

# **The Arab League**

## **Background Guide**

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## **Introduction to the Arab League**

Following the approval of the Alexandria Protocol in 1944, the League of Arab States (LAS), an intergovernmental organization comprising all Arab governments in the Middle East and North Africa, was established in Cairo on March 22, 1945 through the signing of its Charter. The Charter of the League of Arab States consisted of a preamble, twenty articles, and three special appendices. Palestine was the subject of the first annex, which featured the League Council's choice of a representative to take part in its operations until Palestine attained independence. The second annex deals with collaboration with Arab nations who are not members of the League Council due to their lack of independence. As for the third and final annex, it concerns the appointment of Mr. Abdel Rahman Azzam, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the first Secretary-General of the League for a period of two years. The preamble indicated that the nations signed the Charter with the intention of building Arab ties and relations within the framework of respect for sovereignty and independence in the best interests of all Arab nations.

As of today, this loose confederation gathers 22 Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Since the beginning of its establishment, the Arab League has aimed to protect each member's independence and sovereignty while fostering better relations, policy coordination, and cooperation among its member states. The organization reaffirms the promotion of peace, security and stability by preventing conflict, resolving disputes and acting in a spirit of solidarity and unity. That being said, its support and collaboration from organizations such as the United Nations, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia serve as opportunities to achieve those goals.

### **I. Reintegrating Syria into the Arab regional system**

#### **Background and Historical information on the topic**

The issue of the position of Syria in the Arab regional system has been fundamentally redefined after the abrupt overthrow of the Assad regime in late 2024. It is no longer a discussion on the controversial reintegration of a pariah state but the uncertain passage to a new political order in the leadership of Ahmad al-Sharaa. This shift brings an end to over a decade of inhumane civil war and diplomatic isolation and offers the Arab League and the rest of the international

community a whole new range of challenges and opportunities. It is now a matter of creating the future of a post-Assad Syria, which will affect Middle Eastern geopolitics for many years to come. The first step to that effect was the violent crackdown on popular protests by the Assad regime, which led to the first suspension of Syria by the Arab League in November 2011. This collective censure isolated Syria and was a joint effort to put pressure on the government to make a political transition; however, it ended unsuccessfully. This diplomatic isolation lasted more than ten years, until the war deteriorated into a destructive civil war, becoming the worst humanitarian disaster of the century and attracting many regional and international actors. With the support of Russia and Iran, the Assad government was able to cling on to power, but at the cost of its legitimacy and the ruin of the country. A controversial diplomatic thaw was on the verge of happening just before the fall of the regime. Several of the major Arab countries, with reasons for dealing with the refugee crisis, fighting against the Captagon drug trade, and counterchecking the influence of Iran, had started the process of normalizing ties and admitting the Assad regime back to the Arab League. The practical policy was suddenly outdated because of the rapid onslaught that resulted in the capture of Damascus and the collapse of the Assad family rule that lasted half a century. The emergence of a new transitional government that is led by Ahmad al-Sharaa has entirely cleared the board. The dilemma of the Arab League is no longer on what to do with a dictator but on working with a new and emerging government to guarantee stability, humanitarian assistance and to aid the process of a united and autonomous Syria.

### **Past actions:**

Since the nation's liberation, efforts have been made to assist the population with the interconnected political, economic, and security challenges they face.

In response to the fall of the Assad regime, Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates, all engaged with the new administration in Damascus, launching meetings and initiatives to address Syria's stability and recovery. As an example, the Riyadh Meeting on Syria, which took place on January 12, 2025, demonstrated Arab and international commitment to Syria's future. The meeting brought together representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab League, the European Union, and the United Nations. Foreign ministers and delegates from over 20 nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, and Egypt, joined forces to create a path toward rebuilding Syria and restoring its role as a secure, sovereign state in the region.

In addition to the support from other nations, the signing of Syria's Constitutional Declaration in March 2025 by interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa marked a significant milestone in the country's post-conflict transition. Framed as a legal roadmap toward democratic governance, the

declaration sets out institutional reforms, civil rights guarantees, as well as a five-year timeline for drafting a permanent constitution.

Syria's post-Assad security is defined by fragmentation, terrorism, and foreign interference. Multiple armed groups, such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), still operate across the country, each with their own agenda and external backers. In an effort to demobilize, disarm, and reintegrate these groups, the transitional government announced a plan to merge them under the Ministry of Defense. The SDF was initially excluded but later, on March 10, 2025, it signed a groundbreaking agreement to slowly integrate its forces and governance structures into national institutions. This includes shared control over oil and gas infrastructure. The government pledged political representation and local governance rights in return. With this the transitional Syrian government hopes to bring stability and safety to its population.

