

ARAB LEAGUE

Party Portrait

The Arab League – or League of Arab States (LAS) – is an organization focused on building cooperation between Arab states, defending their sovereignty, and working with international bodies on issues of economics, peace, and security. While the LAS is a political umbrella, each member of the LAS is responsible for conducting its own foreign policy. Historically, the LAS has strongly respected the principle of state sovereignty, thereby not supporting regime changes in its member states. Shifting away from these non-interventionist goals, the LAS has recently taken on active roles as a conflict mediator, crisis manager, and international intermediary.

Key Interests

- Maintain regional order and stability;
- Uphold state sovereignty;
- Reduce Shi'a/Iranian influence across the region; and
- Mitigate the impacts of conflicts and humanitarian crises across the region.

Sources of Leverage

Soft Power - The primary sources of leverage for the LAS are soft power. There is potential for oil-rich states to use their wealth to gain traction and attention during conflicts, but this leverage is largely unrealized due to rivalries between member states. The LAS' main source of leverage is grounded in its credibility and legitimacy as the only Pan-Arab organization.

Regional Strategy

Due to serious divisions and conflicts within the League, there seems to be no overarching regional strategy. Prior to 2008, the League's strategy was to ensure that powerful elites maintained domestic control and stabilized their states. Since the Arab Spring, most LAS actions seem aimed at maximizing Sunni influence in the region, minimizing Iran's Shi'a influence, and, generally, preventing conflict and instability.

Powerful Individuals

Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit

Potential Negotiation Moves

- Intervene in Conflicts** - In the early stages of conflicts, the LAS is likely to intervene and attempt a mediation effort. Alternatively, it may refer issues to the UN Security Council with recommendations/requests for additional mediation efforts, ceasefires, or military intervention by regional or international actors
- Build Regional Military Alliance** - Build on its 2015 commitment and establish a voluntary joint military force with peacekeeping role
- Act as Guarantor** - Position itself as the guarantor of political resolutions to conflict
- Engage with Donors** - Engaging with international donors for reconstruction and recovery aid

Internal Conflicts

There are numerous divides and conflicts within the League. Much of the conflict and indecision in the LAS can be explained by the Sunni-Shi'a divide. Saudi Arabia supports Sunni factions throughout the League while Shi'a states are largely supported by Iran. This leads to proxy wars in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen and instability throughout the region.

Memberships

N/A

Allies

N/A

Partners

EUROPEAN UNION, UNITED NATIONS, Informal partners of some member states include: IRAN, TURKEY, UNITED STATES

Rivals

Some member states consider as rivals or adversaries: IRAN, TURKEY, ISRAEL

Adversaries

Some member states consider as rivals or adversaries: IRAN, TURKEY, ISRAEL

Active Armed Opponents

Active armed opponents of member states include: ISIS, SYRIA Government

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

N/A

Aid Donor

N/A