



Security Council

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Letter dated 10 April 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In accordance with the procedures of the League of Arab States, and in reference to the 30th ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, held in Tunis on 31 March 2019, I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter from the Permanent Observer Mission of the League of Arab States in New York, transmitting the “Tunis Declaration” and the “Statement on Golan”, issued at the closing of the session (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sami **Bougacha**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations
addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: Arabic]

**Letter from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States
to the United Nations**

In line with the recommendation of the Group of Arab States, adopted at a meeting of the Group at the Permanent Representative level held on 24 March 2016 and chaired by the Permanent Representative of Libya to the United Nations, regarding the role of the chair of each ministerial and summit-level session of the Council of the League of Arab States in transmitting resolutions to the relevant bodies by means of a memorandum of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States or official letter from its New York office, and pursuant to article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Tunis Declaration (see appendix I), adopted by the Arab Heads of State and Government, and their statement (see appendix II) concerning the proclamation issued by the United States of America on 25 March 2019 recognizing the sovereignty of Israel over the occupied Syrian Golan. Both documents were issued by the Council of the League of Arab States at its thirtieth ordinary session at the summit level, which was held on 31 March 2019 in Tunis under the slogan “resolve and solidarity”.

Following Secretariat guidelines in that regard, I should be grateful if you would transmit the present letter and its appendices to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council to be issued a document of the Council.

(Signed) Maged Abdelfattah **Abdelaziz**
Ambassador
Head of the Observer Mission, New York

Appendix I

Tunis Declaration

Adopted by the League of Arab States at its thirtieth ordinary session at the summit level, held on 31 March 2019 in Tunis

We, the leaders of the Arab States, gathered on 31 March 2019 in Tunis at the kind invitation of the President of Tunisia, Béji Caïd Essebsi, for the thirtieth ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level,

- Based on a comprehensive assessment of inter-Arab relations and the prevailing situation in our region, the serious challenges facing our countries, the threats hanging over their security, stability and development, and the implications for the Arab regional order of the major shifts taking place in international relations,
- Reiterating our firm commitment to the principles and goals of the Charter of the League of Arab States and our adherence to the universal and noble values and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations,
- In fulfilment of our shared responsibility to improve the situation in the Arab region and enhance solidarity between our countries,
- Desirous of consolidating our region's present and guaranteeing the future for coming generations:

I. We affirm that what unites the Arab countries and peoples far outweighs what divides them, given the strong bonds emanating from our ancient civilization, history and common destiny, brotherhood, cultural unity and common interests. Ongoing discord and conflicts have conspired to profoundly sap the energy and potential of the Arab region, to erode solidarity and undermine security in the region and to make it vulnerable to external meddling in its affairs.

We cannot accept a continuation of the status quo, which has turned the Arab region into a stage for international and regional struggles and sectarian conflicts and a sanctuary for terrorist organizations that pose a threat to the security, stability and development of our countries.

If we are to achieve security and stabilize the region, we must intensify efforts to put an end to tensions and conflicts in all their guises and focus on addressing the causes of fragility and manifestations of division. We must take the lead in pushing for comprehensive political settlements of the current crises.

Enhancing the resilience, security and stability of the region and building its capacity to resist external interference can only come through national and Arab reconciliation.

We welcome, therefore, the initiative of the President of Tunisia, Béji Caïd Essebsi, in choosing the slogan "resolve and solidarity" for the thirtieth session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level. We are keen to continue working as one in our joint efforts to tighten the bonds of solidarity and fundamentally consolidate security in the region by maintaining security and stability in the Arab States and for their peoples, improving their social conditions, strengthening their capacity to deal with political, security, economic and cultural challenges, and ensuring their active and positive engagement in the system of international relations.

II. The issue of Palestine remains at the heart of our joint endeavours and informs all our actions in regional and international forums. We remain resolved to continue efforts to relaunch serious and effective negotiations within a set time frame

and to assist in reaching a settlement that will bring about a just and comprehensive peace in keeping with the terms of reference of the peace process, internationally binding resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 and the principle of the two-State solution.

Peace, security and stability can be brought to the Middle East only on the basis of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general.

We shall continue to provide the Palestinian people, their legally constituted national leadership and their sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, with all political, moral and material support. We shall stand with them in their determination and struggle to recover their legal rights, above all the right to self-determination and to establish an independent State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, the right of return in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948 and the release of prisoners.

We are committed to shoring up the budget of the State of Palestine and providing a financial safety net to enable it to cope with the economic and financial strains confronting it and thereby strengthen the Palestinian people's resolve. We appeal to the international community to maintain its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and mobilize the necessary resources and contributions to fund its budget and activities, so that it may continue to provide Palestinian refugees with essential services.