## **Current situation:**

After the overthrow of the Assad regime in 2024 and the election of President Ahmad Al-Sharaa, Syria has taken a new step: one of reconstruction, stabilization, and the need to re-enter the Arab regional system, which was previously disrupted by over a decade of civil war, turmoil, and humanitarian crisis. Decades of war tore the national institutions, displaced millions of people, destroyed infrastructure, and deteriorated relations between regions. Consequently, the non-membership of Syria in the Arab League was a major impediment to collective security, economic integration in the region, and integrative humanitarian activities in the Middle East.

Syria today is confronted with the twofold challenge of nation building internally and externally with the emergence of a transitional democratic leadership. Economically, it has been crippled, and the World Bank had at one time estimated the losses to be in the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars, putting the state of the economy in a state of dire need, leaving the public services, medical, and education in a deplorable state. In addition, millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are still distributed among neighboring states, which has caused a demographic, economic, and humanitarian burden that is still palpable to date. The challenges of environmental degradation, water scarcity, and climate-related stresses are additional issues that complicate Syria's recovery process and necessitate the involvement of the region to mitigate long-term instability.

Considering the necessity to stabilize Syria, regional and international systems have come up to assist in its reintegration.

Among the primary joint efforts, UNSC Resolution 2254, which described a plan of political transition and national reconciliation. Now that Syria has a new leadership that has shown a willingness to adhere to these principles, Arab nations have moved to restore their diplomatic relations and resume dialogue in the region. In line with this are reconstruction-oriented models, including the Early Recovery Plan of the UN, the interventions on the post-conflict economies of the Arab Social and Economic Council, and programs on refugees returning and reintegration.

The Arab Peace and Security Council, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights are basically used in the Arab context as the guiding frameworks of reintegration that focus on sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the development aspect of human beings. The Amman Consultative Mechanism and Cairo Track on Syrian Reconciliation have played critical roles within the region in ensuring cross-border cooperation, recovery of security coordination, and establishment of the platforms towards economic revival.

At a more generalized level, the OIC, the UNDP, and the ESCWA have played a significant role in ensuring that Syria is stabilized in terms of humanitarian delivery, governance, and reconstruction of the institutions of the state. An example is the UNDP, which increased the number of digital governance initiatives, reinforced the anti-corruption machinery, and initiated early-recovery programs that equip Syrian institutions to reintegrate into the region.

Despite these developments, there are still some major challenges. Restoring confidence between member states, guaranteeing the safe resettlement of refugees, alleviating the grievances caused by war and ensuring accountability towards the past atrocities are the key concerns. The recovery of the economy also demands a lot of investments, and the amounts promised by previous donors are not that great to rebuild as opposed to the estimated amount. Besides, geopolitical tensions in the region, extremist remnants, and border insecurities continue to pose threats to long term stability.

Consequently, in a bid to restore Syria to the Arab regional system, the Arab League should consolidate political discourse, undertake institutional reform under the rule of President Ahmad Al-Sharaa, and coordinate economic aid. They should focus on inclusive national reconciliation, reconstruction of vital services, employment creation, and local governance. Additionally, the cooperation between regional security and border management should be consolidated to ensure a stable environment that facilitates reintegration.

The Syrian reintegration is not just a bilateral or national issue, it is a regional necessity which is connected to the security of the whole Arab region, the economic development and stability. Rejoining Syria to the Arab League is not merely a chance of recovery but a must towards sustainable development in the region, unity, and peace.

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***Questions a resolution must answer:***

- 1.** How can the Arab League ensure that the emerging transitional government of President Ahmad Al-Sharaa follows legal frameworks and abides by regional commitments, and shared security obligations following the fall of the Assad regime?
- 2.** What mechanisms should be established to verify that Syria's political transition is stable and transparent; ensuring accountability for violations committed during the previous regime?
- 3.** What financial, humanitarian and developmental resources must be deployed to support Syria's reconstruction?
- 4.** How can the Arab League help address social fragmentation and community tensions that worsened during the civil war in order to ensure national reconciliation?
- 5.** What regional security strategies are required to control borders, eliminate extremist groups, and prevent foreign interference during Syria's transitional phase?
- 6.** How can the Arab League provide essential services such as healthcare, education and infrastructure, and make them accessible to all Syrians?
- 7.** What are some of the frameworks the Arab League should create to monitor Syria's reintegration and political stabilization, ensuring it aligns with Arab League principles and Long-term development?