, as the Union is always eager to support the reconstruction and improvement of governance in the Middle East. Besides that, the European Union attaches great importance to what is happening in Palestine, and emphasizes that Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live in a lasting peace and security, by ending the fighting and bringing a real end to the hostage issues as a starting point for building a peaceful life (European External Action Service n.d.).

Not only that, but the European Union also acts as a humanitarian and development actor in the Middle East, with the EU and the European Commission's DG ECHO being among the largest donors to humanitarian activities in Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2025). They have focused mainly on providing immediate assistance for basic needs, such as food, water, and healthcare, especially in times of war, because people, especially children, are more exposed to severe and potentially fatal diseases (Médecins Sans Frontières 2025). They

have also helped Syrian Refugees who were forced to leave their country, for example, they create special programs for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon to maintain access to healthcare and basic living conditions, including organizing food distribution missions to cover their essential needs.

II.2.3 Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its Conflict-Resolution Tools

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, with 57 member states. It works to protect and save the Islamic interests and rights around the world. It was established in 1969 (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation 2025). The organization has several tools to resolve conflicts. First, the Charter calls upon the members to seek solutions to their conflicts through peaceful means such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and other forms of dialogue. Second, the OIC has worked hard to expand its mediation capabilities through a long process of establishing a new network of mediators, experts, and diplomats in order to build a diplomatic team that can conduct dialogue successfully and meet mutual interests. Thirdly, this organization uses political and strategic tools to influence international governance, for example by issuing resolutions that call for actions to limit crises, such as ceasefire, peace talks, or even sanctions against countries that are parties to the conflict or that contribute to its escalation. Also, the OIC applies pressure not only as a single organization, but as a group of 57 votes in international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In this way, the OIC can more effectively advance and protect its position globally.

III. Opportunities and Challenges for International Engagement in the Middle East

III.1. Structural, Political, and Legal Constraints Facing International Bodies

III.1.1. Influence of Global Power Politics on International Decision-Making

International organizations mainly rely on funding and donations from wealthy states, which spend huge amounts of money to cover their budgets. As a result, the more a country contributes financially, the more it tends to be taken into consideration in decision making. For example, the United States is the largest financial contributor to the United Nations, accounting for about 22% of the regular budget, quarter of the peacekeeping budget, around 45% of the humanitarian programs budget and many millions in voluntary engagement made throughout the agenda (Lombardo 2025). This results in pressure for decisions taken in the organization to align perfectly with the U.S. interests in order to be implemented, especially when it comes to natural resources, where the United States clearly places its interests on the table first. Economic and military powers also play a role in domination, a state with a larger economic or military sector tends to be more dominant in the international arena because it can more easily withdraw from agreements and cut funding, or withdraw its military forces from certain areas and thereby risk provoking new conflict (Abebe 2025). This is considered important and is always analyzed deeply, because today's world is multipolar and every actor works to achieve its own goals.

States no longer seek influence over global decisions, only using hard power tools such as wars and sanctions, nowadays an important concept is 'Soft Power'. Soft Power is a concept popularized by Joseph Nye that refers to new tools that shape the global stage (Saaida 2023). Tools such as culture, music, social media, and news are sometimes more effective than wars in changing mindsets, promoting new ideas, or delivering a message. Diplomacy is much

more important and effective than any other tool, and it is considered a form of soft power through which agendas can be advanced by diplomatic means.

III.1.2. Sovereignty Concerns and Resistance from Local Actors

Sovereignty is one of the most controversial concepts in political science and international law, and it is discussed in relation to different areas such as internal water, territorial seas, contiguous zone, and exclusive economic zone (Britannica 2025). It can be broadly defined as the principle that a state has supreme and authority internally and externally, is not subject to interference by external actors, and works to fulfil its own interests. Actors often refuse the intervention of international organizations when those organizations extend their authority to the nation's territory or interfere in its political system and functional borders. (An actor may also reject the involvement of those organizations if they seek to control internal systems, such as domestic law, which should be defined only by the local government [Okada 2023]).

For instance, the Syrian government rejected the humanitarian operations conducted by the United Nations under the Security Council Resolution 2165, which aimed to provide assistance to the country at the peak of the war in 2014 (UN Security Council 2014). This case reveals how a state can use sovereignty to limit international intervention, even in humanitarian aid, because such intervention may increase tension between the state and the international community.

