

TOPIC:

**USA v. Iran: Alleged Violations of
Sovereignty and the Use of Force
in Relation to Nuclear Facilities**

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I. Committee Description

A. Definition of ICLI

The International Court of Legal Inquiry (ICLI) is a specialized international legal committee designed to examine complex disputes involving international humanitarian law, state sovereignty, the use of force, and international security. It provides a structured forum in which states can present and examine competing legal, political, humanitarian, and security perspectives surrounding a dispute.

Unlike a traditional court, which primarily determines legal responsibility and issues a judgment based on applicable law, the ICLI adopts a broader inquiry-based approach. It recognizes that international disputes often involve overlapping legal questions, security concerns, humanitarian consequences, diplomatic interests, and conflicting interpretations of events. Rather than limiting proceedings to the question of which party is legally right or wrong, the ICLI examines the wider context in which the dispute has developed.



The ICLI therefore combines elements of legal examination, diplomatic inquiry, and structured international dialogue. Participating states are expected not only to defend their legal positions but also to engage with opposing arguments, examine the consequences of different courses of action, and consider the interests and concerns of other actors involved in the dispute.

Guided by the principles of the United Nations and international law, the ICLI functions as a forum for rigorous legal inquiry while allowing delegates to address the political and humanitarian realities that influence international disputes. This combination distinguishes it from conventional

judicial bodies and gives delegates greater scope to investigate a dispute from multiple perspectives before reaching their final conclusions.

B. Duties and Roles of ICLI

The ICLI examines complex international disputes from legal, political, humanitarian, and security perspectives. It carefully examines the evidence, arguments, official documents, and witness testimonies presented throughout the proceedings to understand the solution fairly and fully. It also looks beyond the states directly involved and considers how the dispute may affect neighboring countries, civilians, regional security, and the wider international community.

The ICLI brings international law, diplomacy, and practical problem-solving into one space. It allows the different sides to present their positions, raise their concerns, ask questions, and better understand one another's perspectives. States with different interests can take part in discussion and contribute to shaping a collective response.

Rather than simply deciding which side is right and wrong, the committee looks at the wider reality of this dispute and the people affected by it. Through legal inquiry, honest dialogue, and cooperation, it helps states recognize shared concerns, find common ground, and explore solutions that are lawful, fair, realistic, and achievable.

C. Prominent Goals:

- Promote the peaceful resolution of international disputes.
- Uphold the principles of international law when addressing disputes involving the use of force, international humanitarian law, and sovereignty.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability by objectively examining state actions that may threaten regional stability, global security, and international peace.

- Encourage long-term international cooperation and conflict prevention through a collaborative legal action framework based on stability, justice, and international order.
- Assess the legality of state conduct in accordance with the UN Charter and international law and treaties.
- Develop fair, practical, and legally grounded recommendations that address the legal, diplomatic, humanitarian, and security aspects of international disputes.

II. Introduction to Topic

A. Topic Significance

The involvement of nuclear-related facilities makes the dispute especially serious. Military operations affecting these sites may endanger workers, civilians, and nearby communities while also creating risks for neighboring countries and regional stability. The consequences of such actions may therefore extend far beyond these two states directly involved. More broadly, the dispute shapes international discussions on accountability, nuclear security, restraint, and the responsive conduct of states. Examining this topic allows the ICLI to assess the legitimacy and consequences of state actions, promote peaceful dispute resolution, and encourage legal and diplomatic approaches that prevent wider conflict and protect sovereignty.

B. Main Events

- **14 July 2015** – The United States, Iran and other world powers agreed to restrict Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- **16 January 2016** – The IAEA confirmed that Iran had completed the nuclear-related measures required for Implementation Day, and nuclear-related sanctions relief began.
- **8 May 2018** – The US withdrew from the JCPOA and later re-imposed sanctions on Iran.

