Aboul Gheit's briefing at High-Level Security Council Session on Permanent Item

23 January 2025

Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit's briefing at the High-Level Security Council Session on Cooperation Between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations: Cooperation Between the Security Council and the League of Arab States

Your Excellency Mr. Ahmed Attaf,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, National Community Abroad, and African Affairs,

Allow me to begin by extending my heartfelt congratulations to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish to express my profound appreciation for Algeria’s pivotal role as the Arab member of the Council. I particularly commend Algeria’s initiative to convene this significant session, which seeks to bolster the relationship between the League of Arab States and the Security Council.

Your Excellencies,

It is no secret that the agenda of this esteemed Council is replete with Arab issues. From the Palestinian cause to the situations in Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia, the convergence of priorities between the League of Arab States and the Security Council is unmistakable. This shared focus necessitates the intensification of our cooperation to address unresolved crises, thereby strengthening regional and international security and advancing the principles of justice.

Furthermore, we cannot overlook the strategic international competition unfolding among major powers at the global level. Unfortunately, this dynamic has exacerbated tensions within the Council, hindering effective engagement on critical Arab issues, particularly the Palestinian cause, which remains central to the collective Arab conscience.

Mr. President,

It is imperative to continue refining the conceptual and operational framework for collaboration between the League of Arab States and the Security Council. This effort builds on the Council's historical role in addressing Arab concerns and aligns with the vision outlined in the "Declaration on the Future of the United Nations," adopted during the 79th session of the UN General Assembly. This declaration underscores the necessity of strengthening the foundations of cooperation, especially during this critical period of reshaping the international multilateral system within the framework of the United Nations.

From this standpoint, I reiterate my appreciation for the success of regional and international tripartite mediation efforts in concluding an agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian sides after 15 months of a criminal genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. I must emphasise, however, that a ceasefire is not a permanent solution. Sustainable peace cannot be realised unless the Palestinian people achieve their legitimate right to establish an independent state along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The denial of Palestinian rights continues to pose a profound threat to international peace and security, as witnessed over the past months in a war whose flames extended beyond Gaza and Palestine, engulfing the broader region.

In this context, I urge this Council to actively encourage and adopt the initiative of the international coalition supporting the implementation of the two-state solution. This coalition, which the League of Arab States proudly helped establish in collaboration with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union, Norway, and other peace-loving nations, represents a vital step forward. We look forward to greater engagement by the Security Council in supporting this initiative and fulfilling its longstanding resolutions on this matter.

Mr. President,

Allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Lebanon on the election of President Joseph Aoun, which brings an end to a vacancy that lasted more than two years. I also welcome the broad consensus achieved in nominating Judge Nawaf Salam as Prime Minister. We are hopeful that Lebanon will embark on a new chapter of stability, reconstruction, and economic revitalisation. In this regard, I underscore the importance of maintaining the ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel and extending it through the precise implementation of Resolution 1701. This includes ensuring Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanese territory and the deployment of the Lebanese army in the areas from which such withdrawal takes place.

On developments in Syria, the League of Arab States continues to stand with the aspirations of the Syrian people for a better future after enduring immense suffering under the former regime. A mission from the General Secretariat, led by my personal envoy, recently visited Syria on 18–19 January to assess the situation firsthand. A comprehensive report has been distributed to our member states to provide clarity and enable informed decision-making. We aspire for Syria to achieve a successful political transition that secures its emergence from the current crisis without external interference or imposition, while preserving its unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

In this regard, I must warn against the dangers posed by Israeli expansionist ambitions in Syria, which exploit the delicate circumstances the country is navigating. I emphasise the necessity of adhering to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement as the foundation for maintaining calm between Syria and Israel. Furthermore, I affirm that the occupation of the Golan Heights remains legally invalid, serving no purpose other than fulfilling Israel’s expansionist aspirations, as clearly stipulated in the resolutions of this esteemed Council.

I once again commend the success of the regional and international tripartite mediation efforts in concluding an agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian sides after 15 months of a devastating and criminal genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. However, I must emphasise that a ceasefire alone cannot constitute a permanent solution. True peace will remain unattainable unless the Palestinian people secure their inalienable right to establish an independent state along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The ongoing denial of Palestinian rights poses a grave and imminent threat to international peace and security, as vividly demonstrated over the past months by a conflict whose devastation transcended Gaza and Palestine, igniting instability across the region.

