



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Rules and Practices of the Committee on Middle East Questions¹

*Adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its 191st session in October 2012
and amended in October 2016, March 2022 and April 2026*

I. ROLE AND MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 1

1. The Committee on Middle East Questions (hereinafter the "Committee") shall follow the peace process in the Middle East and facilitate dialogue with members of parliament from all parties involved in the conflict. This shall include parliamentarians from all the political factions represented in the Israeli and Palestinian parliaments, from neighbouring countries and from members of the Quartet.
2. The Committee shall address regional conflicts and situations in the Middle East through a dual-focus framework:
 - Standing focus: The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is the permanent, central anchor of the Committee's mandate, ensuring sustained dialogue and confidence-building between all parties.
 - Rotating regional focus: At each IPU Assembly, the Committee shall select one other regional situation and approach it through one thematic lens.
3. The Committee shall undertake visits to the region, as required but at least once a year, if politically and logistically feasible, to gain an understanding of the situation on the ground, consult with the parties concerned and promote dialogue between them. Such visits may include missions to parliaments, regional parliamentary forums, or other relevant institutions, in line with the Committee's standing and rotating priorities.
4. The Committee shall submit a written report on the situation in the Middle East to the Governing Council. It may also express a political position on the situation in the Middle East for endorsement by the Governing Council.
5. In all its activities and decisions, the Committee shall take into account gender equality and ensure the meaningful participation of women parliamentarians.
6. The Committee shall ensure that the perspectives of youth and marginalized communities are considered in its deliberations and activities.
7. The Committee shall regularly assess its activities and adjust its working modalities to enhance its impact on peace and dialogue in the Middle East region.

II. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 2

1. The Committee shall be composed of twelve members, elected by the Governing Council for a term of four years. The members (two from each geopolitical group active within the IPU²) shall be nominated by their geopolitical group and elected on the basis of their interest and expertise in the subject matter and of their availability to attend all sessions.

¹ In these Rules, whenever the words "member", "parliamentarian", "President", "representative", "Secretary General" and "Vice-President" are used, they should be construed as referring to both women and men.

² At the time of approval of this Rule, there were six active geopolitical groups at the IPU. The composition of the Committee shall be reviewed accordingly in the event of changes to the number of geopolitical groups.

2. Each geopolitical group shall be represented by one man and one woman.
3. In addition, as long as the standing focus of the Committee remains the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, one representative each from Israel and Palestine shall be standing members of the Committee, participating in a non-voting capacity.
4. The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians shall each be entitled to designate a representative to participate in a non-voting capacity in Committee meetings and, where appropriate, in missions.
5. If a member of the Committee dies, resigns or ceases to be a parliamentarian, an election to replace that person shall be held at the next session of the Governing Council. A retiring member shall not be eligible for re-election for two years.
6. If a member of the Committee fails to attend two consecutive sessions, he or she shall be replaced through an election by the Governing Council.

III. METHODS OF WORK

SESSIONS

Rule 3

1. The Committee shall meet in ordinary session at each Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Secretary General shall fix the place and date of its ordinary sessions. The Committee shall hold two sittings during each Assembly: one sitting dedicated to the core Israeli–Palestinian conflict and its ramifications on the region and one sitting dedicated to the designated rotating regional focus.
2. It shall convene extraordinary dialogue sessions with members of parliament from countries involved in the conflict if the President of the Committee deems it necessary or if three of its members so request. Such dialogue shall, in principle, take place at IPU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, but can, if Committee members so agree, also take place in the Middle East region. The date of extraordinary sessions shall be fixed by the Committee President in agreement, whenever possible, with the members of the Committee.