In the face of continued Israeli aggression, we call on the international community and the Security Council to shoulder their responsibilities, provide the Palestinian people with the protection they need and put an end to the hostile acts of Israel and its systematic violations of Muslim and Christian holy sites, particularly the Aqsa Mosque. We warn Israel against any plans or attempts to carve up the Mosque or alter its historical status, such as the recent ruling by a court of the occupying authorities to close the Bab al-Rahmah oratory, and its schemes to expand illegal settlements at the expense of the Palestinian territories. In that regard, we demand the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

We utterly reject any unilateral actions by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter the legal or historical status of East Jerusalem, in particular with regard to the Muslim and Christian holy sites there. We appeal to the nations of the world not to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and not to transfer their embassies to that city, in line with their obligations under Security Council resolutions [476 \(1980\)](#) and [478 \(1980\)](#) on that subject.

The long-standing Hashemite custodianship of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in East Jerusalem, especially the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif, now exercised by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and his leading role in protecting those holy sites and their Arab Muslim and Christian character are essential.

We commend His Majesty King Mohammed VI for his leadership of the Al-Quds Committee and his signing on 30 March 2019, with the Pope, of a special appeal on Jerusalem, the Holy City and place of encounter.

It is of the utmost importance that the decision adopted on 18 October 2016 by the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 200th session be implemented. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to Israeli violations and the arbitrary measures that Israel imposes on the Aqsa Mosque and those who pray there and reiterate that the Jordanian-run Waqf Administration of

Jerusalem has the sole and exclusive legal authority to manage, maintain and preserve the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif and control access thereto.

We again reject and condemn the so-called Jewish nation-State law as enshrining racism and denying Palestinians their rights, in particular the right to self-determination.

III. We reaffirm our desire for a unified and sovereign Libya and reiterate our rejection of any military solution or interference in that country's internal affairs. We urge all parties to arrive at a comprehensive political settlement swiftly through consensus and dialogue, on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement and in line with the road map set out by the United Nations, so as to restore security and stability to Libya and end the suffering of its people.

We wholeheartedly support the action plan presented by Ghassan Salamé, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and adopted by the Security Council. Any measures designed to create conditions conducive to implementing the various stages of a settlement are welcome.

Neighbouring countries have played a critical role in Libya, in particular through the tripartite initiative undertaken by the President of Tunisia, Béji Caïd Essebsi, in coordination with Algeria and Egypt, to assist the Libyan parties in overcoming their differences and reaching a comprehensive political settlement.

We support all efforts to root out terrorist organizations and eliminate the danger they pose to Libya, its neighbours and the region as a whole.

IV. We reiterate our desire for a political settlement to end the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. It should be based on the Geneva road map, declarations by the International Syria Support Group and the relevant Security Council resolutions, so as to end the suffering of the Syrian people, meet their aspiration to live in security and peace and preserve the country's unity, sovereignty and independence. Military options, which only serve to complicate the crisis further and intensify the suffering of the Syrian people, must be discarded. What is needed is a swift transition to a political settlement, in the crafting and approval of which all components of Syrian society should have a say.

The Arab countries have an important role to play in helping the Syrian people to emerge from the current crisis by enabling the Syrian Arab Republic, as a key constituent of the Arab world, to again take its rightful place at the table of Arab affairs and helping to improve the region's security and stability and bolster its capacity to counter interference by outside parties.

Under international law, the Golan is occupied Syrian territory. That is confirmed by United Nations and Security Council resolutions and acknowledged by the international community. No attempt to present the sovereignty of Israel over the Golan as a *fait accompli* shall be countenanced. That would represent a grave violation of international resolutions, pose a threat to security and stability and demolish all prospects for peace in the region. Any decision or action designed to change the legal or demographic status of the Golan would be unlawful and therefore have no legal effect, as set forth in Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [497 \(1981\)](#) and related General Assembly resolutions. The right of the Syrian Arab Republic to retake possession of the occupied Golan has the full support of its Arab neighbours.

V. Given the deepening crisis of the Syrian refugees and displaced persons and the chronic, festering problem of the Palestinian refugees and persistent attempts to disavow their legitimate right of return, we call upon the international community

to shoulder its responsibilities and use all available means to find radical and effective solutions and bring to an end the tragedy of displacement and the refugees. Collective international efforts should be intensified to create conditions conducive to the repatriation of displaced persons and refugees, as stipulated under international law, all the while respecting the sovereignty of host countries and their law and continuing to assist those refugees, displaced people and host countries.