- **8 May 2019** – Iran announced that it would begin gradually reducing its compliance with certain JCPOA commitments, citing the US withdrawal and re-imposition of sanctions.
- **3 January 2020** – A US strike killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani. Iran condemned the strike as unlawful, while the US defended its action on security and self-defence grounds.
- **8 January 2020** – Iran launched missiles at bases in Iraq hosting US forces and informed the UN that it considered its action an exercise of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.
- **23 February 2021** – Iran reduced the IAEA's access to and monitoring of parts of its nuclear program, contributing to significant verification gaps.
- **2021–2022** – Indirect negotiations aimed at restoring the JCPOA failed to produce a final agreement amid disagreements over safeguards, sanctions and Iran's nuclear program.
- **2023–2024** – Iran expanded its stockpile of enriched uranium while the IAEA continued to report limitations affecting its monitoring and verification activities.
- **22 June 2025** – The US attacked Iran's Natanz, Fordow and Esfahan nuclear facilities. Iran described the strikes as a violation of its sovereignty and international law, while the US defended its actions on security and self-defence grounds.
- **23 June 2025** – Iran launched missiles at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, which hosted US forces. Iran stated that the attack was carried out in response to the US strikes on its nuclear facilities.
- **24 June 2025** – A ceasefire brought the immediate military escalation to an end, but the wider nuclear, security and legal disputes remained unresolved.

- **28 February 2026** – The United States began wider military operations against Iran, including attacks on nuclear-related and military infrastructure.
- **11 March 2026** – The US informed the UN Security Council that it considered the operations begun on 28 February to be an exercise of individual and collective self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.
- **8 April 2026** – Iran and the US agreed to a two-week ceasefire after weeks of direct conflict.
- **May–June 2026** – Tensions and hostilities gradually resumed as the temporary ceasefire failed to produce a lasting resolution of the nuclear and security disputes.
- **8 June 2026** – Military confrontations between Iran and the US continued while negotiations over Iran’s nuclear programme, sanctions and regional security remained unresolved, marking the end of the committee’s timeline.

C. Link to SDGs

- **SDG 16:** to promote inclusive and peaceful societies, uphold the rule of law, ensure access to justice for all, and build accountable and effective institutions. It underlines that sustainable



development is impossible in environments with a lack of respect for international obligations, weak legal protection, political instability, or armed conflict. The goal is evident in the topic at hand, as the Iran-US dispute raises essential questions regarding the lawful use of force, respect for state sovereignty, the scope of self-defense, and the protection of nuclear infrastructure and civilians. Moreover, it sheds light on broader institutional issues, including the effectiveness of international mechanisms responsible for

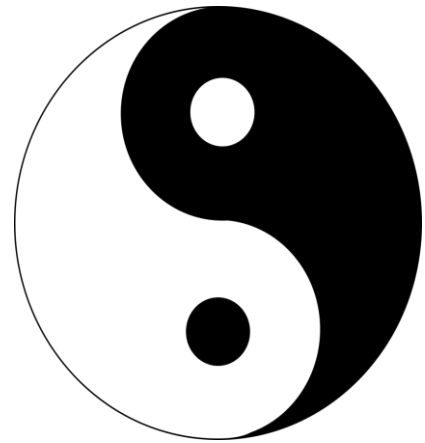
peaceful dispute resolution, accountability, and nuclear verification. Delegates are required to examine whether the actions of the parties were consistent with international humanitarian law, the UN charter, and other applicable legal principles, as well as considering the role of institutions such as the IAEA and the UN in preventing escalation and ensuring compliance. The ICLI Legal Action Framework promotes SDG 16 by supporting practical measures for de-escalation, accountability, civilian protection, and future conflict prevention. The committee focuses on strengthening respect for international law and showcases how legal institutions can take part in international stability and peaceful dispute resolution.