In this regard, I call upon this esteemed Council to actively endorse and support the initiative of the international coalition for implementing the two-state solution. The League of Arab States is honoured to have participated in the establishment of this coalition, alongside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union, Norway, and other peace-advocating nations. We anticipate heightened engagement from the Security Council to bolster this effort, in alignment with its numerous relevant resolutions.

We hope that Syria will embark on a successful political transition that enables it to overcome its crisis without external interference or imposition while safeguarding its unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. In this regard, I must also warn of the persistent threat posed by Israeli expansionist ambitions in Syria, which seek to exploit the country's delicate circumstances. Adherence to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement remains imperative as a foundation for maintaining calm between Syria and Israel. Furthermore, I reiterate that the occupation of the Golan Heights is legally invalid, driven solely by expansionist motives, as unequivocally outlined in the resolutions of this esteemed Council.

Mr. President,

The League of Arab States stands in unwavering solidarity with Sudan as it endures one of the most devastating and costly conflicts in modern history in terms of human suffering. We resolutely support the unity of Sudan and its national institutions. We urge all Sudanese parties to cease hostilities, halt military confrontations, and return to the paths of calm and constructive, fraternal dialogue. Such dialogue must be guided by wisdom, patriotism, and the prioritisation of Sudan's supreme national interest and stability. We also emphasise the importance of the continued cooperation and coordination between the League of Arab States, the United Nations, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, and specialised UN agencies in addressing the humanitarian dimensions of the crisis in Sudan.

We aspire to collaborate closely with the Security Council to establish lasting peace in Sudan by first restoring calm as a foundation for a comprehensive settlement. Such a settlement must address the aspirations of the Sudanese people while safeguarding their unity and sovereignty. In this regard, we look forward to the Security Council’s support for the League’s initiatives, particularly in rationalising and coordinating peace efforts alongside those of the United Nations and the African Union.

Regarding Libya, the League of Arab States is keen to intensify coordination with the United Nations to expedite the resumption of the political process. In partnership with the African Union and neighbouring countries, we are committed to unifying Libyan society under a single, inclusive leadership. We urge the Security Council to support these efforts and assist in helping Libya overcome its intricate political crisis, free from the influence of foreign agendas. We emphasise the importance of appointing a Special Envoy for the Secretary-General who possesses a deep understanding of Arab culture and Libyan traditions.

The League of Arab States is also strengthening its engagement with Somalia to safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and sustainable development. These efforts are aimed at upholding Somalia's autonomy and respecting its will as it works towards a stable and prosperous future. On this occasion, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Somalia for its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the next two years. The League of Arab States affirms its unwavering support for Somalia in preserving its unity and sovereignty, and we look forward to fruitful collaboration during its tenure.

Mr. President,

The conceptual framework is a cornerstone of our collective efforts to confront global challenges, including pandemics, armed conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, food and water insecurity, desertification, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and crisis mitigation. These challenges, along with their profound impact on the various strata of our societies, demand coordinated and reinforced action. While our joint efforts align with those of the United Nations, they require further strengthening. In this context, we call for the activation of mutual visits at the international level, including the acceleration of the forthcoming visit by Security Council members to the League of Arab States headquarters. This visit, following the last one in 2016, would provide a vital opportunity to hold intensive meetings with the League Council in Cairo and enhance collaboration.

The growing international focus on humanitarian aid underscores the importance of alleviating human suffering in the face of crises, particularly in conflict zones. In this regard, the League of Arab States is intensifying its efforts to support the United Nations' humanitarian initiatives in Arab countries such as Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Sudan, working to address urgent needs and mitigate the impact of conflicts.

The League of Arab States also draws your attention to the grave implications of Israeli plans and decisions aimed at undermining UNRWA. These efforts threaten not only to dismantle an agency with an indispensable humanitarian mandate but also to destabilise the entire region. UNRWA's role extends far beyond humanitarian aid; it is a pillar of stability for millions of Palestinian refugees. Undermining this agency constitutes a direct threat to regional stability. We call upon the Security Council to take decisive action to defend UNRWA’s vital mission.

Lastly, the League of Arab States seeks deeper engagement in resolving Arab issues on the Security Council’s agenda. This includes strengthening cooperation with the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoys to Arab conflict zones, and we welcome the regular visits of some envoys to the General Secretariat. Furthermore, we urge collaboration in the effective selection of UN representatives for missions in our region, leveraging Arab expertise proposed by the League to enhance the likelihood of successful agreements that serve the interests of Arab nations and their peoples. Such efforts are particularly critical as we navigate an era of unprecedented challenges.

Thank you.