VI. We support regional and international efforts to restore legitimacy to Yemen and end the suffering of the Yemeni people. The Houthi militias must comply with the truce and ceasefire, implement the Stockholm Agreement brokered by the United Nations in December 2018, continue negotiations on a political settlement in line with the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its implementation mechanisms, the outcomes of the Yemen National Dialogue and Security Council resolutions, and thereby end the crisis without external regional interference, preserve the country's independence and unity and restore security and stability to Yemen and the Arab Gulf region. It is imperative that the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people be stepped up to halt the downward spiral in the humanitarian, health-care and economic situation in Yemen.

VII. We commend Iraq for its success in routing the terrorist organizations in its territory and the Iraqi people for the sacrifices they have made in the defence of their country's sovereignty and security. We attach great importance to the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and again pledge our support for its reconstruction efforts in the liberated areas.

VIII. We are resolved to develop closer security cooperation and coordination between our countries, step up efforts to combat and eradicate extremism and terrorism in all its forms and eliminate its sources of financing by applying the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism and adopting legal measures to criminalize extremist and takfirist ideologies. We need to promote the values of tolerance, moderation, democracy and human rights and to combat all forms of exclusion, marginalization and despair, from which terrorist organizations and obscurantist movements strive to make mileage, and thereby shield our peoples and the potential of our countries and bolster their security and resilience.

IX. We reaffirm our support for interreligious dialogue, because it is essential to disseminating and promoting the values of tolerance, human solidarity and respect for diversity, and to countering extremism and radicalism. In that connection, we welcome the meeting that took place between Ahmad al-Tayyib, the Sheikh of Al-Azhar al-Sharif, and Pope Francis during the latter's visit to the United Arab Emirates in February 2019.

X. Cooperation between Arab States and the Islamic Republic of Iran must be based on the principle of good neighbourliness, non-interference in internal affairs and the non-use of force or the threat of force, in accordance with international law; practices that undermine confidence-building and threaten security and stability in the region must be avoided.

We once again reject and condemn the ballistic missile attacks that have been directed against the territory and cities of Saudi Arabia and underscore our profound concern with regard to that country's security and stability, which are essential to the security of the Arab Gulf region and the wider Arab region.

We reaffirm the absolute sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa and support all peaceful measures and means adopted by it to restore its sovereignty, and we call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the initiative of the United Arab Emirates to find a peaceful solution to this issue through direct negotiations or recourse to the

International Court of Justice, thereby contributing to building trust and enhancing security and stability in the Arab Gulf region.

XI. We stand in full solidarity with the Sudanese Government as it strives to promote peace and development, maintain national sovereignty, and implement the outcomes of the national dialogue; we welcome the steady improvement in security in Darfur and support the exit strategy for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which would see that mission leave Darfur by December 2020. We support the efforts to give effect to the initiative of His Excellency the President the Republic of the Sudan aimed at ensuring Arab food security, and call upon Arab States, financing institutions and the private sector to invest in the projects that fall under this initiative. We reiterate our call for the Sudan to be removed from the American list of State sponsors of terrorism.

XII. We continue to support our brothers in the Federal Republic of Somalia as they strive to establish security and stability, counter terrorism, rebuild and strengthen national institutions, address economic challenges and implement the Somali national development plan.

XIII. We welcome the tranquil and fair presidential elections in the Union of the Comoros, which were held on 24 March 2019 and monitored by the League of Arab States and the African Union, that resulted in the election of President Azali Assoumani, and we support the efforts of the Comoros to become an emerging country by the year 2030.

XIV. We note with appreciation the positive outcomes of the various Arab cooperation forums that have been convened with regional groupings and, in that connection, we welcome the first European Union-League of Arab States summit, which was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 24 and 25 February 2019, and we look forward to the convening of the fifth Arab-African summit, to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2019, and the convening as soon as possible of a fifth South American-Arab countries summit.

XV. We reaffirm that inclusive development is vitally important to the advancement of the region, protecting Arab societies against the scourges of extremism and terrorism, and reducing exclusion and marginalization. National strategies for inclusive and sustainable development must be developed by investing in Arab human capacity and ensuring that Arabs have the necessary scientific skills, knowledge and values. Human development indicators for Arab countries must be improved, and young persons must be more involved in public affairs and decision-making and play a greater role in achieving economic development and social advancement. The role of women must be enhanced, their participation in all areas of public life must be increased and they must be further empowered economically and socially. More focused efforts must be made to support education and scientific research plans and to enable Arab youth to master the sciences and modern technology.

