



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 8 May 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In the presidential statement of 23 March 2022 ([S/PRST/2022/1](#)), the Security Council requested that I provide a brief report, at least 30 days in advance of its next meeting on the cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, on the implementation of the presidential statement and on further ways to strengthen institutional relations and cooperation between the two organizations. I would also like to draw attention to my report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations ([A/77/277-S/2022/606](#), paras. 90–99) and General Assembly resolution [77/17](#) on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. This letter is a response to the request for a brief report covering the period from 23 March 2022 to 7 May 2023.

Cooperation with the League of Arab States, as with other regional and subregional organizations, on matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, and consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, serves to enhance collective security and augment our actions through joint efforts. I firmly believe that renewed and expanded cooperation is critical to revitalizing the multilateral system, which has come under severe stress in recent years.

During the reporting period, I met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, on numerous occasions, including on the margins of the opening of the General Assembly in New York in September 2022 and at the Summit of the League of Arab States in Algiers in November 2022. More recently, we spoke by phone on 16 April 2023 to discuss the unravelling situation in the Sudan, in particular the impact of the fighting on civilians. Days later, on 20 April 2023, we participated in a virtual summit organized by the African Union on developments in the Sudan. We condemned the fighting and called for a cessation of hostilities to allow civilians trapped in conflict areas to get assistance and supplies or evacuate.

The Summit also brought together leaders from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the European Union, as well as foreign ministers and senior officials of several countries. It demonstrated the relevance of trilateral cooperation and coordination among the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union, along with other relevant regional organizations.

The League of Arab States also continued to support United Nations efforts in Libya, including by calling for progress in the political process, for reforms in the economic and security sectors and for adherence to international humanitarian law. The Libya Quartet (the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States



and the United Nations) should continue to engage in the Berlin process and the Libyan political dialogue facilitated by the United Nations.

Our ongoing engagement has been critical in terms of strategic guidance for our cooperation, particularly in the area of peace and security. It has also been focused on intensifying and accelerating common efforts to prevent conflict, encouraging multilateral dialogue, advancing the political settlement of disputes, fostering collective security and promoting just and lasting peace across the Arab region and beyond.

As you are aware, our cooperation with the League of Arab States is based on an agreement signed in 1989 and renewed in 2016 by a protocol of amendment. In the protocol, the parties called on the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations liaison office to the League of Arab States in Cairo, which opened in 2019, for more effective cooperation, dialogue and collaboration, in particular on peace and security issues. The liaison office, supported by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, is making significant efforts to enhance the strategic and operational partnership between the United Nations and the League.

In many cases, regional organizations such as the League of Arab States are closer to and have special insights into conflicts, including their root causes, bringing nuance and specificity to United Nations efforts. In order to capitalize fully on these comparative advantages, the liaison office regularly coordinates substantive and technical meetings between United Nations officials, including special envoys and representatives of the Secretary-General, and League of Arab States officials. These and other meetings with Arab and foreign diplomats, United Nations entities and other partners enhance the exchange of information and consultation, as well as follow-up mechanisms, thereby strengthening cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

As an illustration of our shared commitment to joint efforts on peacebuilding and strengthening resilience, the United Nations and the League of Arab States collaborated on a joint conference on drought, food security and climate resilience in Somalia in December 2022. I also delivered a video message to the “Jerusalem: Resilience and Development” conference convened by the League in February 2023.

Similarly, in order to capitalize on synergies, League of Arab States officials participated in a meeting of mediation support entities of international, regional and subregional organizations, co-organized by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the European External Action Service, in March 2023, and in the informal dialogue on strategic risks for peace and security, organized by the Department of Peace Operations and the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations, held in April 2023. League officials have also participated, together with other regional organizations, in the consultation process for the development of the New Agenda for Peace.

The implementation of the youth and peace and security agenda, including Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) and the relevant subsequent resolutions, was also the focus of significant joint efforts during the reporting period. The liaison office led a technical support team with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the Folke Bernadotte Academy, which supported the League of Arab States Department of Demographic Policies and Department of Youth and Sport in developing an Arab regional youth and peace and security strategy. The team supported the League in organizing consultations on the draft strategy with member States and youth representatives in September 2022. The consultations included an innovative online youth dialogue on peace and security that allowed nearly 300 young people from 13 countries across the Arab region to voice their opinions and contribute

to the development of the strategy. The draft strategy is currently with the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers for its endorsement and is expected to be presented at the upcoming League of Arab States Summit in Riyadh at the end of May 2023. The liaison office is also working to raise awareness about the strategy among youth and peace and security focal points within the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations and United Nations field missions across the Arab region, and to promote their respective roles in supporting its implementation. As part of these efforts, the liaison office also held a training session on the youth and peace and security agenda for League staff in March 2022.