- **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the Goals, emphasizes the importance of international cooperation in addressing challenges that cannot be effectively managed by one state or institution alone. It promotes stronger partnerships among states, international organizations, civil society, and other actors through the exchange of knowledge, resources, expertise, and coordinated action. It also highlights the importance of policy and institutional cooperation in achieving common international objectives. SDG 17 is particularly relevant to the Iran–United States dispute because its legal and security implications extend beyond the two states involved. Questions surrounding nuclear activities require international verification and monitoring, particularly through the IAEA, while military escalation can affect regional security, neighboring states, nuclear safety, and broader international peace. These issues therefore require cooperation among states and international institutions rather than relying solely on unilateral decisions. ICLI reflects this principle through the State Commissioners, who bring different national perspectives together to develop a Legal Action Framework. Through evidence assessment, negotiation,

and collective decision-making, Commissioners propose coordinated measures concerning accountability, nuclear safety, sovereignty, de-escalation, and the prevention of future conflict. In this way, the committee demonstrates how international partnerships can contribute to addressing the wider consequences of the dispute and promoting peaceful and sustainable solutions.

D. Link to Theme: Yin and Yang

Yin and Yang is a Chinese philosophical concept that signifies balance among opposite yet connected forces. It implies that two sides impact one another and neither can be understood alone, even though they may appear contradictory. This is reflected in the dispute between the United States and Iran, where Iran highlights its right to peaceful nuclear development, while the US emphasizes that security threats can justify defensive or preventive action.



This contrast gives rise to a broader legal tension between principles that must be assessed together rather than in isolation. On one side are the prohibition on the use of force, respect for state sovereignty, and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure; on the other is the right of a state to invoke self-defense when the legal requirements for doing so are met. This tension becomes particularly significant when military operations involve nuclear-related facilities, where questions of necessity, proportionality, civilian protection, and wider regional consequences may arise. In this sense, the yin and yang theme is reflected in the interaction between competing legal

considerations, each of which can influence how the other is interpreted and applied. Resolving the dispute therefore requires careful assessment of how these principles operate together within the limits established by international law.

E. Link to Good Governance Pillars

- **Accountability:** Accountability is a core pillar of good governance. It requires leaders to show transparency and face the consequences for their mistakes. Its key elements include enforceability, which means that those who fail to fulfill their duties or violate the public trust should be held accountable, and answerability, which means that



Good Governance

officials should be able to explain and justify their decisions and actions under the law and to the public. Accountability is reflected in ICLI through the distinct responsibilities assigned to each role. Advocates present and defend the legal positions of the parties while questioning opposing arguments and evidence. Witnesses provide testimony and information that allow claims and state conduct to be examined more closely. State Commissioners assess the broader legal and political implications of the dispute and contribute to developing practical measures for accountability, prevention, transparency, and compensation. Together, these roles ensure that arguments are challenged, evidence is scrutinized, and the actions of states are assessed according to applicable legal and humanitarian standards.

- **Rule of Law:** It is a fundamental pillar of good governance. It ensures equality before the law, fair legal frameworks, and human rights protection. Its key principles are no abuse of power, fair rules, and equal treatment. The committee must determine if the US had a lawful claim of self-defence and whether the



military action respected Iran's sovereignty. By applying these principles equally to both parties and assessing the evidence, the ICLI demonstrates the importance of this pillar in addressing international disputes and developing sustainable lawful solutions.

III. Main Commissioners

1. Oman:

Oman has long played a prominent diplomatic role in facilitating indirect dialogue between the USA and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and it remains strategically located beside the Strait of Hormuz. Disruption of the strait has made energy flows, maritime access, and Gulf security even more important to Oman by 2026. As a result, Oman's main interests are maritime stability, mediation, and de-escalation while protecting trade, navigation, and its territory from the expanding conflict.

2. Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia is a major Gulf power whose economy and security are closely tied to developments in Iran and stability in the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. The 2026 escalation amplified threats to Gulf trade and infrastructure and disrupted regional energy flows. Saudi Arabia's primary

concerns are Gulf and energy security, especially protecting economic stability, export routes, and oil infrastructure.

