



Concept Note

High-Level Informal Interactive Dialogue on Cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the League of Arab States

Date: Thursday, 26 September 2024, 10:00 am

Place: UN HQ, Conference Room 11

Background

In Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/2, adopted under the Tunisian Presidency of the Security Council in January 2021, the Council encouraged the "holding of an informal meeting between its members and Representatives of the Arab Summit Troika and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on the margins of the General Assembly high level segment". In its Decision 8632, adopted in March 2021, the Council of the League of Arab States at Ministerial level welcomed efforts aimed at promoting cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, and expressed support to the organisation of such a meeting to discuss the recent developments in conflict-affected areas in the Arab region with a view to achieving more unified Security Council positions towards Arab issues on its Agenda.

A Presidential Statement adopted during the United Arab Emirates Presidency of the Security Council in March 2022 (S/PRST/2022/1) reiterates the intention of the Council to consider further steps to promote closer cooperation and strategic coordination between the two Organisations in the fields of "conflict early warning and prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, sustaining peace, promoting respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations, addressing root causes of conflicts, enhancing safety and security at sea and combatting threats in this regard including through capacity-building efforts in the Arab region, preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and building community resilience to resist incitement by promoting tolerance, inclusivity, respect and dialogue."

Format

The 2012 handbook on Security Council working methods defines an Interactive Informal Dialogue (IID) as an *informal private meeting of the Security Council members convened in order to hold an off-the-record discussion with one or more non-Council member states*. The meeting will be chaired by H.E. Ms. Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, as President of the UN Security Council, with the participation of the Arab Summit Troika – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Iraq. A representative of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States H.E. Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit will brief at the beginning of the meeting.

Focus

As the third meeting of its kind, this year's High-Level Informal Interactive Dialogue provides an opportunity to focus the discussion on the latest developments in the region. The last IID on cooperation between the UN Security Council and the League of Arab States took place in September 2023, just weeks before the onset of the current devastating escalation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The period since has seen a staggering number of civilian casualties and been extremely turbulent for the State of Palestine and the region. The Security Council has adopted four resolutions, Resolution 2712, 2720, 2728, and 2735 on the conflict in Gaza. The Council of the League of Arab States convened several emergency meetings at ministerial level aimed at achieving a ceasefire; guaranteeing the flow of humanitarian assistance at scale and preventing forced internal or external displacement of the Palestinian occupied population. In November 2023, the extraordinary Arab/Islamic Summit held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia established a Joint Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee to stop the war in Gaza and press for the launch of a serious and real political process. Following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2735 in June, ceasefire discussions facilitated by the US, Egypt and Qatar are still ongoing. The IID offers a platform for members of the Security Council and the League of Arab States to jointly and informally reflect at Ministerial level on what comes next. The focus of the meeting on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory for its gravity does not touch on the importance equally attached by the Security Council to other crisis situations in the Arab world.

Participants are encouraged to keep the discussion interactive, and to avoid reading prepared statements. Participants are asked to instead use the following guiding questions as a basis for discussion:

- 1. Peace Conference:** Discussions around a sustainable peace and a pathway towards the two state solution are more relevant and urgent than ever. The idea of holding a Peace Conference has been proposed by several UN member states and organisations. What role should the UN and its Secretary-General play in the holding of a Peace Conference? On which issues should the Peace Conference focus? When and where should it take place? Should the Conference be preceded by a preparatory conference?
- 2. Role of UNRWA:** UNRWA is the backbone of the lifesaving humanitarian response in Gaza, and the agency has been providing key services to Palestine refugees across its five fields of operation for 75 years. Today UNRWA faces unprecedented challenges, from financing shortfalls to politically motivated attacks. How can the Security Council and the League assist the agency best overcome these challenges?
- 3. Mechanism:** The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions on the war in Gaza however implementation has been lacking. Efforts by the international community to bring about an end to the war have not yet yielded a ceasefire agreement. What mechanisms does the international community and the Security Council have at its disposal to implement its own resolutions and advance peace negotiations?
- 4. Regional Spillover:** It is clear that the war in Gaza has had a significant impact on the wider region. Tensions along the Blue Line and in Lebanon, continuous attacks on ships in the Red Sea, and escalations in Yemen, Syria, Iraq risk igniting a broader regional conflagration. What role can the UN Security Council in cooperation with the League of Arab States play to prevent this spillover effect?