Recognizing the need to continue enhancing capacity-building for the League of Arab States in relevant areas, UNLOLAS organized several initiatives throughout the year, including briefings by United Nations peace operations personnel in the Arab region on advancing the women and peace and security agenda for League staff, the Arab Women Mediators Network and gender focal points from States members of the League in April 2022. With support from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the liaison office facilitated the participation of League officials in training events on ceasefire mediation in May 2022 and on actionable conflict analysis in November and December 2022. With the Department of Peace Operations, it organized training on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration for League of Arab States staff and member State representatives, which took place in December 2022. Work is currently under way to organize additional training for League staff on women and peace and security and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as on topics such as strategic foresight and advisory, operational and transactional issues (with the Department of Operational Support). Cooperation on electoral matters between the secretariat of the League and the United Nations, principally through the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs as the United Nations system-wide focal point for electoral assistance matters, has increased in recent years, and the two organizations continue to work on new electoral capacity development initiatives for member States.

Work has also been under way in support of League of Arab States efforts to implement Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and relevant subsequent resolutions, as well as the regional women and peace and security action plan. The League of Arab States and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) are aiming to advance the implementation of women and peace and security commitments and transparency and accountability frameworks in conflict and post-conflict areas in the Arab region, including through the operationalization strategy for the Arab Women Mediators Network, adopted in 2022. The Network was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the League in 2020 to support and facilitate women's meaningful participation in peace processes at all levels and falls within the framework of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).

While encouraging enhanced efforts to promote women's economic empowerment and the elimination of poverty in the Arab region, in line with broader efforts to prevent and resolve conflict through the women and peace and security agenda, UN-Women and the League of Arab States are also developing a programme to support countries in increasing women's participation in the labour force by 5 per cent. This large-scale programme is expected to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2023.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict met with the League of Arab States Assistant Secretary-General for Social Affairs in September 2022 and agreed to strengthen cooperation for the full implementation of the League's Executive Action Plan "Protection of Arab Women: Peace and Security" 2015–2030 and the 2016 memorandum of understanding between

the League and the United Nations with a view to addressing conflict-related sexual violence. The engagement of religious leaders on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and the reduction of stigma for survivors, including children born of conflict-related rape, was also discussed as an emerging topic for future collaboration.

During the reporting period, efforts were made to identify ways to strengthen cooperation on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Both the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate have worked with the League of Arab States to that end. On 19 September 2022, the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism met with the League to explore areas for cooperation on issues of common interest. In November 2022, the Executive Directorate met with the newly designated Director of the Counter-Terrorism Department of the League to take stock of previous cooperation and explore ways to cooperate in the future. It was decided that the Executive Directorate would conduct a visit to the Headquarters of the League in Cairo in the second half of 2023 to further the dialogue.

The partnership between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is crucial for addressing the plight of children affected by conflict in the Arab region. In June 2022, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Affairs of the League in Cairo to discuss the protection of children in armed conflict, following the adoption by the League of Arab States of a comprehensive plan to prevent the recruitment of children. The Office of the Special Representative also held technical round-table discussions with the Secretariat of the League on matters including cooperation to prevent grave violations against children and the Safe Schools Declaration. In September 2022, the Special Representative addressed the League of Arab States committee on combating violence against children, at its invitation.

The fifteenth general cooperation meeting between the United Nations and the League of Arab States was held in Geneva in July 2022 to discuss strategic and operational aspects of cooperation between the two organizations across a range of issues affecting the Arab region, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/11](#). This biennial meeting provides a framework for taking stock of and planning activities in various areas, including peace and security. In addition to the plenary sessions, meetings of three working groups, on political, economic and social issues, were held to review inter-organizational cooperation and plan new joint initiatives. Participants agreed on a set of recommendations designed to guide the further development of general cooperation between the United Nations and the League and to address challenges.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/17](#), the fifteenth sectoral meeting between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, on the topic of cooperation on climate change, was held in Cairo on 27–28 February 2023. This biennial meeting was co-led by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, with the support of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and by the League of Arab States Department of Environmental and Meteorological Affairs, with the support of the League of Arab States Department of International Organizations. As at the general meeting on cooperation, participants reviewed ongoing joint work and explored new avenues for cooperation, but the focus was specifically on issues related to climate change. The resulting report contained a range of recommendations intended to guide joint work in that area, taking into account its impact on stability and prosperity in the region.

Looking to the future, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs has begun organizing the next general meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and the League, which will be hosted by the United Nations in Geneva in 2024. As in 2022, the results of the cooperation between the United Nations and the League across the full range of areas of common interest will be reviewed and plans will be developed to take the cooperation further.

We are eager to continue strengthening institutional relations and cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States through dialogue, capacity-building and enhanced collaboration on peace and security issues. I am convinced that this will be beneficial for the achievement of our common goals and objectives as well as our ability to address existing and emerging challenges together. Your continued support would be a key contribution to this endeavour.

I would be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* António **Guterres**

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