

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB students first in region to win top prize at World Model UN**

Nine AUB students brought home the “Best Delegation Award” of the 29th Annual Harvard World Model United Nations, (WorldMUN), granted in recognition of the AUB Model UN team's diplomatic, leadership, and public speaking skills. The AUB team became the first delegation in Lebanon and the MENA region to ever earn the honor since the inception of Harvard WorldMUN in 1992.

“In times when the world sees every possible negative aspect of our country, it was an honor to raise Lebanon's name on the international scene and show the world our true colors,” said Alec Acaf, member-at-large of AUBMUN.

Attended in different host countries every year by over 2,000 currently-enrolled university students from over 110 countries, the Harvard World Model United Nations (WorldMUN) is the world's most internationally diverse college-level Model UN conference and the largest outside of the US and Canada. The debates and events of this year's conference, dubbed the “Olympics of Model United Nations,” were held virtually for the first time due to COVID-19 restrictions.

From February 25 to March 1, 2021, AUBMUN members debated the world's most pressing global matters, simulating roles of representatives of the highest UN agencies and bodies, such as the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Security Council. The debates led to passing comprehensive resolutions that tackle the topics at hand.

Engaged in this prominent event among the world's most seasoned contestants, were AUBMUN President Mounia El Khawand who served as chair of delegation; Vice President of AUBMUN Stephanie Nassar; Sarah El-Abd, Jirji Haddad, Michel Sadek, and Mark Nourallah from AUB's Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and Alec Acaf, Karen Sreih, and Maurice Haddad from the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

“I am both elated and humbled by the award that was bestowed upon us, a testament to what hard work, perseverance, and determination can achieve, despite the adverse circumstances,” said Mounia El Khawand. “I am proud to have served as your president, chair, and mentor over the past year. We are the best delegation in the world! What a legacy that is.”

Five out of eight AUBMUN competitors brought home highly coveted individual awards: Stephanie Nassar, Sarah El-Abd, Jirji Haddad, Michel Sadek, and Alec Acaf. These delegates won against others that came from the globe's most prominent universities.

“The AUB Model UN Club never gave up on projecting the best image of AUB to the international community,” said Stephanie Nassar, who also served as the head delegate of the team and won an honorable mention award. “The financial burden was the first bump on the road, but we managed to make Lebanon's case to obtain fees waiver. The time difference of seven hours was another, but we endured sleepless nights and strived for excellence. The unreliable internet connection was also a hindrance, but we managed to make our voices heard. The continuous support we received from all faculty and staff is what made us believe in the beauty of our dreams. This achievement is the first of its kind, and we wish for future AUBMUN members to keep the legacy going and make Lebanon's flag rise high, no matter the circumstances.”

Eager to have their skills tested within a highly professional, competitive, and diverse virtual environment, AUB's delegates worked tirelessly day and night, giving their best at the oddest hours, with the conference schedule set at Eastern Standard Time.

“As a student-oriented educator with a mission of 'bridging the gap between policy making and academia,' this is a historic win by our AUB students reflecting the true colors of our university, its education, and the impact of its clubs' culture,” said Dr. Zeinab Mirza, faculty advisor of AUBMUN.

**ENDS**

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## Note to Editors

### About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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