A similar situation occurred in Yemen, where the Houthi movement which, has control of the capital, has detained and restricted the work of the United Nations, accusing it of harming and violating state sovereignty and of spying for external powers (Nichols 2025). It is clear from this experience that the Houthis used sovereignty as a political defense against international organizations in order to prevent them from gaining access to the area and probing more deeply into the corrupted and complex system.

III.1.3. Legal and Institutional Limitations of International Bodies

The United Nations, as an international organization, is limited in its actions for several reasons. To begin with, the design of the UN charter limits its actions, as it was written to define the organization's framework in a way that protects state sovereignty and maintains consensus among major powers. This clearly limits the UN's ability to intervene in conflict resolution unless the Security Council authorizes such action (Luck 2006). When it is up to the Security Council, decisions become harder to take because, at this stage, a powerful tool intervenes: the veto power. For instance, Article 2(7) explicitly prohibits the organization from intervening in domestic affairs, and this has been reflected in practice where UN action was restricted in Syria and Yemen.

Security Council veto power can create political paralysis, as the five permanent members (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France) can block decisions, making them impossible to adopt, and this tool is usually used by a state that does not find the agreement in its interests or feels that it does not reflect its priorities (Luck 2006). China and Russia have repeatedly vetoed resolutions concerning Syria, more than sixteen vetoes since 2011, and the United States has done the same with the resolutions concerning Israel.

The UN, like other international bodies, lacks independent military capacity, which makes it directly dependent on member states for all aspects (logistics, funding, troops, and so on) (Weiss – Thakur 2020). This dependence makes the United Nations weak in enforcing its resolutions, especially during periods of conflict. For example, peacekeeping missions such as UNIFIL in Lebanon or UNAMI in Iraq depend on voluntary funding and programmes, a reality that limit their effectiveness.

International organizations are also similar to other large institutions in that they are characterized by bureaucracy and administrative problems, decision making is a long process that requires time to be completed, and the presence of parties with opposite interests often slows the process and sometimes prevents programmes from even being fully discussed (Thakur 2017). A real-life example is what happened in Libya after 2011, when crisis response was delayed due to administrative issues and bureaucratic procedures between the UN, the EU, and other regional bodies. In addition,

many countries in the Middle East consider international organizations to be biased or to act as tools of external influence, reducing the local authority and legitimacy in order to secure access to the region's natural resources, a perception that is often linked to the legacy of Western imperialism.

III.2. Case Study of International Involvement

Lebanon is a small country located at the intersection of the East Mediterranean and the Middle East. It is known for its plural and multi-religious society. The Muslims (Sunni, Shia, and Druze groups), Christians (primarily Maronite Catholics, along with Greek Orthodox and other denominations) are the components of Lebanese society. This diversity was established through a confessional political system that emphasized sectarian and political affiliation as a key factor in gaining power or benefiting from it. This system was established to ensure fair political representation in the state, without domination by any one party. Still, through time, the demographic, social, and regional issues conflicts escalated, directly weakening the state's authority and replacing it with sectarian loyalty and preference, creating structural conditions that led to the outbreak of tensions on all levels. The war did not take a linear trajectory, but it had unfolded through some overlapping stages. It all started with the clash between Christian militias and Palestinian leftist forces in Ain el Remmaneh, following the Syrian intervention when Syrian forces entered Lebanon aiming to restore the peace but this entry led the country to the third stage of this war which is Israeli invasion to expel the PLO from Lebanon, and that led to the appearance of the Multinational forces and international intervention in Lebanon. The fourth stage was the fragmentation and militia war in which the state's authority reached its minimum, to finally reach the final stage, which was titled by the Taif Agreement and political settlement that laid the basis of the post war governance. All those stages are written in detail in the text.

The Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) was a long, multi-sided internal armed conflict. It began as clashes between Lebanese rival political sectarian blocs and then evolved to include militias and alliances. It was not only a war of one phase, but it was a group of overlapping wars, including ideology, religion, militias, and sectors. The Lebanese Civil War started due to sectarian

