

Republic of Tunisia

Positions for the League of Arab States

I. External Threats to Arab States and Regional Economies

The Arab world is central to the global economy and its commodity market. The strategic location costs the Arab world to be involved in various conflicts. External threats to members of the League of Arab States are highly related to the dependency of most Arab states on natural resources as their ultimate economic sources. Republic of Tunisia expresses deep concern of the rising threats to Arab states and their economies. Being a strategically important trade partner to the European Union, Tunisia is committed to protect the economic situation of the Arab world. Tunisia views external threats to any member-states of LAS as a direct threat to Tunisia. Although Tunisia supports the right of all countries in the region to develop nuclear program for peaceful purposes, Tunisia strongly opposes any development or possession of nuclear weapons in the region. Iran's nuclear program, Iranian threats to shut the Strait of Hormuz, and the Israeli threats to attack Iran are major concerns for Tunisia. Republic of Tunisia believes the security of territorial and trans-boundary waters of the Arab world are highly significant to protect Arab states and regional economies from external threats.

During the 16th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran in August 2012 in which Republic of Tunisia was elected as a vice president, the Tunisian foreign minister Dr. Rafiq Abdulsalam argued Iran to play a "positive role" in the region. In his speech, Dr. Abdulsalam also called for Israel to "give in to IAEA demand for nuclear inspection."¹ Tunisia takes all necessary measures to secure its territorial waters and the surrounding international waters. Tunisia participated with over thirty countries in the largest naval exercise in the Middle East in the Arabian Gulf in September 2012 which aimed to simulate the closure of Strait of Hormuz². Tunisia also works closely with its allies in North Africa and Europe to achieve the goal of securing international waters. The Tunisian navy conducted anti-mine and anti-piracy exercises with the naval forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in February 2012³. Also, joint naval exercises with member-states of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) are regularly conducted by Tunisia's naval forces.

Because of the regional instability and the rising threats to Arab states, Republic of Tunisia recommends the restructure and activation of the Arab Peace and Security Council⁴. Tunisia strongly encourages intensifying military cooperation among LAS members to achieve a balanced Arab response to external threats. Also, Tunisia urges the League of Arab States to advance its mediation efforts between LAS members and non-member states in the region in order to prevent disputes from turning into regional conflicts.

II. The Coming Resource Wars

Not only Arab states share a common language and historical heritage but they also share common risks of natural disasters. Different parts of the Arab world regularly face geological threats like earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis in addition to threats of climate change such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, sand-storms, and forest-fires.

Morocco's floods in 2009, Guno Hurricane in Oman in 2007, and Algeria's earthquake in 2003 are all indicators of the rising risks in the Middle East and North Africa⁵. Climate Change in the region is expected to multiple risks of rising the sea-level, prolonged droughts, and desertification⁶. Furthermore, water is a fundamental right for all human beings and the lack of it leads to disasters. The Middle East is considered one of the most water-stressed regions in the world⁷. Some LAS member-states are expected to face water disasters by 2020. Despite the economic advantage of the Arab world's oil reserve, recent wars in the region were correlated at least partly with these oil reserves. The Arab world controls over more than half of the world's oil reserves. LAS members which

¹ "Tunisian FM from the NAM Summit: Israel Should Give in to IAEA Demand for Inspection." *Tunisian FM from the NAM Summit: Israel Should Give in to IAEA Demand for Inspection*. Islamic Invitation Turkey, 31 Aug. 2012. Web. 04 Oct. 2012. <http://www.islamicinvitationturkey.com/2012/08/31/tunisian-fm-from-the-nam-summit-israel-should-give-in-to-iaea-demand-for-inspection/>

² "الداخل يجرم ياه في الاوسط الشرق منطقة تشهد بحرية مناورات اك بر اند طلاق" *BBC Arabic News*, 17 Sept. 2012. BBC. 04 Oct. 2012. http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2012/09/120912_gulf_naval_maneuvers.shtml

³ "NATO Task Force In Tunisia." 11 Feb. 2012. Turkish Navy. <http://turkishnavy.net/2012/02/11/nato-task-force-in-tunisia/>

⁴ "Baghdad Declaration" Mar. 2012: n. pag. League of Arab States.

<http://lasportal.org/wps/wcm/connect/22d652004abff4f5939b9f526698d42c/%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86+%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

⁵ "Regional Workshop on Urban Risk Reduction in Arab States" UNISDR 2009. www.unisdr.org/archive/11676

⁶ "Mapping Climate Change Threats and Human Developments" UNISDR 2010. <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdrps/paper02-en.pdf>

⁷ "Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World." *HDR 2007/2008*. UNPD. http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_20072008_EN_Overview.pdf

