

# **Charter of the Arab League**

## **Background and History of the Charter of the Arab League:**

The Charter of the Arab League is the founding treaty of the Arab League. The agreement was concluded on March 22nd, 1945 by the governments of Syria, Transjordan (Jordan as of 1950), Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt, and North Yemen (Yemen as of 1990). The Charter endorsed the principle of an Arab homeland while respecting the sovereignty of the individual member states. The internal regulations of the Council of the Arab League and the committees were agreed to in October of 1951 and those of the Secretariat General in May of 1953. The following countries later joined through means of the Arab League Charter: Libya (1953); Algeria (1962); Mauritania (1973); Sudan (1956); Bahrain (1971) Somalia (1974); Morocco (1958); Qatar (1971); Palestine (1976); Tunisia (1958); Oman (1971); Djibouti (1977); Kuwait (1961); United Arab Emirates (1971); Comoros (1993).

## **Use of the Charter of the Arab League:**

The Charter consists of 20 articles that define the aims that the League and its affiliate bodies should achieve, the shape of relations among member-states, and other matter of relevance. Characteristically, the Charter is an all-embracing document that sets out a wide range of potential areas for joint Arab negotiation and action. The Charter allows for member-states that wish to develop further cooperation and create closer ties to do so by concluding whichever accords they deem necessary to achieve those targets.

The charter is amendable only if approved by the majority of two-thirds of the twenty-two member-states, with the objective of maintaining a world of peace and security. Two more documents have been regarded as complementary to the Charter; namely, the Treaty for Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, concluded on March 13, 1950, and the Charter for National Economic Action, which was issued on November 26, 1980. All League member-states have become parties to both instruments.

## **Pact of the League of Arab States**

His Excellency the President of the Syrian Republic,  
His Royal Highness the Emir of Transjordan,  
His Majesty the King of Iraq,  
His Majesty the King of Saudi-Arabia,  
His Excellency the President of the Lebanese Republic,  
His Majesty the King of Egypt, the King of Yemen,

With a view to strengthen[ing] the close relations and numerous ties which bind the Arab States,

And out of concern for the cementing and reinforcing of these bonds on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of theme Stated,

And in order to direct their efforts toward[s] the goal of the welfare of all the Arab States, their common weal, the guarantee of their future and the realization of their aspirations

And in response to Arab public opinion in all the Arab countries,

Have agreed to conclude a pact to this effect and have delegated as their plenipotentiaries those whose names are given below:

Who, after the exchange of the credentials granting them full authority, which were found valid and in proper form, have agreed upon the following:

Article 1. The League of Arab States shall be composed of the: independent Arab States that have signed this Pact.

Every independent Arab State shall have the right to adhere to the League. Should it desire to adhere, it shall present an application to this effect which shall be filed with the permanent General Secretariat and submitted to the Council at its first meeting following the presentation of the application.

Article 2. The purpose of the League is to draw closer the relations between member States and co-ordinate their political activities with the aim of realizing a close collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries.

It also has among its purposes a close co-operation of the member States with due regard to the structure of each of these States and the conditions prevailing therein, in the following matters:

- (a) Economic and financial matters, including trade, customs, currency, agriculture and industry;
- (b) (communications, including railways, roads, aviation, navigation, and posts and telegraphs;
- (c) Cultural matters;
- (d) Matters connected with nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgments and extradition;
- (e) Social welfare matters;
- (f) Health matters.

Article 3. The League shall have a Council composed of the representatives of the member States. Each State shall have one vote, regardless of the number of its representatives.

The Council shall be entrusted with the function of realizing the purpose of the League and of supervising the execution of the agreements concluded between the member States on matters referred to in the preceding article or on other matters.

It shall also have the function of determining the means whereby the League will collaborate with the international organizations which may be created in the future to guarantee peace and security and organize economic and social relations.

Article 4. A special Committee shall be formed for each of the categories enumerated in [article 2](#), on which the member States shall be represented. These Committees shall be entrusted with establishing the basis and scope of co-operation in the form of draft agreements which shall be submitted to the Council for its consideration preparatory to their being submitted to the States referred to.

Delegates representing the other Arab countries may participate in these Committees as members. The Council shall determine the circumstances in which the participation of these representatives shall be allowed as well as the basis of the representation.

Article 5. The recourse to force for the settlement of disputes between two or more member States shall not be allowed. Should there arise among them a dispute that does not involve the independence of a State, its sovereignty or its territorial integrity, and should the two contending parties apply to the Council for the settlement of this dispute, the decision of the Council shall then be effective and obligatory.

In this case, the States among whom the dispute has arisen shall not participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Council.

The Council shall mediate in a dispute which may lead to war between two member States or between a member State and another State in order to conciliate them

The decisions relating to arbitration and mediation shall be taken by a majority vote.

Article 6. In case of aggression or threat of aggression by a State against a member State, the State attacked or threatened with attack may request an immediate meeting of the Council.

The Council shall determine the necessary measures to repel this aggression. Its decision shall be taken unanimously. If the aggression is committed by a member State the vote of that State will not be counted in determining unanimity.

If the aggression is committed in such a way as to render the Government of the State attacked unable to communicate with the Council, the representative of that State in the Council may request the Council to convene for the purpose set forth in the preceding paragraph. If the representative is unable to communicate with the Council, it shall be the right of any member State to request a meeting of the Council.

Article 7. The decisions of the Council taken by a unanimous vote shall be binding on all the member States of the League; those that are reached by a majority vote shall bind only those that accept them.