3. Lebanon:

Lebanon is particularly exposed to the Iran–US dispute because of Iran’s longstanding relationship with Hezbollah, a major Lebanese political and armed actor. Although Hezbollah does not represent the Lebanese state, an escalation between Iran and the United States could place Lebanon under greater regional pressure, particularly if tensions were to manifest through military activity, retaliatory actions, or other incidents occurring on Lebanese territory. Such escalation could also deepen domestic political tensions and further strain Lebanon’s security, economy, and civilian population. Lebanon’s primary interest is therefore to preserve its sovereignty and internal stability, maintain state authority over national decisions, and prevent the Iran–US dispute from drawing Lebanon into a broader regional conflict.

4. United Arab Emirates:

The UAE, lying across the Arabian Gulf from Iran, has major security and economic interests in preserving regional stability and secure maritime trade. Threats to shipping and nuclear safety increased in 2026, including the drone strike at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant. The UAE, focusing on Gulf and Nuclear security, aims to protect maritime trade, energy interests, civilian nuclear infrastructure, and the population from regional escalation.

5. Qatar:

Qatar, while hosting the major Al Udeid Air Base, has maintained essential relations with both Iran and the US. After being targeted in June 2025, Qatar remained exposed to the wider dispute

and kept its diplomatic role. Qatar aims to protect its safety and sovereignty, preventing the country from being drawn into the confrontation, while preserving dialogue and good relations in the Gulf.

6. Iraq:

Iraq has been repeatedly caught between American and Iranian tensions, and it shares a border with Iran. Iran has conducted missile strikes in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The risk to Iraqi security, sovereignty, and energy imports further increased in 2026. Iraq's key concern is territorial sovereignty, especially preventing armed forces and foreign states from using its territory for wider regional confrontations.

7. Kuwait:

Kuwait is particularly exposed during Iran-US hostilities as it hosts US military forces and is located close to both Iran and Iraq. Iranian strikes, reaching Kuwait, damaged Kuwait International Airport, causing casualties while other drones and missiles targeted military interests. Kuwait's primary focus is civilian security, protecting its population, military facilities, infrastructure, and sovereignty from further attacks.

8. Bahrain:

Hosting the headquarters of the United States Fifth Fleet, Bahrain is of particular strategic importance during this dispute. Bahrain faced drone attacks and Iranian missiles aimed at US military positions, with Bahraini defences intercepting various threats. Bahrain aims to protect its territory, military facilities, civilian population, and navigation in Gulf waters, focusing on defence and security.

9. Pakistan:

Pakistan has participated in diplomatic efforts that address the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz and limit regional escalation. Pakistan also shares a border with Iran; hence, its focus is border

security and diplomatic de-escalation, preventing the dispute from expanding to the neighboring states while protecting its sovereignty.

IV. Legal Action Framework (Suggested Solutions)

The Legal Action Framework is the final set of practical and legally grounded measures proposed by the State Commissioners to address the dispute and its consequences, reduce future risks, and promote compliance with international law.

Commissioners are advised to prepare solutions beforehand and may consider the following suggested solutions while drafting the Framework:

- Mutual Non-Interference Commitment: Both parties refrain from the use of force unless permitted under international law.
- Pre-use-of-force legal review: Proposed military operations undergo a formal legal assessment before force is used.
- Framework compliance review: Systematic review of each party's compliance with the procedures, obligations, and commitments of the Framework
- IAEA Access and Verification Protocol: Ensure safe IAEA access to relevant nuclear facilities, require updates on nuclear materials, and restore essential monitoring equipment to support independent and continuous verification.
- No-strike on nuclear facilities: Prohibit attacks on nuclear and radiological facilities where grave civilian or environmental harm may occur.
- Compensation for proven harm: Adopt a method to assess and compensate civilian, infrastructure, or environmental damage where responsibility has been established.
- Official Breach-Report Procedure: Establish a detailed mechanism for reporting, reviewing, and responding to alleged breaches of the framework.