PRESIDENCY

Rule 4

1. The Committee shall elect its President and Vice-President from among the 12 members nominated by the geopolitical groups, for a one-year term. Both shall be eligible for re-election once. Gender parity and geopolitical balance of the leadership shall be observed; the President and Vice-President shall not be of the same sex and shall not be representatives of the same geopolitical group. An endeavour shall be made to ensure alternation between men and women and rotation among the geopolitical groups for both positions.
2. The President shall open, adjourn and close the meetings, direct the work of the Committee, ensure respect for the Rules, call upon members to speak, put matters to the vote, announce the results of the voting and declare sessions closed. The President's decisions on these matters shall be final and shall be accepted without debate.
3. The President may entrust Committee members with preparing reports for submission to the ordinary Committee sessions at the following IPU Assembly.
4. The President may also propose that the Committee hold hearings with delegations from countries concerned and relevant experts.
5. The Vice-President shall chair the Committee in the President's absence. In case of resignation, loss of parliamentary mandate or death of the President, or if the rights or affiliation of the parliament to which the President belongs are suspended, his/her functions shall be performed by the Vice-President. Should the Vice-President also become subject to any of the situations mentioned in the previous sentence, the Committee shall elect a new President and Vice-President for a one-year term.

AGENDA

Rule 5

1. The provisional agenda of each session shall be fixed by the Secretary General in agreement with the President. It shall be communicated to the members of the Committee at least one month before the opening of each ordinary session. The agenda shall reflect the Committee's dual-focus framework, including items related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the rotating regional focus.
2. A member of the Committee may request the inclusion of supplementary items in the agenda.
3. The definitive agenda of each session shall be fixed by the Committee at the opening of each session.

DELIBERATIONS - QUORUM - VOTE

Rule 6

1. The members of the Committee shall deliberate in camera.
2. The Committee may hold valid deliberations and take valid decisions only if seven members are present.
3. The 12 members of the Committee nominated by the geopolitical groups shall have one vote each.
4. The President shall participate in the voting only if the votes are equally divided.
5. The Committee shall normally vote by a show of hands. However, if the President deems it necessary or if one member of the Committee so requests, a secret ballot shall be held.
6. The Committee shall take all its decisions by a majority of the votes cast.
7. In calculating the number of votes cast, only positive and negative votes shall be taken into consideration.
8. In the interval between sessions, the President, acting through the Secretary General, shall, if necessary, consult the Committee by correspondence.
9. For the results of this consultation to constitute a valid decision, the Secretariat must have received replies from at least four members of the Committee within 10 days of the date of dispatch of the communication by which they were consulted.
10. The Committee may invite parliamentarians from countries directly concerned by the region under examination to participate in the Committee. Such invited parliamentarians shall provide inside knowledge and contextual perspectives but shall not have voting rights or decision-making authority within the Committee.

IV. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

ACTIVITIES, MISSIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Rule 7

1. The Committee may engage with external and internal IPU stakeholders to enhance its effectiveness and visibility. This includes:
 - In camera hearings with ex officio members, delegations from countries concerned, relevant United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and regional organizations.
 - Regular cooperation with other IPU committees and bodies to ensure coherence across the IPU's peace and security agenda.
 - Engagement with regional parliaments and parliamentary forums on matters affecting Middle Eastern peace and security.
2. At the close of each IPU Assembly, the Committee shall adopt concise outcomes and conclusions, capturing observations, commitments and follow-up actions on both its standing and rotating priorities.

V. ADMINISTRATION

SECRETARIAT

Rule 8

1. The Secretariat of the IPU shall receive or prepare all documents necessary to the deliberations of the Committee and shall distribute them to its members in English and French. It shall ensure the simultaneous interpretation of the debates in these two languages, as well as in Arabic and Spanish.
2. It shall prepare reports of its regular sessions, in consultation with the President, for submission to the Governing Council.

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES

Rule 9

1. One or more of the members of the Committee and/or the IPU Secretary General may propose amendments to the Rules for discussion by the Committee. The Committee shall discuss such proposed amendments and adopt, with the support of an absolute majority of the members present at the time of the vote, its own views thereon. Should these views favour specific amendments to the Rules, such amendments shall be submitted to the Governing Council for approval.