institutional design, state weakness, and regional pressures created a structurally unstable system. The Lebanese political system, after the 1943 National Pact, was built on Confessional power sharing; each sector took a part of the institutional system and worked separately from the other. The President of the Republic is traditionally a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister is traditionally a Sunni, the Speaker of Parliament must be a Muslim Shia, and the Deputy Prime Minister is often from the Greek Orthodox community. This not only stopped one sector from dominating another but also caused workflow paralysis where institutional tasks were fundamentally connected to private or sectarian interest rather than national interest. Each sector was determined to help its population to guarantee a further term of political representation in the upcoming elections (Suad 2016). And as a result of this act, there was something known as a patron-client network in which every sector operates for the sake of its follower base. For example, some jobs were dedicated only to one group belonging to the sector that was taking control over the institution; in this way, those parties secured a robust base of advocates to be able to continue in their political marathon, and they instrumentalized governmental work to advance their interests. This patron-client system not only weakened the institutions and created sovereign paralysis, but also it made massive effect on external intervention. In the weak state, elites asked for external support from states or other external actors. Support was extended across multiple sectors, such as money, weapons, and protection, to compete with the war parties. In this way, there were openings for outside actors to buy influence by supporting or backing the leaders of the competing sectors. Thus, the great obsession with seeking external support from states led to the appearance of external intervention in the Lebanese interior and the manipulation of bullet decisions, while a near-total absence of authority had a primary goal of fighting domestic rivals. The internal fragmentation led to the need for an external sponsor, who, in turn, approved this and leveraged the existing demand. External actors such as the United States, France, Syria, and Israel started to support Lebanese leaders in various aspects. They provided money, weapons, and political backing that ensured the internal division among the Lebanese population. Those factors all worked together to fragment the internal authority and facilitate the path toward the outbreak of a civil war.

The Cairo Agreement of 1969, between the Lebanese government, represented by the Lebanese army and state authority representatives, and the PLO, represented by Yasser Arafat, was held in Cairo and signed in November 1969. This agreement played a role as a pre-war paper that paved the way for this war; it explicitly approved the ability of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to be officially armed forces. This agreement put the Palestinian refugee authority in parallel to the Lebanese authority, which led the Lebanese side to lose a crucial part of its sovereignty and control across a vast expanse of the state (GrokiPedia 1970). This agreement ended an already fragile system and reflected the limited ability to engage in rational decision-making in the presence of regional, religious, and sectarian interests by creating a parallel armed authority that accelerated the state's collapse. In 1976, Syria's military force entered Lebanon, claiming to restore stability and the political system, but in practice, it did the opposite. Syria took control over Lebanon; the Syrian presence in Lebanon was an invasion, but later it gained political cover through agreements with the Arab League and ADF, the Arab Deterrent Force. Although it gained political cover, it was not a fully balanced agreement between Lebanon and Syria. It manipulated the decision-making process, limited state sovereignty, and constrained the domestic political outcomes by positioning itself as a mediator or a third party that held a peaceful goal to resolve the conflict (Hudson 1997).

Israel wanted to interfere in this conflict, it had found an interest there to focus on the pursuit of its strategic objective of countering the PLO in Lebanon, and this directly contributed to the escalation of the conflict (Cobban 1984). Israel entered to implement a private agenda and manage the conflict, not to resolve it. They besieged the city, Beirut, trying to enforce decisions and reshape internal balance, making the negotiation process impossible on some topics. Both Countries, Syria and Israel, wanted to benefit from the Lebanese case. It was obvious when Syrian troops supported many Muslims dominated areas, whereas the Maronite viewed this as an external invasion and sovereign threat, so Israel started to fight Syria in the Lebanese airspace (Hijazi 1989). Not only did external actors have the strongest role in escalating the war, but also the internal parties, the internal militias, and sectors intensified the war through sectarian mobilization that made recruitment easier and hardened identity, and turned the political dispute into a vague armed conflict. Christians were divided

into 2 main groups. The first group was the one following the previous president, Franjeyyeh, who was the main supporter of Syria's intervention in Lebanon. The Phalangists and NLP represented the second group. These factions later fought each other, concluding in the 1978 Ehden incident, which led to severe deaths in Franjeyyeh's family members, including Tony Franjeyyeh, his wife, and his daughter. Similar fighting was happening in the south simultaneously, between the Shia, PLO militias, and Israel. Therefore, the Civil War in Lebanon transformed into a proxy war, where Syria fought Israel and supported the Muslim area, and Israel responded in the same way by supporting the opposite Christian sector (Gurses 2014). And Hizbollah was supported by a strong Iranian line, which has been a major factor in supporting Hizbollah's military and organizational capacity through funding, training, and weapons officially since 1980.