- Prohibit Offensive Military Use of Nuclear Sites: Offensive weapons, forces, or military operations cannot be stationed in protected nuclear facilities.
- Safeguard Third-State Territory and Airspace: The US and Iran must respect the sovereignty of other states and avoid using their airspace or territory for military operations.
- Strait of Hormuz Security Protocol: Require parties not to hinder civilian commercial navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and set up communication procedures to avoid miscalculations, attacks, or disruption of regional shipping.
- Cross-Border Assistance Mechanism: Permit affected states to request medical, technical, or evacuation assistance from international organizations and participating states.

V. Questions to Consider, Tips and Suggested Sites

A. Questions to Consider:

1. Under what circumstances, if any, may a state use force in self-defence in response to a possible nuclear threat?
2. What evidence is required to be shown to prove that a nuclear facility is a sufficient security threat to justify action against it?
3. How can freedom of navigation and regional security, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz, be safeguarded during high-tension periods?
4. What role do previous negotiations, diplomatic agreements, compliance records, and inspections play in the legal assessment of the dispute?
5. What mechanisms could promote accountability if one party or the other is found to have breached its legal obligations?

6. When addressing the dispute, how can the security concerns and interests of affected and neighboring states be taken into consideration?
7. To minimize escalation, protect civilians, improve verification, and prevent similar disputes in the future, what provisions should be incorporated in the Legal Action Framework?
8. What role should the International Atomic Energy Agency play in monitoring Iran's nuclear activities?

B. Tips

- Know your role well and understand it.
- Stay grounded in facts.
- Use ICLI language present in the delegate guide.
- Build a clear case and get lots of evidence.
- Listen carefully and ask good clarifying questions.
- Remain diplomatic at all times.
- Dress up and use costumes for witnesses.
- Use credible sources and refrain from your use of AI to gather information.
- Be aware of the flow of debate and rules of procedure.
- Have fun and enjoy your MUN experience!

C. Suggested Sites

Cour internationale de Justice - International Court of Justice | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE: <https://www.icj-cij.org/>

Explainer: What is the status of Iran's main nuclear facilities?:
<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-is-status-irans-main-nuclear-facilities-2026-01-16>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <https://en.mfa.gov.ir/>

Monitoring and verification in Iran: <https://www.iaea.org/topics/monitoring-and-verification-in-iran>

Resolution 2231 (2015) on Iran Nuclear issue | Security Council:
<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/2231/background>

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

VI. President's Note

Dear Delegate,

If you are looking for a committee where every argument matters and every piece of evidence can change the debate, ICLI is the committee for you! The ICLI examines international disputes through evidence, legal reasoning, and structured debate. This year's topic, Iran v. United States, focuses on alleged violations of sovereignty and the use of force in relation to nuclear facilities. I warmly welcome you to ICLI and look forward to an exciting and fruitful committee.

Sincerely, Celina.

VII. SGs' Note

Dear Delegates,

As your Secretary-Generals, we hope this background guide gives you a strong foundation for the discussions ahead and helps you approach your committee with confidence. Beyond preparation,

this conference is an opportunity to challenge yourself, step into new perspectives, and take part in conversations that demand thought and initiative.

This year's theme, "Yin and Yang: The Harmony in Opposites", reflects the idea that opposing sides can exist in balance, whether between conflict and cooperation or speaking and listening. It reminds us that meaningful progress often begins when we learn to understand perspectives different from our own.

As Leo Buscaglia said, "Change is the end result of all true learning," and we hope this experience leaves you with a stronger sense of the value your voice can carry. We cannot wait to meet you and see what you bring to this conference.

Warm regards,

The 15th HHHSMUN Secretary Generals

Mia, Hani and Omar

VIII. Delegations Present

Delegations	Advocates of Iran
	Advocates of the USA
	State Commissioners

IX. Contact Info:

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