

23 March 2022

New York

## **Secretary-General's remarks at the Security Council briefing on the Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States**

Mister President,

Secretary-General Aboul Gheit [*of the League of Arab States*],

Excellencies,

I welcome this opportunity to address the Security Council on the cooperation with the League of Arab States.

Strengthening our cooperation with regional organizations is a sine qua non for strengthening multilateralism globally.

We need partnership across all levels – from the local to the regional to the global.

The League of Arab States is critical across the spectrum of our work.

When COVID-19 upended societies and economies and threatened new vectors of instability, Secretary-General Aboul Gheit and I appealed to this Council to open space for multilateral efforts, humanitarian action, and diplomatic solutions.

Scanning the region today, these appeals are even more critical.

We remain united in our pursuit of multilateral answers to the cascading challenges facing the Arab world and beyond.

These efforts have an added urgency as we face the profound global ramifications of the war in Ukraine.

Numerous countries, for example, import at least half of their wheat from Ukraine or Russia – including Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.

Food, fuel and fertilizer prices are skyrocketing. Supply chains are being disrupted. And the costs and delays of transportation of imported goods – when available – are at record levels.

All of this is hitting the poorest the hardest and planting the seeds for political instability and unrest around the globe.

In addition, we are seeing clear evidence of this war draining resources and attention from other trouble-spots in desperate need.

Just last week, I was deeply disappointed that our appeal for Yemen received less than a third of the funds so urgently needed.

I cannot overstate the severity of the suffering of the people of Yemen.

20 million Yemenis need lifesaving humanitarian assistance and protection, with women and children in greatest need of support.

I appeal to the generosity of members of the Arab League at this critical time.

And I renew my plea to all countries to find creative ways to finance increased humanitarian and development recovery needs worldwide, to give generously, and to immediately release pledged funds.

Mister President,  
In Libya, I welcome the League's constructive engagement to help preserve the unity and hard-won stability achieved since the signing of the Libyan ceasefire agreement in October 2020.

I count on the League and its membership to continue prioritizing agreement on a comprehensive political process and advance the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2570.

In Sudan, the League of Arab States and the United Nations have been working closely together – both bilaterally and in the context of the Friends of Sudan Group – to encourage meaningful dialogue towards an inclusive and peaceful transition.

In Syria, our two organizations are firmly united in support of the Syrian people, who feel abandoned by the world as they enter the eleventh year of a war that has subjected them to human rights violations on a massive and systematic scale and left the country in ruins.

The only way to break the deadlock and alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people is through a credible political process that sees the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2254.

We must keep working to forge a political path to a sustainable peace in which all Syrians are heard, grievances addressed, detainees released, and needs met. There must be no impunity.

In Lebanon, we are grateful to the Arab League and its members for urging the government to address the country's crisis through meaningful reforms, timely elections, constructive engagement with the IMF, and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1559 and 1701.

In Iraq, we welcome enhanced strategic cooperation between the government and members of the League, which included an observation mission to monitor Iraq's parliamentary elections last October.

Strengthening regional cooperation and collaboration are also critical in Yemen, where escalating hostilities threaten to further heighten dramatic humanitarian needs and further diminish hopes for peace.

I count on the League of Arab States to support UN-led efforts to reach a lasting ceasefire, defuse tensions, advance an inclusive political process, and provide humanitarian and economic assistance to the Yemeni people. Faced with a catastrophic funding crunch, I

urge everyone to do everything they can to prevent hunger and starvation from taking millions of lives.

In Israel-Palestine, the League and the United Nations remain committed to finding a path for the peace process to advance and the occupation to end.

Our shared goal remains two States – Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State – living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both States.

Political, economic and security conditions across the Occupied Palestinian Territory are deteriorating as Palestinians experience dispossession, violence and insecurity.

At the same time, UNRWA's existential financial crisis is affecting the rights and wellbeing of Palestine refugees across the region.

I reiterate my call on Member States to increase their financial support to the Palestinian people and their contributions to UNRWA, a vital pillar of regional stability.

Mister President,  
Ever closer cooperation with the Arab League is vital to achieving these goals.

From regular meetings with my Special Envoys and staff exchanges, to workshops on mediation and capacity-building exercises on inclusive peacemaking – our relationship is broadening and deepening.

We look forward to strengthening our ties further, including through the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States, which has opened new communication channels between our organizations at both headquarters and in the field.

We are particularly focused on building stronger partnerships with the League in the areas of Women, Peace, and Security, disarmament, mediation, and peacebuilding.

And we are expanding our cooperation on Youth, Peace, and Security issues in which capacity building and consultations on a regional strategy in the Arab region are increasing.

Looking ahead, we will hold our fifteenth general cooperation meeting in July to advance our biennial framework, and we will work together on a sectoral meeting on climate change.

Mister President, Excellencies,

Today more than ever, we need to come together and stand together in support of multilateral peaceful solutions.

This is why our relationship with the League of Arab States and the strong support from its membership have never been more essential – or more appreciated.

*Shukran.*