In that connection, we commend the initiative of the United Arab Emirates to establish the Arab Space Cooperation Group. We value the role of that Group and the contributions that it has made to promoting Arab cooperation in space sciences and their applications, with a view to supporting the advancement of Arab States. We welcome the initiative of His Highness Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and the ruler of Dubai, to launch a project that will see Arab scientists develop a space satellite. We invite the relevant Arab scientists to take part in this project, which will be the first cooperative effort carried out by the Arab Space Cooperation Group.

XVI. We reaffirm that economic and development issues are critical elements of joint Arab action, and we welcome the outcomes of the fourth Economic and Social Development summit, which was held in Beirut on 20 January 2019. There is an urgent need for the Arab nation to redouble its efforts to foster economic cooperation by taking advantage of the complementarity of Arab countries and their natural and financial resources and human capacities. Efforts to grow trade and increase the number of investment projects must be intensified, so as to make it possible to establish an Arab economic bloc that participates constructively in the global economic system, promotes development in Arab countries and creates job opportunities for Arab youth.

XVII. We reiterate our support for the League of Arab States, which is the embodiment of joint Arab action. It is vitally important for the League to continue developing its role and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its organs, so as to enable Arab States to play their role and reclaim the initiative in respect of addressing Arab issues and arriving at appropriate solutions and settlements to all crises and conflicts. In that connection, we commend the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States for his tireless efforts. We underscore that regional groupings, namely, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, play an important role in promoting and enhancing joint Arab action, furthering integration and cooperation among Arab States, and engaging with other regional groupings.

Lastly, we express our deep appreciation and sincere thanks to the Republic of Tunisia and the Tunisian people for their hospitality and the outstanding organization of the summit, and our profound gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Béji Caïd Essebsi. The wisdom and vision he demonstrated in conducting the summit meetings enhanced the quality of the consultations, promoted coordination and fostered constructive and lively dialogue, making the “resolve and solidarity” summit an important milestone in the history of joint Arab action. His efforts also helped to marshal the genuine will that binds us as we strive to promote Arab solidarity and work together to meet the challenges before us, improve conditions in the region and strengthen our national security, with a view to realizing the aspirations of our peoples.

Appendix II

Statement issued at the closing of the thirtieth ordinary Arab summit, rejecting the American decision to recognize the sovereignty of Israel over the occupied Syrian Golan

We, the leaders of the Arab States assembled in Tunis on 31 March 2019,

Reaffirming our adherence to our established positions, in particular the inviolability of the sovereignty of Arab States and Arab territories, which is the fundamental principle that underpins joint Arab action,

Reject and condemn the decision that the United States of America took on 25 March 2019 to recognize the sovereignty of Israel over the Golan. That decision is invalid, both in form and substance, and constitutes a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible, and of Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [497 \(1981\)](#), both of which were adopted unanimously. In those resolutions, the Council makes it clear that it does not recognize the annexation by Israel of the Syrian Arab Golan. We reaffirm full Arab support for the right of the Syrian Arab Republic to recover the occupied Golan Heights and reiterate that the Shab'a Farms, the Kafr Shuba hills and the northern part of the village of Ghajar are Lebanese and that Lebanon has the right to recover them.

We emphasize that the American decision runs counter to the responsibility of the United States as a permanent member of the Security Council to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Council. We furthermore emphasize that such recognition does not alter the legal status of the Syrian Golan, which is a territory that has been occupied by Israel since 1967, and that such recognition has no legal effect, nor does it give rise to any rights or entail any obligations or privileges.

We stress that legalizing the occupation is utterly unacceptable. This move represents a serious setback in the American position and erodes fundamental principles of international law, thereby increasing tensions in the region and undermining efforts to bring about comprehensive, lasting and just peace in the Middle East and to end occupation on the basis of the principle of land for peace.

We express our appreciation to the many States and international and regional organizations that have firmly rejected the American decision and reiterated their commitment to respect international law, the Charter of the United Nations and internationally binding resolutions; on the other hand, we stress that it is dangerous for any State to transgress international law and consider taking the same action as the Americans.

We instruct the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of member States to use all political, diplomatic and legal means as part of their ongoing efforts to address the American decision to recognize the sovereignty of Israel over the occupied Syrian Golan. We furthermore instruct them to intensify bilateral and multilateral contacts with the international community, including by having the Arab representative in the Security Council (the State of Kuwait) put a draft resolution before the Council and by seeking an opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality and invalidity of the American decision.

We request the Secretary-General of the League to follow up developments in this matter and to report thereon to the Council of the League at ministerial level, which will convene for that purpose.