In both cases the decisions of the Council shall be executed in each State in accordance with the fundamental structure of that State.

Article 8. Every member State of the League shall respect the form of government obtaining in the other States of the League, and shall recognize the form of government obtaining as one of the rights of those States, and shall pledge itself not to take any action tending to change that form.

Article 9. The States of the Arab League that are desirous of establishing among themselves closer collaboration and stronger bonds than those provided for in the present Pact, may conclude among themselves whatever agreements they wish for this purpose.

The treaties and agreements already concluded or that may be concluded in the future between a member State and any other State shall not be binding on the other members.

Article 10. The permanent seat of the League of Arab States shall be Cairo. The Council of the League may meet at any other place it designates.

Article 11. The Council of the League shall meet in ordinary session twice a year, during the months of March and October. It shall meet in extraordinary session at the request of two member States whenever the need arises.

Article 12. The League shall have a permanent General Secretariat, composed of a Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries and an adequate number of officials.

The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the Council upon the vote of two-thirds of the States of the League. The Assistant Secretaries and the principal officials shall be appointed by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council.

The Council shall establish an internal organization for the General Secretariat as well as the conditions of service of the officials.

The Secretary-General shall have the rank of Ambassador; and the Assistant Secretaries the rank of Ministers Plenipotentiary.

The first Secretary-General of the League is designated in an [annex to the present Pact](#).

Article 13. The Secretary-General shall prepare the draft of the budget of the League and submit it for approval to the Council before the beginning of each fiscal year.

The Council shall determine the share of each of the States of the League in the expenses. It shall be allowed to revise the share if necessary.

Article 14. The members of the Council of the League, the members of its Committees and such of its officials as shall be designated in the internal organization, shall enjoy, in the exercise of their duties, diplomatic privileges and immunities.

The premises occupied by the institutions of the League shall be inviolable.

Article 15. The council shall meet the first time at the invitation of the Head of the Egyptian Government. Later meetings shall be convoked by the Secretary-General.

In each ordinary session the representatives of the States of the League shall assume the chairmanship of the Council in rotation.

Article 16. Except for the cases provided for in the present Pact, a majority shall suffice for decisions by the Council effective in the following matters:

- (a) Matters concerning the officials.
- (b) The approval of the budget of the League.
- (c) The internal organization of the Council, the Committees and the General Secretariat.
- (d) The termination of the sessions.

Article 17. The member States of the League shall file with the General Secretariat copies of all treaties and agreements which they have concluded or will conclude with any other State, whether a member of the League or otherwise.

Article 18. If one of the member States intends to withdraw from the League, the Council shall be informed of its intention one year before the withdrawal takes effect

The Council of the League may consider any State that is not fulfilling the obligations resulting from this Pact as excluded from the League, by a decision taken by a unanimous vote of all the States except the State referred to.

Article 19. The present Pact may be amended with the approval of two-thirds of the members of the League in particular for the purpose of strengthening the ties between them, of creating an Arab Court of Justice, and of regulating the relations of the League with the international organizations that may be created in the future to guarantee security and peace

No decision shall be taken as regards an amendment except in the session following that in which it is proposed.

Any State that does not approve an amendment may withdraw from the League when the amendment becomes effective, without being bound by the provisions of the preceding article.

Article 20. The present Pact and its annexes shall be ratified in accordance with the fundamental form of government in each of the contracting States.

The instruments of ratification shall be filed with the General Secretariat and the present Pact shall become binding on the States that ratify in fifteen days after the Secretary-General receives instruments of ratification from four States.

The present Pact has been drawn up in the Arabic language in Cairo and dated 8 Rabi al Thani 1364 (March 22, 1945), in a single text which shall be deposited with the General Secretariat.

A certified copy shall be sent to each of the States of the League.

**ANNEX ON PALESTINE** At the end of the last Great War, Palestine, together with the other Arab States, was separated from the Ottoman Empire. She became independent, not belonging to any other State.

The Treaty of Lausanne proclaimed that her fate should be decided by the parties concerned in Palestine.

Even though Palestine was not able to control her own destiny, it was on the basis of the recognition of her independence that the [Covenant of the League of Nations](#) determined a system of government for her.

Her existence and her independence among the nations can, therefore, no more be questioned *de jure* than the independence of any of the other Arab States.

Even though the outward signs of this independence have remained veiled as a result of force majeure, it is not fitting that this should be an obstacle to the participation of Palestine in the work of the League.

Therefore, the States signatory to the Pact of the Arab League consider that in view of Palestine's special circumstances, the Council of the League should designate an Arab delegate from Palestine to participate in its work until this country enjoys actual independence.

**ANNEX ON CO-OPERATION WITH ARAB COUNTRIES NOT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE** Whereas the member States of the League will have to deal either in the Council or in the Committees with questions affecting the interests of the entire Arab world

And whereas the Council cannot fail to take into account the aspirations of the Arab countries not members of the Council and to work toward their realization, the States signatory to the Pact of the Arab League strongly urge that the Council of the League should cooperate with them as far as possible in having them participate in the Committees referred to in the Pact, and in other matters should not spare any effort to learn their needs and understand their aspirations and should moreover work for their common weal and the guarantee of their future by whatever political means available.

**ANNEX ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE**  
The States signatory to the present Pact have agreed to appoint Abd Al Rahman Azzam Bey Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

His appointment shall be for a term of two years. The Council of the League shall later determine the future organization of the General Secretariat.