Major power countries did not leave the Lebanese political landscape evolving autonomously, without direction from external actors, one of the most important external actors in that period was the peacekeeping missions. The MNF I was the first deployment of the Multinational Force to Beirut in September 1982. MNF I included mainly the US, France, and Italy, which had a primary goal to supervise the evacuation of the PLO from West Beirut after the Israeli invasion. It was upon the Lebanese approval, a short mission for almost 30 days, and it was a clear one, not aiming at fighting or reshaping internal systems to align with the sender state's policy. France, at first, before 1982, had a different policy, independent from Washington, and established friendly relations with Arab states. But after 1982, it had to choose between maintaining its independence from the US or joining it in the MNF to be active in what was happening in Lebanon. It aligned with the second option and played a crucial role in that period. It worked closely with the US, but it supported Amin Gemayel to show its neutrality to all Lebanese parties (Wood 1998). The MNF I was narrow, time-limited, and mostly agreed upon. It succeeded in PLO evacuation as a primary goal, but its withdrawal was very early, and it had limitations in civilian protection. This point directly refers to my hypothesis: a clarified mandate can successfully work, but if it is narrow, this becomes harder and sometimes impossible. In reference to my hypothesis above, the local dynamics and the sectarian structure played a deep role in constraining the peacekeeping missions in Lebanon, according to an interview with Karim

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Pakradouni. He explained that even allies may be rejected when it comes to domestic credibility, meaning that local political legitimacy in Lebanon is very important. He illustrated why the Christian leaders changed their orientation and asked the MNF I to quit. They did not accept Bashir Gemayel to take power at a time when foreign troops were still present, because their initial goal and slogan was no foreign armies in Lebanon, and they were also to demand the leave of Syria, Israel, and the PLO too. So even though the supported part of this MNF saw it as a politically dangerous issue. Due to the limited success of the MNF I, MNF II was established in 1982 and lasted till 1984, a 2-year mission that had strong causes to appear. The assassination of Bashir Gemayel, the Sabra and Shatila massacres that were severe in which civilians from both sides Lebanon and PLO were randomly slain at the time West Beirut was invaded by Israel and governance structures were notably fragile, and the escalations of the political chaos in the Lebanese political system made it direct causes to establish the MNF II with some modifications to meet the required goals (Tarrabain 1990). The MNF II was made up of the same countries in addition to the UK, but France this time did not show neutrality to the Lebanese government, France was recognized as closer to the government than to the other factions and it coordinated politically with its allies, which was interpreted as taking sides in Beirut internal conflict and this factor directly contributed to the MNF's failure. The MNF II got broader and less clear than the first one, they directly supported Gemayel's government and by that it lost the neutrality where it tended to use military power beyond self-defence, the US targets were hit by offshore naval gunfire and air strikes in support of fighting in Beirut, and this made the MNF look like participant in hostilities supporting one side, not a neutral zone.

This case study revealed that international intervention did not generate sustainable peace in Lebanon owing to the fact that the interveners were ineffective within a coherent peacekeeping framework that aligned with Lebanon's political reality. Due to the limited, clear, and time-restricted mandate, MNF I met a short-term objective, but it didn't address the root causes of instability or keep civilians safe after withdrawal. Unlike MNF 2, its goals were wide and unclear, because it did not have a clear duration, it mixed up the peacekeeping with supporting the Lebanese government and the prevention of power. Due to that, it became tied to the Gemayel government and the Lebanese

army, and lost both credibility and neutrality among other factions. It lost credibility because it took a side with the Lebanese government, used its force for more than self-protection, as previously explained, the ambiguity created mistrust, which it transformed its representation to interfering in governmental issues and deterrence rather than stabilizing the environment, and it could not protect the civilians, which weakened its support even though from the primary supporters. So, the force became involved in the conflict instead of controlling it. These results confirm the main hypothesis: the international mission failed due to fragmented mandates and political alignment that didn't match the country's sectarian power-sharing system, weak state authority, and the presence of local and external veto players. So, in Lebanon, we can see that international involvement can calm violence for a while, but without a strong plan, neutrality, and understanding of local politics, it can't achieve long-term peace.

The Lebanese Civil War left behind a huge disaster in terms of people's deaths, losses, and destruction of homes and residential buildings. Statistics reveal that more than 150,000 deaths were recorded between 1975 and 1990 and almost 17,000 people disappeared (RAND Corporation 2013). This war helped in shaping the new Lebanon because of the displacement and social fragmentation. Mass displacement became a wide definition after this war, and due to the large scale of internal displacement, many people never returned to their original places and areas. This topic is a fundamental issue in Lebanese politics because it directly turned Lebanon into a more geographically segregated country, which considered itself independent of another part of the state, and worked then to reinforce militia authority and weakened the institutional work more because of the deep sectarian division (Gainer – Snesil – Mason 2024). Besides those, emigration in Lebanon was a huge phenomenon, which is also referred to as "Brain Drain," that had severe demographic effects. Emigration during the war reached approximately 990,000 emigrants, about 40% of the population at that time (Cashin 1995). The majority of those people who left the country were heavily concentrated in the working ages (25-44) (Hourani 2006). This is a structural effect on the Lebanese community that weakened the state capacity as well as the workforce, which directly resulted in as a result increased dependence on diaspora remittances. This produced a long-term structural shock for the labour force in the country and human

capital, increasing the economic system's reliance on diaspora remittances. Over time, this built a fragile economic system that was mainly based on this factor, in addition to some services supported by external flow. So, wartime losses can be understood as one of the factors that contributed to building weak institutions that, in their role was part of the Lebanese economic crisis in 2020.

This war was a major cause of state collapse, militia rule, and institutional breakdown. Lebanon was divided into sectarian areas, and the national army was weak and failed to maintain any peace norms. This is directly related to the research hypothesis, which clearly illustrates that due to the host government's limited or absence of real control, internal intervention could not succeed because of the fragmented power, and the internal intervention could not succeed also, since the government's lack of neutrality directly forces the external actors or forces to take a side with the warring parties.

The Civil War ended in 1990, through a mix of political settlement and military enforcement. The Taif Agreement, an agreement that ended the Lebanese Civil War, was a document signed in Saudi Arabia, under the Arab League auspices, supported by the US, and supervised by Syria (Conciliation Resources 2026). It is obvious that external actors had a major role in the Lebanese system, in both peace and war phases. The Taif Agreement officially ended the war and reshaped the Lebanese political system by setting bullet points that till now are guiding Lebanese politics. The Taif rebalanced political representations to 50/50 between Christians and Muslims after having a clear Christian dominance before the war in parliament. This agreement shifted the executive power from the Maronite President and shared it among the Council of Ministers, and this was a huge, new political level in Lebanon. In addition, Taif requested all the militias to be disarmed to restore civil peace in the country and defined the state's identity and relations, to announce explicitly that Lebanon is an Arab country in identity and belonging, in order to settle ideological disputes about Lebanese orientation, especially by the Christian groups. The Taif Agreement was able to record a real success in resolving the Lebanese Civil War more than any other international force or actor, such as MNF I and II, because it had reshaped the core political system by redefining the representations in such multi-sector and multi-religion country, and it created institutional framework for the post war state to limit chaos especially political and economic chaos (Conciliation Resources 2026).

IV. Conclusion

This paper has studied the role of international organizations in the Middle East conflicts, focusing on the UN, EU, Arab League, and OIC. We can know that each organization was deeply involved in a topic more than another, and this clearly shows that not all conflicts in the same area are the same. This paper also discusses peacekeeping missions, mediation, humanitarian aid, and diplomacy as tools in solving conflicts. International organizations are crucial bodies and necessary in this huge, interconnected world, especially with the development of globalization as a concept, they help in reducing violence and poverty, manage crises, and protect civilians in difficult periods. However, these organizations cannot fully guarantee peace and stability in the world, and this is justified especially when great power politics dominate the decision-making process, huge powers use the veto right, sovereignty limits any interference, and local actors resist or reject the external involvement. The Lebanese Civil War was a clear case study that reveals the reality, although international bodies interfered in this war for tens of years, they couldn't end the war for several factors. Clear, neutral, and short mandates had limited success, whereas political alignment and unclear mandates led to massive failure. The long-term peace for this case study didn't come from forces, MNF I and II, it came from a political settlement known as the Taif Agreement. Therefore, the hypotheses raised in the introduction are fully confirmed, international bodies matter, but they widely depend on political will, cooperation of powerful states, and local acceptance. Also, the legal and institutional limits and fragility weaken the enforcement.

To sum up, without reforms and coordination, the interventions remain symbolic, and future peace efforts must focus on human security, international law, and reducing geopolitical interference to secure an effective international effort to solve conflicts.

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